

# THE SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB JOURNAL 2010



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*Front cover: Viv Scott and Steve Ashworth on the first ascent of 'Bandits' VII,8, Beinn Eighè.*

*Photo: Sam Loveday.*

*Back cover: Heike Puchan on 'Call of the Wild', E3 5c, Lochan Dubh Crag. Photo: Brian Whitworth.*

*Opposite: Dave Cowan on 'Brave New World', E2 5c, Rolling Wall, Diabeg. Photo: Dave Ogden.*





# THE SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB JOURNAL

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## A SCOTTISH HAUTE ROUTE

By Roger Wild

THIS TRIP BY Roger and Finlay Wild, on 10–16 March 2010, was inspired by the journey in 1978 which is described in the article by David Grieve in *SMCJ 1978*, Vol. XXXI, 227–36.

### Route

The route is a subjective choice. Our logic was to follow a direct line along the most significant high ground. We used two tests:

- a) would missing out a particular hill detract from the high-level concept of the route?
- b) would including a particular hill turn the trip into a peak bagging exercise rather than a traverse?

We drew the following conclusions. The Grey Corries were included. The line deviates a little but the ridge forms a continuous chain of peaks heading more or less in the right direction. The alternative deviation south to Glen Nevis is slightly off the direct line anyway. Aonach Mòr was a twenty-minute indulgence. Ben Alder is the highest and biggest peak in its immediate area and has to be included. The inclusion of any neighbouring peaks involves losing height to an extent that seems artificial. Meall Chuaich is the highest peak in its area and is on the direct line. Beinn a' Chaorainn is off the direct line but only just and so we included it.

The final selection was:

Ben Nevis, Càrn Mòr Dearg, Aonach Mòr, Aonach Beag, Sgùrr Choinnich Mòr, Stob Coire an Laoigh, Stob Choire Claurigh, Stob Bàn, Beinn na Lap, Ben Alder, The Fara, Meall Chuaich, Càrn Dearg Mòr, Cairn Toul, Ben Macdui, Beinn a' Chaorainn, Beinn a' Bhuid, Ben Avon.

The route is equally worthy in either direction. We chose west to east because of the likely wind direction at the time. This proved to be a

*Top: Day 1 – Sgùrr Choinnich Mòr from Stob Coire Easain. Skier: Finlay Wild.*

*Bottom: Day 7 – The Sneck. Skier: Finlay Wild.*

*Both photos: Roger Wild.*

fortunate decision as we experienced very strong winds during days five and six. Battling against these winds would have been a major factor if we had been travelling in the opposite direction.

Distances given are by the shortest reasonable route. In reality distances were slightly longer. The total distance from road to road is 155km with 10,000m of ascent.

## **Gear**

We used Nordic metal-edged mountain skis with three-pin bindings and leather boots. Finlay's boots are high cut above the ankle which gives some support on downhill sections. This type of leather boot now seems to be difficult to obtain because plastic boots have taken over the market. This is unfortunate as this type of boot is ideal for mountain touring. My boots are lower cut but my three-pin bindings have a cable which can be attached for steeper descents. We both had damp and sometimes wet feet for most of time but interestingly neither of us had any blisters at the end of seven days' touring. We both used 'waterproof' socks which didn't keep our feet dry but probably helped to keep them warm. Choice of skis will always be a personal decision. We opted for Nordic skis reasoning that the extra difficulty on steep descents would be more than compensated for by the ease of travel on gentle downhill, flat and uphill terrain. This is because of the lighter weight but also the Nordic camber which provides much better 'kick and glide' than alpine camber.

The lighter equipment was an advantage on the mountaineering sections where skis were carried and also where we were obliged to walk due to lack of snow. We both had three-quarter width skins which provided sufficient grip on the uphill sections while enabling many downhill sections to be negotiated with skins still fitted. This saved time removing and refitting skins and made some downhill sections faster.

We carried sleeping bags, mats and Gore-Tex bivy bags. We both took Jetboil stoves. Having two stoves was possibly an unnecessary weight but it was good to have a spare and cooking on two stoves was useful. We each had maps (replenished at Dalwhinnie), compasses and GPS receivers. We took a simple 'hands-free' system for compass or GPS so that both ski poles could be used whilst following a bearing.

## **Food, accommodation and transport**

We set off with two days' food and cooking gas. Our sacs weighed 14kg initially. Prior to setting off we had left food caches at Lairig Leacach bothy, Dalwhinnie, Ruigh-aiteachain bothy and the Hutchison hut. We had hoped to leave food and a tent at the east end of Loch Ossian by using the train to Corroul but the line was blocked by an avalanche at Tyndrum. The food carried was mainly pasta and oatcakes. The food at the caches was tinned.

We are grateful to the Mountain Bothies Association and landowners for the continued provision of the superb shelters we used. We later returned to remove rubbish and tidy up.

On Tuesday 9 March we parked Finlay's van at Braenaloin near to where the River Gairn meets the B976 road. The snow was piled up by the ploughs at the side of the road and we took some time to park the van without getting it stuck in the snow. We drove my van to Dalwhinnie and parked it with provisions for an overnight stay. A friend took us to Fort William. We packed our rucksacks, had an evening meal and at 8 p.m. another friend dropped us off at Achintee in Glen Nevis.

### **Approach**

We carried skis to Lochan Meall an t-Suidhe where the snow began. From here we were treated to an unusual ascent of Ben Nevis. A huge avalanche had swept down the Red Burn a few days previously and the old familiar track was completely covered. A narrow path crossed the Red Burn and the slopes above were hard packed snow. We arrived on the summit under a beautiful starry night sky and slept soundly in our bags until 6 a.m.

### **Day One**

Ben Nevis, Càrn Mòr Dearg, Aonach Mòr, Aonach Beag, Sgùrr Choinnich Mòr, Stob Coire an Laoigh, Stob Choire Claurigh, Stob Bàn, Lairig Leacach bothy

18 kilometres, 1900 metres of ascent, 10¼ hours

It was a stunning day with the snow brilliant white under the sun and views in all directions. The descent to the Càrn Mòr Dearg arête proved easier than we had expected. There was full cover with all the boulders covered and the snow was relatively soft. The arête was plastered with snow and an excellent path had been trodden making it easier than in summer conditions. We carried skis along the arête to Càrn Mòr Dearg, down to the col below the Aonachs and up to the easy ground near the Aonach Mòr/Beag col. We had decided from the start that we would adopt whatever mode of transport was the most efficient at the time i.e. skis, skis with skins or skis carried. Skis were a tool for travelling rather than an end in themselves.

With skis back on we soon reached the summit of Aonach Mòr and a brief downhill run took us to the foot of Aonach Beag followed by a short climb to the summit. We could see the Grey Corries stretching out from us with the Cairngorms in the far distance. It was game on. We had skied the Grey Corries two years previously in what we had thought were plentiful snow conditions but today was even better. We hardly

touched a rock throughout the day. It was a long day made even longer by all the stops for photography.

We met a group of three walking in the opposite direction and having a great day. Apart from at Dalwhinnie, these were the only people we saw during the whole seven day trip. The descent from Stob Choire Clairigh had been in the back of our minds wondering what the snow would be like. It was a doddle with soft snow on a firm base. The final climb to Stob Bàn was an effort but spirits were high as we descended to Lairig Leacach bothy and an evening of eating and drinking followed by unbroken sleep.

### **Day Two**

Lairig Leacach bothy, Beinn na Lap, Loch Ossian (east end)

17 kilometres, 800 metres of ascent, 7¼ hours

We skied down to 480m altitude where the snow stopped. From here we carried skis for five kilometres to the south-east end of Loch Treig where there was sufficient snow to continue on ski. Apart from the start and finish, this was the only significant section where skis were carried due to lack of snow. Beinn na Lap was a gradual climb up consolidated snow followed by a fairly quick descent to the north shore of Loch Ossian where we followed snow at the edge of the track to Corour Lodge. We had planned to leave a tent here by using the train but the line was blocked by an avalanche and so we had no plan in place for a roof over our heads. We could perhaps have contacted the estate in the days before the trip to try and make arrangements but time ran out.

We spoke to a lovely lady in the estate office and asked if there was anywhere we might use. She tried her best to help but our request was hindered by the story she told of a burglar who had sued the estate because of an injury sustained during a break in. We could see in her eyes the pain of the conflict between the requirements of Highland hospitality and the Health & Safety Executive. Sadly the HSE won and we ended up bivouacing in the woods near the loch. This gave Finlay the opportunity to indulge his pyromaniac tendencies although when I complimented him on being able to get a fire going in the damp conditions he remarked that Jimmy, his old Scoutmaster, would have been disappointed because he had used two matches rather than one. The weather was unsettled and we were unsure of what the night would bring as we drifted off to sleep at an unusually early hour.

### **Day Three**

Loch Ossian, Ben Alder, Culra bothy

14 kilometres, 800 metres of ascent, 7½ hours

The weather held and we left the bivouac early, keen to get moving. The snow was hard packed and fast going so we soon reached the slopes of Ben Alder. The ascent on hard névé was tiring at times. On the mist shrouded summit we considered descending on foot by the Long Leachas as it was a direct and quick route to Culra bothy. With the poor visibility and wind we decided to keep skis on and retrace the last part of the ascent and then traverse across to just below the Bealach Dubh. The descent from the bealach was great fun, providing easy height loss and distance gained.

We passed below the north facing cliffs of Ben Alder which were iced up and looking in good condition for climbing. The last few kilometres to Culra bothy involved linking up hard packed wreaths of snow which provided a fun challenge to see who could find the best combination. The bothy was bathed in sunshine and we hung out sleeping bags and boots to dry outside. It was fairly green around the bothy and we anticipated some walking next day. During the evening the wind got up again eliciting a positive comment from Finlay, 'The stronger the wind the faster we'll be blown to Dalwhinnie and we'll take fewer photographs and that'll be faster too'.

This theory was to be severely challenged a couple of days later when we were fighting our way over Cairn Toul and Ben Macdui in very strong winds.

## **Day Four**

Culra bothy, The Fara, Dalwhinnie

17 kilometres, 700 metres of ascent, 6½ hours

We set off on foot but quickly realised that the Allt a' Chaoil-reidhe was frozen well enough to hold our weight. This was a real bonus as we could skate and glide slightly downhill all the way to Loch Pattack which was also frozen. This provided easy access to the snow at the foot of the ridge leading to The Fara. Looking back from the ridge to Culra bothy we could see the ice covered river snaking its way in sharp contrast to its grassy banks. It was our Yellow Brick Road. The snow was firm along the ridge and we soon reached the summit of The Fara and descended south-east to the firebreak and the track alongside Loch Erich.

There was no snow on the track but to our delight the shore was snow covered and we skied along the water's edge, crossed the stream by a jammed log near the dam and cut across to Dalwhinnie and my van. We enjoyed an excellent feast, listened to the indifferent weather forecast and turned in for another early night.

**Day Five**

Dalwhinnie, Meall Chuaich, Càrn Dearg Mòr, Ruigh-aiteachain bothy

27 kilometres, 1300 metres of ascent, 10 hours

From the high ground during the previous day we had noticed that there was more snow to the south and east of Leacainn than on the track to the north so we followed the snow and took a fairly direct line to the track on the south flank of Meall Chuaich reaching it at the foot of a stream at 500m altitude. We ascended by the east bank of the stream to reach the summit in increasing wind. Visibility deteriorated and we took care with the navigation as we descended the north-east ridge before cutting across to the dam at the north end of Loch an t-Seilich. Some snow and heather hopping was needed here and the final run down to the dam was entirely on heather. The track leading north had just enough snow for skiing and after a kilometre we turned east and, after some more snow and heather hopping, reached the weir on the Allt Bhran at 440m altitude. From the weir the snow improved and we took a fairly direct line to the summit of Càrn Dearg Mòr.

The weather had deteriorated now with strong winds and a rise in temperature. It was thawing. We descended north and then east to reach a swollen River Feshie with the bothy tantalisingly close on the other side. It didn't seem worth going the extra distance to the ford beyond the ruined bridge as we would get our feet wet anyway in these spate conditions and so we crossed straight to the bothy in calf-deep water. It had been a long day and we were glad to reach the bothy but it felt rather cold and inhospitable. To our joy there was a little coal and some firelighters and we soon had a warm fire going with our boots drying out in front of it. The pre-placed food cache was recovered from the woods and we set to, cooking it all. We had no difficulty eating all the tinned ravioli, macaroni, spaghetti, corned beef, rice pudding, fruit salad and custard, washed down with lashings of hot tea and condensed milk. Life was good!

**Day Six**

Ruigh-aiteachain bothy, Cairn Toul, Ben Macdui, Hutchison Hut

25 kilometres, 1950 metres of ascent, 10 hours

The weather was still unsettled as we carried skis for half an hour to reach the snow at 480m altitude on the track by the Allt Coire Chaoil. The visibility on the Moine Mhòr was very limited and the hands-free navigation kit was put to good use. The snow was perfect for Nordic 'kick and glide' technique and we quickly reached the lower slopes of

Cairn Toul. As we gained height the winds became stronger and the final minutes to the summit were a struggle. Keeping skins on we descended south to the col and then contoured around to head east towards Coire Odhar.

The snow in the corrie was soft and a straightforward descent brought us to Corrou bothy where we stopped to brew some tea. Rejuvenated by tea and oatcakes we headed for the Tailors' Burn and made a good start on the ascent to Ben Macdui. The snow on the lower half of the ascent was relatively soft and easy for skinning. As we gained height the snowpack became very firm and the last half-hour was spent struggling with frozen rime and very strong winds. The summit platform and trig point were almost completely covered in snow with only a small lump remaining to mark the summit. The weather and the lure of the Hutchison Hut provided all the momentum we needed to lose height as quickly as the navigation would permit and before long we were turning right at Loch Etchachan and dropping down to the hut.

The Hutchison Hut is small and basic but after 10 hours in the wind and clag it felt like a palace, especially once we had recovered the food cache which a friend had helped me deposit during the previous week. We sat opposite each other leaning against the walls in our bags on the narrow bench and cooked and brewed and chatted about the day and the trip so far. We'd had perfect snow and sunshine, wind, rain, frozen rime, frozen hands, wet feet. One day to go: would the weather hold?

## **Day Seven**

Hutchison Hut, Beinn a' Chaorainn, Beinn a' Bhuid, Ben Avon

32 kilometres, 1350 metres of ascent, 11½ hours (to the road)

A gentle rising traverse brought us to the Lairig an Laoigh. Patches of blue sky appeared intermittently as we climbed to Beinn a' Chaorainn. The wind had eased too. A great descent was followed by more 'kick and glide' across the Moine Bhealaidh to Beinn a' Bhuid. Visibility became poor as we gained height and it took a while to locate the summit. The skies cleared as we dropped down to the Sneck and up the final climb to Ben Avon. It was great to get to the last summit and take in the views. However we still had 19km to go and as we headed down the cloud came in again. More navigation was required until we dropped below the cloud base and we could see the long and winding route eastwards. From Loch Builg the snow was patchy and we alternated between walking and skiing for most of the way until there was no snow at all on the last few kilometres to the road and Finlay's van.

The first chip shop we found on the way to Aberdeen was in Aboyne. We didn't linger for fear of putting off customers with our ragged

appearance. The next day we collected my van from Dalwhinnie and we went into the fuel station for a coffee. The lady behind the counter asked what we had been doing. We gave her a brief summary of the trip to which she replied, 'And did it do any good?'

I suppose she has a point but then maybe she hasn't read W.H. Murray:

*Here is a field of free action in which nothing is organised, or made safe or easy or uniform by regulation; a kingdom where no laws run and no useful ends fetter the heart.*

## AFTER THE GAME

It was after the game.

A street seething. My way  
blocked by a man mountain,  
a hulk with tits and tattoos,  
an overhang of belly, pitons  
stuck in nostrils, a krab  
in belly button...

A belch belted me. He blew  
a filth of smoke in my face  
and grinned like a crevasse.  
But I've known mountains,  
their fear, all the realities  
that blast pretensions clear.

I laughed! Walked through the smoke,  
walked through his little brain  
and from the other side breathed air  
from mountains of my mind,  
cool, clear and undefiled.

Hamish Brown

## FAILING ON VULCAN WALL

By John Temple

OF ALL THE character-building influences of rock climbing, successful failure is the strongest. I failed three times to make the first ascent of one of Skye's great climbs and over half a century later I am still able to savour, if not enjoy, the lingering bitter-sweet flavour.

Summer 1957 was one of my most satisfying periods of failure, in life as well as in climbing. I failed to avoid drifting into teaching. The Postgrad Education Year was the early equivalent of the Climbing Grant so popular in Llanberis and elsewhere in the 1970s. I failed to persuade my Prof, a patient and wise Scot, that it would save everyone trouble if I skipped the exams in much the same way as I had skipped most of the course. 'No,' he said, 'it will cost you. Better to sit and fail than pay for your course.' Despite advising the examiners that the best way of ventilating a school was the tried and tested hole in the roof method, I failed to fail. Generations of children have suffered in consequence.

I also failed to serve Queen and Country. Deferred National Service in the company of some who had done it entailed listening to their accounts of the tedium punctuated by what, in these gentler times, would be classed as verbal and physical abuse. Their mantra, with vindictive grin, was 'You've got it to come'. Fitter than I had ever been I failed the medical. Ho, ho, ho.

I did pick up glandular fever – an STD I believe – and failed to get to the Alps in consequence. The Cuillin (and I write in a whisper) were the default option. Those were the days when the NHS was, we were told, the envy of the world. Was I to chance the Third World treatment I would get in France? In fairness I would want to record the excellent treatment I eventually enjoyed in Chamonix Hospital – they have had a lot of experience of spiral fractures. I'm sure that the instructions as to how to use the thermometer were perfectly clear – in French. The nurse on return collapsed in apoplectic giggles when she saw the thermometer sticking out of my mouth.

It took as long to hitch to Glen Brittle as it would have done to Chamonix. Once beyond the Great Glen what the Ministry of Transport classed as 'A' roads changed character. In keeping perhaps with the communities they linked, they became discursive. Rather narrow like the religious inclination of some in those communities. Discontinuous where fingers of the Atlantic take a hold of the coastline and you have to take to the boats. (I love the 2010 road sign: Dornie Ferry – No Ferry.) Very beautiful roads when the sun shines and very, very quiet. Not roads in a rush.

Skye did not disappoint. The Cuillin were as promised, generally

invisible with only their pedestal of grim moorland below the clouds. These either hung about promising better things or raced past threatening worse. It was sometimes glorious in the evening sun, which shone above a thin grey mist of midges. We would retreat into the warm water of Loch Brittle to avoid them, delighted as darkness fell and the surface flashed phosphorescent, wondering why the clear weather always seemed to have the night-shift.

The beach we were told was busy; there were at least half a dozen other tents. There were certainly enough people around to overflow Ronald MacDonald's launch on his day trips to Rum. Someone must have noticed, for one afternoon a Board of Trade Inspector was waiting on the beach to count them off the overloaded boat. How did Ronald know that he was there? The launch put in at little coves near the headland, the surplus passengers left to walk back – legality apparently restored by the time the Hebridean met Officialdom.

There were days on the mountains – very instructive days for an overconfident newcomer who thought that a combination of three Alpine seasons, a geography degree and the one-inch OS map were adequate for navigating the complexities of the Cuillin. It was a shock to emerge from the mist on Sgùrr Dearg and find that Glen Brittle had changed dramatically in a few hours. It had narrowed, lost its road, fields and houses, and acquired a long craggy-shored loch.

The bay was also unrecognisable – much smaller, devoid of beach but with a scatter of islands and rugged hill slopes rising steeply into the cloud base. It took me a while to accept reality but no time at all to compound my error by descending to Coruisk without looking at the map, thereby committing us to a 10 mile circuit of the trackless butt end of the Cuillin. Not a good choice. The campsite was quiet when we arrived. There was, it transpired, a search and rescue on in Coire Lagan: looking for us.

They were not as pleased as I had hoped when, breathless, I caught up with them bearing the good news that we were safe and well. Even my offer to be carried down so that they would not feel their efforts entirely wasted failed to cheer them.

Improving weather turned attention to the rock. I had looked across Coire Lagan and noticed a clean-looking slab high up at the left end of Sròn na Ciche. There seemed to be enough features in the way of ledges and cracks to convince me that it was climbable. Despite the Coruisk incident Pat did not question my judgement, at least openly. She had been climbing for all of six weeks, a fact that the Procurator Fiscal would doubtless have dwelt on had I been unlucky as well as foolish.

The steep wall was not the user-friendly slab I had anticipated. I struggled onto it via the corners on its left. Standing in my ex-army P.E. shoes I felt (and was) insecure. A mere twenty feet of half-weight hawser-

laid nylon rope hung down to some nasty-looking rocks. I could not reverse the moves. The wall above had vertical cracks but not much to hang my two line (i.e. thick string) slings on. There was a good ledge at about forty feet above. I fiddled a bit with my two chunky steel krabs substituting as worry beads. Staying put was only a short term option. Down appeared to offer the certainty of serious injury. Up, if I had thought it through, offered essentially the same with terminal potential. I skipped thinking it through and moved up.

I retain a mental picture of bracing in a sort of bridging position between two of the cracks. It was drainingly strenuous. Each move up uncertain. No rest for the foolish. Adrenalin kicked in. The fight or flight options of evolutionary selection were not quite those I was involved in. For me either would be brief. I clawed up and onto a ledge. Collapsed, spent, breathless and amazed to be alive. Pat joined me on the ledge, commendably composed but admitting she did find it quite hard.

I looked at the next pitch. My mind was now well sensitised to reality and it looked hard. The instant decision this time was the sensible one. We abbed leaving a krab and a sling.

Back on the reassuringly level campsite the next morning my capacity to make the same mistake twice gradually asserted itself. The wall began to lie back a bit. The holds got bigger. If a novice, a girl, could follow it without a pull on the rope it can't have been that bad. And I had left a karabiner.

The second ascent of the pitch was a pretty exact re-enactment of the first – an intense desperate struggle to stay in contact with the rock I was on, and to stay out of contact with the even less amenable rock below. The second pitch looked as bad as ever to eyes sensitised to reality. I recovered the krab and we abbed off the sling.

Allt a' Mhuilinn, Easter 1958: 'Have ye seen anythin' o' three English lads?' Few words; much information. Clearly not a social matter. Delivery direct, brusque even. Clear undertones of authority. The accent was Clydeside rather than Morningside. Tragedy was implied and the speaker sounded familiar with tragedy on the Ben. There seemed to be an implied link between Englishness and tragedy on the Ben where the learning curve can be as steep as the frowning cliffs. Visitors from the south beware. The Ben has its own tick list and you are on it.

Pat hurriedly put her paps back in her sleeping bag. I unzipped the tent door. The speaker was tall and lean, hard-eyed, unsmiling, his face as sparse as his words but conveying all the information you needed to know. His companion was smaller, chubbier and, but for the Woodbine in his mouth, would have flashed a grin. My first contact with MacInnes and Clough. Pat and I had been up Gardyloo the day before but had seen no one else. Hamish and Ian headed off briskly but were soon back with the bad news. Alfie Beanland and party had fallen out of *Zero*. All were

dead and I was incorporated in the carry off. Volunteering was not an option.

Skye, Whitsun 1958: A job in Leeds brought contact with Mike Dixon. He broke his collar bone just before we went and found that it greatly reduced both his climbing ability and the pleasure derived therefrom. Luckily Hamish and Ian were running a Mountaineering Association course. They both managed to arrange time off and invited me along to their assault of *Vulcan Wall* – Hamish's choice of name; he was proud of his heavy peg hammer – 'The Message' I recall.

Ian, a.k.a. 'Dangle', led off and set what was to be the rather low tone of the day by aiding the initial corner, belaying at its top and handing the lead over to Hamish. I was bemused rather than aghast that he then murdered the pitch. Should I have protested? Perhaps, but I did not have the moral fibre to do so, the more so as I would have been obliged to attempt the pitch again. 'Thanks, but no thanks.' I got to lead the third pitch.

Years later in an article in *Mountain*, Cunningham used our ascent as an example of how not to do it. Who, I wonder, was the first to do it right?

## BEN MORE AND STOB BINNEIN

By Ken Crocket

I SLAMMED DOWN on the hard ground as my feet went up in the air. A few seconds followed, while I checked that all bits were attached and working properly, then I gave myself a short talking-to session. ‘Get a grip Crocket’ was the gist of the conversation. It might only have been a simple slip on an icy patch on a flat section of the path, but walking solo in winter negates this sort of carelessness. As it happened, my sandwich box in the rucksack took much of the impact, and was cracked beyond repair.

It was a subtly concealed patch of ice mind you – covered with a thin skin of powder snow, but that was no great excuse. It would not happen again. I was on the south ridge of Stob Binnein, having panted up the steep and relentless south flank of Stob Invercarraig. This was Rob Roy MacGregor country, and intimately connected with that people’s hero. About 1718 he bought land and built a home for himself and his wife at Inverlochlarig, on the very toe of Beinn Tulaichean. And there he died at the end of 1734 having lived a life packed with incident.<sup>1</sup>

I had set off from the wee car park just a few hundred metres east of Inverlochlarig, having made the slow but very picturesque drive along Loch Voil. Pale sunlight was trying, as it tried all day, to break through thin and patchy cloud. It had been a long tussle with conscience as the weather was less than promising at home, right up to the very morning hoped for. But as so often happens with a day’s walking, a little bit of faith goes a long way, and the weather improved with every mile.

The decision to attempt both Munros from the south was as much through sentiment as logic. I had passed the north flank of Ben More so often on my way further north that its grim, steep defences on that side had begun to depress me. It had been my first Munro ever, done from the north, and over the years I had vowed never again. But many hills have more than one way up and so I examined the maps for an alternative. Two cars could make a straight walk feasible, in either direction, but my normal walking partner was otherwise engaged on the day. There was also the option of a circular route, beginning and ending at the A85 road, about 4½km east of Benmore Farm. I said maps, for Ben More & Stob Binnein are particularly awkward characters, hiding in the corners of several OS Sheets. The old *Loch Lomond and the Trossachs* One-Inch sheet covered the area much more conveniently than the current maps.

It was not until I was well up Stob Invercarraig that I came upon the first snow. The south-facing slopes were always the first to be stripped of

<sup>1</sup> *Rob Roy MacGregor, His life and times.* W.H. Murray (Canongate, 1982. ISBN 0-86241-5381, £5.99.)

cover. The steep slopes hid all views of what lay ahead so my gaze was always led to the south and to the west, where lay the Crianlarich group of hills. I had been aware that a potentially fresh wind from the north-east was around, and so it proved as I pulled over the last steep slope to gain the shoulder of Stob Invercarraig. A few minutes later and I was on the south ridge of Stob Coire an Lochain proper, where I was unceremoniously dumped on the ground by the sneaky ice patch.

Being relatively sheltered thus far, I had been trying out a new jacket, one which was amazingly light. I was very aware that it was not suitable for a wintry day, and I soon discovered it provided insufficient protection from the wind which was now howling over the ridge. A tactical error, as I had absolutely no shelter on the smooth ridge while I changed to a heavier jacket. The wind was strong enough to blow away anything not weighed down by rocks or safe in a rucksack, and I was extra-careful not to lose any gloves or the best hat which also went on. My mini-thermometer registered a balmy couple of degrees below freezing, but coupled with a marked windchill effect I estimated it was closer to minus 20. It was certainly enough, because of the enforced stop, to numb the right cheek of my face for a while, and it was about 10 or 15 minutes before my hands were comfortable again. It was really pleasing to be on the move again.

To my relief, this turned out to be the wind at its worst, and in fact there was nothing remotely as cold as that freezing blast from then on. There are often strange effects of wind in the mountains, made even more strange by their invisible nature. There must have been a funnelling effect today, with a fresh nor'easter charging up Coire Chaorach between Ben More and Stob Binnein, being forced over the col between Stob Coire an Lochain and Meall na Dige to the east, before striking me hard on the ridge south of Stob Coire an Lochain. If only, I thought for the umpteenth time, we had the ability to see things normally hidden such as the currents of the wind. I recalled a flight lesson I once had in a small plane, where the air, still invisible, became more real because of the speed of flight, a near-solid wall of resistance which had to be battled against. Walking in a gale, or canoeing white water must be the closest we can come to this. I was more than happy to be moving on, warming up again and thinking of lunch. The cloud effects were very subtle, with the sun veiled by a high, thin screen of cloud and never quite breaking out, but the weather was much, much better than the forecast had been gloomily predicting. Perhaps the Met Office takes a deliberately pessimistic view for safety's sake.

I cruised over Stob Coire an Lochain, dipped down the ridge a little then rose up towards Stob Binnein. Approaching the craggy top I seemed to have a choice of routes; I chose the sunny side on the west and crunched across hard snow below a fine line of crags. A superbly-crafted

wall of snow had been wind-blown below the cliffs, forming a sheltered bowl. It captured any sunlight going, looked over to the Crianlarich hills, and had 'Lunch-Spot' in neon lights above it, so I dropped down into it and found a ruck of boulders to nestle amongst. Here, the effects of the wind were visible for all to see, in the beautifully-sculpted curving wall of snow before me. Some adventurous walker had been unable to pass the steep wall without playing on it, and a set of footsteps with axe marks climbed straight up the wall. Next week the marks, and perhaps even the wall, would be gone, yet someone would have a good memory of that experience. It reminded me of the slightly unreal feeling winter climbing can provide; climbing something real and tangible one day but knowing that it would not exist come the summer. Even memories can fade, which makes it important to photograph them, and write about them.

I sat down on the spare jacket and discovered my shattered lunch box; fortunately the contents were intact. The flask of coffee was of steel, otherwise I'm sure that yet another flask would have tinkled its glittering shards into the rubbish bin at home. The extra weight is worth it. Of course if you are a millionaire you could always buy a titanium flask and win both ways! Eating lunch, I was torn between looking out over the Crianlarich hills before me, and the steep and attractive little crag behind my boulder shelter. I recalled that the famous Naismith's Rule had seen its genesis here, on 2 May 1892. Willie Naismith had walked, also alone, over Cruach Ardrain, in snowy conditions, down to the pass between Benmore and Inverlochlarig Glens, up to Stob Binnein, then over to Ben More. He finished with a glissade down the north-east ridge of Ben More to finish near the site of another house where Rob Roy had lived, in 1713, following the destruction of his home at Craigrostan by the Earl of Montrose's troops. This was about one mile west of Luib, where Naismith would have caught his train home, reaching Hamilton the same evening.

Naismith had left Crianlarich at 10.40 a.m., and gained the summit of Ben More at 3.55 p.m. Though the hills were liberally coated with snow (he started a small avalanche of surface snow while cutting steps down the steep slope to the glen), he remarked that there was less snow on the hills than usual. He saw a large bird, probably an eagle, from Stob Binnein, but met with no other party all day. It is worth quoting from his short note, published in the *SMC Journal* of September 1892, as it is the first time that Naismith's Rule, as it came to be called, appears.

'Distance, ten miles; total climb, 6,300 feet; 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 2,000 feet of ascent.'<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> 'Notes and Queries. Cruach Ardrain, Stobinian and Ben More.' *SMCJ*, Vol. II, No. 3, September 1892, pp. 135-136. W.W. Naismith.

I had to break with my dreaming of times past however, as time was always short on a winter's day. The cold was seeping in, as small gusts of wind would tease me from time to time, so I packed away the lunch stuff and got out the crampons. The snow, when present, was hard, and the slopes ahead steep. I had no desire to repeat my earlier slip. I climbed up out of the bowl, passed the end of the crags, and picked my way up a steep slope to reach the summit of Stob Binnein. So far, like Naismith, I had seen no one, but now looking back I could see a small group coming over Stob Coire an Lochain. And as I looked over to Ben More, my final peak of the day, I saw several figures toiling up the slope towards me.

I was really pleased with the route I had chosen; it had turned out to be a classic ridge walk with great views of each top as well as the surrounding hills. I was also glad to be descending the long slope from Stob Binnein to the Bealach-eadar-dha-Bheinn (Gaelic for the pass between two hills), rather than grinding my way up it. I exchanged pleasantries with the walkers and looked for the best way down. This proved to be a slope of hard snow close to the edge overlooking Coire Chaorach. There was a small cornice to be kept at a respectable distance, but it was much faster than picking a way down the boulder-strewn ridge, especially with crampons on. At the bealach I had the pleasure of looking up the ridge I had just descended, before making my way over to a prominent boulder for a refreshment stop before the last pull up to Ben More.

I was joined by a happy trio who had come up from the south for a long weekend of Munro bagging. They too were delighted that the weather had been far better than the forecast, and would be heading home with several new Munros and weather-beaten faces. My legs were now becoming beaten, as I hauled myself to my feet and started up the final slope. With each step, it seemed to shrink in height, but I was still glad when I pulled over the final rise and approached the summit of Ben More. It was 2.00 p.m., and the hill was deserted. There was that beautiful, yet slightly scary feeling of a late afternoon in winter, with ice and snow hard-frozen all around, no other living figure in sight, and the knowledge that one was very much alone in a potentially hostile environment.

I walked over from the summit to the north edge of the hill. The hills to the north were turning a steely blue, with ridge after succeeding ridge showing a subtle shift in tone. Very often on a walk I find music bubbling up in my head; today it had been one of the great Scandinavian composers. I must have been listening to his music recently, but it could not have been more appropriate. He was the composer of the far, frozen north, of long white winters, and deep, green forests. For a while I listened, and looked, then turned south for the col again and the long path down the glen to my starting point and home.





## NANGA PARBAT

**By Sandy Allan**

*A summary account by Sandy Allan, who unwittingly became the first Scotsman to climb Nanga Parbat 8126m on 10 July 2009. Sandy, with his friend Rick Allen, climbed the Kinshofer route on the Diamir face. Both are members of the Alpine Club and Scottish Mountaineering Club.*

IT WAS RELATIVELY late in the day for Rick and me to be crawling in the gale force wind to the very summit of Nanga Parbat. Rick rushed his photos but I insisted on taking some better ones, because although we had both already climbed a number of 8000m peaks most of my photos are really poor. As it turns out my Nanga Parbat images are not much better. However, there are some without thumbs or the inside of my down mittens in the picture, and the one of Rick is rather good and I know he likes it. I partly froze my hands in the process and rewarming them made me realise that I was putting my well-being at risk for the sake of a photo. The old ego trap, that lurks for mountaineers, was yawning. It can lead to poor decision making with potentially grave consequences. There are so many people caught up in the stuff of our lives, and all – including me – seem to want a photo... a memento. Perhaps this is nowadays a necessary requirement, to prove to others that one was there, like an attendance certificate from school days.

Nanga Parbat is the ninth highest mountain in the world and stands at 8126m, situated in the Astore district of Gilgit-Baltistan, in northern Pakistan. It's the westernmost eight thousander and in 1895 Albert F Mummery and his two Gurka companions reached 7000m on the Diamir face. Mummery died reconnoitring the Rakhiot face. In was on the 3 July 1953 that Hermann Buhl eventually soloed to the summit on an expedition organized by Karl Herrligkoffer. Up to that point 31 people had died on the mountain so western climbers gave it a macho western name almost as silly as calling anything above 8000m 'the death zone'. However in Urdu, Nanga Parbat translates to 'Naked Mountain'. The Messner brothers summited on the 27 June 1970 and really Nanga Parbat has been associated with achievement, death and destruction, and human-caused intricacies for a long, long time. Nanga Parbat is an outstandingly interesting accumulation of rocks and ice. Geologically the mountain gives its name to the massif of rocks derived from the Indian continent, and is made up from the southern margins of the Asian landmass prior to the India-Asia collision. Nanga Parbat is made up of ancient continental crust, caught up within the younger Himalayan mountain belt.

*Top: Porter on Kinshofer Wall, Diamir Face, Nanga Parbat.*

*Bottom: Rick Allen on the summit of Nanga Parbat.*

*Both photos: Sandy Allan.*

Anyway, we are at 8126m, it's 10 July 2009 around 1500hrs local time. I have semi frozen hands, the weather is awful and Rick and I think we are a tad too late to be in such a high place and it's a long way back to our high Camp 4 which is below us at around 7000m. We had kept to our turn-back time, but had stretched it to the maximum; many of the other Austrians and Italians with us had turned back ages ago, exhausted and disheartened by the continuing false bluffs and Cairngorm weather. I felt an amazing calmness and inner strength particularly so when the final Italian climber, who had kept us company and already had several eight thousanders under his belt, turned back around 7900m. I simply gave a hand sign in my big mittens to Rick not be influenced and to keep going. Rick read the sign and we said our goodbyes to a sad Giuseppe and climbed on upwards. Less than an hour later we were forced to crawl, just the two of us, to the summit in the strong cold wind, sitting and kneeling on the summit as the wind would not let us stand.

Apart for the love of it, one of the reasons we had returned to this mountain was to peer down from the summit and see if there was a climbable way up from the Mazeno Ridge side, which Rick and I had tried before in an Alpine style expedition led by Doug Scott in 1995. However on this occasion due to the wind, neither of us had the nerve to peer over what seemed like the very edge of our horizon! After a short descent from the summit I asked Rick to wait and shelter behind a rocky protrusion and massaged my hands back to semi circulation, something the first aid manuals advise against, but it invariably works if you catch the freeze early enough. We then scooted away downwards, meeting a large Korean team with some Pakistani and Sherpa high altitude porters who were making a concerted effort to get a 'Miss Go Mi Sun' to the summit. 'Hi', I greeted them and said, 'wow you are even later than us, it's wildly windy up there, we could not stand up on the summit. You should be careful.' I added a good luck and take care. They continued up as we took a few steps on and I recognized Wolfgang's face. Wolfgang was part of the friendly large Austrian team. He seemed calm, and when asked, he said, 'I am OK and with the Koreans'. I warned him that while 'you may think you are with the Koreans, the Koreans may not think you are with them!' I was incredibly concerned for him and knew he was far too late and was in reality by himself! 'Take care; you should come back with us!' I told him explicitly, but I knew he had his eyes on the summit and there was no way that he was going to retreat from his lofty place. My thoughts were struggling with the knowledge that these people were actors entering into their own 'perfect storm'. It was obvious that they were not for retreating!

Rick and I moved on down, moving fast, the weather was even worse and snow was beginning to fall. The thought of having to cross over a soft, deep, unstable snowpack on the open slopes below was not

something either of us relished, so we just kept moving down efficiently. We were still feeling strong, and soon caught up with another famous Korean woman who had already summited at least an hour or so before us and was being guided by sherpas who were on oxygen. I recall one Sherpa in front of her and two behind, with tight ropes to their precious employer. Miss Oh Eun Son did not use oxygen and she was claiming that all her ascents were oxygen free. A literal translation if ever there was one, it seems that being hauled around by some of the highest paid Sherpas from Nepal, sucking oxygen from cylinders on their backs does not really count as assistance! Nevertheless, as an enlightened Scottish Highlander I believe that our existence depends on our ability to build a harmonious, respectful global community and Oh Eun Sun was a nice lady so I had kept my thoughts to myself! I had spoken to her a number of days before, and even shared a photo shoot and was getting to know her quite well. On one occasion we chatted for ages as we washed clothes by the stream at base camp. She was pleasant and I liked her. I was impressed that she did not send out one of her minions to do her laundry. She explained to me that she wanted to summit all the eight thousand metre peaks and that it was important in Korea. Miss Go Mi Sun was in competition with her and they were both lining themselves up to be the first women to climb all 14 eight thousanders. Miss Oh Eun Sun felt she was not competing with Miss Go, she simply liked the idea of doing them all first! Miss Go and Miss Oh were quite chatty and we often saw them going on walks together around base camp. They had managers and a film team and their own teams of outstandingly hyperfit, quietly competent Sherpas. It was a bit of a circus, but the Korean teams fixed lots of rope and did a great deal of the work on the mountain from which we all benefited.

It was almost dark as we arrived back at our high camp at 7000m. My Vango tent was there and still standing. Two local porters were there, as originally I was guiding a client, Edward, on the mountain, but he went home after a couple of forays to Camp 1 (4890m). The huge crashing and crushing avalanches that were only metres from our Camp 1, an incessant tummy bug and a pregnant wife back in London had won the day and Ed decided to go home. Immediately with Ali our liaison officer's help, I told Mehrban and Quasim, my local high altitude porters hired specially to assist me fixing the mountain for Ed, that they could consider themselves on holiday with full pay. I explained that Rick and I did not really need them. I also let them know that they could stay and climb the mountain for themselves or hang about and try and get work with the other teams or simply go home. They opted to stay and were good company and often Rick and I would come back from our acclimatisation forays to find our base camp tents re pitched. Mehrban was a wonderful guy who had already climbed K2 and was greatly

respected by all the expeditions' various porters and local staff. They operated independently and seemed to hang out with the porters of the much larger Austrian team. This team was led by Gerfried Goschl from Austria whose family has a long and strong climbing history.

On summit day, Rick and I woke very early. Rick got the stove on and we ate some food. I woke the local boys up as they shared my large Vango tent, but they kept their heads in their sleeping bags making it obvious that they were not as enthusiastic as either Rick or me. I must admit it was a bit windy outside and the prognosis was not optimistic. So, Rick and I after copious cups of tea, set off, thinking we had done well getting away so early but soon realised that some of the juggernaut teams, Miss Oh and Miss Go and some of the Austrians, Italians, Portuguese and others were already well ahead of us. It was freezing, windy with spindrift and deep soft snow so we soon began to appreciate the trail breaking assistance. I had opted just to wear my down suit and was thinking that I should have worn an extra layer next to my skin as I felt quite chilly.

On returning from the summit I fully expected the local chaps to have descended that day but they were there when Rick and I turned up and it was really nice of them to offer us water to drink. It tasted of sweaty sock or something even worse so I vomited that first mouthful and then discreetly dislodged the large pot and began melting fresh snow from scratch. They were cool guys, good company and it was ace to have them around. I would say that although the Pakistan Mountaineering agencies tell us that their high altitude porters are good, they are still not equal to the Nepalese Sherpas.

After our summit success as I slept at high camp, there was an amazing hullabaloo going on in the darkness. From the sound of it, people were obviously trying to organise something. It transpired that the Koreans we met going up as we came down from the summit were now stuck up on the mountain between high camp and the summit! This news was no surprise to us but it was a bit of bad luck! But anyway being reasonable men, rather than informing them that it served them right we sent out a rescue party. Mehrban got up in what seemed like the middle of the night in freezing cold temperatures and with local staff from various expeditions who had been looking after the high camp all day, joined forces and went to help. It was truly a sterling effort, carrying freshly melted snow water, spare food and clothing. They did their stuff and by headtorch light, extended the Koreans lives and helped break trail for the Korean team back to Camp 4. Of course being out overnight, with limited food and water in terrible weather is not good for the human condition, add to that the effects of extreme high altitude and well, the reader can work out that the tale does not end here!

The following morning it was a quiet Camp 4. Rick and I got up early

thinking that all was as good as could reasonably be expected and that all the climbers who tried the summit yesterday were back at high camp, in their tents warming up, rehydrating and resting. We struck camp and headed down. Most people were still in their sleeping bags but we had our priorities and have been at altitude long enough to know that it's best to hang out where there are good supplies of fresh water, thicker air and hearty meals! Rick also needed to get back to work and my daughter Hannah was graduating in Edinburgh so we both had good reasons to get back home.

So we went down, which was kind of complex as while Rick and I were not too concerned about the fixed rope thing they are actually really handy when descending. But as the weather window for the summit attempt came faster than all the commercial groups had planned for, they had to pull the lower fixed ropes to fix higher parts of the mountain for the aforementioned Korean climbers and entourage! This resulted in some quite exposed down climbing. But we were OK and being reasonably early the snow was in good condition and we made good progress. We struck my tent at Camp 3 (6500m) and then went on to Camp 2 (6000m) where we struck our tents and tidied up. Rick hung out at Camp 2 a while but I decided just to get off the hill as soon as possible so declined the offer of drinks of tea from some high altitude porters, shouldered my huge sac I set off abseiling down the Kinshofer wall and on to Camp 1. I should mention that the Kinshofer wall is an impressive bit of climbing, good Scottish grade IV at 5800m! At Camp 1, I struck the old Salewa tent that Rick and I bought second-hand in Kathmandu for our new direct route on Pumori south face which we climbed in 1986. It was sad seeing the faded flysheet in tatters although it made me realize that even with the occasional imperfection my own skin was holding out quite well under the circumstances. I tidied the camp up as best as I could, melting snow and making a quick brew in the process. Taking as much of the equipment and rubbish as I could by tying it to the outside of my Berghaus expedition sac, I left the rest for Rick. I then headed back to base camp arriving exhausted but happy.

Back at base camp, we were greeted like Royals as we did not realize that most people had turned back and did not make the summit. But anyway, we had a few brews and some food, then went instantly comatose in our respective tents. Next morning we were updated on all the news. Miss Go Mi Sun had died as she was exhausted, and fell off on the descent somewhere above Camp 2 where a section of the fixed ropes had been removed for use higher up the mountain. The Austrian, Wolfgang Kolbringer who we met going up to the summit had also disappeared presumed dead. There was a dreadful list of sad tales, all very human and unfortunately avoidable. Gerfried and some of his team turned up having climbed a new line to Camp 4 and then summited the

next day really looking for Wolfgang but all they found was a hat in the rocks and they presumed he had been blown off the summit.

Sadness hung over our base camp. The Korean budget was sufficient to charter two helicopters to come and search for Miss Go. This all added to the pandemonium. Nevertheless, there were people milling about wearing the finest designer mountaineering clothing comprehensively adorned with sponsors logos taking photos, rushing to be the first with bad but potential money making news. It reminded me of crows at lambing time, hanging about, targeting and eventually moving closer to pick eyes from weak lambs. It amazed and disgusted me all at the same time. They were really just ordinary people who were wanting to climb a mountain and somehow in the process of modernity were getting tangled up in the futile grabbing of potential associated fame, sacrificing empathy by being the first to get news out to some commercial web site.

It made me sad and I was glad to hang out in my tent. The time alone let me reflect on this eight thousand metre peak bagging scene. It is so very different from the real Himalayan new routing expedition climbing scene which is more familiar to me. I saw many mountaineering people camped in the same remote but beautiful and sheltered base camp as me, letting their sense of responsibility erode. Have these mountaineers set on ticking eight thousanders by the normal route, fixing rope every step of the way, really lost the habit of inwardness and open hearted listening? Willing – or so it seemed to me – to sell their soul for a quick lucrative tit bit.

Thinking back, we had had the summit to ourselves, and it was an amazing summit truly worked for. It was ace!

On our arrival in Pakistan at the start of this expedition, we spent one night in Islamabad and then drove along the Karakorum highway. We met amazingly friendly locals and travellers from distant lands. Where we crossed into the Swat Valley policemen and soldiers rode shotgun on our trucks and we travelled in convoy with army protection. We turned up in a village looking for beds in the middle of the night and the hospitality shown to us was second to none. On our walk out from base camp Rick, myself, Mehrban and Qasim met some holy men and invited them to share our hastily made brew and remaining biscuits. We sat together on boulders among green grass by the edge of a small stream. They were delighted to establish that we were Scottish as indeed we were! Once our biscuits were finished they shared their snack food with us as we drank the remaining tea. I talked about Pakistan: my past ascent of Muztagh Tower and journeys with friends on the endless Baltoro; climbing in this wonderful country and this awesome range of mountains, magnificent avalanches, hanging glaciers with tumbling seracs, jungles of inspiring ice encrusted rock obelisks, cathedrals and spires; turbulent glacier melt rivers, creaky bridges, ageing hand painted jeeps with

treadless, bulging tyres. Wonderful Pakistan with a vast range of characters, oily lentils, onion bhajis, goats and their herders, stubborn mules, flies, apricot trees, irrigation channels and dusty chickens, well-intentioned people who do not necessarily believe that 'west is best' but understand that we are all simply different.

The conversation was amiable and interesting. It became obvious that these spiritually rich men were also well heeled and well travelled. The leader of the Holy men looked into my eyes and wonderingly asked why I wanted to go to the summit of Nanga Parbat? I replied, 'To get closer of course!' He nodded and smiled.

## SULEIMAN'S PILAF

By Iain Smart

WE ARRIVED at the hut in a freezing dusk, the surrounding hills dark and dingy in the gloaming. When we emerged in the morning all things were bright and beautiful. Snow had fallen leaving behind a white, white world under a clear blue sky. Behind the beauty, as is often the case, there was danger. Clouds of suffocating powder swept down the gullies billowing into the corries. Only fools would rush out to climb on a day like this. Since this was in fact the case we optimised our chances by choosing the safest route. We could see the wind blowing streamers of silver dust from the crests of the ridges. These would at least be clear of snow and free from avalanche. In fact things weren't as bad as they looked; the snow was dry and easily swept from the holds. We managed the *Tower Ridge* without incident; the Eastern Traverse was practically snow free. Late in the afternoon we arrived on the plateau and plodded to the summit with our heads in sunshine and our feet invisible in knee-high spindrift. At the summit the wind dropped and life became easier. We dallied as long as we could to enjoy the spectacular winter sunset of blue and gold behind the several horizons of snowy mountain tops and deep glens filling up with darkness.

Then we paid the price. In the gathering dusk we descended into Coire Leis where the powder had accumulated in deep drifts. A mile of unconsolidated fluff lay between us and the hut. As card-carrying Senior Citizens, we had to take our time whether we wanted to or not. In the prevailing conditions this was no hardship. There was no wind. We were warmly clad and had husbanded our strength. The photomultiplying effect of the snow on the starlight allowed us to progress without using our headtorches. So every few hundred yards we had a rest and relaxed comfortably in the soft drifts, enjoying the austere beauty of the ghostly walls of the glen and the roof of bright stars. In our earlier days when we were afflicted with galloping machismo our priority would have been to move as quickly as possible and we would have missed out on these periods of contemplation under the wonder of a starry heaven.

On occasions like this my friend Carlos tends to have bouts of introspection. One of them overcame him as we lay on our backs in a comfortable snowdrift looking at the immense universe above us, a black sky full of fixed stars that twinkled and wandering planets that gave a steady light and every now and then a shooting star that, for the brief period that it advertised its presence, did both.

Carlos had only recently discovered science and was full of wonder at the new world that had opened up to him. He opined, 'All that starlight is

out of date. All the information we are receiving from that weighty matter out there happened light years ago. We are living in the past.'

Most of us know this but to Carlos, product of several conventional religions based on revealed truth, it was a novel thought.

A profound silence followed.

'Yes, oh sage, how true', I said to get him started again.

'The light we are receiving now was released long ago', he continued. 'It is arriving with obsolete information about events that happened in the distant past. Some of it must have started out before there was life on earth.'

'And we who now behold these present days

Have eyes to wonder, but lack tongues to praise', I suggested.

'That may be so but there is nothing we can do about it, except enjoy the fact that we are stumbling around in an antique shop full of past history.'

When Carlos starts off on one of these soliloquies he makes the cliché sound as original as they must have been when newly minted. I knew from experience that we were now going to get a quotation from the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, the philosopher whose writings he had encountered during his years in Persia. He had learned enough of the Farsi language during his time in Iran to have read and understood the idiom of the original and, better still, actually to have heard the quatrains recited by a native speaker; so he knew both the poem and its spoken music. He was of the opinion that Fitzgerald's English translation was separately inspired and that the poem had actually gained in translation, if such a thing is possible. The main loss was not in meaning but in the beauty of the script in which it is written; Latin letters were somehow too stark and angular compared to the grace of the flowing Farsi script. He found Omar's civilised fatalism very congenial and he frequently returned to it in spite of his familiarity with so many prestigious philosophical systems and divinely inspired religions

So out it came, a stanza based on the thoughts of a long-dead Persian philosopher and poet translated into a different language and recited by an old man lying on his back in a snow drift in a remote highland glen gazing up at Orion and the Pleiades.

And that inverted bowl we call the sky  
Whereunder crawling cooped we live and die  
Lift not your hands to it for help,  
For it rolls impotently on as you and I.

He obviously felt much better after that and struggled out of the comfortable armchair he had created in the soft snow. Regaining his feet he remarked that that was one of the most comfortable bits of armchair philosophy he had enjoyed in a long time.

And so we journeyed slowly on leaving a gently winding trench in the snow behind us. Our tracks were punctuated by the imprints of two chaises longues where we had reclined comfortably in the soft powder and contemplated the inverted bowl whereunder crawling cooped we live and die. At every stop Carlos had come out with a philosophic gem from his old pal Omar either in the Persian original or Fitzgerald's translation. I learned that a thousand years ago this man was not only a poet but an astronomer of great mathematical competence. He had calculated the length of the solar year correct to six decimal places and had demonstrated convincingly that it was the earth that rotated and not the stars. Naturally he got into trouble with theologians who knew from their books that this was not the case. He had the good sense to keep a low profile. Less controversially he wrote a treatise on algebra and conceived a general theory of cubic equations. This was safe territory as it did not threaten the theologians who gained their knowledge from looking at their reflections in the mirror of revealed truth..

After a happy couple of hours we arrived at the hut leaving the world of hard monochrome beauty lit by dim archaic starlight to enter the bubble of gold on the other side of the hut door. In the warmth of this hallowed refuge we relaxed in our shirt sleeves before a cheerful fire, basking in the fossil sunlight released from the bottled gas kindly provided by a benevolent hut-custodian.

Carlos that night in honour of Omar made something he called Suleiman's Pilaf, a rice-based dish of many ingredients. The hut filled with the rich aromas of spices from distant tropic lands – cardamom, cinnamon, coriander and fragrant cloves. Inside the air was redolent of warm climes and lush vegetation while the dark world outside, in all probability, went on being austere beautiful even if no one was looking at it. We went outside from time to time just to check that this was so; we never actually caught it out doing anything else, but it is as well to make sure.

And of course to the memory of Old Khayyam, polymath and poet we dedicated a glass of wine, red wine, 'that subtle alchemist that in a trice life's leaden metal into gold transmutes'. Carlos, mindful of the last quatrain turned down an empty glass as a gesture of fellowship with the absent Omar:

And when thyself with shining foot shall pass  
 Among the guests star-scattered on the grass  
 And in thy joyous errand reach the spot  
 Where I made one – turn down an empty glass!

It all goes to show that in order to have someone drinking to your memory and enjoying your company a thousand years after your death you have to write poetry that resonates in the civilised mind.

## THE PASS

By Graham E. Little

THERE IS CLARITY to high mountain air that both enhances and confuses vision. Every ripple of the landscape enjoys keener definition yet perspective is strangely distorted, making height and distance difficult to gauge. Gazing along the upper reaches of the Dharlang Nala, the turning of the valley seems so near and yet so distant. It could be a few hours or days away. Somewhere beyond the turning lies the Kanthang Glacier, beyond that the Poat La, beyond that Padum in Zaskar. We have climbed our mountain, the expedition is over, yet I feel that the journey has only just begun. We bid farewell to our friends and porters who will retrace the route from base camp back to Kishtwar: they head west, we head east.

She would have enjoyed this walk.

We are in a valley of flowers, buttressed by great mountain walls, glacial waters dancing through. It is empty but for a few shepherds, at peace in the high pastures, faces deep tanned, shoulders wrapped in rough cloth the colour of dry grass. There is a harmony about this place that helps me to think clearly. Mountains allow great clarity of thought, especially when we are alone in them, yet as with the landscape this clarity holds its own distortions. Mountain thoughts don't always provide solutions to lowland problems.

We cross the stick bridge over the churning Muni Nala river. Our gaze is drawn to the summit of our peak, etched into a cloudless sky, until the massive rock buttresses of Majut cut it from vision. I ponder the value and relevance of a first ascent. The concept of conquest, that was once so fashionable, now seems quite alien. Mountaineering is not about winning, losing or defeating but about adventure, discovery and understanding. If we conquer anything in the process it is our own inhibitions, our own insecurities; but even these, I suspect, are suppressed not resolved: we become 'Warriors' for the day.

Wide flats give springy walking on a moss and flower carpet, the great expanse of the valley encouraging broad strides. The outflow from the next side valley is wide, but after a cold night has little nourishment. We start to boulder-hop across. The rock is polished and covered with treacherous glacial silt. On the last jump, I slip, crack my shin and nearly go under in the deepest channel.

We move at our own pace, silent in our own thoughts; apart yet travelling together. Hours slip by.

The next side stream, swelled by the melt of the morning, is a tumbling torrent with no tempting stepping-stones. Wading is not an option. The braided channels of the main river offer more hope. We adopt the

technique much used by the local shepherds: linking arms and doing a sort of side shuffle. Other than the numbing effects of the icy water we ford several channels without incident, move beyond the outflow of the troublesome side-stream and attempt to re-cross the main river to regain its north bank. There is a point of stability in fast flowing water that equates to instability. We reach it. The freezing waters surge around us, taunting in a seriously playful way. We back off and continue along the south bank, clambering over mounds of collapsing moraine. After several hours of this purgatory, an ancient snow-bridge allows us to cross with ease. Where the turbulent silt-heavy waters plunge under the ice an inverted rainbow arcs through the spray.

By late afternoon we reach a huge lone boulder with adjacent fresh water. It offers an ideal bivouac and we gladly take it. We are now on the edge of the Kanthang Glacier but a deep topping of dirty moraine completely obscures the ice. The flanking peaks are bathed in the evening light; we shiver in the shade. Travelling light in remote country gives a continuous sense of satisfaction other than at meal times. We eat a frugal dinner and then slide into our sleeping bags. It is a restless night: my body is tired but my mind is hyperactive.

We climb the lateral moraine at dawn onto a verdant bench running parallel to the glacier. A grassy hollow holding the charred remains of a juniper fire gives encouragement; a cairn on a nearby boulder confirms the way. To our amazement, we are following a well-defined path but it soon fades. The mountain wall to the east looks vast and impregnable. It is difficult to believe that there is a crossing, although our small-scale map depicts one. Himalayan mapping has a certain charm, comprising as it does, equal parts of cartographic skill, artistic interpretation and pure imagination.

I pull ahead and find myself in a strange green valley, caught between the sterility of the glacier and the bare mountain slopes above. The sun is getting higher and burns down upon my bare shoulders. I sit waiting on the soft grass.

She is with me again, the firm, full curve of her body, dark hair – tinting to copper in the sunlight – falling softly around her smiling face as she lowers onto me. We are abandoned to each other. A coach stops on the road nearby but we are oblivious. Her lips taste of salt – they are delicious.

A shadow falls above me. We walk together along a level rib of old moraine. Does he know that I'm troubled? We talk only of inconsequential things. The Kanthang Glacier is now bare ice littered with rock fragments of every conceivable shape and size. We convince ourselves that small rocks perched on top of larger ones are way-markers and we start to cross the glacier. A dark, soaring fang to the south, dusted with fresh snow, enjoys our admiration – another wonderful unclimbed peak in a

land of unclimbed peaks. Sometimes it is not necessary to climb mountains, just to travel through them is enough. We stop for a mid-day brew, carefully decanting the precious hot liquid from a pan lined with glacial grit.

We walk on bare ice, its surface honeycombed – our boots scrunching through into the melt below. Near the east flank, a thousand melt-water channels link to gouge a deep blue gutter into the ice. Fast cold water carves the ice, frozen water carves the rock, great plates of rock shift to carve the world, a mountain world so young and yet so old. I look back; he is a small moving speck of colour in this immense monochrome frame – so stark, so powerful and yet so magnificent: mile after mile of grey ice flowing as a wide river, inexorably gouging yet forever melting. I sit on a block of freshly shattered gneiss searching for a chink in the mountain wall above. I convince myself that two nipples on a high spur dividing hanging glaciers are cairns. He is sceptical but agrees to climb onto the tottering lateral moraine to get a closer view. In a sandy defile, between two pressure ridges, I find several large pats of yak dung. It is an exciting moment. He tries hard to share my enthusiasm.

We follow the yak dung trail, reasoning that where yaks can go, we can follow. We soon find ourselves in a stony basin at the toe of a snowfield. At the head of the basin three monstrous pinnacles stab the sagging clouds. The air is getting very cold. We have run out of yak dung and energy so prospect for a bivouac site. A low oblong block is the best we can do in this icy wilderness. Stone slabs serve as a mattress and Gore-Tex shells as our protection against the gathering storm. Hailstones rattle down and drum against our Gore-Tex cocoons. I lie sandwiched between the lee of the block and my companion. I worry about finding the Poat La yet know that crossings are rarely easy, are rarely made without sacrifice. I drift into an uneasy sleep, the bare rock pressing hard against my back.

I love her yet know he needs her. I try to think how I would feel if the tables were turned.

The morning is bitterly cold, the sky pewter-grey, shot through with streaks of sunrise. Fingers are numb, the stove misbehaves – I curse. He laughs from the warmth of his sleeping bag.

I am now convinced that the two nipples are cairns and I spot another cairn only a few hundred metres above us. A cache of bleached skulls is the final proof, marking the start of a zigzagging path over a wide stony ridge into a bigger snow basin to the north. Yak dung, warmed by the sun, has melted into the snow producing a well defined way. Passing a mummified yak, we gain an upper snow basin. We are higher than the summit of Mont Blanc yet still have a long way to go. The back wall of the upper basin is ringed by shattered, rusty crags. A level section of the skyline is alive with cairns but the ground below looks deadly. Icicles

tinkle down from the crags above. A tenuous traverse over rotten snow and then on and up I go over piles of tilted tiles, lungs pumping, legs aching.

The sky comes to meet me. Suddenly I'm there at 5490m on the Poat La, balanced between Kishtwar and Zanskar. Many cairns guard this pass, marching up the flanking ridges. Ragged prayer flags flap and snap; torn clouds drift and shift in the keen clean wind. I breathe deeply.

Her perfume is all around me. Rain is streaking down the car windows and tears are flowing down her cheeks. We exchange a last touch, a last kiss.

I sit alone, gazing out across the lonely jumble of rock and ice, feeling completely lost. He arrives. We linger, chocolate eating, camera snapping and just savouring being on the Poat La.

We plough down a soggy snow slope. Curving before us is an anonymous glacier guided by ice glazed peaks. There is a magical vastness to it all, an immense openness. We are privileged to be lost amongst it all for this short time. Dodging crevasses, I feel naked without my climbing gear yet relish the freedom this allows. I never want this journey to end. Looking back, he is a toy-like figure on a wide expanse of whiteness. Why am I rushing? Perhaps the pleasure of being together is the better for being apart. An endless medial moraine ridge leads us down and down, on and on.

We rest in a field of giant stone mushrooms, great blocks poised upon columns of ice. I find one battered grass sandal. A lone purple flower grows in a mound of spoil. The beauty of this mountain world is a powerful drug. This moment seems the totality of all things.

The colour suits her, complementing her pale skin and dark hair. I am holding her; she is so warm, so sensual.

The toe of the glacier is a vast slag-heap. An unstable descent leads us down onto the wide flats below. A massive undercut monolith makes a perfect bivouac and has obviously been used before. Across the valley brown, cream and ochre banded rock peaks thrust snow-less into a cloudless sky. An enormous shield of rock has exfoliated leaving a pale jagged scar. This is Zanskar. We have crossed from a Muslim into a Buddhist land. The mountains are different yet they are the same. Mountains have no religion although they are magnificent, exacting Gods.

Rock is above and below me, the light begins to fade. I come close to sleep. Can it be wrong to follow one's heart, to do what every fibre of mind and body desires, even when it causes great pain? Lovers, it seems, know only the morality of union.

We are back at that Highland cairn, great glens sweeping away, the sky blushing in the fading light. A light breeze caresses the surface of the lochan far below, sharing our intimacy.

A long hike down the valley brings us to a stony plane. Strange black burnt boulders litter the place; the mountain walls above are crumbling embers. A thin path scribes a low ridge to the north. We ascend with dry throats, our boots stirring the dusty trail. A stunning patchwork of green across the barren valley stops us in our tracks: polygons of jade and emerald in an ash-grey mountain desert. Where there is water there is vegetation. There is little water.

A screeching whistle from the hillside above startles us. It has no visible source. There is another, then another. The air is alive with sound. And then we see them, large ginger-furred marmots the size of badgers. They watch us from their mounds of earth-spoil, then abruptly, with a piercing whistle, duck into their under-rock burrows.

Ahead, a great wart of purple rock ruptures the hillside. As we get nearer, it is evident that we have reached the old monastery of Bardan, the ruins of the gompha straggling down the tor, an assortment of chortens and other crumbling structures, clustered about its base. Elaborate relief designs on the walls of the chortens are flaking, sections of stonework are collapsing – it is the way of all things. Perched on every ledge, covering every rock outcrop, are prayer stones, river-smoothed, carried up from the gorge far below to be incised with the mantra OM MANI PADME HUM. There are thousands of stones, mostly slate-grey but some are light or dark rust. A few of the larger ones display a more complex wheel-like configuration. They are all an act of devotion, a supplication, spoken in stone, long after the lamas have gone; to be silenced in a millennium or so by the forces of erosion. This place exudes a powerful tranquillity.

He wanders off to inspect some ruins hard under the rock overhangs. I sit on a rib of splintered rock, holding an oval prayer stone, my fingers tracing its inscription, understanding the exquisite simplicity of its calling. There is not a breath of wind. The sun burns down. I close my eyes. The lamas had no need for a ‘soul mate’, their belief was their companion; the joy of intimacy with a women exchanged for the security and ritual of monastic life, the search for enlightenment.

If it is right that we should be together then it will be. If not, then I am alone.

We climb to the top of the gompha, as climbers must. It involves some difficult moves on suspect rock. On the summit, the mud-brick wall is impaled with a long sun-bleached stick. Far below, on a bluff above the brown silt laden waters of the Zanskar River, stands another monastery, tiny figures in burgundy robes confirming its active use. We scree-slide down the valley flank, for a thousand feet or more, to the reach the new monastery. Its high walls are dirty-white, the hillside behind a wash of pastel colours.

The road from Padum is nearly blasted through. French tourists,

dressed in trendy mountain clothes, mill around. Opportunistic Zanskari children hard-sell their services. After the dry lands above, we appreciate the water pipe and tree shade but little else. We have reached the cutting edge of tourism where we corrupt, impose our culture on others and succeed, in due course, in debasing all that is of real value – it seems so horribly inevitable.

We head down the road, fresh hardcore clinking under our boots. The Zanskar River doglegs around a big plug of hard rock. On the far bank an oasis of greenery and settlement flourishes below the high waterfall of a side-stream. On we tramp, the dry wind blowing dust into our eyes, our feet blistering. The pass seems a lifetime away. For a short section the route reverts to the old track. We walk on a softer surface, long tombs and a million prayer stones flanking the path. The mantra chants from every stone: OM MANI PADME HUM.

We arrive in Padum: mud-brick houses built between boulders, colourful children playing in the dust, piles of dung stacked for winter fuel, heat shimmer-dancing on the plain beyond – a destination gained only to discover that destinations are an illusion; they are but the beginning of another journey. There is another pass still to cross.

1989 (minor editing 2009)





## ROUTE 2 DIRECT, CÀRN DEARG 5 FEBRUARY 1978

By Ian Sykes

GORDON SMITH was staying out at my cottage, Callop, in Glenfinnan. He was recuperating after one of his famous hitch hiking adventures having left ChamoniX with a strapped up ankle, two huge rucksacks full of gear and without a penny to his name. He'd sneaked on to the ferry at Calais hiding among a bus party and fed off the leftovers in the ship's café, arriving home to Callop thin as a rake and as cheerful as ever.

That summer, 1977, Suds (Ian Sutherland) and I had climbed *Route 2* on Càrn Dearg Buttress, Ben Nevis, and scouted it out with a view to a winter ascent and what a winter it was turning out to be. We had climbed *Comb Gully* on 1 November in perfect conditions and it had remained snowy and cold since then.

By February Ben Nevis was literally buried in snow and Càrn Dearg Buttress was plastered. Even the steep slabs of *The Bullroar* were coated in ice. It was bitterly cold without a cloud in the sky, if we were ever going to venture onto the buttress this was it! Gordon and I walked up to the CIC hut on one of those days that happen in Scotland on a regular basis once every five years.

The hut was crowded with climbers and the mountain was under siege. We walloped up to the foot of the buttress in deep snow amazed at the amount of ice clinging to the rock.

Gordon led off at the lowest point of the cliff up a steep corner which is the summer start of *The Shadow*. The Terrordactyls were great on this kind of ground hooking easily into frozen turf and cracks, and we were soon perched on a steep slab below a series of overlaps. I managed to traverse right and worked into a slabby groove. At one point I tried to cross into the middle of the face but found it very thin. This place, I think, is the superb line of *French Connection*, climbed seventeen years later by Damilano and Lewale in 1995.

A couple of pitches further up found us level with the top of *The Curtain* and the summer's recce really paid off as I was able to find the unlikely traverse line of *Route 2* to the Meadow. In summer this is a wet mossy area at the start of the main traverse of *Route 2*, now it was a cascade of glorious green ice and I managed to place two really good screws, the first decent belay so far.

Shouts of encouragement came from below from Alan Kimber, a local guide, and his client who asked how we were getting on and took photographs which he kindly gave us later. We were getting very anxious about daylight as it had taken longer to climb the lower half of the buttress than we had anticipated.

*Top Left: Càrn Dearg Buttress, February 2010. Photo: Simon Richardson.*

*Top Right: Gordon Smith on Route 2, Càrn Dearg Buttress, Ben Nevis, 1978. Photo: Ian Sykes.*

*Bottom: Gordon Smith high up on Route 2, 1978. Photo: Ian Sykes.*

Gordon joined me on my frozen perch on the Meadow. He's very short sighted using bottle thick spectacles, which give him an owl like appearance, and some advantage over me as he can only see half a rope's length ahead and seems totally unaware of the atrocious drop below. None the less, neither of us liked the look of the traverse. He set off nervously leaving the safety of the ice and began clearing snow off the slab in a most precarious situation as he moved out rightwards across the heart of the buttress.

'There's a peg here, Spike. Someone's been here before us,' he said in consternation!

We just couldn't believe it. We were over halfway up the buttress and until now there had been no sign of climbers and we could not imagine how they had got there, but sure enough there were clear tracks of somebody having crossed before us. It was too steep a place to lose concentration but very baffling and somewhat disappointing.

The climbing was very serious here; powder snow on steep glazed slabs with not much for the crampon points or the Terrordactyls to hook into. Gordon moved very slowly and I prayed for him to get a runner of some kind, but there was nothing doing. After a hundred feet or so of very airy sidestepping he finely reached a spot below the little scoop of *Centurion*. I was certain that there was a belay here from my summer recce and kept bellowing encouragement as he scraped about. He finally got a lousy MOAC in a small depression.

'It's all there is, don't come off for goodness sake!'

A daft thing to say, I didn't think I had an option! The thought of leaving my safe perch was unnerving, Gordon had clipped the peg of our unknown predecessors and then the rope ran out at right-angles across the face in a long unprotected loop. I teetered across the slab in a gibbering state which grew worse when I reached him and saw the useless nut he was pretending to use as a belay.

Fortunately the worst was over and I continued on better holds and finally reached the hollow where *Sassenach* and *The Bat* converge. This was a real safe haven, high on this vertical cliff with a glorious view north, the Highlands covered in snow and tiny ant-like figures on *North-East Buttress* and a number of parties finishing up *Tower Ridge*. The CIC Hut almost a thousand feet below, a meeting place of descending climbers.

It should have got easier from here but a steep rock pitch on the crest of the buttress proved harder than expected. We were racing against the falling darkness. Gordon led off round a huge overhanging block and vanished from sight and I stood stamping my feet and willing him to get a move on. There was a lot of scraping, scratching and muttering and then the rope started to move and at last the angle eased off. Gordon topped out and I followed by torchlight onto the crest of the ridge. We

descended *Ledge Route*, following the steps of our unknown predecessors.

Back at the CIC hut we learned that Mike Geddes and Alan Rouse had reached the traverse pitch of *Route 2* three days earlier by taking a tension traverse from *Route 1* onto the ice bulge of The Meadow. This must have been a very scary thing to do and explained how the tracks appeared as if by magic.

So, 30 years later the Terrordactyls are relics hanging on bar room walls; it all seems a long time ago. Nowadays, ice tools have banana picks and bent shafts and every aspiring tiger (a term from the past) has soloed *The Curtain* with one arm tied behind his back. Càrn Dearg Buttress is rarely in winter condition so this classic climb gets few ascents. Let us pray for global cooling.

## HODGE'S JOURNALS & CORBETT'S CRITERION

By Jim Barton

SOON AFTER discovering fellwalking in the mid-1960s I also began to explore the literature of mountains and the outdoors. I can remember as an undergraduate leafing through books and guides in a Cambridge bookshop, and buying a sale copy of Malcolm Slessor's *The Andes are Prickly* for 7/6d (reduced from 42/-). Another purchase from those days, Joe Brown's *The Hard Years* published in 1967, I saw recently priced at £95 in a secondhand book list. Although it's satisfying to see appreciating monetary value, the real benefit of a book collection comes through reading the words of a variety of authors, some world famous, some obscure, and there's also the thrill of the chase in tracking down a wanted volume, particularly at a price you can afford.

The best example of this takes up six feet of my shelf space: a complete set of SMCJs. I came by them through a visit in 1977 to a secondhand bookshop in Beckermert, Cumbria, run by the wonderfully-named Michael Moon. He had a good few mountaineering titles, and I mentioned that I was on the lookout for SMCJs. Having moved to Edinburgh three years before, I was in the thick of discovering the Scottish hills. In December 1977 a letter arrived from Beckermert offering a complete run of Journals from Vol. 1 (1890) to Vol. 28 (1965). They had belonged to Edmund W. Hodge of Elterwater Hall. The letter continued: 'The run is in remarkably fine condition and it is highly unlikely that a run of this length and quality could be put together today. The price is £200.' I had two weeks to decide on purchase before they would be offered to the next person on the list. Whoever that was didn't get the chance, for next weekend I drove to Cumbria and returned with two full cardboard boxes on the back seat.

Up to Vol. 23 the Journals were bound, with the rest in separate parts. Four numbers were missing from my previously acquired Journals, but after advertising in *Climber & Rambler* I was able to complete the run to 1977, and had Vols. 24 to 30 bound by K. Page & Co. Edinburgh. I continue to take the Journal by standing order to keep the run up to date.

The history of the Journals themselves is interesting in its own right. The first 11 volumes are bound in half leather; a note in the endpapers of Vol. 11 penned by E.W. Hodge, dated July 1939, indicates that these belonged originally to James Rose of Aberdeen. Rose was an SMC member, and one of Sgoran Dubh's buttress climbs is named after him [*SMCJ* 1904, Vol. 8, 118–20 and 152–6]. In 1918, G.B. Green's survey 'Old Volumes of the Journal' [*SMCJ* 1918, Vol. 15, 24–9] noted that 'As is well known, the first three volumes are now so rare that they may almost be said to be worth their weight in gold.'

Hodge was elected to the SMC in 1936. He was an active mountaineer in the all-round sense, and became the 11th Munroist in 1947. His notes and articles published in the Journal span the period 1937 to 1956. His first piece was titled 'Under the Western Horizon' [*SMCJ* 1937, Vol. 21, 255–61], about an 8-day sea-mountaineering trip with six companions in a 34ft motor cruiser. They reached Village Bay at St Kilda, climbed Conachair and 'at the request of the inhabitants set out "G. VI. R" in stones on its summit, to celebrate the Coronation.' The sea-mountaineering theme continued in other articles: 'The Furthest Hebrides' [*SMCJ* 1940, Vol. 22, 184–9], 'We Sail Again' [*SMCJ* 1955, Vol. 25, 342–7]. These and other pieces have been generally annotated and corrected by Hodge in neat dark blue ink or pencil. Although Hodge comes over as a stickler for accuracy, he does have a sense of humour, as his 1949 piece 'Highland Patrol' shows [*SMCJ* 1949, Vol. 24, 105–10], poking fun at the then new concepts of National Parks, and regimentation and commercialisation of the hills. He edited the 1953 edition of the Northern Highlands Guide, and clearly used the Journals to assist him in updating the previous edition.

The most interesting item is the posthumous publication of Corbett's Tables in April 1952 [*SMCJ* 1952, Vol. 25, 45–52]. John Dow wrote a short foreword which stated that the Tables were 'incomplete'. Hodge's marginal comment to this is 'No'. There are several marginal notes against Corbett's list: Carn na Laraiche Maoile and Carn na Saobhaidhe in the Monadh Liath, both 2658ft, as 'alternatives'; Geal Charn and Meall Coire nan Saobhaidh 'good example'; Beinn an Tuim and Sgurr nan Utha 'crit. example'; Buidhe Bheinn 'just 500'. The following year's Journal contains a short note by John Dow [*SMCJ* 1953, Vol. 25, 136–7] quoting Hodge's comments, of which the main point is 'What I find, on going through the List with the 1-inch maps, is that no point is admitted unless there is a re-ascent of 500ft to it; and this is rigidly adhered to, no account being taken of distance, and the List therefore contains no subsidiary "tops".' Dow concludes: 'A list of summits and "tops" on Munro lines for mountains between 2,500 and 3,000 feet would be a much larger and more troublesome compilation, and Hodge is probably not alone in feeling that such a list would hardly serve any useful purpose.'

So Hodge's detective work brought to light the '500 foot drop' criterion that Corbett applied but never stated explicitly, and the original material for this is on my shelves. I only came across this a few years ago, and now it comes to mind each time I tackle that next new Corbett.

Who knows what future changes will occur in the SMCJ: will the paper copies eventually become obsolete, to be replaced by an electronic bookshelf? I hope not. It's been a privilege to own these volumes, as real artefacts going back more than a century. Whatever the medium then, it will take more than £200 to secure this set next time it's on the market.

## THE SEPARATION OF MOUNTAINS REVISITED

By Robin N Campbell

IT HAS BECOME fashionable now to classify mountains purely in terms of summit height and net drop.<sup>1</sup> In Scotland, J. Rooke Corbett initiated this approach, following a pattern established in England and Wales. Lately, there has been a major effort, by Alan Dawson and others, to extend this simple *drop-based* method of classification to all mountains throughout Britain, of all heights down to 500ft. However, Corbett aside, it has not been our way. Hugh Munro, Percy Donald, William Docharty and even Fiona Graham all took account not just of drop but of distance as well when classifying mountains – a *separation-based* method. An additional difference between the drop-based method and our own has been that Munro, Donald, Docharty and Graham all reserved some room for the judgment of the list or table maker to intervene regarding matters other than summit height. Since the Club continues to publish Munro's and Donald's Tables, rather than drop-based versions of these, some justification of the separation-based approach is perhaps needed. The purpose of the present article is to review explicit methods of calculating separation, and to offer support to a particular method, appropriate for use with present-day maps.

Frank Bonsall<sup>2</sup> proposed a simple formula for capturing the separation of a mountain from other mountains. This was the Naismith Time to reach *the nearest higher ground* along the connecting ridge<sup>3</sup>, where Naismith Time is calculated from *distance* [from summit to nearest higher ground] and net *drop*, by the application of Naismith's Rule – that is, one hour for every three miles of the distance, and half an hour per 1000ft for the re-ascent, or – more conveniently – 20 minutes per mile of distance and three minutes per 100ft of ascent. He also proposed that a suitable amount of separation for a mountain to qualify as a *separate mountain* in the manner of Munro's Tables would be 30 minutes. So Bonsall's formula for identifying mountains (as opposed to tops) is:

$$20 \times \text{distance (in miles)} + 3 \times \text{drop (in 100-foot units)} > 30$$

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<sup>1</sup> Net drop is the height difference between the summit and the lowest col linking a mountain to higher mountains. Gross drop would include any descents resulting from upward excursions along the way.

<sup>2</sup> *SMCJ* 1973, 30, 153-6; *SMCJ* 1974, 30, 254-6

<sup>3</sup> Strictly, not the *nearest* higher ground, but the *most accessible* higher ground, to cover the very occasional case where a choice of a deep or a shallow col is offered, and the deeper col leads to nearer higher ground.

Later, David Purchase<sup>4</sup> proposed a different formula and criterion for measuring separation, namely  $37.5 \times \text{distance (in km)} + \text{drop (in m)} > 150$ . Dividing by 5 to adjust the threshold to correspond with Bonsall's value of 30, and making the necessary conversions to Imperial measure, the formula becomes:

$$\mathbf{12 \times \text{distance (in miles)} + 6.1 \times \text{drop (in 100-foot units)} > 30}$$

So Purchase's formula may be interpreted as a Bonsall separation calculated for a curious walker who proceeds over the ground at 5mph, but takes an hour to climb 1000ft. If Bonsall and Purchase set off to climb a 3000ft hill together from a starting point at sea-level and three miles distant, Bonsall, taking 1hr for the distance and 1hr 30min for the height, would reach the top after 2hr 30min. Purchase, perhaps briefly surging ahead, but faltering at the first steep slope, would take 36 minutes for the distance, but 3hr 3min for the height, and would not appear at the cairn until a further 69 minutes had elapsed.

While this is moderately amusing, I would rather emphasise the similarity of the proposals. Both propose a simple linear combination of distance and drop, the difference being that Purchase's function gives more weight to drop and less to distance. While formulae like these *may* be interpreted as a time calculation, and therefore a measure of the effort involved in reaching the nearest higher ground, to insist on an effort-based approach is to take the narrow viewpoint of the hillwalker perhaps too far. In fact, Purchase implicitly rejects this interpretation in favour of a purely graphical approach. His question is: what line in the plane defined by distance and drop variation best separates Munros from Tops?

Both Bonsall and Purchase claim to have devised a separation rule that effectively distinguishes Munros from Tops, 'good' Munros having a separation of 30 or more. Since there is a considerable difference between the two rules, it follows that we can find other equally effective linear rules by balancing the distance and drop factors in different ways. So choosing between Bonsall's or Purchase's linear formulae is a rather arbitrary matter. Purchase points out that if the Munros and Tops are plotted on a drop x distance graph they cluster around a line – in other words, drop and distance are positively correlated. Of course, the Tops are found at the end of this line near to the origin and the Munros farther out, so it may be that any line intersecting this axis of correlation at the crucial zone where Tops fade out and Munros fade in, and making a decent angle with the axis, will do a reasonable job of separating Munros from Tops.

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<sup>4</sup> *SMCJ* 1997, 36, 252-71. And for an extended version see *The Munroist's Companion* (SMT, 1999) Chapter 4.9. Bonsall's two papers may also be found there, as Chapter 4.7.

Neither Bonsall nor Purchase was the first to propose an explicit separation formula for mountains. This was done 77 years ago by Percy Donald.<sup>5</sup> Donald distinguished ‘hills’ from ‘tops’ in the following way: ‘Grouping of “tops” into “hills”, except where inapplicable on topographical grounds, is on the basis that “tops” are not more than 17 units from the main top of the “hill” to which they belong, where a unit is either  $\frac{1}{12}$  mile measured along the connecting ridge or one 50-foot contour between the lower top and its connecting col.’

We can convert this to a linear formula as follows:

$$12 \times \text{Distance (in miles)} + 2 \times \text{drop}^6 \text{ (in 100-foot units)} > 17$$

Now, multiplying both sides by 1.765 to adjust the threshold to 30, we get:

$$\mathbf{21.2 \times \text{Distance (in miles)} + 3.5 \times \text{drop (in 100-foot units)} > 30}$$

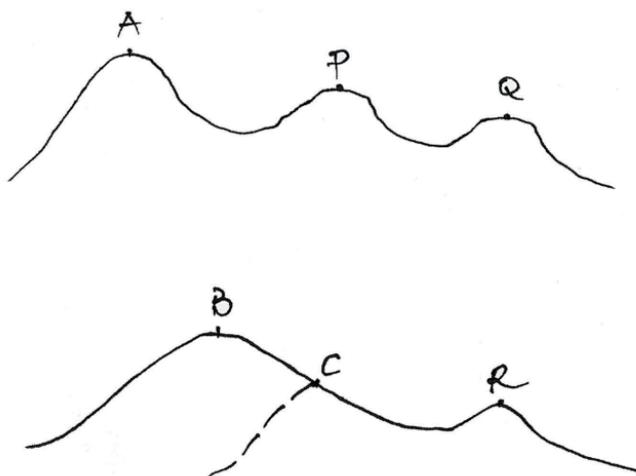
Donald’s formula is seen to be almost the same as Bonsall’s. And so Donald’s walker is a slightly decrepit version of Naismith – 2.83 miles per hour, and 35 minutes per 1000ft. I have given ‘distance’ a capital D as a reminder that Donald’s definition of distance relevant to separation is different from that used by Bonsall and Purchase. Donald’s slow walker would take longer to reach the nearest higher ground, and still longer to reach the main top of the ‘hill’, so his formula includes many tops as ‘hills’ which would be excluded by Bonsall or Purchase. In fact, although it is not relevant here, Donald frequently departed from his formula, presumably ‘on topographical grounds’, and his classifications often have a capricious look.

Donald’s formula is criticized by both Bonsall and Purchase, on the grounds that it leads to anomalous classifications. In the Figure opposite, both point out that Q might be sufficiently far from A, the main top of the hill, to qualify as a separate ‘hill’, even though Q is not sufficiently separate from P, nor P from A. Purchase mentions a specific example from the Ettrick Hills, where Herman Law is Q – deemed separate, Trowgrain Middle is P – a top, and Andrewhinney Hill is A, the main top. As for the lower diagram in the Figure, Bonsall argues that R – ‘an insignificant pimple’ – should not qualify as a separate hill simply because of its considerable distance from B. Their measures of separation, on the other hand, work well in such cases, they argue, since distance to nearest higher ground is short for both Q and R.

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<sup>5</sup> The Two-Thousand Feet Tops of the Scottish Lowland Uplands. *SMCJ* 1933, 20, 92-101.

<sup>6</sup> The factor of 2 corresponds to an assumption that if we add the surplus above the highest contour to the deficit below the lowest contour it will be on average 50 feet.



However, Donald's formula is easily modified to take account of the first difficulty, by changing the definition of the relevant distance to the distance *to the summit of the nearest higher top*, rather than to the main top of the hill. Then Q is a top of P, and P is a top of A, so Q is also a top of A (the 'is a top of' relation is treated as transitive) and the anomaly is removed. As for the second difficulty, I see no reason to accept Bonsall's argument. 'Nearest higher ground' measures of separation would treat R as equally separate from the truncated C (indicated by dotted line) as from the more distant B. It is perfectly obvious that the separation of R from C is less than its separation from B, and so this is a virtue of Donald's measure, not a defect. In the event that R is indeed 'an insignificant pimple', it should and would be excluded as a top by all three classification schemes.

My conclusion is then that Donald's separation measure has been too hastily rejected by Bonsall and Purchase. If it is modified following the argument of the last paragraph to: 'Grouping of "tops" into "hills", except where inapplicable on topographical grounds, is on the basis that "tops" are not more than 17 units from the summit of the higher "top" or "hill" to which they belong, where a unit is either  $\frac{1}{12}$  mile measured along the connecting ridge or one 50-foot contour between the lower top and its connecting col.', then it seems to be a perfectly sound measure, and one which distinguishes hills in relation to separation somewhat better than those proposed by Bonsall or Purchase. An approximately equivalent metric rule, easily applied to maps, would be 'not more than 26 units... where a unit is either  $\frac{1}{10}$  km or one 10-metre contour line'.

Although I will not attempt a comprehensive survey here, looking at the 'bad Munros' identified by Bonsall, it is interesting that application of this revised Donald measure to Munro's Tables would have

comfortably saved Càrn Cloich-mhuilinn from demotion in 1981, would have made the demotions – also in 1981 – of Geal Chàrn, Càrn Bàn Mòr and Meall Dubhag (all of Sgòr Gaoith) seem arbitrary and severe, and justifies the continuing retention as a Munro of Sàil Chaoruinn (Tigh Mòr na Seilge). It may well be that Munro and his associates in the run-up to the 1921 revision were applying a separation rule much more like Donald's than the nearest higher ground rules of Bonsall and Purchase.

## THE YEARS BETWEEN

By John Burns

TO THE SEAGULLS circling above the stack it appeared as though an enormous chalk-encrusted spider was frantically seeking its prey. On the rock below, struggling with an overhang, Iain's strength was quickly fading. The fall was quick. Moments later he felt the jolt on his harness and was swinging free above the sea.

The Youth had locked off the belay with one hand whilst casually texting a friend with the other. He was lean, his spiky hair exaggerating his height, and his tee-shirt said something about death. 'The tide's changed...' his words almost lost amongst the calls of the gulls circling the pillar of rock like snowflakes in the wind. Far below them bobbed the little dinghy that had carried them across to this isolated piece of verticality. It strained against the rope tethering it like a dog tied up outside a pub waiting for its owner. The dry platform of rock they had walked across an hour ago was now rhythmically washed by white sea foam.

The Youth slowly lowered Iain back on to the rock and, after a few moments to gather his breath, he set off again up the face. 'I'll do it this time,' he announced, but the Youth had already returned to pumping the buttons of his phone and if he heard at all he made no response. Looking down Iain was reminded that almost thirty years separated himself and his partner, perhaps he had been that confident, that arrogant all those years ago. Moving out onto the rock once more he began his spidery search for a hold. The overhang pushed him away, off balance, and out into space. He was still agile and, despite his grey-flecked hair and thickening waist, rock climbing had kept him athletic, he could hang on. At last he found a hold, small ripple but it was enough. He pushed himself upward and began to swing up the overhang. As he moved he felt a sharp stab in his ribs, the legacy of a bad fall on Mount Kenya with his lifelong climbing partner Tim, some twenty years ago. Most of the time he forgot about it but, when he pushed himself, his body remembered. He was almost there when he felt the fingers of his hand begin to open. He forced fingers to close again. Now he was going to make it, like all those times before he would climb the route. He would take all his skill and strength and prove to himself he was still as good as he ever was. Even the Youth would see that, he would find this move hard and know that Iain was still a climber to be respected.

The fall was less forgiving this time. On the way down a small step of rock caught him in the belly. The pain engulfed him. He swung on the rope, eyes closed, struggling to get breath back into lungs, the acrid taste of vomit in his mouth. After a minute or two the pain subsided. The

Youth stared up at him from the belay below, his eyes wide, thumb poised in mid text, hovering over the phone. 'Wow dude!' he said, 'You ought to be more careful.'

Iain swung back and forth on the rope for a moment. Below, he could see the dinghy bobbing in the sea, now waves were breaking across the slab of rock as the impatient tide returned. Above, the overhang remained forbidding. He shook out his arms, trying get the ache out of them and bring back a little strength. Starting back up the rock, the first few moves seemed to have become harder than before, he was beginning to stiffen from the fall and all the power in his arms had gone. He paused for a moment and then looked down at the Youth.

Taking over the lead the Youth was full of movement and eagerness. 'A virgin sea stack, what a tick!' In seconds he was on the overhang, his chalked fingers searching for a hold. Iain remembered the phone call, hearing the excitement in the Youth's voice as he recounted discovering the unclimbed stack while windsurfing. Hours poring over guide books had revealed that here, on the north coast of Scotland, was that rarest of things, an unclimbed stack.

The overhang stopped the Youth in his tracks, he tried one way then another. Minutes passed and still the Youth could not pull himself over, a slight tremble in his legs showed that the struggle was becoming uneven. As Iain watched the Youth's struggles something stirred in his mind, he called up, 'Try to the left, go left.'

'What?' shouted the Youth, incredulous, as the left side of the overhang appeared fiercer than the right. Slowly the Youth moved to his left, more from a feeling of having run out of options than the expectation of success, but, despite his misgivings, he moved left. Suddenly the Youth let out a whoop and as Iain looked up the Youth's feet were moving upward and out of sight. Iain took the lead for the final pitch, all that remained was an easy crack as the angle of the face eased and holds became plentiful. Now the sea breeze was welcome, the rock warm, and life felt good as he moved towards the top of the stack.

Stepping on to the summit Iain remembered. Moving towards the centre of the top of the stack, he knelt and tore at a patch of heather, dragging it loose from the small crack that housed its roots. There it was, a sling of orange nylon faded yellow by the sun, and an old rusty peg.

Moments later the Youth was with him, beaming with joy he stopped to admire the scene. Far below them the sea was pounding the base of the stack throwing white foam high into the air. 'Awesome!' exclaimed the Youth, grinning, 'A first ascent, how cool is that?' Iain started to speak but the Youth interrupted him. 'Smile', he said pointing the camera of his phone in Iain's direction. 'Look at that', he laughed, turning the phone so Iain could see his image. 'The Old Man of Hoy', teased the Youth. There, on the Youth's phone, was a photograph of an old man sitting on a sea stack. 'I'll send it to Billy, beat that, dude, a first ascent.'

The Youth abseiled off and left Iain alone on the summit. Iain stood slowly, his body stiff from the fall, and sitting on the old iron peg. Bending over he examined it again, it was nearly twenty years since he hammered it into place. He remembered how the peg sang as it went home and their joy at conquering the stack. Odd that he and Tim had never claimed the climb but Africa and the near-fatal fall had pushed all thoughts of recording the sea stack from their minds. He had found the overhang hard then but, in the end, he had climbed it. He grabbed the sling, the peg was stubborn but the years of salt spray and frost had taken their toll and eventually it came free. He spent a long time studying the peg, it had been bright and shiny when he had driven it into the groove all those years ago but age had taken its toll and now it was riven with cracks and rust. He turned and hurled it off into the sea below, watching it spiral down into the heaving water.

Halfway down the stack the Youth called up to him from the dinghy, 'I think there's another route round the other side, we can come back and do that.'

Iain grinned on the abseil rope, feeling the ache in his side, 'Yeah, maybe.'

## PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION

By Mike Dixon

### Scottish Nordwand

A DAZZLING whiteness infused Ben Nevis. Everything was beautifully lit and shaded as we trudged up to the foot of the Orion Face. It was Spring and even the light had a new-life quality. Surprisingly, Geoff and Willie were walking away from this marvellous spectacle. Both displayed a sunken eyed, haunted look. They looked like two men who'd glimpsed some fundamental cosmic truth and were shaken by its revelation. Retreat from *Zero Gully* had instilled in them a healthy respect for the value of life.

Black thoughts and grave reservations remained unspoken but were dissipated by the job in hand. It was the first time I'd climbed with Pete. The freezing level was around 3000ft, producing ice which was fine to climb but poor for screws. During the entire route I wouldn't have wanted to test any of the belays, even with my semi-anorexic frame.

Entering the Basin was like stepping into some aesthetic wonderland. The succession of freeze-thaw cycles had produced a gallery of frozen time ice sculptures, several reminiscent of melting watches from a Dali painting. I scanned the shelves of this surrealist watchmaker, mesmerised by the various stages of petrified drool and liquescence.

Exposure was ratcheted up again at the stance beside the Second Slab Rib. A short descent was followed by a diagonal traverse out of the Basin. Perched above Zero and with the ice not as solidly bound to the underlying rock, it felt committing, insecure and sparsely protected. From the stance I watched Pete come up in a truly nordwand setting. The chilly shade contrasted with the ice palace of the Great Tower glistening in the background. The left slanting ramps that followed directed the gaze down to a pair in the Basin and added further scale to the whole undertaking. A snagged rope provided a worrying moment before we emerged onto a smaller snowfield below the final tower. Pete took an alternative direct line up a steep, shallow corner/groove; a dark slit visible from the road. I found this tricky to follow and a continuing lack of decent belays was stretching the nerves. But that was the end of technicalities. A kick up easy snow led to the top.

Even back then it was no longer a revered route, not in terms of difficulty. I felt sorry for anyone who felt short changed by it. I'd come well prepared, my head full of Smith and Marshall. Whenever it got tricky, I imagined myself step cutting in the dark. It put my own ascent in proper perspective. Not that I wasn't pleased. On the way down, it felt good to look back up at the face and to think we'd been up there. I could add no greater meaning to what I've always looked upon as a gloriously

selfish activity. But in retrospect, the best bit was not the climbing or the situations. It was those watches.

### **Commando Climber**

On a windy Summer's day in the early nineties we stood under the imposing bulwark that is the Càrn Dearg Buttress. To maximise the cliff's potential to impress, first timers should walk up in the dark and in the morning burst through the CIC door for a direct assault on the senses.

Never a fashion slave, my climbing partner, another Pete, was kitted out in his regulation green, army and navy clothing, attire which would not have been unsuitable for fighting the Viet Cong. It was probably purchased during that era. *The Bullroar* is an elegant route traversing across the frontal face. It offers absorbing slab sequences in exposed situations. We had the cliff to ourselves and the whole ascent went very smoothly.

We were ambling down and life was pretty good. The sun was shining, the views to Loch Eil lovely, and even Fort William looked pleasant from a distance. Pete was in a rare, good mood and this alerted in me a sense of foreboding. It was a short, uneventful walk back to the car or so it seemed. However, there was one last obstacle, a hidden trip wire at the golf course perimeter fence where Pete took a spectacular flier. His tangled limbs resembled a figure from the Picasso painting *Guernica*. There were resonances of Francis Bacon in his distorted mouth and anguished facial expression. It was ironic for someone who'd just Rudolf Nureyev'd his way across 5a rock. At times such as this you don't ask Pete how he's feeling. Doing so would be akin to lighting the blue touch paper without being able to stand well back.

On the final stomp across the fairways two cheery golfers engaged eye contact with Pete. Their faces stiffened as though they'd seen the Gorgon's head.

'He doesn't look too happy,' one of them commented.

'And that's after a good day,' I replied.

It's not always the route or mountain which lingers longest in the memory. That day I'd acquired *The Cubist Commando*, another piece to go in my collection.

### **Post Modernism**

It was over a decade since I'd last been up there. Things had changed. There had been several technological advancements. Where had all those ice screws of the sawn off air rifle barrel variety gone to? Confidence had replaced trepidation when taking hanging belays from modern ice screws. Some friends had even taken leader falls on them but seemed to have saved such occasions for Norwegian ice.

Climbers had money. So much so that many didn't bother attaching

leashes to their axes. You didn't have to be particularly fit any more. Gear was so much lighter and, with the right contacts, you could drive up to the dam. Everyone looked smart, even chic. The new track, circumventing the Stygian bogs, ensured you stayed that way the whole day.

*The Orion Direct* was now a path. People were climbing the same pitches in parallel. People were crossing and overtaking each other. Everyone who had gratefully consulted the Internet the day before was now cursing the authors of those sites who had publicised the great condition of the route and spoiled their experience of it. Guidebook writers were damned for introducing the four star rating. Adjacent routes with a mere three stars were deserted. A pair of Canadians were complaining about the lack of directness and low technical difficulty. Ropes were getting tangled. People were shouting at each other. Dropped gear was clattering down threatening to impale those further back in the queue. Abandoned ropes were hanging down; some were backing off and throwing abseil ropes in the path of others. People weren't glimpsing the evidence of things unseen. The whole scene resembled a Hieronymus Bosch painting; a kind of vertical lunatic asylum.

I had to be honest with myself: it was time to visit a new gallery or stop going to exhibitions for good.





## AEOLUS

By P.J. Biggar

*Alack, the night comes on, and the bleak winds  
Do sorely ruffle;*<sup>1</sup>

WHEN I TURNED the engine off there was utter stillness. It was early on a January morning and dark enough for us to need the cab light on to read the guidebook. Dawn was coming in over the west Fannaich. With some disquiet we looked away across the moors towards the remote buttress we had come to climb on:

‘It’s a bit black isn’t it?’

‘Stripped.’

‘We’d better go and take a look.’

‘Aye.’

Stretching and shivering in the frosty air, we stumbled out of the van as another car pulled into the salt strewn lay-by and a man got out.

‘It’s not Mackenzie is it?’ Roger’s question had a little smile in it.

‘Nah, just a hillwalker.’

According to our books of lore only that lord, his lady and a great mountain guru had ever climbed upon the Speckled Mountain, and this morning the name seemed all too apt.

While we were fiddling with gear the hillwalker came past and we had a few words. He wanted to do Sgùrr Breac and A’ Cailleach. He was bespectacled; he had an axe, bendy walking boots and no crampons, though they might have been in his sack. The upper slopes of the hills had banks of old snow which, after the recent thaw, must have set hard. There had plainly been a violent wind, for smashed trees partly blocked the path through the plantation.

‘It’ll be very icy on the tops,’ Roger said. The hillwalker appeared quite unperturbed. We thought he’d go up the Druim Reidh, the long spur which runs up to the connecting ridge between Sgùrr Breac and A’ Cailleach, but he must have thought it too steep because, to my annoyance, he followed us up the valley. I was annoyed partly because having made all the effort to come and climb in a really remote location I felt, quite unreasonably, that we deserved to have it to ourselves, but my more urgent reason for vexation was that the call of nature was pressing and with potential company I had to dump my sack by the path and seek solitude behind a hillock.

‘Did you see the eagles?’ asked Roger when I caught him up. Happily, this time, I had: two dark outlines swirling high above the snowy north

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1 William Shakespeare, *Lear*, II. iv. 298-9

*Top: Neil Wilson on Arch Arête (Severe), Rubha Dubh, Neave Island.*

*Bottom: Neil Wilson on Clashnessie Monster (E1 5b), Clashnessie Bay, Point of Stoer.*

*Both photos: Simon Nadin.*

face of Sgùrr Breac. The hillwalker was ahead of us now, searching for a place to cross the river – not easy as the boulders were thinly coated with ice.

We came to patches of snow and they were hard. One of them was so hard that, although Roger managed to edge across it, I went down and passed it by awkward steps on the river bank. Presently we turned away from the river and the hillwalker was forgotten.

The north-east face of the mountain would have been just the thing for the modern winter climber – there wasn't a flake of snow on it – and its one or two pathetic shards of ice only served to emphasise its nakedness. Roger and I didn't feel very modern so with many a grunt and groan we turned up the steep slopes by the deeply gouged streambed and made for the haunt of lords and gurus under the north face; here, at least, we could see snow.

Carrying a heavy pack up a frozen slope with a deep gorge behind one can be unnerving. My companion seemed quite at ease, but I paused near the top and got out an axe before tackling the final steepness.

The corrie, when we finally reached it, was certainly interesting, and one could see that it had potential. There were a couple of steeper buttresses with ice hanging from them; there was an apron of snow and a gentler tiered face rising gradually into steeper rocks further to the left. The further right one went the more snow there was, but we became intrigued by a gentle-seeming, wandering line not all that far from the entrance to the corrie. It curved peacefully to the right, encountered an icefall or two then slowly unwound into the obscurity of steeper ground above. On this side of the corrie there was much less snow – the hillside looked truly speckled – but there was promise of that luxury from the climber's delicatessen: deep-frozen turf.

Roger said he wasn't awake yet so I lugged the ropes up the first pitch, wondering why we had bothered roping up at all. Pitch followed pitch in like manner until we came to the vicinity of the icefall. The weather stayed calm. Behind us all the riches of the north were spread out: Suilven, Canisp, Cul Mòr rising white above the redness of the moors. Time was passing, but we barely regarded it and all the while our little route was getting that wee bit steeper.

'I'll have a look at this ice,' I said to Roger, and I gave it an exploratory tap with my hammer. It was hollow and fractured easily.

'I'll move a bit to the left,' I muttered.

'What's that?'

'Left. Up here.'

A turfy rib ran up beside the ice; it seemed a better bet. About a hundred feet higher I had a glance behind me: a sharp arête plunged downwards. I pushed back my helmet and looked up; a steep step confronted me. With a start I realised that this was getting a bit more serious. Some

protection would be nice, but what? I had a good selection of nuts and camming devices, but there was remarkably little rock....

‘Ah, but...’ My Dachsteined fingers jiggled about and at last came up with what I wanted; mine was painted red, Roger’s black. To my great relief the turf was deep and frozen to a turn: the warthog buried his snout deeper with each blow of the hammer.

Another fifty feet and I found a good ledge as warnings about scarcity of rope echoed up from below. This time I bashed the black one in and backed it up with a snarg.

Roger looked much more awake when he arrived:

‘That was a good pitch,’ he said with a smile.

His was at least the equal of it, but rockier and perhaps better protected: most enjoyable. We felt we were getting on.

All day we had been aiming for a rocky feature on the skyline and it was getting nearer. After the two steeper pitches the angle seemed to be relenting and the quality of the snow improving. There was a shoulder above which seemed almost adjacent to our rocky landmark. I climbed up to the shoulder and could see what I thought were relatively easy slopes leading up to the line of low crags to the right of which there was a break leading to the top. I shouted down to Roger that we had almost cracked it.

All the way up we had been in shelter and it seemed to us that the day was calm as indeed it had been when we set out, but now as I stood by the frozen rocks bringing my partner up, I realised that the winds were unchained and coming from the south-east. They were curling over the rim of the cliff and whipping up little storms of spindrift.

Roger crunched off upwards. Presently I found him on a frozen platform in a rocky recess; plainly the fun wasn’t over yet. I looked to the right. Oh horrors! Open slopes! Melville was right: there’s something evil about all that whiteness! And the wind was getting to us now. I set off as fast as I could, traversing in the approved manner, then turning sideways and kicking steps on a rising line. Fifty feet and nothing; nothing will come of nothing, keep going! If I can just get to that line of crags! I’ve no idea how far I’ve come, all that ghastly whiteness! Is that a split in the snow? Oh Lordy, Lordy!

When I got to the cliff above the snow-slope all the cracks I tried were useless. Out came a warthog again and some security was achieved. To my right the cliff finished some twenty or thirty feet away; I should have left the screw as a runner and gone on, but I rationalised that at least I could see my partner from here, so I brought him up.

Roger traversed under the cliff and disappeared round the corner. I was left with the bundle of frozen ropes which threatened to tangle, wondering what on earth was going on round the corner and why he was taking so long. I could hear nothing except the roar of the wind. Below my feet the

snow-slopes dropped away over frozen rocky edges while the spindrift whirls performed their evil lap-dance and the rope stopped moving, just jerked a bit now and then. What's happening? What's he doing? Should I go?

If I take out this belay and he's still climbing...Shouting was so obviously useless I didn't even try. In an act of pure faith I dismantled my belay and began to shuffle along the ledge in Roger's steps. Oh joy! The rope moved on in front of me.

Roger had faced a steep little gully exit and he too had found no rock protection, but another faithful warthog was rooting deep in a few withered heather fronds amidst the whiteness. My friend stood hunched against the wind, belayed to his axes buried in névé. We didn't shake hands; we knew what was coming.

We stumbled about trying to coil ropes and put things away, but it was difficult because anything you put down was at instant risk of being blown off – including the ropes. We managed to untie and stuff some things away while having a shouted conversation.

I knew from what we'd said earlier that Roger wanted to descend by the Druim Reidh, the long ridge which formed the other half of a horse-shoe with the ridge we were standing on. Light was fading, the wind at gale force, wasn't there another way? Standing in the stinging drift my mind sought easier alternatives. I remembered descending a steep, rocky ridge hereabouts with big Charlie years ago, but it was too steep, too dodgy.

'Could we go down to the south-east col? The one above Nest?' As soon as I said it I knew the answer:

'The wind would be right in our faces!'

'Can we get down at the low point of the corrie? Get out of the wind?'

Roger shrugged:

'Perhaps, but there's ice. We'd have to get the rope out.'

'Is it the ridge then?'

'That's my preferred option.'

'OK.'

I clicked the broken plastic buckle of my sack and began to stagger up the slope. I felt dreadful: drained and full of anxiety. Roger moved on ahead, a reassuring dark figure against the snow.

To get to the Druim Reidh we had to start by going up and over the twin summits of Sgùrr Breac. The snow was hard and icy, the gale battered us. A small part of me just wanted to sit down and rest; I spoke to it severely:

'Keep going! Nice and steady. Don't try to go fast, just keep moving. Get your hood up for goodness sake! Why be uncomfortable? Idiot!' I still had my helmet on, but when I had the jacket made I insisted that the hood be large enough to take it, now I was glad. With my face partly

encased in Gore-Tex I could breathe warm damp air: I began to feel better.

We kept just to the left of the cairn of Sgùrr Breac and started, mercifully, to descend. At least now the wind was on our shoulders and as we went down we came into the lee of the hill and gained a little respite. Twilight was here, but while we were on the snow we should have any glimmer there was.

Crampons bit into the white ice until I stamped downwards into nothingness and stumbled forwards – the wind had shaped the snow into beautiful, moulded ridges and in the half light one couldn't judge how far down to put one's foot. I got up and shambled on. Going down, down: perhaps Roger would stop soon so we could eat and drink?

We reached the low point. Tom a' Choinnich loomed above, the top between Sgùrr Breac and A' Cailleach. Roger's pace never faltered. Although I wanted him to stop, I knew why he kept going and I followed grimly. If we could get up this rise then all the rest would be on the level or downhill. At one point my tired brain registered that there were footprints in the snow. The hillwalker? Surely not?

Sgùrr Breac had sheltered us for a little while but now, as we climbed the slope, the wind came snarling at us again. Hunched down we dragged our bodies upwards until, almost without realising it, we found we were going down again.

Roger gestured:  
'That rock!'

It was big and offered a little shelter. At last we were able to remove our packs. I scabbled for my little flask of hot blackcurrant: I daren't fill the little mug full for fear of the wind snatching precious drops. I pressed Roger's arm and held it out half-full. A few drops of warmth in the howling gloom. We also drank from his bottle. I still had climbing gear hanging from my harness and I crammed it away in the sack while stuffing my mouth with Twix bars from the pouch of my jacket – how glad I was I'd put them there all that time ago in the peaceful corrie. I was still munching and trying to breathe through my streaming nose when we moved on.

When we emerged from the shelter of the rock we had to cross slopes of boulders and bare ice polished by the blast. It was coming at us from the side now and at the height of each gust we had to crouch or kneel. Long blue sparks came from our crampons as they ground on the rocks. My crampons are rigid and my feet were in pain; the added pressure of the metal spikes and the unnatural twisting of my feet as I resisted the gusts made me feel as if my boots were full of red hot gravel.

Roger pointed across the valley to where we'd come from:

'When the wind hits that ridge, it should go up and over us for a while.'  
And he was right; just for a short while the wind actually eased a little

and we could walk in a more upright fashion, but, as if to make up for this slight relief, the dark was almost on us and we were now getting down to a region where the gaps between the snow patches were becoming longer.

Soon I couldn't see the obstacles. Crampons caught on rock and tussock. The blue sparks shot out more frequently. I see quite well in the dark, but not as well as Roger. For a time he was a dark figure in front of me, then a dark shadow and at last a sort of flitting ghost; I could just see a movement when he passed a snow patch. I hurried to keep up.

Over peat hags, frozen pools, clumps of heather, avoiding darker lumps in the gloom, fearing they might be rocks: Nuncle Lear! Nuncle Lear...! Then I fell, full length on the ground. My axe went spinning away somewhere. When I got to my feet I found I'd bruised my leg and strained my knee. I retrieved my axe by feel and limped in the direction I'd last seen Roger take. A few stars in a gap in the clouds hinted at an order in things at a higher level.

Now the wind was starting to rage again. I caught up with Roger who was crouched in perplexity at the far side of a large snow patch.

'We must find the path,' he said. 'I know it's here somewhere.'

We agreed that it was time for torches. The bright beams lit up a sort of formless chaos. Pieces of heather went shooting past; the ground was lumpy dark with streaks of snow. We struggled on.

We knew we must be coming near the steep nose at the north end of the Druim Reidh. There were cliffs to be avoided to both right and left; if only we could find the path! In the distance we could see the headlights of a car on Destitution Road. Steamy comfort, warmth, the football results on Radio Scotland...

'Is that lights I'm seeing up on the hills, Willie?'

'No, no, Mabel, only madmen and fools would be out on a night like this.' ...

'Got it!' said Roger. His headlamp illuminated an uncertain, slight, icy depression in the ground. We followed it downwards, our beams criss-crossing, only to lose it again. Every inch of the way the ground was hard frozen and the wind tore at us and knocked us sideways at every turn. We crossed above big drops, clawing and stumbling our way down.

'Thank goodness for crampons!' said Roger.

My feet were burning, my ankles ached and my leg was sore, but at last the angle began to ease. The gale still came howling up the valley, but it wasn't so cold now, and I paused to lift back my hood. I had forgotten that my torch, a Christmas present from my son, was attached to my helmet. It shot off into the night and I was left in utter darkness. I was sure it had smashed on a rock.

'Roger!'

My wail was like the despairing cry of a child lost in a crowded shop.

Then I turned full circle and became aware that there was a ghostly light behind me! But it wasn't the foul fiend! My torch hadn't become detached at all but had twisted round and got caught up in my clothing!

'Never mind,' said Roger soothingly when I caught him up. 'At least we're down now.'

We sank down on a little patch of withered grass by a boulder and struggled to undo crampon straps. I couldn't face emptying the frozen rope out of my sack to get at my sandwiches, but I swigged greedily at Roger's bottle and passed him half my last Twix. When we moved on it felt so good to be walking on rubber and not rigid steel.

We crossed a delusive track before we found the path up the valley we had followed in the morning. The sight of the little footbridge over the burn was immensely heartening and we veered to the left to avoid the smashed fir trees in the forest and took the old path past the ruined boathouse. Fresh ice had formed in the ruts.

When we neared the van I could see a glimmer in the cab; I'd forgotten to switch off the light as we looked at the guidebook all those hours ago. The hillwalker's car was gone.

'Did you see those prints coming down Sgùrr Breac?' asked Roger as we sat in the back of the swaying van with steaming mugs of tea. 'No sign of crampons.'

'Not him, surely?'

'Who else could it be?'

'Nah, old prints.'

'We'll never know: it's a mystery.'

The God of the Winds was unwilling to release his victims even now, for the gale shook the van and blew stalks of heather and grass and small branches through the headlight beams all the way over the wild Dirrie Mòr and down to Gorstan, but as we drove through the avenue of trees after Strathpeffer it was so calm you wouldn't know there'd been a wind that day.

## AM BODACH, AN CAILLEACH

By Donald Orr

*'We shall not cease from exploration  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know the place for the first time.'*<sup>1</sup>

MY SISTER'S illness had caused me to pause and evaluate aspects of my own life. We had not grown apart as such though adulthood, marriage and families of our own had left the childhood links far behind, but we were still bonded through our love of mountaineering. A connection that had been made as children exploring the Mamore Forest and forged and tempered through all the climbs and expeditions we had undertaken together. Now as part of her convalescence we drove north together reminiscing on each stage of the road about MacBrayne's buses, the size Tyndrum had grown into over the years, and the effect of the loss of the aluminium smelter on the village we had grown up in. Kinlochleven was our own private, childhood memory bank, not shared with other siblings or relations that had formed our attitudes to, and life in, the mountains, circled as it was by so many three thousand foot peaks.

Parked in the sunshine by St. Paul's church we emerged from the car and looked up and down Wade's Road almost expecting to see ourselves emerge from our aunt's house as we had been those many years ago, two youngsters in corduroys and woollen pullovers always happier in each others' company than with cousins or friends. We both turned around viewing the familiar surrounding peaks that dwarfed the village. The mountains had been a stage awaiting the drama of our imaginations; spacious, dynamic and inevitable. In that moment I realised I was expanded into the past because of my feelings, deep ones that had determined who and how I was to be, and recognised that my insight was timeless. My feelings knew no time; they neither knew nor acknowledged it.

We approached the remains of our childhood home. The garden neglected, reforming in undergrowth. The building roofless, ruined rooms and a rubble-filled hearth. In this bedroom we had talked of mountains, in the evening, in whispers. In the echo of the falls of the Grey Mare's Tail we had planned our ascents, irresistibly contoured from attic to arête. We were aware of ghosts in the brambled garden and found the remains of our path through the rhododendrons that had led off to a mountain track. We had returned to our starting point and we both knew

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<sup>1</sup> Eliot, T.S. 'Little Gidding', Four Quartets. Faber & Faber, London. 1944.

that place had articulated the themes of our lives and defined the quality of our experiences.

This was where Easter had risen in cold rooms, white eyed and wind groomed, and whispered troubled gullies and twisted icefalls to us as we threw off slumber and looked out at the diamond blue constancy of the sky over snowy ridges, that had bound eternity to Spring and coiled the colour of time.

Summer heat had resolved our rigidity. The endless length of summer days merged memory, movements and event, mixing sights and that smell of infinity. Time, for us, became etched on eternity; the margins where colour ended, where light fell in sheer perpetuity. The infinity of endless sunshine had slowed to the finite; we had known locations and ridges and arêtes, all the static grandeur this side of the light. All the routes weaving through the boulders, threading the chaos of stone; an embroidery that had told us of cracklines and riven height scarred with routes so consoling to us that we gave them names, recognising in their shelters and hidden recesses access to the buttressed summit light.

I knew then that I had always been in Kinlochleven at that distant place in time; I had never left it but lived expanded into the past, or out of it. Time's inevitable acceleration had made a thousand alterations measured by the timeless present but as fleeting and remote as a dream. What did it mean to live for the moment? I was still that boy, remote, restless even in his sleep that would not playfully compete but haunted the shoreline. Always distant and apart from others, only my sister had left her bootprints with mine by Loch Eilde revealing our interests astride the tide's edge and rounded ridges. Above us we still saw the arêtes and high passes that had drawn us there, the open light whose magnet led us to that infinity and oneness of experience that had altered time in silence and made the stuff of colour. This was not age reflecting on a simpler life in the past or a nostalgic desire for our old lives but the recognition that adventure was there to be had if the effort was made.

Rona looked at me and said, 'Eechies?' and we turned down the road together towards the shop that had held all we required in our childhood. We came to a churned section of muddy soil; no walls, no evidence of a building ever having been there apart from a flat section of bare earth below the trees. We looked at each other, absorbed the moment and memory, and looked about.

'The Masonic Hall's been painted,' I said.

'Not before time,' my sister added.

I looked at her. 'Over the stepping stones to the village?'

Rona nodded and off we went together through the autumn woodland.

I recognised in the scents of the mouldering woods that I had never forsaken that initial mood; that inherent tracery of a mountain childhood had given me continuity and a means of reassessment in this life. A

re-enactment, an anamnesis of reality of place that defied and dislocated the reality that stood around me. What I and my sister had experienced as our boots scattered the sleeping darkness of stone and mingled it with colour and light had created the poetry of our lives. Our actions had plucked the cords that bound us and entexted our existence into the mountains of Mamore. In the intensity of our desires we had intuited the relationship to landscape, the unthought connection to the land, a presence in our lives that language could not make. We had sensed in the scree the scattered inseparable now and oneness of being, at once held and released us in the wake of its unfolding, daring diversity; an echo of the earth's intensity, a merging of the divine and existence which was a childhood part of the eternal round of human sensitivity. Our lives were enveloped in the brilliance of the risk of travelling with, rather than through, the land and the land was that great misread message; a misunderstood statement of the earth. Landscape had become dislocated by adults from language and portrayed as scenery, reshaping a truth more imagined than breathed in light. It was as children that we had been aware of this, how the reasoned language of adult being wanted safety and containment and had produced pools of shadow that dulled the perception of an encroaching darkness. The mature reality of the world created shrinkage; it rendered majesty into word depictions, viewed mountains as external variance. Adults had sought to disclose creation but only offered a description of appearance, explained colour as mere effect which stemmed the discovery of who they were and could have become.

Not that the two of us were bitter or twisted in the knowledge that we did not live our own lives but lived what we thought our lives to be; we were still linked by laughter in our own precious way even if the fear and sadness, and the disappointment of the years were all our own and had created a loneliness for us, climbing had given us a recognition of our own mortality that girdled us like the softest kernmantle's barest touch. A loop that might one day tighten and stifle but in acknowledging its gentle insistent pressure we had learned that it would never subside. We had learned as children that in climbing there is a mystery beyond the shallow human actions that gained height, an immensity beyond the stuff that movement could achieve. The answers we gleaned changed the nuance of understanding like cloud shadow across the hills or light rippling the loch's surface. All human action was imperfect, a helpless expression of internal life, of lost words that had altered cadence without being able to counter strife but we still sought that wavering, unimagined mystery fully realising that if it should arise from some dark chasm adults would conceal it in an avalanche of restorative superficiality.

We walked past the remains of the aluminium factory our uncles had worked in grinning at each other as we read the signs for indoor ice

climbing and the notices for beginners' rock climbing classes. 'If only...' I said.

'Could have saved a lot of time.'

'Do you think it would have changed anything?'

Rona shrugged, 'Do you really want a chorus of 'I did it my way'? We were products of our time, and anyway, we learned lessons.' She turned and I sensed her gazing at my profile as if reading my thoughts, 'Do you remember the Clachaig men?'

I laughed as I recalled how we had haunted the Clachaig Inn, too immature to be taken seriously but desperate for knowledge and information of more demanding rock routes from the mountaineers who frequented the hotel bar. In an age before magazines and guide books, thirsty for information we had sat clutching soft drinks on the periphery of climbing groups and scanning for lost rock features in the creases of strangers' clothes, for the rock's harsh caress on the backs of their hands. We noted changes in weathered gear and in the edges of their attire saw the cracklines we longed to hear of. We spied on a boot's edge the abraded rough resonance of mountain trade that we ourselves were anxious to realise.

When we had approached and asked these strangers they had told us of it all. They had gifted us the forbidding pitches and granted us the golden riches of the heights and sunlit ridges. Our minds were sensed with expeditions, with the grains of plans and expectations, and filled with the smoke of dreams and adulation. From this we gained the courage to move on and learned to interpret the silence of the cliffs, to raise a raven's cry or buzzard's call and navigate night and mist with certainty enjoying the development of our gifts.

Looking across to a building that had held the co-op grocers, Rona said, 'Olive?'

'Long gone I would imagine', I replied remembering immediately the woman who had worked there and who had gifted us her secret smiles.

'Where was the bus station?'

'Somewhere over there, I think.'

We stood on the bridge above the rush of tawny water and gazed up at the large corrie between the rugged bulk of Am Bodach and the delicate lines of Na Gruagaichean. It was there we discovered that the great silence of the corries was a trick of the mind. The wind did not seek the next word to say or the stream pause for the right sound. The seclusion of the mountains was not the stuff of solitude. The land roared its isolation and intoned its ingratitude. It constantly narrated its story, lilted its song and poured out its sounds beyond the words that people used striving to connect the effects of experience with the notion of reality.

My eyes settled on the form of Stob Coire a' Chairn and I recalled another lesson learned as we had forced our way through soft Easter

snow towards the ridge when the world suddenly turned purple. My eyes were already streaming when my sister had asked why everything was purple and I realised that we were in the initial stages of snow blindness. Turning, we ran, swam, fell and rolled as fast as we could below the snow line. Sitting in the lee of the sheep pens above the dirt road our eyes soon adjusted without any damage being done and I knew that we had avoided a serious accident only because we had seen a film in the village hall a few weeks ago that had featured this problem. I turned to my sister, 'What was that film called? The White...'

'Spider?' I shook my head. 'Fang?'

'No. The one with Glenn Ford and Lloyd Bridges.'

'Oh yes. The White Tower. Claude Rains was in it too! I liked him, he looked like Grandpa!' She paused realising where I had come from, 'Yes, that was sixpence well spent!'

'And sixpence for chips on the way home!'

Eventually our attention had demanded more and our interests extended into Glen Coe. On the painted wall above Achtriochtan we knew that we had come out of want for that situation; out of need for that defiled verticality and ravine and chasm where Garbh Bheinn seemed to come to meet us from across Lochaber. We came to atone for leaving Mamore in the light of the summer terraces, on juniper and heather ledges we panted and shook out our cramped hands echoing the ripple of the summer heat's absolution. We came for more than echoes and the resonance of mountain days. To us all the particles of time distilled their restless latency into a reality very nearly expressed. It was the golden splendour of innate earth and a truth almost articulated in the ascent of a mountain ridge. We were on the threshold of a harmony that was harmony nevertheless; a peace perfected in the chaos of stone.

Frost stretched our resources and ourselves and both of them took a fall. Under equipped and pushing our limits in winter climbing a turf ledge had given way and spilled both of us down an icy north face. We fell together, noiselessly in that bizarre time slowed reality that operates when tragedy strikes.

I was aware during the fall of a strange, silent nobility. As I dropped through the air my thoughts became flexible, my feelings unbelievably supple nowhere akin to the rasping abrasion my rigid body was subject to nor the unyielding slide towards a final cessation. The stillness I experienced within was devoid of the memory flash or the explosion of a key moment and lacked totally the shrill dramatics of disaster. At its centre was the white stillness of the crucial minute that deployed a revolutionary majesty, a mute anthem of the moment and in its special silence a lonely dignity.

We both escaped relatively unhurt and limped downhill agreeing, once more, to keep silent about our escapade. Recovering, we were

anxious and indignant as we scanned the event in our minds; the minutes before and the hush later. When the past had gone and the future was still to start time seemed to hold its breath and in that gasp was the question of what it was that we chased after.

The event had made us dissatisfied with ourselves, with what we had been, yet strangely content that we were no longer them. We knew that a boundary had been pushed to an extreme and that at that frontier we had weighed and balanced our terms of fear. Understanding that we had operated within a form of innocence that could be precisely removed yet remained indelibly with us, we saw our absence, encountered it as something tangible and both of us concealed it from others.

It was through that disappointment we discovered aspirations and refined what we really hoped for. Only through our lostness did we know where we were. Disappointment was also a learning experience and could be collected, not that we became fanatical, but we learned to carry expectations lightly and this became a form of addiction. Not a destroying poison but a calming solace revealing the real encounters in our lives and the map of ourselves.

I looked across at the lines radiating out from the corner of her eye and the small scar by her eyebrow still pale under the weathered skin. It was age that had caused disconcertion, a distress that life did not possess an internal drive to completion but that it stuttered into disordered slivers of memory. We were here and now, still placed in time and not disillusioned. The internal episodes of memory, our exclusive reality was in the now of their occurrence. Inside we were not limited, not tied to the present but expanded into the past. Who we were and how it was to be us was not constrained by time. We were still present in that distant place which is the expanse of our being, invisible from the outside with no regrets at lack or loss of expertise but still welcoming the openness of the mountains around us, still capable of undertaking expeditions within ourselves, of discovering who we could have become.

What had drawn us to the hills was that mystical silence of self emptying, the hush of self abandonment, the blank stillness within where the mountains, as staircases for silence, led us to where the heights called to heights and together we had appreciated that communication. We had avoided trapping in language that which was mountainous and in that were forced to contemplate the paradox of admiration of our world through gentle destruction. Together we had struck an unspoken deal of effort for experience and never debated but appreciated the knowledge received realising that the meaning was in the process, the significance was in the comprehension.

What had bound us was the awareness of ourselves as an aspect of absence in desperate need of presence. The enactment of encounter was at the core of mountaineering and the examination of its mystery. The

paradox of the joyous outpouring of energy and ingenuity in the act of scaling rocks with a cautious spirit groaning within. We were made of time, and as grace is a suspension of disbelief, a trust in the impossible, in negative capability, we had enacted our spirits beyond all belief in the assurance of things hoped for and our conviction of things not seen. If place could inform and instruct us the process was delivered through a glass darkly and unravelling these lessons was the task of a lifetime.

‘The shops are all changed round, and the butcher’s has disappeared.’

‘Where exactly was the Tartan Hotel?’

‘Down the road, just about opposite the Post Office, opposite the Village Hall.’

‘I think that’s gone too!’

‘What! Show me!’

We set off down the road in the afternoon sunshine to re-explore the village.

## AMBITIONS

By Nigel Suess

WHEN TWO MOUNTAINEERS who are also holders of the Scottish pensioners' bus pass meet their talk sometimes turns to long held but unfulfilled ambitions. Liz expressed an enduring interest in *The Chasm*.

'I have had a notion to climb it ever since reading the account given in *Always a Little Further*.'

I had not read Alastair Borthwick's book and left gully climbing behind in the early 1970s.

'It's quite hard. Probably VS, although Severe if completely dry.'

'Yes. I thought that I should try *Clachaig Gully* first. If I struggle there then *The Chasm* is probably too ambitious.'

I hoped that my voice did not betray thoughts that must not be expressed.

'*Clachaig Gully* also has a bit of a reputation.'

'Yes. I cannot persuade anyone to go with me on either route.'

I had heard that most climbers steer clear of *Clachaig Gully* in the interest of extending their climbing career and maybe their life and also suspected that the inclusion of both climbs in *Classic Rock* motivates most of those tackling them. I had camped on the green at the foot of *Clachaig Gully* thirty-five years earlier on my first mountaineering holiday in Scotland and been impressed by its fine line, but had never been summoned to its verdant charms.

I returned to my books and became absorbed in one of the classics of Scottish mountaineering. I was very well acquainted with Bill Murray's tale of the first ascent and the humorous article by Allan Austin published in this Journal forty years ago. The first paints a picture of heroic encounter with unsolved problems and the calm rational route to a solution. The second shows the reader that the gully is a horrible place full of cold water and wild men. I also noted from Tom Patey's *Ballad of Bill Murray* that mud and slime are expected hazards. Turning to Hamish MacInnes' *Call-Out* I read of numerous rescues carried out on teams attempting this one climb. However, although gullies in summer are deeply unfashionable, so am I, and study of these texts resulted in the scent of a challenge overcoming the whiff of scepticism. I decided to broaden my range of Scottish mountaineering experience and give this climb a chance to impress me. I telephoned the germinator of this idea.

'I am prepared to give *Clachaig Gully* a go when conditions are right.'

I detected some pleasure at the other end. As the climber who was responsible for a route on Lewis named 'I'm enjoying this' she clearly judged that *Clachaig Gully* was also a route she would enjoy. This year

the dry early Spring conditions held into June and we pencilled in a free Monday. Retirement brings time as well as a bus pass.

‘If we are late off the hill I may be too tired to drive back.’

So I booked two berths at Lagangarbh and hoped that Benny had stocked the hut with Horlicks.

The day arrived with blue sky and light winds auguring well. We set off from the Clachaig Inn car park at 9.30 a.m. The cuckoo on the hillside passed comment on our ambition. Having read many recent blogs and the guidebooks I knew that it is now recommended to omit the lowest pitches and to descend into the gully about 1000 feet up. Some rate this the crux! Fortunately, there are sturdy trees about and an abseil seemed like a good idea. We found ourselves at the basin below the Great Cave Pitch in the company of grey wagtails. The rope jammed. This necessitated a scramble back up and an unprotected descent encumbered with two ropes. Time had passed and, after changing into my oldest serviceable rock boots and most disreputable trackie bottoms, it was 11.30 before we began the climb. However, the books suggest around five hours for the ascent.

I led off the Great Cave Pitch with Bill Murray’s words firmly in mind. It went easily to the ‘rowan-tree’ which seems to have had little opportunity to grow since 1938 and to me looked more like a birch. Then Murray took a descending traverse to a grassy patch. Ah, but on which line? I tried one then returned to try another before I found that my first choice was correct and a hidden side-pull brought me to easier ground. I belayed and called up Liz. With the sun warming the gully photos were taken and we were ready for the official crux. This also went easily with an in situ wire to render safe the most awkward moves so we paused for our pieces in the sunshine. Next came Jericho Wall. Here we became aware of the friable character of much of the rock in the gully. Some of the lower chimney came away in my hands and I was instructed to replace the holds after use. I positioned a Rock 5 despite knowing that in a fall I could not rely on it. More probably it would only deplete further the wall’s mass and in no way save me from a painful landing at the feet of my partner. This is not a pitch for climbing wall aficionados who prefer solid reliable hand and foot holds. But we are of a generation brought up on the discipline that the leader must never fall and with the heroic conceit that we are mountaineers!

The recent weather had been uncharacteristically dry so the water flow was modest and most of the time we had kept our feet dry. The next serious pitch changed that but, since we were getting quite warm, a cold shower seemed to be almost welcome. I climbed up the back of the cave then passed through a chilling chute of water before emerging via a hole in the roof of the cave onto easier ground. To expedite the passage of my partner her bulky sack was hauled up first and she then passed through

the cave at optimum speed. Our soaked clothes soon dried. My manuscript notes prepared as an aide memoire on the climb were rendered to a pulp in my pocket and I had a watch malfunction. As a consequence I let the time pass unmonitored. We were here to enjoy ourselves. June days are long and the opulent plant life, grey wagtails and even a ring ouzel added to the pleasure of an unhurried ascent. I was obliged to take extreme care on each pitch. A fall would have been a serious issue. It is unlikely that a mobile phone would have worked in the deep recesses of the gully and we were not expected to make contact with civilization for a couple of days. We only had light clothing and an abseil retreat after the first two pitches would have been hopeless. Many of the pitches do not have good abseil anchors. Our isolation was emphasized by hearing distant voices coming from the descent path from the Aonach Eagach hundreds of feet above us on the west side of the gully. My partner developed cramp in her fingers so we pitched most of the climb. At each belay I glanced across the void towards Sgor na h-Ulaidh. It provided a surrogate measure of our steady progress and I gained some comfort from the recollection that its summit lies higher than our destination. We both came to appreciate Bill Murray's remark 'There seemed to be no end to Clachaig Gully.'

Another troublesome pitch was reached. It was clearly going to be our second soaking. I squirmed up slimy rock using the back and foot method and managed to place a questionable Friend 3 before moving through the strongest flow to reach a wet ledge.

'Can I stop belaying you and take a photo?'

The answer was in the negative but, with a quadruple granny as partner, politely expressed. We struggled on. I thought that we had passed the Red Chimney Pitch some time earlier but that was clearly an impostor. However, when it came it provided a fitting finale. My earlier guiding memories of Murray's account had become ragged and, as I neared the top of this pitch, I had quite forgotten his 'one knobble'. I tried various means of getting up to the top of the right hand wall but the holds seemed to be insufficient for a committing move. Eventually, just as he had, I saw that a step across the chimney was possible and enabled a move up on holds which suddenly worked for me. Soon the rest of the gully succumbed and, after admiring rose root growing in profusion, we struggled out through appallingly loose rock and heather to reach the descent path at 7.40 p.m. (by her watch).

'Well, we are not going to get our tea tonight.'

I suspect that Murray's team did not think first of their stomachs. Liz burrowed in her sack and found a most welcome bag of jelly babies. We coiled the rope, packed the gear away and set off down the badly eroded descent path. Knowing that it has claimed the lives of several tired mountaineers we moved slowly and carefully. As we descended we were

reminded that it was late in the day since we could see people leaving the bar to return to the campsite. We reached the Clachaig Inn at 9.30 p.m. exactly twelve hours after starting having travelled less than a mile from our starting point. I removed my more offensive garments and we staggered into the bar.

‘Are you still serving food?’

‘No, kitchen closes at 9.00.’

‘Well, we shall have a pint of beer and a shandy.’

My tired and hungry partner then gave an emotional outburst of such theatrical brilliance that it persuaded the commissariat of the Clachaig into immediate action and two large bowls of soup and bread and butter were produced. Fed, watered and after using the much improved Lagangarbh shower we became normal sensible pensioners once more and I believe that her ambitions for *The Chasm* have been put on hold.

## THE FINAL MOVE

By Brian Hill

THE TENSION was palpable as the group of four moved up to the final few feet. It showed in the haggard lines of their faces and in the tenseness in their shoulders. Their eyes had narrowed and their mouths had thinned and tightened as they assessed the situation. The freshening wind tugged at the knees of their flabby breeches. The leaden sky had lost definition and was settling lower and whiter on the nearby peaks. Already, the higher tops had become obscured, and now, the spiralling columns of snow devils could be seen marching across the higher slopes as the impending storm and snow line descended towards them. Time was running out. It had been a long day; in fact, it had been a long four days, of wit battling wit and the elements to the culmination nigh at hand. Patience had been tried but at this very moment coolness and steadiness were demanded to see this thing through to its conclusion.

The foursome grouped closer bracing themselves against the rising wind, the three focusing on the current leader and what he was about to do next for the outcome of these four days of toil and hardship, and of expectancy and fame, would be decided within the next move. They all looked at him and studied him as he in turn looked at and studied this final move ahead. The leader's partner, a stalwart and stoic to the end, looked uncharacteristically at unease and shifted weight from foot to foot which he would later claim was due to the increasing cold and an attempt to keep warm, and not to distraction and a waning of confidence in his partner. The other two shifted more anxiously still, well aware that their whole future was now fully dependant on the outcome of what this man might accomplish within the next few moments. The partner turned his collar up and huddled into his jacket turning his back into the wind off the sea, noticing that the knuckles of his leader as he took his grip were as white as the caps of the breaking waves he had seen in the distance. Relax! Relax! He mouthed silently, you'll never do it unless you relax. The other two sensed this also and searched each other's eyes aware of the faltering. If the tension was palpable before, it was almost unbearable now. The leader was gripped tight, swaying back and forth, staring at the line, and this movement was not just due to the wind. The partner dropped his gaze altogether; just get it over with, he thought, just make the move. The two others again looked at each other, reflecting on all mistakes they had made in the last few days – that it should now come down to this, this final moment. As if on some unseen signal, the three turned their look to at the leader sensing the moment had come. In an instant, they saw his fixed stare at the problem ahead momentarily change focus to a distant almost vacant gaze into space, saw the knuckles

of his fingers redden as his gripped relaxed, and he made the move. And everybody held their breath.

As was seen from afar, the rotating white orb picked up speed on the downward slope before catching a break in the slope which steered it across the bank and slightly uphill steadily losing momentum to reach the brink where, as everyone gasped, it teetered for a moment then disappeared. The sound was unmistakable before being drowned by the roar from the crowd. He had made his putt.

(The frequent references to the ancient game of golf in Robin Campbell's 'Climbing and Writing: The Victorian Way' in *SMCJ 2004*, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 195, 546–54, seeded thoughts that there might indeed be similarities between the two sports.)

## SCRIPT FOR A JESTER'S TEAR

By Jim Graham

STANDING IN THE car park, the climber was about to set off for the hill when his mobile phone rang. It was work. 'What now?', he thought answering it. Yet another problem has arisen with an issue that was not only taking up a lot of his time at work but was now encroaching on his confused personal life. The call lasted for about 10 minutes and by the time he set off he was 'wound up' to say the least. He knew he should have left the mobile in the hut; more fool him for answering it in the first place. You would think he would know better by now – there always seems to be someone wanting a slice of him; that's how it felt to him anyway.

He was still in this train of thought when he caught up with a couple who were about to head up onto a Munro. They chatted for a few minutes before setting off on their separate ways.

On he plodded, still in his morose mood, thinking about everything that was going on in his life, the mistakes, things not said or done, the hurt, the loss, a year spent in free-fall, running away.

Lost in these thoughts he walked round a corner and bumped into the two Dougies and Ian; friends who had set off while he was still on the phone. They were heading up to bag a Munro while he was going looking for an easy gully to climb. 'Nice to be in company', he was thinking as they set off together, 'I am beginning to get fed up wandering around the hills by myself.' However, they soon parted company as he headed deeper into the mist looking for the start of his climb. Reaching the bottom of the gully and sitting in the snow to gear up an eerie silence settled around him broken only by the occasional fading sounds of his friends making their way deeper into the lowering mist.

Starting up the gully he soon found himself floundering in deep unconsolidated snow. He kept going ignoring the warning bells going off in his head, perhaps thinking too much about other things. After what seemed like an age he reached the first ice pitch. This he attacked with all the delicacy and panache of the proverbial bull in a china shop. Flailing about on the ice like a court jester; bells, baubles and all. Ice was being knocked off left, right and centre by his tools – smashing picks into bare rock looking for placements, sparks flying everywhere, a pyrotechnic show to be proud of, the sound of metal on rock was deafening. Any ice that was left was soon finished off with his crampons. This was ice climbing at its absolute worst. This was the assault of the geriatric baboon. On clearing the ice pitch he found himself back into deep unconsolidated snow, lurching, sprawlicking and swimming upward finally reaching the relative safety of a snow ledge scooped out

by the wind under the gully wall. He flopped into it exhausted, arms and legs shaking uncontrollably, chest heaving desperately trying to suck air into his lungs; his clothing was soaked in sweat. He was scared shitless.

Calming down, he made himself comfortable and took his rucksack off. Taking out his lunch box, he set it in the snow, and while reaching for his flask he caught sight of the lunch box tumbling down the gully out of sight. 'Bloody Hell, can't I do anything right?'

He didn't know how long he sat there, but he did know he wasn't going back the way he had come. The only option was to go up. The best he could hope for was that conditions would improve with height, but something told him that he wasn't going to have that sort of luck today.

Sitting looking out from his perch everything he could see was white. There was no corrie floor – the mist was too thick. The gully walls were plastered with snow and ice making some very pretty and some weird and wonderful patterns. He certainly had to admit that nature was a pretty good decorator. Sitting there he felt he was cocooned by his surroundings; his vision being restricted to not much more than a hundred feet in any direction. With his mind, by this time, in neutral, he was idly looking at the opposite gully wall when he became aware of a trench in the snow running up below the wall. He shifted his position to allow him to look further up the gully and, sure enough, disappearing into the mist was a line with patches of turf showing through the snow.

He steeled himself and nervously moved out into the gully, struggling through deep snow towards the channel below the gully wall. Relief washed over him when he was able to plant his tools into frozen turf and looking upwards he could see turf and what looked like ice giving him a line to follow. Finding good placements he started to move up into the mist gaining confidence as he went higher. When this channel ran out he was forced over to the other side of the gully where he found ice smears on the walls and more patchy turf. As he gained height he became totally focussed in what he was doing. Concentration was total – it had to be – the consequence of a mistake was unthinkable. Even though he was climbing well within his limit, there was no safety system, nobody knew where he was; he wasn't even sure if he knew where he was either. His confidence was building as he climbed, feeling relaxed, breathing easily, legs and arms moving with no effort. His hand and eye coordination was there like any craftsman using a good set of tools sometimes delicately using ice smears, sometimes digging through snow to find turf, sometimes hooking into cracks in the rock, but all the time being efficient and economic. He was totally focussed, even enjoying himself, using all his winter climbing skills; his axe, hammer and crampons acting as mobile belays as he moved steadily upwards towards the cornice which he hoped would not be there.

Like he had thought earlier he wasn't going to have that sort of luck

today. There it was looming out of the mist, not that big but big enough to stop him getting over it. Looking for a way round it he saw a snow ramp leading up to the buttress on the left. The ramp turned out to be a slab covered in unconsolidated snow. He moved onto it brushing snow away looking for something solid which he could use, but there was nothing. Scanning the wall above he could see cracks and pockets which he thought he would be able to use.

'In for a penny, in for a pound' he thought as he hooked his right-hand pick into a pocket above his head and taking his weight on it he stepped upwards. His crampons contacted the rock under the snow and he found small ridges, he hoped, for his front points. He felt secure and was able to torque his left pick into a vertical crack allowing him to pull further up the ramp. The climbing now was much steeper and felt fairly tenuous requiring all his concentration and focus as he placed his tools into cracks, pockets, on ledges and over blocks using anything that would give him purchase. His world was encapsulated in these few feet of mountain, everything else forgotten as he scanned ahead for safe placements, feeling delicately through the snow with his cramponed feet. He was at one with himself, at one with the mountain, he was in control, climbing by instinct. It really didn't get any better than this.

The ramp took him onto a ridge which led to the plateau about thirty feet away. He could feel the exposure all around him and he knew he was probably about six or seven hundred feet above the corrie floor, but it felt good to be there after the confines of the gully. Moving up towards the plateau the snow got steadily steeper and turned to powder. 'Great for skiing on, but perhaps not so good for climbing', he thought with some irony. Only ten feet to go but it looked like there was a bit of a bulge at the top which might make things a bit precarious. He wasn't sure how the snow was still there let alone supporting his weight. Climbing this was madness; even with a rope it would have been 'interesting'. He knew he should not be there but he had no option but to carry on, trying to 'think light' as he tried to levitate himself upwards. As his head came level with the top he felt as though he was standing on a cloud. 'If this lot lets go now it's going to hurt' he thought as he reached over the bulge with his axe. He felt the pick catch something solid. Reaching over with his hammer in his other hand, he again felt that reassuring thump as the pick bit into something solid. He tested both placements, closed his eyes, held his breath and pulled up.

The climber stood on the plateau lost within himself, and staring into space. He was breathing deeply filling his lungs with air; and he could feel his heart pumping the blood around his body. There was no uncontrollable shaking of limbs and gone was the feeling of fear which was replaced by a calmness and confidence which had been eluding him for quite some time. Standing there, thinking about what he had done, it

seemed to him that he had just walked through a door which had taken him from a dark enclosed place to somewhere which was much brighter and airier. He was aware that some sort of fundamental change had taken place, which was difficult to grasp at first, but slowly it began to dawn on him that perhaps there was some sort of self belief in there.

Breaking out of his reverie, he looked around at the whiteness surrounding him. The edge of the cornice was difficult to see so he decided to take a dogleg across the plateau to keep clear of it. He set the map and compass without thinking about it and set off for the bealach where he would find the path down into the corrie. The walking was pretty easy going downhill with his footsteps being cushioned by the soft snow and it wasn't long before he managed to surprise himself by arriving at the bealach exactly where he wanted to. A right turn and he followed the path into the corrie.

Wandering down the path, mind in 'neutral, finger up the bum', he idly glanced to his right to see a yellow plastic box emblazoned with 'Tupperware 40th Anniversary'. 'Bloody collectors' piece, this now', he thought as he picked it up with a smile on his face. The fruitcake inside was a bit mangled but it tasted fine. 'It's a funny old game this', he thought looking up to see blue sky appearing through the cloud.

A couple of hours later he was sitting in the snow, with his back against a tree, overlooking the loch and the road beside it. The cloud had lifted and the landscape was bathed in moonlight making an almost surreal picture and there was absolutely no sound to be heard. As he sat there, the silence was broken by an articulated lorry making its way along the road. He watched the loom of its headlights move up and down and swing from side to side as it negotiated the inclines and bends of the road. Eventually the lorry disappeared out of sight around a bend leaving him staring after it. He sat there in the silence once more thinking about his own road and where it would take him. That he didn't know but he knew now that it would take him in the right direction. Just like the lorry there would be twists and turns, ups and downs, and no doubt it would be a struggle at times but he knew it was always going to be interesting.

When he finally stood up he shouldered his pack and while he adjusted the straps he looked around taking in the moonlit landscape. He looked back at the mountain with the big half moon floating above then turned and set off towards the road.

## THE KEY

By John Allen

I HAD BEEN a member for about six months, but had never used the key. Others had reached the huts before me, so no need, or one had been hidden under... (editor: leave that out, might upset the hut custodians). When I needed mine for a night at Lagangarbh, I couldn't find it. From then on, I was reduced to making sure that somebody else had a key, and arriving at the hut with him or just after him, so as not to admit loss. It would be in my SMC file, in the postal envelope, that's it – must remember to check that out back home.

It was not in the postal envelope.

I sent off for the supplementary CIC spanner so that I could get in there on a day in July when I was taking some non-walking relatives up a Ben Nevis route more interesting than the tourist way. Before leaving home I gathered up all the keys I could find from hooks and bottom drawers, confident that I had temporarily forgotten my secret hiding place and one of these would be the Precious One. Off we went, with promise of a brew at a little private place that I knew and in which I had shares. Of course on arrival, I didn't have the right key, and no amount of fumbling about the door frame, turning over squalid rocks nearby... (editor: leave that out, might upset many grandees of the Establishment, cause questions at the parliament of the AGM). Fortunately it wasn't raining outside the hut and the sun shone on those wonderful precipices that I had brought my family to admire, and we sat on big rocks well distant from the immediate environs of the hut to eat our butties, drank highland spring water from safe Highland Spring sealed bottles, and avoided awkward requests for cups of tea. No real embarrassment then.

Next time it was winter, a March SMC weekend meet at the CIC. I could ascend at my own pace and make sure I didn't arrive first. Easy at my age, and no loss of face for being last, as when I was younger. The problem arose when next morning I was also rather slow to exit for our route and someone called: 'If you're last out, don't forget to lock the door.' Crickey, caught out at last. No key for the locking. Get a move on, leave gaiters, overtrousers, waist harness in the sack till later. I made it. Got snow down my socks on the way up *Observatory Gully*, forgot to put my harness on before leading up *Gardyloo*, just tied on with a bowline. Like old times. Super pitch on the day, up past the cave and beyond, screwed into Nigel's tubular weaponry, belayed him onwards to the cornice and over. Felt even better when the next leader (not SMC) to my stance told me he was about to faint, would I catch hold of him before he passed out, and attach his slings to my screws. So I did. Great stuff. Whoopee day!

Back down to the hut for tea and the door was open. I could forget about keys for the time being, but I did begin to feel that I didn't deserve this hut key privilege, a bit of a fraud, an imposter. Later that year I had so forgotten about keys that I really embarrassed myself.

Friend Ian was free for a trip up north, so I suggested that we aimed for the Ullapool area to do a few of those remarkable summits in the Inverpollly region. We could stay at the Naismith hut. He had been there as a guest on the meet of another club, so knew where it was, and I needed a mountain break from harsh domestic duties. I was sure that the spare key on my ring was the SMC hut key, so we could just turn up (editor: always inform the hut warden first). We did, and the key did not fit the lock. Shame on me. I could not accommodate my guest. We had to return to holiday-infested Ullapool and scrounge a B&B late on that day. A twin-bedded room. The greasy breakfast was a bit hard to take, Tourist Board approved or not.

Serious problem for me, this key business. What should I do? I began to think of ways round it. Resign temporarily from the SMC on some pretext that would retain honour (e.g. emigrate briefly, or have a conscientious objection to enlarging the CIC hut), then re-apply? Ridiculous. Become someone else, invent a whole new list of ascents and fictitious companions for the application form? No hope. How do others cope? Is that the reason why so few members actually visit the huts? Loss of key. I bet that's it, but they won't admit it. I began to hope that all the locks would need to be changed, and new keys cut, so that I could honourably apply for a new key. About the same time as these rather desperate thoughts, I began to talk to my friends. They laughed. Resign, they said.

Some really serious memory searching produced the reason. It was in the pocket of an old fleece jacket that I had left behind at the hut after a winter visit. I had thought about going up to the hut to recover the old jacket later, but then there was a snag – no key to let myself in to the hut. And I couldn't ask to borrow one. Later I heard that the Hut Custodian was in the habit of on-site burning of items abandoned at the hut. So if he had burnt everything on site somewhere, there would be a key among the blackened ashes. I would have to scrape and sift among the stones around the hut on my own secret mission. Not an attractive idea, for more reasons than one. So still no key.

I would have to grovel.

Then there was a change of Convener of Huts Sub-Committee. I would write a suitable letter, servile, offering to pay upfront into the hut fund, acknowledging that loss of a high-security key might require review at a Huts Committee meeting, with refusal to re-supply as an option. I would have to resign, disgraced. What was the point of membership with no hut key? I could buy the SMC Journal at a shop. But I would forfeit the

automatic right to attend the AGM, Dinner, and other events. I would be dependent on invitation by mates – now unlikely.

I began to think of the awfulness of composing such an obsequious and degrading letter, when quite suddenly, like the appearance of a magic fairy, the new Huts Convener appeared at a meet at the CIC when I was present. And just as suddenly he was snatched away on priority business, and disappeared into the night. I had lost my chance to address the question in all humility to the apparition. Damn, damn, damn. What an idiot I felt! I nearly went outside to dig around in the snow where the CIC Convener must have burned my jacket (editor: cut that bit out – sounds like you are trying to blame him, and he might take offence), but I gave that idea a miss – too much discoloured snow.

Then, good soul that I am, I agreed to a stint on the Committee. Though meetings were to be held at Club huts, others would arrive before me, I could be sure. At least I would be able to stay overnight and climb/walk next day after the evening meetings. Out of the corner of an eye, I spied the Huts Convener again. This was my second chance. After the meeting I threw everything to the wind and cornered him.

I think he was shocked, a bit speechless, as if no one had ever tried this request before. Maybe he was new to this huts convening business (editor: better leave that out, he is very experienced in these matters) and only expected routine questions, but not this one. There is nothing in the Rules on this, but the letter that comes with the key makes its value clear. Obviously you mustn't try to forge a copy, or lend it, but it doesn't say you can't lose it. It is not like a car key, or a house key, that can after some irritating phone calling, a roadside tantrum, divorce request, form filling, security check, delays and upfront payments usually be resolved quite easily. He felt the gravity of the situation as heavily as I did, and I accepted that there would have to be a payment (editor: leave this out, members might ask questions at the AGM, phone the Daily Telegraph with new revelations, require a new Rule about keys).

We exchanged pleasantries, I tried some humour, rather hollow; and we agreed a standard rate for a replacement on receipt of an explanatory letter, and I rejoiced that I might soon be a proper member again. We talked over past climbing adventures, and I slept like a confirmed member of the church.

## LOCHNAGAR ROUTE NAMES

By Sheila Young

'HAS ANYONE ELSE responded to that woman with the geeky research project on the route names of Lochnagar?' posted one of the climbers I had contacted in the course of my research, on the UKClimbing Forum. Not quite sure about how to take that comment, I decided to regard it as a compliment and took 'geeky' to mean 'original' and 'enterprising'... and continued my research undaunted until all 261 route names on Lochnagar had been researched. It took me eight months and required considerable sleuthing to complete my project.

A lifelong connection to the world of climbing (my Dad climbed with Mac Smith in the 1940s) and a discussion about the provenance of a particular route name on Lochnagar were the sparks which lit the flame. I decided to look at the naming of the routes of the said mountain and did this from first principles, talking where possible to at least one of the first ascensionists directly. Over the decades 184 climbers made first ascents on Lochnagar, so this was no mean task. Nevertheless, post 1958 only five names could not be discussed directly with a first ascensionist, so the response rate was very high, for which I am incredibly grateful. I had to make a decision about whether or not to include the names of variations and decided to do so as there were a few interesting ones. I know that there is debate about whether variations should be named at all... but that is not for me to argue. Essentially I took all the names out of the Rock and Ice guide and I refrained from making a judgement on which names sounded interesting and worthy of investigation; I looked at each and every one.

My reason for choosing Lochnagar is that I've always loved it and living in Aboyne, it also happens to be my local mountain. Added to this is the fact that there are some pretty intriguing names there. The field area for my research comprised all of the cliffs on the north east and northern flanks of Lochnagar, excepting Clais Rathadan. My thesis title was: *Between a rock and a hard place: a study of the function, structure and semantics of the route names on Lochnagar*. And before you turn over to the next article, fearing an approaching academic paper, I am not going to bore you with too much information on the function and structure, since I know from my discussions with some of you, that what you are really interested in is the semantics ...the content of the names. However, to understand my findings you need to understand a little about name structure and function, so let's get that out of the way first.

The posh name for a route or path name is a honym. Hodos means 'path' in Greek. No surprises there then since the main function of a honym is to define and in some cases, to describe the route and show

the way. But there's more. Hodos has another meaning and that is 'journey'. Encapsulated within the name then is the *experience* of the climb; the effort, emotion and energy involved. We get an insight into the total experience of the climb as it happened on a particular day, in a particular month of a particular year. Initially names were only descriptive, either of the topography (*Giant's Head Chimney*, *Slab Gully*, *Pinnacle Gully 2*) or of the climbers who made the first ascents (*Douglas-Gibson Gully*, *Bell's Pillar*, *Raeburn's Gully*). However, this changed as the obvious lines were climbed and names began to describe the experience of the climb itself or the climber's state of mind at the time of the climb, but more on that later.

Structure is more complex, but vital for understanding the evolution of the names, not just on Lochnagar but on all mountains and crags. Names can be one of three types: simple, complex or phrasal. Examples of simple names are *Chevalier*, *Mort*, *Psyche*, *Shadowlands*, *Nevermore*. These can also have the definite article, *The Vice*, *The Link* and *The Gift*. Complex names are usually made up of two or more words, *West Gully*, *Pinnacle Face*, *Jacob's Slabs*, *Fedaige Buttress*. Phrasal names, naturally enough, include a phrase, *Once upon a time in the East*, *Where Eagles Dare*, *Diedre of the Sorrows*, *Trail of Tears*, *The Dark Side of the Moon* and *Slip Slidin' Away*. Of the 261 names 161 are compound, 83 are simplex and 18 are phrasal.

We need to return to complex names for a minute as there is a bit more to understand about their structure. Complex names have two parts, a generic and a specific. As you would imagine, the specific tells you more about the generic. So for example, in *West Gully* 'gully' is the generic and 'west' is the specific. In *Pinnacle Gully* 'gully' is again the generic and 'pinnacle' the specific. However, in *Gully Route* 'route' is the generic and 'gully' the specific.

So how is all this relevant? First of all, my research has shown that as with function, the structure of names has changed through time and as the structure changed so also did the content. The earliest names were complex using a generic/specific structure often using numbers/letters (*Pinnacle Gully 1*, *Shadow Buttress A*) or directionals (*Central Buttress*, *West Gully*, *The Black Spout*, *Left-Hand*). The use of letters and numbers is also early and rather short lived. *Route 2* was the last route to be numbered/lettered in 1953. A cursory glance at some other regional guides shows that this fashion died out around this time in other areas. Another significant group in this category were eponymous names (*Tough-Brown Traverse*, *Raeburn's Gully*, *Bell's Pillar*), also short lived but for reasons which will be discussed later.

The first simplex names appeared in the 1950s with *Scarface* (1951), *The Stack* (1952), *The Clam* (1954) and *The Link* (1956). 82 names are simplex and they appear fairly steadily throughout the whole period,

though their zenith would appear to be in 1994/95 when 13 of the 18 routes named in those two seasons were simplices.

Phrasal names appeared in 1985/6 with *Slice of Ice*, *Diedre of the Sorrows* and *Trail of Tears*. Messrs Nisbet, McLean and Dinwoodie were responsible for the introduction of phrasal names to Lochnagar. This change in structure allowed a different type of name to enter the corpus. The structure enabled length and this in turn allowed songs, poems and film titles (*The Dark Side of the Moon*, *Once Upon a Time in the East*). There is a very gradual trickle of phrasal names through the past two decades and since all three types of structure are still to be found it can be concluded that one type of structure did not supersede another.

As well as looking at the structure of the names I also looked at the language. It should not surprise that the names of the routes on Lochnagar are overwhelmingly English – 253. This is to be expected, since the climbers are all (apart from one Frenchman) native English speakers. There is only one fully Gaelic name, *An Saobh-chreideach* ('the heresy' in English), chosen by a non-Gaelic speaker who had a Gaelic speaking girlfriend at the time. If Gaelic is notably absent, would it not be fair to expect Scots, most notably the Doric, to be represented? The reality is that there is only one fully Scots name, *Mirk*, and another three names which have a Scots element, *Crumbling Cranny*, *Dod's Diversion* (and related *Dod's Crack*), *Reiver's Buttress*. It is only in recent years that the speaking of Scots has been encouraged, and rather than considered a vulgar version of English it is now considered a rich and beautiful language in itself. While the majority of first ascents were being made on Lochnagar it would not have been considered fitting to give a Scots name. Many of the earliest climbers came from the middle and upper classes and would have been more likely to speak Received Pronunciation (RP) than a Scots dialect, though it must be acknowledged that *Crumbling Cranny* casts doubt on that as it dates from the earliest period. GJF Dutton, writing in the SMC Journal of 1960<sup>1</sup>, makes a plea to climbers to make names relevant to the area they are in. He would clearly have preferred more use of Gaelic in Highland areas.

The fact that climbing has its roots in the Alps – in particular the French and German speaking parts – can be seen through several of the route names. Taking French first, of the seven French names, three are totally French, *Mort*, *Chevalier*, *Arête* (variation of *Epitome*). The other four have a French element, *Sentinel Couloir*, *Diedre of the Sorrows*, *Giant's Head Arête*, *Tough-Brown Integral*. There is one German name *Mordwand*. However, terms such as *arête* and *couloir* have been 'adopted' into the vocabulary of climbers as if they were English words, in the same way that *corrie* and *glen* have from Gaelic. Indeed, some climbers were not aware of having used a foreign word in the name.

1 'The Naming of Climbs' (Letter), *SMCJ* 1960, xxvii, 151, 45–7.

Interestingly, Dutton reprimands climbers on the use of foreign terms in names, and says that there is plenty of scope in the Gaelic and English languages to describe features without needing to use others. Finally, there are three names which should also be mentioned, *Mullahmaloumouktou*, *Katsalana* and *The Stooee Chimney*. The former was chosen to sound Arabic, *Katsalana* is based on a First Nation Canadian name and *The Stooee Chimney* is a phonetic version of *Stuic*.

I also looked at the grammar used in the names and what became clear is that people actually do think about grammar when they are naming a route. Most importantly, the meaning can change if the correct (intended) grammar is missing. If previous editions of the Rock and Ice guide books are examined it can be seen that in the interests of standardization in editing, small but important details can be overlooked. Some routes are hyphenated in some guides but not in others. There are issues with capitalisation and possessives. *Fools' Rib* was submitted to the editor but has been registered as *Fool's Rib*, which does not fit with the semantics since the intention was that both climbers were fools, not just one. Douglas Dinwoodie and Bob Smith were trying to climb *Pinnacle Grooves* that day but got onto the rib instead. They climbed it by accident; they got 'fooled'. *Pelican Groove* was submitted as *Pelicans Groove* since both climbers are Pelicans (Robert Gordon's alumni). *Tough-Guy* was originally *Tough-guy* in order not to appear eponymous. Guy is Guy Muhlemann and the name is a clever play on words.

Twenty six names have the definite article, *The Stack*, *The Clam*, *The Finalist*, *The Nihilist*. Definite by name, and definite by choice it seems, since the majority of names which include the definite article were deliberately given. In all cases the reason given was to add emphasis.

Climbers also use various techniques very successfully to 'colour' the names they choose, such as alliteration (*Pillar Perfect*, *Dyke Dastardly*, *Mullahmaloumouktou*), rhyme (*Slice of Ice*, *Stackattack*) and sibilance (*Slice of Ice*, *Isis*, *Eclipse*, *Solstice*). Another device to add interest to the names is punning/play on words. 26 names use this technique, 25 are a play on words and one, *Torquing Corpse* is a pun. Torquing is the most fabulous word to pun with, and as you will know, it has been used very effectively elsewhere in Scotland, *Torquing Nonsense* (Aonach Beag 2000,) *Torquing Heads* (Coire nan Lochan 1986), *Torque of the Devil* (Coire nan Lochan 1988).

The final word on structure relates to something that place name scholars term 'naming conventions'; 'themes' to the rest of us. One name is 'the motivating name' and the subsequent names are 'the motivators'. Often this starts off fairly logically, *Transept Route* leads to *Transept Groove*, but then this leads to more sophisticated structural links and names such as *Sepulchre*, *Judas Priest*, *Trinity* appear. I identified 16 naming conventions in total (including, ecclesiastical/religious, morbid,

moon, shadow, mythological/supernatural) and found 94 names to be part of one. The most popular naming conventions are mythological/supernatural 15, morbid 13 and ecclesiastical/religious 13. Climbers, it seems, prefer to follow a theme. The reasons given are: 'it's fun to try to find a name to fit with the existing theme', 'following a theme saves you the effort of thinking up a completely new name', 'it's important to stick with tradition'. Of course, some people deliberately choose to break with a theme and some people get very upset by this. It is difficult to state categorically when naming conventions first started on Lochnagar. According to Greg Strange, it could be as early as 1933, when Symmers and Ewan named *Polyphemus Gully* and *Gargoyle Chimney*. They had already named *Giant's Head Chimney* in 1930, which was probably the 'motivator'. The other thing about naming conventions is that they generally evolve naturally through time, but occasionally they can be deliberately created, for instance if several routes are completed over a short period of time. *Athos*, *Porthos*, *Aramis* (Three Musketeers theme) is an example of this.

This leads conveniently on to the content of the names. The content of the earliest names was linked to the function. They were almost entirely eponymous, named later by others. The question of which was the first route to be named by a first ascensionist is a difficult one to answer. Greg Strange is fairly certain that Symmers named most of his own routes; these began in 1926 with *Pinnacle Gully 1*. However, it is still unclear which of the route names over the next 30 years already existed and which were genuinely new names, and this will probably never be known.

The eponymous names were followed by names which included topographical features or made reference to climbing in some way. According to Bill Brooker, 'during the early days, the names were not considered important; what mattered was the feature you were climbing.' The results of my study would bear out that this preference not only existed in Bill Brooker's time but has prevailed throughout the decades. Of the 162 names, 128 include one or more topographical features, *Fool's Rib*, *West Gully*, *Dod's Crack*.

Another discovery was that names often have several layers of meaning. 153 names have two or more layers of meaning. *Starlight and Storm* for example on one level refers to the fact that it was climbed one weekend when there was an accident on Lochnagar which claimed two lives. The contrast of the excellent day's climbing they had experienced, the 'starlight', contrasted poignantly with the 'storm' experienced by the climbers who lost their lives. On the second level it makes reference to Gaston Rebuffat's book of the same name. *Terrorist*, as well as its literal meaning referred to the fact that Norman Keir was using 'terrors' to climb the route. He was one of the first climbers in the North East to use

Terrordactyls. *The Hacker* fitted with nearby *Terrorist* but also referred to the vegetatious conditions at the time. It was very mossy, so there was a ‘good deal of hacking to achieve the goal’. *Shady Grove Road* fits with the ‘shadow’ theme but refers to *Shadygrove Road* which runs through Raffles housing scheme in Carlisle. Jason Currie explains ‘I named the route after the street in a joking reference to not wanting to go there unless I was tooled up.’ Incidentally, the route was supposed to be registered as ‘*Shadygrove Road*’ rather than ‘*Shady Grove*’. Most of the traditional hodonyms (pre 1960) have a single layer of meaning. Of the 108 names with a single layer of meaning, 47 are simplices, suggesting that in part, the simpler the name, the more straightforward the meaning. There are also ‘hidden meanings’ to names. For instance, some of you might realise that *Life for Lust* is a play on words of the song ‘*Lust for Life*’ and fewer still will know that it also refers to the Lewinski/Clinton affair, the news of which had just broken. However, perhaps only the FA himself will know the third private and hidden meaning.

History on Lochnagar was made in 1967 with the names *Crypt* and *Mort*. Mike Forbes (now Peach) recalls trying to get away from what he termed ‘the traditional type of name’ as he found these boring. He also remembers the appearance of the first simplex names with no obvious connection to topography or climbing terminology elsewhere in Scotland and wanted to emulate that in the Cairngorms. These are experimental and experiential names, giving an insight into the minds of the climbers at the time. *Crypt* was so named because Mike Forbes and Mike Rennie had an arrangement with the minister of a church in Braemar to leave bikes there – they were deposited in the crypt. *Crypt* is linked to *Mort* (lost in the rockfalls of 1995/2000) and fits well with the morbid theme. Mike Forbes chose the name because he was in ‘a very morbid frame of mind’, as one of his poems, published in the Etchachan Club Journal in 1975, attests:

Untitled

*A day of doom, of death to foretell*  
*A day so grim of a soul to sell*  
*A day of the cliff vast and black*  
*The day when the rope would cease to be slack*  
*The day of the red bespattered snow*  
*The day of the cortege on the hill of death*  
*The day when I took my last long breath.*

However, there was another practical reason for progressing from the ‘traditional’ type of name. Once all the obvious features had been climbed it became necessary to become more creative, proving that necessity is indeed the mother of invention.

Before I talked to a first ascensionist, I did my own research into each name for possible meaning. While it was important to keep an open mind about each name, some research enhanced the interview process. For instance, it was useful to know that *Morning Has Broken* (Cat Stevens, 1972) and *Eclipse* (Pink Floyd, 1973) were pop songs. As it transpired, the former played no part in the naming process, while the latter did. This leads to an important observation; you can think you know what a name means, but you can be completely wrong, as I was to find out on several occasions. For instance, would it not be logical to think that *Sonshine Corner* was a summer first ascent. Well, it appears not, since this was a winter first ascent. However, some names do refer, at least on one level, to seasonal conditions, *Slice of Ice*, *The Ice Ox*, *White Wizard*, *Isis*, *Winter Face*.

Not surprisingly the weather/conditions feature frequently in the names. *Rolling Thunder*, *Chinook*, *Footloose*, *Gale Force Groove*, *Red Lightning*, *Starlight and Storm* all refer (at least on one level) to the weather or conditions. However, some names referring to conditions are not always recognisable as such. *Fool's Rib* (or *Fools' Rib*, as it should be) was so named because it was climbed by accident, as conditions were so appalling that the climbers could not see what line they were following. *Epitome* was the opposite extreme, as it epitomized climbing on a perfect summer's day. Other names refer to the extreme effort taken to complete the climb or the overall experience of the climb. *The Gift*, for instance, was a snatched route, as the climber needed to be home by mid afternoon. The climb was therefore a gift in that it was early on in the season, it was relatively easy and it was achieved in a limited time. *The Argonaut*, on the other hand, was 'a bit of a journey' because it took Dale and Todd 9 hours to climb 400 feet.

And while names range from the light hearted, *Ham Butty* (Bill Church was eating his ham sandwich after the climb when he noticed that a nearby route was called *Iffy*), *Pillar Perfect*, *Freewheelin'*, to the intellectual, *Nevermore*, *Trail of Tears*, *Diedre of the Sorrows*, there are others which are deeply personal responses to highly stressful situations, *Redemption*, *Torquing Corpse*. *Redemption* was one of those routes which required a 'gargantuan struggle.' This was the fourth attempt and it turned out to be an epic, involving a fall and it was finally achieved well into the night in appalling weather. I was frequently told that some routes require carefully chosen names, and this was one. Richardson and Cartwright batted several names around for quite some time, finally settling for *Redemption*, which Cartwright rather eloquently describes as 'a heavy word, a word redolent with reprieve and gratitude'.

As well as the weather a number of names acknowledge the idiosyncrasies of Lochnagar itself specifically that it is steep, hard and the rocks are often slimy and vegetatious. All the 'shadow' names

(*Shadow Buttresses A and B, Shadowlands, Shady Grove Road*) reflect the dark, shaded faces. *Fluffy Face, Grovel Wall, The Hacker, Slime Lords* all refer to the turfy, vegetative nature of the faces on Lochnagar. *Steep Frowning Glories*, taken from Byron's poem Lochnagar, captures beautifully the darkness, the steepness and the majesty of the mountain.

I was also interested to see if the names changed as climbers from further afield appeared on the cliffs of Lochnagar. After all, the earliest climbers were mainly from the Aberdeen area and there was generally a feeling of ownership of local crags. It was fascinating to explore attitudes to 'outsiders' coming in. Tom Patey shows the extent of this feeling with these comments:

'Indeed, the Aberdeen group held a monopoly in the North-East Corrie [of Lochnagar] till 1957, when Jimmy Marshall and a raiding Edinburgh party scored a notable triumph on Parallel Gully "B".'<sup>2</sup>

and

'Eventually, and inevitably, the first invaders began to arrive, precursors of a new regime, which was to challenge the Aberdeen climbers for the leading role in the development of Scottish ice-craft.'<sup>3</sup>

It wasn't perhaps that the local climbers did not want to share their cliffs with others, it's just that they did not want the cliffs to be overrun and undoubtedly they wanted to keep the best new routes for themselves. In fact it really did seem to matter to them that the Cairngorms were looked upon favourably. North Eastern climbers strove to establish the Cairngorms as a respectable climbing area when its crags had been dismissed as grubby citadels of vegetation and indeed achieved this:

'The Cairngorms are now firmly established as a reputable rock climbing centre and it took several years of campaigning among the infidels to achieve this.'<sup>4</sup>

'Raiding party', 'invader' and 'infidels' are highly emotive words and their choice shows the strength of feeling. The sense is that they, their land and their ways are under attack from marauding forces. Naming, it seems, is also about claiming and conquering.

If inter-city, inter-regional rivalry was fierce then it is not difficult to imagine the reaction to climbers coming from south of the Border. Whillans' *Sassenach* was undoubtedly meant to antagonise and it did! When Whillans and Brown bagged one of the hardest routes on the Ben at the time, *Centurion*, Douglas Dinwoodie recalls feeling ashamed that

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2 'Post-War Winter Mountaineering in Scotland', *AJ* 1960, 65, 165.

3 'Cairngorm Commentary', *SMCJ* 1962, xxvii, 153, 207-20.

4 *Ibid.*

Scottish climbers didn't get there first. He is also of the opinion, reflecting back that 'anti-Englishness varied from group to group, and from light hearted jibing to mean bigotry.' *Settler's Rib, Reiver's Buttress, Sour Grapes* and *Cumberland* on Lochnagar, in their own ways, attest to the fact that there is still a perceived hostility towards the English, be that from the local climbing fraternity or from society at large.

Censorship is a thorny issue and it isn't really my place to say whether it is good for the development of names or not. All I can say is that it clearly affects the type of names to be found and it can be as interesting to see what type of names are absent as to see what type of names are present. Only two names on Lochnagar allude to sex/anatomy, and even then only very mildly, and both are 'hidden names', *Life for Lust* and *Booby Prize*. Both GJF Dutton and Mac Smith have written about censorship – Dutton in 1960 and Mac Smith nearly a decade later. The former, reacting against the first 'modern' style of name beginning to enter the climbing world, stating that names should 'refer, either obviously or subtly, to some feature of the climb or of its climbing' and they should be 'worthy' though he does not define what that means. He does however say that a good name is not so important for a less significant route. This thought seems to persist today, with several climbers stating that significant routes require significant names. It is also true to say that some cliffs on Lochnagar have a reputation for being harder than others and the names reflect this.

Mac Smith rejoices in the diversity of contemporary names and the fact that 'gone are the days when we were restricted to the purely descriptive, and autocratic guide-book editors would take exception to a name and have authors change it.' However, censorship still exists. SMC routes editor, Andy Nisbet is strict about 'sexual anatomical names and swearing. Tradition is important and the tradition of Scottish climbing is not to use obscenity.' And for all that Mac Smith decries censorship he clearly had no desire for seeing sexual names either, as he goes on to say that though there are names which allude to sex elsewhere in the Cairngorms, *The Hoarmaster, Hooker's Corner, Hot Lips, The Whip*, he says, rather disparagingly, that they all come from 'the hotbed that is Glenmore'.

What is apparent is that where there is no censorship, names of this nature are popular, as Creag Dubh would attest to and as the names of climbs in other countries would attest to, such as Spain and Poland<sup>5</sup>. The debate will no doubt continue.

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<sup>5</sup> Rutkowski, M 'Toponymy of Climbing Space: Names Within the Polish Climbing Community', *Names: A Journal of Onomastics* (June 2000), Vol 48, No 2, 115–25.

In his article on names, Mac Smith<sup>6</sup> said ‘The climbs you make on a glorious mountain are, in effect, permanent reminders of you as individuals and their names, in many instances, of your personalities.’ How true that is. The diversity of names attests to the breadth of interest and knowledge of the climbers themselves.

While I was talking to the first ascensionists, I usually asked them if they had a favourite route name, or asked them to say what they felt made a memorable name. This response was typical: ‘Mostly I love a route name that has got some connection to the experience of climbing the route, preferably with a nice play on words, or ties in with other existing route names on the particular crag.’ It will probably not surprise you that the best loved names on Lochnagar are *Trail of Tears*, *Diedre of the Sorrows*, *The Undertaker*, *Where Eagles Dare*, *Redemption*, *Torquing Corpse* and *Steep Frowning Glories*.

As this is the first study of its kind in Scotland there is nothing to compare it with. However I would suggest, that in terms of function, structure and semantics, the route names of Lochnagar are but a microcosm for the whole of Scotland. There will undoubtedly be differences from mountain to mountain, but these will be subtle. As to the future, the function of route names is unlikely to change, the structure could change (though it is hard to imagine how) and the semantics are guaranteed to change – this is what makes it so enthralling to research.

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6 ‘What’s in a Name’, *ECJ* 1996. Reproduced in *SMCJ* 1998, xxxvi, 189, 550–5.

## TRILOGY OF MOUNTAIN TRAGEDIES

By Dave Adam

### Falling

We met them on the Ridge, after doing Italian Direct,  
Too Late we surmised – as we fled down and they up.  
Doggedly up, Slowing, Ageing, Tiredness, to the Tower.

We did mention the approaching dark, we did try to  
Change what we didn't know would happen and  
Felt that want in them – to turn back, have a beer.  
Who were we to offer wisdom, madder fools here!

They had journeyed too far to heed sense or yield.  
On convoluted corniced arête, they met with fast  
Twists of conspiring cloud. Into the white Nevis web  
They went – spindrift licking at their heels, waiting.

The teetering Gap in snowy darkness swirling – headlong  
Falling between Glover's tearing walls. Savagely tossed in a  
Sliding jangle to silent rest. Two slipped shapes caught  
Finally in soft, mothering drift below. No tale to recall.

Dizzying blades chop above as we climb in bright morn,  
It was for them. That parting breath at least shared – we did try.  
The 'Venomous One' had baited and preyed once more.

### Avalanche

Like an insect on an entomologist's pin, poised and  
Pierced against the Piranha's pick in frozen silence.  
Eyelids wedged open by pure sparkling white, yet  
Coldly squeezing vision away and heralding icy panic.

Clenched in static whiteness, sucking snow drenched  
Air through chilled teeth, he shouts out – with nothing.  
The sparkling white, washes red slowly downwards  
Over a frozen mirage of warm escape, into sunlight.

To move, to feel for blood, to dig out – but nothing.  
 Limbs of plaster, cast into a motionless mass that  
 Once rushed over him. Flowing, flying and filling  
 Every juggling lunge towards a deeper coldness.

No life saving, fetid breath to come, no probing  
 Rescue here, only the craved after Highland solitude.  
 That is why he is here, to play the odds against Angels  
 Loneliness and Risk – proving he needs no-one.

The rush of Heaven surged through. Warm wet yellow  
 Seeping from within and freezing on once shivering gut.  
 Electric flashes of elation and nearly there, seconds before  
 That marbled cornice plunged through his Mountain idyll.

### Lost

It came from nowhere as morning calm beasted  
 Into vicious clawing, dragging and spitting at  
 All that was winter mountain and whoever dared.

She looked down and did see her feet, amidst  
 The howling blizzard of icy grit that turned her  
 Gaze anywhere but straight into it. No face to face  
 Without defeat – her skin flinching at the sharp  
 Peppered agony that bullies submission.

Snowy footprints, once reassuringly there, are  
 Wiped – vanishing without trace. The return  
 Path sipped into oblivion and the so familiar views  
 Gone to ground under this ice bouldered plateau  
 Rendered in anonymous glazes of cold white.

Circling in the nervous emptiness of direction  
 Seeking intuition to navigate out of this Gorm Hell.  
 She turns with the wind, yielding to its rumbustious  
 Shove in a chilled stumbling trot – to Further from  
 Anywhere – to find Somewhere she had never been.

The skulking Ptarmigan knew that place as home,  
 To it she was not lost but found by raw nature in  
 A wild place – Plucked like a Berry and Consumed.

## THE IRISH FURTHS

By Bill Edgar

I COMPLETED the Munros and Tops in 1998 at the age of 76 (Munro number 1981) and turned to the next ambition – The Furths.

Of the English ones, starting with Scafell and Scafell Pike while I was at St Bees School, I had been up all except Broad Crag and Ill Crag. These two were easily accomplished one fine hot summer's day, with return over Bow Fell and down The Band: rehydration with orange squash in one of the hotels – not so many streams as in Scotland.

Over the years my ascents of the Welsh Hills had been inserted between rock climbing days and I finally completed the canon as a member of a sponsored walk (the Welsh 3000s) organised to help raise money for a CT Scanner for the Bradford NHS hospitals.

But what about the Irish Hills? As time went by no obvious opportunity presented itself to arrange a visit to Ireland and I began to think that I would never manage any more than the three tops ascended with my daughter and elder son (and a West Highland terrier) years ago in the course of a family holiday. Then, thanks to great encouragement – insistence – from my wife and family and something amounting almost to a diktat from my elder son (younger son lives in Vancouver – not convenient for Irish Hills) a week in Ireland accomplished it.

George (up since 2 a.m.) and I met in Dublin airport, he from London and I by Ryanair from Leeds/Bradford. All logistics for the whole trip were attended to by George which was nice for me (nobody, of course, would hire a car to an eighty-two-year-old).

### **Day 1:** Lugnaquilla.

An attractive mountain, up pleasant grassy slopes and over Camarahill to the top. Back to the car by lunchtime and drive to Caher.

### **Day 2:** Galtymore.

Up at 0600, car left in narrow road, almost inserted into hedge, no visible parking places. Mist and rain but impressive glimpses of steep mountainside. Descent past the tiny Lough Diheen nestling between Galtymore and Galtybeg. Back to car at 1130 and drove to B&B in Killorglin.

### **Day 3:** Macgillycuddy's Reeks.

Up at 0500, then a short drive on small roads ending at a car park, charge 2 euros put in honesty box. Left car at 0610. Initially along a little, roughly paved path which was also a shallow stream.

Up Cruach Mohr, clouds racing by, spray blown high off Lough

Cummeenapeasta. Over big boulders, hands needed not only to help ascent but also to avoid being blown off balance by the strongly gusting wind, which stayed with us all day. On the short grassy ridge, about four or five feet wide, just after Cruach Mohr, we went a few feet below the crest on the windward side so that the gusts could not blow us off and down the steep eastern side of the mountain. Hands needed for the rocks on Big Gun. Later, on one of the broad rounded tops an extra strong gust of wind made me fall down.

We paused for a snack after descending to the top of The Devil's Staircase. I was not at all sure that my tired elderly legs would carry me all the way out to Caher and Caher West (which we had been up previously, on our family holiday) but we decided to try so I slowly plodded on above The Devil's Staircase, with George exercising great patience with my snail's pace progress. Lunch sandwich on Caher West.

Then back, and on to Carrauntoohill, with a fine view of the whole of our route. A guided party of Americans on the top of Carrauntoohill, the only people we saw all day. Down over Beenkeragh, difficult to say what was which top so went up them all.

Descent over Knockbrinnen rough, steep grass and heather and rock, no path visible. Then along the valley bottom above Gaddagh River where the path/stream was still quietly flowing, unperturbed by the wind.

Back to car at 1830. A splendid day, a lovely mountain chain, high clouds, no mist, clear view of route all day. Return to Killorglin,

**Day 4:** A day off.

Round The Ring of Kerry, lovely country, sun, though yesterday's mountains obscured in cloud. Visited Staigue and Cahergall forts.

**Day 5:** Brandon Mountain, named after St Brendan.

A day of wind, rain and mist. If it hadn't been for the barrier of the Irish Sea I would probably have turned back after the first hundred yards or even not got out of the car, then gone home to come back another day – 'feeble weed', I hear the cries.

We abandoned all thoughts of making our own choice of route by map and topography (none visible) and blindly followed the abundant waymarks.

At the summit ridge, trig point, 'shelter', and Cross there was horizontal rain and visibility of about twenty yards. The view is praised, rightly I am sure, but no view that day. Back to the car.

By the time we reached our B&B, strategically chosen in the Newgrange area of chambered tombs (I also saw where the Battle of the Boyne took place), the car heater had nearly dried us out. A splendid week, and good to be able to do it with one of my sons.

## REHEARSALS

By George Allan

TEAM GAMES make it easy. You have been on the bench more often than you would like of late and, at the end of the season, the manager calls you aside. You know what's coming. 'Need to freshen things up next year – younger players – grateful for your service'. He even goes as far as telling you that he has a friend who has taken over another local team and is looking for a utility defender. Thanks, but no thanks. You know his friend and you know the team – two divisions below the one you are leaving: time to get out the gardening tools. Top performers in individual sports have no such easy exits. Who can forget the great Seve Ballesteros who, in his pomp, won a major by chipping out of a car park? The plot had long since been lost but that didn't stop the fans, who were circling the first tee, willing him on to one final triumph. Thirty six holes later it was another missed cut and the early flight home. At least a climber's decline can be played out in some lonely corrie, witnessed only by one other consenting adult and the odd raven.

I decided to give up climbing. I even chose a particular route as my swan song. As I sat on that final belay at the top of the First Flatiron, looking out over Boulder and the plains beyond, I thought 'That's it. A better run than you ever expected all those years ago. Time now for long hill walks and a little scrambling'. But somehow I just seemed to be trying to convince myself. I didn't tell my companions, a sure sign that I wanted the door left ever so slightly ajar. Back in Scotland, the rope remained in the cupboard but ambivalence nagged. 'This won't do', I thought. I couldn't understand why I was so indecisive. A climber of modest aspiration and limited ability, I had been only too happy to get the odd game with the third eleven. Perhaps losing myself in the mountains would help settle the issue and so I disappeared into the Perthshire hills. A particular walk turned into one of those great days. I had long fancied traversing the ridge on the north side of Glen Lochy, linking the Corbetts Beinn nan Oighreag and Meall nan Subh. It was perfect, late summer walking: warm but with a breeze and all the glories of the south and central highlands on display. The only others about were a father and son on the top of Meall Ghaordaidh and as I headed westwards I thought that I could happily go on like this for ever.

When I returned home my wife said 'Well?'

'An excellent trip', I replied, 'The day in Glen Lochy was great.'

'That's not what I meant'.

I knew perfectly well that that was not what she meant and I had to confess that nothing had been resolved. Still, with the arrival of autumn, the matter could be put aside for awhile. Not so, however, when the snow

arrived and with it high pressure and clear days. A potter around on something easy would commit me to nothing, so I packed my axes and went to Clova for a day. I am extremely fond of the Angus Glens. I love the way that one moment you can be driving through lowland farm lands with their rich, red soils and less than half an hour later you are in the highlands. Surprisingly, you can lose yourself in them, often finding peace in places where you would expect crowds. There was certainly no one else about as I put on crampons below Craig Rennet. South east facing and rarely in condition, it hardly qualifies as classic but it is a proud feature separating Corrie Fee and Glen Doll. With no obvious line, you can pick and choose your difficulties. Craig Rennet presents a series of wide parallel ramps. I opted for the easiest way, linking these ramps by climbing the bands between them which provided typical Clova fare: shallow-rooted heather buried under nine inches of snow. Sitting on a boulder at the top eating my piece, I suddenly thought 'Damn it. That was fun.' And so, I was back in the old routine: searches of the Internet; Thursday night phone calls; gear packing; long drives.

It was one of those winter days that Scotland gives. It was well below freezing but windless. Wisps of mist played around the cornices, sparkling silver in shafts of sunlight and the peaks to the east were spread out in all their magnificence. Coire na Poite was as wildly beautiful as I had hoped it would be and there, above us, was March Hare Gully, a sinuous run of pure white, broken only by light grey sections of ice: a route I had always wanted to do and one which I had assumed would elude me. At the first belay, the crux below, I began to relax. I was already imagining us walking across the plateau to the summit in the evening sun, savouring the glow of achievement. The second pitch started with thirty feet of steepening snow followed by an icy groove at a reasonable angle. At the base of groove, I placed a poor Friend and a good screw and headed on up. The ice was a little hollow, with the odd hole, but nothing which caused alarm. At the very top, I fell. Perhaps the ice collapsed or the axes ripped, I will never know, but those weren't the reasons for the fall. Its cause was simple: carelessness.

I ricocheted down the groove and jerked to a stop in the gully bed sixty feet below. Upside down with the rope twisted round my legs, I lay there hyper-ventilating. As I gathered myself, my first thought was 'Get on back up and do it properly'. I still had hold of the axes and, disentangling my legs, I placed my right axe and levered myself to the horizontal and then swung my left axe to pull myself upright. Nothing happened. I tried again, still nothing. The arm was useless. There would be no going back up to seek revenge.

The retreat was executed efficiently enough and when we reached the corrie floor, John took my sac and gear whilst I experimented with different ways of walking. The most satisfactory seemed to be a crab-

like shuffle, left shoulder forward with the arm dangling free. If they had been casting for Quasimodo, I would certainly have been in with a chance. In the morning, it had seemed to take John and I no time at all to reach the corrie but, for some reason, the walk out proved interminable: the heather was deeper; the crusty snow was less able to hold one's weight; the boulders in the streams were icier. We could not find the path, of course, and it was dark when we reached Tornapress. All the while, the only thought that I could find to console myself with was that I would be arriving at the A & E Department in the passenger seat of a car and not in the belly of a chopper.

That was a week ago. I am sitting at my desk trying to finish a piece of work. One handed typing is making it a slow process. I rummage in a drawer and pull out a postcard. On the front is a photo, taken from the top of a Munro in the central highlands, looking along the ridge linking it to its neighbouring summit. The top of the ridge is clear of snow, its greys and brown and greens intensely bright in the spring sunshine. On the north edge of the ridge, an unbroken cornice, pure white and with that sweeping curve so deeply attractive to the human eye, arcs round unbroken to the next top. Closing my eyes, I can almost taste the fresh, clean air. I open the card and start to write:

'Dear John,

Apologies for cutting short your long weekend. At least the weather stayed fine, so I hope you got some good ski-touring done. Many thanks for chaperoning me back to safety- much appreciated. As for the future, it's too soon to think about it yet but that wouldn't be a good note to end things on, would it?'

I seal the envelope quickly and hurry out to catch the post.

## NEW CLIMBS SECTION

### OUTER ISLES

#### LEWIS SEA-CLIFFS, DALBEG AREA:

**Notes from Blair Fyffe:** *Blessed are the Weak* is definitely E5, agreed by other ascents. *Mercury* and *Solace* are only worth a star at most. *Neptune* is worth 3 stars.

#### BEARASAIGH:

Many routes by Keith Archer & Paul Headland – see the new routes section on <http://www.smc.org.uk>.

#### TORASGEO:

*Das Boat* 30m E4 6a \*\*\*. Blair Fyffe, Tony Stone. May 2008.

Takes the obvious diagonal cracked groove to the right of *Generation Gap*. Climb the cracks and block rib for as *Ein Schiff voller Narren* (SMCJ 2007). Step left and climb past a huge downward pointing flake, then continue up the excellent sustained groove.

#### AIRD MOR MANGURSTADH, Painted Wall Area:

**Notes from Blair Fyffe:** *Gneiss is Nice* is very serious and bold at the start, not very nice, at least E4 5c and possibly E5. Significantly harder and scarier than *Painted Wall* or *The Dreaded Dram*. *Painted Wall* was thought to be at the lower end of the grade.

#### Buaile Chuido, Screaming Geo, The Screaming Wall:

*The Wailing Wall* 50m E4 \*\*\*. Mark Garthwaite, Rab Anderson. 10 Jul 2010. Start at the same point as *Necromancer*.

1. 25m 6a Move left to climb a groove and wall, then step left to a small alcove barring access to an overhung left-leaning ramp. Follow this to a good flake above a short jam crack, then step right and climb to a small nose. Improbable moves across the smooth white wall on the left gains good holds visible at its top left edge. Pull up left to a small foot ledge, junction with *Screamadelica*.

2. 25m 5b Climb the red wall up and right in an amazing position to a short quartz groove, then a horizontal break. Move up and right to the arete and finish up the inset groove in this.

*Screamadelica* 30m E2 5c \*\*\*. Mark Garthwaite, Rab Anderson. 10 Jul 2010. This spectacular climb steps across the top of the cleft which separates *Lighthouse Arete* from the main cliff. Start from a foot ledge inside the cleft, some 5m from its top. Climb up and bridge the void onto a foothold below an overlap, then climb rightwards into a hanging groove. At the top of the groove step right to small foot ledges, junction with *The Wailing Wall*. Climb straight up via a down pointing tooth and its short right-facing corner, then continue directly up the wall to a horizontal break where a step left gains the finishing holds.

#### LEWIS HILLS:

*Sron Scourst* Grade 3 scramble \*\*\*. Grahame Nicoll. 8 Jul 2009.

A very exposed and improbable scramble up a very imposing buttress. Good route finding is essential.

Approach: Follow a good track up Gleann Mhiabhaig to a point 300m beyond Loch Scourst. The route lies directly above at NB 105 099 but is not at all obvious; it may be worth ascending the hillside opposite, a short distance, to pick out the line.

Scramble easily up to a steep grassy rake leading left and up to a large grass alp below a steep rock face. From the top of the alp, traverse right until it is possible to scramble up to a spectacular grass ledge which leads left to the crest of the buttress. Continue left and up into a gully (exposed), climb this for only a few metres then move left onto the rib. Follow this enjoyably to the top.

### **CREAG DUBH DIBADALE:**

**Note from Blair Fyffe:** The first pitch of *The Big Lick* is serious, possibly the crux of the route. The second pitch is definitely 5c, not 5b, and was as hard as the so called crux pitch at the top (which was not that bad).

### **NORTH HARRIS, Sron Uladal:**

*The Usual Suspects* 130m E8/9 7a \*\*\*. Dave MacLeod, Tim Emmett. 28 Aug 2010.

A spectacular voyage up the steepest part of the steepest cliff in Britain, climbing terrain normally associated with hard sport climbing. The climbing is generally well protected and the rock excellent apart from a couple of metres on pitch 2. The first ascent was done in heavy rain after a long wet spell. Start with a short scramble up to a large sloping ledge beneath the largest overhangs of the lower part of the cliff, well down and right from the start of *The Scoop* and underneath a ludicrously steep left-facing groove.

1. 40m 6b From a large block, traverse right a couple of metres to a large flake and move up to a niche with a big loose boulder. Pull over the bulge and climb leftwards up the wall on improving holds to a big square jug (good gear). Hard moves though the bulging crack above gain a sloping shelf at the base of the left-facing groove. Climb the groove on good holds for some distance to a good bridging rest beneath an overhang. With excellent protection, make a desperate move to gain a standing position above the overhang but beneath the next bigger overhang. Traverse left to a stopping place and continue with hard moves getting established on a big undercut flake. Follow this left, then up to its termination and take a hanging belay. A big pitch.

2. 25m 7a Desperate moves on tiny holds straight off the belay (crux) lead rightwards without respite or protection to a superbly positioned flake-line on the lip and good cams. Turn the lip using the flake, then pull left to gain another flake/crack. Follow this with thuggy climbing to a block below a perched ledge above to the right. Arrange good cams, the last gear on the pitch. Pull right onto the ledge. Move up on big suspect holds and then climb diagonally leftwards (technical 6a) to gain the most welcome belay ledges of *Knuckle Sandwich*. Old aid bolt and small cams belay.

3. 35m 6b Start up the thin crack of *Knuckle Sandwich* for 4m (small wires) to a sloping shelf leading right to gain a huge detached flake. Layback up this and make difficult moves on slopers and edges over the bulge to a smooth rounded

slab. Step right onto a spike (no hands rest and good cams). Return and climb the big flakes with difficulty at first to a junction with *Knuckle Sandwich* below a bulge. Arrange crucial gear and then make a long fingery traverse rightwards across the wall in a fantastic position. Mantel onto a big flat hold and move up to a belay directly above.

4. 15m 6b Climbs the roof and thin cracks just left of the arete looming overhead. Arrange crucial small cams in the roof then use crimps on the small sidewall to pull round into the roof and out on improving holds to a huge jug on the lip. Climb the wall cracks above with some technical moves but good protection to a ledge.

5. 45m 6b/c From the left edge of the belay ledge, clip a poor knifeblade and make a very tenuous move laybacking the small arete to gain better holds. More tricky moves on small edges lead leftwards to gain an obvious line of spiky jugs leading diagonally into a big open groove. Climb this past a couple of bulges to a right-trending line of jugs below bulges. Step up then left and go straight up the final 15m headwall (5b in the dry, possible but serious in the wet).

### **SOUTH HARRIS, AIRD MHIGHE CRAG:**

(NF 123 928) Alt 25m West facing

A good wee bouldering crag with 29 routes, with undercut starts and the potential for some scary highballs. Quick to dry, though the ground at the base is quite boggy. Clean and very rough on the fingers. Descriptions supplied by Andrew Moles – see the new routes section on <http://www.smc.org.uk>.

### **BARRA:**

There is a guide at [www.colinmoody.com/Site\\_2](http://www.colinmoody.com/Site_2). This might be removed after the SMC guide comes out.

### **MINGULAY, Sloc Heisegeo (NL 5507 8207):**

*Shooting Straight* 35m E4 6a \*\*. Felix Coxwell, Tom Green. 2 Sep 2009.

Abseil to a brown ledge 30m down the face. Climb up via a large flaky nose past a small overhang to the main left-facing flake. Blast up the flake and at its end traverse left to a pink crack/seam and climb this to the top.

**Note:** A lower pitch was also climbed, starting from the base of the gully finishing on the ledge; HXS 5b – not recommended.

### **DWS Crag:**

(NL 570 821) South-facing

It is located south of the bay on the east side of the island, approached by following the coast around from camping area. It is possible to climb trad style, but French grades have been offered for DWS ascents. The rock is typically good gneiss. There is a crag photo at:

<http://www.ukclimbing.com/images/dbpage.html?id=129940>

*Dave's Route* 15m F5+ S0 \*. Dave Turner. 22 May 2009.

Climb the wall under the roof at the left side of the crag to finish left of the roof.

*L'Arete d'Amour* 15m F6a+ S0 \*\*\*. Sam Ponsford. 22 May 2009.

The neat rightwards-slanting arete bounding the right side of the roof, continued on good holds to the top.

*Pwill Deri* 15m F6c+ S0 \*\*\*. Sam Ponsford. 22 May 2009.

The wall to the right of the arete.

*Spearing the Bearded Clam* 15m F6b S0 \*\*. Malcolm Scott. 22 May 2009.

The crack-line right of the previous route.

*Way Down* 15m F5+ S3. Sam Ponsford. 22 May 2009.

Possible descent route down a large corner system in the middle of the crag.

*Pete's Route* 15m F6a+ S0 \*. Pete Graham. 22 May 2009.

The wall right of the corner.

*Tidy Like* 12m F6b+ S0 \*\*\*. Tom Luddington. 22 May 2009.

Up the left side of the square slot and right over the overhang.

*Traverse In* F6a S0 \*\*.

The sea-level traverse in from the right-hand side of the crag to gain the routes by the line of least resistance.

*Traverse In (Low)* F6a+ S0 \*\*

Stay low after the square slot instead of climbing up out of it, a bit harder.

*Piffle* 6m 4+ S1. Andy Moles. 22 May 2009.

A short pillar to the right of a deep corner recess near the right-hand side of the crag.

### **Dun Mingulay, Sron an Duin:**

**Note:** Steve Crowe notes that *The Swell* (SMCJ 2009) is a longer and improved version of *Oceanside Expedition* (2001). He has now climbed all the pitches and thought the route to be superb. Donie o' Sullivan watched a Portuguese climber free *Perfect Monsters* on the same day.

### **PABBAY, The Bay Area:**

*Traverse of the Cods* 35m E6 6b. Iain Small, George Ullrich. 9 Jun 2010.

A wild trip traversing the prominent break above the big cave. Take many long slings to avoid rope drag, and a confident second! Follow *Bart* to the break below the main roof, then traverse right along this to where *Every Cormorant is a Potential Shag* crosses it (large Cams). Continue along the now wide break and pull into a niche. Cross the hanging slab to swing on to the arete and make hard moves up to below the roof. Follow the improving finger rail to eventually pull into and follow the upper corner of *The Herbrudean*.

### **Banded Geo:**

*My Neighbour* 25m HVS 5a. Tom Powell, Tom Everett. 17 Jun 2009.

The route is on the left-hand side of the Banded Geo, non-tidal, and takes the first obvious line after the big corner at the extreme left. A tricky move gains the corner, climb upwards on improving rock to the leftwards trending crack below a roof. Follow this, bolder than it looks, to an exciting steep finish on good holds. A picture at: <http://www.wikitopo.com/crag.php?cragId=390&tId=1772>.





**Note:** A repeat of *Blo'na Gael*, post rockfall, by Ian Jones & Dan Moore (HVS \*). A new description is: Quit the chimney of *Prominent Nasty Looking Off-Width Crack* for the razor sharp fracture. Follow this rightwards to a more substantial flake. Jam and bridge up to the overlap which is passed with difficulty and so to the top. Somewhat disconcerting.

### **RUM, Kilmory:**

*Tottering Stack* 35m VS. Michael Barnard, Hannah Gibbs, Ron Dempster. 22 May 2010.

The large rectangular stack mentioned in SMCJ 2008 is located at NG 353 043 and is non-tidal. Climb via its landward arete. The top half is loose and serious. On the first ascent the leader reversed the top pitch and an abseil was made from the block belay.

1. 20m 4a Climb an obvious corner-crack on good rock to reach the loose arete. Follow this easily to a good block belay.
2. 15m 4a Continue up the arete to the foot of the upper tower. Move along a ledge on the east face and step onto a large block to reach the final arete. Swarm up this to the top.

Just west of this is an impressive channel cutting into the cliff. The narrow promontory formed as a result is attached to Rum by two arches. The following route takes the fine west-facing wall of the promontory, well seen from the other side of the channel. Cross either of the arches and abseil to gain the non-tidal ledge.

*Double Trouble* 12m E3 5c \*\*. Michael Barnard, Hannah Gibbs. 22 May 2010. Start below the centre of the wall. Move up and traverse left between two overlaps to gain a prominent line of flakes. Follow these up and right to reach a final thin vertical flake. Climb this and continue boldly to the top. Pre-practiced.

### **CANNA:**

There is a guide at [www.colinmoody.com/Site\\_2](http://www.colinmoody.com/Site_2). This might be removed after the SMC guide comes out.

### **TIREE:**

The routes are just south of Dun Shiaber, on the west side of Half Dome Crag (NL 965 388).

*Thrift* 15m Difficult. Andy Spink, Joe Thurgood. 25 July 2009.

An obvious chimney at the back of a recess. Start up the wide chimney-crack with a chockstone. Move out left onto a mossy slab and so to the top.

*Hey Joe!* 10m Very Difficult. Andy Spink, Joe Thurgood. 25 July 2009.

Up a crack and walls in the left wall. Nice climbing in solid rock with easy and good protection.

### **MULL:**

A large number of outcrop routes by Colin Moody and friends are described in the new routes section on <http://www.smc.org.uk>.

*Top:* Martin Fitzsimons on *Spider* (HVS 5a), *East Face of Aonach Dubh*, Glen Coe.

*Bottom:* Brian Whitworth on *The Pincer* (E2 5c), *South Wall of Garbh Bheinn*, Ardgour.

*Both photos:* Heike Puchan.

Also described here is the Abhainn na Uamha (NM 516 358, Ben More), first canyon descended by Andy Spink & Liam Irving in 2009. There are guides for Calgary, Balmeanach and Ardtun at [www.colinmoody.com/Site\\_2](http://www.colinmoody.com/Site_2). These might be removed when the SMC guide comes out.

### **THE GARVELLACHS, Eileach Naoimh:**

(NM 633 093) Non-tidal West facing

The south-west to north-east running ridge on which the lighthouse sits has a small col 15m north-east of the lighthouse. The next two routes climb the buttress north-east of this small col.

*Neoprene Groove* 25m Very Difficult. Brian Davison. 12 Jun 2010.

From the west side of the ridge facing the lighthouse this climbs a black groove in the buttress left of the col. Climb a wall up to the groove then make some steep moves up the groove to a ledge above and follow easier ground to the top.

*Where's me Paddle* 25m Severe. Brian Davison. 12 Jun 2010.

The buttress immediately left of Neoprene Groove offers pleasant wall climbing to the ledge above the groove. Continue more easily to the top.

**Note:** *Lightning Conductor* was also climbed to a ledge system at two-thirds height where an easier escape left could be made to the top. The top crack section containing the lightning conductor looked steep for Severe unless the conductor was indeed used for aid.

### **COLONSAY, Uragaig (NR 391 983):**

At the back of the beach below the hamlet of Uragaig lies a 20m bright lichenous wall, prominent from the opposite headland of Meall na Suiridhe. Approach the beach via the track through Uragaig and take a grassy track right off this by a pair of adjoined cottages.

*Uragaig Wall* 20m E3 5c \*\*\*. Ellis Ash, Tim Loftus. 7 Aug 2010.

Excellent sustained climbing linking various flakes and diagonal cracks right of the centre of the wall. Microwires and a full set of medium to very small cams useful. Start below and left of a grassy ledge. Pull onto the grassy ledge and move directly up to a small ledge. Move up to another small ledge and a triangular niche. Follow the diagonal crack leftwards until moves up and right lead to good sidepulls. Move up and right to the bottom of a diagonal crack and follow this to the top. Belay 20m back.

## **SKYE**

No routes described here, as the guide is in production.

## **NORTHERN HIGHLANDS NORTH**

### **BEINN DEARG, Glensquaib Cliffs:**

The Pastor Glass Reconciliation Gully 280m IV,4 \*\*. John Mackenzie, Eve Austin. 19 Feb 2010.

A good natural line taking the slender curving gully to the right of *Storming Stormont* giving a variety of climbing and some steep turf or rock sections interspersed amongst more straightforward gully climbing.

1. 50m The easy narrowing gully (as for *Storming Stormont*) to the base of the buttress.
2. 45m Curve around rightwards to enter the gully by a short step. Climb the steep pitch above on turf to a cracked block.
3. 30m Continue up the gully to a barrier pitch split by a narrow chimney. Climb this to belays up left.
4. 50m Continue up the gully to a terrace and an excavated block below the barrier walls.
5. 25m Move up to the walls and climb blocky ground in the same line as the gully below to good thread belays under an overhang.
6. 30m Climb up the wall parallel to *Storming Stormont's* exit ice pitch heading for a steep headwall which is climbed direct on good turf.
7. 50m Easy ground to the top, then walking leads to the wall.

#### **West Buttress:**

*Gastronomical* 300m III,5 \*\*. Neil Wilson, John Mackenzie. 24 Jan 2010.

A very good climb taking the obvious ridge to the right of *Gastronomes Gully Direct*. Perfect conditions of well frozen turf, good ice, plentiful protection and solid belays. Some short hard passages but not sustained.

1. 50m Start in the gully/bay that lies to the right of the icefall of *Gastronomes Gully Direct*. Climb over a tricky chockstone and up the corner-gully to spikes.
2. 40m Continue in the same line up turf.
3. 40m Climb the iced chimney to more broken ground.
4. 40m Move up below the top section of the ridge climbing around a slabby rib en route.
5. 40m Above is a spiky wall with an undercut start. Climb this and the spikes/flakes above. Move up and left to a cosy niche overlooking *Gastronomes Gully*.
6. 50m Aiming for the pronounced notch on the skyline up right, climb onto the pedestal, then turf ledges to a difficult short wall and further turf to reach the notch via a short sharp chimney, all this well protected. Easier climbing leads to the final headwall.
7. 40m Climb a groove on the right, move left and finish up the spiky headwall to a sudden finish. Easy ground now leads to the wall at the top (not included in length).

*Gastronomes Gully, Mixed Start* 350m II. John Mackenzie. 18 Apr 2010.

The actual gully of *Gastronomes Gully* begins a third of the way up the cliff. The described route (Northern Highlands North p35) takes a very long traverse left from the Cadha Amadan to reach it. There are two much more direct alternatives. When iced, the icefall that issues direct from the gully forms a fine Grade IV,4. This is quite rarely in condition. A Grade II mixed start on turf to the right is often well frozen and gives a logical line. Start in the narrow bay left of *Inverlael Gully* (as for *Snowseekers Allowance*) and take the left-slanting ramp line to its

top to a small snowfield. Climb up and right on turf to reach the gully which is then followed to the top.

### **LOCH BROOM, Creag Mhor, South Face (NH 180 873) Alt 150m:**

*Lower Cascade* 80m III. John Mackenzie, Eve Austin. 3 Jan 2010.

A broken band of crag lies roughly centrally, easily reached from the road. A broad icefall occasionally forms and this gave two pitches taking a left of centre line. Rarely in condition.

**Note:** John Mackenzie repeated *Bonar Icefall* and thought the first pitch worth Grade IV, the approach much longer than 5mins, but the pitches longer and better than the description suggests.

### **ALLADALE, Meall nan Fuaran:**

*Fuaran Tioram* 220m III \*. Dave Allan. 4 Mar 2010.

An obvious ice-filled groove which starts up rightwards from the start of Campsite Cleft. The groove becomes a gully which emerges on to the upper face. Follow this to the top.

**Note:** *Double Barrel* on nearby Sron Gun Aran (guidebook p46) should be downgraded to II.

### **SEANA BHRAIGH, Luchd Coire:**

*The Road* 275m VI,6 \*\*\*. Malcolm Bass, Simon Yearsley. 10 Mar 2010.

A natural icy line up the steep ground to the left of the crest of Flowerpot Buttress. Varied and excellent climbing. Start in the snow bay with an icy slab/corner at its top left.

1. 30m Easy snow to the foot of the ice.
2. 55m Climb the icy slab/corner with a steep pull out of the left side of the cave/recess to a good belay on a turfy ramp.
3. 40m An easy turfy ramp rightwards leads to the foot of an icefall (*Saxifrage* joins this point from below before moving right round the crest). Climb the icefall and belay on blocks at the foot of the amphitheatre.
4. 55m Go up ice to below the top wall. Traverse tenuously left across the black slab (mixed) until possible to break through the top wall via a short steep slot. Continue up to the foot of the obvious black icy corner. Climb the blocky left arete in a superb position to the terrace.
5. 40m The climb changes character, becoming turfy/rocky above the terrace. Move 5m left and climb the left-trending turfy corner (not the right-trending corner). Belay at the base of a steep blocky corner.
6. 55m Climb the steep blocky corner and continue in a direct line to the plateau, passing a chokestone in the steep final wall.

**Note:** *Saxifrage* (SMCJ 1999) was accidentally missed out of Northern Highlands North.

### **SEANA BHRAIGH, Coire Mor:**

*Carn Ban Fall* 230m III,4 \*. Dave Allan, Simon Nadin. 31 Dec 2008.

A frozen burn at the head of Coire Mor (NH 331 866 at its top). On the crux second pitch, the right branch was taken. To descend, go north, then north-west along a ridge until a descent can be made to the bothy at Loch a' Choire Mhoir.

**OYKEL BRIDGE:**

*Oykel Icefall* 75m VI,6 \*\*. Dave Allan, Simon Nadin. 11 Jan 2010.  
One of the lowest ice climbs in the country starting at alt. 20m at NC 405 002. The crux second pitch is 23m long of which 16m is vertical (2 rests used). The climb is visible from the A837 to the north. Approach via Oykel Bridge.

**ARDGAY, Wester Fearn Burn:**

*Gregor's Waterfall* 40m II/III. Dave Allan, Davie Moy. 3 Jan 2010.  
A waterfall marked at NH 609 865. It could be climbed on thick ice either side of the water flow. Reach the base from trees on the appropriate side.

**RHUE, Main Cliff:**

*Nogbad the Bad* 25m E6 6b \*\*. Ian Taylor, Tess Fryer. 18 May 2010.  
A line up the centre of the wall right of *Rhue Corner*. Climb easily for 5m to a ledge with a big flake. Follow a thin crack diagonally rightwards, then straight up to the big break (Camalot 5). Move left, then go up boldly to good holds below a small roof (poor Camalot 2 under the roof). Hard moves gain better holds and gear, then head for the top with a final difficult move.

**ARDMAIR, Laggavoulin Buttress:**

*More Bowmore* 25m Very Difficult. Jason Hoffman, Jacqueline Jeffrey. 30 Apr 2010.

From the top of *Bowmore* (either climb *Bowmore* or walk up the descent path at the top of Laggavoulin Buttress), step left 3m and follow the obvious corner to a small ledge at 7m. Climb the face with good holds and protection for 8m. Pull through heather and rock 5m to a recess (20m). Head to the right and scramble behind a large boulder to reach the top of *The Raven* on Monster Buttress; pull through heather to reach the top of the crag.

**SGÙRR AN FHIDHLEIR:**

*The Bow Direct* 250m VII,8 \*\*\*. Pete Macpherson, Guy Robertson, Martin Moran. 8 Jan 2010.

Takes the obvious corner in the centre of *Magic Bow Wall* direct all the way. A classic companion to *Nose direct*, every bit as good, and about the same grade overall. Start as for *Magic Bow Wall* but where this breaks right stick to the corner for two long sustained pitches. A further easier pitch leads to broken ground near the top. There were thin streaks of ice on the first ascent, but these appeared far from essential, the hooks being reliable and the angle not severe.

**CUL MÒR, Creag nan Calman:**

(NC 158 113) Alt 700m

The west-facing crags that ring the summit of Creag nan Calman are quite often in condition, finishing just short of the summit cairn. Approach is easiest by following the normal route to Cul Mor then traversing to and gaining the col between the two peaks. A shelf lies below and girdles the crags; allow between 2 and 2.5hrs from the road.

*Opening Gambit* 130m III. John Mackenzie, Eve Austin. 1 Dec 2009.

This follows a line near the left or north end of the crags. To the left of a tiered

ridge is a shallow gully blocked by a wall and to its left a shallow rib.

1. 40m Climb the rib and broken ground to a wall.
2. 40m Move left to a narrow entrance to a depression which leads easily to a steeper three-tiered slab that gives good mixed climbing and some ice but better runners. Move left to a thread.
3. 50m Continue up the turfy funnel to a short wall and chockstone; climb this to the top.

### **CUL MÒR, Coire Gorm:**

*Cul Moon* 190m VII,7. Simon Richardson, Roger Webb. 31 Jan 2010.

The line of grooves and chimneys left of *Cul Cats*.

1. 50m Start 20m left of *Cul Cats* and move up turfy steps into a prominent right-facing corner. Climb the corner to a blank-looking bulge, then make a difficult step left. Continue up the left-facing ramp system to a small terrace.
2. 50m Continue up the ramp system to a broad terrace crossing the face. Move up to below the line of chimneys cutting through the headwall.
3. 50m Climb up turfy cracks, easily at first, until below the chimney-line cutting through the roofs above. Move up to the roof, step left and climb the steep bulging corner to a ledge.
4. 40m Easy ground leads to a terrace. Traverse left easily from here.

### **CUL BEAG, West Face:**

*Lurgainn Edge* 320m III,4 \*. Neil Wilson, John Mackenzie. 8 Feb 2009.

An interesting mountaineering route following Dr Bell's route fairly closely. The ridge which lies to the right of the Y shaped gully is in two parts separated by a terrace. Start at the foot of the ridge.

1. 2. and 3. 150m Follow its edge to the terrace. Walk to the upper ridge.
4. 45m Climb an open chimney, then move up left to a ledge.
5. 45m On the skyline is a prominent block. Climb up walls and turfy grooves always parallel to the edge on the right to below a straight turfy chimney.
6. 50m Climb the chimney to arrive at a little col overlooking a corner.
7. 30m Move left to a turfy groove and climb this back right to the edge and finish up this more easily in a fine position.

### **CUL BEAG, Lurgainn Slabs, West Face:**

(NC 13714 07690) Alt 300m South-West facing

Three tiers of slabs, fairly quick drying. There are many potential slabby routes if given a brush of the ubiquitous lichen but the rock is good and the lines too. Best reached via a grassy gully, well seen from the road and which has a buttress on its right which forms the gully's right wall. Allow 30mins. Descents are best on the right (looking up) traversing around the various tiers. All the routes climbed on sight but a brushing would give fine climbs.

**Lower Tier:** From the gully exit, move left below a more broken lower section to a break which gives access to the main slabs, identified by a shallow left-facing corner.

*Forgotten Groove* 40m VS 4c \*. John Mackenzie, Eve Austin. 4 Jun 2010.

The corner is blocked by a lower bulge. Pull over this and continue up the corner

to its top. Move left and climb a well positioned headwall slab to a crack above. Pleasant climbing in a good position.

**Middle Tier:** This lies directly above and is lichen free save for a dirty central corner and heathery cracks, but the pink rock between is excellent.

*Precambrian Doddle* 20m Very Difficult \*. John Mackenzie, Eve Austin. 4 Jun 2010.

Between the dirty central corner and a heathery crack is a clean slab which is climbed direct to the top.

**Top Tier:** This is above and left of Middle Tier and is the biggest of the tiers containing a large left of centre left-facing corner with a prominent overhang.

*G.F.C.* 55m VS 4c \*. John Mackenzie, Eve Austin. 4 Jun 2010.

1. 25m 4c The corner is bottomed by a steep slab. Climb the bold slab just right of a scoop to an alcove (possible belay). Climb the short overhanging wall above on jugs to the slab and the foot of the corner.

2. 30m 4b Climb a diagonal crack to a roof above, move up and left into the upper corner which is climbed to the next roof, split by a horizontal chimney. Burrow under this past yardarms to a ledge and good threads. A great friendly corner, definitely unusual, but slow to dry, allow two dry days in the summer after heavy rain.

### **STAC POLLAIDH, Upper Number 2 Buttress:**

*Cold Shoulder* is wrongly described in the guide. It is actually in the recess just right of *Pretty Pollaidh*. The description should read: At the LEFT end of the buttress is a large recess. Climb the very steep crack-line out of the LEFT side of the recess etc.

*Scabs* 25m E2 5c \*. Ian Taylor, Tess Fryer. 20 Aug 2008.

Climb the twin cracks in the right wall of the *Pretty Pollaidh* chimney joining *Cold Shoulder* at the top.

**Note:** Although *Ol' Red Eyes* is on Upper No.2 Buttress, it is on the right flank and is actually accessed by going up past *Calum the Clansman*.

### **STAC POLLAIDH, West Buttress:**

*The Ghost Road* 45m VI,5 (grade uncertain). Barry Middleton (unsec). 24 Dec 2009.

Climb as for summer taking the corner direct, avoiding the option of a steep section at mid-height (approx 5m). For the upper section after the crux corner at half-height, bridge using the right foot onto small bunches of frozen turf. No protection was placed, or found. The route had frozen turf in the corner and thin ice on the slabs.

*Ghostbusters* 45m IV,6. Martin Hind, Roger Webb. 4 Feb 2010.

Start as for Ghost Road. Climb *Ghost Road* to the striking chimney-corner that breaches the impending wall on its left. Climb the chimney-corner to a ledge.

Battle the bulge above to a sudden finish.

### **STAC POLLAIDH, East Peak, North side:**

*One Ping Only* 70m III,5. James Gordon, Nick Ord. 24 Dec 2009.

1. 30m Start at the lowest toe of the buttress. Tricky moves up the first 5m, then follow the crest.
2. 40m Traverse up and left to foot of an obvious wide chimney and finish straight up (a crack to the left looked inviting but was too easy!).

### **RUBHA DUNAN SEA-CLIFFS, Wake Wall:**

*Where was Jonathan?* 13m Severe. Tom Sharp, Pete Amphlett. May 2009.

Start at the foot of *Descent Chimney* and climb short walls straight up from there to finish in a short right-facing corner on black rock.

### **ALTANDHU BOULDERING:**

Topos for two more sectors are available.

### **REIFF, Stone Pig Cliff:**

*Crossfire* 8m Hard Severe 4c. Mark Bannan, Ewan Lyons. 29 Jul 2010.

Start halfway between *Broadside* and *Limey*. Climb the fault, stepping right onto an obvious nose of rock, then move up to a ledge. Move right to finish easily up *Broadside*. Well protected.

### **Camus Crag:**

To the right of *Double Bluff* is an overhanging wall split by a thin crack and further right a ramp.

*Terrorist* 11m E2 5b \*\*. John Mackenzie (unsec). 29 Jul 2008.

A good sustained route up the wall with the crux at the top. Start just right of *Double Bluff* and climb up and right to the horizontal break. Move right along this and climb the thin crack to the top.

*Codebreaker* 12m HVS 5a \*. John Mackenzie, Eve Austin. 29 Jul 2008.

The innocuous ramp leads to a foothold; foot traverse right along the flake top, then climb the recess with the slot on the left to the top, crux.

### **Rampant Wall Left:**

To the left (facing in) of the first short routes on Rampant Wall is a square-cut bay with a rectangular pinnacle and a west facing black back wall with two hidden corners on the right and a central crack. A short but steep overhanging prow lies on the north side of the bay. Descent is on the right or north (facing out).

*Black as Sin* 10m HVS 5b. John Mackenzie, Eve Austin. 6 Jun 2010.

The north face of the pinnacle has a slender groove near the left end. Tricky to start, then easier to the top. Descend the short back wall on the left.

*Central Crack* 12m Severe 4a. John Mackenzie, Eve Austin. 6 Jun 2010.

The obvious central crack-line which has a steep start and an easy finish.

On the right is a pair of slender excellent corners with some paler rock.

*Horny Wee Devil* 15m VS 5a \*\*. John Mackenzie, Eve Austin. 6 Jun 2010.

The left-hand disjointed corner. Climb to an alcove, move up and right using the pair of horns. Move up and right again to another alcove below a slender corner. Climb this, crux, to the top. Great fun and well protected.

*Typically Reiff* 15m VS 4c \*. John Mackenzie, Eve Austin. 6 Jun 2010.

The tight narrow corner to the right. Move up to the lower corner and climb this to the top one which has good holds and protection.

### **Leaning Block Cliffs:**

*Mr Bridger* 20m E2 5c \*. Michael Barnard, Hannah Gibbs. 14 Aug 2010.

The 'unclimbed steep right-angled corner' to the right of *Goldeneye* and mentioned in the description for *Gilt Edge* (SMCJ 2009). Quite bold in places.

*Blockover* 12m Very Difficult \*. Michael Barnard, Jonnie Williams. 31 May 2008.

Climbs the outside of *Block Chimney*. Start on the ledge below the west wall of the leaning block and bridge up between it and the right-hand wall (exposed but much easier than it looks!) to finish up a corner right of *Wall of Silence*.

### **ASSYNT, Loch Dubh Crag:**

**Note:** Steve Hill & Tim Dickenson climbed the route *Fisherman's Friend* in 1989 and named it *Out of Africa*. A route near *Travellers Paradise Wall* was also climbed the same day. The guidebook does mention unknown earlier ascents.

### **Ardroe Crag:**

*Flowerpot Men* 15m Hard Severe 4b. Andy Nisbet, Brian Davison. 2 Sep 2010.

At the right end of the crag is a big corner just before the crag turns into a gully which separates this crag from Loch Braigh Crag. Climb the well protected corner.

*Perky* 15m E3 6a. Brian Davison, Andy Nisbet. 2 Sep 2010.

At the final turn into the gully is an overhanging groove with an arete either side. Climb the more prominent right arete to a ledge. Step right on to a steep wall and climb this to a finishing groove (or, much easier, step left and return right to the groove).

### **Loch Braigh Crag:**

*Pinky* 10m VS 4c. Brian Davison. 2 Sep 2010.

The left arete of the crag, across the gully from *Perky*.

### **Clean Cut:**

*Flightless* 18m E3 5c \*\*. Brian Davison, Andy Nisbet. 2 Sep 2010.

The next arete right of *Flawless*. Climb the arete to a bulge. Move left and pull into a fine jamming crack which leads to an easier upper slab.

### **SUILVEN:**

*Terror* 230m VI.6. Roger Webb, Simon Richardson. 21 Dec 2009.

A logical line up the centre of the buttress, probably approximating to the line of *Gray's Route*.

1. 20m Start as for *Erebus* and climb up to a terrace.
2. 30m Continue up the groove of *Erebus*, but where this breaks left continue up the vertical corner-crack above to a ledge.
3. 30m Move right along the ledge for 25m to a weakness. Climb this (hard to start), to reach a ledge system.
4. 50m Climb the obvious corner-crack on the left for 20m. Continue zig-zagging up through the walls and corners above to reach a large terrace.
5. 50m Move left and climb a chimney-gully left of a prominent rock prow.
6. 50m Continue up turfey grooves to where the angle eases. Another 100m of scrambling leads to the summit.

### **POINT OF STOER, Clashnessie Bay, Clashnessie Arch Crag (NC 068 321):**

Park at NC 069 317 and walk north along the coast. After 10mins a prominent sea-arch is reached. The first two routes are on the south facing wall to the right of the arch, seen on approach, the third route starts on this face and traverses left through the arch, and the final three routes are on the north-west face beyond the arch. A large boulder well back from the cliff edge provides an abseil point for accessing both faces. An abseil down broken ground on the right-hand side of the south face gains sloping ledges safely above the sea.

*First Steps* 25m VS 4c. Bob Brown, Neil Wilson. May 2009.

From the sloping ledges, climb the left side of the south face, initially by a corner and thereafter straight up.

*Over-Arching Ambition* 40m E1 \*\*. Simon Nadin, Bob Brown, Neil Wilson. Jul 2009.

From the same stance as the previous route, traverse diagonally up leftwards to belay on a ledge above and right of the sea arch (4b). Teeter horizontally left along a shattered ledge system and finish up a cracked slab (5b).

*Blue Lagoon* 120m VS 5a \*\*\*. Bob Brown, Neil Wilson. Jun 2009.

A lovely sea-level traverse. Start from the same point as the previous two lines and keep going horizontally left, across the base of the south face, through the arch and onwards until you run out of cliff. Climbed on Bob Brown's 75th birthday.

The next five routes are on the north-west face, which the latter part of the previous route traverses under. Access by abseiling down the obvious V-groove (*Clashnessie Monster*) to a handy flat ledge.

*Brokeback* 30m HVS 5a \*. Neil Wilson, Bob Brown, Simon Nadin. Jul 2009.  
From the ledge, follow the obvious right-trending line to the top.

*Guanano Grooves* 25m E2 5c. Tess Fryer, Ian Taylor. 27 Jun 2010.

Start up *Brokeback* but go steeply straight up through two bulges to the top.

*Clashnessie Monster* 25m E1 5b \*\*. Neil Wilson, Bob Brown, Simon Nadin. Aug 2009.

Gain and climb the V-groove directly above the belay ledge, and finish by dubious rock.

*Quartz 'n' All* 25m E4 5c \*\*. Simon Nadin, Neil Wilson. Aug 2009.

To the left of the V-groove is a quartzite wall taken by this line. Sustained, strenuous and adequate gear.

*More Foosty than Feisty* 25m E2 5b \*\*. Ian Taylor, Tess Fryer. 27 Jun 2010.

Left of the big quartz patch is a narrow wall. Climb a line of thin cracks up the left side of the wall. A great wee route, very helpful where it matters. Take a good supply of small wires.

**POINT OF STOER, Clashnessie Bay, Rose Root Crag (NC 070 322):**

A small vertical wall of good gneiss with small incut holds, slightly scruffy with the odd loose block, but pleasant nonetheless. Going north from Scourie, park at Loch na Bruthaich, cross the stile and contour northwards. The crag faces north-west and is in a great setting set back from the sea. It gets the sun by late afternoon. The crag has a smooth face with a shorter thin crack on the left and centrally a rockfall crack with debris. A narrow buttress is split by a crack to its right and right again shorter walls.

*Terminal Panicles* 12m E1 5b \*\*. John Mackenzie, Bob Brown, Eve Austin. 8 May 2010.

Start below the thin crack and climb up to a diagonal break. Move right along this to below the headwall split by a blind crack. Climb this, crux, to the top, spike belay above. Exciting and surprisingly good for its length, definitely the route of the crag.

*Rose Root* 12m VS 4c \*. John Mackenzie, Bob Brown. 8 May 2010.

Climbs the left-hand narrow buttress squeezed in between the rock-fall crack on the left and a narrow crack on the right. A steep and pleasant wander up incut holds.

*Primrose* 12m Severe. Bob Brown, John Mackenzie. 8 May 2010.

The right-hand narrow buttress to the right of the narrow crack is a little scrappy after a good start.

**LOCH GLEANN DUBH, Thrust Crag:**

On the north side of Loch Gleann Dubh, about 3 miles from the A834 at Kylesku, an unnamed line of quartzite cliffs slants down from west to east just above the loch. Towards the right-hand end, at NC 274 341, a dark bay is apparent, with a prominent corner line to the right of an overhung wall. At the base of the bay is a surprisingly large flat area, not well seen from below.

*Holly Tree Corner* 36m Very Difficult. Geoff Cohen, Des Rubens, Noel Williams. 19 Apr 2009.

1. 18m The corner rises in two steps, the second a little steeper, to a capacious stony ledge.
2. 18m Move right, climb a black wall behind the holly tree, and finish up the corner line.

*Jade Goody Memorial Chimney* 36m VS 4c. Geoff Cohen, Des Rubens. 19 Apr 2009.

On the left of the bay a dark slit chimney is topped by a steep left-facing corner. A loose climb that has its moments of exposure.

1. 18m Climb up to a steep section with a chockstone that is passed to gain good protection in a wide crack. Finish by back and foot or bridging.
2. 18m Climb the continuation corner then move right to gain easier, more vegetated rock to finish.

### **TARBET SEA-CLIFFS, Raven's Crag:**

*Yellow Belly* 35m E4 6a \*\*. Tess Fryer, Ian Taylor. 23 Jul 2010.

1. 25m 6a Start left of *Deep Water Blues* and climb up and right to a ledge (junction with *Deep Water Blues*), then follow the immaculate golden ramp on the left. At its top go steeply up a thin diagonal crack and continue in the same line to the big ledge above.
2. 10m 5b Climb the right side of the wall above, escaping rightwards near the top.

For several other routes on the Tarbet Sea-cliffs, see the new routes section on <http://www.smc.org.uk>.

### **FAR NORTH-WEST CRAGS, Ridgeway View Crag:**

Between *Oars Aft* and *Classic Crack* is a shorter wall bottomed by a large overhang.

*Ridgeway Phew* 15m HVS 5b \*. John Mackenzie, Bob Brown, Andy Tibbs. 5 Jun 2010.

Climb the overhang by a well protected crack just right of a central blocky crack. Climb the good wall above, all well protected.

*Hornblower* 12m Hard Severe 4b. Andy Tibbs. 5 Jun 2010.

Between *Oars Aft* and the descent gully is a short right-facing corner. From a small rock at the crag base, climb diagonally left to the top of the corner. Finish direct. A start can also to the left of the corner up a slab with a narrow right-leaning flake at a similar grade.

### **SHEIGRA, Treasure Island Walls:**

*Whoomf* 15m E1 5b \*\*. Ian Taylor, Tess Fryer. 31 Jul 2009.

Climb the excellent wall left of *Spare Rib*.

*Fear of the Dark* 20m E2 5c \*. Tess Fryer, Ian Taylor. 31 Jul 2009.

Follow *After Dark* to the move left, then go steeply straight up, keeping right of the black vein.

**FOINAVEN, Lord Reay's Seat:**

*The Long March* 185m VIII,8 \*\*. Malcolm Bass, Simon Yearsley. 9 Jan 2010. A great climb taking a parallel winter line to *Breakaway* to join it for its final corner. Start 15m left of *Breakaway*/summer *Pobble* at a left-facing open corner with two perched blocks at its base.

1. 40m Climb the corner and continue up blocky ground to belay in the corner line.
2. 20m Climb to a cave below the obvious triangular roof. Go up, swing out left, and climb the sensational overhanging crack (bold) to a large ledge. Move 2m right to below a corner.
3. 40m Climb the delicate wall up and right to the obvious crack in a large block. Surmount this, move right, and climb the poorly protected tenuous groove to a snowfield. Belay at the top right-hand corner of the snowfield.
4. 30m Climb the easy snowy gangway up and right round the crest. Climb the short corner and continue right to beneath the obvious final corner of *Breakaway*.
5. 15m An inch by inch struggle up the corner. Belay on a pedestal.
6. 40m Step down left from the pedestal and turn the arete to easy ground, and continue direct to belay on the summit.

**DURNESS, Balnakeil Bay:**

Routes are on the central outcrop, (NC 391 696, tidal but sandy). Access is easy and clear of water for around 3hrs around low tide.

*Para Heady* 15m Difficult. Nick Cole. 2007.

On a slabby slope to right of a corner with algae run-off. Trend left towards the obvious escape groove at the top of the corner.

*Easy Start* 15m Very Difficult. Nick Cole. 2007.

To the right of *Para Heady* there is a detached sloping rock. Climb this, then move to overhanging horizontal slabs on the outside corner.

*Simple Crack* 15m Difficult. Nick Cole. 2007.

An off-width crack on the right side of a narrow cave or cleft in the rock. Climb in and out of the crack to the top.

**Sango Bay, Creag Ruadh:**

*In and Out* 30m Severe. Nick Cole. 21 Jul 2009.

To the right of the slabby depression, there is a slanting shallow corner and crack heading right towards the end of a dry stone wall and fence posts, starting about 10m up the from where the grass meets the sand. Head up alongside the corner taking care on some fragile loose rock and small grassy ledges. NC 4102 6744, non-tidal.

**BEN HOPE:**

**Note:** John Mackenzie & Eve Austin climbed the North Ridge to the 'Bad Step' – same step as on *Brown's Ridge* (1969), and climbed it direct at Severe. Very Difficult possibly refers to going further on to the west face.

**BEN LOYAL, Summit Tor:**

The north (right) end of the east face of the summit tor forms a steep smooth slab split by an obvious deep crack. Five metres to the right, starting above a boulder, is a narrower crack. Both routes are very well protected and very sustained, and both routes would be classics anywhere, but with the added element of the great situation, are something special.

*Top Hat Crack* 30m E2 5c \*\*. Simon Nadin, Neil Wilson. 26 Jun 2010.

The wider left crack. Climb the shallow crack before stepping left into the main crack. A sustained mauling with excellent protection (two sets of Friends). Needs traffic.

*Top Crack* 25m E3 5c \*\*\*. Simon Nadin, Neil Wilson. 26 Jun 2010.

The right crack starting above the detached block. A bouldery start up the wall (Friend 4) gains the diminishing crack. Follow this with increasing difficulty to the crux at the top.

**SKERRAY SEA-CLIFFS, Arches Bay:**

*Nautilus* 25m E6 6b \*\*\*. Simon Nadin (unsec). 2009.

Fantastic and committing climbing above the arch via the right-hand wall. Start at a small ledge 5m left of *Arch* (stance as for *Sidestep*) at a ramp with a crack running up its edge. Follow the ramp and swing left to prominent flakes at a shallow corner. Small wires protect awkward moves up this before traversing left to a good hold and Friends above the centre of the arch. Now commit to increasingly difficult climbing aiming slightly rightwards past a shallow groove and into the bottom of the overhung niche (small Friends on left). Spectacular bridging leads to better holds over the roof. Good, but hard to find protection.

A few hundred metres west of Arches Bay, at NC 676 634, is a headland with a prominent slabby point facing north. The first two routes are on the north-facing point, the third is on the wall on the east side of the point (Exfoliation Wall).

*Cracked Arete* 20m VS 4c. Neil Wilson, Simon Nadin. 2009.

Climb the crack-lines just to the right of the left edge of the face.

*Grey Slab* 20m VS 4c. Neil Wilson, Simon Nadin. 2009.

A few feet right of the previous route is an obvious line of weakness up the slab.

*The Slit* 25m E4 5c. Simon Nadin, Neil Wilson. 2009.

Adventurous climbing based on the striking chimney-crack line. Climb rounded cracks to gain the defile directly. Follow this until it feels wise to exit rightwards with difficulty around a bulge. Climb carefully to the top.

**SKERRAY SEA-CLIFFS:**

(NC 6711 6355) North-West facing

Approach: Walk easterly round the coast from Skerry Harbour. The climbs are found approximately 250m past the first major bay of Port an Fheadairigaig, hugging the coast and crossing a fence on the way and ignoring the footpath heading back south towards the bend in the road described for the starting point

of other climbs in this section. Alternatively park at the bend in the road and walk direct.

The climbs are on a cliff in the last bay before two large rock fingers one of which has a large cave. The routes are accessed either by the obvious open gully/corner (Moderate) leading to the sea or by abseiling down the obvious seaward facing corner (also Moderate) in the middle of the face. Suitable anchors are found at the top of a small knoll where this open corner tops out. All climbs start at an obvious weakness around 18m down the face. The climbs are very pleasant with excellent protection. The climbs are described left (seaward) to right (landward) when at the base.

*Wizzes Birthday* 18m Difficult. Paul Airlie, Sarah Boxall. 4 Jun 2010.

This follows the crack-line (the bottom of which is quartz filled) about 4m left of the very obvious seaward facing corner.

*A Carpentier* 16m Very Difficult. Paul Airlie, Sarah Boxall. 4 Jun 2010.

The twin crack-line in the slab 1.5 meters left of the obvious corner. Use the right crack for feet.

*Ginger Slab* 18m Severe. Paul Airlie, Sarah Boxall. 4 Jun 2010.

The grey and rusty looking slab featuring several cracks 3m right of the obvious corner. Start low at the base of the slab and follow the obvious crack-line on the left side of the slab.

### **ARD BEAG:**

The area (guide p340) is best described in two geos, East and West. *Cabin Fever* and *Greased Lightning* are in the West Geo (best approached by abseil), *Black Betty* in the East; *Greased Lightning* & *Black Betty* are worth a star. The following routes are all in the East Geo – topo provided. The next three routes finish up the ridge to the cliff-top as for *Black Betty*.

*Grace Schiehallion* 18m Difficult. Andy Tait, Steve Perry. July 2010.

One metre left of the main chimney-crack running down from the neck of *Black Betty* is this distinctive crack.

*Triceratops* 18m VS 4c \*. Steve Perry. Sept 2010.

One metre to the left again are three pin scars; climb with interest.

*Fist of God* 18m VS 4b \*. Steve Perry, Andy Tait. July 2010.

A clean-cut corner to the left leads to a shallow roof; boldly follow it rightwards, then upwards to gain the ridge.

*Handful* 18m Hard Severe \*. Andy Tait, Steve Perry. July 2010.

Climb the same corner, then pull out over the roof and gain the next corner leading to the ridge.

*Leap to Begin* Difficult. Andy Tait, Steve Perry. May 2010.

Three metres left of the corner is a wide scrappy looking crack that gives better climbing than first appears.

**CAITHNESS, South Head of Wick:**

*Riding the Waves Direct* 10m E3/4 6a \*\*. Ian Taylor, Tess Fryer. 1 Aug 2009. Climb directly up the left-hand cracks avoiding the dogleg to the right.

**SARCLET, Heithe Buttress:**

The large cliff with the grey pillar and routes *Lithium Fry-Up*, *Hats off to the Catman*, *Donnie Darko* etc is now named Heithe Buttress (ND 341 418). It lies between Tilted Ledge to the south, and its north edge is bounded by Heithe Geo. By the same reasoning, the headland with routes *Kaleidoscope* and *Tug of the Tide* is named Heithe Headland (ND 341 419) as it forms the north edge of Heithe Geo.

**Heithe Buttress:**

*Heithe Cliff* 35m Severe 4a. Raymond Wallace, Stuart Ross, Rob Christie. 8 May 2010.

Follow a series of right-trending brown streaked grooves running up the middle of the grey pillar, past an inverted hollow spike, to a ledge at four-fifths height, then straight over the blocky headwall.

*Shedmania* 35m Severe 4a. Rob Christie, Stuart Ross, Raymond Wallace. 8 May 2010.

Climb the deeply cracked left-facing corner on the left side of the grey pillar, then up the top vertical corner.

*Frank the Rabbit* 35m VS 4b. Raymond Wallace, Rob Christie. 8 May 2010. Climbs cracks up the centre of the wall to the right of *Donnie Darko*, joining that climb at the black chute.

**Cave Bay:**

A slab at the back of Cave Bay, with a view from its base to *The Haven* and *Just Visiting*. Probably non-tidal. To descend, scramble down to the top of the slab where abseil anchors can be assembled. An abseil can be made down to a ledge just above water level.

*The Patent* 30m Mild Severe \*\*. Stewart Munro, Paul Freudenthal. 16 May 2010.

The route trends up the right side of the slab. Follow a crack and move leftwards around a slight overlap to a large ledge. Step off the ledge onto the upper slab using a large pocket. Continue up using left-trending cracks to top out at the upper right corner of the slab.

**MID CLYTH, Skerry Mor, Stack Area:**

*The Waterboys* 20m E2 5c. Finlay Wild, Rob Christie. 6 Jul 2010.

From *Strange Attractor*, boulder round (or walk at low tide) north for about 10m to an obvious left-facing corner. Climb this to below a small roof. Move left to pass the roof, then follow an improving crack which trends slightly left to finish easily by some blocks.

**South Caithness Sea-Stacks, Cleit Bheag:**





A 30-50m swim depending on the tide. Both routes are on the seaward face and are harder than they look.

*Yeah Right* 35m E1 5a. Ross Jones (unsec). 14 Aug 2010.

Climb the stepped corner of the original route to overhangs at 15m. Pull up and leftwards to a grassy ledge. Climb the wall and crack on right to pull through on a hanging block onto a large ledge just left of the chimney. Climb the wall above and leftward to finish.

### **Cleit Ruadh:**

The northern stack is short and pleasant, a 55m swim and climbed on its seaward face.

*Direct Variation* 15m HVS 4c. Ross Jones, John Sanders. 15 May 2010.

After the short crux wall of the original route at 4m, climb the crack-line directly above.

## **NORTHERN HIGHLANDS CENTRAL**

### **BONAI DTHONN:**

*Safari* VI.6. James Edwards, Gareth Hughes. 1 Jan 2010

This climb has excellent moves and positions. Two long pitches at Grade IV were done from the bottom of the crag to the base of the route. Then follow the summer line. The crux is the first main pitch getting to the bottom of the chimney. Pitch 2 is spectacular and leads to a good stance at the top of the chimney (peg). Pitches 3 and 4 continue in the line and lead to easy ground.

### **STONE VALLEY CRAGS, Caterpillar Crag:**

Colin Moody notes climbing the left crack at Very Difficult (*Benny Blanco* climbs right of it). The middle crack was thought Severe and the right-hand crack was agreed at Hard Severe.

### **BEINN AIRIGH CHARR:**

*Brodie's Climb* 150m II. Allan Gorman. 20 Dec 2009.

High up on the left of Coire nan Laogh is an easy angled buttress to the right of the route *Comic Relief*. A fun route up turf, heather and easy rock steps.

### **GRUINARD CRAGS, Car Park Area, Triangular Slab:**

There are now several routes on the slab, all VS except for two V.Diffs at the right end (see the new routes section on the SMC web-site). There are now two stakes at the top for belaying and *Centre* has been cleaned giving a much better route with good protection.

### **GRUINARD CRAGS, Creag Carn an Lochain Dubh, Front Face:**

Just to the right of Pink Streak is a faint rib taken by *Humbug Rib* (SMCJ 2007) and well right of this by a large shallow scoop is *The Artful Dodger*. In between these routes is a steepening wall with the route below taking a direct line passing just right of a narrow heather strip three-quarters of the way up and starting just

left of a small triangular heathery block. Brushing would reveal an excellent route that would also knock a grade off.

*Stirling Moss* 45m E1 5b \*. John Mackenzie, Eve Austin. 31 Aug 2010.

Climb into a shallow depression; briefly traverse right before moving back up and left. Climb straight up on hidden holds to steeper ground, a flake-crack and on the left a steeper wall with a shallow right-facing flake crack. Climb this to move up left to a tricky mantel which leads to a ledge with a round stone. Step left and climb flakes to the top. Good protection where needed but awkward to find.

### **GRUINARD CRAGS, Creag Carn an Lochain Dubh, Amphibole Crag:**

To the immediate left and forming a spur below the main crag is a 'mini-dome' of a crag, easily identified by a large overlap above and with large boulders below. A shorter but steeper smooth slab extends to the right.

*Actinolite Slab* 30m Severe \*. John Mackenzie, Eve Austin. 9 May 2010.

1. 25m A very pleasant and varied climb, steeper than it looks. Start at the lowest point of the buttress and move onto the slab, initially rightwards and climb up to the smaller overlap above. Big holds lead over this and up a gentle slab to below the top tier, belays in a recessed corner.

2. 5m Climb just left of the corner-crack to the top.

*Metamorphic Crack* 30m VS 4c. John Mackenzie, Eve Austin. 9 May 2010.

To the right of the crags base is a long steep slab and at its left end is a left-slanting crack. Climb the crack and up to the overlap, taken just to the right of where *Actinolite Slab* steps over, on more big holds and up the slab to the right-hand side of the top tier. Climb the deceptive rock just left of a crack to the top.

### **Creag Carn an Lochain Dubh, Windy Gully Sidewall:**

The following are upper tier finishes to routes in SMCJ 2007. Full descriptions are in the Northern Highlands Central notes on the SMC web-site.

*Dusty Rib Direct Finish* 10m E1 5b \*. John Mackenzie, Eve Austin. 31 May 2010.

Climb the crack to the top. Good varied climbing with contrasting styles.

*Little by Little Direct Finish* 10m Hard Severe 4b \*. John Mackenzie, Eve Austin. 31 May 2010.

Climb the deceptive groove on huge jugs to the top. Varied, good and unusual rock formations on the lower ramp.

### **Sleuth's Buttress:**

Between Riverside Slabs and Creag Carn an Lochain Dubh is a narrow steep crag with a rose bush growing horizontally low down and a run of scree below. It provides two very contrasting climbs. Routes described from left to right and a descent to the left (looking up).

*A Cracking Case* 20m E2 5c \*\*. John Mackenzie, Bob Brown. 18 May 2010.

The front face of the crag has an undercut crack-line just to the right of the rose bush. Gain the crack with difficulty and up to a horizontal crack. Move right to the jam crack and climb this to the top slab and follow the crack to the top. It has more than adequate protection.

*Inspector Detector* 25m VS 4c \*. Bob Brown, John Mackenzie. 18 May 2010. The right-hand end of the front face has a hanging brown slab. Climb a short groove to the slab, move right to the arete and up this to the top. A route with some good positions and pleasant climbing.

### **ANTEALLACH, Ghlas Tholl:**

*The Silver Fox* 90m VII,8 \*\*\*. Pete Macpherson, Martin Moran. 21 Jan 2010. Just below the split in *Hayfork Gully*, about two-thirds of the way up, there is a steep slabby wall on the left. Start at the right end of the wall below a shallow groove with smooth side walls and a thin seam of turf going up to a turf ledge.

1. 40m Climb direct up a shallow groove using a thin crack under turf to a turf ledge (bold). Continue direct up a steepening groove to a niche below a roof. Pull strenuously through the roof via a crack and continue steeply up the crack to a ledge. Continue up a left-facing slabby corner and belay on the right on slab under a cave-niche. An amazing pitch.
2. 50m Climb direct through a bulging wall above onto a slab. Go up a left-facing corner for 2m until it is possible to pull out left onto a wall. Climb on good hooks up to a roof in a very exposed position. Step left onto an arete, then pull left through the roof (easier than it looks). Continue more easily up an icy groove on the left to easy ground.

### **Toll an Lochain, Forgotten Face:**

*Lobotomy* 150m IV,3. Andy Nisbet, Jonathan Preston. 12 March 2010.

Climbs slabby ground on the right side of the face, left of the recess with *Monumental Chimney*. Requires a good build-up. Start at a short gully as for *Monumental Chimney* (although it is easier to start this higher up). Find a way up the face above, unprotected and the difficulty depending on the build-up, to a terrace below steep ground (50m). Traverse left along the terrace, slightly descending (40m). Follow a snow ramp leading right and becoming progressively easier to arrive at the summit of Sail Liath.

### **Corrag Bhuidhe Buttress:**

*Tulach Ard* 220m V,6 \*\*. Dave McGimpsey, John Mackenzie, Andy Nisbet, Roger Webb. 9 Feb 2010.

A left-facing corner high on the *Constabulary Couloir* wall of Corrag Bhuidhe Buttress, well seen from the Ridge (top of Corrag Bhuidhe South Buttress) but not from the corrie. Climbed when icy. Start up *Constabulary Couloir*, then move right and approach via short ice pitches and big terraces (some 300m but not included in length).

1. and 2. 60m Climb ice through a steep tier below the corner (easier lines can be taken further left) and continue up snow which steepens to a big pinnacle below the corner. This was banked out but may involve some steep turf.
3. 30m Move right and go up a deep roofed groove. Move left round the roof (crux) to gain the main corner and follow it to a big chockstone.
4. 35m Continue up the icy corner.

5. 35m Continue in the same line to easier ground.  
6. and 7. 60m Easy ground to the crest of Corrag Bhuidhe Buttress.

*Monster Raving Loony* 400m V,5. Dave McGimpsey, Andy Nisbet. 11 Feb 2010.

An icefall and icy grooves up the right side of the *Constabulary Couloir* wall of Corrag Bhuidhe Buttress. Good climbing but escapable in the lower part. Gain the triangular snowfield as for *Corrag Bhuidhe Buttress* but immediately move left along a terrace. Climb the next tier on its left side to reach steeper ground (90m). There was a prominent icefall above but its lower continuation was too thin. Climb a steep turfy corner on the right to gain and climb the icefall (50m). Continuation ice led to the terrace from which *Tulach Ard* starts further left. Move left to below icy grooves (40m). Climb these to below a right-slanting ramp (50m). Climb the ramp and snow to below the crest of Corrag Bhuidhe Buttress (50m). Trend left to gain the crest in about 70m and follow it to the top for another 50m.

*Lady's Buttress* 250m III \*. Andy Nisbet, Jonathan Preston. 12 March 2010.  
Start inside *Lady's Gully* at the first easy point where the buttress on the left can be gained (long approach at Grade II not included in length). Climb three long pitches in grooves on the crest, then two pitches on the crest, common with *Corrag Bhuidhe Buttress*.

### **Badrallach Crag:**

*Stalker's Struggle* 35m E1 5b \*. Andrew James, Conor Brown, James Karran. 12 Sep 2009.

The obvious groove between *Laird's Loss* and *Pillar of Society* is varied and worthwhile. Head directly to the crack with a long reach required to grab the horns and surmount the roof. Pull onto the slab and continue pleasantly between the crack-lines of the neighbouring routes with a serious move just before safety.

*Rustler's Reward* 35m E1 4c. Conor Brown, Andrew James, James Karran. 12 Sep 2009.

An eliminate between *Pillar of Society* and *Poacher's Prize*. Sustained and bold but never too tricky, side runners would reduce the grade.

**Note:** A direct start by the same team to *Lapsang Suchong* up the juggy arete at 4c.

### **SAIL MHÒR, North-East Face:**

The following routes are twin icefalls which form at the right end of the face at about NH 037 890.

*WonderFall* 90m V,5 \*\*\*. John Lyall, Barry Middleton, Andy Nisbet, Stu Charlton. 15 Jan 2010.

The left icefall, climbed in three steep pitches. High in the grade. The first pitch was an iced corner (30m), the second a steep pillar (35m) and continuation ice for the third (25m).

*Silver Screen* 80m V,5 \*\*. John Lyall, Andy Nisbet. 15 Jan 2010.

The right icefall. An initial column was passed by traversing left along a ledge to gain the icefall. Climb this to a ledge (35m). Above the ledge the icefall splits into a very steep column on the right and slightly less steep but thinner ice on the left. Climb the thinner ice with a steep start and continue up heathery ground to the top (45m).

### **THE FANNAICHS, Creag Dubh:**

(NH 215 764) Alt 300m NNE facing

Park at the Braemore Junction car park and walk up for about a mile to the crag which forms numerous icefalls. The line below, though escapable gives the longest stretch of ice but is invisible from the road. On the left of the face is a shallow gully that starts halfway up and to its left is an icefall. It gives some steep ice and thin slabs with good rock belays save below the top pitch. Ice forms quite readily on this otherwise wet face from various seeps.

*Deertrack* 150m IV,5 \*. John Mackenzie, Neil Wilson. 14 Jan 2010.

1. 40m Climb mixed ground up and left of an isolated slabby icefall to reach the start of the ice on the left.
2. 30m Climb a short vertical section to a thin slab, climbed up and left to below an icefall.
3. 30m Move up a iced scoop to reach the gully, belays to the right of another icefall. An escape up the gully is obvious but the ice is better; Grade III,4 to here.
4. 30m A steep icefall flows down the left wall of the gully a little higher up. Climb this, crux, to another thin slab to ice screw belays below the top icefall.
5. 20m The avoidable but good icefall, bulges and all to the top.

### **SGURR MÒR:**

There are two sections of crag in the north-east facing corrie between Sgurr Mor and Carn na Criche. They regularly form ice. They are maked on the 1:25000 map as Eag nam Fear-bogha and the corrie beneath is marked Coire Leacan Dubha.

### **Isolation Crag:**

A long low crag lies up and left of Creag a' Mhadhaidh at NH 202 724. In prolonged cold conditions this can form considerable amounts of ice.

*Grand Isolation* 40m V,5 \*\*. Colin Wells, Penny Clay. 25 Jan 2010.

This route takes the most prominent icefall which cascades down the cliff towards its right side. It gives a continuously exposed and sustained pitch. Start at the right side of the icefall and gain a steep left-trending ice ramp via a short vertical section. Follow the ramp steeply until it is possible to go up a steep groove to another ice ledge. Trend back right to a steep finish up a hollow ice tube and the top. It is possible to walk off the to left (looking out) along turfey ledges. Warthogs useful for belay in turf at the top.

*Keep Calm and Carry On* 30m III. Colin Wells, Stephen Reid. 3 Feb 2010.

The right side of Isolation Crag is bounded by a gully. This route takes a short

icefall that spills down the left side of the gully and involves a short steep traverse right from a cave at half-height to gain the upper part of the route. Belay using Warthogs.

### **Icicle Works Crag:**

This is the upper left-hand tier of the crag.

*The Icicle Works* 60m V,5 \*\*\*. Stephen Reid, Colin Wells. 4 Feb 2010.

The following route takes a central line up the impressively icy (and icicle festooned) tier. Potentially quite a serious route due to the copious number of large and fragile icicles and ice daggers hanging over the key traverse.

1. 30m Climb up icy slabs to a steep right-trending ice ramp that leads to a ledge half way up the crag. Gaining the ledge can be tricky due to large fragile icicles barring the best way which forces awkward flanking manoeuvres beneath and right of them. A good belay can be made in an icy grotto protected by an overhang.

2. 30m Traverse right from the belay under more fangs of ice to gain a steep scoop between massive icicles. Continue straight up to two short free-hanging ice sheets. Pull up strenuously to gain a bridging position between the sheets and climb straight up to the top to a finish on good turf. Belay using Warthogs.

### **THE FANNAICHS, Creag an Fuar Tholl Beag:**

*Ptarmigan Grooves* 80m II. Martin Hind. 11 Dec 2007.

A gully near the right end of this long low crag leading up to Beinn Liath Mhor Fannaich (NH 218 713). Climb easy snow with a 5m iced chimney groove to finish. There were two ptarmigan also heading up the gully but they cheated at the crux by flying over the difficulties.

### **THE FANNAICHS, Creag Dubh a' Gorm Lochain (NH 237 693):**

*Wilkinson Sword* 100m IV,4. Martin Hind. 2010.

A fairly obvious icefall looking like a sword with a hilt on the west side of the face above the loch. It was accessed from a diagonal ramp. Descent was by traversing eastward and down a gully below the upper crags and contouring round below the route.

*Just Another Thursday* 130m IV,4. Martin Hind. 2010.

The next obvious continuous icefall to the right. Descent was by a rising diagonal into the same descent gully and round below the routes above a lower crag.

### **THE FANNAICHS, Sgùrr Breac, North Face (NH 159 713):**

*Ready Breac* 300m II/III. Roger Robb, Peter Biggar 19 Jan 2010.

Takes the initially easy slopes well to the left of the buttress containing *Chill Out Chestnut* (SMCJ 2008 p133) and aims for a rocky outcrop on the skyline. Slant right towards an icefall in a shallow corner and climb either this or the turfy rib to its left. Thereafter climb straight up by turfy steps to a shoulder below the rocky outcrop. There is a choice of finishes; easier to the right by a snowfield and short gully, to end on the slopes east of the east top of Sgùrr Breac. The upper pitches are much better than they look from below.

**Note:** Malcolm Airey and Nick Kaczynski climbed a 10m ice pitch on a roadside cutting on the A832, at a layby opposite a cutting at Loch a' Chuillín (NH 284 616). *Stepping on your Toes* was vertical for last 4m (IV,4, 12 Jan 2010).

### **STRATHCONON, Glenmarksie Crag:**

*Cerberus* 25m E7 6c. Andrew Wilby. 25 Jul 2010.

Start 4m right of *Strategic Arms Limitation*. Sustained well protected climbing up a dog-leg crack. Reachy moves up the first initial crack to gain a horizontal break. Traverse right across this to finish up a cracked wall.

### **Scatwell River Slabs:**

*The Lance* 25m E2 5c. Ray Wilby, Claire Hayden, Andrew Wilby. 3 Jul 2010. Start 4m left of the river level start of Northern Line, at a small pine tree with a bulbous base. This is 3m right of the direct start to Circle Line. Climb a rib for 8m (peg runner, crux) to gain a thin crack on the slab (micro wires required). Step right onto the slab and climb straight up to the bottom of the crack of Circle Line. Traverse 2m right along a small overlap and go centrally up the slab to climb the wall crossing Northern Line at the double overlap. Gain the slab above and go straight up to finish.

**Note:** The large birch tree at the top of *Grand Central* and the pine tree at 'Clapham Junction' are both now in the river. Two medium sized Friends and a long sling advised for the belay at Clapham Junction as the remaining small birch tree may be unreliable.

### **CANNICH:**

*Cannich Falls* III. Matt Smith, Vicky Hayes. 3 Jan 2010.

On Allt Coillte (NH 342 325). Start at a small humpback bridge at NH 343 321, 5mins east of Cannich along the A831 towards Beauly. Access the stream from the right-hand side (facing up) and follow over small steps at Grade II. Any steps/sections of stream that appear unsafe can be turned on the right. At a fork, turn right. The main fall is located at approx. alt. 160m, a bit above the fork. Access from the left side by skirting a plunge pool and climb left to right, giving 20m of Grade III. Descent is by following the stream over one more step and then escaping right out of the stream bed.

### **GLEN AFFRIC, Sgurr na Lapaich:**

*Swansong* 150m I/II. Matt Smith, Pete Collins. 3 May 2010.

The guidebook refers to an easy slope between the two buttresses in the centre of the face. Go up this easy slope for 100m, then take a rising traverse left on steepening snow, passing a small rock island, to a choice of finishes. The alternative finishes are either into a snow bay top left, and finish left on easy mixed ground to join top of the buttress on the left (Grade I) or finish through a small tricky rock band at the top of the snow bay (Grade II).

### **BEN WYVIS:**

The lower section of No.2 Spur, to the left of *Fox Gully*, is much shorter than the main upper section but has a steep frontal face. Above this steep face a long

arete leads parallel to *Fox Gully* to the top. Being lower down it is less likely to be in condition.

*Earls before Swine* 210m V,6 \*\*\*. John Mackenzie, Simon Nadin, Neil Wilson. 13 Feb 2010.

The steep buttress left of *Fox Gully* has a pair of left-slanting hanging ramps. To their right is a shallow corner/groove leading up to the centre of the buttress. An excellent, strenuous and varied climb with all sorts of entertainment climbed under well frozen conditions. Good stances, belays and protection.

1. 30m Start below the undercut shallow corner/groove, pull over this and step left into the groove proper. Continue in the same line to below a steep wall.
2. 30m Gain an undercut alcove and move up then left across its top and climb an overhanging wall. Continue up a steep groove.
3. 40m Above the stance is an overhanging off-width crack. Climb this, predictably strenuous and up the groove above to an overhanging exit. Snow then leads rightwards to the rocky arete (junction with *Fox Gully Arete*).
4. 60m Continue up the pleasant arete to its top.
5. 50m Climb the snow arete to the top.

*Serf's Route* 200m II/III. Andy Nisbet. 7 Mar 2010.

A promising line but the difficulties end too quickly. Start under the left of the left-slanting hanging ramps. Climb up, then traverse left into a prominent left diagonal fault line (there is a large sharp flake below and left of this). Follow this through a steep groove to a barrier wall. Go out left to a platform and pull through the wall to easier ground. Go straight up to reach the top of *Fox Gully Arete*.

## NORTHERN HIGHLANDS SOUTH

### **LADHAR BHEINN, Stob a'Chearcaill, North-West Face:**

*Tohatsu* 315m IV,4. David Ritchie, Mark Shaw. 27 Dec 2009.

This good route takes a direct line up the buttress between *Bottleneck Gully* and *Gaberlunzie* starting just left of *Gaberlunzie*.

1. 50m Climb the obvious corner to below a wall.
2. 60m Move up left, then back right to gain a snow shelf. Climb the wall above by a shallow chimney to gain easier ground.
3. and 4. 130m Continue up the easier angled buttress above for two long pitches to belay just left of *Bottleneck Gully*.
5. 60m Climb the steeper rib above surmounting an obvious perched block.
6. 15m Easier ground leads to the ridge.

*Headstone Buttress* 285m III. David Ritchie, Neil McGougan. 27 Feb 2010.

Climbs the buttress right of *Gaberlunzie*. Start midway between *Gaberlunzie* and *Marguerite* gaining the shallow fault line, then follow turfy grooves taking a fairly direct line up the front face of the buttress to the ridge.

*French Connection* 185m IV,4. David Ritchie, Neil McGougan. 1 Mar 2010.

This climb is based on the deepest fault line running up the face right of

*Marguerite* and finishes at twin pinnacles well seen from below the face. Start in a snow bay 50m right of *Marguerite*.

1. 40m Climb grassy grooves and short walls to belay on the left.
2. 55m Continue up the grassy fault line, turn a steepening on the right then move back left across the main fault line to some blocks.
3. 60m Move back right crossing the main fault line and climb a shallower turfey line.
4. 30m Continue straight up to finish just right of the twin pinnacles.

### **Coire Dhorrcail:**

*Penny Wheep Gully, Direct Finish* 60m IV,4. David Ritchie, Neil McGougan. 28 Feb 2010.

From the amphitheatre, climb the obvious short steep chimney to gain easier ground and the main ridge.

*Wild West* 230m VII,6. Roger Webb, Simon Richardson. 3 Jan 2010.

The prominent right-facing corner on the front face of *Landlubber's Buttress*. A strong line and very vegetated but difficult to protect.

1. 40m Enter the groove from the right and climb it to a steep wall.
2. 50m Step left and climb the steep corner-crack and continue over steep bulges to belay below a steep chimney-slot.
3. 50m Climb the slot and continue up the chimney above to where it ends. Move up the open turfey corner above to a poor belay.
4. 50m Continue up the open groove and trend left to reach easier ground. Move up to below the final steepening.
5. 40m Turn the final steep wall by a chimney system on the right and continue up easier ground to the top.

**Note:** The icefall right of *Summit Route* as shown in the current guide was climbed in thin conditions by David Ritchie & Neil McGougan on 23 Jan 2010, 300m IV,4. The route description for *Summit Route* fitted the line taken.

### **SPIDEAN MIALACH, Coire Leacach Mor (NH 062 046):**

The following routes are situated on a small buttress tucked into the north-west side of the north-east ridge which leads to the top (marked as 977m) west of the main summit. Best reached by descending the top section of the ridge just beyond a short level section before dropping down a narrow gully on the left (looking down) to the foot of the buttress. The buttress contains a prominent left-facing corner. The north-east ridge itself offers a pleasant winter scramble from the north side with a fine snow arete in the upper section.

*Black Ice* 80m IV,4 \*. Pete Harrop, Steve Kennedy. 7 Feb 2010.

The prominent left-facing corner. The corner provides a good pitch with a short step at mid-height forming the crux. Traverse left under the overhang at the top of the corner to reach easier snow slopes and a block belay high on the right (55m). Continue directly up grooves to join the north-east ridge (25m).

*Ruff Stuff* 80m II. Bob Hamilton, Steve Kennedy, Andy MacDonald. 31 Jan 2010.

Start in the narrow gully on the left side of the buttress. Climb mixed ground just right of the gully then take the first feasible line going out right onto the buttress edge. Finish up mixed ground just right of the buttress edge.

### **DRUIM SHIONNACH, West Face:**

*Sophisticats* 90m III,5. Sandy Allan, Sonya Drummond, Andy Nisbet. 12 Dec 2009.

A line crossing *Capped Gully* and finishing up a big groove on its left. Start in a bay right of *Capped Gully* and climb the left edge of *Boxer's Buttress* to a spike in snow (40m). Traverse left across *Capped Gully* and climb steep turf to gain the big groove. Climb this to a steepening, then take a left exit over a tricky overlap (50m).

*The Gruffalo* 80m V,6 \*\*. Pete Macpherson, Martin Moran. 21 Dec 2009.

This route climbs the line of corners just right of *Cave Gully*, finishing up a chimney in the sidewall. Start at the base of the first step in the gully.

1. 35m Climb turfy grooves in the right wall, and continue to the base of the subsidiary chimney taken by *Cave Gully*. Move right and climb to a ledge under an imposing crack-line.
2. 45m Go up the slab corner on the left for 10m then pull up right into a deep chimney, which gives a superb pitch.

### **AONACH AN CHRITH, North-West Face:**

*Boa Constrictor, Left-Hand Variation* 270m IV,4. David Ritchie, Neil McGougan. 26 Feb 2006.

Follow the initial shallow gully of *Boa Constrictor*, then move up left to gain the obvious rib. Follow this to reach a short steep wall then descend 15m rightwards to join *Boa* at the foot of the big left-facing corner. Follow *Boa* to below the wide slot, then continue up left-trending grooves left of the tower to the top.

### **FIVE SISTERS, Sgùrr na Ciste Duibhe:**

*Big Sister* 200m V,6. John Lyall, Andy Nisbet. 13 Jan 2010.

A low altitude stream produces an icefall, rarely frozen, at NG 975 146. It starts from a gully which runs up rightwards under its base. After 10m is an overlap, hidden from the road, which on this occasion was climbed via a fragile screen (crux, V,5 if solid). This is the key to the route being in condition. Continue steeply to gain a thinly iced slab leading to the left edge of a double overlap (50m). The first overlap was passed by an iced groove leading rightwards to the second which was climbed on steep ice to a gently angled ledge. More steep ice led to a groove and a belay well to the right (50m). Return to the groove and climb it to below a steep upper icefall (50m). Climb this to easier angled ground (50m).

To descend traverse left to a tree and abseil for 40m to less steep heather. Traverse left again to a ridge which forms the left side of the initial gully and descend this to the base of the route (all directions facing down).

### **SGÙRR NA FEARTAIG:**

*The Bonker* 85m VI,6 \*\*. Blair Fyffe, Andy Turner. 4 Mar 2010.

The fine icicles above *Aerial Runway* (clearly seen on the photo on p. 95 of the Northern Highland South guide). Start directly below the Icicle. A short (10m)

pitch up icy steps to belay on *Aerial Runway* just left of the icicle. Climb a pillar into a bit of a cave (small wires in the rock at the left side of the cave). Pull steeply round an icicle fringe onto easier angled ice above. Climb this to a large ledge on the left (25m). Continue up easier ice and mixed ground to the top (50m).

### **Coire Leiridh:**

*Silver Lining* 55m III. Ben Carter, Paul Firth, Simon Watchman. 26 Feb 2010. Walk 50m up the side of the burn on the west end of Coire Leiridh until the ground steepens and there is a tree and below it a good ice terrace (NH 016 455). Ice screw belays.

1. 30m A bulging ice pitch with a wide start narrowing to an obvious exit.
2. 25m A fine pitch of good ice that narrows towards the top. Exit the gully to the right.

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

*A Melon Entry Dear Watson* VII,7. Rich Cross, Andy Turner. 1 Mar 2010.

Go up *Moriarty* for a pitch to the block belay on *Sherlock*. Climb the second pitch of *Sherlock* to the stance on the arete. Start up the third pitch of *Sherlock* (up the steep corner) to the compact rock band. Traverse left with an awkward downwards mantelshelf to belay in a corner. Go out left on awkward ramps to turn the left side of the compact band; belay on a big ledge system. Go out right towards the edge of the buttress and up over short walls and grooves (a long pitch). Go leftwards then rightwards up ramps to a final awkward undercut wall leading to the top.

*Sherlock* VIII,8 \*\*\*. Iain Small, Guy Robertson. 4 Mar 2010.

An outstanding and sustained outing, mostly on snowed-up rock, so a very good plastering is required. The scene of several earlier attempts. Start up the *Sleuth Start* but where this breaks out left keep going directly up the groove line to belay beneath a short overhanging chimney slot (40m). Climb the slot, then move up then slightly right past a pile a stack of flakes to belay by the gigantic block of *Sherlock*. Follow the summer line of *Sherlock* to the top.

### **SGORR RUADH, Central Couloir:**

*Old Kent Road* 250m III. Sonya Drummond, Andy Nisbet. 21 Feb 2010.

The diagonal snow fault which runs across the left wall of the Central Couloir. Start up the icefall some 10m right of *Post Box Gully* (as for *East End*, SMCJ 2008). Traverse right and climb another icefall and ramp which leads to the start of the fault. Follow this diagonally right across the face to finish at the same point as the following route.

*Speakers' Corner* 120m V,7. John Lyall, Andy Nisbet. 16 Feb 2010.

The buttress between *Croydon Chimney* and *High Gully*. Climb easily up left as for *High Gully* to start left of its initial icefall.

1. 45m Climb a short wall to gain a groove and a ledge. Continue up a groove on the right of the next steep section to reach a roof overlooking *Croydon Chimney*.
2. 30m Move up right under the roof to reach a big ramp leading up right to end below a steep V-groove.

3. 20m Gain and climb the groove (a definite crux), then step right and climb a cracked wall on the crest to a good ledge.
4. 25m Finish up an easy groove.

### **MEALL GORM, Creag a' Chumhaing, The Smooth Wall:**

(NG 797 403) Alt 430m East facing

An obvious wall of clean rock with a prominent right-slanting fault lies at half-height on the walls left of the main buttress of Creag a' Chumhaing, in between two deep chockstoned gullies. It is well seen from the Bealach na Ba road as it swings into Coire na Ba. The wall offers some excellent routes, which warm in the morning sun.

Approach: Park at a layby at NG 804 407, walk across the corrie bottom, crossing the Allt a' Chumhaing and climb steeply to the base using the heathery rib just left of the right-bounding gully, 30mins.

#### **Main Wall:**

This is the highest and most impressive section of crag with four crack-lines and is bounded on the left by a slabby shield of lichenous rock.

Descent: A 35m abseil from fixed anchors in-situ above *Fingerpicker*.

*Midsomer Madness* 30m E2 5b \*. Murdoch Jamieson, Martin Moran. 21 Jun 2010.

The rightmost crack leans awkwardly to the right and is more engaging than it looks with sustained technical moves to a roof, then fine jamming to a ledge. A bold swing up left on juggy rock leads to easy ground.

*Line in the Sand* 30m E2 5c \*\*\*. Martin Moran, Robin Thomas. 29 Apr 2009. The main right-slanting corner is a little mucky but provides an excellent sustained route with a technical start, superb jamming in the mid-section and an exciting exit up the wider finishing crack. Belay 8m higher.

*Fingerpicker* 25m E3 6a \*\*\*. Martin Moran, Robin Thomas. 29 Apr 2009.

The enticing thin crack in the central wall is technical and strenuous but well protected. Belays and abseil point 8m above the exit.

*Double-Edged Sword* 35m E3 5c \*\*. Martin Moran, Robin Thomas. 29 Apr 2009.

The sharp-edged off-width 4m left of *Fingerpicker* would be a Peak classic. A Friend 5 or equivalent is required; otherwise E4! Layback and jam over a bulge with a wobbly chockstone, wedge the crack and hand-jam strenuously over a bulge. Move slightly left and finish up a crack-line with sustained interest.

*Lichenography* 25m HVS, 5b \*. Alex Moran, S.Wall. June 2009.

Start 5m left of *Double-Edged Sword* just right of a corner with a rocking block. Climb a short wall and slab to the bottom of the large black corner. Climb this with interest and finish up cracks above; slow to dry.

#### **Left-Hand Walls:**

Routes on the walls further left are shorter but still worthwhile. Descend by traversing the ledge to the left.

*Back in the Swing* 15m VS 4c. Martin Moran, Martin Welch. 15 Sep 2009.

A good warm up route starting in the corner just left of *Lichenography*. Climb up left on the wall and follow this with interest to a large terrace.

*Visa Crisis* 16m HVS 5b \*. Martin Moran, Martin Welch. 15 Sep 2009.

The slim corner-line near the left end of the wall is hard to start but enjoyable and well-protected thereafter.

*House of Puzzles* 15m E3 6a \*. Murdoch Jamieson, Martin Moran. 21 Jun 2010.

The arete just right of *Visa Crisis* has a perplexing start. The E3 way is to start up *Visa Crisis* and place runners at 5m then step down and swing right into the groove on the arete (runner in finger pod). Swing up left and gain a big flat hold on the arete. Stand on this, and then make a fine move (technical crux, good protection) up the edge to easy ground.

### **Creag a' Chumhaing:**

*Peace on Earth* 275m VII,7 \*\*\*. Alex & Martin Moran. 24 Dec 2009.

This grand adventure climbs a direct line up the frontal face of this prominent cliff at the entrance to Coire na Ba, and is repulsive and exhilarating in equal measure. Pitches 3, 8, 9 are technical 7, making for an arduous outing, but difficulties are mitigated by the 15min walk-in from the road. Fresh snowfall and a few days of sea-level freeze create the required conditions. Start at the big corner, which cuts through the first tier.

1. 45m Climb the open-book corner with sustained interest to below the first terrace.
2. 15m Move up to the terrace and traverse right to a detached flake left of a chimney and crack-line.
3. 50m Climb the chimney, then move up left and climb a steep corner-crack to gain the *Spiral Gully* terrace. Belay on blocks 10m higher. The headwall above looks scrappy but don't be fooled!
4. 25m Follow a crack-line 5m right of an icefall to a higher terrace.
5. 25m Go up a turf depression on the left past a tree to a cluster of flakes (ancient abseil sling).
6. 30m Take the right-trending line between imposing roofs, traverse left for 3m and ascend a groove to a turf ledge. Belay on the left.
7. 20m Go up to the terrace below the formidable final tiers and traverse to its right end. Belay beneath a crack.
8. 25m Climb the steep crack to a projecting gargoyle and continue up a chimney with chockstone to a large block.
9. 40m Go up then left to reach a right-slanting gangway, which splits the final overhangs and is climbed to an abrupt finish.

### **Upper Cliff:**

*Gorm Gully Variation Finish* 45m IV,4. Ben Carter, Simon Watchman. 27 Feb 2010.

Climb *Gorm Gully* up to the final easy ice pitch. Head left up the escape for

10m, then take a steep ice line above. Follow a right-slanting ice ramp at the top to a ledge. Traverse left round a large block go up to a niche on a ledge (25m). Move right up a groove to the top (20m).

### **SGÙRR A' CHAORACHAIN, South Face, No.1 Buttress:**

*Old Wounds* 40m E3 5c \*\*. Alex & Martin Moran. 19 Jun 2010.

The overhang and enticing crack-line on the left arete of Patey's Wall gives a good challenge. Scramble up to a belay at a crack in the initial wall.

1. 25m Climb the crack to the halfway ledge, pull boldly through the roof and layback the crack to a finishing bulge.
2. 15m Climb easy rocks on the right to the top.

### **BEINN BHAN, Coire na Poite:**

*Wonderland* 370m VII,7 \*\*. Simon Yearsley, Malcolm Bass. 28 Dec 2009.

This fine route cuts through the steep walls between *Realisation* and *Harlequin Rib* for five pitches before joining *Harlequin Rib* for the final 145m. Start at icefalls on the right side of the frontal face.

1. 45m Climb the icefall and move up and right to a second icefall. Climb this until it is possible to break right onto a steep wall, which is climbed on tufts and ice to reach a terrace. Traverse right for 4m to a fine exposed stance on the rib. A serious pitch.
2. 50m Step right onto a steep turfy slab, and climb this (tenuous) to a terrace. Move 3m left and climb a steep groove immediately left of a grey flaky arete, pulling steeply onto the arete at the top. Continue up moderate ground over a short steep step to a grey bay beneath the next steep tier
3. 45m Climb up to and through a left leaning corner slot. Above the slot, make a difficult move right, climb up to easier ground, and continue to a terrace. Move 5m left to beneath a triangular roof on a rib.
4. 35m Climb the superb open corner on the right, then moderate ground to the next steep tier.
5. 50m Move right to enter the bottomless groove 2m left of the arete. Climb the fine groove on spaced turfs and positive hooks. Continue up easier ground to a junction with *Harlequin Rib*.
6. to 8. 145m Follow *Harlequin Rib* to the summit.

**Note:** Photodiagram provided. The nearby route *Realisation* does remain independent from *Adventures of Toad*, despite the entry in current guidebook.

### **BEINN NA H-EAGLAISE, East Face:**

*Crescent Gully* 300m II. Peter Biggar. 27 Dec 2009.

This lies a short distance to the right of *Summit Gully* (SMCJ 2008); it starts in a classic Torridonian cleft with one or two icy steps and then enters a more easily angled bowl from which there are several exits. On the first ascent the steps in the lower gully were avoided on the steepish ground to the left; it would make no difference to the grade.

*Hogmanay Buttress* 300m II. Peter Biggar, Ronnie Robb. 31 Dec 2009.

The obvious buttress line directly to the right of *Crescent Gully*; it improves with height. The initial rocky step was avoided on the right, thereafter easily by

snowfields, turfey grooves and more interestingly by a narrowing rocky arete higher up.

**Note:** All the lines climbed so far on this hill seem surprisingly long for such a diminutive mountain, but there were some nine run-outs on *Hogmanay Buttress* and a glance at the contours on the map confirms the length. *Summit Gully* is probably also 300m rather than 250m as reported in SMCJ 2008.

### **BEINN ALLIGIN, Horns of Alligin:**

*The Waterhorse* 320m VII,6. Roger Webb, Simon Richardson. 28 Feb 2010.

The prominent buttress to the right of *Diamond Fire*.

1. 30m Start at the foot of the buttress below a prominent right to left ramp. Climb the ramp past a couple of steepenings to a ledge below a prominent left-facing corner.
2. 50m Climb the steep corner, then move up to a terrace. Move left along this to belay near the left end of the second tier.
3. 50m Climb the stepped corner system on the left flank of the tier to an easing.
4. 50m Move on to the terrace above, traverse right to reach a left to right ramp cutting through the tier above. Follow the ramp and steep step above and move up to a steep prominent wall.
5. 60m Turn the wall on the left and continue up mixed ground close to the buttress edge. Belay below a steep wall.
6. 60m Step right round the wall and climb mixed ground to a snowfield. Climb this and continue up mixed ground above to reach a ledge line just below the summit ridge.
7. 20m Move left along the ledge and then climb easily up to the summit of the Third Horn.

*The Christening* 300m IV,4 \*. James Edwards, Andy Wardle, Roger Webb. 4 Mar 2010.

Climbs the centre of the face right of *Diamond Fire*. In the middle of the face right of the line of *Three Legged Waterhorse* is an icy depression that runs directly from the summit of the western horn down to the steep initial wall. A direct start would be possible but on the day of this ascent there was insufficient ice. Right of centre of the face the lower tier of rock is breached by a right to left-trending fault. Climb this to reach the central depression (40m). Climb the depression to the summit.

### **LIATHACH CRAGS, Creag nan Leumnach:**

*Gift Horse* 30m E2 5b \*\*. M.Jamieson, Martin Moran. 2 Jun 2008.

Start at a layback crack 12m left of *Torridown Man*. Climb the crack, traverse 4m right and pull up to a ledge. Continue up a crack, then move delicately up left to finishing slabs. A varied outing, seemingly ignored by earlier visitors.

### **LIATHACH, Stuc a' Choire Dhuibh Bhig – North:**

*Zeta Ridge* 200m II. Sonya Drummond, Andy Nisbet, Helen Rennard. 12 Feb 2010.

A prominent ridge which forms the right side of *Chi Squared*. Approach up *Chi Squared* or broken ground on its right. Take a left-slanting ramp to just below

the crest (55m). Continue up the ramp to the crest and follow it approximately in two long pitches to a level section. Continue over a step to where the ridge joins the upper slopes.

### **LIATHACH, Coire Dubh Beag:**

*Sniffier* 200m III,5. Andy Nisbet. 17 Jan 2010.

A less significant line left of and parallel to *The Snotter*. Start up a short steep icefall about 20m left of *The Snotter*. Follow snow up left, then climb another short steep icefall rightwards and some easier angled ice to snow. Climb easily to a short steep groove on the left in the next tier. Climb this, then up to another tier with a line of weakness. Continue to easy ground.

### **LIATHACH, Coire na Caimhe:**

*Dru Chimney* 100m IV,5 \*. Martin Hind, Roger Webb. 23 Jan 2010.

Start about one third of the way up *3rd Pinnacle Gully* at the base of an obvious and prominent chimney. Climb the chimney (50m) and the continuation fault to easy ground (50m).

*Shining Glory* 200m VII,7 \*\*. Martin Hind, Andy Wardle, Roger Webb. 18 Feb 2010.

Start at the bottom left corner of the buttress between *Jerbil* and *Andes Couloir*.

1. 40m Climb up and rightwards to gain a ledge after 10m. Follow a fault back diagonally leftwards until forced into a tricky rightward traverse to gain easier ground. Continue to a good ledge.

2. 20m From the left end of the ledge, climb a right-slanting fault to the foot of a prominent chimney-crack.

3. 45m Climb the chimney-crack to its finish below a steep wall, then move right to gain a weakening and climb this to a good ledge beneath overhangs.

4. 35m Move left to a steep groove. Climb this and the wall above to gain easier ground and a large terrace.

5. 55m Climb a blunt rib above to gain the Am Fasarinen ridge.

### **INVERALLIGIN SEA-CLIFFS:**

*Small Pocks* 15m E1 5a. Michael Barnard, Hannah Gibbs. 12 Jun 2010.

The steep left wall of *The Lum*. Climb the initial 'pocky' wall to a large undercut flake, reach up for the mid-height break and continue straight up the wall above.

### **DIABAIG, Charlie's Dome:**

*Hull Wall* 80m E1 \*\*. Michael Barnard, Mike Rycroft. 7 Jun 2010.

To the right of *Oor Wullie* is a large overhung corner, the main feature of the lower half of the wall. This excellent route climbs this corner before continuing up cracks right of *Oor Wullie*.

1. 30m 5b Climb the steep corner to below the roof (Friend 0 underneath). Bridge out left, aiming for an obvious large foothold on the arete. Gain this and move up to step right into a heathery niche (as for *Oor Wullie*). Traverse right to break through the overlap at its right end and move up.

2. 50m 5b Go up to the right end of a short steeper wall above. Climb a left-slanting diagonal crack to reach a ledge at the foot of the main crack-line, well

seen from below. Follow this upwards and out right to easier ground. Finish rightwards up pleasant scooped corners.

**Note:** The same team thought *Calcite Corner* to be E2 5b (not HVS 5a).

### **BEINN EIGHE, Far East Wall:**

*Little Nipper* 60m VI,8. Ian Parnell, Ines Papert. 19 February 2010.

1. 30m Boldly climb the shallow right-facing groove 5m left of *Far East Gully* to ledges and then the steep crack to belay below a prominent corner with a crack in its left wall.
2. 30m Climb the corner and then cracks trending slightly left to easier ground.

### **Eastern Ramparts:**

*Pale Rider* VIII,9 \*\*\*. Martin Moran, Robin Thomas. 5 Feb 2010.

The winter ascent climbed thin cracks to gain the main corner from the right side on pitch 1. The summer crux (pitch 2) was sustained but highly co-operative. The 3rd pitch moved right from the summer line after the left traverse and thin ramp, climbing a vague crack rightwards then traversing delicately right along a footledge to gain a terrace. A short easy chimney at the right end of the terrace led to the final slopes (50m, serious and sustained with big swing potential for the second).

**Note:** After an ascent of *Boggle* by Andy Nisbet & Simon Yearsley in Sep 2009, it was thought worth three stars and a modern description is available.

*Fear of the Cold and Dark* VIII,8 \*\*. Pete Macpherson, Iain Small. 2 Mar 2010.

1. 35m Climb the summer line up the right side of the chimney via a crack to pull through a roof. Belay up and right at large block.
2. 15m Move down and right to foot of a left-facing groove. Climb the groove to the *Upper Girdle* and belay on the right below the corner at the left side of the white wall.
3. 25m Climb up the corner about 3m, then pull precariously left onto the cracked arete. Climb up via a shattered crack until forced right to join a large flake in the corner. Layback up the flake to the end of the corner, then move diagonally up and left for about 8m via steep grooves to belay as for *Fear of the Dark* at a good ledge below and right of an orange coloured steep groove with capping roof. Sustained and quite serious pitch.
4. 40m Crux. Climb up the orange groove to its capping roof. Pull out left and climb up a left-facing corner until you can pull out right to gain a sensational standing position on the left edge of a wall under a small roof. Pull through the roof (strenuous) and climb left into a wide crack. Continue direct up steep grooves and corners to the top.

### **East Buttress:**

*East Buttress Left-Hand* Very Difficult. Sonya Drummond, Andy Nisbet. 7 Aug 2009.

By the winter line (SMCJ 2009). This may have been done before, and certainly all the sections will have been, but it seems worth recording as a separate route on a popular buttress.

**Note:** Iain Young wonders whether he & Simon Osborne were first to climb the direct start to *East Gully* in mid Feb 1978.

### **Fuselage Wall:**

*War Games* 55m HVS \*. Andy Nisbet, Simon Yearsley. 18 Sep 2009.

A left line up the pillar with *Spitfire*. Based on the winter route *War Games* with a finish up *Bandit*.

1. 40m 4b,4c Pitches 1 and 2 of *War Games* (some hollow blocks) and belay as for *Spitfire* at the right end of the roof.
2. 15m 5b Step left and pull through the roof 1m left of *Spitfire* (crux by far; starting as for *Spitfire*, then stepping left would drop the grade to VS). Go diagonally left up the wall above to finish left of a capping roof.

*Ace* VS \*. Sonya Drummond, Andy Nisbet. 22 Aug 2009.

Based on the winter line.

1. 25m 4a As for the winter line except that the 'short square-cut chimney' was passed by moving right and back left above it.
2. 25m 5a Climb a shallow right-slanting ramp just left of 'the compelling steep crack' to join and follow the winter line.
3. 10m Scramble to the top.

*Tail-End Charlie* 70m VI,7. Malcolm Bass, Simon Yearsley. 21 Feb 2010

Start at same place as *Bombs Away*. Climb straight up a groove immediately right of the start of *Bombs Away* and exit left. Go straight up to belay ledge of *Ace* (30m). Go up the groove of summer *Ace* (left of the 'compelling crack'), then go leftwards to the cave/niche of *Fight or Flight*. Instead of going left as for this route, go awkwardly right under the roof to squeeze out right onto a diving board in a great situation. Finish up to easy ground.

*Bombs Away* Severe. Andy Nisbet. 7 Aug 2009.

Based on the winter line, except going further right on pitch 1 to join directly the short roofed groove of pitch 2, then avoiding the descending traverse on pitch 3 by going up first then right. Low in the grade.

### **Far West Buttress:**

*Chocks Away* 85m V,6 \*\*. James Edwards, Andy Wardle, Will Wilkinson. 1 Dec 2009.

This route, which comes into condition very quickly, follows a left then right-facing corner system on the right side of the buttress. Start in the bed of *Fuselage Gully* (*Far West Gully*) at the second left-facing corner about 20m up and right of the toe of the lower tier of the buttress.

1. 25m Climb up to the left-facing corner. Exit right at the top on chockstones.
2. 15m Go up easy ground to the base of the right-facing corner.
3. 20m Climb this, stepping around the roof on its left to a good ledge.
4. 25m Climb a slab moving back left at the top and climb a hanging chimney (difficult to start) to the end of the difficulties.

### **Pineapple Cliff:**

*Pina Colada* 110m VII,7 \*\*. Andy Nisbet, Helen Rennard. 28 Feb 2010.

The buttress between the left and central chimneys. Start well up the snow slope which leads up into the back of the deep central chimney.

1. 20m Traverse out left to the crest of the buttress and follow it to a huge block below steep ground (a serious pitch).
2. 30m Gain the top of the block and climb the cracked groove above to turf. Step left to turf in a parallel groove. Climb this groove and twin grooves above to reach turf on the right leading into a right-slanting ramp. Climb it to a ledge. A sustained and steep pitch, might be VI,7 overall with less icy cracks.
3. 20m Climb a continuation corner to a ledge. Traverse right above the central chimney and climb a steep groove to a terrace.
4. 30m Continue up a corner and step right to a ledge. Go right along this for 5m, then climb a groove to easier ground and the start of upper snow slopes.

## CAIRNGORMS

### **COIRE AN T-SNEACHDA, Mess of Pottage:**

*Mixed Message* 90m V,7. John Lyall, Andy Nisbet. 4 Dec 2009.

A left-hand version of *The Message*, including some grooves which have been climbed before and an exciting section on one which is on the summer line of *Truncator* (SMCJ 2009). Start as for *The Message*.

1. 30m Climb the blocky chimney, then the left-hand of the two grooves (the normal *Message* climbs the right) and continue to below a roofed groove in the rib left of *The Message*.
2. 20m As for *Truncator*. Climb the worn groove (*The Message* has been climbed this way, but harder) but continue up the groove to the roof. Make exciting moves out left into the corner-crack. Go up this to an awkward belay on the right.
3. 20m Continue up the corner-crack until forced into *Trunk-Line*. Go up this to below the top corner of *The Message*.
4. 20m Finish up the top pitch of *The Message*.

*The Messenger* 100m Hard Severe. Sonya Drummond, Andy Nisbet. 9 Aug 2009.

Three good sections of climbing separated by grass.

1. 30m Climb easily to below its corner.
2. 30m 4c Climb the corner and continue to below the right-facing corner of winter.
3. 40m 4b Climb a left-slanting chimney left of the corner and continue in the same line to finish up a steep crack (as for *Droidless* winter).

*The Three Decrees* 100m Severe 4a. Andy Nisbet. 14 Sep 2009.

Based on the winter line but climbing ribs either side of its corners to maximise clean dry rock. Start up slabs below its crack and corner and pick as dry a line as possible into a short deep V-groove. Pull out on to its left rib and gain the base of the crack above. Move up left of the crack, then step across it. Climb up the wall right of the crack and continue up the rib right of the left-facing corner of the winter route. Go easily up to the right-facing corner of *The Messenger* (winter).

Climb the first section of the corner to a ledge, then continue up the left arete of the next section. This leads to blocky ground and the top. Climbing the arete left of the first section of Messenger corner looks better but more than Severe.

*Terracotta* 30m VS 4c. Allen Fyffe, Iain Peter. 5 Sep 2010.

Takes the fine left-facing flake left of *Pot Doodles* and finishes at the abseil point on the Haston Line. Start at the foot of *Tasker* and climb up and right below a small overlap to reach the crack of *Pot Doodles*. Move back left on to the slab and up to the fine flake. Climb this and go left under the overhang then up and then left to finish.

### **Aladdin's Buttress:**

**Note:** Greg Boswell & Adam Hughes climbed *Paramedic* free on 19 Dec 2009. It is not known if this is the FFA, as it is thought that there was a second ascent previously. The guidebook omits to note one rest point on the first ascent.

*Tom Thumb* 100m IV,5 \*. John Lyall, Andy Nisbet, Jonathan Preston. 27 Nov 2009.

A ridge immediately left of *Pygmy Ridge*. It gives similarly pleasant climbing but is more escapable, especially with a bigger build-up. Start at its base, 10m left of *Pygmy*.

1. 30m Climb an easy groove, then go more steeply right on to the crest. Follow this to an exposed platform leading to the next section.

2. 30m Climb a groove and ramp leading up left of the sharp crest. Gain the crest and follow it to near *Pygmy's* horizontal arete.

3. 40m Go left and climb a steep wall over a distinctive wedged block. Head up left but when easy ground is reached, go right up a steep groove which leads to the final crest of *Pygmy Ridge*.

**Note:** There was no evidence of this being climbed before, even on a previous semi-winter ascent when much more was visible. Unlike an icy groove right of *Original Summer Route's* upper ridge and leading on to its final step, where a big old peg was found in April 2009. This gave a good quality Grade III which would make a fine finish to routes from below.

*Paddy Whack* 60m III. Andy Nisbet. 10 Dec 2009.

Left of *Tom Thumb* and another sharp ridge is a curving ramp come gully which leads easily up right to the end of *Pygmy's* horizontal arete. Start up this but soon move up left to gain a slab which sits under a steep wall on the next buttress to the left. Gain the slab and go up it rightwards to a chimney-gully. Climb this over a bulge to gain the final crest of *Aladdin's Buttress True Finish*. Climbed in good conditions of snow and ice.

**Note:** *Genie* was first climbed in winter by Gordon Smith & Gary Ball in Jan 1979. While such a late claim might normally be treated with doubt, the 1982 ascent is also in doubt.

### **Fluted Buttress:**

*Wavelength* Very Difficult. Brian Davison, Andy Nisbet. 27 Aug 2010.

Start next to *Fluted Buttress Direct* and climb the alternative winter start.

Continue up to the traverse but then move left and climb the rib overlooking *Spiral Gully* to the top.

*Fluted Buttress* 150m Severe \*\*. Andy Nisbet. 19 Aug 2010.

Follows the rib immediately right of the winter route *Fluted Buttress Direct*, on surprisingly clean and solid rock. Start up clean rock and turf ledges right of a shallow groove which is the winter approach. On reaching the main winter groove, climb the rib on its right (this is between *Fluted Buttress Direct* and *Piccolo*). Where this begins to peter out, step across *Sax Appeal* groove and go up to below a smooth slabby area. Go up into the slabby area, then traverse left across it to a sharp continuation rib (bold). Follow this (again just right of *Fluted Buttress Direct*) to where it ends. Step left across *Fluted Buttress Direct* and climb a steep wall on jugs, then up near another crest to where it joins *Fluted Buttress Direct*. Finish up this.

### COIRE AN LOCHAIN, No. 3 Buttress:

*The Snowpimp* 50m VIII,9 \*. Guy Robertson, Greg Boswell. Apr 2010.

A very strenuous route, but with thankfully short hard sections, taking the crack in the arete right of *Hooker's Corner* then continuing directly up the grooves which *Conundrum* avoids. Start at a short corner below the initial overhanging crack. Climb the corner to a ledge just right of the arete, take a breath then swing left into the crack and climb this past a particularly long and powerful move (crux) to a junction with *Conundrum* at the ledge on the arete. Follow this until where it goes left again then continue directly up steep grooves to a belay below the obvious acutely overhanging corner-crack (30m). Climb the overhanging corner-crack with difficulty, then continue directly up the central thin groove to the top (20m).

### STACAN DUBHA:

*Panama* 120m V,5. Sandy Allan, Andy Nisbet, Jonathan Preston. 11 Dec 2009.

A steep hidden gully forming the left side of the buttress with *Havana* (SMCJ 2009). Go up the ramp which is the start of *Havana* and continue round left to the start of the gully.

1. 30m Go over a short steep step to gain the base of an overhanging section. If this was frozen and icy it might tempt you. Otherwise climb a crack-line about 3m to the right until possible to step left into the gully above the overhanging section. Go up to a chokestone, over this and reach the crest on the right.
2. 40m Go diagonally back into the gully and climb a V-groove and a steepening to reach a mixed section leading to easier ground.
3. 50m Continue in the same line, then left to reach the top.

*Panarella* 150m II. Andy Nisbet. 30 Jan 2010.

A gully forming the right side of the buttress with *Havana*. Start up a wide easy gully, which has been climbed and descended at Grade I, then take its narrow left branch. In excellent conditions there were four very short ice pitches.

### STAG ROCKS:

**Note:** Gordon Smith notes that when he did *The Tenements* in winter 1978/9,

he started up a prominent corner system just right of *Stagnant Gully* and joined the summer route above its clean first two pitches. John Lyall has winter climbed the summer start at a higher grade but the normal winter route starts to its right. Gordon Smith also notes that he and Gary Ball climbed a route left of *Central Route*, not *Central Route* itself in early February 1979.

### STAC AN FHARAI DH:

*Glassy Cherry* 120m V,5 \*\*. Guy Robertson, Jason Currie. 18 Jan 2010.

A quality pure ice route up the centre of Stac an Fharaidh West Flank. Obvious features are a thin icefall up the central barrier wall, and a steep ice finger in the same line near the top. Gain and follow an obvious, easy angled left-trending groove leading up to below the thin ice fall and belay below this on the right (50m). Go left and climb the icefall then continue in the same line over iced slabs and bulges to belay below the finger (50m). Climb the finger to the top (20m).

**Note:** Michael Barnard climbed *Pippet Slab* variation (the wide crack) in June 2010 and thought it HVS 5a.

### LURCHERS CRAG:

*Fang* 60m III,5. Andy Nisbet. 7 Dec 2009.

A sharp ridge which is the highest ridge going left (north) out of *South Gully*. Start in the centre of its flat-fronted base facing *South Gully*. A tricky short wall leads into a shallow chimney, then another tricky wall on the right which leads to a sharp but less steep crest and a final pinnacle also on *Husky*.

*Skittles* 80m III. Sonya Drummond, Andy Nisbet. 1 Nov 2008.

The left of two shorter ridges between *Pinnacle Ridge* and *Punchdrunk*, starting at its base on the right.

*Pup* 60m II. Andy Nisbet. 7 Dec 2009.

The rightmost ridge on the cliff, apart from a small one further right, and next right of the ridge with the *Canis* routes. A steep start leads to easier ground.

**Note:** The first ascensionist of *Desperate Measures* (SMCJ 2009) should have been Joe Omond (not Ormond).

### SGÒRAN DUBH MÒR, Fan Corrie:

**Note:** *Sparkler* (SMCJ 2007) was an ascent based on *Bell's Variation*, not the original route which was the 1986 ascent.

### SGÒR GAOITH, No.4 Buttress:

*Gaia* 200m III,5. Sonya Drummond, Andy Nisbet. 28 Nov 2009.

The ridge on the opposite side of the descent gully to *Enchanted Ridge* (SMCJ 2009). i.e. on the left facing down. Start near the base of the descent gully. Move out right on turf to a ridge and step down into a groove beyond. A better start with consolidated snow would be to descend further into the main gully and climb the groove from its base. Climb the groove (45m), and continue up it (50m) towards a crest on the right. Follow the crest to a summit and descend

from its right edge. Go left to a col and back right up a steep groove to a big flake (50m). Stand on the flake and make a thin move up a short slab before returning right to the crest (10m). Follow the crest to where it becomes walking (45m).

Continuing left from the col into a long wide groove would make the route Grade II in good conditions.

### **SGÒR GAOITH, Summit Buttress:**

*Cassin Ridge* 90m III,5. John Lyall, Andy Nisbet, Jonathan Preston. 30 Nov 2009.

A short but well defined ridge which runs just south of east from the summit cairn. There is a short hard corner on the right after 15m, otherwise follow the crest fairly easily.

### **COIRE GARBHLACH, Lower Corrie:**

**Note:** A big icefall right of *Dirich Uisge* was used as a lower tier start to that route by Chris Ensoll and party in February 2010.

*Humphrey* 140m II. Mark Bull, Gillian Duncan. 13 Feb 2010.

Right of the 'terrace come amphitheatre' is a shallow gully. Climb an icefall on the lower tier (about 50m right of *Dirich Uisge Right Start* – see above) to enter the gully, and follow it to the top, passing another short ice pitch. It was Grade III on the day but normally has more snow and less ice.

### **Upper Corrie:**

*Quattro* 250m III,4. Andy Nisbet. 13 Mar 2010.

The furthest left (fourth) of the ridges. Start at the left corner of its base. After an awkward start trend slightly right to pass a steep corner and wall. Return left and climb the centre of the steepest tier (crux), then move left to the crest which leads right of the broken upper section of the buttress. Where the crest peters out, move left on to the upper buttress and climb this to snow slopes leading to the cornice.

### **EINICH CAIRN, Coire nan Clach:**

The following three routes are to the right of *Alaska Highway* on the front face of the central rib.

*Klondike* 60m III,4. Dave Hesleden, Simon Richardson. 6 Nov 2009.

The next break right of *Alaska Highway* consists of a narrow slanting gully leading to a ledge at mid-height (30m). Continue up and left up the easy corner above.

*Living the Dream* 60m IV,4. Dave Hesleden, Simon Richardson. 6 Nov 2009. Start just right of *Klondike*, climb a flake then step right into a choked stone crack. Climb this to the mid-height ledge (30m) and finish up the easy central corner above.

*Yukon Gold* 60m III,4. Simon Richardson, Dave Hesleden. 6 Nov 2009.

Climb the deep left-slanting gully, approximately 25m right of the previous

routes, and pull over the capping chokestone to the mid-height ledge. Finish right up an easy corner.

### **CARN CLOICH-MHUILINN:**

Both routes are on the right half of the slabs on Carn Cloich-Mhuilinn. Quite a few other lines looked possible at varying levels of difficulty, mostly looking hard to protect. With a max height of 60m most of the routes are single pitch, but the views are great and it has a nice, open friendly feel (except when you can't find any protection!).

*Razor Cut* 60m Very Difficult. Neil Reid, Walt Black. 5 Jun 2010.

At the right of the highest section of the slabs a prominent thin line cuts obliquely left, branching two-thirds of the way up. Scramble easily up the first 10m and belay in a small niche just below the wide ledge. Follow the crack-line past a rectangular overlap on the right and take the more prominent right branch where the crack divides in two. Protection minimal for the first half of the climb.

*Not Bothered* 50m Difficult. Walt Black, Neil Reid. 5 Jun 2010.

A diagonal rake crosses the right side of the slabs, rising from right to left. This route starts directly below the top of this rake, following a stepped crack through a triangular niche at mid-height and turning a final wall on the right to finish on broken ground (the wall direct looks about Severe).

### **COIRE SPUTAN DEARG, Snake Ridge Area:**

*Adder Rib* 120m III. John Lyall, Andy Nisbet. 18 Dec 2009.

The ridge to the right of *The Ladders* gives a natural line but escapable, particularly with a good snow build-up. Keep to the crest as much as possible. A short section is common to the original line of *Mousehole Gully* but this now goes direct through the mousehole. The upper buttress was the highlight and was eased by some consolidated snow.

### **Terminal Buttress:**

*Last Waltz Variation* 25m Very Difficult \*. Michael Barnard. 26 Jun 2010.

A variation start to *Terminal 5* (SMCJ 2008). On the left flank of the lower buttress is an amenable looking groove, bounded on its right by an enormous flake. Start up the left side of the flake and climb the groove to a ledge. Step right and go up a short corner to the slabs left of *Terminal 5*. Go right to join *Terminal 5*.

**Note:** The winter line of *April Wall* probably starts up this line.

*Terminal Corner* 40m VS \*. Michael Barnard. 26 Jun 2010.

Takes the obvious left-hand entry to the *Terminal Buttress* groove before continuing up a corner-crack to its left.

1. 20m 4a Start left of *Terminal Buttress* at a slabby line of weakness. Follow this up and right, then move into the right-hand of two grooves which leads up to the base of the main *Terminal Buttress* groove.
2. 20m 4c Climb the fine corner crack in its left wall and continue up cracks to the crest of the buttress and junction with *Terminal 5*.

**BEINN A' BHUIRD, Coire an Dubh Lochain:**

*Garba's Return* 90m III. Duncan Tunstall, Simon Richardson. 15 Nov 2009.

A winter version of *Shipton*. The buttress left of *Alpha Gully* comes into condition fast and is a good early season venue. Later in the season it develops a huge cornice.

1. 30m Start near the right side of the buttress below a narrow turf groove. Climb the groove, with a step right at 10m, to broken blocks.
2. 60m Move up and left over the blocks below the headwall, to reach a shallow gully leading to the plateau.

**LOCHNAGAR, Southern Sector:**

*Kanevvluk* 100m II. Gwilym Lynn, Caroline Lynn. 13 Mar 2010.

Follows the right edge of the first buttress in the Southern Sector. Take easy ground up to a more defined rib further up. Follow this is the top.

*Red Lightning, Left-Hand Start* 50m II. Gwilym Lynn, Caroline Lynn. 5 Dec 2009.

To the left of the stepped corners of *Red Lightning*, follow a series of broken grooves to join the arete of *Red Lightning* near the top.

*Pea Soup Chimney* 130m IV,4. Gwilym Lynn, Andrew Inglis. 6 Feb 2010.

Climbs the small buttress lying to the left of *The Sentinel* and to the right of the gully bounding *Red Lightning* buttress.

1. 40m Climb the obvious square-cut chimney in the centre of the buttress through a small roof at its top to reach easier ground.
2. and 3. 90m Easy snow leads to the plateau.

**The Sentinel:**

*Eagle Eye* 60m VS. Simon Richardson, Duncan Tunstall. 3 Aug 2008.

Good climbing up the left edge of the buttress.

1. 30m 4c Start as for *Paladin* but move left to below an overlap defending the left side of the face. Climb this using a rounded flake and continue up and left to grassy niche.
2. 30m 4a Continue up the slab on the left, then step right on to the headwall and follow a right-trending crack to the summit of the buttress.

**Sunset Buttress:**

*D'Artagnan* 100m III. Simon Richardson, Duncan Tunstall. 5 Dec 2009.

A line up the right side of the shallow buttress taken by *Aramis*.

1. 50m Start just inside the gully of *Iffy* and follow a ramp leftwards to the centre of the buttress. Continue up right-facing grooves until below a steep wall overlooking the gully of *Iffy*.
2. 50m Break left through this and finish up the final gully of *Aramis*.

**Note:** Will Wilkinson returned to *Sunset Buttress* and decided the direct variation in SMCJ 2008 is too close to the normal route to be worth recording.

**Shadow Buttress A:**

*Maron's Buttress* 200m V,6. Dave Almond, Duncan Tunstall. 5 Feb 2010.

A link between *Polyphemus Gully* and *Giant's Head Chimney*.

1. 30m Climb the first pitch of *Polyphemus Gully*.
2. 40m From the top of the ice step left and climb a wide crack direct for 10m. Traverse left onto a slab and follow this up and left.
3. 50m Climb back right and climb the narrowing buttress direct.
4. and 5. 80m Finish up *Feathered Arete*.

### THE STUIC:

*Slot Machine* 60m III. Simon Richardson. 11 Apr 2010.

The prominent fault-line between *Unblocked* and *The Slot, Left-Hand*. Move up the fault and climb it to a steep bulge. Step left onto a rib overlooking *Unblocked* and climb up steeply to easier ground. Trend up and right to the crest of the buttress and finish as for *The Slot*.

**Note:** *Unblocked* banks out to a Grade I gully later in the season and no through-route is required.

*Glottis* 60m I. Simon Richardson. 11 Apr 2010.

The prominent clean-cut gully to the right of *Glottal Slot*.

*Whaleback* 60m II. Simon Richardson. 11 Apr 2010.

The broad ridge right of *Stegosaurus Rib*. Start up steep turf steps leading to an easy snow finish.

### CREAG AN DUBH LOCH:

*Valentine's Buttress* 80m I/II. Harry Holmes, Thomas Rust. 14 Feb 2010.

An area of crag east of South-East Buttress at NO 239 822. The crag is made up of three main buttresses split by two gullies. There is a large icefall on the left edge of the crag with smaller falls on the right buttress. The route is on the central buttress starting at an ice bulge and taking a line straight up the middle past a cave. Start below a bulge of ice and move straight up on good turf and ice. Gain the small cave (50m). Continue straight up over several bulges and an ice wall (30m).

*The Sword of Damocles* VIII, 9. Iain Small, Doug Hawthorn. 13 Feb 2010.

Climb the summer line throughout. Useful ice above the chimney pitch on this ascent.

### Central Slabs:

*Minotaur* 300m VII,7. Dave Hesleden, Simon Richardson. 13 Feb 2010.

A direct version of the summer line. Good varied mixed climbing.

1. 50m Start at the pillar as for the summer route, but climb its left side and exit steeply at its top onto a steep slab. Move up and left to join a right-trending line up snow to the apex of a triangular snow slope. Pull through a steep section and belay below an overhung recess.
2. 40m Climb the recess and steep corner above, then continue up an easier groove to reach a terrace below a right-facing corner system.
3. 30m Climb the corner and exit left at its top. Move up the terrace to the next tier.
4. 60m Climb the final groove of *The Titan* then continue up an easier snow

groove to join *Theseus Grooves*. Follow this to the top in another 120m.

### Central Gully Wall:

*Black Diamond* 200m E5 \*\*\*. Guy Robertson, Pete Macpherson. 22 Jun 2010.

Superb sustained climbing up the faint crack-line between *Dubh Loch Monster* and *King Rat*. Low in the grade, but with a hard crux and some bold sections. Start as for *Dubh Loch Monster*.

1. 30m 4c Climb cracks as for *Dubh Loch Monster* but veer right and climb a short crack to a small ledge under a leaning wall with a short corner defining the left end of the *King Rat* roof.
2. 30m 6b Step up and use an undercut to gain the leaning wall then make a desperate move right to get established in the corner. Move up left into then up a short groove and continue up slightly right to a hidden jug at a steepening. Pull directly over this and a second bulge directly above to a good ledge and in-situ peg on *The Prowl*.
3. 30m 6a Step left across the gap, then move up to follow the obvious blind flake and cracks which lead to a small niche below and left of a cracked red wall. Climb the superb wall to a ledge, and continue up the crack until a mossy bulge forces a traverse right to a junction with *King Rat* and belay below a steep crack.
4. 40m 5c Climb the steep crack-line direct over the right side of the bulging nose to a junction with *King Rat*, and follow this to a ledge.
5. etc. 70m 4c Finish up *King Rat*.

*Super Rat* IX,9 \*\*\*\*. Pete Macpherson, Guy Robertson. 18 Feb 2010.

A superlative tour de force with outstanding climbing all the way. The more ice the better, but should be possible without (but harder). The summer line of *King Rat* is followed (free) to halfway up pitch 4. Instead of going left into *Waterkelpie* corner, keep going directly up steep cracks to the belay. On pitch 5, instead of going left below the roof, pull directly through just right of the nose using twin parallel cracks, then regain and follow the summer line to the top in a further three pitches.

*Danger Mouse* 240m VII,7. Iain Small, Simon Richardson. 21 Feb 2010.

This winter line based on *Kraken* is probably the easiest winter route on Central Gully Wall.

1. 60m Start 10m below *The Mousetrap* Winter and climb a steep crack and pull onto a steep slab. Move right along this to gain the prominent *Mousetrap* recess. (This section was first climbed by Ross Hewitt & Neil Morrison 13 Feb 2010). Climb this to the spike belay at the top of pitch 2 of *The Mousetrap*.
2. 30m Climb the right side of the recess as for *Kraken* and exit onto the turf moustache. Hand traverse right to join the corner of *Waterkelpie Wall*. Climb the corner then traverse right to a good belay on *King Rat*.
3. 30m Climb the crack directly above through the roof to gain a turf ledge. Continue up the mixed groove above to reach a terrace (This pitch is common with *Super Rat*).
4. to 6. 120m Continue up icy grooves as for *Super Rat* to the top.

**GLEN CALLATER, Coire Kander:**

*Tora Bora* 100m to easy ground IV,5. John Higham, Iain Young. 30 Nov 2008. Right of *Twisting Gully* is a broad buttress that merges with steep turf/snow slopes above. The buttress is split by a shallow vertical fault line that starts at the base of the lowest rocks. This surprisingly enjoyable, early season route follows this fault in three pitches, with only minor deviations, over turf ice and the occasional hook move, to easy ground.

**GLAS MAOL:**

*Craig Herrich Buttress* 200m III,4. John Higham, Iain Young. Feb 2008. Relationship to the summer route uncertain. Start just right of the lowest rocks and climb up and right over slabs to snow/turf which leads upwards and left through a short narrow chimney come gully to gain the crest. Climb snowy grooves initially left of the crest to ultimately gain the fine arete which eases to merge with the plateau.

**Note:** The same team climbed in Dec 2009, the fine spur which drops at NO 207 773 from the Tom Buidhe plateau into Canness Glen on the true left bank of the Canness Burn, Grade II. A fine winter scramble reminiscent of the *East Ridge* of Beinn a' Chaorainn, though with one short much steeper section taken direct. A resting peg at the base of this (together with the obviousness of the spur) suggests we are unlikely to have been the first.

**GLEN CLOVA, Winter Corrie:**

*Sun Rock Blues Direct* 50m IV,6 \*. Henning Wackerhage, Adam Henly. 17 Jan 2010.

1. and 2. Follow the original line.
3. 50m (direct variant). Climb a turf groove right rather than traversing left. At the top of the groove climb the well protected crux corner and overhang to easier ground.
4. Easy climbing remains.

*Moon Ice Jazz* 145m VI,7 \*\*. Adam Henly, Robbie Miller, Henning Wackerhage. 31 Jan 2010.

A line between *Sun Rock Blues* and *Wiggle*.

1. 45m Climb the right side of the recess between the two routes.
2. 50m Climb left and then directly up the steep wall to the icefall above. Climb the icefall in an exposed position to reach easier ground. A stunning pitch.
3. 50m Easy climbing to the top remains.

**Corrie Fee:**

*B-Sutherland Variation* 100m II/III. Mat Dowsett, John Mehers. 17 Jan 2010. Climb *B Gully* until *B Gully Chimney* is passed on the left. Another 15m further up, before *B Gully* begins to steepen, there is a short but steep snow ramp on the left. This leads to a narrowing gully/chimney that eventually meets the top of the ridge and overlooks *B Gully Chimney*.

**Coire Sharroch:**

*Sharroch Groove A* 255m II. Sonya Drummond, Duncan M. McCallum. 27 Dec 2009.

Coming round left from A Gully Buttress in Corrie Fee, one enters Corrie Sharroch. *Sharroch Groove A* takes the first groove in the cliffs on the right side of the Corrie (looking up). NO 253 746.

1. 25m Scramble up to the base of the groove, then climb the groove itself.
2. 50m Climb the continuation groove more steeply, crux.
3. 60m Carry on up the left groove easily, then traverse left and upwards to a steepening.
4. 60m Avoid the steepening by moving left and upwards.
5. 60m Carry on up a final groove and onto easier ground on to the top of the crest of A Gully Buttress.

### **GLEN ESK, Earn Craig:**

This is the name on the 1:25000 map for the cliff named in SMCJ 2009 as Bruntwood Craig. Bruntwood Craig is the cliff to the right.

*Earn Gully* 200m II/III. Dave Adam. 19 Jan 2010.

The gully immediately right of the main face of Earn Craig (Eagle Rocks), at NO 385 807. The gully narrows in its upper reaches and is overhung dramatically by the north-east facing buttress. It terminates in a steep icy cul-de-sac with a 10m ice pitch exit. Photo of lines provided.

*Bruntwood Gully* 200m I. Dave Adam. 19 Jan 2010.

The main gully to the right of *Earn Gully* and left of Bruntwood Craig (NO 385 807). In descent.

### **GLEN ESK, Craig Maskeldie:**

*Maskeldie Buttress* 250m III,4 \*\*. Andy Nisbet, Duncan Tunstall. 27 Dec 2009.

The big buttress which provides the skyline as you walk up the glen along Loch Lee and beyond. Start up on the right of a steep lower buttress and climb an easy ramp followed by a traverse left into a left-slanting shallow chimney. This led to the crest and a short awkward step back right. Follow the crest as directly as was reasonable, including a short difficult wall. This short crux could have been bypassed on the left making the route an easier Grade III.

*Lee Gully* 300m II. Dave Adam. 9 Jan 2010.

The first gully to the right of Maskeldie Buttress. Climb to the first small cul-de-sac, then move right. Follow the narrow gully to the second rock cul-de-sac and exit left to the main ridge on a narrow terrace. Continue directly through the blocky outcrops to the top of Craig Maskeldie.

*Shaula Ridge* 150m III,5 \*\*. Andy Nisbet, Duncan Tunstall. 5 Mar 2010.

The buttress to the right of *Lee Gully*. Start at the right side of its base and climb a big easy ramp (hidden on the approach) leftwards. Gain a crest on the left and skirt round a steep capping band. Follow the crest to a short steep wall taken direct and finish up the easy crest. Bypassing the short steep wall on the left would make the route Grade II.

**Unich Butress (NO 387 796):**

The steep butress to the right of *Unich Gully*.

*North Ridge* 200m VS. Andy Nisbet, Duncan Tunstall. 16 Aug 2010.

Start on the left edge of the north (front) face up a ridge which forms between the steep front face and a heathery left side.

1. 40m 4c Take the ridge mainly on good clean rock but vegetated as the angle eases at 25m.
  2. 30m 4b Continue up the right side of the ridge to the angle easing and vegetation increasing. Tree belay.
  3. 45m 4b Up and right on easy vegetation past a short rock step to the ridge, which can be accessed by another tricky step.
  4. 35m The crest of the ridge can be followed to the first step.
  5. 50m 4c Drop into the step and exit taking the left side of the steep wall. Follow the ridge for 15m to a clean step which is climbed direct (crux). Follow the crest of the ridge to where it flattens.
- The ridge continues for another 50m but is gentle and wide. The gully on the west of the ridge provides an easy descent.

*Once in a Blue Moon* 300m VII,7. Duncan Tunstall, Simon Richardson, Henning Wackerhage. 30 Dec 2009.

Start in the centre of the steep triangular front face below a left-slanting vegetated groove.

1. 50m Climb the groove, past a couple of steep slabs, to a ledge on the left.
2. 30m Move up and right to a vegetated overhung scoop. Climb this with difficulty (first crux) and pull onto a narrow ledge.
3. 20m Step left around the steep arete and climb a bulging crack-line (second crux) to a large ledge.
4. 20m Hand traverse right along a heathery break to reach easier ground on the right side of the crest.
5. 30m Move up a slabby groove and climb this to belay near the ridge crest.
6. 50m Climb left of the crest via ramps and chimneys to belay below a chimney leading up to a pronounced notch in the ridge.
7. 50m Climb up to the notch then up the ridge crest until it is possible to gain easier ground.
8. 50m Follow mixed terrain right of the crest to easier ground. A further 50m of scrambling leads to the top.

**Earn Craig:**

*What Dentists Earn* 190m E1 5b. Mark Atkins, Duncan Tunstall. 31 Aug 2010.

A pleasantly sustained line that leads directly up the cliff apart from the traverse connecting pitch 2 to 3. Start on the right end of the raised low angled grass in the centre of the crag about 10m up. Topo of the crag provided.

1. 25m 5b Climb from the right end of the grass up a steep crack. Where it ends, traverse left below the steepening until a belay is reached.
2. 30m 5b Continue straight to a grass ledge. Traverse easily right for 20m.
3. 25m 5b Climb the corner on the right of the ledge, then a hanging ramp that leads diagonally left.

4. 40m 5b Climb to a roof; traverse down to its left end. From here the wall can be followed up and right. A tricky move gains the left edge which leads to a tree. Bash through the undergrowth for another 10m.
5. 40m 5b Climb straight up for 30m to a tree. Use this to climb steep grass before drifting right to a good crack.
6. 20m 5a Surmount the initial overlap, then traverse left to overcome an overhang beside a corner. Traverse immediately back right to above the belay, then follow easy ground to the top.

## NORTH EAST OUTCROPS

### **DEAD MCIVOR GULCH:**

*Arachnophobia Direct* 10m E5 6a \*. Russ Birkett (on-sight solo). 16 Oct 2009.

A serious and more sustained variation. From the good break after the boulder problem start, go direct through the overlap and wall above with thin moves to gain excellent holds below the top. Bold and committing.

### **MUCHALLS, Brown Jewel Stack (NO 905 920):**

This is the fine stack which can be reached at low tide by boulder hopping.

*North-East Face* 25m VS 4c. Simon Richardson, Duncan Tunstall. Jun 2010. Climb an obvious crack on the north face on good rock to a ledge. From here the top can be reached. Abseil off a sling.

### **STONEHAVEN, Downie Point (NO 883 853):**

These climbs are on conglomerate and with limited protection if roped. From the path leading to a war memorial, go NE to Downie Point. Just before the path drops to the gap, head east and soon a large stack can be seen. There is a scramble down to the sea on the left.

*Bridie Arete* 15m Difficult. Duncan Tunstall. Aug 2010.

Climb the clean arete south of the descent overlooking the stack.

*Donald Arete* 15m Difficult. Duncan Tunstall. Aug 2010.

The slightly less clean arete on the right of the descent.

### **Downie Point Stack (NO 884 851):**

Reached from the foot of the climbs above by a 3m swim.

*North-East Face* 10m VS 4b. Duncan Tunstall. Aug 2010.

Climbs the steepest face. DWS. The easier angled north face was also climbed. There is an easy descent down the south face.

### **Castle Haven (NO 884 844):**

There are some impressive cliffs on Castle Haven. At low tide they can be traversed eastwards until a stack is overlooked. The rock is solid and forms a clean arete.

*Constantine Arete* 20m Severe. Duncan Tunstall. Aug 2010.  
Climb the arete overlooking the Stack.

### **ARTHUR FOWLIE, South Wall:**

*Merlin* 25m E2 5b \*. Russell Birkett, Tim Rankin (on-sight). 12 Sep 2009.  
Climb the obvious left-trending ramp line left of *The Bouncer* to pull into a diagonal crack. Climb the left side of the alcove above to gain a thin horizontal break leading to easier climbing above. Head direct over the overlapping slabs above to pull through the final roof via a break on the right.

### **RED TOWER AREA:**

*Kaa* 15m F6c+ S0/1 \*. Julian Lines. Jun 2009.  
Takes the left arete of *Mowgli* on its left-hand side. Climb into a scoop and move right to the arete; tackle it before making a final urgent move through a bulge.

### **LONG HAVEN CRAIG (NK 122 402):**

This crag overlooks Little Dummeath Stack. It has three distinct buttresses separated by sea caves. All are accessible at high tide. There are 14 routes – see the new routes section on <http://www.smc.org.uk>.

### **BURN O'VAT:**

There are now 50 routes described on the new routes section on <http://www.smc.org.uk>.

### **CLACH NA BEINN:**

*Giardia Groove* 25m III,4. Gwilym Lynn, Caroline Lynn. 20 Feb 2010.  
Climbs the groove line bounding the right-hand edge of the slabs between *Cave Crack* and *Outside Right*. Climb the groove until forced slightly right to climb a series of turfey steps and slabs.

### **CUMMINGSTON:**

Two deep water solos to the left of *Sidle*. At the time there was a sandy (ish) base and about 2m of water.

*Bunny Boiler* 10m F7a+ S2/3 \*\*. Julian Lines. 24 May 2009.

From the base of *Sidle* move out left and go along the lip of the roof on 'pancakes' to gain the hanging prow. Finish up the prow in a fine position.

*Evilness* 8m F7b S2/3 \*. Julian Lines. 24 May 2009.

Where *Bunny Boiler* heads out left, climb directly up the overhanging wall on crimps, to reach a good crimp, then frantically head up and left to good holds just right of the arete near the top.

### **COVESEA, Covesea Crag (NJ 188 711):**

A small crag facing east and north, with the north end being tidal. See the new routes section on <http://www.smc.org.uk>.

### **REDHYTHE POINT, Overhanging Wall:**

Three more routes on the new routes section on <http://www.smc.org.uk>.

**ROSEHEARTY, Murcurry Walls:**

*Limbo Dancer* 30m HVS 5a \*\*. Russell Birkett. 16 Aug 2009.

A sea-level traverse of the north wall giving sustained well protected climbing on good rock, high tide required for the full experience! Would not be possible with a big swell running. Start on the large boulder below *The Wreck* and step onto the wall with feet just above the high-tide mark. Continue right at this level to make some technical moves to gain the crack of *Feed the Ego*. Move up this a couple of moves to cross the short wall to the right at mid-height, finishing on stepped ledges.

**GLEN CLOVA, South-East Crag:**

*Darkness* 40m E1 5b \*. Michael Barnard, Hannah Gibbs. 14 Jun 2010.

This route would lie to the left of *Flake Route*. Start at the far left end of the terrace. Move up leftwards to a shallow groove in the left side of the arete. Climb this using a series of flakes to a short corner below the large block of *Flake Route*. Climb leftwards using the crack underneath the block to gain the top of it. Finish easily up and left.

*Lemmings* 40m E3 5c \*. Michael Barnard, Matthew Thompson. 20 Jun 2010.

Good climbing up the short but steep wall between *Central Crack* and *Parapet Route*. Start up the small corner as for the latter and move up to an obvious crack. Climb the crack and wall above to a balancy top-out onto the slab (bold). The rest of the pitch is easier, unfortunately a bit licheny at the top. Continue straight up to near the left groove of *Parapet Route*. Step left and back right up a diagonal flake-line to finish directly. Pre-practice used.

*Pilgrims* 40m HVS 5b \*\*. Michael Barnard, Matthew Thompson. 20 Jun 2010.

Start 4m right of *Parapet Route* at a short left-facing corner. Climb this and the fine vertical cracks above to the foot of a hanging corner bounding the right side of an overhanging wall. Climb this with the aid of a jammed flake, moving up left at the top to join *Parapet Route* near its huge flake. Finish as for that route.

**HIGHLAND OUTCROPS****CREAG ARDCHULLARIE BEAG:**

(NN 580 141) Alt 300m South facing

Short schist buttresses overlooking Loch Lubnaig offers single pitch trad climbing and bouldering on good quality rock with interesting features.

Approach: Park at the head of the footpath into Glen Ample, walk up to the farm, and instead of following the path, cross the stream on the left to find an overgrown forestry track. Follow this up out of the woods, then curving back down to the left round to the west side of the hill, then head up hill towards the crags and boulders, 20-30mins.

Holly Tree Wall has a strikingly blank overhanging wall on its right-hand side, a heathery slab on the left, and a holly tree growing out of a slabby ledge halfway up in the middle. Round the corner to the left is a large slabby rock with an overhanging roof feature.

*Marmaduke's Meander* 10m Severe. Keith Alexander, Jelle Muylle. May 2010.

Climb the heathery slab to the left of Holly Tree Wall, starting from the large crack on the left, traversing up and left over to finish up the corner-crack on the right.

*Marjorie Marmalade* 20m HVS 5b. Keith Alexander, Graeme Diack. May 2010.

Climb a strenuous right-trending crack leading to a slabby ledge with a holly tree at the back corner. Squirm between the holly tree and the rock to climb both directly upwards. Mantel tentatively over the large hollow sounding block overhanging the tree, or escape airily left.

Slab Roof Rock is a large slabby rock round the hill to the left of Holly Tree Wall, with an overhanging head high corner one-third of the way up).

*24 Ticks Later* 20m HVS 5b. Graeme Diack, Keith Alexander. May 2010.

Make a slabby start below the obvious roof, then climb the corner-crack to an awkward move directly over. Finish trending left over a 10m slab.

### **POLLDUBH, Sheep Fank Wall:**

*Tickattack* 15m E1 5b \*. Steve Abbott, Ed Grindley. 8 Sep 2005.

Climb a large corner to the right of *Sheep Fank Direct* to a first roof. Move left under this and pull over at a large rectangular block. Entertaining moves lead up and right of the next roof to gain a shallow groove and slabs.

**Note:** *Tickattack* has lost a large block and may be less safe.

*The Ashes* 12m E2 5c \*. Steve Abbott, Ed Grindley. 11 Sep 2005.

Climb the initial corner of *Tickattack* to the first roof. Climb this directly above the initial corner until a step left can be made into the groove of *Tickattack*.

*Brown Slab* 10m E1 5b \*. Steve Abbott, Ed Grindley. 8 Sep 2005.

Start 3m left of *Bardhinaghi* at a pointed block. Step off the block on to a short rib before moving right to a small niche in the slab. Climb the slab just left of a thin crack (which can be reached direct – harder).

### **Hangover Buttress:**

*As Time Goes By* 10m E4 6a/b \*\*\*. Steve Abbott, Ed Grindley. 2 Apr 2005.

The hanging gangway and overhanging crack between *Friends* and *Gangway*.

### **Dundee Buttress:**

*McCroning* 20m E2 5b. Steve Abbott, Ed Grindley. 1 Sep 2005.

Climb the steep crack and groove just left of the left rib of the buttress (right of *Red Wall*) to a ledge which runs across the face. Move left for 2m and climb the steep wall and break.

*Heading for the Howff, Direct Finish* 20m E2 5c/6a. Steve Abbott, Ed Grindley, Rona Grindley, Joe French, Linda Taylor. 9 Sep 2004.

Finish up the right-facing open corner.

This ascent pre-dates that in SMCJ 2009 p451.

### After Crag:

*After a While* 20m E2 5b \*. Steve Abbott, Ed Grindley, Rona Grindley. 16 Jun 2003.

Pleasant bold climbing up the main slab between *Afterthought* and *Rubberface*. Start at a corner between the two. Climb the corner, step left into a shallow groove, then step back right on to the slab. Climb this slightly leftwards to cross the bulge at a small flake. Go slightly leftwards again to the top.

### Styx Buttress:

*Tobe Hooper* 30m E4 6a \*\*\*. Steve Abbott, Ed Grindley. 21 Aug 2004.

Start at the diagonal break as for *Black Friday* (at the left side of the left wall). Climb up to and over the overhang, then make difficult moves over a second overhang until it is possible to step left into a recess above an overhanging corner. Move up and right across a short slab before making a committing pull into the shallow corner system below and left of *Ascention*. Finish up this.

*Jericho Rose* 30m E3 5c \*. Ed Grindley, Chris Philipson. 8 Jun 2004.

Start just to the right of *Damnation* and climb the overhanging wall to the foot of a narrow gangway. Follow this leftwards and cross the widest part of the roof between *Damnation* and *Iche* to a small ledge. Make a thin step up left to a pocket and climb the slab directly.

### Blacks Buttress:

*Seven Fours* 30m E1 5a \*\*\*. Ed Grindley, Rona Grindley. 31 May 2009.

Start just left of tree at foot of crag. Climb up to and onto the nose between *Knucklebuster* and *Shergar*, and go up to the overhang. Step right and climb the slab finishing straight up the middle of the slab between the arete of *Knucklebuster* and the recess of *Shergar*.

This ascent pre-dates that by Steve Kennedy & Bob Hamilton on 10 June 2009 and claimed as *Avalon* in SMCJ 2009 p452.

### Note: Description for *Land Ahoy*.

Start below a small L-shaped hold at 4m (i.e. as for *Centrepiece*). Climb up to the hold then go slightly leftwards before climbing directly to the crack.

*Soho* 20m E2 6a. Ed Grindley, John MacLeod. 17 Sep 2009.

Where *Heulsuse* traverses left into *Crybaby*, climb direct up the thin crack to the ledge. Climb the crack above to slabs. Move right and up from a small foothold to finish – bold.

*Poème à Loup* 20m E3 5c \*\*. Ed Grindley, Rona Grindley, John MacLeod, Peter Duggan. 13 Sep 2009.

Climb slab just right of *Heulsuse* to a pale streak of rock coming down from the right side of a shallow overlap. Poorly protected after the overlap. Finish by moving left to mantel onto a wide ledge.

*Oraisons* 20m E3 5c \*. Ed Grindley, Rona Grindley. 3 Jun 2009.

Start at fallen tree near the right-hand side of the buttress. Climb the slab (delicate) to reach a thin vertical crack about 3m left of the rib. Follow this and easier slabs.

### **Microwave Buttress:**

200m left of Wave Buttress is a wide open gully which goes right up the hillside to crags near its summit. 50m right of this gully is a short grassy gully containing a tree. Microwave Buttress is the dome-shaped buttress to its right, i.e. about 100m left of Wave Buttress. It is characterized by a chossy corner-crack on its right side.

*Slum Dog* 20m VS 4c. Steve Abbott, Ed Grindley. 26 Jun 2009.

Climb a short corner crack on the left-hand side of the buttress, then follow twin cracks up the slab. At their top step right and pull over the bulge.

*Running Dog* 25m E1 5a. Steve Abbott, Ed Grindley. 26 Jun 2009.

Climb the short crack of *Slum Dog* and step onto the slab. Go diagonally rightwards crossing *G Dog* and quartz bands to the rib. Finish by the slab.

*G Dog* 20m E2 5b. Steve Abbott, Ed Erindley, Rona Grindley. 14 Jun 2009.

Start 2m right of *Slum Dog* and climb a thin crack just left of the overhanging prow. Move right at a bulge to a continuation crack.

*Mad Dogs and Englishmen* 20m E4 6a. Steve Abbott, Ed Grindley. 28 Jun 2009.

At the right side of the buttress and 5m right of *G Dog* is a grassy ramp leading up to a tree stump. Climb part way up the ramp and take the thin overhanging crack direct. Well protected by small wires.

### **DUNTELCHAIG, The Main Crag:**

*The Broch Inspector* 10m E3 5c. Andy Tibbs, Roger Webb. 28 Jun 2010.

From the optional belay on *Misty Crack*, climb the crack just left of the original finish.

*Ride on the Side* 20m VS 4b. Davy Moy, Dave Allan. 22 Jun 2010.

Start 2m right of *Edir*. Go up two slabs to an overlap, go through a weakness on the left, then traverse right along the lip to the edge of a third slab. At the top of this, step right onto a fourth slab, then straight up to the top.

### **ASHIE FORT:**

*Deprivation* 10m E3 5c. Davy Moy, Guy Robertson. 3 Sep 2010.

Climb directly up the fine prow just left of *Kenny's Revenge*. Sustained and poorly protected; head pointed.

### **CRAIG A' BARNES, Upper Cave Crag:**

*The Stoned Gnome Connection* E2 5c \*\*. Ian Jones, Roger Benton. 28 Sep 2009.

Climb the crack of *Tombstone* and follow it diagonally on undercuts and side pulls to the finishing jugs of *Gnome*.

## BEN NEVIS, AONACHS, CREAG MEAGAIDH

### BEN NEVIS, The Little Brenva Face:

*White Fright* 350m VII,6. Iain Small, Simon Richardson. 7 Feb 2010.

The line of grooves running up the right side of the steep headwall on the Little Brenva Face. A serious route, climbed on thin ice with spaced protection.

1 to 3. 150m Climb *Frostbite* for 100m, then bear straight up to the foot of the headwall below a right-trending ramp. This lies about 30m right of the break taken by *Wall of the Winds* and is just right of a smooth blank wall.

4. 30m Move along the ramp to belay below a steep left-facing corner.

5. 60m Climb the corner and follow a left-slanting ramp to its apex. Make a difficult move into a steep open groove above, and follow this on thin ice to a snow bay.

6. 50m Continue up the groove-line above to beneath a prominent overhanging chimney. Ignore the tempting through route (too small) and climb the outside of the chimney and exit right at the top. Move up to a terrace.

7. 60m Move left and climb the steep front face of the final wall moving right into a left-facing groove near the top. Follow this to easy ground.

*Ramsay Gray* 350m VI,6. Dave Hesleden, Simon Richardson. 11 Dec 2009.

A varied mixed expedition based on the steep pillar between *Route Major* and *North-East Buttress*.

1. and 2. 80m Start as for *Route Major* and climb halfway along the first left-trending leg of the zigzag to belay below a line of ice that runs through the mixed ground above.

3. and 4. 100m Climb the ice and exit onto a snowfield. Climb this and move through mixed ground to the foot of the steep pillar.

5. 40m The pillar is cut by two grooves. Enter the right-hand groove from the right and surmount two steep steps to easier ground.

6. 50m Continue up snow and ice steps above to below the final tower.

7. 30m Climb the impending chimney-groove on the left side of the tower.

8. 50m Finish up the prominent groove left of the final section of *North-East Buttress*.

### The Minus Face:

*Differentiation* 150m VI,6. Simon Richardson, Roger Webb. 13 Mar 2010.

The rib between *Wagroochimsla* and the gully-line taken by *Platforms Rib*. Start 20m left of *Platforms Rib* below a left-trending scoop.

1. 60m Climb the scoop and exit steeply onto a snow patch. Move up right to a left-trending groove. (The dirty groove avoided by the summer line of *Wagroochimsla*). Climb this to where it steepens (good protection on the right wall) and exit delicately over the bulge onto steep ground. Move up right to gain easier ground overlooking the gully of *Platforms Rib* and follow this to belay below a steep wall on the left.

2. 50m Step right and climb the shallow depression just left of the gully of *Platforms Rib*. This leads to a belay below a roof under the steep bulging section of the rib.

3. 40m Step left and pull through the overhang into a shallow niche. Move right

into twin cracks and follow these to easier ground and the crest of *North-East Buttress*. An excellent pitch.

*Integration* 240m VIII,8. Simon Richardson, Iain Small. 7 Mar 2010.

A direct line up Minus One Buttress linking *North-Eastern Grooves* with *Subtraction*.

1. 25m Start up *North-Eastern Grooves* (*Minus One Buttress* winter) and climb a left-facing groove to an easing. Belay on a large block overlooking *Minus One Gully*.

2. 50m Move up and left and climb a line of discontinuous ice smears on the crest of the buttress (to the left of the ice sheet taken by *Minus One Buttress* winter) and move up to a first band of overhangs. Move left past a series of blocks to belay by a large block (the Plinth).

3. 40m Continue up the chimney-groove above for 25m to a roof (*Minus One Buttress* steps up and right here onto the buttress crest). Instead, step down and left to enter a left-facing corner overlooking *Minus Two Gully*.

4. 25m Climb the groove (thin) and exit onto a large ledge. *North-Eastern Grooves* traverses down and left from here onto *Minus Two Buttress*, and *Subtraction* joins here from the left.

5. 25m Climb the second groove on the right (as for *Subtraction*) to an exposed turfey ledge on the right.

6. 60m Move back left into the main *Subtraction* groove and climb this through a bulging section to enter a long V-groove. Climb this to a ledge system girdling the buttress.

7. 60m Follow the easier continuation line (the parallel groove on the left was followed on this ascent due to unconsolidated snow) to join the right branch of *Minus Two Gully* that cuts up behind the buttress. Follow this to the crest of *North-East Buttress*.

*Minus One Direct* VIII,8 \*\*\*\*. Nick Bullock, Guy Robertson, Pete Benson. 14 Mar 2010.

A superb and uncompromising line; the lower slabs provide exacting and poorly protected thin ice and the upper buttress five pitches of sustained mixed. Spectacular positions. Follow *Minus One Buttress* to the in-situ thread and sling belay just after the difficult step right (100m). Climb up, then diagonally left using an undercut crack to gain a peculiar tooth of rock, then use this to swing left into a square-cut groove (peg). Go up this to a large overhang, then hard back right across the wall above the belay (crux) to move up to the belay below the first pitch of the *Arete Variation* (20m). Climb the cracked wall directly above into an icy groove which leads boldly to the pile of stacked blocks and junction with the *Arete Variation* below its second pitch (30m). Climb directly up the blocks to gain and follow a groove to an overhang. Turn this on the left by a crack which is followed with interest to belay on the left below another overhang (40m). Turn the next overhang boldly on the right and continue to below the next steepening (20m). Continue up the narrowing, exposed crest to belay at a junction with the gully coming up from the right (40m). A final easy pitch leads to the crest of *North-East Buttress* (20m).

### **Orion Face:**

*Orion Grooves* 350m VI,5. Tony Stone, Iain Small, Simon Richardson. 21 Mar 2010.

The line of grooves bounding the right side of Orion Face. A good expedition up the face but some sections climbed before.

1. to 3. 150m Climb the first three pitches of *Zero Gully* (until level with the 'big boulder' on *Slav Route*) to reach the easier upper gully.
4. to 6. 150m Move up and left into the groove system and follow this for three pitches to below the steep headwall between *Orion Directissima* and *Slav Route*.
7. 30m Climb up a steep icy groove (just left of *Slav Route*) and continue up the right-facing corner-groove just right of the right edge of the buttress.
8. 20m Continue easily to the top.

### **Observatory Buttress:**

*Final Fling* 150m VI,5. Guy Robertson, Simon Richardson. 20 Apr 2010.

The upper part of *Observatory Buttress* (above the *Girdle Traverse* terrace) rears up into a steep headwall cut by three narrow parallel grooves.

1. 60m Start midway between *Left Edge Route*, *Direct Finish* and *Observatory Buttress*, *Direct Finish*, and climb steep right-facing grooves to below the headwall.
2. 40m Climb the leftmost groove and exit left at its top to reach the crest of *Observatory Buttress*.
3. 50m Continue along the crest to the plateau as for *Left Edge Route*, *Direct Finish*.

### **Tower Ridge East Flank:**

*Faith Healer* 170m VIII,7 \*. Iain Small, Ian Parnell. 21 Jan 2010

An absorbing and delicate icy mixed climb based around the striking groove line just to the right of *Rolling Stones*. Culminating in a superb but savage sting in the tail. Ice on the ledges and slabs was found very useful on the first ascent, but the final corner will always be hard and serious. Avoiding this last pitch by taking easier alternatives to join *Tower Ridge* would give a worthwhile VI,7. Follow the ledge of *East Wall Route* to a belay (in-situ) below the start of the *Echo Traverse* groove/chimney.

1. 50m Climb the groove/fault of *Echo Traverse* for a few metres before a delicate traverse left around a steep nose gains a prominent ramp which is followed leftwards for 30m. Move up to belay at a sideways pointing spike at the base of the big left-slanting corner.
2. 50m Climb the corner to a large snow ledge.
3. 50m Follow the snow ledge diagonally up left until below a steep corner on the left of a rock prow. Climb the first section of the corner for 10m on helpful turf to reach a ledge on the left. Follow this leftwards and step down a short corner to belay on insitu threads.
4. 20m Step back right and climb the steep corner to reach the large snow ledge of the Eastern Traverse of *Tower Ridge*.
5. 150m Follow *Tower Ridge* to the summit.

### **The Comb:**

*Mumbles* 80m E3 \*. Tony Stone, Blair Fyffe. 30 Jun 2010.

This route climbs the left arete of The Comb via a fine hanging groove on the

second pitch. The rock is generally clean and solid.

1. 45m 5b Start on the diagonal fault line of *Pigott's Route* just to the left of a large compact brown slab. Pull into and climb a short left-slanting groove, then pull over a bulge on to a ledge. Step up and right and climb the arete (this is the left arete of the brown slab) on some great rock, until able to step left into a larger groove. Climb boldly up this and continue more easily to the ledge of *Don't Die of Ignorance*.

2. 35m 5c Walk right along the ledge to where *Don't Die* gets hard. Climb the wall above (crux) to a small inset groove in the arete. Pull round the arete, and continue up into an inset groove. Climb this and the arete past a roof to a fine belay perch on the arete.

Continue up much easier and slightly loose ground, or make one abseil (abseil point left in situ) to the ledge and scramble down.

*Anubis* 200m XII,11 or 12 \*\*\*. Dave MacLeod (unsec). 20 Feb 2010.

A winter ascent of the summer line giving sustained, strenuous and technical climbing of a very high standard. Guaranteed to produce a memorable lead. The main roof is very strenuous but the section above leading to the niche is very thin and technical. Above this, some ice in the back of the tapering corner was useful on the first ascent, but probably possible without. On the first ascent the ropes were pulled up from the belay ledge at 40m, tied together and dropped back down to allow a double length pitch to be climbed. From the belay move up on ice and then rightwards on an icy ramp to gain icy mixed ground on the edge of The Comb's front face leading to the easy upper ridge. Climbed ground up, third attempt, with knowledge from the summer ascent.

### **Creag Coire na Ciste:**

*Tinkerbell Direct* 120m VI,6. Dave Hesleden, Simon Richardson. 12 Dec 2009.

A series of steeper variations on *Tinkerbell*.

1. 40m Start midway between *Wendigo* and *Tick Tock Croc* and climb the left side of a small pillar to a good belay in the snow depression below the large platform of *Wendigo*.

2. 40m Climb the steep icefall left of *Tinkerbell* to reach the terrace below the final tower of *Central Rib*.

3. 20m Move right along the terrace to below a bulging corner cutting through the front face of *Central Rib*.

4. 20m Climb the corner to the plateau. This exit is likely to be severely corniced later in the season.

### **South Trident Buttress:**

*Polyphemus Pillar* 120m VI,6. Simon Richardson, Iain Small. 29 Nov 2009.

A mixed line up the bulging pillar on the right side of the face.

1. 25m Start 25m right of *Triton Corners* and climb a broad right-slanting ramp to its end at a good stance directly below a prominent shield of rock.

2. 30m Pull up and right onto a small ledge then step across a groove. Continue up the shallow corner above (bold) then trend left to climb a steep corner. Belay on the slab above below a prominent V-corner with an offwidth at its back.

3. 50m Climb the offwidth and continuation groove to reach a small snowfield.

Cross this and climb the easiest line in the triangular wall above. Belay below the final wall on a huge block on the left.

4. 15m Move left and climb the depression to the top.

**Note:** *The Clanger* was climbed by the original summer finish on 23 Jan 2010 by Doug Hawthorn & Iain Small at VI,7.

### Number Five Gully Buttress:

*Lysystrata* VI,8. Andy Benson, Rich Cross. 30 Nov 2009.

As for the summer line. Steep and technical climbing with excellent protection.

### Càrn Dearg Buttress:

*Calgacus* 60m E6. Iain Small, Rick Campbell. 12 Sep 2009.

Pitch 1 by Rick Campbell, Sep 2006. The stunning arete right of the *Sassanach* chimney; well seen from the base of *The Bat* corner. The climbing is balancey, intricate and (apart from the initial arete) overhanging. Small nuts and as many tiny cams as you can carry. Bold.

1. 15m 6b From the belay at the base of *The Banana Groove* step left onto the slabby arete. Move precariously up this with runners placed (even more precariously!) in a seam on the right to where a bulging wall bars access to easier ground above. Hard moves are made up the wall to belay.

2. 30m 6b Deceptive climbing up a slightly lichenous faint weakness right of the edge leads up to a scarred niche just left of *The Banana Groove*. The bulging rock above is avoided by bold and hard moves leftward around the arete onto the slabby left face of the arete. Continue delicately up this to a ledge on the edge itself.

3. 15m 6b Move back onto the left-hand face again where more hard moves lead onto a step on the arete; side-step the final bulge in the same manner to a belay well back near the top of the *Sassanach* chimney.

### North Wall Càrn Dearg:

**Note:** *The Cone Collectors* reported in SMCJ 2009 should be named *The Cone Gatherers*.

*The Past is Close Behind* 200m VIII,8. Iain Small, Blair Fyffe. 18 Feb 2010.

A fine sustained journey up the wall to the left of *The Shroud*. Start at an obvious easy angled left-rising ramp. This is about 20m left of the base of *The Shroud*.

1. 40m Climb an easy snow ramp with one short step to move back and left to a ledge below a right-facing corner.

2. 35m Go up a thin wall and step left into a technical groove. Climb this to a ledge on the left.

3. 15m The obvious rightward traverse. Step back right into the groove, and across a technical wall and a rising right-sloping ledge. Go along this to its right end below a large right-facing corner.

4. 35m Quality climbing up the big corner locking off on solid chockstones.

5. 30m Bold, slabby climbing up and rightwards into an inverted V-groove. Pull out of this on thin ice and go up to a ledge.

6. 45m More thinly iced slabs and easier ground.

Another 100m or so of grade I/II climbing leads to *Ledge Route*.

**Raeburn's Buttress:**

*The Great Corner* 340m VIII,8. Iain Small, Simon Richardson. 24 Jan 2010.  
The awe-inspiring clean-cut corner on the right flank of Raeburn's Buttress.

1. and 2. 100m Climb the first two pitches of the *Compression Crack* icefall to reach the Girdle Traverse terrace.
3. 50m Move left along the terrace to belay below the chimney cutting up into the corner.
4. 40m Climb the chimney to a small exposed ledge at its top.
5. 50m Continue up the imposing corner above and exit into the upper groove. Follow this (sustained) to the top of Raeburn's Buttress.
6. to 8. 150m Continue up easier ground to the summit of Carn Dearg NW.

**MAMORES, Stob Ban:**

*Swimming for Seconds* 110m IV,4. Alan Halewood, Richard Parker, Jamie Bankhead. 21 Dec 2009.

Left of *Summit Groove* about three-quarters of the way up *South Gully* is a horizontal ledge traversing towards a short open book corner of clean rock.

1. 50m Follow the traverse for 10m but climb up into a small bay before the corner is reached. Exit this by a rock wall on the right (crux) and emerge on a long broad right-leaning snow ramp. Exit the ramp on the left after 20m to a hanging belay just above on good rock gear.
2. 60m Follow a turf groove onto a smaller parallel snow ramp and emerge at the summit cairn via a short rocky wall.

**AONACH MÒR, Twins Area:**

*Tenacity* 100m VI,6. Sandy Allan, Andy Nisbet, Jonathan Preston. 16 Dec 2009.

Based on the rib left of *Golden Promise*.

1. 10m Climb up into the bay with *Pepperpot*.
2. 50m Take a shallow groove leading up from the top right corner of the bay, hopefully iced, to its top after 20m. Either traverse right from here on to the rib or place runners and descend 5m back down the groove before traversing right and going up to the same place (the longer version is slightly easier). Trend rightwards up the rib before pulling back left over an overlap, then going straight up to a terrace and a block at its top.
3. 40m Climb steep broken ground above to a difficult cornice, potentially not possible.

**North Buttress:**

*Soupreme* 55m IV,5. Matthew Munro, Simon Taylor. 19th February 2010.

Start as *Foosyerneeps* turning right and entering a wide gully. Climb straight up a series of steep steps until a headwall at 40m. Climb right over another step heading back down to the same belay seat as *Custardream*.

**Note:** *Perplexed* (SMCJ 2006) is the gully left of *Foosyerneeps*.

*Custardream* 45m III. Matthew Munro, Simon Taylor. 19 Feb 2010.

This rib is the furthest right on North Buttress and just before the Climbers' Col. Climb this until 10m short of the cornice where a good belay seat on the arete exists. If the cornice is impassible traverse right underneath cornice.

**CÀRN DEARG MEADHONACH:**

*Family Affair* 80m IV,5 \*. Andy Nelson, Lewis Harrop. Mar 2008.

Climbs a groove and then a wall on the arete visible on approach to the buttress.

*Casablanca* 80m IV,5 \*. Bob Hamilton, Steve Kennedy, Andy MacDonald. 7 Mar 2010.

Climbs the right edge of the north-west face of the upper buttress well right of *Perilous Journey* (SMCJ 2008) overlooking an easy gully on the right. Start in the gully just right of the toe of the buttress and climb up just left of the buttress edge to reach a level arete (above a snowy ramp coming up from the left). A short awkward wall above the arete (crux) leads to an icy groove on the left. Climb the groove, then move back right to belay on the edge (50m). Continue by following a system of grooves up left then back right to finish on the top of the pinnacle (30m).

**Note:** The description for *Like Father, Like Son* in SMCJ 2008 should refer to the route being left of *Perilous Journey* rather than left of *Picket Line*.

**AONACH MÒR, WEST FACE:**

The following routes are on a tier of cliff low down and about 500m to the north of the main area (Summit Ribs) – photodiagram provided.

*The Last Gondola* 70m III. Halli Gudmundsson, Lee Curtis. 17 Jan 2010.

An icefall which runs up an natural waterway gully towards the right of the tier. Two ice pitches of 45m and 25m. The slope above the route levels out.

*Icesave* 70m III. Halli Gudmundsson, Lee Curtis. 17 Jan 2010.

A shallow ice gully about 100m left gave two pitches of 55m and 15m.

**AONACH MÒR, West Face, Summit Ribs:**

The following routes may have been climbed before but no record has been found.

*Dogleg Gully* 500m II/III. Andrew Moore, Mike Dunn. 14 Feb 2009.

Climbs the gully between *Daim Buttress* and *Solitaire* which, especially when seen from north, makes a right-left dogleg at mid-height. Keeping left at the start leads to a short ice pitch up a narrowing; this can be avoided on the right. Slant diagonally right towards the foot of a subsidiary buttress at mid-height. Do not climb this but trend up and left into the upper gully which leads to the final ridge of *Daim Buttress*. Worth a star or two.

*The Black Eye Routine* 500m II. Andrew Moore, Mike Dunn. 12 Apr 2010.

Climbs the gully between *Solitaire* and *Red Eye Routine*. Start up *Red Eye Routine* and traverse left into the gully. At about one-third height, the main gully begins to lie back and trends left (I); the more direct, right fork is steeper (II) and leads to the upper slopes of the *Red Eye Routine*.

**Note:** A direct start would need a good build-up and be harder.

**AONACH MÒR, An Cul Choire:**

*Infinite Ridge* 150m II. Sandy Allan, Andy Nisbet. 29 Mar 2010.

The nearest buttress to the Aonach Mor/Aonach Beag col. The buttress with *Bishop's Rise* is the next one away from the col. Start up steep snow left of the crest before gaining it (50m). Climb the crest, then just right of it to pass the steepest section, before regaining and following it (50m). Finish up the crest (50m).

### **AONACH BEAG, North Face:**

*Nymph* 200m III. Sandy Allan, Andy Nisbet. 29 Mar 2010.

A big shallow scoop in the rocks right of *Dragonfly*. Climbed on hard snow. Climb steep snow and a short ice pitch to enter the main scoop. Follow this to where it steepens below a short vertical rock band. Work up leftwards to pass the rock band by an iced groove. Reach North-East Ridge more easily.

### **AONACH BEAG, Central West Face:**

*Beyond the Call of Duty* is a prominent icefall on the face. In April 2010 icefalls formed either side, as shown on the diagram on p261 Ben Nevis guide.

*Sublimation* 150m IV.4. Andy Nisbet. 7 Apr 2010.

The icefall some 60 to 80m left of *Beyond the Call of Duty*. Start below it and climb two patches of ice (which may bank out) to gain a snow bay below the thickest ice, which is high up. There are three exits out of the bay; the right was taken. This led to a left-slanting ramp which led back to the base of the thick ice. Climb the thick ice (crux) to snow slopes.

*Osmosis* 150m III. Andy Nisbet. 7 Apr 2010.

The icefall some 30m right of *Beyond the Call of Duty*. Start just right of that route and move up right on ice to the main icefall. Climb this through a short steep section to easier angled ice which led to a much longer steep upper section. Above this a shallow snow gully led to the top.

### **AONACH BEAG, West Face, Skyline Buttress:**

*The Apprentice* 70m VS 4c \*\*. Andy & Robbie Nelson. May 2008.

The arete and open corner on the left edge of the crag. Scramble over a boulder into the gully, then climb up and right to gain the arete and follow with sparse protection to belay on the big heather ledge. Climb the open book corner and chimney above. Scramble easily up a fine short arete to the top.

### **AONACH BEAG, An Aghaidh Garbh:**

*Klondike* 100m III \*. Steve Kennedy, Bob Hamilton. 12 Dec 2009.

The first prominent slabby buttress reached on the usual approach from the ridge south-east of the summit. A ramp which forms a right-facing corner runs up the right side of the buttress. Start at the foot of the ramp and follow the corner throughout with a move out right round small buttress at about mid height. Move left at the top of the buttress and finish up easy snow slopes. Much can bank out later in the season.

*Diagon Alley* 280m II \*\*. Steve Kennedy, Bob Hamilton. 12 Dec 2009.

The long gully between *Jericho Ridge* and the 'Goblet' Buttress. The route has a

serious feel being overhung by a massive cornice. Fortunately, the cornice can be outflanked by an exposed leftwards traverse on steep snow to a break (joining the top of *Jericho Ridge*).

### **STRATHOSSIAN, Strathossian Crag:**

(NN 408 725) Alt 500m East-North-East facing

Named as Creagan nan Nead on the 1:25000 map but since the crag on the east of the strath also has the same name and this is the less significant crag, it has been given a new name. Both crags are granite.

*Neds' Arete* 70m E1 5b. Brian Davison, Andy Nisbet. 2 Jun 2010.

The route is at the top left side of the crag and follows an arete which is not seen on the approach from the north. The route is very vegetated and the grade would be lower if cleaned. Scramble up broken ground left of the crag until below the arete, then steep vegetation to reach a tree above and right of the base of the arete.

1. 25m 5b Climb a short overhanging corner to a ledge on the left. Move left and climb a slab to the arete proper. Follow the arete to a ledge.
2. 45m 5b Climb a crack near the arete to easier ground and follow this to the top.

### **Creagan nan Nead:**

(NN 416 734) Alt 480m North-North-West facing

This impressive slabby wall can be seen to the east of Loch Ghuilbinn when approaching from the north. A lower 50m slab can be seen with a smaller slab higher and left of this. The lower slab has two black streaks running down its length which look wet on the approach, and possibly often are, but the rock on them is darker and clean. The crag was in the sun after 3pm. All the routes are serious but there are runners and a good selection is needed. Descent will normally be by abseil from a tree to the left but a finish to the top can be done (see *Oisin*). *Oisin* was checked on abseil but the other lines were led on-sight.

### **Lower Slab:**

*Fionn* 50m E1 5a \*. Brian Davison, Andy Nisbet. 2 Jun 2010.

Takes a line up the left side of the slab, left of both streaks. Start just right of a short ramp. Climb to the top of the ramp, then a short flake-crack and step left to a ledge with some grass. Climb the slab just right of a roofed corner, then go slightly rightwards to a flake. Go up the slab above keeping right of heather ledges. Either finish rightwards to a belay above *Oisin* or go left near the top to the abseil tree.

*Oisin* 48m E3 5c \*\*\*. Brian Davison, Andy Nisbet. 3 Jun 2010.

Climbs the pale slab between the two black streaks, often nearer the right streak. A top quality line marred only by having to zigzag to find runners and holds. Start at the right end of the slab base and climb to a horizontal crack. Continue above on flake holds easing in angle to another horizontal crack at the left edge of the right streak (serious but 4c/5a). Go up to twin horizontal bands (peridotite?). Go out left along them to a crucial Friend 2.5 in a deep pocket above the higher band and left of centre on the pale area. Return to the left edge

of the right streak. Go up towards a prominent flake in the centre of the slab which is tantalisingly out of reach. Go right into the streak until a move up gains a smaller horizontal band. Traverse back left along it until a very thin move gains the flake (good runners). Continue fairly direct above. The difficulty eases but protection is limited and there is a very serious 5a move high up.

*True Finish* 150m VS 4b. Brian Davison, Andy Nisbet. 3 Jun 2010.

Only recommended to purists, although a link to *Final Slab* would give a nicer finish. Dry conditions recommended. Continue on lower angled but unprotected slabs to a steep tier. Traverse right to near the end of the tier, gain its top and return left to a big tree (45m). Go up a crack to gain a narrow ledge and crawl left along it to a wider terrace. Continue left (40m). There may be a way up here to *Final Slab* but a further traverse left gained easier vegetated ground which was climbed to the top. A scramble down found the top of the slab and abseil approach.

*Sadbh* 50m E2 5b \*\*. Brian Davison, Andy Nisbet. 3 Jun 2010.

Climbs the right side of the slab, mostly right of the right streak but finishing up it.

Start as for *Oisin* to the first horizontal crack. Step right on to a right-slanting ramp and either follow it until right of a grass ledge, or gain a higher ramp and follow it to the grass ledge. From the right end of the grass ledge, make a difficult move up to a rock ledge on the left. Climb the unprotected slab above to a ledge below a bulge. Pass it on the left by a flake-crack which is in the black streak. Continue up with occasional excursions into the black streak on the left for protection. Cross the black streak near the top to finish up the last few metres of *Oisin* to the same belay.

### **Upper Slab:**

The upper slab is shorter easier angled and broken by a horizontal grass ledge at one-third height.

*Final Slab* 35m HVS 4c. Andy Nisbet, Brian Davison. 3 Jun 2010.

Obvious from the approach to the cliff but hard to find. From the left side of the base of the slab climb up and diagonally rightwards to the centre of the slab. Finish direct, passing a bulge on its right side near the top.

### **CREAG MEAGAI DH, Bellvue Buttress:**

*The Safe Side* 300m VI,7 \*\*. Dave MacLeod, Michael Tweedley. 3 Feb 2010.

1. 40m Start below the huge roof and climb an icefall in a large corner to a belay some way below the roof.
2. 55m Traverse left on the obvious turf ledge to large flakes. Climb the slabby wall above direct on turf to meet the roof near its left end. Traverse left with difficulty to a good ledge and climb the steep turf recess above to below steep rock.
3. 40m Move up and left from the belay in a groove leading to a turf ledge. From the left end of this step left around a small arete to gain steep flakes leading through the overhangs above. Follow the line of weakness leftwards.
4. 65m Step left and climb easy snow, ice and turf ground to underneath a sheltered roof just left of the buttress crest.

5. 70m Step left and continue on mixed ground and snow to the buttress crest.
6. Easy slopes lead to the plateau.

*Last Day in Paradise* 200m VII,8 \*\*\*. Pete Macpherson, Martin Moran, 9 Mar 2010.

This enjoyable route climbs the slabby face between *Smith's* and *Ritchie's Gullies* and holds conditions longer than the climbs further right across the Pinnacle Face. The climb gives four sustained pitches, sections of thin ice alternating with technical mixed sequences, and is high in the VII grade. Start in *Raeburn's Gully* 50m up from the start of *Smith's* below an icy bulge and short left-facing corner.

1. 15m Surmount the bulge and belay at the top of the corner under a big overlap.
2. 25m Go out right and gain the sweeping slab above the overlap. Cross the slab rightwards, delicately linking tufts and belay out right at a wide crack.
3. 25m Climb the left-facing corner bounding the right side of the slab, making overhanging moves on cracked pink rock to gain a niche. Swing left on to a small ice fang then climb turfy steps, moving up then left to regain the right edge of the iced slab. Belay at a diagonal crack in a steep wall. In conditions of exceptional icing it might be possible to combine pitches 2 and 3 by climbing direct up the big slab on ice, although a grade of VIII,7 would be inevitable!
4. 40m Climb thinly iced slabs and tufts to gain Apollyon Ledge. Belay up left under a steep wall and roof.
5. 55m Climb the wall via its central depression for 12m to the roof, then traverse out left and swing on to thin ice smears on the left edge. Climb the ice to easy ground and belay 30m higher.
6. 40m Go easily up the final ridge which overlooks the exit of *Smith's Gully*.

**Note:** Alasdair Buchanan avoided the shallow gully of the second pitch of *1959 Face Route* by a turfy groove to the right and leading to near the base of *1959 Direct*. This was thin so he climbed a parallel turfy groove and a short ice pitch high up. Two independent pitches at V,4 but no claim to be first.

*Postal Strike* 250m VII,6 \*\*\*. Steve Fortune, Chad Harrison. 30 Jan 2010.

A classic addition to the Post Face with varied climbing in a great position. Start up and right of *Postman Pat* at the obvious large icefall below a large black roof. The steep ice pitch on *Staghorn Gully Left-Hand Start* proves a suitable warm up.

1. 40m Climb the much steeper than it looks icefall by either the left-hand groove (tricky to pass a cave) or the right-hand sustained pillar. Belay on or below an obvious turfy ledge below the roof. A harder variation looks possible directly over this roof from the belay.
2. 50m A sustained pitch with spaced protection in places. Climb up and rightwards to an obvious turfy traverse left to a large hanging groove above the roof, passing a smaller groove. The crux is the last move to gain the smaller groove when the turf runs out. Continue up and leftwards to the large groove and follow the left rib of this on good turf and in a great position. Belay when the angle finally eases up.
3. Follow the left-facing corner on good snow and ice to a big ledge and traverse left to join *Postman Pat*.

4. Follow *Postman Pat* up more snow-ice grooves and bulges, with a small mixed section at start of pitch 4.

#### **BEN ALDER AREA note:**

Malcolm Airey & Nick Kaczynski climbed three 10m routes on the Falls of Pattack (NN 557 883) on 15 Jan 2010. A 40mins walk from Ardverikie estate office up past Gallovie Farm; the falls of Pattack are signposted on the left from this Landrover track. Requires exceptionally cold conditions.

*Sayonara* III,4. Takes the left edge of the main flow.

*Soggy Tobis* III,4. Takes the short steep icefall formed by a small separate dribble 5m left of the main flow.

*Jimbo's Fall* III. On the east bank of the river about 50m downstream of the main falls is another easier angled icefall, a couple of variations possible.

#### **CENTRAL HIGHLANDS, Fort Augustus Area, Culachy Falls (NH 375 057):**

Approach: The falls lie in Glen Tarff, just off General Wade's Road. Park at the fire station on the south side of Fort Augustus (NH 373 083). Walk east along the A82 for 50m to reach a side road on the right, which leads to the burial ground. Follow this road to the burial ground, where a farm track leads left. Go through two gates and up a wee hill until another single track road is reached. Walk straight over this road and into the woods, following an track until a deer farm is reached. A wooden sign (Falls/Corrieyairack Pass) will lead you round the deer farm alongside a high fence. Follow this track for just over 1km until the falls are reached. 35 to 45mins from car to falls.

*Left Side* 40m III \*. Martin & Julia Stubbs-Partridge. 29 Dec 2009.

Climb ice bulges and mushrooms up the left side of the falls to a tree at the top on the left.

*Right Side* 40m III \*\*. Martin & Julia Stubbs-Partridge. 29 Dec 2009.

Climb a thin ramp on good ice, then steeper bulges to the top and the same tree.

#### **CREAG DUBH:**

*Golden Shower* VI,6 \*\*\*. Scott Muir, Andy Gatenby. 11 Jan 2010.

Climbs the rarely formed pillar above *Oui Oui*. Exceptional winter conditions are required for the pillar to touch down. It was in good but very chandeliered condition with poor protection in places and vertical mush – route very wet – but providing superb technical and vertical climbing. Loads of cleaning was necessary. Started at 7.30am to get better conditions before a thaw.

*Line Dancing* 100m IV,5. Andy Nisbet, Helen Rennard. 27 Feb 2010.

The fault and huge recess right of *Line-Up*. This is the second main fault line left of Great Wall (*Men Only*). Start right of the ivy covered lower wall and climb up left above it. Gain and go easily up the recess to a fallen tree (30m). Climb out the top left side of the recess, the difficulty depending on the amount of ice but well protected, to a tree (15m). Climb the rib above to a tree (10m). Abseiling from here would reduce the grade to III,4. Continue straight up a slab, then finish right by going up under an overhang and udging right to easy ground (45m).

*Top: Viv Scott on Blue Riband (V,5), Aonach Eagach, Glen Coe. Photo: Michael Gardner.*

*Bottom: Alan Shand on Gemini (VI,6), Ben Nevis. Photo: Colin Grant.*





## GLEN COE

### BUACHAILLE ETIVE MOR:

The following routes are on the on the buttress containing the route *Iron Cross*. This lies just up to the left from where *D Gully Buttress* meets *Curved Ridge*, and can be reached by ascending either. The routes terminate on an obvious grassy ledge. From this point an abseil can be made from a huge block (large sling needed). Alternatively scramble up to the top of the crag before descending to the left.

*The Full Whipper* 25m HVS 5a. \* Michael Barnard, Hannah Gibbs. 13 Aug 2009.

A few metres right of the crack of *Iron Cross* is a thinner crack. Climb this directly, moving left higher up to join the right-hand finish to *Iron Cross*.

*Iron Curtain* 25m VS 4c. Michael Barnard, Hannah Gibbs. 13 Aug 2009.

Just left of the right end of the buttress lie two parallel grooves. Climb the left (less blaeberry-filled) one, gradually trending left to finish directly. Quite loose in places.

*Iron Bru* 25m Hard Severe 4b. Michael Barnard, Hannah Gibbs. 13 Aug 2009.

Climbs the steep sidewall of the buttress on excellent jugs. Start to the right of the previous route and scramble up easy ground to the foot of the right-hand gully. Step left into a short corner, move up to a small roof before stepping out right to follow cracks to the top.

### Rannoch Wall:

*Restless* 70m VI,7 \*. Andy Nelson, A. Townsend, Lewis Harrop. 7 Feb 2009.

Climbs a wall and groove/cracks at the far left end of Rannoch Wall. Climb the wall 5m right of the left arete of Rannoch Wall to a turfey ledge/ramp. Go up this then up another short steep wall, towards the obvious ledge and detached block/pedestal. Climb steep cracks above directly into a chimney where the angle eases.

*Line Up* VIII,8. Andy Nelson, Kenny Grant, Andy Sharp. 21 Dec 2009.

Start up the vegetated chimney of *Route 1*, then work up and left past an obvious small block, up the short wall to the *Line Up* stance. From here follow the summer route. The climbing is superb, intricate and quite bold in the first two pitches, sustained throughout, with sensational, well protected climbing on the last pitch up the corner and through the roof.

### Creag a' Bhancair note:

Heike Puchan notes that *Flying Scotsman* is a nice wee climb of three pitches on amazingly thick turf, well worth a star or two and IV,4.

### THREE WATERS:

*Shilling Rabbit Slabs* 75m IV,4 \*\*. Colin Wells, Penny Clay. 31 Dec 2009.

A prominent two-tiered cascade of ice just to the north of the easternmost of the

Top: Heike Puchan & Martin Fitzsimons on *Volcane (E1 5b)*, Ardnamurchan.

Bottom: Heike Puchan & Martin Fitzsimons on *Bewsey Crack (HVS 5a)*, Wave Buttress, Glen Nevis.

Both photos: Brian Whitworth.

two Meeting of the Three Waters car parks on the A82 at NN 1715 6800. Gear up in the car park and walk for about 5mins across the road to the beginning of the ice at NN 170 571. Ascend a series of ice bulges trending slightly left to right to an easing in angle (40m). The ice steepens in a broad sheet; climb it direct to the top (35m). Belays at the top may be problematic – drive-ins may be useful. An awkward descent to the right (looking out) can be made with careful route finding and a couple of awkward steps, otherwise one can abseil from trees on the left.

### **BEINN FHADA:**

*Tres Hombres* 65m IV,4. Jim Beaton, Bill McMillan, Fraser Rankin. 30 Jan 2010.

An icefall located approximately NN 162 547. A 30m ice pitch followed by another 30m of easy angled ice and snow, then a 5m headwall.

### **GEARR AONACH:**

*Rev Ted's Gully Direct Start* 70m IV,5. Zac Poulton, John Pickles. 13 Jan 2010.

Start down and to the left of the easy ramp line leading in to *Rev Ted's Gully*. Climb the obvious icefall to the first narrowing of the gully. This consists of a 25m steep icefall, 35m of easy ground with an awkward step and finally a 10m icefall on the left to reach a tree at the foot of the gully proper.

*Slithy* VI,7. Blair Fyffe, Gareth Marshall. 7 Jan 2010.

By the summer line, under powder (no ice).

### **LOST VALLEY BUTTRESS:**

*Bush Paddy* 80m IV,5. Laubie Laubscher, Pete McCourt. 6 Apr 2008.

1. 55m From the foot of a rocky rib on the right side of *Right-Hand Gully*, cross the latter to the main buttress to below a corner. First climb snow until it steepens to mixed ground and a steep left-facing corner. Climb the corner to below an obvious jammed block. Move slightly left to pull up onto the block.

2. 25m Climb the steep corner right and above. This may have little or no ice depending on conditions but good hooks are available (crux). Climb easier ground above to exit route.

### **STOB COIRE NAN LOCHAIN:**

*Schoolboy Finish to Innuendo* 40m V,6. Michael Barnard, Hannah Gibbs. 20 Dec 2009.

Start at the block belay of the normal route, below the upper wall.

3. 20m Climb the obvious cracked corner directly above, exiting left.

4. 20m Finish more easily up the grooves above.

*Not Strath Nethy* 30m V,5 \*. Michael Barnard, Marcus Scott. 14 Jan 2010.

Climbs the short steep buttress avoided by *Langsam*. Approach and finish as for that route. Follow the obvious steep chimney on the left side of the buttress. Climb the chimney, quite bold initially, until level with a ledge on the left edge of the buttress. Traverse left to the ledge; move up the crest before stepping back right to finish up the top section of the chimney.

**Far Eastern Buttress:**

*Eastern Straight* 60m VI,7 \*\*. Andy Nelson, A.Rafferty, R.Parry. 6 Mar 2009. A direct finish to *Eastern Slant*, climbing the obvious steep corner and offwidth crack. Start as for that route, up easy vegetated ground to belay at the foot of the steep chimney/corner system. Climb the chimney/corner above, stepping right to a ledge at 15m – optional belay. Continue in the same line up the vertical wall, through a small roof and finish up the offwidth crack, with interest to the top.

**AONACH DUBH, East Face, Lower Walls:**

*Dangerous Curves* 25m VII,8 \*. Dave MacLeod, Blair Fyffe. 14 Jan 2010. The overhanging grooves left of *The Excellerator* form thin ice smears in exceptional conditions. Move right under a small roof to gain the steep corner. Climb it on thin ice to another roof (protection can be reached out left in another corner). Move rightwards below the roof to gain a right-trending ramp leading to the top with good protection.

*Jane's Weep* 25m VII/VIII,8 \*\*\*. Dave MacLeod, Blair Fyffe 12 Jan 2010. The very thin and tenuous icefall which forms down the wall between *Lady Jane* and *Sir Chancelot*. Move up very thin ice smears to the stepped ramp on *Sir Chancelot*. Move boldly past this on thin ice until it is possible to reach left to a good crack and protection. Follow the crack for a few moves before stepping back left onto improving ice which is followed to the abseil tree. Very dependent on the ice thickness.

*Reasons to Leave* 25m VI,6 \*\*. Blair Fyffe, Dave MacLeod. 12 Jan 2010. The icefall which forms most of the way down the right end of the wall, close to the line of *Grochan Grooves*. Start up a steep crack to pull onto a small ledge (as for *Grochan Grooves*). Arrange rock protection above and step left across the iced slab to climb the final ice pillar. Abseil from the tree.

**AONACH DUBH, North Face:**

*Eragon* 40m E6 6b \*\*\*. Guy Robertson, Blair Fyffe. Jun 2009. A stunning and at times bold pitch up the big wall between *Yo Yo* and *The Clearances*; protection is there when needed most. The route aims for and passes through the obvious niche, finishing up the slim groove in the upper part of the wall. Start as for *Yo Yo*, but continue left to the end of the initial break (protection). Continue diagonally up and left until good flat holds lead more directly up to a rest a few metres below the niche. Go up through the niche (crux), step left, then trend back right for a few moves before heading back up leftwards to a better rest below the final groove. A precarious wobble up the groove leads to the big ledge and junction with the other lines hereabouts.

**AONACH DUBH, West Face, No.2 Gully Buttress:**

*The God Daughter* 70m VI,7. John Lyall, Andy Nisbet. 24 Dec 2009. The Glen Coe guide has *Oz* and *Rose Late* on the wrong sides of *Rose Innominate*. *Oz* is right of *Rose Innominate* and the big groove which is the following route is immediately left of it.

1. 35m Gain the groove via an overhanging chimney and climb it to the halfway ledge.

2. 10m Walk left to where the cliff turns the corner and climb a steep cracked corner.
3. 25m Move rightwards up two short walls to gain a big fault leading up left to the top.

*Steptoe* 60m VI,7. John Lyall, Andy Nisbet. 22 Dec 2009.

Start as for the summer route (deep chimney-groove) but climb the groove until moves can be made out right to behind the pinnacle on *The Verger*. Climb good cracks up left (probably as for *Verger*) to a ledge. Follow pitches 2 and 3 of the summer route in one pitch.

*No.2 Gully Buttress Arete* 100m Difficult. Alex Roddie. 4 Jul 2009.

The obvious arete forming the right side of this buttress. The lower slabby part has good rock and involves a tricky move in an exposed position. An easier start, Moderate, traverses in from the gully to the right.

*2B Scoop* 100m II. Alex Roddie. 20 Jan 2010.

A small gully to the right of *No.2 Gully Buttress Arete*. Used as a finish to *No.3 Gully* (after going left along the Rake), given that the usual Upper Tier finish was bare at the chockstones.

### **AONACH DUBH, West Face, F Buttress (Upper Tier):**

The Upper Tier directly above F Buttress contains three narrow ridges separated by gullies. The central ridge is the best defined and forms a sharp arete. The first route described follows the left ridge which contains some small pinnacles in the upper section. The routes are easily reached from the top of No.6 Gully by a left traverse along The Rake. Descend by traversing easy slopes back right into Coire nam Beitheach.

*Archie's Ridge* 85m III,4 \*. Bob Hamilton, Steve Kennedy. 20 Feb 2010.

The left ridge. Interesting mixed climbing leads to a small pinnacle. Surmount the pinnacle and drop into a gap (50m). A groove and short chimney on the left lead to the easy upper slopes (35m).

*Whistler Gully, Left-Hand* 85m II/III. Bob Hamilton, Steve Kennedy. 20 Feb 2010.

The gully dividing the left and central ridges, following the left fork where it divides near the top. Finish up an easy snow gully.

*Whistler Gully, Right-Hand* 85m III,3 \*. Bob Hamilton, Steve Kennedy. 20 Feb 2010.

The right fork comprises a nice groove-line leading to the easy upper slopes.

*Shrike Ridge* 90m Very Difficult \*\*. Alex Roddie. 17 Sep 2009.

The central knife-edged arete offers an excellent climb, the second pitch (crux) being thrillingly exposed. Not to be confused with the easier finish to the *B-F Buttress* scramble, which is further to the left.

1. Climb a slab, steep crack and wall to a small gap. This pitch may be avoided to the left by easy scrambling up a vegetated scoop.

2. An excellent pitch! Climb the overhanging front wall of the arete directly on positive holds. Step up onto the knife-edge and climb steeply for about 10m up the arete, extremely exposed, with a couple of bold moves.
3. After reaching a small ledge, the angle relents and pleasant easy climbing leads to the last obstacle, a short tower formed by a detached boulder. Move right, layback up a short rib, then bridge up the final groove. After the groove, scramble easily to the top.

### **STOB COIRE NAM BEITH, North Face:**

*Artemis* 115m IV,4 \*. Steve Kennedy, Bob Hamilton. 23 Jan 2010.

This route follows an obvious break in the buttress left of the bifurcation in the upper reaches of *North-West Gully* (just right of the summer route *Sunset Slab*), on the buttress beyond No.5 Buttress. The length doesn't include the approach via *North-West Gully*. Climb *North-West Gully* to the point where the gully forks. Follow the left fork for a short distance. A break will be seen in the buttress above which develops into a shallow right-trending gully. Start at the left side of the break in a small recess and climb steep mixed ground just right of the recess to reach the shallow gully. Climb the gully to a large spike belay at a pedestal overlooking *The Mummy* on the right (60m). The broken buttress above has two grooves in the upper part. The left-hand groove was climbed to easy ground (55m).

### **Stob Coire nam Beith, Summit Buttresses:**

The suggested name for the previously neglected buttresses situated directly beneath the main summit. Best accessed by climbing a route on the lower face such as *North-West Gully* or *Arch Gully* then traversing left along the upper terrace. The terrace leads into the large basin looking across to Bishop's Buttress. The Summit Buttresses are situated a short distance above the end of the terrace. Alternatively, approach the basin by following slopes just beyond Zero Buttress. The routes are located on two north facing buttresses divided by a deep gully (*Nutcracker*) which is hidden from most approaches. The upper part of the south-east face of the left-hand buttress contains a short prominent gully (Grade I) leading to the summit which has been climbed many times. Gear can be left on an excellent gearing up ledge below the overhung base of the left-hand buttress and retrieved by descending the easy snow slopes on the left.

*Corkscrew* 100m III \*. Steve Kennedy, Bob Hamilton. 30 Dec 2009.

Climbs the upper part of the steep left-hand buttress. Climb *Nutcracker* for about 30m to the right end of a snow terrace leading out left onto the crest of the buttress (30m). Move left and follow the terrace to a chockstone belay on the crest (25m). Climb mixed ground close to the crest to the finish up easy snow slopes (45m).

*Nutcracker* 85m II/III \*. Steve Kennedy. 28 Mar 2010.

The deep wide gully dividing the two buttresses. Climb mostly on the right side of the gully passing a couple of icy steps to reach the easy upper slopes. Possibly climbed before.

*Breakdance* 80m IV,4 \*. Steve Kennedy, Andy MacDonald. 24 Jan 2010.

Situated on the right-hand buttress. Start near the foot of *Nutcracker* about 10m above the base of the right-hand buttress. Climb a short slab on the right, then directly up an open groove. Move right below a steep wall to reach a small col next to a prominent pinnacle (50m). Skirt the upper buttress on the right for 5m, then climb a short steep groove before moving back horizontally left into a groove on the buttress crest. Continue up the crest to finish up easy snow (50m).

*Bongo Thunder* 85m IV,5 \*\*. Geoff Cohen, Bob Hamilton, Steve Kennedy. 13 Feb 2010.

A more direct line up the right-hand buttress. Start just left of the foot of the buttress a few metres below the start of *Breakdance*. Follow a line of snow shelves out right to the crest. Continue up just right of the crest to an easier section then move back left and spiral around the buttress left of the crest to join *Breakdance* at the prominent pinnacle (35m). Climb the ridge directly above the small col by pulling steeply out left into a small undercut recess, then continue directly up a groove which leads to easier ground and a small cornice (50m).

*Side Spin* 85m I/II. Steve Kennedy. 25 Dec 2009.

The shallow gully immediately right of the right-hand buttress leading directly to the summit cairn.

#### **CHURCH DOOR BUTTRESS:**

*Flaked Out* 85m V,6. Alasdair Buchanan, Pat Ingram. February 2010.

Start 5m left of *Flake Route*. Climb over a small steepening to the base of three parallel cracks. Climb the middle one initially, then move steeply right to finish up the right crack to a big ledge (30m). Climb a short well protected groove on the right to pinnacles and easier ground (15m). An easier long pitch leads leftwards to a junction with *West Chimney* (40m).

#### **AONACH EAGACH, Chancellor Gully Area:**

The following two routes climb icefalls on the steep wall right of *The Slit*. They need a very good freeze to form and suffer from sun even early season. Descend my moving up the slope above the routes and then traversing rightwards to open slopes.

*Liquidator* 40m VI,6 \*. Dave MacLeod, Donald King. 8 Jan 2010.

The left-hand ice line on the wall. From a spike belay in the gully bed move up and left to a steep pillar and follow this to ledges. Continue into the narrow ice chimney above, exiting left to a tree.

*Frozen Assets* 40m VII,7 \*\*. Dave MacLeod, Sam Wood. 9 Jan 2010.

The right-hand ice line is steeper and more technical, moving between thin ice fangs, but with some good rock protection. Peg belay at the base of a detached pinnacle (to avoid bombardment when the sun comes out). Move round into the gully behind the pinnacle and climb this for about 6m before stepping onto steep ice on the left wall. Climb this boldly to a footledge on the right below overhangs and good rock protection. Traverse left past thin ice daggers with difficulty and up to spikes on the left below the final ice curtain. Finish up this and belay well back on pegs and cams.

**AONACH EAGACH (Sgorr nam Fiannaidh):**

*The Clachaig Icefall* 150m III \*. Steve Kennedy. 9 Jan 2010.

An icefall occasionally forms low down above Clachaig Inn where the ground steepens above and left of *Banana Buttress*. Roughly midway between *Banana Buttress* and *Clachaig Gully*. About 20mins walk from the hotel car-park. Traverse off right to descend.

**SGÒR NA H-ULAIDH:**

*West Buttress* 300m I/II. Alex Roddie. 29 Nov 2008.

The open buttress directly right of *West Gully*. Climbed in icy conditions and begun by a detour out of *West Gully* near the bottom. Large icy grooves lead to a rambling upper section with a wide choice of line. A useful route when the gullies are lean.

**BEINN FHIONNLÀIDH, South Face:**

*Icefall Buttress Gully* 350m II \*\*. Ian Stennett. 1 Jan 2010.

An interesting winter route with great atmosphere in a truly wild setting. This hidden gully appears as a slanting ramp below and right of the big buttress that sits 75m left of *Rapunzel*. Start beneath the pointed foot of the buttress (NN 089 494) and follow the gully up to the right. The gully is mostly of an easy angle (Grade I) but there are a few small ice steps and a large awkward chockstone before the gully splits. At this junction follow right on easy snow to the summit slopes.

**Note:** A harder (100m III \*\*) but more interesting finish follows the steep narrow gully left that after 40m meets a 4m vertical step (crux) followed by a shorter similar move. Go straight up to the summit slopes.

**BEINN FHIONNLÀIDH, Coire a' Chait, Alasdair's Buttress:**

(NN 093 500) Alt 800m North Facing

This remote corrie located high on Beinn Fhionnlaidh's steep north face remains out of the sun all winter, has superb views to Ben Nevis and beyond and offers visitors a real feeling of solitude. Alasdair's Buttress sits central in the vast coire bowl and has four prominent ice lines that flow over the top. The climbs are all single pitch with an easy descent back to the foot of the buttress so it is possible to complete three or four climbs in a day.

The ice requires a good prolonged freeze to form thoroughly and previous snow melt may help. Large amounts of snow will make access very arduous and a clear day is best to enjoy the wild surroundings and choose the easiest access line along the mountain's undulating south-west flank.

Approach: From the car park at Ellerlic in Glen Creran take the private road down to Glen Ure and then go left behind Glen Ure Farm house and on into the trees. Take a right fork up hill and when out of the trees strike off left to gain the obvious south-west flank of Beinn Fhionnlaidh. On reaching Lochan Cairn Deirg (alt 640m) start a north-east traverse round to Lochan Caorainn (alt 690m) beneath the subsidiary top of Caoran. From here traverse round into Coire a' Chait, 2.5 to 3hrs.

Descent: The easiest route back to the base of the climbs is to the left as you face the buttress. Ascend the slopes above the climbs to the summit plateau for the quickest route at the end of the day.

*Proximo* 45m III \*. Ian Stennett. 4 Mar 2010.

The leftmost ice line that sits in a V-shaped groove. Fun climbing and better after a build up.

*Maximus* 45m III,4 \*\*\*. Ian Stennett. 4 Mar 2010.

A big groove just to the right gives the best ice on the buttress with good thick quantities flowing top to bottom creating some interesting shapes and features. Finish directly up the steep right-hand side near the top for maximum value.

*Commodus* 40m IV,4 \*\*. Ian Stennett. 4 Mar 2010.

Further right is a large slab with ice flowing down a corner which forms its right side. Continually steep ice of uniform angle covering this large slab. A good climb.

*Caesar* 30m III \*. Ian Stennett. 4 Mar 2010.

A thinly iced slab-corner just to the right. Steep at the base and easing towards the top. This iced slab is often thinner than the other climbs but still entertaining.

*Slave* 60m I. Ian Stennett. 4 Mar 2010.

A gully some 40m right of *Caesar*. An ideal quick route up to above the climbs. Can hold some ice on rocks near the top.

#### **ETIVE SLABS:**

**Note:** It is noted that Hamish Henderson & Gordon (Curly) Ross climbed the *Direct Start to The Pinch* in May 1977, before the recorded first ascent. It wasn't recorded as they abseiled off when they joined the original route.

#### **BEINN A' BHEITHIR, Sgorr Bhan, East Face:**

*Hide and Seek* 210m IV,4. Donald King & partner.

Sgorr Bhan is the 947m outlier of Sgorr Dhearg on Beinn a' Bheithir. Two short steep steps at 680m lead into a narrow gully which curves round to the left and opens out. Pass below a ribbon of ice on the right, and climb the main icefall slightly further along. There is a belay on the rock island halfway up the icefall. Worth a star or two.

**Note:** The route and this description was recorded as *Hidden Streak* by Jamie Hageman & Guy Steven, 8 Jan 2010, but had been climbed before.

*Hide and Seek Direct Start* 20m IV,5. Alan Halewood, Sally Ozanne. 10 Jan 2010.

To the right of the Grade I start is a freestanding ice pillar some 8m high. Above this easier ice leads to a short steep mixed step before you rejoin the normal route just below the first steepening.

*Erica Roe Gully* 190m IV,4. Alan Halewood, Sally Ozanne. 10 Jan 2010.

Climb *Hide and Seek* past the first ice step and through the gully narrows.

1. 30m Traverse the easy snow ramp approx 30m to the first obvious ice gully on the left.
2. 30m Climb the ice gully to a belay on the right
3. 50m Climb another pitch of ice to the snow bay where the gully turns left and ends.

4. 30m Directly above is a right-angled rock corner. Climb this on rock and turf to easier ground and a spike.
5. 50m Climb easier snow to the top

### **KINLOCHLEVEN:**

*Little Canada* 150m III \*. Colin Wells, Penny Clay (alt). 31 Dec 2009.

The streams which descend from Coire an t-Sionnaich coalesce into a larger body of water in a small wooded ravine below about 350m which debouches into Loch Leven. Start at a small bridge at NN 1756175. Follow the stream over a series of small bulges until a larger waterfall presents itself. Climb this (25m III), the left side being slightly steeper than the right. The stream carries on above but at very easy angle so walk off to the left and descend to the road.

*Iced Jem* 80m II. James Hatfield, Kate Drugan. 3 Jan 2010.

A frozen stream which falls in steps down a gully. NN 163 636. Approach from parking at the McDonald hotel, along the West Highland Way and 15mins up from the path (1hr). Short vertical ice formations interspersed by less steep ice and neve. After a 35m pitch, a good 50m pitch with the crux at the very top.

### **GLEN ETIVE, STOB COIR' AN ALBANNAICH, North Corrie:**

**Note:** The references to Alan MacDonald in SMCJ 2009 (p463) should be Andy MacDonald.

### **BEINN SGULAIRD (GLEN CRERAN):**

**Note:** *Back to Work* (SMCJ 2009) has been regraded as III.

### **GARBH BHEINN (ARDGOUR), South Wall:**

*Pinnacle Ridge* 170m III. Ewan Lyons, Ewan Olivarius. 20 Feb 2010.

The sun will strip any snow from the steep east facing walls of the ridge. Start round to the right of the steepest rocks at a vague turf/ heathery groove. This continues up into a more defined right-facing turf/ heathery corner line (50m). Continue up for 20m to easy ground. Follow crest of the first pinnacle easily until it narrows at a horizontal arete. This is gained via a ramp on the right until a belay at the bottom of final steep section (60m). Either work up left to gain the crest of the second pinnacle or better still take a steeper right-facing groove on the right (IV,4). Follow this to the end of the groove (40m, possible belay) and then an open slope to a final V-notch on the crest (20m). Easy ground is followed to the final summit slopes.

### **MORVEN, Maol Odhar (Creach Bheinn), Coire Dubh:**

*Walk the Plank* 100m IV,5 \*. Steve Kennedy, Bob Hamilton, Andy MacDonald. 28 Feb 2010.

Takes a line up the front (east face) of the buttress left of *Voodoo Gully* linking a system of discontinuous ledges. Start at the lowest point and climb straightforward ground for about 40m to a steepening. Climb to the left end of a narrow overhung ledge which is traversed awkwardly right (crux). From the right end of the ledge move up and leftwards onto an exposed pedestal on the left edge. Easier ground leads out left then directly up to the easier upper section.

**The Zeppelin Face:**

The suggested name for the sprawling north-east face containing *The Rover* (SMCJ 2008, p177) visible from the main road in Glen Tarbert. *The Rover* is the leftmost of three corner systems. The best descent is by *Voodoo Gully* on the south side of the buttress.

*Ramble On* 130m III. Pete Harrop, Nigel Wombell. 28 Feb 2010.

Climb *The Rover* for about 40m (beyond the initial steepening) then pull out right into a groove system. The groove was lean so the buttress on the left was followed to the top.

*The Crunge* 130m (excluding approach) III. Bob Hamilton, Steve Kennedy, Andy MacDonald. 28 Feb 2010.

Climbs the buttress immediately right of *The Rover*. Approach by scrambling to the middle ledge below the upper face. An easy right to left snow ramp leads to the buttress edge overlooking *The Rover*. Follow mixed ground just right of the edge taking the easiest line.

*Houses of the Holy* 110m (excluding approach) IV,4 \*. Steve Kennedy, Andy MacDonald. 10 Jan 2010.

This route is based on the rightmost of the three corner systems. Approach by scrambling up broken ground to a slabby left facing corner. Climb the corner on thin ice to a bay on the right. Move up left and climb short grooves left of the main corner to a ledge (60m). Finish up a groove line (50m).

*Communication Breakdown* 180m IV,5 \*. Bob Hamilton, Pete Harrop. 10 Jan 2010.

A short distance right of *Houses of the Holy* is an easy looking gully. This route climbs the next prominent gully to the right featuring a prominent icefall near the top (about 100m right of *Houses of the Holy*). Climb continuous easy angled ice for three pitches with the final steep icefall proving to be the crux.

**MORVEN, Maol Odhar (Creach Bheinn), Coire nam Frithallt:**

The following routes are situated on or adjacent to the twin buttresses below the main summit which are divided by a deep gully (*Phantom Gully*). *Voodoo Buttress* (SMCJ 2005, p165) is situated on the larger left-hand buttress. The best approach from the main road is to follow a vague track leading up the west side of the glen into the corrie.

*Delta Wing* 80m III. Bob Hamilton, Steve Kennedy, Andy MacDonald. 8 Feb 2009.

The large left-hand buttress containing *Voodoo Buttress* is bounded on the left by a shallow gully (*Shamen*). Left again is a small slabby buttress with a right-facing corner. Climb the corner, entering by a groove on the right, then climb a short chimney in the upper part to reach easy ground and a small cornice.

*Shamen* 130m II. Gary Caswell, Steve Kennedy, Andy MacDonald. 21 Feb 2010.

The shallow gully on the left side of the left-hand buttress, ignoring an easy left branch about mid-way.

*Witch Doctor* 130m V,5 \*\*. Steve Kennedy, Andy MacDonald. 4 Jan 2010.  
A fine companion route to *Voodoo Buttress*, climbing the face immediately to the right of that route by a series of grooves and narrow turf ledges. Well protected but solid turf desirable. Start near the foot of *Phantom Gully* and climb the initial ramp of *Voodoo Buttress* to belay at a small fir after about 25m. Traverse out right onto the face by some turf ledges, then climb directly up a steep groove to reach a prominent ledge system. Traverse the ledges rightwards, then pull into a snowy bay below the upper headwall (50m). Finish up the most prominent groove with interest to the top (50m).

*Phantom Gully* 120m III,4 \*. Bob Hamilton, Steve Kennedy, Andy MacDonald. 8 Feb 2009.

The deep gully separating the two buttresses, starting close to the foot of *Voodoo Buttress*. The main gully finishes on a small narrow col. A short section of steep mixed ground directly above the col leads to easier finishing snow slopes.

*Phantom Gully, Left-Hand Finish* 120m III,3 \*. Gary Caswell, Steve Kennedy, Andy MacDonald. 21 Feb 2010.

The prominent groove-line leading up left from the col, gained by a short left traverse, and leading to the easier upper slopes.

*Screaming Virgins* 140m III,4 \*. Gary Caswell, Steve Kennedy, Andy MacDonald. 21 Feb 2010.

The wide groove/gully running up the right side of the right-hand buttress onto the crest. An easy ramp leads rightwards into the groove (35m). Climb the groove to the crest of the buttress, then continue up mixed ground just left of the crest to belay above a small col (junction with *Phantom Gully*) - 50m. Continue up steep mixed ground directly above the col as per the upper section of *Phantom Gully* (or follow the *Left-Hand Finish*) and finish up easy snow slopes (55m).

*Black Widow* 110m III,4. Bob Hamilton, Steve Kennedy, Andy MacDonald. 8 Feb 2009.

Climbs the right edge of the right-hand buttress. Start just left of the base of the gully on the right side of the buttress. Climb the buttress to a snow bay, then continue up steeper mixed ground following a vague groove system to reach the saddle at the top of the initial gully of *Phantom Gully*. Finish up *Phantom Gully* by climbing the steep mixed ground directly above the saddle.

*Papa Shango* 145m I \*. Gary Caswell, Steve Kennedy, Andy MacDonald. 21 Feb 2010.

The gully running up the right side of the right-hand buttress with a steep finish. A nice way to the summit ridge finishing close to the cairn.

### **MOIDART, Glenuig, Eas an Forsay (NM 691 780):**

*Eas an Forsay* 75m III. Alan Halewood, Gill Culshaw. 13 Jan 2010.

Park in the layby just north of the caravan site. Cross the road and head up the

frozen watercourse or right bank until in the pool at the base of the steep first pitch. Climb the 20m icefall up the steep black wall to the pool above. The next pitch is 15m of easier ice possible on either the left or right. Above a 40m long easy angled icefall (some 15m wide at the base, narrowing at the top) takes you to the top of the falls. There is also a short easy ice step some 100m further back from the top of the route.

### **MOIDART, Beinn Odhar Bheag, Coire nan Clach:**

The following climbs are found on the obvious north facing crag.

*South-East Gully* 200m II/III. David Ritchie, Neil McGougan. 4 Mar 2006.  
This climb follows the right-slanting gully starting at the left end and lowest point of the crag. Two pitches of interest near the top.

*Deep Chimney* 140m V,6. David Ritchie, Neil McGougan. 4 Mar 2006.

Climbs the obvious chimney right of *South-East Gully*.

1. 20m Scramble up to the start of the difficulties in a cave below the first chockstone.
2. 30m Climb the steep chockstoned chimney to below an overhanging chockstone barring access to the gully above. An excellent pitch.
3. 50m Bypass this chockstone using turf on the right wall, regain the gully above and then climb through further chockstones exiting left.
4. 40m Climb more easily up the gully to finish close to the top of *South-East Gully*.

*Estwing* 150m IV,4. David Ritchie, Neil McGougan. 2 Feb 2008.

Right of *Deep Chimney* lies an area of slabs bounded on the right by a well defined gully with a steep icy start. The following route climbs the shallow left-trending groove lying to the right of this gully.

1. 50m Gain the groove by climbing the buttress on the right for 10m, then follow it to a spike.
2. 50m Climb the buttress directly above following the line of least resistance, slanting right to reach the end of the difficulties.
3. 50m Easier ground leads to the summit.

### **ARDNAMURCHAN, Meall An Fhir-Eoin Beag:**

*Tambora* 20m E3 5c \*\*. Steve Kennedy, Bob Hamilton. 11 Apr 2010.

A serious and bold route on the left side of the upper section of the crag. Approach by scrambling up the far left of the crag then move back right to reach the small grassy gully at the start of the second pitch of *Crater Comforts*. This is a few metres left of the ramp on the second pitch of *Volcane*. The route generally follows the rounded rib left of the upper section of *Volcane* (C. C. goes up the side wall on the left). From the gully climb twin cracks up left, then pull awkwardly onto a small ledge below a steepening. Place good wires at the back of the ledge then pull up rightwards using a flange on the edge. Step back left onto the rib, then continue by thin and unprotected moves to an easier slab and an obvious left-trending crack. Finish easily up the crack.

*Temptress* 25m HVS 5a \*. Steve Kennedy, Bob Hamilton, John Anderson. 11 Apr 2010.

A good but eliminate line up the edge immediately left of the corner of *Greta Gabbro*. Climb the lower slab directly to the base of the edge. Palm the edge all the way with the left hand (no stepping right into the corner for gear!) with gear in the crack just right of the edge.

## SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

### **STÒB GHABHAR, North-East Spur (NN 231 456):**

This may only offer 'short scrambles' in summer but provided three winter routes.

*Munrovin'* 140m III. Andy Nisbet. 29 Dec 2009.

Start on the front face (overlooking the loch) at the left end of the unbroken section (left again an easy ramp leads up left). From here, a ramp leads up right on to the main face. Start just right of the ramp and climb turfey ledges up to the top of the ramp. The angle now eases to reach the top of the dome which forms the lower buttress. Continue to the plateau on a pleasant ridge with small pinnacles.

*Billy* 130m III. Andy Nisbet. 23 Feb 2010.

A line on the right side of the face, starting about 10m left of the following route. Work up left on snowy ledges, using some consolidated snow, passing just under a right-slanting but steeper line of weakness, until possible to climb straight up and join *Munrovin'* near the top of the dome. Finish up the common upper ridge.

*Red Gully* 120m III. John Lyall. 29 Dec 2009.

The right end of the main face (facing north) is formed by a gully. Climb this through a steep section to reach the common upper ridge.

### **STÒB GHABHAR, Coire Dhomhnaill (NN 233 469):**

The cliff containing *The Great Divide* (SMCJ 2000). With snow down to the road but reasonable walking conditions, an approach was made up Coire Toaig, descending into Coirean Lochain at a level section at NN 239 462. A right-slanting line on snow led to Sron nan Giubhas at NN 241 465. The north side of the ridge was then descended, turning left to traverse the cliff base to below the cliff (4hrs with light sacks; later 3hrs 30mins with heavier sacks but in very good conditions).

Left of *The Great Divide* is a concave face with two fault lines, a groove line direct up its centre and one on the left which forms thicker ice and takes a bend left at half-height to finish up a ramp leading to the upper left side of the face.

*Clan Donald* 200m IV,4 \*\*\*. Chris Pasteur, Andy Nisbet, Duncan Tunstall. 23 Feb 2010.

The left fault line. Follow this on ice to where it steepens and forms a big bulging icefall. Two separate lines were taken, one initially on the left to follow a groove

on the front of the bulging icefall and another trending right to climb the bulging icefall by a groove on its right. Climb the left-slanting iced ramp, then steep snow to the top.

*Campbells' Buttress* 250m IV,5. Andy Nisbet, Jonathan Preston, Duncan Tunstall. 9 Mar 2010.

The buttress between the two fault lines. Start either at the right edge of the *Clan Donald* icefall or on the buttress just right.

1. 50m Climb ice leading right or up the turfy buttress to reach a snow ramp leading right to steeper ground.
2. 50m Climb turfy ground above (or an iced corner on the left if formed) before moving left into a stepped right-slanting fault. Go up this and move left again into a parallel fault below a short steep chimney.
3. 50m Climb the chimney (crux) and continue rightwards up the fault before going up to a spike overlooking the central fault (*Donald's Direct*).
4. 50m Go up, then right on steep snow to near the top of a bay.
5. 50m Continue more easily to the top.

*Donald's Direct* 250m IV,4 \*\*. Andy Nisbet, Duncan Tunstall. 19 Feb 2010.

The central groove line. Climb this over several ice pitches to a bay high up. Climb a groove slanting slightly right to gain the crest of a ridge overlooking *The Great Divide*. Follow this ridge becoming progressively easier until walking (not included in length) leads to the plateau.

The following routes lie on a wall above a high bay situated up and left (east) of the previous routes at NN 235 467. It can be approached by descending Sron nan Giubhas to the first ease of steepening at approx. NN 238 465. Or by walking up it to the base of the final steepening. Descend north for about 100m height and traverse snowy terraces left, slightly descending at times and crossing a long gully (which runs the full height of the face) to gain the bottom east end of the bay. Alternatively, after doing one of the previous routes, make a descending traverse left (east) on steep exposed snow to the bay.

*Seduction* 150m II. Andy Nisbet. 9 Mar 2010.

A gully rising out of the top left corner of the bay has one ice pitch high up and steep snow leading to upper convex snow slopes.

*Clandestine* 140m III \*\*. Jonathan Preston, Duncan Tunstall. 9 Mar 2010.

A great wee route for the grade. Climb a narrow gully some 20m to the right passing two short steep sections to reach the upper slopes.

*Mystery Cleft* 120m IV,5 \*. Andy Nisbet, Duncan Tunstall. 19 Feb 2010.

A deep gully hidden from most angles but exiting from the top right corner of the bay. Increasingly steep snow gains a right bend into its deepest section and the expected short ice pitch becomes a much fiercer one. The cornice was passed on the left.

*Single* 120m IV,5 \*. Andy Nisbet, Duncan Tunstall. 23 Feb 2010.

An icefall and ramp forming a V with *Mystery Cleft*. Start up *Mystery Cleft* to

below an icefall on its left wall. Climb this into a ramp, followed to a 'sting-in-the-tail' short chimney (65m, but intermediate belay possible). Climb easing snow to the top.

### **BEINN AN DOTHaidH, North-East Corrie:**

*Kudu* 60m III. Laubie Laubscher, Ken Moore. 5 Feb 2009.

Start 70m left (east) of the bottom of North Buttress (the spur directly left of *Taxus*). The start is at a corner directly after steep rock that forms a 15m ice pitch. The start is the crux with steep ice first which becomes slabbier higher. After 20m the ice slabs meet a snow gully which bends slight left. Follow the gully to its top. One can either walk off east or continue to the summit as described below.

**Note:** The grade is from a 2010 ascent when the ice was thicker. This ascent then climbed two 50m pitches of easier ground slightly left then up past a small rock step. Two more easy pitches of 50m lead rightwards below a rock face to join the arete near the top of *Taxus* ordinary route (240m to *Taxus*). *Taxus* is then followed for about 80m to the plateau. Mark Dashwood, Nigel Suess. 25 Jan 2010.

### **BEINN UDLAIDH Notes:**

*Sunshine Gully* is Grade II and has a right fork at III, also slabs to the right of the right fork that allow lines to IV. Between the right and left fork there is an obvious rib which gives a series of iced steps at Grade IV; these finish at a small rock outcrop with cornice exit above (Karl Spierling, Chris Hine. 11 Feb 2010.).

*Tinkerbell* is placed in the guide under Coire Ghamhnain. It is actually the rightmost climb in Coire Daimh, about 100m right of *The Smirk*, and was climbed several times at Grade III,4 in 2010.

### **BEN UDLAIDH, Lower Tier:**

*Behind the Sun* 30m VII,7 \*\*. Andy Turner, Dave MacLeod. 21 Feb 2010.

Near the centre of the lower tier is a collection of steep icicles forming just left of a large left-facing overhanging corner. Climb the corner on turf and move left onto the ice. Traverse leftwards along ledges on ice to below the final roof and hanging ice curtain. From an exciting position in the roof, bash a hole in the precarious ice curtain and climb it to the top.

*The Grin* 80m VI,7. Greg Boswell, Tim Blakemore. 3 Mar 2010.

A prominent hanging icicle to the left of *The Smirk*.

1. 40m Go up an ice bulge in the right corner, then traverse left under a small roof to gain the hanging icicle. Move up and enter a thin icy groove to the left of a large flake. Make a tricky step right at the top of the groove onto a good foothold on the blank face. Move up and right onto thin finishing icicles to gain an open chimney fault. Move up 10m over a steep turfy bulge to a large ledge beneath a second icy corner.

2. 40m Climb the prominent icy corner and continue to finish up the snow gully for 30m as for *The Smirk*.

### **BEN UDLAIDH, Coire Ghamhnain:**

*Busy Bee* 90m II/III. Birgit Hauffe, Phil Lee, Alex Smith. 7 Mar 2010.

There is a quartz vein on the Coire Ghamhnain side of the north ridge of Beinn Udlaidh, which runs over the crest of the hill to *Quartzvein Scoop* in Coire Daimh. This route takes the first obvious wide icefall on the right after the quartz vein ridge. NN 285 338. The first 7m provides very steep climbing up a curtain of ice over an overhang. This would be shorter with a banking of snow. Easy ground then leads to the main icefall. A 40m pitch gains the top. The line taken can be varied.

### **BEINN A' CHAISTEIL, (Auch Glen):**

*Aquila* 110m IV,4. Robert Kincaid, Roger Parry. 21 Feb 2010.

Two hundred metres left of *Jimmy Dewar's Icefall* is a drape of ice coming from high up on a right-sloping ramp through the crags. Gain access to the main icefall by grass ledges to a large block below the main ice mass.

1. 35m Go up slabby ice to an ice pillar. Pass behind this trending right, then up a steep iced corner to an ice belay on the ledge above the pillar.
2. 40m Go straight up short steep ice sections (or two 20m pitches).
3. 35m Easier angled icy ground to the ramp (which can be descended with caution).

### **BEINN CHUIRN:**

**Note:** The probable first ascent of *Eas Anie* was by Peter Hodgkiss & Davie MacDonald; Hamish Henderson & Curly Ross in February 1986. Both teams climbed by the steeper left-hand finish.

### **GLEN FALLOCH:**

**Note:** Matt Munro suggests a better description for *Eas Ruaridh*, which is not on the main Dubh Eas burn:

Situated a kilometre or so above Glenfalloch Farm is a large waterfall (NN 311 211) on a tributary of the Dubh Eas burn which forms a fine icefall after a prolonged freeze (at least 2 weeks below freezing). It is well seen from the A82. Climb the icefall in two pitches.

### **CRUACH ARDRAIN, East Face of Meall Dhamh (NN 398 217):**

*Stollen Grooves* 120m IV,4. Chris Hine, Karl Spierling. 12 Feb 2010.

At the left end of the crag a large cuneiform buttress occurs above large boulders on the corrie floor. Immediately above and to the right of this buttress is a bay bounded on the left by a ramp and on the right by a steep wall. Icy grooves converge to feed an obvious chimney/gully leading directly from the top of the bay. Climb iced slabs that narrow at a chockstone that is passed to reach a bay where the gully forks. Continue straight up the gully on steepening ice to the top of an icy groove. A short ice wall leads to snow before the gully narrows again and a steep icy groove leads to the exit onto the summit snowfield. Finish just south of the summit.

*Meall Dhamh Ramp* 120m II. Willie Jeffrey, Chris Hine. 26 Dec 2009.

A prominent right-slanting, overhung ramp can be found 150m right of the large cuneiform buttress. Continuous ice was climbed in a series of short steps giving way to turf and snow at the top. Finish just north of the summit.





**CREAG AN FHITHICH Note:** The Map Ref should read NN 204 043. That given in the guide (NN 193 043) is for Pole Farm, not the crag.

**THE COBBLER, North Peak, Chockstone Buttress:**

Chockstone Groove 80m II. Phil Bonnett, Matt Griffin, Angus McCulloch. 20 Dec 2009.

Fifteen metres left of *Chockstone Gully* is a groove line that runs the full height of the crag. It provides two pitches, each with interesting steps, the hardest being at the start and the finish. The route would provide a good approach to routes on Great Gully Buttress.

**BEINN NARNAIN:**

**Note:** Michael Tweedley climbed a route *Machete* in 2009 at E6 6b. No details available.

**THE BRACK:**

*Great Central Groove, McFarlane's Variation* 25m V,6. Stuart McFarlane, Sam Burns, Erick Baillot. 2 Jan 2010.

From the belay below the top 5a chimney (which was bare), traverse horizontally right along a snow ledge for 6m. Climb a steep crack in the wall and where it bulges, step left to reach crucial turf, then pull through onto a ledge. Belay above the chimney. This enables the route to be climbed at a consistent standard with sustained lower pitches, when ice hasn't formed in the chimney.

*Inglis Clark Arete, Direct Start* 55m III,4 \*. Martin Holland, Jonathan Foden, Birgit Hauffe. 27 Dec 2009.

1. 45m Start just left of the toe of the buttress and follow a left-trending turf ramp to a turfy boulder (possible belay). Move up to and climb a short corner with a vertical fist width crack splitting the right wall (crux). Move up leftwards to belay.

2. 10m Step right to above a cleft and make an awkward move up a bulging corner on good chockstone hooks to gain easier ground. Move up and right to gain the original route.

*Four Minutes Past Hell* 50m IV,4. Martin Holland, Jim Bayliss. 25 Feb 2010.

A direct start to *Hell's Teeth*. Start at a quartz wall right of the normal start of *Hell's Teeth* and left of a large corner. Climb the quartz wall on improving turf to pass a small evergreen tree. Move up easier turf to the base of an open book corner (chockstones). Climb the corner with interest to easy ground below a big wall (possible belay). Easy ground then leads to the chimney mentioned in the *Hell's Teeth* description.

*Helter-Skelter* 50m III \*. Martin Holland, Pamela Millar, Birgit Hauffe. 2 Jan 2010.

A variation finish to *Hell's Teeth*.

1. 10m Behind the top section of the 'large block' of *Hell's Teeth* is a small cave. Climb the stepped turf groove immediately right of the cave and then move right to beside a large fissure.

2. 40m Climb on to a turfy pedestal and step across the fissure to a perch on the

outside face. Step back across the fissure to gain an overhung turf ramp. Climb the ramp to a turf block (possible belay). Step right and up to climb a final short slabby wall to easier ground. The final slabby wall would be avoidable by an easy traverse right.

**Note:** Martin Holland & Pamela Millar climbed the chimney which is passed by *Hell's Teeth* on 6 Jan 2010. After 55m of *Hell's Teeth*, climb the obvious chimney on the right, via two steep steps. Continue in the line of the chimney until a large cave is reached (possible belay). Enter the cave and finish via the skylight (40m, III \*\*). Topo of the area provided.

*Chockstone Alley* 165m IV,5 \*. Martin Holland, John Jackson. 1 Mar 2010.  
The gap between *Hell's Teeth* and *The Abyss*.

1. 45m Start to the right of a short wall right of *The Abyss* and climb easily up to a dead tree. Move up and right to the obvious turf corner with a tree at its base. Climb the corner to its top.
2. 45m Step up and right and climb easy turf ground past a dead tree and up steps to below the blocks of *Hell's Teeth*.
3. 30m Move 5m left and up turf corners. Move back right up a turf ramp and up to an evergreen tree. Belay on the ledge above right of a large chimney feature.
4. 45m Move left along the ledge and enter the base of the cave/chimney feature. Traverse 15m horizontally left on chockstones and full body jams. A series of chockstones now allows vertical height to be gained. At the top of the chimney step out on to the top of the massive flake forming the chimney, before stepping back across to the top. A fine crux pitch.

### **BEN DONICH, Am Beannan (NN 206 032):**

The crags lie immediately above the tree line. Best access is via the forest edge. The upper and lower crags are separated by the fence line.

#### **Lower Crag:**

*Sundown* 50m IV,4. Mark Leyland, Ross Cadie. 10 Jan 2010.  
Climb the narrow cleft following the cascade of Allt a' Chocaire.

#### **Upper Crag:**

*Knee Bother* 70m IV,4. Mark Leyland, Ross Cadie. 10 Jan 2010.  
Starting Left of the toe of the crag, icy slabs lead to two steeper steps.

### **BEN LOMOND:**

*Bonnie and Clyde* 70m III,4. Sonya Drummond, Andy Nisbet. 9 Jan 2010.  
A line up the right side of A Buttress. Start at the first break left of a shallow gully which divides A buttress with a minor buttress to the right. Climb straight up to a break in a steep band. Go left up this and straight over a bulge above (crux). Take the line of least resistance above, finishing just right of a steep upper band.

*Pole Dance* 85m IV,6 \*. Sonya Drummond, Andy Nisbet. 9 Jan 2010.  
A line up the centre of the buttress but forced by the steep upper band to finish

on the left. Well protected where it matters. Start in the centre at a crescent shaped weakness some 12m left of the previous route. Climb this, then trend right to a short capped chimney which is hidden from below but just right of a clean cracked corner. Climb this chimney (crux) and a steep turfy tier above before going right to a slabby corner (45m). Climb the corner and easier ground leftwards before being forced to traverse left below the overhanging upper tier to finish past its left end, at the left side of the buttress.

### **BEN CRUACHAN, Binnein Brander Area:**

*Sheep Creep* II/III. Andy Spink. 11 Jan 2010.

Follow an easy iced up burn to an obvious steeper icefall in the centre of crag at approx NN 053 283. This was climbed in two pitches past an obvious tree at half-height.

*Route 1* I. Andy Spink. 11 Jan 2010.

An easy angled iced up burn starting at approx 100m and finishing at 250m (NN 052 283).

*Route 2* 150m I/II. Andy Spink. 11 Jan 2010.

An easy angled iced up burn gave a series of small steps and bulges of approx 200m length. NN 058 280.

**Note:** A canyoning descent of the Allt Brander Canyon, on the south side of Ben Cruachan (NN 050 284) was made by Andy Spink, Mike Clifford, Sam Harrison on 16 Sep 2009.

### **MEALL NAN TARMACHAN, Creag an Lochain, An Innean:**

*Last Past the Post* 180m III. Raymond Simpson. 28 Feb 2006.

The leftmost snowy line on the buttress about 60m left of *Blanche* (SMCJ 2001). Climb a shallow snowy scoop with ice bulges for 60m to reach a diagonal snow bay. From the top right corner, climb an ice chocked chimney just right of a steeper fringe of icicles. Easier ground leads to the summit.

### **An Caisteal:**

**Note:** The left branch of Y Gully has a steep 15m slab in the constricted upper part. Raymond Simpson managed to climb the slab with Rob Ferguson on very thin ice on 21 Feb 2010 at technical 4 though the rest of the gully is II.

*Girdle Traverse* II/III. A.Fox. 21 Feb 2010.

Gain the upper bowl of Coire Tuath by a diagonal leftwards traverse. Cross broken ground above the junction of Y Gully and gain the terrace below the upper wall of An Caisteal. Descend slightly and follow ledges up and round (delicate) to contour into Coire nan Easan just above the icefalls. Cross Tote Gully and follow a snowy ramp on to An Innean. Continue diagonally left, then back right to surmount the corniced headwall below the summit.

### **MEALL GHAORDAIDH, Creag Laoghain:**

*No Pain Laoghain* 200m II/III. Graeme Kemp, Alan Gray, Catherine Zancanaro. 6 Mar 2010.

The obvious left-slanting gully on the face directly above the bridge at Stronuich. Climb 50m of ice, passing a steepening on the right. The gully above gives 150m of pleasant Grade I snow up to the broad north ridge of Meall Ghaordaidh.

### **MEALL NAN TARMACHAN, Creag na Caillich:**

*East Face Route* 210m II. Matthew Shaw, Adam Kassyk. 13 Feb 2010.

This line links up routes described in SMCJ 2001. Start beneath the corner line of *Great Gully* and climb this for one rope length, to just below the obvious narrowing. From here a large ramp line trends diagonally up and left; this is 'the lower diagonal rake' which crosses the entire face. Follow the ramp for about two rope lengths (*For Whom the Bell Tolls* crosses this ramp) to the base of a narrow gully cutting straight upwards. Climb this and its continuation to the top of the crag (as for *Easy Way*).

## **ARRAN**

No routes this year.

## **LOWLAND OUTCROPS**

### **AYRSHIRE, The Quadrocks:**

*Revenge of the Fallen* 12m E3 5c. Kev Shields. 3 Jun 2010.

Climb the right side of *The Arete*.

### **Mauchline Gorge:**

*Cup and Ring* 14m V,5. Dougie McIntyre, Martin Riddell. 9 Jan 2010.

The line was before the bouldering venue, as approached from the car park. The face is a vertical quarried wall, with a natural drainage line so formed an ice smear down the vertical face.

### **Loudoun Hill:**

*Spitfire* 105m V,6. Mike Dunn, Stuart Johnson. 10 Jan 2010.

The route is no longer climbed in summer and is now a good natural winter line, following the summer line. Topo provided. Start 5m right of the large roof at the base of a right-slanting ramp.

1. 20m Climb the easy ramp to belay below the obvious corner.
2. 45m Climb the corner and thin cracks above (crux at the top). Climb easier ground to belay well back at an obvious tree.
3. 40m Continue up easy ground to the summit plateau!

**Glen Afton Note:** William McHendry notes that he has climbed icefalls in Glen Afton (NS 638 070). There is ice of Grade II to IV and a waterfall in a gully about Grade V which is harder to get in condition. The ice can be seen from the road and the approach takes about 15mins.

### **GLASGOW AREA, Neilston Quarry:**

*Ally's Gash* 10m Hard Severe \*. Alistair Lamont, Stephen McIntyre. 13 Apr 2010.

The route sits between *Kirsteen's Crack* and *Polish Direct*. Follow a big crack directly up and over the overhanging section.

### **Spectacle E'e Falls:**

(NS 715 435) Alt 175m North-West facing

*Spectacle E'e Direct* 20m II/III. Craig Lamb, Andrew Lamb, Stuart Ferguson. 10 Jan 2010.

Start at the centre of the Falls where there is a 2m section of vertical ice. Climb this to a less steep ice ramp which gains to the halfway platform. From here there are various lines to the top.

*Spectacle E'e Chimney* 20m II/III. Craig Lamb, Andrew Lamb, Stuart Ferguson. 10 Jan 2010.

Start at the right side of the Falls on the platform which is beside the cave. Follow the shallow chimney up until it opens out onto the main ramp leading to the halfway platform. From here there are various lines to the top.

### **CAMPSIE FIELDS:**

**Note:** Chris Sleight & partner climbed two routes in the Corrie of Balglass near Fintry in January 2010. One was a gully about Grade III and the other was a Grade V icefall. The icefall was recorded in 1979 as *Moonlight Completion* by Bob Sharpe & A.Morgan so the gully has probably also been climbed.

### **THE TROSSACHS, BEN A'AN:**

**Note:** Ken Crocket has provided a detailed argument as to why he disagrees with the note by Douglas Stewart (SMCJ 2009, p470) that *Coriander* was climbed by Tom Weir.

### **CAMBUSBARRON, Fourth Quarry:**

Rockfalls have continued here to affect the finishes of some routes.

### **THE MERRICK, Black Gairy:**

*Black Rhino* 145m IV,4 \*\*. Andrew Fraser, Ian Magill. 17 Jan 2010.

This is the shallow icefall/chimney 15m right of *White Rhino*, which gives a cracking second pitch. The icefall does not reach the base of the crag so climb the first pitch of *White Rhino* then traverse up right to belay just before the start of the chimney (50m). Climb the icy chimney directly (45m). Move 3m right and climb the icy gully to easier ground (50m).

*The Elephant Man* 125m IV,4. \*\*. Colin Wells Stephen Reid (alt). 10 Mar 2010.

1. 30m From *White Rhino*, traverse up right along the first terrace to an easy angled gully and follow this until it steepens.
2. 45m The icefall on the right soon eases but gives an excellent pitch.
3. 50m Climb the icy gully to easier ground.

*Lang Scots Easy Way* III,4 \*\*. Stephen Reid. 10 Mar 2010.

By following the first two pitches of *Kyle Gully* and then an easy snow ramp up leftwards, the route can be joined below pitch 4.

*Starting on Thin Ice* 110m V,4 \*\*. Stephen Reid, James Kinnaird (alt). 18 Feb 2010.

Start at the top of the first pitch of *Kyle Gully*. The first pitch is the crux and is not especially well protected.

1. 30m Climb a few metres up leftwards on turf from the gully to gain a large ledge. Climb the thin left-slanting ice ramp up the wall to a belay where it eases.
2. 30m Climb the ice pillar and a short section of easier ice to a good block belay.
3. 50m Follow the easier icefall above, then easy ground slightly rightwards to a large rock spike. A further 50m of easy ground attains the plateau.

*Retailers' Therapy* 125m V,5 \*\*. Stephen Reid, James Kinnaird (alt). 18 Feb 2010.

Start just right of *Kyle Gully* at a short but pronounced bulging icefall.

1. 50m Climb the icefall and follow its continuation leftwards up easy ground to a steep wall which is surmounted on thin ice to a spike belay near the chandelle of ice on the left side of the wall taken by *Interstellar Overdraft*. This is a few metres right of *Kyle Gully*.
2. 30m Climb the chandelle, exiting rightwards and move up to a belay in *Kyle Gully*.
3. 45m Spilling down the left wall of the gully are several short icefalls. Climb the uppermost one and then continue up easier ice above to a rock belay on the right at the end of the difficulties. 100m of easy ground attains the plateau.

*Kirshinnoch Corner* 245m V,6 \*\*. James Kinnaird, Stephen Reid (alt). 23 Feb 2010.

This takes the thin line of ice and turf up the huge recessed corner/scoop some 50m right of *Interstellar Overdraft*. The grade assumes that a full rack of cams (Friend 0 to 3.5 size) is carried; without these the route would be VI. Start in a line under the scoop where 35m of easy ice leads to the first pitch.

1. 50m Climb the icefall to easy ground.
2. 40m Climb up into the scoop on turfy ice smears and belay in the hollow.
3. 15m Climb a short but steep ice wall to a ledge. Traverse left into a shallow cave and belay down and left of it (necessary to avoid falling ice and to allow sufficient rope for the next pitch).
4. 40m Climb high into the cave and place a high runner in a crack in the roof. Down climb to the ledge and climb thin steep ice to a poor rest. Overcome the overhang on the right and traverse back left to the corner. Strenuous mixed moves up this lead to the end of the difficulties and a short scramble leads to a good belay.
5. 50m Easy ground.
6. 50m Easy ice and mixed ground leads to the plateau.

*Kenny's Folly, True Finish* III. Steve Currie, Ian Brown. 4th March 2010.

*Kenny's Folly* originally finished via *Chippy's Downfall* (ordinary way). Carrying on up the true line of the left-slanting icefall is more in keeping with the rest of the route.

**Note:** *Chippy's Downfall* originally finished via what will be described as the *Direct Finish* (III/IV) in the next guide.

A further 200m right of *Chippy's Downfall*, and just left of a rock buttress, are three gullies all starting from much the same point – the Triplets.

*Fat Triplet* 100m II \*. John Biggar, Stephen Reid (alt). 3 Mar 2010.

The left-hand gully gives a good first pitch.

1. 50m Climb steep ice to snow and then another ice bulge to a rock belay.
2. 50m Step left and continue up the gully line to easy ground.

*Skinny Triplet* 90m III \*. John Biggar, Stephen Reid (alt). 3 Mar 2010.

1. 50m The slim groove line up the left side of the buttress, exiting leftwards and climbing up to a terrace.

2. 40m Continue up steep ice in the same line.

*Thick Triplet* 50m II. Stephen Reid, John Biggar (alt). 3 Mar 2010.

Start as for *Skinny Triplet* but follow the right-slanting gully to easier ground.

On the right-hand side of the rock buttress are three more gullies.

*Path to the Sun* 100m III,4 \*\*. John Biggar, Linda Biggar (alt). 4 Mar 2010.

The line of ice up the right-hand side of the buttress.

1. 40m. Climb turf and icy smears to a cracked rock belay.
2. 60m. Climb ice step above then easy snow.

*Headtorch Gully* 100m II. James Kinnaird, Stephen Reid (alt). 4 Mar 2010.

1. 50m Follow the short central gully to an exit left and go up easy snow to a rock belay.

2. 50m Easy snow.

*Nice Finish* 50m I/II \*. Linda Biggar, John Biggar. 4 Mar 2010.

The right-slanting gully starting just right of *Headtorch Gully*. Easy snow slopes above.

Right again is an obvious wide icefall.

*No Time for Lunch* 120m II/III. Ian Brown, Steve Currie (alt). 4 Mar 2010.

1. 50m Climb the icefall and then heather/snow.
2. 50m Icy slabs followed by easier ground.

Right again is the final gully of the crag.

*Kirremore Gully* 120m II. John Biggar, Linda Biggar (alt). 4 Mar 2010.

The straight-forward gully leads to icy slabs.

Further right still are more short icefalls, the *Right Rib o' the Gairy* (II/II, Stephen Reid, John Biggar, 3 Mar 2010) which can be climbed by various lines.

### **DUNGEON OF BUCHAN, Cooran Buttress:**

*King's Kingle* 120m E1. Chris King, Stephen Reid. 13 Sep 2009.

This series of eliminate variations on *Bikerdike's Buttress* proves hard rock

indeed. Start as for *Cooran Buttress*.

1. 25m 5a Just right of the prominent left-leaning crack of *Bikerdike's Buttress* is a crescent shaped scoop. Gain the scoop, exit right and climb cracks in the slab above to belay in the grassy gully.

2. 30m 5b Climb the rib on the left, then step back right into the gully. Go up a step to below jammed blocks then take a leftwards rising crumbly flake line up the wall on the left, making hard sustained moves to gain a shallow niche. Leave this direct and follow easier rock to a heather terrace and a huge leaning block belay.

3. 15m 5b A few metres left of the leaning block are two short steep cracks. Make a hard pull to gain a toehold in the right-hand one and climb it direct to a terrace below the headwall.

4. 50m 4c Cutting through the bulge above, just left of the roof are four cracks. Don blinkers and climb the third from the left until over the bulge, then traverse horizontally right across the lip of the roof (or just a bit higher) to finish up a short groove (the last few moves of *Cooran Buttress Direct*).

### **DUNGEON OF BUCHAN, Dungeon Hill – The Cauldron (NX 461 852):**

Three cliffs are situated directly beneath the summit of Dungeon Hill, in its NE corrie. The left and central cliffs face north-east, receive little sun and provide good mixed climbing.

*Dark Skies* 100m III. Andrew Fraser, Ian Magill. 2 Mar 2010.

The left buttress beneath the summit of Dungeon Hill is large and rambling. Start 10m right of the foot of the rightwards sloping gully which separates the buttress from the steeper and shorter central buttress, on the left side of a long low icy wall. Follow a shallow turfy gully via two steps then after a steep slot move 5m right along a wide ledge to belay under a mixed icefall (45m). Climb the icefall, then up a number of steps before moving right to climb a leftwards sloping ramp (45m). Continue to the top (10m).

*Constellation Prize* 55m III,4 \*. Andrew Fraser, Ian Magill. 2 Mar 2010.

A sustained and well protected mixed climb up the right side of the steeper central buttress. A prominent ramp slopes rightwards up the buttress and the route climbs a corner to gain the right end of this ramp. Start at the foot of the gully which defines the right end of the buttress, 2m left of an overhung alcove. Climb the turfy corner above to its top, then move right underneath a cracked arete to climb steps rightwards to belay in a corner (30m). Climb the corner then move left into the main right-sloping ramp. Follow this, finishing to the left (25m).

### **POINT OF THE SNIBE, Grit Buttress (NX 465 815):**

*Goatesque* 8m E2 5b. Chris King (unsec). 3 Apr 2009.

The mossy central corner provides an epic and bizarre battle to gain every centimetre.

*Goatzilla* 8m E2 5c. Jonathan Hughes, David Jones. 8 Jul 2009.

Just left of the mossy corner is a short and deeply undercut arete containing a knobby spike. Swing out onto the spike, then puzzle out (quickly) how to stand

on it in order to grovel onto the steep mossy slab above. Huff and puff your way directly up the upper wall to a horribly sloping finish.

### **The Uncarved Block:**

*The Arete Direct* 40m E3 6b \*\*. David Jones, Jonathan Hughes, Stephen Reid. 8 Jul 2009.

Superb climbing directly up the line of the crag. A climb with a definite crux. Start as for *The Arete* and climb the short wall to the right side of the arete. Gain the arete and climb it to a tiny foot ledge at a horizontal break. Make a series of desperate moves directly up the arete and flop onto a heather ledge. Step horizontally left onto the continuation arete and climb this boldly to the ramp of the original route. Stand up and move up and rightwards to a large wedged block on the arete (careful!) and so the top.

### **Top Tower:**

*Chook Run* 9m Hard Severe 4b. Stephen Reid. 2 Jan 2010.

The right arete is climbed to half way where an escape rightwards leads to heather. Climb straight up the rock above on jugs.

*Direct Variation:* 9m HVS 5a. Chris King, Stephen Reid. 2 Jun 2010.

As for *Chook Run*, but finish boldly straight up, just right of the arete, on positive finger holds.

### **The Slab of the Snibe:**

This small slab lies about 100m horizontally right of the Lower Slabs. The routes are all on the larger right-hand slab.

*Yllas* 10m Severe 4b. Stephen Reid, Sally Baxendale. 26 Jun 2010.

The crack on the left, starting just right of a small overhang. Exit leftwards for the best finish.

*Gordon Bennett* 10m HVS 4c. Stephen Reid, Sally Baxendale. 26 Jun 2010.

The clean slab just left of the central cracks is climbed boldly to a foot ledge. Finish directly up the featured wall.

*Nehpets* 10m Severe 4b. Stephen Reid, Sally Baxendale. 26 Jun 2010.

The central crack system is harder than it looks.

*Goat for It!* 10m VS 4c. Stephen Reid, Sally Baxendale. 26 Jun 2010.

The slab to the right of the central cracks, starting via a short crack and continuing directly.

*Sally Arete* 10m Severe. Stephen Reid, Sally Baxendale. 26 Jun 2010.

The right arete (avoiding stepping into the crack on its right, which reduces it to Very Difficult).

### **The Philosopher's Stone & Lower Slabs:**

*If it's Hard at the Bottom, it's Turf at the Top* 20m Severe 4b. John Biggar, Mike Gennaro. 30 May 2010.

Start at the obvious clean white cracks on the left side of the wall. Climb these,

move left to avoid a suspect pillar, then climb the arete above more or less directly.

*Bambi* 60m HVS. Stephen Reid, Chris King (alt). 23 May 2010.

Takes the broken ridge bounding the right side of the bay containing *The Philosopher's Stone*. Pleasant climbing. Start under a short arete at the same level as the Lower Slabs.

1. 40m 5a Climb the arete on its left side and gain a ledge. Traverse left onto the wall and climb a short crack to a large terrace. Follow the easy broken ridge to an upper terrace and belay under the final arete.
2. 20m 5a Climb the arete and cracks to belay on a huge boulder.

### **The Pearly Goats:**

*Jethro* 30m VS 4c. Stephen Reid, Chris King. 23 May 2010.

This climb follows the left arete of the recessed cracked slab and starts just 1m left of *Little Egypt*. Climb the slab and crack in the arete, then step left onto stepped flakes and pull up onto a ledge. Finish up cracks above.

The next routes start on a short lower tier.

*Wider by Faa* 32m VS 4c. Stephen Reid, Chris King. 2 Jun 2010.

Climb the short offwidth crack on the left side of the lower buttress, stepping right at its top into the lower crack of *Juniper Cracks* to gain the terrace. Above, climb the offwidth crack direct to an awkward heathery finish and scramble to the top.

*Juniper Cracks Direct* E2 \*. Chris King, Stephen Reid. 2 Jun 2010.

2. 23m 5b Avoid the juniper of *Juniper Cracks* completely by climbing the searing jam crack direct to the finish groove.

### **The Faa Side:**

*Faa Harder* 35m Hard Severe 4c. John Biggar, Linda Biggar. 23 May 2010.

Pleasant climbing making the most of the clean granite. Start on the left of the buttress, and 4m left of *Faa Side*, at a short steep wall leading to a ledge at the foot of a leftward slanting groove. Gain the ledge by a difficult boulder problem move, then climb the easy corner for 5m, until a tenuous toe traverse can be made rightwards back to the ridge, which is followed to a grass platform with a big boulder. Climb the slab above, starting on the left, just right of a crack, and finishing on the right.

*Variation: Faa Harder Still* E1 5a. Chris King, Stephen Reid. 2 Jun 2010.

As for *Faa Harder* to the ledge but then make bold moves horizontally rightwards to gain the ridge and climb this directly to rejoin *Faa Harder*.

### **BUCHAN WEST CRAG:**

(NX 421 814) Alt 600m West facing:

This small greywacke crag on Buchan Hill is the leftmost of many craglets that can be seen from the car park, though it becomes hidden on the approach. There are 12 routes – see the new routes section on <http://www.smc.org.uk>.

**CRAIGLEE, Sound Clint:**

*Wee Pals Wa'* 13m E3 5c \*. Chris King, Stephen Reid. 17 Sep 2009.

The superb blank wall 8m left of *Hoo-Haa* – as the name implies, take lots of micro cams. Boulder upwards via a short blind crack and gain a thin break up to the right. Carry on up rightwards to the next break and again to a better break and some decent gear. Traverse 1m left and pull through the bulge above via a scoop.

*Pecher's Redemption, Direct Finish* is 5c and not as nice; Chris King, Stephen Reid, 17 Sep 2009.

*Stravaig Tippertaes* 13m HVS 5a \*. Stephen Reid, Chris King. 17 Sep 2009.

Start 20cm left of *Hoo-Haa* at a left-slanting crack. Climb the crack (*No Hoo-Haaing*) to a break and stretch up to the next break. Tiptoe 2m left to a sticky out foothold and move up via a superb pocket. Step back right 1m and go straight to the top.

*Caw Canny Direct Finish* is 4c; Stephen Reid, Chris King, 17 Sep 2009.

*Heidstane* 12m HVS 5a. Chris King, Stephen Reid. 17 Sep 2009.

Two metres right of *Keep yer Heid* and 3m left of some 'steps' is a short crack that peters out. Climb the crack to the break (3.5 Friend) and climb the steep wall to the top.

**Bruce's Buttress:**

The left-hand buttress is unfortunately rather grubby, a shame as the climbs would otherwise be very good. Towards the right-hand end of the crag is a tower that is higher than the rest.

*Bruce's Chimney* 15m VS 4c. Stephen Reid, Chris King. 17 Jun 2010.

The shallow impending chimney 10m left of the tower gives a surprisingly good sustained pitch. Steep, but fortunately the holds and protection are excellent.

*The Game of Death* 22m E2 5c. Chris King, Stephen Reid. 17 Jun 2010.

Climb a crack at the left side of the tower to a horizontal break. Move up to a higher break and make hard moves to gain a standing position in this. Strenuous technical moves up cracks lead to the top.

*The Way of the Dragon* 22m E2 5b. Chris King, Stephen Reid. 17 Jun 2010.

Climb a crack in the middle of the tower until it peters out at a clean slab. Teeter right and make a tricky move to gain the left end of a ledge. Climb the cracks above up and leftwards to finish as for the last few moves of *The Game of Death*.

*Enter the Dragon* 22m HVS 5a. Stephen Reid, Chris King. 17 Jun 2010.

On the right of the tower are two cracks that form an elongated 'A'. Start strenuously up the left-hand crack but, as the holds disappear, traverse the horizontal break to the right-hand one and make thin moves up to a big ledge. Climb the easier groove above to a pinnacle on the right. Step back left and jug haul to the top.

**CRAIGDEWS, Kid's Buttress:**

This is the tiny buttress directly under the Ramp. The obvious central crack-line remains unclimbed despite several attempts.

*The Goatbusters* 6m E2 5c \*. Chris King, Stephen Reid. 15 Oct 2009.

The cracked arete to the right of the central groove gives superb sustained climbing. Finish leftwards to avoid the heather cornice. An in-situ rusting wire showed of at least one previous attempt.

*Fourpences are Soundless* 5m HVS 5b. Chris King, Stephen Reid. 15 Oct 2009.

Start on the right side of the buttress, just left of a small cave and make a hard pull up to get established on a crack-streaked wall. Another awkward move leads to the top.

**The Dark Side:**

*Silly Billy* 25m Severe. Stephen Reid, Chris King. 15 Oct 2009.

About 30m left of the fallen tree is an attractive-looking broken rib. Unfortunately it isn't, and the climbing (via a scoop and the left-hand rib) is both poor and poorly protected. A more direct version looks suicidal. Belay by taking a firm stance in a hollow 25m back from the top of the crag.

Just west of Craigdews, the Grey Mare's Tail (the other one! NX 491 723) is easily accessed from the Murray's Monument car park but requires an arctic freeze to form. The lower fall was climbed (25m II) by John Biggar, Colin Hossack, Linda Biggar, 9 Jan 2010.

**CRAIG AN EILTE, The Minimarket:**

At the very left end of the escarpment is a small subsidiary corrie containing a tiny broken buttress of excellent clean rock. The left wall of the left side of the buttress is very overhanging.

*Traverse of the Goats* 25m VS 4c. Stephen Reid, John Biggar. 16 Jun 2009.

A fun rising traverse up the leaning left wall. It eats cams and more are needed to belay. Start just left of the main arete of the crag at an open groove. Climb the groove to a huge ledge. Traverse this leftwards and carry on up and left following the obvious steep juggy line to the top. Belays are a long way back.

*Shopping Around* 12m VS 4c. John Biggar, Stephen Reid. 16 Jun 2009.

Climb easily straight up the main arete of the crag to an impasse at a steep wall. Make an awkward move up this, then traverse rightwards until a ramp/crack-line leads back left. Better than it looks!

On the right side of the buttress is a short wall capped by an easy angled slab. In the centre of the short wall is a V-groove/chimney.

*Trolley Wobbles* 15m Severe. Stephen Reid, John Biggar. 16 Jun 2009.

Climbs the front of an enormous detached flake. Start just left of the V-chimney and climb onto the flake. Step left and make an awkward move up. Finish directly up the wall and slab above.

*Convenience Chimney* 15m Very Difficult. John Biggar, Stephen Reid. 16 Jun 2009.

The V-Chimney, exiting leftwards behind the huge flake, then easily up slabs.

*Check Out or Deck Out* 15m VS 4c. Stephen Reid, John Biggar. 16 Jun 2009. Climb the short wall in between Convenience Chimney and Wee Rib leftwards to a slim groove. Pull over the bulge above and finish easily up the slab.

*Wee Rib* 15m Difficult. John Biggar, Stephen Reid. 16 Jun 2009.

Two metres right of the V-Chimney is a short broken arete. Climb the interesting arete on its right side, then rightwards up the big slab.

### **The Flesh Market:**

*Dinna Down Climb* 75m IV,5 \*. John Biggar, Linda Biggar (alt), Stephen Reid. 4 Jan 2010.

This takes the turfy Grade II looking open groove line in between the two towers of *Minas Tirith* and *Minas Morgul*.

1. 45m Climb the slab on the left to reach a large block and then the huge ledge above. Gain the upper section from the right (just left of a small roof) with a hard move, and follow the easier groove above, exiting rightwards. Run the rope out to a satisfying spike.
2. 25m Climb easy ground to a short final groove and move up to a rock belay. The best descent is quite a long way right, to the right of *Dinna Fall*.

*Dinna Fall* 35m III. Stephen Reid, John Biggar, Linda Biggar. 4 Jan 2010.

The icefall immediately to the right of *Gorm*.

### **The Vegetable Market:**

At the far right of the escarpment is an area of slightly less vegetated rock, in particular a steep cracked wall high on the crag. Descend well to the right.

*Broken Chain* 60m II. John Biggar, Linda Biggar. 9 Jan 2010.

Stepped icefalls form on the left of this area and can be climbed in several places with much variation possible.

*Blaeberry Buttress* 80m Hard Severe \*\*. John & Linda Biggar (alt). 2 Jul 2009.

Some very enjoyable moves, plenty of protection where it matters and very little vegetation (apart from the blaeberrys at every belay) make for an excellent route. Start directly beneath the low-angled blocky rib and clean whitish slab, 4m right of a small black recess at a short mossy but juggy wall.

1. 25m 4b Climb the short juggy wall, move left to a crack and follow this and the excellent clean slab above, crux at the top. Belay 2m right of the blocky rib.
2. 25m 4b Climb the rib, using zigzag cracks to an awkward mantelshelf on the nose. Go easily up the slab above to below the next steep step.
3. 30m 4b Finish the rib with a great move off the top of a block on extreme left. Another steep pull leads to a heather ledge and a low-lying flake, then traverse 2m right to the steep corner. Pull up this and climb onto a block. Step dramatically right onto the juggy arete and a satisfyingly steep finish.

*Galloway Gallivant* 115m HVS. John Biggar, Stephen Reid. 16 Jun 2009.

An interesting climb despite some heather pulling. It improves with height. To the right of the steep cracked wall is a smaller smooth wall with a stepped arete on its left side. The arete has a small niche near its top. Start directly below this arete towards the right-hand side of the initial slabs at a large flake.

1. 30m 4c Climb the flake leftwards and slabs above to belay at the foot of the stepped arete.
2. 10m 4a Climb the arete to just below the niche and belay on a large ledge on the left.
3. 25m 5a Monkey up the short crack in the centre of the steeply overhanging wall to an awkward exit onto slabs. Trend leftward up the first slab, then straight up to just left of a short arete.
4. 50m 4c Make a hard move up the arete then climb easily to a belay. Pad up slabs to the top.

*Niche Market* 115m E3. Chris King, Stephen Reid. 24 Jun 2009.

The challenge of the niche direct. Start just right of the large flake on *Galloway Gallivant*.

1. 30m 4c Climb onto a small square turf ledge and make some steep moves to gain a slab. Go straight up heather and rock above to belay at the foot of the stepped arete.
2. 35m 6a Climb the right-hand of two crack systems in the wall to gain the stepped arete just below the niche. Gain the niche with a strange move and leave it via a tenuous swing to the right and even more tenuous mantelshelf (protection is from two or three Camalot 0.3s or equivalents). From the slab, climb leftwards up rock and heather to just right of the short rounded arete.
3. 50m 5b Make a series of bold moves up a short leftward-facing corner and scoop above. Then pad up slabs to blocks on a grass ledge at the top.

*The Levellers* 110m HVS \*. Stephen Reid, James Kinnaird. 22 Apr 2010.

A good series of variations on *Galloway Gallivant*. Six metres right of that route is a large horizontal flake lying on the ground; start 4m right of this.

1. 25m 4c Climb the steep wall to a horizontal break. Step up right and move up to grass. Climb the blocky cracks on the left then go straight up to a terrace and descend this leftwards to belay at the foot of the stepped arete of *Galloway Gallivant*.
2. 25m 5b In the wall to the right of the stepped arete are two cracks. Follow the shorter left-hand one and traverse up leftwards on grass to below the overhanging corner on the left. Try and work out how to leave the ledge and, if you succeed, continue up the rest of the corner with marginally more ease and belay just down and right of a short arete.
3. 30m 5a Move up and then traverse right on grass under the wall to its right-hand end where a wide quartz crack will be revealed. Climb this with interest and belay at the short corner above.
4. 30m 4b Overcome the corner, then pad up slabs to the top.

*Salad Daze* 110m HVS. Stephen Reid, Chris King (alt). 10 Sep 2009.

Some 25m right of the arete of *Niche Market* is a prominent cracked arete. Start below this at a vague groove that breaches the lower wall. Just below this a large

pointed block sticks out of the heather.

1. 23m 4b Climb the groove and traverse left, then go up rock steps and heather to the cracked arete. Belay just left in a hollow.
2. 12m 5a Climb the easy rib on the left for 2m, then bridge right across the hollow and jam up a steep crack. Belay at the foot of the slab above.
3. 25m 4c Climb onto the rib on the right, then follow a left-slanting seam up the slab to a short hanging arete with a wide crack. Climb the crack to a ledge and traverse left to a huge flake.
4. 50m 4a Surmount the flake and follow easy steps and slabs to the top.

*The Hanging Gardens of Galloway* 95m VS. Chris King, Stephen Reid (alt). 10 Sep 2009.

At the right end of the wall with the cracked arete is a fine clean pillar. Gain the base of this, either by scrambling in from the right via a heather ramp, or by climbing pitch 1 of *Salad Daze* and traversing right along a wide ledge.

1. 45m 4c Climb the pillar, mainly on its left. Above is a fine clean slab. Ignore this and climb instead the repulsive looking wall on its right, trending left slightly to a steep mossy crack, which is thankfully equipped with huge holds. Belay on the grass ledge above.
2. 50m 4b Follow a left-slanting ramp and overcome a nose. Easy slabs lead to the top.

### **The Clints of the Spout, The Slab of the Spout:**

*Senda das Cabras* 25m Difficult. Stephen Reid, John Biggar. 12 Jun 2010.

Easy for the grade but enjoyable. Start on the far left, just left of a small low overhang. Climb up to some right-trending steps and follow these to heather. From the top right side of the heater, step right and take the easiest line directly up the clean slabs to the top.

*Muito Linda* 25m VS 4c \*. Linda Biggar, Dave McNicol. 14 Sep 2010.

Follow the central crack of *Pao de Spout* (SMCJ 2009) to the niche. Fingery moves lead up and right to the left end of a ledge, then climb the fine crack directly above to the top. An excellent pitch.

*The Shoe Horn Club* 25m E1 5b (A0) \*. John Biggar, Linda Biggar (1PA). 14 Sep 2009.

Starts 1m right of the crack of *Pao de Spout*. Climb the excellent slab to a small stance in a niche at 3m. Place runners, pray and make hard moves to gain the left end of the big ledge. Climb the left side of the steep slab above then easier ground to the top. Poorly protected where it matters (and where it doesn't). Climbed free by Chris King, Stephen Reid, John Biggar, 12 Jun 2010 and thought to be E1 5a.

*Brasil* 25m Hard Severe 4a \*. Linda Biggar, John Biggar, David MacNicol. 14 Sep 2009.

Start 5m right of *Pao de Spout*, under a (mostly) clean juggy rib between two damp streaks. Climb the rib with an awkward finish onto the big heather ledge. Climb the centre of the slab above to another ledge then the easy but unprotected finishing slabs.

*The Sugar Loafers* 20m Severe 4a \*\*\*. David MacNicol, Linda Biggar, John Biggar. 14 Sep 2009.

The best quality and best protected route here, an excellent climb up the clean rib right of the massive wet streak, with the crux right at the top.

### **The Clints of Dromore, Black Streaker Slab Area:**

About 10m up and left of *Left Rib* is a short, steep juggy rib. There are two easy and well protected routes here, possibly Difficult.

*Far Left Rib* 20m Very Difficult \*. John Biggar, Linda Biggar. 13 Sep 2009. Start at the foot of the juggy rib and climb it up and leftwards on satisfyingly big holds.

*Dark Slab Rib* 20m Very Difficult \*. Linda Biggar, John Biggar. 13 Sep 2009. Much better than it looks. Start as for *Far Left Rib*, climb the slab for 5m, then the steep back wall on the left.

**Note:** There are four (entirely) different lines on the Black Streaker Slab itself – but only three are described in the guidebook.

### **RHINNS OF KELLS & ENVIRONS, Craigneilder Gairy (Craigbroch):**

*Central Gully* 150m II/III \*. Cam Wheeler. 24 Dec 2009.

1. 50m Follow the gully over easy ground to a belay on a flake below a small cave.
2. 50m Struggle through the roof of the cave on its left then continue up easier ground (stay direct for best climbing) to where the gully widens. Poor belay.
3. 50m Swim up snow in till a final steep prow of rock is reached. Either exit left direct up steep rocks and turf (better) or escape up ice and turf to the right.

### **NORTH-EAST SIDE OF CORSERINE, Summit Crag:**

The easy angled crag below the summit contains some springs that are the source of the Polmaddie River. These tend to freeze up quite quickly due to a good height and the fact that the crag almost never sees direct sunlight from January to the end of February.

*Polmaddie* 70m II \*\*. Cam Wheeler. 21 Feb 2010.

To the left of the crag is an excellent, easy angled icefall rising from right to left.

1. 45m Follow the best line up the icy slabs.
2. 25m Good climbing up steep snow and a small cornice lead to the top.

*Kilmore* 50m II \*. Cam Wheeler. 21 Feb 2010.

Links up the best of the broken ice and mixed ground to the right of *Polmaddie* in two pitches. Follow the line of best climbing. Escapable but pleasant climbing with some nice moves.

*The Doonfall* 45m III \*. Cam Wheeler. 21 Feb 2010.

The obvious icefall in the centre of the crag provides some straightforward but interesting climbing. Low in the grade.

1. 25m Follow the best line up the icefall in two steps.

2. 20m Easy ground and steep snow lead to the top.

*Easy Gully* 80m I\*. Cam Wheeler. 21 Feb 2010.

To the right of *The Doonfall* is a wide easy angled gully that makes a pleasant scramble. Start down and left and move over easy ground with patches of ice to finish up steepening snow. Snow needs to be consolidated.

#### **MILLDOWN:**

*Biggar Gully, Left Fork* 100m III. Andrew Fraser. 19 Feb 2010.

This probably holds more ice than the right fork. Pleasant short icefalls lead into a small cave above which is a fine hidden top pitch, which can be technical to start.

#### **DALCAIRNIE FALLS (NS 466 042):**

These are just south-west of Dalmellington and can give a number of 20m lines in a hard freeze. William McHendry, G.Shirkie, K.Shirkie, R.Davidson, G. Davidson, 10 Jan 2010.

#### **THE BORDERS, Swatte Fell, Upper Coombe Craig (p210, Lowland Outcrops):**

*Gamekeepers' Gully* 150m II. Martin & Darcey Gillie. 1 Jan 2010.

Start about 40m left and slightly above *Paok!* at the foot of the leftmost gully line on the face. Easy ground leads to stepped ice for 40m before the gully trends right and becomes more enclosed. Finish up easy ground.

**Note:** The other routes in the corrie appeared worthwhile and it may be worth future editions of the guide being slightly more enthusiastic!

#### **GALLOWAY SEA-CLIFFS, Sandyhills:**

*Trust* 20m E7 6b. Dave & Mary Birkett. 12 Sep 2009.

This route is on the bouldering area described on p228 of the current guide. It climbs the obvious overhanging groove line in the centre of the amphitheatre past multiple old peg runners. It is probably advisable to place a rope at the top, belayed to the gorse bushes to avoid a horrible loose scramble to the top of the crag. E6 but for the state of the rock and the pegs.

#### **STIRLING AREA, North Third, Birds and Bees Buttress:**

*Procrastinator's Crack* 12m E2 5c \*\*. John Nelson, Euan Boyd, Jason King. 19 Apr 2010.

A fine crack climb slightly marred by escapability in the lower section. Start just right of *Beeline* at a smaller left-facing corner. Climb to a small roof, then step right to a mossy ledge (possible to start from here). Leave the ledge with difficulty and follow a fine hand crack with interest to the top.

#### **RATHO QUARRY:**

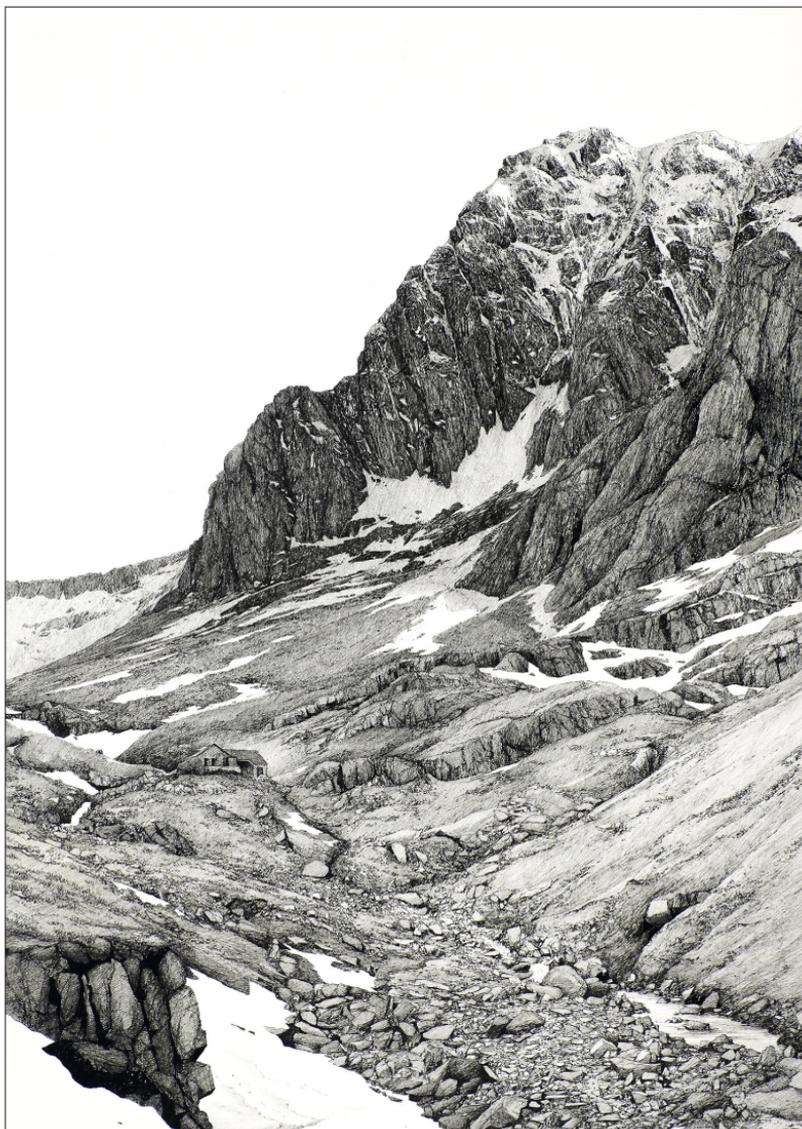
*Paramedics* 15m VS 4b. Liyen Nhuyen, Claire Holland. 5 May 2010.

A right-trending system of wide cracks just left of *Corpuscle*. Start at a crack with a smiley face at the bottom.

**Note:** There have been a number of accidents on *Corpuscle*, as the route has a risk of groundfall.

**BURNMOUTH AREA:**

There are 5 new routes on Breeches Rock and 3 at Hurker's Haven – see the new routes section on <http://www.smc.org.uk>.



Allt a' Mhuilinn, Ben Nevis – Jamie Hageman

## 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 reprinted each year. The prize is run with a deadline of the end of April each year. So, assuming you are reading this in October, you have six months before next year's deadline in which to set 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 entry 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 April for consideration that year. Contributions should preferably be word-processed and submitted via e-mail, although double-spaced typewritten hard copies will also be accepted. (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 for 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 2010

This year has been an unusually difficult one for the judges. No article was felt to stand out from the others and each judge picked a different favourite. For this reason it has been decided not to make an award this year. This is the first time that Rule 3 has been invoked.

First-time contributor and new member, John Temple, made a good first impression with *Failing on Vulcan Wall*. ‘... genuinely engaging... historically interesting and laced with helpfully quirky humour.’

A well-written account of a winter outing in the Fannaichs is described in *Aeolus*. It brings out well the effort and committment required to battle the elements out on our mountains on short winter days.

Though perhaps a bit long and a bit overwritten, *Am Bodach, An Cailleach* was much enjoyed. ‘An unusual slant for a mountaineering article, albeit a familiar subject... the subject and the people lingered in my memory.’

*The Pass* was another well-regarded contribution. ‘We’ve all been here, whether in the high mountains or solo walking in the Scottish Highlands. Tackles quite well how we are torn in many directions in the mountains – the desire for isolation, but the joy of small human signs such as cairns and companionship. Who knows how the next pass will turn out?’

It is encouraging to get contributions from non-members and one in particular stood out. *The Years Between* is an interesting story about the first ascent of a sea stack. Although it’s hard to believe someone could forget making a first ascent the account is entertaining. ‘We were all young and keen once (I think).’

*The Separation of Mountains Revisited* was also enjoyed, though you have to have your wits about you to keep track of the Qs, Ps, As, Rs, Cs and Bs. ‘Surprisingly entertaining for such a “technical” article.’

We thank all those who put ‘pen to paper’ and encourage you all to continue making submissions or to ‘dip your toe in the water’ for the first time.



Suilven – Helen Forde

## SCOTTISH WINTER NOTES 2009–10

The 2010 winter was the coldest winter in Scotland for nearly fifty years. Heavy snowfalls and long spells of good weather mean that 2010 will be long remembered as one of the greatest Scottish winter climbing seasons and frequently compared to the legendary winter of 1986.

By any measure, it was a late start to the winter. November is typically an excellent month for mixed climbing in the Cairngorms, but unseasonably warm temperatures meant that only the most determined found winter routes high on Braeriach and Beinn a' Bhuid. The snow arrived in earnest at the end of November, and the mountains turned increasingly wintry. By the end of the year the entire country had been transformed into a winter wonderland – hard frozen and covered in powder snow.

Not only was it cold, but the snow fell with little wind, coating the landscape in a uniform blanket of white, to the delight of climbers and skiers alike. The sustained cold weather lasted into the middle of March and as a result over 40 new Grade VII and VIIIs were climbed, nearly double the number of previous years, and there were dozens of significant repeats. Highlights include, the development of Coire Scamadail on Skye, the astonishing first winter ascent of *Anubis* (XII) on Ben Nevis by Dave MacLeod, big additions on the Minus Face and Creag and Dubh Loch and a series of long and impressive routes in the Northern Highlands. Many of these climbs will achieve legendary status, and will be lusted after for many years to come, as aspirants wait patiently for the unique conditions experienced in the winter of 2010.

### Icelfalls

The December freeze brought many ice routes into condition for the first time in many years, and with access to the hills difficult due to deep snow and laborious approaches, low-level icelfalls were the logical choice. Around Fort William, *Steall Falls* (III) in Glen Nevis and *Smoking the White Owl* (III) below the Gondola station on Aonach Mor were the most popular routes and saw many dozens of ascents. Other popular icelfalls included *Grey Mare's Tail* (IV,4) in the Southern Uplands, *Oui Oui* (III) on Creag Dubh, the *Eas Eanie* (IV,4) near Tyndrum, *Lumberjack's Fall* (III) opposite Cruachan Power Station, and *Eagle Falls* (III) behind the Invernarnan Hotel in Glen Falloch.

More enterprising parties made longer approaches to *The Hex Factor* (V,5) above Loch Erich, *The Stonker* (IV,5) on Sgurr na Feartaig in Glen Carron and *Ghlastail GTX* (V,5) in the Strathfarrar hills west of Inverness. The Glen Coe hills experienced less snowfall than other parts of Scotland, and the longer mountain ice routes attracted attention. The *Cold Climbs* classic, *No 6 Gully* (IV,4) on Aonach Dubh, came into condition for the first time in several years together with the popular icelfall of *The Screen* (IV,5). One of the most travelled routes was the 600m-long *Blue Riband* (V,5) that leads up the south flank of the Aonach Eagach ridge with succession of steep ice pitches. It received several ascents a day over the two week period either side of New Year, and as a result was climbed more often than ever before in its 30-year history!

Inevitably there were many new icelfalls climbed, such as Colin Wells and Penny Clay's *Grand Isolation* (V,5) on Creag a' Mhadaidh in the Fannaichs, but

perhaps the most striking new ice route was the hanging icefall to the right of *Oui Oui* on Creag Dubh. Easily seen from the road, this 40m hanging ice column was a well-known last great problem. It was last attempted in the great winter of 1986 when James Grossett, one of the strongest Cairngorm activists at the time, attempted to lead it. Unfortunately he was spooked by brittle vertical ice, so he called for a top rope. Just after New Year, Scott Muir, one of Scotland's most accomplished icefall climbers, was successful. 'The route was gushing with water,' Scott explained afterwards. 'The left side was reasonably solid but chandeliered and too verglassed for any rock pro on the wall. The middle section was very dodgy with very poor screws and placements. Overall it was pretty technical but I felt at home – being used to pillars and free hanging things. I got pretty pumped though, from being so being unfit.'

Scott graded the climb VI,6 and called it *Golden Shower*. The next day part of it fell down when exposed to the sun even though the temperature was still  $-7$  degC. 'That's what makes Scotland magical,' Scott enthused. 'One day something's in – the next it's not, and may never be for another 24 years!'

Dave MacLeod had a productive week in Glen Coe coming away with five difficult new ice climbs including a thin dribble of ice running down the classic E2 *Lady Jane* on Aonach Dubh. Difficult mixed moves and thin intermittent ice lead to the more continuous upper smear resulting in a bold VIII,8 and Scotland's highest graded ice climb. Macleod described *Jane's Weep* as a climber's dream – 'ice smears a few millimetres thick and occasional blobs running boldly up a wall, eventually gaining thicker ice to finish on an overhanging pillar.'

## Isle of Skye

The vertical basalt crags of Coire Scamadail on the north side of The Storr are dripping wet most of the year but have the potential to be a natural ice trap. Facing north-east, and easily visible from the main road north of Portree, they have attracted the attention of ice climbers over the years, but most have been thwarted by their relatively low altitude and proximity to the sea. They were finally breached by Mike Lates who climbed an icy gully cutting through their left side in two instalments in the late 1990s. *Scamtastic* (V,5) saw a second ascent by Mick Fowler and Dave Turnbull last season.

Well aware of the potential of the corrie, Lates was determined to return as soon as conditions became good. The cliff started to ice through December, and finally after New Year the ice was thick enough to climb. On 4 January, Lates enlisted Andy Huntington for the first ascent of *Top Scam* (V,6), the central ice line topped by an ice umbrella. Lates returned four days later with Martin Welch to add *Scamadalingdong* (IV,6), the prominent icy recess to the right of *Scamtastic*.

Other teams had been alerted to the potential, and on Saturday 9 January, Robin Clothier and Doug Hawthorn picked *The Fine Line* (VI,6), the plum route on the crag up the vertical ice sheet on the imposing right side of the cliff. Hawthorn and Clothier have a climbing partnership extending back over 25 years, but Hawthorn had not climbed ice for over 15 years. Last winter he dug out his rusty 1980s climbing gear from the garage and introduced his teenage sons to the delights of Scottish winter climbing by taking them up *Glover's Chimney* on The Ben. He had bought new kit for this season, but even so, a steep

new Grade VI is an impressive way to reacquaint yourself with the delights of Scottish ice.

The following day, Alasdair Fulton, James Sutton and Ben Weir joined the fray and added another major line – *The War Path* (VI,6), whilst Clothier and Hawthorn climbed *The Shard* (VI,6), the huge hanging cigar to the right of *Scamadalingdong*. After a brief thaw, Martin Welch and Stewart Anderson climbed *Vertigo Gully* (VI,7), the prominent incised corner on the right of the cliff whilst Hawthorn and Weir added the equally impressive *Silverpine* (VI,7) up the hanging chimney to the right of *The Fine Line*. This concluded a remarkable ten days of development and the establishment of one of Scotland's steepest ice climbing areas. No doubt these superb routes will attract considerable attention next time we have a major freeze.

Nearby on the cliffs of The Storr itself, Martin Welch and Martin Moran scored a notable success with the first ascent of *Storvegen* (VI,8), a spectacular 200m-long ramp line on the big cliff behind the Old Man of Storr. In the Cuillin, Iain Small and I took advantage of the low snowline to make a winter ascent of *The Great Prow* at VII,8, and across on Sron na Ciche, Neil Wilson and Iain Stewart made a winter ascent of *Green Recess Chimneys* (IV,5).

## Northern Highlands

On Christmas Eve, Martin Moran and his son, Alex, made the adventurous first ascent of the big cliff low on the flanks of Meall Gorm below the Bealach na Ba – Creag a' Chumhaing (*crag of the defile*). 'This is one of biggest and steepest cliffs in the area,' Martin explained on his blog. 'It is nearly 800 feet in vertical height, forming the towering prow that frames the postcard view down the pass. No one is known to have climbed it.' After five sustained pitches the pair reached the final tier that was guarded by a series of fierce overhangs. Fortunately a steep crack-line leading to a gargoyle feature provided a way through, but another steep groove-line above meant the pair only topped out at 9 p.m. The route was aptly named *Peace on Earth* and graded VII,7.

A few days later, Moran teamed up with Pete MacPherson and Guy Robertson to make a big addition to the Fhìdhleir. *Bow Direct* (VII,8) takes the full length of the huge arching right-facing corner that dominates the 300m-high north-east face. The wall was first breached in winter in December 2000 by *Magic Bow Wall*, which traverses right out of the corner at half-height to climb a steep series of corners near *Fidelio*. Moran, MacPherson and Robertson started up the lower pitches of *Magic Bow Wall* and continued directly up the groove above. They were assisted by useful ice in the groove and a friendly way through the capping roofs, to create the outstanding line on the face.

Further south in Applecross, Simon Yearsley and Malcolm Bass put a long-standing objective to bed with the first ascent of *Wonderland* (VII,7) in Coire na Poite on Beinn Bhan. The route takes a line for between *Realisation* and *Harlequin Rib* for five pitches before joining *Harlequin Rib* for the final 150m. Further west, Roger Webb and I made the long trek into Knoydart where we climbed *Wild West* (VII,6), the prominent groove-line up the steep front face of Landlubbers Buttress. Coire Dhorrcail is renowned for its long approach from Kinloch Hourn, but a blocked road, icy sea-level track and deep snow on the approach and descent resulted in a memorable adventure and 33-hour round trip.

The big event of the New Year period however, was the first ascent of a new VIII,8 on Foinaven by the indomitable team of Yearsley and Bass. When this pair made the first winter ascent of *Pobble* on Lord Reay's Seat back in March 2006 they had belayed under the final corner of summer E1 *Breakaway*, and vowed to return to climb it in winter. They left their van at 5.30 a.m., and took nearly six hours to reach the base of the crag.

They set off up a difficult series of steep cracks and overhanging grooves to join *Breakaway* and by the time they reached the fifth pitch it was dark. 'Climbing big new routes in winter (especially in January) is an engrossing affair,' Simon explained. 'Malcolm became particularly engrossed in a hideous fankle of ropes, rack, gear and clipper leashes whilst wedged in the confines of *Breakaway's* upper corner. Unable to move up or down Malcolm had plenty of time to reflect on the atmosphere of a night-time shift on a remote cliff in the far far north before a frenzied burst of swearing and thrashing finally freed him to continue the inch by inch struggle up the crack to a superb pedestal stance at its top.'

There was much wild whooping and night-time screaming when the final sixth pitch led to a belay right on the windy and exposed summit of Lord Reay's Seat. After a long descent, the pair finally reached the road at 5.28 a.m. – a huge 24hrs since leaving. Yearsley summed it up succinctly afterwards. 'Inspired by the enormity of the day, we called the route *The Long March*.'

The other big news in the North-West was the first winter ascent of *Sherlock* on Fuar Tholl's Mainrechan Buttress. This steep HVS on the vertical right flank of the buttress had been tried several times over the last decade, but with no success. One team had made three attempts on the route before being stopped by a steep wall high up and deciding that the line was not possible in winter. As blizzards swept the country at the end of February, several teams converged on Mainrechan Buttress with *Sherlock* firmly in their sights. First on the scene were Guy Robertson and Dave Hesleden who reached a point close to easier ground but unfortunately they ran out of time and had to abseil off.

Robertson was back three days later with Iain Small, and forearmed with better knowledge of the line they started up *Sleuth Start* then moved right to the second pitch of *Sherlock*, which they followed to the top to give a superb VIII,8 outing. They were surprised to find footsteps higher up the route, and later they found out they belonged to Andy Turner and Rich Cross who had climbed a VI,7 line that started up *Moriarty* a couple of days before.

In Torridon, Roger Webb, Martin Hind and Andy Wardle visited Liathach's Coire na Caimhe and added *Shining Glory*, a good VII,7 mixed route to the buttress between *Jerbil* and *The Andes Couloir*. Andy Nisbet and Helen Rennard made a good addition to the Pineapple Cliff on Beinn Eighe with the steep *Pina Colada* (VII,7) that takes the well-defined buttress between the left and central chimneys. Across on the Eastern Ramparts of Coire Mhic Fearchair, Pete MacPherson and Iain Small climbed a line based on the summer E1 *Fear of the Dark* called *Fear of the Cold and Dark* (VIII,8) and Martin Moran and Robin Thomas made the first winter ascent of the spectacular *Pale Rider* (VIII,9). Just to the west on Beinn Alligin, Roger Webb and I visited the remote north-west side of the Horns where we climbed *The Waterhorse* (VII,6), the imposing seven-pitch buttress to the right of the classic gully line of *Diamond Fire*.

Further north, other good additions included *The Silver Fox* (VII,8 – Moran and MacPherson) on An Teallach, and *Cul Moon* (VII,7 – Webb and Richardson)

and *By Appointment* (VII,6 – Small and Hewitt) both on Cul Mor. Malcolm Bass and Simon Yearsley also visited the remote Luchd Corrie of Seana Braigh. In 1998 the pair had spotted a line of unclimbed corners on Flowerpot Buttress, but when they returned the following season the central slab was not sufficiently iced. After experiencing good ice conditions on the Ben in March, they decided to have another go, and this time they were successful recording *The Road* (VI,6). ‘It was fantastic to get this line after the long wait,’ Malcolm told me. ‘The climbing was so varied, pulling hard up a steep icy slot, then balancing delicately out across the slab, then romping up turfey corners.’

## The Cairngorms

From Christmas onwards, the high Cairngorms were swamped with snow, which effectively stopped winter climbing activity for a number of weeks. A few brave souls ploughed a trail into Coire an t-Sneachda and some of the easier routes on Aladdin’s Buttress were climbed, but most climbers saw sense and headed for low-level ice.

The Angus Glens on the south-east side of the massif were more sheltered from the northerly winds however, and provided good climbing. The classic *Look C Gully* (IV,4) and *B Gully Chimney* (III,4) in Corrie Fee saw numerous ascents, and in Winter Corrie, Adam Henly, Robbie Miller and Henning Wackerhage made the first ascent of *Moonlight Jazz* (VI,7). This follows the prominent recess between *Wiggle* and *Sun Rock Blues* with a stunning second pitch taking an icefall through the steep section.

Some good exploratory action took place in Glen Esk, which due to its low altitude is rarely frequented by winter climbers. Duncan Tunstall and Andy Nisbet were quick off the mark with the first ascent of the prominent 250m-high *Maskeldie Buttress* (III,4), which dominates the skyline as you walk up the glen along Loch Lee. Dave Adam continued his exploration of the gullies in the glen with the fine *Earn Gully* (III), and I joined up with Tunstall and Wackerhage to make the first ascent of *Once in a Blue Moon*, the prominent steep buttress to the right of *Unich Gully*. Few people would believe that a new eight pitch VII,7 could lie within 30 miles of the city limits of Aberdeen, but the 2010 winter opened up the most unlikely of possibilities.

Although heavy snow conditions limited new route activity in the high Cairngorms, it did result in a couple of notable ascents on Lochnagar. *Parallel Gully B* was climbed, probably for the first time since the great rockfall of 2000, which removed the lower chimney and part of the Tough-Brown Face. The smooth lower groove filled with ice and provided a long V,4 pitch, albeit a far more serious proposition than the original chimney. High up on The Stack, *Redemption* (VIII,7) was repeated by Guy Robertson and Pete MacPherson. Covered in deep hoar, they found it a frightening experience and only found four runners on the entire route.

Finally at the end of March, Guy Robertson and Greg Boswell made the second ascent of *Pic’n Mix* in the Northern Corries. This very steep IX,9 on the pronounced pillar between No.3 and No. 4 Buttresses in Coire an Lochain was first climbed by Ian Parnell and Tim Emmett in April 2006 and was compared in difficulty to *Happy Tyroleans*. Three weeks later Robertson and Boswell returned to add the equally challenging line of *The Snow Pimp* (VIII,9), the crack in the arete right of *Hooker’s Corner*.

## Creag an Dubh Loch

Creag an Dubh Loch has some of the finest winter routes in Scotland, but it does not often come into winter condition. Its relatively low altitude means that it rarely collects enough snow to coat its smooth granite slabs with sufficient ice. This year was different, and by early February, teams who had climbed some of the easier classics such as *Hanging Garden Route* (V,4) and *Theseus Grooves* (III), realised the cliff was about to come into prime winter condition. On Saturday 13 February there was a burst of activity. Iain Small and Doug Hawthorn picked the plum with the first winter ascent of *The Sword of Damocles* on the awe-inspiring Broad Terrace Wall. This E2 chimney-line was an obvious and very challenging winter objective that had been attempted by other strong teams in recent years. Small and Hawthorn took an almost casual approach, not starting the climb until 9 a.m. and finishing just after dusk to record a fierce five-pitch VIII,9.

Further right near Central Buttress, Dave Hesleden and I made a winter ascent of *Minotaur*, which provided a well-protected VII,7 up a series of grooves and bulges. Throughout our ascent we were treated to a grandstand view of Ross Hewitt and Neil Morrison attempting the third ascent of *Mousetrap* (VII,8) on the awe-inspiring Central Gully Wall. Unfortunately they failed on the fifth pitch, but their attempt spurred a flurry of activity over the next few days.

The 200m-high front face of Central Gully Wall is one of the great Scottish cliffs, but its maze of steep slabs and overlaps rarely build up with snow, and the face catches the morning sun, which means it quickly strips. Not surprisingly the face is rarely in winter condition, and until this season, had only been climbed in winter three times. The first was in January 1980 when the strong Edinburgh team of Hamilton, Taylor and Spence made a winter ascent of the VS *Mousetrap* at VII,8. Their ascent benefited from unusually icy conditions, but even so it was an astonishing feat for the era.

The route was repeated in January 1986 by Dougie Dinwoodie and Jeff Hall in similarly icy conditions, but the ascent of the day was the first ascent of *The Rattrap* by Andy Nisbet and Sandy Allan. This pair started up the 5c cracks of Dubh Loch Monster before veering right to gain a line of ice near the upper section of *Gulliver*. Their 19-hour ascent, climbing the upper pitches by moonlight has entered Scottish winter climbing legend as one of the greatest winter climbs of the 1980s, and was one of the first Scottish Grade VIIIs to be recorded.

*The Rattrap* saw a number of repeat attempts by Pete Benson, but they all failed due to poor conditions at mid-height on the face. After accompanying Benson on one of these attempts, Guy Robertson resolved to climb a direct line up the face based on the line of *King Rat*. This summer E1 classic follows VS cracks for the main part, except for a wide 5c roof at the start of the second pitch. Above the roof, Robertson had noted that it was possible to climb a more direct line up the crack system, avoiding some of the devious wandering left and right taken by the summer line.

Robertson made two attempts on the line earlier in the season with Pete MacPherson reaching a highpoint five pitches up below an overlap level with the second crux section on *King Rat*. There was a brief thaw and re-freeze after Hewitt and Morrison's *Mousetrap* attempt, and Robertson and MacPherson were back on 18 February. This time the grooves were lined with helpful snow-ice and

after a 6 a.m. start the pair were on top of the crag before dark. 'The route was stunning,' Robertson told me. 'Not the slow powdery verglas grind of last time but really elegant, thin and icy climbing, interspersed with very strenuous bulges (and, of course, the roof). For me it was one of the best, if not the best of all the long hard routes I've done. You can imagine the two of us sitting watching the sunset, after all that effort, to be rewarded with conditions and such an immaculate day. We were tickled pink.'

The eight-pitch long *Super Rat* (IX,9) is one of the finest Scottish winter additions in recent years taking a strong natural line and needing a precise combination of snow, freeze and thaw to make it possible. Ross Hewitt was also rewarded that day with an ascent of *Mousetrap* with Tania Noakes. Despite better conditions than his previous attempt, Hewitt found the fifth pitch very thin and run out and thought the route merited VIII,7 on the day.

Three days later, Iain Small and I added *Danger Mouse*, which starts up *Mousetrap*, then follows *Kraken* and *Waterkelpie Wall* to join the upper pitches of *Super Rat*. At VII,7 it is the easiest line on the wall and deserves to be repeated, but like the other three routes on the face it will only be possible when the 'easier' upper pitches have consolidated snow or ice. The front face of Central Gully Wall has now been climbed six times (on four separate days) in the last thirty years and remains one of the most elusive winter objectives in Scotland.

### **Ben Nevis and the Central Highlands**

The big media story on Ben Nevis was the Smith-Marshall Project. Dave MacLeod and Andy Turner recreated the famous week in February 1960 when Jimmy Marshall and Robin Smith climbed six new routes on the mountain including the iconic *Orion Direct*, and made the second ascent of *Point Five Gully*. Using modern gear, MacLeod and Turner climbed the routes over a five-day period and the accompanying film was shown at the Fort William Film Festival at the end of the week. This highly imaginative and well-executed project captivated its modern audience as much as Smith and Marshall's ascents inspired a generation of winter climbers 50 years ago.

In a remarkable parallel to Smith and Marshall, Iain Small created his own piece of Nevis history by quietly adding six new routes and making a major repeat. He started his campaign in mid January with the first winter ascent of *1934 Route* (V,6) on the lower tier of South Trident Buttress with Doug Hawthorn. Helpful névé patches eased progress and the pair had plenty of time to continue up the summer line of *The Clanger* on the tier above. The winter version escapes at half-height via an infamous through-route to gain the crest of the buttress on the right, and has become a popular IV,5. Instead, Small and Hawthorn continued up the chimney-groove of the summer line resulting in an excellent and sustained VI,6.

The following day, Iain and I teamed up to make an attempt on the huge vertical square-cut corner on the right flank of Raeburn's Buttress. Climbers have stared at this fantastic feature for decades and at over 90m high it is equivalent to a double-sized *Cenotaph Corner*. The route is difficult to access, but the best approach is to climb the lower icefall of *Compression Crack*. We approached via *Compression Crack* and after a steep lower pitch, Iain took over the lead and pulled out the stops with a breathtaking lead of the intimidating

upper corner, which led around a double series of overlaps to the easier technical 7 continuation groove. Three easier pitches then led to the summit of Carn Dearg. Iain commented afterwards that this was probably the most intimidating lead he had ever made and *The Great Corner* weighed in at a worthy VIII,8.

Four days later, Small was back on the Ben with Ian Parnell. A brief thaw limited options, but high up in Observatory Gully they found *Faith Healer* (VIII,7) a challenging line of icy grooves to the right of *Rolling Stones*. On his way up Observatory Gully that day, Small noticed that *Point Blank* (VII,7), the exposed rib right of *Point Five Gully*, was nearly in condition. This Mal Duff masterpiece was first climbed in 1988, but despite a number of determined attempts, it had not been repeated. Two days later Small climbed the line with Owen Samuels, confirming both the grade and quality of the line. Now the psychological barrier of the route has been broken, this great thin face route should see more ascents.

The next route on Small's agenda was a direct line up the very steep headwall on The Little Brenva Face. This part of the mountain is comprised of very compact rock, but there is a line of shallow grooves running up the right side of the face left of the depression climbed by *Route Major*. Small and I climbed *Slalom* to reach the headwall and then followed a zigzag line to gain the groove-line. Conditions were tough, with iced over cracks and thin ice, resulting in *White Fright* (VII,6), a harder companion to *Wall of the Winds* that takes an easier line up the left side of the headwall.

Small's final addition to his magnificent run of routes was *The Past is Close Behind* (VIII,8) which takes the very steep wall between *Kellett's North Wall Route* and *The Shroud*. Partnered by Blair Fyffe, the six-pitch route proved to be a demanding expedition up steep walls and cracks with the last two pitches climbed in the dark. The route was named after hearing Jimmy Marshall talk about his famous routes 50 years ago at the Fort William Film Festival a few days before.

Later in February, Dave MacLeod stunned the winter climbing world with the first winter ascent of *Anubis* (XII), a challenging summer E8 6c, high up in Coire na Ciste. MacLeod made the first summer ascent of *Anubis*, which follows an intermittent crack-line running up to a huge roofed prow on the front face of The Comb in July 2005. He had dreamed of climbing it in winter ever since, and after completing his long-term project to free the nearby aided winter route *Don't Die of Ignorance* (XI,11) in March 2008, he duly turned his attention to *Anubis*. Unlike *Don't Die of Ignorance*, which took six attempts, Dave succeeded on *Anubis* on his third visit. After climbing the long crux section, which overhangs 12m over its 35m length, he tied his 70 metre ropes together and continued up icy grooves with the rope just clipped to the belay as a runner until he was on Grade IV ground. He then untied and soloed to the top.

*Anubis* opens a door to a new future for the world of winter climbing. MacLeod took M-climbing tools and techniques and combined them with Scottish ethics to produce a climb that is quite unique across the world. *Anubis* represents a quantum leap in the development of our sport and M-climbing will never be the same again. MacLeod can quite justifiably claim to have climbed the most difficult traditional mixed route in the world

In early March, The Minus Face came into its best condition for over 20 years, and the much-prized Minus gullies saw many ascents together with two new

winter routes on the legendary Minus One Buttress. The original line on this superb feature (*Minus One Buttress* – VII,7), was first climbed by Arthur Paul and Norrie Muir in April 1977 and has only been repeated a couple of times. According to climbing folklore the pair were climbing on the Ben on a horrible sleety day, but that night it froze, so they headed back up next morning to find the mountain coated in a climb-anywhere coating of polystyrene ice. Their route was repeated a day or two later by Jerry Smith and Graham Little, and then in 1988 by George Armstrong and Alan Shand, but since then, all other attempts on the route have failed.

Iain Small and I followed the first three pitches of *Minus One Direct* and then continued up the summer line of *North-Eastern Grooves* to below the huge overhanging corner slicing through the upper part of the buttress taken by the summer E1 *Subtraction*. Small made an outstanding lead of this long and demanding crux pitch, and we eventually arrived at the top of *Integration* (VIII,8) on the crest of North-East Buttress at 8 p.m. with eight sustained pitches and 13 hours of climbing behind us.

Three days later, Guy Robertson, Nick Bullock and Pete Benson followed our footsteps up the lower part of Minus One Buttress before breaking out right to follow a continuous crack-line leading up the buttress. This stunning line VIII,8 approximates to the summer *Minus One Direct* with the *Serendipity Variation* (E1). ‘The route was never particularly hard,’ Guy told me, ‘but this is possibly the finest winter climb I’ve ever done. The climbing and the line were simply superb.’ Unfortunately these routes were only in condition for a few days before a slow thaw set in. Roger Webb and I just had time to add *Differentiation* (VI,6), the steep raised pillar between *Wagroochimsla* and *Platforms Rib*, before the ice peeled off and crashed into the lower reaches of Observatory Gully.

On Creag Meagaidh, Pete MacPherson and Martin Moran scored a notable coup with the first ascent of *Last Day in Paradise* (VII,8), the buttress between *Ritchie’s* and *Smith’s gullies*. This prominent line jumps out of the pages of *Cold Climbs* as a clear objective, but it needs icy conditions for the steep sections to be climbable. Moran and MacPherson found a combination of bold slab climbing and thin technical ice to give a memorable outing. Also of note on Meagaidh was the first ascent of *Postal Strike* (VII,6) by Chad Harrison and Steve Fortune. This good addition takes the obvious icefall to the right of *Postman Pat* to a roof before continuing up the left-facing corner system above.

## **Glen Coe and the Southern Highlands**

The first winter ascent of *Line Up* on the Buachaille was a notable early season coup by Andy Nelson, Andy Sharpe and Kenny Grant. This summer HVS on the left side of Rannoch Wall had been eyed up by several activists over the years, but this wall is renowned for its spaced protection and flat holds. Nelson, made a very smooth lead of the crux corner, and overall the route provided a sustained VII,8 with difficulties on all three pitches. On No. 2 Gully Buttress, on the West Face of Aonach Dubh, John Lyall and Andy Nisbet took advantage of the cold snowy conditions before Christmas with the first winter ascent of *Steptoe* (VI,7) and a new route *The God Daughter* (VI,7), which takes the big groove between *Rose Innominate* and *Oz*.

Andy Nisbet and Duncan Tunstall spent several days exploring the remote

Coire Dhomhnaill on the north side of Stob Gabhar. The climbing potential was first discovered by D.Stewart and N.Wightwick in April 2000 when they climbed *The Great Divide* (III), the deeply incised gully cutting through the central buttress of the cliff. Left of *The Great Divide* is a concave face with two fault lines – a groove line direct up its centre and one on the left which forms thicker ice. The central groove-line gave Nisbet and Tunstall the excellent 300m-long *Donald's Direct* (IV,4) and they finished the day with *Mystery Cleft* (IV,5), the deep gully in the high bay up and left. Returning four days later with Chris Pasteur they added *Clan Donald* (IV,4), the companion left-hand fault to *Donald's Direct*, and *Stingle* (IV,5), the icefall and ramp forming a 'V' with *Mystery Cleft*.

Andy Turner made a significant contribution to the lower tier of Beinn Udlaidh with the first ascent of *Under the Sun* (VII,7). This gently overhanging line is based on a series of icicles that lead to an ice curtain leading through an overhang. Prior to this ascent Udlaidh's lower tier had been almost completely ignored. The one exception was the bolted route *Crossroads* that was established in 2005, but the climb only had a limited life as the bolts were taken out a few months later. Turner's ascent vindicates this action, as it is now clear that this very steep wall is capable of providing traditional winter routes for the talented and bold.

## Repeats

Significant second ascents included *Against All Odds* (VII,7) in Glen Coe (Robertson-Fyffe), *Hung, Drawn and Quartered* (VIII,8) on Am Basteir on Skye (MacPherson-Parnell) and *The Godfather* (VIII,8) on Beinn Bhan (Small-Stone). In the far north, Pete MacPherson and Iain Small made the second winter ascent of *Marathon Corner* (VIII,8) on Ben Loyal. This vegetated E1 climb was first climbed in winter by Guy Robertson and Pete Benson in 2004 and has the distinction of being the most northerly winter climb in the country.

On Ben Nevis, Ian Parnell and Greg Boswell made the second ascent of *Ship of Fools* (VIII,7), which takes a very thin line of ice grooves to the right of *Riders on the Storm* on Indicator Wall. Parnell was unable to climb to the very thin crux ice pitch that Iain Small led on the first ascent in April 2007, but found a mixed variation to the right. On the Orion Face, Tim Neill and Owain Jones made a rare repeat of the serious *Journey into Space* (VII,5) and Mark Musgrove and Andy Green repeated *Spacewalk* (VII,6).

The most important repeats however, were two ascents of *The Tempest* in Stob Coire nan Lochan in Glen Coe by Andy Turner and Dave MacLeod. *The Tempest*, which takes the diamond-shaped wall on Summit Buttress to the left of Broad Gully, was first climbed by Neil Gresham in January 2001 after top rope practice and pre-placing of the gear. The route caused a furore at the time, but it was a genuine attempt to raise Scottish winter standards in line with the rest of the world. The route was graded M9, and together with *Logical Progression* in the Southern Highlands, which was climbed in similar style, it set a new technical level for Scottish winter climbing.

*The Tempest* was repeated shortly after Gresham's ascent by Innes Deans, but since then it has not been climbed. Scottish technical standards have risen in the intervening nine years, often by climbers who have applied skills learned on M-climbing venues elsewhere in the world. As a result the Scottish ground up

ethic has emerged even stronger than ever and it was time for a re-appraisal of *The Tempest*.

Enter Andy Turner who realised that to make a ground up ascent placing protection as he climbed, he would have to remove the original in-place nuts and pegs that were now in poor condition. Turner spent a couple of days climbing *Scabbard Chimney* and *Spectre*, so he could abseil down the route to remove the gear. He then succeeded on leading the route on his second visit. 'The route is not steep or very strenuous,' he stated on his blog, 'but has lots of dead ends and tenuous holds.' His first attempt failed at a bold section at three-quarters height, but on his return he managed to find a couple of wire placements to protect the committing icy top section. Turner felt that in its traditional state the route was worth hard IX,9, possibly even X,9 for the difficult to find gear and run out climbing.

A few days later, Dave MacLeod set off up the route, eager to make an on-sight ascent. He also stalled at a point six metres below the top, having run out of the correct sized protection. 'I didn't fancy a major peel from the final moves without gear but was desperate not to lose the on-sight either,' Dave explained on his blog. 'Solution? Downclimb the whole thing taking the gear back out and come back after a rest.' A day later MacLeod was back on a typically foul Scottish day, and he battled up the route fighting through spindrift avalanches to record the first on-sight ascent. Both ascents were highly significant. Turner demonstrated that it was possible to climb the wall without working the moves and MacLeod climbed the route in perfect style. These two ascents alone are a clear demonstration of how far Scottish winter standards have progressed over the past decade – who can guess what the next ten years will bring?

Simon Richardson

### THREE FOOTNOTES ABOUT BEN NEVIS

Some may have noticed confusion in guidebooks about the gender of the intrepid leader of the *Slav Route*. This was Ms Mira Marko Debelak, the foremost Slovenian climber of her day, known for the very bold *Spik Direct* in the Julians, and probably the strongest woman climber of her day too. Her companion Edo Derzaj was also her husband.

The couple were invited to Britain by Fanny S. Copeland, an English writer and teacher who had worked in Ljubljana for a long period, and had become an expert on the country and its people. Copeland and Debelak published a guide to the Slovenian Alps together in 1936. The visit, and the Ben Nevis route, were reported in *The Times* for 18 October 1934. The route should of course be called the *Slovene Route*, not the *Slav Route*, since there are Slavs from the Mediterranean to the Baltic Sea.



James D. Forbes visited Fort William in May 1848, where he explored Ben Nevis, before wandering through Affric to Skye to visit his friend Louis Albert Necker de Saussure in Portree. His letter of 28 May to his wife Alicia describes one of his outings, and contained an impressive sketch of the Ben.<sup>1</sup>



The weather was fine, but mist as usual on the top of the Ben, so I did not attempt, but I circumnavigated him at a very high level, over some of the most frightfully rough ground it is possible to see. My object was to examine, as far as possible, the contact of the granite and black porphyry. There is a very wild and precipitous glen at the back of Ben Nevis, with a sort of pass, at the head of which we can get into Glen Nevis. I shall make you a little drawing; it will please you better than description... Our pass was at A, the summit of the Ben being at B.

The rest of Forbes' account may be found on p. 30 of Crocket & Richardson's *Ben Nevis*.

On p. 53 of *Ben Nevis*, there is a photograph of Norman Collie and other Alpine Club members taken 'almost certainly in Fort William during the SMC Easter Meet of 1896'. Too late for the book, I discovered the following in an obituary of Joseph Collier by Godfrey Solly (*SMCJ*, 9, 47): 'Collier made several later climbing expeditions to Scotland, but the only other time he came into contact with the Club was in Easter 1896, when he was one of the Alpine Club party at the Chevalier Hotel, the official Meet being at the Alexandra.'

Subsequent research in Fort William, assisted by Ian Abernethy, discovered the remains of the facade of the Chevalier Hotel, overlooking the site of the demolished Railway Station, and an exact match was found with the stonework shown in the Collie group photo. So, the 'almost certainly' may be safely removed from the photograph caption.

However, it is also necessary to add the information that the man seated between Solly and Slingsby is Harold B. Dixon, first President of the Rucksack Club, and pictured on p. 12 of that Club's excellent centenary publication *This Mountain Life: the First Hundred Years of the Rucksack Club*, edited by John Beatty (Northern Light, 2003).

Robin N Campbell

1. Reproduced courtesy of the University of St Andrews Library, msdep7 – Incoming letters 1848, no. 33.

## BARRA – EARLY DAYS

COLIN MOODY NOTES: I used to go bouldering up a hill to the west of Ben More after work, it was a fair walk but the rock is as rough as gabbro, I would disturb red deer and listen to golden plovers. The view is stunning over the Treshnish Islands, Coll and Tiree and on a good evening I could see the islands south of Barra. I knew there was climbing on these islands but from Mull I could get onto a route in Spain faster and cheaper. In Spain if it rained I could go to the café or pub but on Pabbay or Mingulay I was committed.

In 2002 Billy Hood and friends canoed to Barra Head. He met Wilson Moir on one of the islands. The midges were so bad that Wilson refused to come out of his tent to speak to Billy: Spain sounded even better. Billy mentioned the cliffs on Vatersay and I sometimes thought of checking them out.

In November 2008 I had four days holiday left; I would probably work Hogmanay and the first as usual and take Christmas day and Boxing day off, so I had two days left to play with. In winter there was a ferry from Oban to Barra on Fridays and one back on Mondays. Cynthia Grindley and I had been contributing records to the BTO Bird Atlas, so I suggested a trip out there to see the bird life, and Billy's cliffs.

The forecast was bad but the man on the phone at Calmac said to turn up in the morning as the ferry might sail: we didn't really consider the consequences. During the crossing the spray from the bow went right over the ship, there were several Tannoy apologies for the 'pitching and rolling' and a few people were sick.

On Sunday we walked and hitched round the island. There was a surprising lack of bird life, a couple of redshank and a few other birds.

The day before we flushed a Jack Snipe into the gale at Billy's cliff on Vatersay. The hitch hiking was good so we still had time to look at some of the Barra cliffs.

We found a stunning crack line, a photo of it would not have been out of place in Hard Rock. I said to Cynthia that it was a route for Pete Whillance as it looked a tiny bit intimidating for me to lead (four months earlier Pete had led Cynthia up an E5 on Canna) but that crack just HAD to be climbed.

The atmosphere around the coast was fantastic with huge breakers smashing into the cliffs. The combination of stormy conditions, wet rock and wellies made exploring exciting, I managed to peer over one short cliff and the rock looked perfect.

Chris who owns the hostel we were staying at runs canoeing courses, so I thought there was a fair chance he was also a climber. I asked him about the cliffs, he dismissed Vatersay but said he couldn't understand all the climbers going to Sandray when the cliffs on Barra were so good. I then asked about nests but he didn't think they would be a problem. Things were getting better and better.

When I got home I phoned Pete. We agreed that the island might have been bypassed by many climbers eager to visit the islands to the south. We arranged a trip for June.

Cynthia kept reminding me of the cheap flight offers to Spain but I didn't bite. My elbow had taken a lot of abuse at work and I had been given a steroid injection at the end of February. I didn't think climbing fairly steep limestone was the best thing for recovery.

Gneiss would be easier angled – well the stuff I wanted to do: so we packed the car with camping gear and ropes and took advantage of the ‘road equivalent tariff’.

On our first day we developed the best sea cliff we could find on Vatersay. We put up four new routes then walked out and stumbled across a climber’s cairn marking our ‘new’ crag.

I wrote up all the routes we climbed on Barra and Vatersay with grades and lengths but didn’t name most of them as we assumed everything had been climbed before. Regardless of who had climbed what, it was just magic being out at these wild cliffs, picking out lines and climbing them.

I asked Rab Anderson. He thought climbs had been done on the north west of the island. When Chris had been on the Barra Marathon (Barrathon) Rab had gone hill walking, not coastal cliff searching.

Mick Tighe said he had climbed on Barra but didn’t remember where, typical Mick. Yan Taylor thought Kev Howett had climbed on Barra so he asked him in an e-mail. There was no reply so maybe the e-mail never arrived at the intended destination.

Pete seemed to be asking all his mates along so I got worried it would be me and a bunch of English folk! I phoned Yan but he was already going to Pabbay and Mingulay the same week. I asked him about Mark Garthwaite but Yan said he had asked him to join them and he couldn’t make it.

Pete brought along Johnathon Lagoe and Andy Hyslop, so we took them to Breaker Wall. We had found Breaker Wall during a wet walk in May. There are reefs out in the sea so you can sit on the cliff top and watch the waves form and disappear. The breakers can even be seen on Google Earth. When I mentioned it to Billy he said it was misty when they went past, they could hear the breakers so kept well out to sea.

Pete set to work on the impressive corner at the right end then Andy seconded it removing the runners. It had a hard move about 15 feet up then it ran into overhanging rock towards the top; it was about E3. Cynthia then climbed the route. I pointed out to her later that if she had fallen off the lower crux she would have swung out and probably decked out. She said she hadn’t thought of that. A few days later Steve Crowe and Karin Magog climbed the arête to the right of the corner to give *Impact Zone*, (E6). Steve referred to Pete’s route as the *Classic Corner* so that name stuck.

The MV Lord of the Isles back to Oban was packed with climbers so any secrecy was blown. Everyone knew where we had been climbing. We were told that Steve and Karin were on Barra while we were sailing.

There was a group from the LSCC that included Rhona Weir, other Scottish based climbers including SMC members Iain Small and Roger Everett. Honorary member of FRCC Dave Birkett, and a strong team from Sheffield. The Sheffield team had been out in the wilds with their party tent.

I offered to write up Barra for the next SMC guide and was then told that Kev Howett was doing that. When I got Kev’s text I found that he and friends had climbed 18 routes around the stacks west of Castlebay (four to six years before us), we had climbed 66 routes (65 were new as one of them was in the original 18).

I would have to find names for routes and crags that Kev had not been to and write up approaches. This seemed mad to me so I think I took over writing up

Barra from him; well I'm sure he is a busy man. A trip to the Mitchell Library in Glasgow to see the six inch to the mile maps didn't reveal any names of coastal features, but I did notice that there was a Temperance Hotel in Castlebay on the 1904 map.

With so much rock in the Outer Hebrides, I don't suppose Barra will ever get busy with climbers, even with the guide book I hope the cliffs will always have that exploratory feel.

There are photos of Barra climbs at [www.colinmoody.com](http://www.colinmoody.com)

## 100 YEARS AGO: THE CLUB IN 1910

The 21st Annual Meeting and Dinner took place on Friday 3 December 1909 in the St Enoch Hotel, Glasgow, with Gilbert Thomson presiding. Treasurer Nelson announced a balance of £241 1s. 3d, which together with the Life Membership Fund brought the Club's total funds to £557 18s, 4d., of which most was invested in 4% South Australian Government Stock. Secretary Clark announced 4 new members, but 4 had resigned, so the total remained at 182. Librarian Goggs reported that 60 new volumes and over 100 new slides had been added to the collections. Editor Douglas was thanked for 'his invaluable services... during the last seventeen years', and thankfully gave way to Frank Goggs. A proposal to extend the Easter Meets to cover ten days was approved. At the Reception preceding the meeting, Secretary Clark again showed several slides demonstrating colour photography, employing a new aluminium screen. There followed the Coming-of-Age Dinner, celebrated by 13 toasts, speeches and replies. Mercifully, if the Journal account of these is veracious, most were very short: Ramsay's was longer, but full of wit, and is reproduced in full in the Journal.

The main New Year Meet was held at the Royal Hotel, Tyndrum, with overflow Meets at Inveroran and Aviemore. Total attendance was 48 members and 13 guests. Rain fell continuously with blizzards above, and nothing was achieved, ushering in a year of largely poor weather at home and abroad. Meanwhile, James Parker and Howard Drummond enjoyed much better weather in Glen Clova, where they made ascents of Craig Rennet and Backdoor Gully in the Winter Corrie of Driesh – the first routes recorded in that district.

On 27 February a party consisting of Miss Gray, R.P. Hope, Willie Ling, Lucy Smith, Harold and Ruth Raeburn were on the face of Stuc a' Chroin. Ling and Ruth Raeburn were on the second rope, and the remainder on the first. Raeburn led the way up a difficult chimney. When the others came to follow, Miss Gray fell and pulled the other two off. The combined load was too much for Raeburn, who was plucked from his stance and hurled down the pitch. All four then shot down the snow-slope below. 'The three were apparently not hurt,' wrote Ling, 'but Raeburn was lying helpless, head down. When I got to them he was barely conscious and groaning but when I got him raised he came to. His ribs were broken and he was in a bad state.' [Ling's Diary, Book 8, pp.54-5, Alpine Club Archives] 'Truly a sad ending to a joyous day,' Ling remarked. In fact, the principal damage to Raeburn was to his gut, badly wrenched by the sudden shock of 400-odd lbs. of falling bodies, and he was laid up for six weeks as a

result [Geoffrey W. Young Letterbook No. 1223, 13 May 1910, Alpine Club Archives].

The Easter Meet was another of Secretary Clark's logistic masterpieces, co-ordinating the Kinlochewe and Dundonnell Hotels in such a manner as to encourage traverses between the two, with intermediate accommodation at Larachantivore. The Meet was also blessed by very fine weather, allowing W. Lamond Howie to take several outstanding photographs, notably the fold-out panorama of An Teallach and Beinn Eighe from Loch Coulin, both published in the Journal. Twenty-nine beds were filled at Kinlochewe, and 14 at Dundonnell. There was also a boat to Letterewe, and Ling used this to conduct a large party to deal with unfinished business on Martha's Peak of Beinn Airidh Charr, carried over from his visit with Glover a year ago (*Original Route*). While Ling, Glover, Harry Walker and Corry tackled Martha's Peak by a central line, Charles Walker, Charles Inglis Clark and Worsdell climbed its right flank. Ling's route is given as *Face Route* in the latest guidebook, and the other is described as *Walker's Route* (though in the first ascent list the former is given as *Original Route* and the latter is missing altogether). Elsewhere on the Meet, while Alex P. White with G.K. Edwards climbed his eponymous Gully on Sail Mhòr, Morrison and Sang climbed Hayfork Gully on An Teallach, and then the South Peak of Beinn Dearg Mhòr. This latter route is described in current guidebooks as 'an entertaining scramble' but Morrison's description of it suggests something quite different. These various efforts were all reported in the Journal by Glover, White, Sang and Morrison respectively (*SMCJ*, 11, p. 98–102, 161–3, 164–72 and 173–80). As well as the main Meet in the North, there were subsidiary Meets at Kingshouse (12 attending) and Inveroran (6). From Kingshouse MacRobert and Arnold Brown failed at the last difficulty on the Crowberry Shelf Route, just as Murray's party were to do 27 years later (see my note about this bold and skilful attempt in *SMCJ*, 38, 443).

At Whitsun, Ling and Glover continued their annual exploration of the North from a base at Altnaharrie. They explored the northern ends of Beinn Laoghal and Ben Hope on successive days, finding not very satisfactory routes on each. They then transferred to Rhiconich, and traversed Foinaven from the East, beginning with a long rock-climb to Creag Dionard from the loch-side. Where this route went, and how it relates to more recent routes is a mystery. It is also astonishing that 40 years were to pass before anyone else thought to investigate Foinaven, despite Glover's excellent beguiling photograph of the Creag Dionard buttresses.

Twenty-odd members visited the Alps in the summer, but the weather prevented most from achieving their goals. Ling and Raeburn, however, the latter still recovering from his February fall, had a very successful season, finding good weather in the Bernina area, where they made a first ascent of the Disgrazia's North Face, before traversing the Scerscen in very difficult icy conditions, and finishing off their holiday with a traverse of Piz Bernina. Before that, they had made various ascents in the Arolla area, crossed to Zermatt with Ruth Raeburn and Miss N. Yovitchitch, and then traversed both peaks of the Unter-Gabelhorn with the ladies, getting back to Zermatt in time for dinner. In the Oberland, Solly and Collins climbed the Schienhorn and Bietschhorn and other peaks with Archer Thomson. Several members enjoyed better weather in Norway, where the Store Skagastølstind was climbed by several parties.

The final climb of note in what had been a very poor year was the September ascent of Crowberry Gully, the first in summer conditions (see Raeburn's article *SMCJ*, 11, 255–62). The party consisted of Francis Greig, Raeburn, Douglas Menzies and Stuart Cumming. Greig led throughout, apart from the Thincrack Chimney, where Raeburn took over. At the junction, Raeburn attacked the Left Fork with Greig. They climbed two pitches but were beaten by the last gruesome chockstone. The normal route completed, Raeburn and Greig descended to Crowberry Tower to investigate the capstone in the Left Fork from above, but concluded that 'it was a place better left alone'.

The three Journal numbers for the year contained the many fine articles mentioned above, and also a first description of the Strathfarrar Hills by Henry Alexander, and a long and interesting survey of the diverse sorts of loch scenery by Colin Phillip.

Robin N. Campbell

## **SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING TRUST – 2009**

Scottish Charity SCO09117

The Trustees met on 24 April and 2 October 2009.

During the course of these meetings support was given to Glasgow Academy – East Greenland 2009, Alan Clark – BSES Greenland 2009, Sonja Klein – Toxicity in plants in Nepal, Nevis Partnership – Ben Nevis footpath, Nevis Partnership – Allt a' Mhuilinn footpath, Scottish Mountain Heritage Collection (Mick Tighe), Mill Cottage Trust – Mill Cottage Works, Dundee Mountain Film Festival, D McKee – Eco-Loo at Inverlochlarig, Balquhidder, John Muir Trust – Nevis Area (Conservation Officer), R Van Hove – BSES Greenland 2009, Heather Morning – MSc (Managing Sustainable Mountain Development), Who Cares? – Trek in Nepal, Jonathon Conville Mountaineering Trust – Scottish Winter Course 2009/10, Mountain Rescue Committee for Scotland – Symposium, Alex Macintyre Memorial Hut and Mountaineering Council of Scotland – Visually Impaired Course 2009.

The present Trustees are P.V. Brian (Chairman) (ex officio as immediate past President of the SMC), R. Aitken, J.T.H. Allen, R. Anderson (ex officio as Convenor of the Publications Sub-Committee), B.S. Findlay, D. Rubens (ex officio as President of the SMC), A. Macdonald, C.R. Ravey, R.J.C. Robb and D.N. Williams (ex officio as Editor of the SMC Journal). J. Morton Shaw is the Trust Treasurer and James D. Hotchkis is the Trust Secretary.

The present Directors of the Publications Company are R.K. Bott (Chairman), K.V. Crockett, M.G.D. Shaw, C.M. Huntley, C.R. Ravey and T. Prentice (Publications Manager). C.R. Ravey (both a Director of Publications Company and Trustee) provides liaison between the Publications Company and the Trust as does R. Anderson in his capacity as Convenor of the Publications Sub-Committee.

The following grants have been committed by the Trustees during 2009:

Glasgow Academy – East Greenland 2009 (from the Sang award)	£500
Alan Clark – BSES Greenland 2009 (from the Sang award)	£500
Sonja Klein – Toxicity in plants in Nepal	£400
Nevis Partnership – Ben Nevis footpath	£10,000
Nevis Partnership – Allt a' Mhuilinn footpath	£5,000
Scottish Mountain Heritage Collection (Mick Tighe)	£4,000
Mill Cottage Trust – Mill Cottage Works	£2,500
Dundee Mountain Film Festival	£1,500
D McKee – Eco-Loo at Inverlochlarig, Balquhidder	£575
John Muir Trust – Nevis Area (Conservation Officer)	£1,000
R Van Hove – BSES Greenland 2009	£250
Heather Morning	
– MSc (Managing Sustainable Mountain Development)	£567
Who Cares? – Trek in Nepal	£2,200
Jonathon Conville Mountaineering Trust	
– Scottish Winter Course 2009/10	£1,352
Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland – Symposium	£750
Alex Macintyre Memorial Hut (half grant and half loan)	£10,000
Mountaineering Council of Scotland	
– Visually Impaired Course 2009	£2,400

The Trustees wish to record their gratitude to Helen Forde and to Noel Williams for their respective roles in designing a logo for the Trust.

J D Hotchkis  
Secretary

## MUNRO MATTERS 2009-10

By Dave Broadhead (Clerk of the List)

Thanks once again to all those Munroists who took the time to sit down and write so many interesting letters to register their Completion. Thanks also to the Webmaster, Ken Crocket, and the Keeper of Regalia, Gordon McAndrew. As before the year runs from 1 April to 31 March and the five columns give number, name and year of Completion of Munros, Tops and Furths as appropriate.

\* SMC member \*\* LSCC member.

4255	Jane Weir	2009	2009	4298	Edward Spiller	2009
4256	Julia Mary Greenwood	1992		4299	Paul Taylor	2009
4257	Ian Greenwood	1992	1992	4300	Stephen Collins	2009
4258	Tony Brightman	2009		4301	Viv Beardsley	2009
4259	Michelle Sweeney	2009		4302	Andy Beardsley	2009
4260	Andrew Eccles	2009		4303	Roy J. Fisher	2009
4261	Billy Sutherland	2009		4304	Duncan Kelly	2009
4262	Iain Dow	1992		4305	Michael Earnshaw	2009
		1999		4306	David Ramsay	2009
4263	John Vass	2008		4307	Alan Taylor	2009 2009
4264	Richard Fyfe	2009		4308	Geoff Forman	2004
4265	Anne M. Findlay	2009		4309	Chris Cook	2009
4266	Danny Allen	2009		4310	Vaughan Stead	2009
4267	Chris Knowles	2009	2009 2009	4311	Robert E. Scoltock	2009
4268	David Singleton	2009		4312	Claire Turner	2009
4269	Ken Robbins	2009		4313	Keith Turner	2009
4270	Colin Sturmer	2009		4314	Alan Hunter	2009
4271	Philip Ross Haylett	2008		4315	John Neil Mackenzie	2008
4272	Paul Jarvis	2009		4316	Sue Young	2009
4273	Andrew Watkin	2009		4317	Larry Young	2009
4274	Graham Lewis	2009		4318	Anthony Butler	2009
4275	Farshid Namdaran	2007		4319	James Eccles	2007
4276	Jon Mayne	2009		4320	Andy Barnett	2009
4277	Douglas Grieve	2009		4321	Iain Gillespie	2009
4278	Tony Stanbridge	2009		4322	Andrew Gillespie	2009
4279	Elkie Kammer	2009		4323	Archie Paterson	2009
4280	Mark Webster	2009		4324	Linda Thomson	2009
4281	Paul Wood	2009		4325	Alan Thomson	2009
4282	Andrew Watson	2009		4326	Richard Rogers	2009
4283	Colin Ferguson	2009		4327	Tony Wayte	2009
4284	Simon Davies	2009		4328	Dorothy Stirling	2009
4285	John L. Preston	2009		4329	Dougie Orr	2009
4286	John Whiteman	2009		4330	Charles G. Thomson	2009
4287	Kenneth Brookman	2009		4331	Colin Mackenzie	2009
4288	Donald Forrest	2009		4332	Carolyn Smith	2009
4289	John Burgess	2009		4333	Bob Railton	2009
4290	Patricia Richards	2009		4334	Laura Davison	2009
4291	John Richards	2009		4335	Harry Braden	2009
4292	Bob Gwynne	2009		4336	Antoni Anderson	2009 2009
4293	Stewart Hill	2009		4337	Andrew Barraclough	2009
4294	Shane Harris	2009		4338	Brian J. H. Paget	2009
4295	Ian S. Grant	2009		4339	Willie Morrison	2009
4296	David M. Woods	2009		4340	Alan Lea	2009
4297	Jennifer Spiller	2009		4341	Harry Watt	2009

4342	Simon Olley	2009		4399	Gill Robinson	2008	
4343	Roy R. Smart	2009		4400	Mark Robinson	2008	
4344	John Huthinson	2009	2002	4401	Fiona Masson	2009	
4345	Audrey Hay	2009		4402	Noreen Whitelaw	2009	
4346	David Clark	2009		4403	Seona Mackintosh	2009	
4347	Alan Rollo	2009		4404	Jean M. Bruce	2009	
4348	Stuart McLeod	2009		4405	Ivor W. Normand	2006	
4349	Jeff Wynne	2009		4406	Heather Leitch	2009	
4350	Ben Oliver	2009		4407	John Leitch	2009	
4351	Ann Corkin	2009		4408	Pamela E. Wigston	2009	
4352	David Corkin	2009		4409	Marthe-Josee Kellas	2009	
4353	Alan D. Poots	2009		4410	Eddie Harvey	2009	
4354	W. Leonard N. Moir	2009		4411	F. Stuart Ashton	2009	
4355	Helen R. Morton	2009		4412	Andrew Simpson	2009	
4356	S. Storton	2009		4413	Alan Sharp	2009	
4357	Allan M. Findlay	2009		4414	Jim McGrath	2009	
4358	Peter Ditchburn	2009		4415	Scott Duncan	2009	
4359	Antoni Cain	2009		4416	Archie Hayes	2009	
4360	David Baggaley	2009		4417	Chris Davison	2009	
4361	Ewen Hatchwell	2009		4418	John Darling	2009	
4362	Betty Rae	2009		4419	David Bassy	2009	
4363	Angus Maceachran	2009		4420	Martin Keith Walker	2009	
4364	Elaine Wilson	2008		4421	Robert Brown	2009	
4365	John Youngs	2008		4422	Les Silkowski	2009	
4366	Ron Sanderson	2009		4423	David Beare	2009	
4367	Paul Swinburne	2009		4424	Ian M. Fraser	2009	
4368	I. Jean Hutton	2009		4425	David W. Dixon	2009	
4369	Gillian Beeston	2009		4426	Merlin Waterson	2009	
4370	Alan Clark	2009		4427	Stewart K. Stevenson	2009	
4371	Mike Treanor	2009		4428	David Fisher	2009	
4372	Rory Laird	2009		4429	John Walker	2009	
4373	Alan Geddes	2009		4430	Debbie Riley	2000	
4374	Jonathan A. S. Harrison	2009		4431	Simon C. Riley	2009	
4375	Peter Fielder	2009		4432	Neil Ayling	2009	
4376	Hans-Werner Meiners	2009		4433	Paul Grace	2009	
4377	Robin Bennie	2009		4434	Pat McKay	2009	
4378	Kathryn Goodenough	2009		4435	Sandy McKay	2009	
4379	Rod McLeod	2009		4436	Gordon Clarke	1998	
4380	Ken Neil	2009				2009	
4381	Simon Sawers	2009	2010	4437	John Halliday	2009	
4382	Patrick Groark	2009		4438	Lionel S. Foreman	2009	2009
4383	Neil Mantle	2009		4439	Tish Mitchell	2009	
4384	Brian Tucker	2008	2009	4440	Christopher E. Lennox	2009	
4385	Finlay Clark	2009		4441	Chris Carter	2009	
4386	Margaret Allan	2009		4442	Brian Prangle	2009	
4387	Hamid Khatib	2009		4443	Livingston Russell	2009	
4388	John N. Mair	2009	1990	4444	Judith Gray	2009	
4389	James C. McLeod	2009		4445	Andy Gray	2009	
4390	James C. McLeod	2009		4446	Philippa Leach	2009	
4391	Trevor Galloway	2009		4447	Peter Masters	2009	
4392	Wendy Georgeson	2009		4448	Chris Pearson	2009	2009
4393	Norman Georgeson	2009		4449	Scott Gourlay	2009	
4394	Bert Morris	2009		4450	Andrew Ward	2009	
4395	Gary Home	2009		4451	David Thomson	2009	
4396	Mark Gibson	2009		4452	Neil C.J. Stutchbury	2009	
4397	Robin Jeffries	2009		4453	Mark Cooke	2009	
4398	Trevor Wade	2009		4454	James E. Oliphant	2009	2009

4455 Stirling Johnson-Marshall		4475 Chris Dent	2009
	2009	4476 Valerie Inglis	2009
4456 Linda Sinclair	2009	4477 Cameron Campbell	2009
4457 Iain Hughes	2009	4478 David Breckenridge	2009
4458 James Donald	2009 2009	4479 William Bain	2009
4459 Gordon H. Davies	2009	4480 Josie Smith	2009
4460 Christopher J. Smythe	2009	4481 M. Jane L. Grimley	2009 2009
4461 Colin Campbell	2009	4482 Roger Grimshaw	2009
4462 George Rose	2009	4483 *William A. Forbes	1986 1995 2002
4463 Peter D. Sinclair	2009		2009
4464 Doug Prentice	2009	4484 Victoria Simpson	2009
4465 Brenda J. Bain	2009	4485 Shaun Hibbard	2009
4466 David West	2009	4486 Peter Jordan	2009
4467 Steven Carter	2009	4487 Allan G. Stephen	2009
4468 James T. Martin	2009	4488 Andrew Rathbone	2005
4469 Graeme David McKay	2000	4489 Anne Welch	2009
4470 Peter Bowles	2009	4490 Andrew Lindley	2009
4471 Chris Bowles	2009	4491 Simon Fraser	2008
4472 Alison Paterson	2009	4492 Martin Julich	2010
4473 Kenneth Rybarczyk	2009	4493 John Dunbavin	2008
4474 Graham Crowder	2009		

Comparing with 2008-9 (in brackets) the total of 239 (227) new Munroists showed a slight increase comprising 81% (79%) males, 63% (55%) resident in Scotland and 12% (12%) couples. Average age was 52 (54) with an average party size of 14 (14) taking an average of 22 (21) years to Compleat.

To share a selection of the fascinating anecdotes and reflections received I have adapted the popular theme of the 'Seven Ages of Man' as follows:

### 1. Early starters

Anne Findlay (4265) was on top of Lochnagar aged 2, in the company of her parents Ian and Isobel Hughes (397 & 398). Anne also reports that her home village of Blebo Craigs in Fife (population 170) is home to at least three other Munroists! Colin Ferguson(4283) climbed Ben Vorlich aged 10 with his father George Ferguson (887) and similarly Andy Barnett (4320) 'was a lad of 10 when my Dad took me up Ben Nevis, a grand walk of which I have vivid memories.' Over 30 years later he returned to Compleat on neighbouring Carn Mor Dearg. Jane Weir (4255) Completed on Ciste Dubh, accompanied by her father, Robert Waterston (3210) aged 85. She started as a seven year old on Ben Lawers, while Robert's Completion at the age of 80 remains the oldest registered male. James Eccles (4319) remembers 'my first Munro was Ben Nevis which I ascended in 1965 during a holiday cycling round the coast of Scotland. We wore basketball boots, carried cycle capes, sou'westers and food in a "musette" (butty bag).' Also starting on The Ben, Gill and Mark Robinson (4399 & 4400) remember 'as typical tourists on a camping holiday, we were ill prepared, having taken just a couple of cartons of juice each.'

### 2. Fast finishers

John Preston (4285) finished his last 102 in one go, with the help of a campervan. Trevor Galloway (4391) reported a continuous round 'starting April 13 on Ben Lomond and finishing August 10 on Ben Hope' also using a campervan. His blog

is at [www.nonstopmunromadness.blogspot.com/](http://www.nonstopmunromadness.blogspot.com/) and he also raised £2000 for Maggie's Cancer Care.

### 3. Regular rounds

When compiling 'Munro Matters' there is never any shortage of interesting material, though the following letter from Jon Mayne (4275) is typical: 'Dear David, I am writing to notify you that I completed the Munros (for the first time) on 14 May 2009 with a stunning day on the Fisherfield Six. My last Munro was Beinn a' Chlaidheimh. I don't believe there is much remarkable about my completion; as I cannot believe that either my age (44) or the time it has taken me (12 years since Beinn Sgulaireid in August 1997) are in any way unusual.' The great thing about the Munros is of course that every round is unique, and worthy of celebration. The BBC commissioned a TV programme about Munro, and I was contacted at an early stage for advice, as they were particularly keen to film a Completion and needed to find a suitable subject. An extensive advertising campaign followed and in due course I received a letter from Douglas Grieve(4277) who 'took up the BBC offer. Let's hope I have not spoiled the thing!' When I finally saw the results I thought Douglas did very well and conveyed the enthusiasm and emotion that comes across in most of the letters I receive.

Ben More (Mull) remains the most popular summit for Completion, with 16 this year, while Ben Hope saw 11. Not surprisingly, the 'Coincidental Completion' is becoming increasingly common. Richard Fyfe (4264) finished on Ben Lomond with a party of 24 friends at the same time as Colin Sturmer (4270) and another occurred on Maoile Lunndaigh where Anne Findlay (4265) arrived at the summit at the same time as Graham Lewis (4274). The latter caused some confusion at the Lochcarron Hotel by asking for a birthday cake reading 'Happy 284th'! Farshid Namdaran (4275) thinks he is probably the first Persian (Iranian) Munroist and Hamid Khatib (4387) is probably the first Iraqi, though he admits 'to have been living in Scotland for 26 years.' James C. Mcleod (4389) and James C. Mcleod (4390) father and son were immediately spotted by the pedants who search the list for errors, which I am always happy to correct. Robert Scoltock (4311) kindly commented 'I have had many, many great days on Scottish hills using the great fund of knowledge contained in the SMC District Guides and I wish to express my grateful thanks to the SMC for publishing them.'

### 4. Prolonging the pleasure

These of course include the 'Golden Munroists who have taken more than 50 years to Complete their Round. These include W. Leonard N. Moir (4354) (April 1956–July 2009); John Halliday (4437) (March 1958–September 2009) and Livingston Russell (4443) (June 1959–October 2009). Livingston was one year behind his wife Christine Russell (4201) and sent a photograph of a distinctive commemorative necklace made for her by the Campbeltown goldsmith Grant Logan comprising a 'gold Buachaille Etive Mor and a white gold boot-print with my number on.' William Bain (4479) reported a fantastic 61 years (May 1948–November 2009) while Graham Clark (1686) reported finishing his Corbetts on Ben Loyal 60 years after his first.

### 5. Can't stop counting

Compleatists are asked to suggest what they plan to do next, when the thrill of climbing that final hill wears off. While many are content to bask in their new found glory, perhaps revisit old favourites or savour views missed in poor weather, some go on to start another round or tick other lists. Christine Murison (1967) finished her second Munro round exactly ten years after her first and Derek Syme (685) Completed his second round while President of The Munro Society. Reporting his third Munro round, Ken MacIver (290) made the following observations: 'My first round took 14 years, second round 18 years but only 9 years for the third. My first round summit party consisted of 11 friends, with no Munroists; second round 22 friends plus 2 dogs, including 4 Munroists, third round 30 friends plus 4 dogs, including 9 Munroists.' John Peel (1066) notified me of an omission in his entry dating back to 1997, commenting that 'normally I would not bother about it but some of the young sprogs in my running club are nearing Completion and I want to be able to say "but have you done the Tops?"' I received three letters from the ever active Bert Barnett (3112) who achieved a historic first when he Completed a second round of the Grahams. Karl Nelson (1432) Completed his second round of Munros and Tops on Ben Alligin, moving across the country to finish his Corbetts with Conachraig next day, dashing back west to finish his Grahams with Beinn an Eoin the day after. He had finished his Donalds earlier in the year. Charles Scott (568) celebrated his third Munro Completion on Ben More (Mull), bagging the Graham Beinn Fhada on the way up and the Marilyn Coirc Bheinn on the way down. Having climbed his 1000th Munro earlier in the year, he commented 'you may note an interest in Marilyn's – I got Alan Dawson's book during the winter and have got to 519, but I am finding these hills generally dire...' Terry McDonagh (700) reported a second Corbett round, commenting 'there was nothing particularly special to report about these events other than the fact that these hills are getting higher and further away each time that I climb them!' Alan Taylor (3783) finished his Corbetts with Carn Liath, then 'celebrated quietly and reflectively over a big curry and a couple of double vodka and cokes, the next day in Dundee. My thoughts went back to a great many of the hills and the journey of getting there and the varied experiences of an ever changing landscape, the long walk ins (without a bike), the boats to the islands, hostels, hitch hiking, sleeping in my car and the friendly and helpful fellow walkers and country folk. The hills are the best place to be.'

### 6. Taking a more difficult route

Lacking car and driving licence, Elkie Kammer (4279) reported that 'getting to the base of a mountain has often proved more difficult than getting to the top, especially since City Link has booted out most of the local bus companies and introduced rules like only stopping at designated bus stops and not carrying folding bikes.' Mark Webster (4280) summarised his round in rhyming couplets, starting with 'Ben Nevis was first in the early eighties I guess/Although Munros were unknown to me then I confess.' In a similar vein, Bert Morris (4394) adapted 'The Wild Rover' to entertain fellow guests at Ratagan youth hostel, starting 'I've been a hillwalker for seventeen years/ And spent all my money on Gortex and gear.' Alan Hunter (4314) Completed on Sgurr nan Gilleann, noting

that 'I've had Gillean to climb for almost 3 years now but the delay has been down to me wanting to climb the entire Black Cuillin ridge in a day. It took 4 attempts, all previous ones of course foiled by the weather! This time perfect visibility, no wind and a light pack saw Jim Howe and I just managing the traverse. We set off from Glen Brittle camp at 0300 and stood on Gillean at 2000.' Also in the Cuillin, Trevor Wade Completed on the Inn. Pin. (in August) and commented that 'my gang of three waited in line for over 2 hours for a quick dash up the long side – the only time I have ever queued for a Munro.' Alan Lea (4340) was repulsed twice within a month by deep snow on Carn Am Fhidleir, frustrating his plans to Compleat on Skye the following weekend. The elusive summit was finally reached in May. Hans-Werner Meiners (4376) became another German Compleater. I also sent some previous 'Munro Matters' to a German journalist writing for an outdoor magazine, so we can no doubt expect plenty more. Pam Wigston (4408) became, at the age of 80, the oldest female Compleater. She explained that 'after my husband died, I still needed an aim in life at the age of 65...with only 9 Munros left, I broke my back...this was not a time to give up, but time for great determination.'

### 7. Beyond the last climb

The loss of a Munro, Sgur nan Ceannaichean, was balanced of course by the gaining of a Corbett. The results of the latest 'heighting' activities of The Munro Society were announced at a press conference, accompanied by a certain amount of 'media frenzy'. The SMC acknowledged the change as soon as the Ordnance Survey accepted the new height and details were immediately posted on our website.

On a more sombre note, there are also some Munroists from whom we will not be hearing again. Irvine Butterfield (105) passed away in May 2009 but his excellent books *The High Mountains of Britain and Ireland* (1986), *The Magic of the Munros* (1999) and *The Call of the Corbetts* will continue to inspire hill-goers for many years and his many other contributions to the Scottish mountains have been acknowledged elsewhere. Richard Rogers (4326) had advanced cancer when he Completed in May 2009 and sadly passed away in October. He was disappointed not to have a suitable summit photo for the Munroists Gallery, but was clearly a man with a sense of humour. Recounting to a friend 'a daring solo assault that nearly ended in tragedy (due to white-out conditions)' he summed up the experience by admitting 'I can't say I am fighting to do Lurg Mhor again in the near future – indeed I'd frankly rather go to a Tracy Emin retrospective.' Graeme David McKay (4469) took the unusual step of giving names and addresses of 3 referees, one of whom I happen to know. This mutual friend has since told me that tragically Graeme passed away suddenly a few months later.

### DATABASE EXTENSION

An increasing proportion of correspondence relates to the 'Can't stop counting' group. Over the winter, a particularly quiet one last year when the flow of letters stopped as deep snow covered the hills, the website database was extended from three columns to six, as interest in climbing the Corbetts, Grahams and Donalds grows. Dave Hewitt and Alan Dawson keep their own lists of Corbetteers, Donaldists and Grahamists and kindly agreed to share their data. (See [www.rhb](http://www.rhb).)

org.uk) One interesting outcome of this exercise is that a remarkable 20 people have achieved a 'Full House' as follows:

452	Ann Bowker	1986	1986	1983	1992	1999	2002
763	Brian Curle	1990	1991	1991	1992	2000	1994
121	Don Smithies	1973	2001	1998	1996	2000	2002
1298	Graham Illing	1994	1997	1996	1998	2000	2000
319	Ken Whyte	1984	1987	1987	2000	2000	2000
678	Stuart Benn	1989	1989	1990	1996	2000	2004
816	Rob Woodall	1990	1995	1990	1995	2000	1992
1452	Eddie Dealtry	1995	1995	1994	2001	2001	1997
1196	Alan Holmes	1993	1993	1993	1997	2002	1997
1197	George Morl	1993	1993	1993	1997	2002	1997
959	*Mike Dixon	1991	2008	2000	1996	2002	2005
2494	**Rhona Fraser	1984	1995	1997	1990	2003	2000
1331	John Mackay	1994	1994	1997	2003	2006	2002
2606	Colin Crawford	2001	2006	2001	2006	2006	1996
2009	Alan Dawson	1998	1998	1987	2006	2008	2001
276	Gerry Knight	1982	1982	1983	1997	2009	1986
327	Stewart Logan	1981	1981	1981	1984	2009	200
387	Richard Fuller	1984	1984	1985	2001	2009	2009
1311	Terry Fuller	1994	1994	1994	2002	2009	2009
1432	Karl Nelson	1995	1995	1996	2009	2009	2009

The eight columns of information are ordered Munroist number, name, year of Completion of first round of Munros, Tops, Furths, Corbetts, Grahams, and Donalds. \*SMC member, \*\*LSCC member.

### AMENDMENTS

The eight columns give number, name and the year of each Completion of Munros, Tops, Furths, Corbetts, Grahams, and Donalds.

3112	Bert Barnett	2001	2002	2002	1998	2000	
		2001	2009		2007	2009	
		2009					
2991	Ewan James Lyons	2003	2009		2009		
1183	Mike Fry	1993			2009		
1184	John B. Mathews	1993			2009		
358	Michael B. Slater	1984	1987	1987			
		1988		2009			
		1990					
		1993					
		1996					
		1999					
		2003					
		2008					
1066	John Peel	1992	1996				
2904	Jonathon M. Smith	2003	2009	2003			

2454	**Mary Webster	2000	2009				
1474	Jim S. Bramwell	1995	2005				
		2009					
344	Iain K. Macleod	1984					
		2009					
1589	Ethel S. Thomson	1996					
		2009					
3736	Patricia R. Cook	2006			2009		
1911	Martin J. Almond	1997	1997				
		2006					
2433	Alan Rowan	2000			2009		
2373	David M. Raw	2000					
		2004					
		2009					
2494	**Rhona B. I. Fraser	1984	1995	1997	1990		
		1994			1998		
		2000			2006		
1801	Lindsay Boyd	1997	2002		2004		
		2000			2009		
		2002					
		2008					
4208	Brian A. Trickett	2008		2009			
2432	Brian Kerslake	2000	2006	2009			
747	Leonard J. Thomson	1990	2009				
685	Derek G. Sime	1989	1989	1990	1998		
		2009					
2943	Donald R. Sutherland	2003			2006		
1967	Christine Murison	1996					
		2006					
1279	Nigel P. Morters	1994	2009		1999		
		2008					
1991	Pat Hay	1998	2009	2002			
1992	Alan Crichton	1998	2009	2002			
1432	Karl Nelson	1995	1995	1996	2009	2009	2009
		2009	2009				
620	Norrie Muir	1988	2002		1997		
290	Kenneth J. MacIver	1982		2002			
		2000					
		2009					
371	Helen Donnelly	1984	1984				
		1989	1989				
1159	Garth B. Fenton	1993		1994			
1160	Elaine S. Fenton	1993		1994			
1442	Issy Silkowski	1995					
	(formerly Isobel Gordon)	2009					
568	Charles L. Scott	1987					
		2004					
		2009					

2106	Bob Taylor	1999	2009	2008			
		2009					
1222	Gilmour Strang	1992	1992	2008			
634	Bill Miller	1987	1998	1991	1992		
		1998			2005		
		2004					
		2009					
3465	Colin F. Morsley	2005	2009				
2035	Eleanore Hunter	1998			2009		
746	James C. Waterton	1990			2000		
		2009					
1686	Graham Clark	1996			2009		
3783	Alan Taylor	2006			2009		
2124	Chris Freeman	1999					
		2006					
		2009					
959	*Mike Dixon	1991	2008	2000	1996	2002	2005
		2009					
148	*David Whalley	1976	1982	1989			
		1982	1989				
		1986	2009				
		1991					
		1995					
		2000					
		2005					
1533	Graeme Morrison	1995			2009		
		2009					
691	Roderick L. G. Brodie	1989					
		2007					
1078	Patricia A. Brodie	1992					
		2009					
825	Bernard Smith	1990	2000	1979			
		2009					
4483	*William A Forbes	1986	1995	2002	2002		
		2009					
700	Terry McDonagh	1989	1990		1995		
		1998			2007		
		2002					
268	Patience Barton	1982		1996	2009		
		1988					
186	Chris Barton	1979		1996	1987		
		1987					
		1988					
4108	Charles Kilner	2008		2009			
4207	Bob Copeland	2008	2008	2008			
4105	Clair Hutchings	2008	2009	2004			

This information is of course available on [www.smc.org.uk](http://www.smc.org.uk) along with the popular Munroists Photo Gallery. To register a Completion or amendment,

please write to Dave Broadhead, Cul Mor, Drynie Park North, Muir of Ord, IV6 7RP. If you would like a certificate for either Munro or Corbett Completion, please enclose an A4 sae (with the correct postage please). Once you have received a number, a Completion photo can be emailed or posted to the Webmaster. Iain Dow (4262) and Julia and Ian Greenwood (4256 & 4257) registered 17 years after their Completions in 1992, so it really is never too late.

Enjoy your hills

Dave Broadhead  
Clerk of the List

# SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN ACCIDENTS

## STATISTICIAN'S REPORT FOR 2009

NB: This report and the information therein, may be reproduced free of charge in any format or medium for research, private study or internal circulation within an organisation. This is subject to it being reproduced accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland copyright, and the title of the publication specified. It should be noted that just fewer than 1000 reports were received from teams. Incidents which may run for several days, or weeks, involve 6–8 teams and use over 1500 man-hours are classed as a single incident.

### Mountaineering Incidents 2009

1. Only Mountaineering related incidents are in these figures. Stalking and Mountain Biking are not included but are in the Non-Mountaineering table. There is a rise in incidents of 4% compared to 2008. This may be due to better reporting by teams or the effect of the credit crunch giving people more time off! It is very difficult to relate to numbers participating in mountaineering. I have surveys for access to Ben Nevis summit by the mountain path which is annually in excess of 160,000 and some figures from Sports Scotland which is based only on Scottish nationals equating to 5,000,000 hill days annually by Scottish residents. This gives a small insight into the use of the mountains by mountaineers. There is a need for government funded bodies to collate participation in the mountains by visitors to Scotland's mountains and give us good evidence of how many annually use our wonderful hills. There is also a need for an updated survey into the benefits gained by the Scottish economy annually from mountaineering.

2. The three main types of incidents are hill walking in summer (57.5%), hill walking in winter (24.5%), and winter climbing (3.1%) are the most common categories of incident reported by teams.

3. The number of fatalities has increased to 27 for Mountaineering incidents and is a rise of 13.5% from the reported 2008 figures. There was a rise in fatalities in avalanches (6 in total) over previous years and this is the subject of much debate and publicity. I am currently engaged in a survey of 30 years avalanche incidents in Scotland with Bob Sharp and the SAIS which will be completed before next winter. Heart attacks and illness resulted in 6 fatalities and the rest were slips, trips and falls, and one person was killed in a river crossing.

4. The Statistician is a member of the Scottish Mountain Safety Forum and will be able to provide up-to-date information to members. I have also liaised with the Scottish Avalanche Service and Mountain Weather Service. Mountaineers use these Services on a frequent basis for guidance and advice. This will allow any trends discovered are discussed with the various agencies and to allow lessons learned to be passed on to the mountaineering public.

5. Helicopters from the Royal Navy, RAF, Coastguard, Police and Ambulance Service continue to provide outstanding assistance to Mountain Rescue Teams. Unfortunately there are some casualties who still think that if they need assistance for very minor ailments they will be 'plucked off the hill' in any weather. Fortunately the Police, Mountain Rescue Team Leaders and the ARCC monitor this problem and manage to filter such requests!

6. 'Border Reivers' Scottish Mountain Rescue Teams and SARDA Southern have assisted the Rescue Services in England and Wales on at least 10 occasions and these incidents are not included in the Scottish figures. Scottish Cave Rescue assisted teams on five occasions and are included in this report and are members of the Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland.

7. The Police, Mountain Rescue Teams, MCA, RAF and RN Helicopters and the ARCC (Aeronautical Rescue Co-ordination Centre) are thanked for all their input and for assisting in completing incident reports. In addition thanks to Mike Walker for his IT Support and Bob Sharp for all his historical and analytical advice.

8. The task of the Statistician is now a massive undertaking and has risen dramatically since the early reporting in the SMC Journal. where from the earliest reports 1925-45 there were a total of 90 incidents. Annually incidents are now in the region of 375-400 (with nearly 1000) reports. It is my view that this is now a two-person task to cope with this volume that occurs annually and I ask the Committee to look at this. This would also allow stability in this vital area when one Statistician leaves or moves on.

9. Due to an increase in incidents in the Bennachie 528 metres (Inverurie area) there is now a new Mountain Rescue post for this 'hot spot'. This will allow the local teams quicker access for equipment.

10. Scottish Mountain Rescue Teams spent 41,801 person-hours in 2009 on incidents for the Police in comparison with 2008 person-hours were 28,000, a huge rise. Team training and maintenance of equipment is not in this figure which would at least double the man-hours spent annually by teams in Scotland.

11. The Scottish Mountain Rescue Committee has changed to a new type of reporting for Mountain Rescue incidents for 2010. This will allow better use of the Statistics for use by teams and government agencies. Bob Sharp is thanked for his huge contribution with this project and it is essential that all agencies use it and reporting is standardised throughout Scotland.

12. Teams and all Agencies are thanked for their assistance with this report.

Table 1: Mountaineering Incidents

Year	Incidents	Fatalities	Injured	No Trace	Persons assisted
2009	402	27	228	2	560
2008	387	20	198	3	518
2007	333	20	154	2	522
2006	315	30	156	1	469
2005	321	27	173	4	447
2004	308	18	159	1	419
2003	289	19	151	3	393

### Relative Risks: Mountaineering Incidents 2000-09

The following table is taken from recent research into Scottish Mountaineering incidents. Anyone interested should go to the website of the Mountaineering Council of Scotland <<http://www.mcofs.org.uk/research.asp>>

Table 2: Contributory Factors

Poor Navigation	23%
Bad Planning	18%
Inadequate Equipment	11%
Medical Problems	11%
Poor Timing	8%
Group Separation	7%
River Crossing	2%
Avalanched	2%

### Non-Mountaineering Incidents 2009

1. These are on the increase (11% over the figure for 2008). This seems to be mainly due to an increase in the rise in searches for suicide/depressed persons and the elderly. As previously the use of some MRTs by the Police is changing. The numbers of fatalities has increased dramatically; this is mainly due to searches for suicidal/depressed persons. Teams are now used to assist with civil contingencies such as flooding, heavy snow and even rail incidents in remote areas by the emergency services. Mountain Rescue in Scotland is a huge asset for the emergency services and has many skills and adaptability which may lead to changes in operational use for teams.

Table 3: Non - Mountaineering Incidents

Year	Incidents	Fatalities	Injured	No Trace	Persons assisted
2009	156	58	30	10	157
2008	141	38	25	11	134
2007	125	28	29	12	131
2006	117	19	32	3	117
2005	114	16	28	9	120
2004	86	17	15	3	81
2003	99	15	24	14	101

Yearly tables may change due to late submission of incidents by teams.

This is my final report as I retire at the beginning of May 2010 after nearly 40 years with the Mountain Rescue teams. Many thanks for all the help and support during my time with you all. For information, Bob Sharp has now taken over as the MRC of S Statistician (lomondbob@talk21.com).

Dave (Heavy) Whalley  
Scottish Mountain Rescue Statistician – April 2010

**MOUNTAIN RESCUE COMMITTEE OF SCOTLAND****SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN ACCIDENTS 2009****Compiled by Dave 'Heavy' Whalley**

The Police have not been mentioned in every incident as they are involved in all.

**NORTHERN HIGHLANDS**

FEBRUARY 6 – Morusig – 2 Walkers lost in a white out on Moruisk Plateau, lost map. They dug in hoping for whiteout to clear, it did not! Called Police and Torridon MR leader gave bearing and talked them down, a bit cold but okay. Torridon MRT, 2.

FEBRUARY 9 – Slioch – Local reported the word 'HELP' written in snow seen by binoculars, high on Slioch, close to the summit. Team members deployed and met party coming off the hill. They were members of a 'guided' group who admitted they did it as a joke. SARDA(Scotland), Torridon MRT, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 3.

APRIL 5 – Dundonnell, Smiddy Crag – Casualty slipped and fell about 20 metres on a Mountain Rescue Training Exercise. Carried to MRT training base and Helicoptered to Raigmore. Dundonnell MRT, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 17.

APRIL 11 – Brebag Tarsuinn – Assynt MRT training in Cairngorms were alerted to an incident near Brebeg Tarsuinn. A walker with a head injury and their partner were evacuated by Rescue 137. Assynt MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 4.

APRIL 12 – Ben Mor Coigach – Walker in a party of 3 on Ben Mor Coigach got separated on hill Police informed and Dundonnell MRT and R177 called out. 'Lost' Party member had got off the hill safely. Party advised to stay together in future! Dundonnell MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 5.

APRIL 17 – Sgurr Mor Fannich – Party of 3 on trials bikes, called Police as they were lost at 2200, it was thought they were in shelter. Found high on hill, with limited clothing, and mildly hypothermic. Taken off by Dundonnell MRT, very lucky indeed. Dundonnell MRT, 13.

APRIL 29 – Beinn Lair, Marathon Buttress – Lead climber fell 40 metre top of Marathon Buttress Benn Lair, injuries arm/leg fracture/ 7 broken ribs. Due to darkness and situation, partner went for assistance at daylight. No phone communications for 2 hours. Dundonnell MRT, SARDA(Scotland), Torridon MRT, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 31.

MAY 11 – Ben Loyal – Husband and wife became separated on descent of Ben Loyal. Wife informed Hotel. Body located by shepherd, certified fatality by doctor on the hill. Assynt team recovered casualty. FATALITY. Assynt MRT, 8.

MAY 13 – Quinag – Assynt MRT asked to assist a hysterical cragfast walker in the Quinag area. R100 was in area training and recovered casualty. Assynt MRT, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 3.

MAY 24 – Ben Hope – Whilst training on Ben Hope RAF Kinloss MRT were alerted by a member of the public that a walker had fallen and broken her

- humerus. Casualty care given and a helicopter Rescue 137 took casualty to hospital. Airwave communications e RAF Kinloss MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 2.
- MAY 25 – Slioch – Torridon MRT were asked by the Police to check a remote campsite for a walker who had uncharacteristically not called in on a trip wild camping. Team member visited wild camping site near Slioch base, nothing found. Torridon MRT, 1.
- MAY 29 – Liathach, Spidean – Torridon MRT alerted by Police to a walker cragfast descending Spidean on Liathach Ridge Eastwards, before.833. He descended to early and got stuck. Spotted by team, R177 evacuated casualty swiftly to Torridon base, no in Torridon MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 2.
- JUNE 3 –Shenevall – Walker who was unwell on way into Sheneval, became sick, cramps etc and nurse staying in bothy sent for help. Evacuated by Rescue 100 to Raigmore. Dundonnell MRT, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 1.
- JUNE 20 – Grunaird Bay, Mungadale Crag – Climber fell 30 feet when rope anchor failed as he was descending, 3 nuts came out! treated for spinal injuries (minor compression) by Dundonnell and Torridon MRT. High Line used by R100, COMMS WITH Helicopt Dundonnell MRT, Torridon MRT, 9.
- JUNE 21 – Gairloch, Loch Bad An Sealaig – Dundonnell MRT assisted DOE Party when one became sick, possible Asthma attack. Stornaway Helicopter Rescue 100 was airborne and picked up casualty. Dundonnell MRT, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 1.
- JUNE 23 –Loch Assynt area – 86 Yr old walker left car at Loch Assynt, missing for 7–10 days, keen geologist and regular walker in the area. Rucksack located and massive search by Assynt, SARDA, MCA and Red Cross Swift water boats including hovercraft Assynt MRT, Non-specialists (Non-MR), Police Dogs, RAF Kinloss MRT, SARDA(Scotland), RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 58.
- JUNE 24 – Fionaven, Creag Urbhard – FATALITY. Whilst family were fishing, in Loch Dionard wife went for a walk up Creag Urbhard, she did not return. Located below steep terrace by R137, with head injuries. Assynt MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 10.
- JUNE 26 – Ben More Assynt – Solo walker, visually impaired called Police at 0100 to say he was misplaced on summit of Ben More Assynt, he had been on hill since 1100. Due to favourable conditions R137 recovered walker to safety. He was south of Ben More Assynt MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 1.
- JUNE 27 – Liathach, Correag Cam – Cragfast walker on South side of Liathach Torridon MR party nearly located casualty before R100 recovered to Torridon base. Assisted by mountaineers who made walker safe. Walker had left tent and kit in Coire Na Caim Torridon MRT, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 2.
- JULY 1 – Loch Dionard – Party of Duke of Edinburgh Award one became very sick, vomiting. Evacuated by Rescue 100. Taken to Raigmore with suspected appendicitis! Coastguard Personnel, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 1.
- JULY 16 – Stac Pollaidh – Walker fell on Stac Pollaidh injuring leg open fracture and lacerations to the face. Dundonnell MRT Team member assisted on the hill Casualty taken off by Rescue 100 Cg to Raigmore. Poor Comms again with Rescue 100. Dundonnell MRT, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 13.

- JULY 23 – Fisherfield Wilderness – Walker in the Fisherfield Wilderness, route the 6 Munros and Slioch was reported overdue by a day. Torridon, Dundonnell and SARDA involved. Located walking out Heights Of Kinlochewe. He was well and mix up as he texted Dundonnell MRT, RAF Kinloss MRT, SARDA(Scotland), Torridon MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 26.
- JULY 24 – Beinn Dearg area, Inverael – 2 walkers no map, compass or clue, car at Inverael to climb Beinn Dearg. They got lost at Glenbeg bothy at 2300! They overnighted and attempted to find way back up hill arriving back at Glenbeg. Dundonnell, Kinlos Dundonnell MRT, Police Dogs , RAF Kinloss MRT, RAF Leuchars MRT, SARDA(Scotland), Torridon MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 44.
- AUGUST 21 – Cape Wrath – Missing walker from Netherlands, overnight, large search of remote Area by Assynt MRT, Cg and RAF Kinloss/ Leuchars MRT. Located by Rescue 100. Assynt MRT, Coastguard Personnel , RAF Kinloss MRT, RAF Leuchars MRT, SARDA(Scotland), RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 46.
- AUGUST 21 – Old Man of Stoer, Lochinver – 2 Climbers caught out/misjudged time and ended cut off by tide at bottom of route The Old Man Of Stoer. Lifeboat and Coastguards located climbers at bottom of route. Helicopter lights used on sea stack for Lifeboat/Coastguard Personnel, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 10.
- SEPTEMBER 12 – Quinag, Spidean Connich – Party of 5 no map, torches and limited kit, got lost on Quinag. One injured leg and Assynt MRT carried her off hill. Other 4 very cold/ hypothermic one injured knee on way off. All taken off the hill and release Ambulance Personnel, Assynt MRT, 16.
- SEPTEMBER 21 – Beinn Eighe, Coire Dubh Mor – FATALITY. Male 75 year old fell/ slipped on way off Beinn Eighe rest of party cragfast, above casualty all night. One managed to get off in the morning for help. Evacuated 2 casualties very hypothermic and o SARDA(Scotland), Torridon MRT, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 6.
- SEPTEMBER 27 – Craig-Killilan, Ben Dronaig Lodge – Walker on an organised sponsored walk went ahead (72 year old) and went wrong way. Ended up in Strathconnon where a passer by assisted him home. Kintail MRT, 1.
- SEPTEMBER 30 – Beinn Alligin – A couple and dog doing a traverse round Beinn Alligin got benighted, well equipped but poor navigation, blamed guide book map. They called Police at 0400. Walked off by Torridon and SARDA. No injuries. SARDA (Scotland), Torridon MRT, 8.
- OCTOBER 8 – Cona Mheall, Assynt – Whilst descending Cona Mheall, solo walkers torch failed, he decided it was safer to bivvy and walk off in daylight. His friend reported him overdue. Assynt MRT on standby, located by Rescue 137 and winched off the hill Assynt MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 14.
- NOVEMBER 11 – An Teallach, Shenevall – Party of 3 one map, limited torches split up on An Teallach. Two spent the night out one at Shenevall the other by a boulder. Located at Shenevall by Police Dogs. Dundonnell night search, Kinloss, SARDA, Torridon Dundonnell MRT, Police Dogs , RAF Kinloss MRT, SARDA(Scotland), Torridon MRT, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 47.
- NOVEMBER 30 – Beinn a' Chasgien Beag – Walker reported missing between

Altbea and An Teallach by mother, may have been depressed. Located by Rescue 100 after a search by Dundonnell and SARDA. Casualty very cold, no kit, map, compass, hat or gloves. Snow Dundonnell MRT, SARDA(Scotland), 16.

DECEMBER 28 – Liathach, Coire Dubh – Red lights seen in Coire Dubh, 2 Torridon MRT located two climbers walking off with red light both okay. Torridon MRT, 2.

DECEMBER 30 Liathach, East Ridge – FATALITY. AVALANCHE 2 walkers avalanched just below ridge, one uninjured other located by Torridon MRT, SARDA taken off by Rescue 100, died in hospital. Dundonnell MRT on standby. Dundonnell MRT, RAF Kinloss MRT, SARDA(Scotland), Torridon MRT, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 35.

## WESTERN HIGHLANDS

JANUARY 4 – Kintail, Attadale to Achintee path – Slip on ice, casualty reported unable to walk with back injury. On examination in Helo injuries not as serious as first reported. No First Aid given by Kintail MRT, evacuated by Rescue 100. Kintail MRT, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 13.

MARCH 12 – Kintail, Sgurr Na Sgine – All night search on hill, possible heart attack, a 62 year old casualty had chest pains but had made his way gradually down Coire Toiteil until exhausted/ collapsed. Found by search party at 1215pm. Treated by tea Glenelg MRT, Kintail MRT, Police Dogs, RAF Kinloss MRT, SARDA(Scotland), SARDA (Southern Scotland), Torridon MRT, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 37.

MARCH 25 – Gairich – Whilst descending Gairich the casualty slipped and fell breaking her right tibia. She contacted the Police who requested the Stornaway helicopter, who evacuated the casualty to the Belford Hospital. No MRT involvement. Non-specialists (Non-MR), HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 1.

APRIL 1 – Glenfinnan, Sgorr nan Cearc – One of a group slipped and fell injuring head on Sgorr nan Cearc above Loch Sheil, near Glenfinnan. There were no helicopters available, stretchered off by Lochaber MRT. Lochaber MRT, 13.

APRIL 11 – Glenfinnan – Party of 2 went from Hotel to Corryhully bothy to Loch Beoraid, lost track and due to tiredness decided to spend night in bothy. Search by Lochaber and located by R177, cold and hungry but unhurt. Lochaber MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 10.

MAY 23 – Glenfinnan, Strathan Bothy – Lochaber in search for a missing walker – taken from BBC NEWS, no further info at present. Lochaber MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 15.

MAY 25 – Acharacle, Dornin – Man reported missing from Silver Walk. located by relatives on shore with a party of canoeists!. Glencoe MRT, 10.

JUNE 5 – Sgurr Na Ciche – Lochaber to assist on a rescue on Sgurr Na Ciche. Casualty became tired and decided to walk back to tent. Failed to find it and spent night out on hill, located by local keeper. RAF Kinloss fast party sent by Rescue 137. Lochaber MRT, RAF Kinloss MRT, 19.

JUNE 20 – Highland Cross, Glen Affric – 4 Competitors treated for knee/ strains and blisters on annual Highland Cross Event 20 mile hill walk/ run part from Kintail-Glen Affric, by Torridon and Dundonnell MRT working at check points. Dundonnell MRT, 4.

- JULY 14 – Kinlochourn, Barrisdale – Mother and 2 children were walking from Kinlochourn Barrisdale when she slipped and went over on her ankle. The 11 year old child walked out alone to raise the alarm!. Casualty was evacuated by R137. Lochaber MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 1.
- JULY 23 – Kintail, 5 Sisters, Above Achnagart – Kintail MRT. Couple reported overdue by son, police spotted lights at grid ref. 1 KMRT on site with binoculars spotted two persons starting to move after having gone to ground overnight. Arrived at car 134 Kintail MRT, 1.
- JULY 25 – Glen Finnan – Lochaber to a girl with a leg injury, right ankle and taken off the hill by Lochaber MRT. Lochaber MRT, 8. August 14 Kintail Maol Bhuidhe Bothy 15 Yr old boy doing Lands end to John o Grouts solo using SPOT devise for back up, disappeared of computer screen for 6 hrs. Father asked us to check if safe. Found wet but OK in Maol Bhuidhe Bothy. Kintail MRT, 5.
- AUGUST 28 – Kintail, Malagan Bridge – Police phone with concern for driver of car parked at Malagan, Glen Shiel. Hill Party put on alert while investigations done. Driver intending to camp out, team stood down and car gone by 5pm next day. Kintail MRT, 3.
- AUGUST 29 – Kintail, Alt Beith YHA – Police reported Ruck sack found near burn at Alt Beith. Party of Scouts bringing it to Morvich did not arrive. Later Police investigated Named owner to find it had been there some months. No action. Kintail MRT, 1.
- SEPTEMBER 2 – Kintail, Alt A Cruinn – Misper became dis-orientated in dark, called Ratagan YHA to ask for help, YHA called us but no signal to call back. Went to ground until daylight, then walked off via Alt a Cruinn. Unhurt. Kintail MRT, 10.
- SEPTEMBER 3 – Cannich, Carn Nan Gobhar – Husband and wife set off Mullardoch Dam to climb Carn Nan Gobhar, they separated. Casualty no navigation equipment little experience, walked off Glen Strathfarrar. Located by a local stalker, Dundonnell MRT, Dundonnell MRT, Police Dogs , RAF Kinloss MRT, SARDA(Scotland), RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 22.
- SEPTEMBER 26 – Glen Shiel, South Cluanie Ridge – Passing motorist spotted lights on hill. Investigation showed distress signal. R137 managed to winch casualty and evacuate to Belford. 7 KMRT members on scene but no action taken. Kintail MRT, 7.
- OCTOBER 13 – The Brothers, Glen Sheil – Overdue walker, got turned around in cloud. Short search located in Glen Licht. Kintail MRT, 3.
- OCTOBER 16 – Sgurr Na Arigidh – Kintail MRT called to assist a couple who separated in cloud on Sgurr Na Arigidh. They phoned police as one one member of the party was in experienced and managed to walk back to their transport without assistance. Kintail MRT, 3.
- DECEMBER 5 – Glen Spean, Loch Dubh – Whilst kayaking and hillwalking casualty broke ankle when she slipped, partner walked out for 3 hours to get assistance. Casualty recovered by Lochaber and Rescue 177. Lochaber MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 5.
- DECEMBER 18 – Kintail, Coire Na Cadha – Casualty slipped on ice, ice axe brake failed to stop her and she tumbled approx 200m in to corrie. Party assisted by

other party. First aid on scene limited by precarious situation. 137 lifted to Ft William. Kintail MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 14.

## **BEN NEVIS**

- JANUARY 3 – Ben Nevis, Mountain path – After completing 2 gully on Ben Nevis a climber was walking off and he tripped, causing injury to his right knee cap. Evacuated by R177. Lochaber MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 3.
- JANUARY 3 – Ben Nevis, Mountain path – Walker descending Ben Nevis, lost her footing and fell landing on her chest injuring her rib. Recovered by R177. Lochaber MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 3.
- JANUARY 3 – Glen Nevis, Ring of Steall – Lochaber MRT to assist a walker. No further info at present. Lochaber MRT, 3.
- JANUARY 9 – Glen Nevis, Cow Hill – Lochaber MRT to missing walker NFINFO. Lochaber MRT, 7.
- FEBRUARY 4 – Aonach Mor – Casualties became disorientated on descent from Aonach Mor, traced by Lochaber and walked off the hill. No injuries. Lochaber MRT, 8.
- FEBRUARY 6 – Ben Nevis – Lochaber MRT to a missing walker. Lochaber MRT, 5.
- FEBRUARY 8 – Ben Nevis, Coire Leis – Walker in a party of 3 slipped/ fell 100 metres on snow ice, hitting a rock. She injured her left arm, (fracture) airlifted off by R137 and Lochaber MRT. Lochaber MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 15.
- FEBRUARY 18 – Ben Nevis, Achintee Gully – Solo walker walking up Ben Nevis, made a navigational error and ended up in Achintee Gully. He became cragfast and was rescued by Lochaber MRT uninjured. Lochaber MRT, 5.
- FEBRUARY 23 – Ben Nevis, No 2 Gully – Avalanche No 2 Gully Leader belaying on 2 ice screws when cornice collapsed, rope cut possibly by crampons and 2 below tumbled down. Leader got to top and called assistance. Both evacuated, one injured leg. Evacuated by Lochaber MRT, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 8.
- FEBRUARY 25 – Ben Nevis, Carn Mor Dearg Arete – Marines on training exercise, both lost footing in icy conditions and slid downhill for about 80 metres before coming to rest. Lochaber MRT and airlifted by R177. 1 casualty detained with ligament damage. Lochaber MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 8.
- MARCH 4 – Aonach Mor – 2 climbers on a unnamed route on Aonach Mor, left a route card and when they had not returned by 2000 Hrs, their partners called Police. Lochaber MRT and R177 located at South side of mountain and flown off. Lochaber MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 15.
- MARCH 6 – Aonach Mor – Avalanche. Climber on White Shark grade 4 ice climb, cornice collapsed as he was punching his way through at top. Fell 60 feet on to belay, breaking leg. Recovered by Lochaber MRT and R137. Lochaber MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 18.
- MARCH 9 – Ben Nevis Summit – Party of three climbed Ben Nevis by the Carn Mor Dearg Arete, reached summit at 1600 and could not navigate off, due to poor weather and ability! Talked off by mobile telephone by Lochaber Team Leader. No injuries. Lochaber MRT, 1.

- MARCH 25 – Ben Nevis – Male walker in a party of 2 reached summit but due to worsening weather felt unable to continue. His partner went for assistance, due to weather walked off by Lochaber MRT, who were deployed by R137 in poor weather. Cas suffered Lochaber MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 14.
- MARCH 29 – Ben Nevis – Lochaber MRT Called out on Ben Nevis. No further info at present, from Lochaber report log! Lochaber MRT, 1.
- APRIL 4 – Ben Nevis, Mtn path – Walker descending from the summit of Ben Nevis lost his footing on corner 6 of the Zigzags and sprained ankle. He got separated from party and was found by a passer by. Evacuated by Rescue 137 and Lochaber MRT. Lochaber MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 1.
- APRIL 5 – Ben Nevis, Mountain track – Whilst walking the Mountain Track of Ben Nevis as part of an organised group, one member took cramp which did not clear. Evacuated by R137 to Belford, no apparent injury, suitable advice given. Lochaber MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 2.
- APRIL 7 – Ben Nevis, Mountain path – Group of 5 reached summit of Ben Nevis at about 1830, weather changed to wind, snow and darkness. They lost path and became disorientated. They were unable to descend and contacted Police. Escorted off by Lochaber M Lochaber MRT, 12.
- April 15 – Ben Nevis, Tower Scoop – On reaching the top of Tower Scoop and fixing a belay, climber was hit by cornice collapse and blocks of ice hitting him and leaving him hanging to belay. He managed to abseil off with assistance of companions. Walke Lochaber MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 10.
- APRIL 15 – Ben Nevis, Observatory Ridge – Due to poor conditions, 2 climbers took longer than expected on Observatory Ridge on Ben Nevis. Made on way off the hill next day. Lochaber MRT, 1.
- APRIL 25 – Ben Nevis, Mountain path – Group of 6 on organised Charity walk got into difficulties on the descent of Ben Nevis, 2 slipped on ice/snow dislocating knee and ankle. All evacuated by R137. Lochaber MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 4.
- APRIL 28 – Ben Nevis, CIC Hut – Walker fell, slipped and injured knee near the CIC Hut, unable to walk and was helicoptered off to Belford Hospital. Lochaber MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 1.
- MAY 1 – Ben Nevis – Police were contacted that a casualty was in the Ben Nevis area and intending on taking his own life. Lochaber and Rescue137 deployed to Ben Nevis, casualty who was unconscious top of Red Burn was located and taken to Belford hospit Lochaber MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 8.
- MAY 3 – Glen Nevis, River Nevis – FATALITY. A party of 4 on boulders by the water on Nevis, when one slipped and fell into the water. Lochaber MRT and R 100 searched river, due to high water levels, the search was called off. Casualty found several days later. Lochaber MRT, RAF Kinloss MRT, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 38.
- MAY 4 – Glen Nevis, Ring of Steall – Walker reported missing in the Ring Of Steall area of Glen Nevis. Lochaber, Glencoe and RAF Kinloss MRT began a search when missing person was located in Fort William safe and well. Glencoe MRT, Lochaber MRT, RAF Kinloss MRT, SARDA(Scotland), RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 40.
- MAY 9 – Glen Nevis, Meanach Bothy – Walker fell whilst crossing river, landed

- heavily and injured knee, unable to walk evacuated by Lochaber MRT. Taken to Belford hospital. Lochaber MRT, 5.
- MAY 9 – Ben Nevis, Mountain path – Lochaber MRT assisted a girl on Charity Walk up Ben Nevis who fell, slipped 30 feet off the Mountain path near the second alloy bridge. She fell into gully injuring her face, skull and wrist. She was evacuated by R137 Lochaber MRT, 16.
- MAY 23 – Glen Nevis, Polldubh Crag – Lochaber MRT assisted a fallen rock climber (Guide) at Polldubh on Dundee Buttress. He slipped and fell on wet rock, fracturing skull and damaged vertebrae on back. Taken to Belford Hospital. Lochaber MRT, 9.
- MAY 23 – Carn Mor Dearg – 2 walkers left from YH, made CIC Hut summited Ben and caught by arctic weather. They had inadequate clothing and equipment. Bivied on NE side of arete in cold and wet conditions. Airlifted off by Rescue 177. Lochaber MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 12.
- MAY 24 – Mamores, Mullach Nan Coirean – Walker fell /slipped on wet grass and broke tibia and tibia on the Mamores. Lochaber MRT attended casualty treated and evacuated by Rescue 137. Lochaber MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 15.
- MAY 29 – Ben Nevis, Mountain path – Lochaber MRT to assist a walker on the Ben Nevis mountain path. Cas stumbled and fell down gorge approximately 30 feet. He punctured lung, broken arm and head injuries. Airlifted by Rescue 177. Lochaber MRT, 5.
- MAY 29 – Ben Nevis, Mountain path – Lochaber MRT assisted a walker on the Ben Nevis Mountain path. Second incident of the day. NO FURTHER INFO AT PRESENT. Lochaber MRT, 5.
- MAY 30 – Ben Nevis – Lochaber to assist in rescue on Ben Nevis limited, Call from member of public concerning assistance to walker. No help required well intentioned false alarm. Lochaber MRT, 4.
- JUNE 3 – Ben Nevis, Mountain path – Wife called Police worried husband only supposed to go to half way up Ben. He summited located by a member of Lochaber MRT on his way to Glen Nevis. He was well but had no means of communicating with his worried wife r Lochaber MRT, 1.
- JUNE 14 – Ben Nevis, Mountain path – Lochaber MRT to assist a walker with head injuries as a result of a fall on the Ben Path. Recovered by R137. Lochaber MRT, 8.
- JUNE 14 – Ben Nevis, Mountain path – Lochaber to assist report of young girl on her own on path below Windy Corner. Helo checked out as team on another incident on the same day. Lochaber MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 8.
- JUNE 19 – Ben Nevis, No 5 Gully – Lochaber to No 5 gully Ben Nevis LIMITED INFO AT PRESENT. Lochaber MRT, 8.
- JUNE 20 – Ben Nevis, Slingsby Chimney – Climber on route to Slingsby Chimney North East Buttress slipped and injured his shoulder. He was helped to the CIC Hut by his friends and evacuated by R177 to the Belford Hospital. Lochaber MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 1.
- JUNE 20 – Ben Nevis, Mountain path – Walker part of an organised group alone when he felt ill, started to descend and fell, injuring his head. Evacuated by Lochaber MRT and R177. Lochaber MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 10.

- JUNE 25 – Ben Nevis, Carn Mor Dearg area – Lochaber to assist walker crag fast in Coire Leis, had set out with partner and dog from North Face Car park. Cragfast rescued by Lochaber MRT and partner and dog taken off by R177. Lochaber MRT, 24.
- JULY 2 – Glen Nevis, Steall Falls – FATALITY Body found in Steall Falls area by walker, evacuated by Lochaber MRT. Multiple injuries as result of a fall. Lochaber MRT, 22.
- JULY 4 – Ben Nevis, Mountain path – Lochaber to incident on Ben Nevis Path, descending from summit, fell and injured hip, (wearing trainers), recovered by R137 taken to Belford and released after treatment. Lochaber MRT, 12.
- JULY 5 – Glen Nevis, Steall Falls – Lochaber to whistles heard in the Steal Falls area. 10 team members searched area for 6 and a half hours no find. Lochaber MRT, 10.
- JULY 6 – Glen Nevis, Steall Falls Area – Lochaber to another incident for ‘whistling deer’ Whistles heard by member of the public in Steall Falls. It was deer calling. Lochaber MRT, 18.
- JULY 12 – Glen Nevis, Steall Falls Area – Whistles heard in the Steall Falls area on consecutive days 12/13 July by members of the public. False alarm - possible deer mating! Taken from BBC News. Lochaber MRT, 15.
- JULY 14 – Luibeilt, Mamores – Outward bound student injured ankle whilst on expedition. Evacuated by Glencoe MRT landrover. Glencoe MRT, 2.
- JULY 16 – Ben Nevis, Coire Ghuibhsachan – Lochaber in a rescue in Coire Ghuibhsachan, 6 team members involved. The Casualty was camping and was hit by a stone, airlifted from the hill by Rescue 137. Lochaber MRT, 6.
- JULY 28 – Ben Nevis, Mountain path – Lochaber to incident on Ben Nevis. Casualty walking with son felt unwell on reaching half way point, he took two seizures and lost consciousness. Airlifted by Rescue 177. Casualty kept in Belford hospital overnight. Lochaber MRT, 2.
- JULY 28 – Kilfinnam – Lochaber called out by Police for whistles heard in mountains. It was a deer that was making the noise, the second incident of this year. Lochaber MRT, 4.
- AUGUST 9 – Ben Nevis, Mountain path – Lochaber MRT to a search for a missing 12 year old boy, his parents were uncertain of his location. Turned up safe and well. Lochaber MRT, 11.
- AUGUST 10 – Glen Nevis, Steall Gorge – Lochaber MRT to an incident at Steall Gorge. No further info at present. Lochaber MRT, 12.
- AUGUST 10 – Glen Nevis, Steall path – Lochaber MRT assist a 42 year old male walker with head injuries on the Steall Path Glen Nevis. 12 MRT attended. He slipped when crossing the river. Lochaber MRT, 14.
- AUGUST 18 – Ben Nevis, Mountain path – Lochaber to assist a walker on Ben Nevis on the mountain path when he suffered chest pains. He was airlifted from the hill to the Belford Hospital, where he was treated for a suspected heart attack and transferred Lochaber MRT, 9.
- AUGUST 19 – Ben Nevis, Mountain path – Walker was descending Ben Nevis when she lost her footing resulting in a broken ankle. She was stretchered off the hill by Lochaber MRT. Lochaber MRT, 13.
- AUGUST 25 – Ciaran Bothy, Mamores – Injured female evacuated by helicopter

- from Ciaran bothy, she had become unwell and collapsed. Rescue 137 Helicopter diverted from search in Mamores. Cas taken to Belford suffering from a bug. Glencoe MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 1.
- AUGUST 25 – Aonach Beag, West Side – FATALITY. Walker fell over 250 metres, recovered by Lochaber and R137. Lochaber MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 23.
- AUGUST 27 – Ben Nevis, Five Finger Gully – 2 Belgium walkers ended up in Five Finger Gully Ben Nevis in poor weather, and fatigue became cragfast and requested assistance. Taken off by Lochaber MRT and R137. Lochaber MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 23.
- AUGUST 28 – Mamore Lodge, West Highland Way – Request to assist a walker with ‘cramp’ on West Highland Way, originally given as Mamore Lodge. Incorrect location given initially – 700 metres up Coire Brogie! Evacuated by Glencoe MRT. Glencoe MRT, 11.
- AUGUST 28 – Ben Nevis, Mountain path – Walker on the Ben Nevis in a large party, fell behind, reaching summit at 1500 Hrs. About 1 hr into descent she slipped and fell, banging her head and breaking her wrist. She continued for a short distance then du Lochaber MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 10.
- AUGUST 30 – Ben Nevis, Mountain path – 2 female walkers reported overdue on Ben Nevis path, located with a party of 9 at aluminium bridges. Lochaber MRT, 5.
- SEPTEMBER 1 – Ben Nevis, Mountain path – Lochaber MRT to assist a walker with Parkinson’s disease located between Achintee and the Youth Hostel. Lochaber MRT, 12.
- SEPTEMBER 5 – Ben Nevis Race – Lochaber assisted another runner in the annual Ben Nevis Race/ Limited info at present. Lochaber MRT, 20.
- SEPTEMBER 5 – Ben Nevis Race – Lochaber assisted a hill runner in the annual Ben Nevis race, Limited Info at present. Lochaber MRT, 20.
- SEPTEMBER 6 – Mamores, Binnein Mor/ Beag – Solo walker overdue on Mamores Binnein Mor/ Beag due to poor planning and darkness. Located by Lochaber MRT. Glencoe MRT, Lochaber MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 21.
- SEPTEMBER 10 – Mamores, Stob Ban – Lochaber MRT to assist a walker on Stob Ban (Mamores) Limited info at present. Lochaber MRT, 3.
- SEPTEMBER 14 – Ben Nevis, Mountain path – Walker on Ben Nevis Mountain Path, twisted her knee, tried to walk off. Requested assistance from Lochaber MRT. Carried off by Lochaber. Lochaber MRT, 12.
- SEPTEMBER 16 – Glen Nevis, Steall Waterfall – Walker part of organised group, whilst descending lost balance and fell. He fell 100 metres and suffered gashes to his head. Lochaber and Rescue 137 evacuated casualty, injury required stitches. Lochaber MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 6.
- SEPTEMBER 20 – Ben Nevis, Mountain path – Lochaber MRT already on an incident on Ben Nevis Path. Casualty from Denmark with knee pain was unable to continue was assisted off the hill. Lochaber MRT, 12.
- SEPTEMBER 20 – Ben Nevis, Mountain path – Lochaber to incident on Ben Nevis path near windy corner experienced pain in her knees unable to continue and rescued by Rescue 177. Released from hospital with no treatment. Lochaber MRT, 12.

- SEPTEMBER 26 – Ben Nevis, Mountain path – Walker male after summiting as part of organised group on descent suffered chest pains. Taken off by Lochaber and Rescue 177 about half an hour from bottom of path. Taken to Belford Hospital. Lochaber MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 16.
- OCTOBER 1 – Ben Nevis, Base of Tower Ridge – Lochaber MRT and Rescue 177 to a climber who fell 2 metres near base of Tower Ridge. Head, ribs, wrist and spinal injuries. Evacuated to Belford Hospital. Lochaber MRT, 16.
- OCTOBER 1 – Ben Nevis, Coire Giubhsachan – Lochaber MRT to assist a father and daughter lost on Ben Nevis, told that path became rough, lost their way, weather poor snowing! poor navigation. They called Police and were located in corrie opposite Steall Lochaber MRT, 9.
- OCTOBER 3 – Ben Nevis, Mountain track – Lochaber MRT assisted a walker with a knee injury and severe hypothermia and carried him off the hill. Taken to Belford hospital. Lochaber MRT, 12.
- OCTOBER 5 – Ben Nevis, Coire Leis, Abseil Pos – 2 females on Ben Nevis evacuated by Lochaber MRT. One with severe leg cramps, evacuated by Rescue 177. It was training with Glencoe MRT at the time. Lochaber MRT, 3.
- OCTOBER 11 – Ben Nevis, Mountain track – Lochaber MRT and Rescue 137 to assist a possible stroke/epilepsy casualty on Ben Nevis path early in day. Casualty kept in Belford hospital for 2 days. Lochaber MRT, 7.
- OCTOBER 15 – Glen Nevis, Steall Falls – Lochaber to assist 2 people cragfast above Steall Falls after walking the Ring of Steall, 11 Lochaber MRT and Rescue 177 in attendance. Navigation, lights seen by walkers. Lochaber MRT, 12.
- NOVEMBER 12 – Ben Nevis Summit – Solo walker used shelter to change clothing, due to strong winds was unable to walk. He stayed in summit shelter overnight and phoned for advice. Assisted off by Lochaber MRT and Rescue 177 in the morning, no injuries Lochaber MRT, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 15.
- DECEMBER 13 – Aonach Beag – 2 walkers cragfast on Aonach Beag due to ice and snow as they descended. They were uninjured but cold/ hypothermic. Taken off by Lochaber and Rescue 177. No winter kit! Lochaber MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 12.
- DECEMBER 29 – Ben Nevis, Observatory Ridge – False alarm with good intent, 2 climbers reported in trouble, in Observatory Ridge, signalling for help, they abseiled off. Lochaber MRT. Lochaber MRT, 2.
- DECEMBER 30 – Ben Nevis, Coire na Ciste – FATALITIES AVALANCHE 2 climbers killed when slope avalanched, near No 3 Gully Buttress, all swept to small Lochan in Ciste, one got out other 2 buried. Major operation, by Lochaber and RAF Leuchars, SARDA on ro Lochaber MRT, RAF Kinloss MRT, RAF Leuchars MRT, SARDA(Scotland), Torridon MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 34.

### **GLENCOE (Including BEM)**

- JANUARY 3 – Glencoe, Stob Coire Sgreamhach – Walker no crampons encountered area of ice, tried to avoid it and fell, injuring his ankle. R177 was already in area on another incidents and quickly recovered casualty. Glencoe MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 1.

- JANUARY 5 – Glencoe, Dalness – Walker above Dalness on Buachaille with a sprained ankle recovered by helicopter R177, no team involvement. Glencoe MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 1.
- JANUARY 5 – Glencoe, Stob Coire Nan Lochan – Solo climber in NC Gully, slipped and fell suffering a broken ankle. Assisted by other climbers on the hill. Glencoe assembled but not deployed cas recovered by R177. Glencoe MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 18.
- JANUARY 18 – Glencoe, Stob Coire Sgreamhach – Group of students split into groups for a climb on the mountain, 2 turned back, one continued to summit. When group returned to car park reported 1 as missing. He had asked out by a different route to Glen Et Glencoe MRT, 13.
- JANUARY 24 – Glencoe, Buachaille Etive Mor – FATALTY. Large slab avalanche Buachaille Etive Mor, Coire Tulaich, 9 climbers engulfed. Survivors dug with axes and hands to rescue survivors. 3 all members of one club, one injured. Glencoe MR, 2 Sea King H Glencoe MRT, Lochaber MRT, SARDA(Scotland), RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 27.
- JANUARY 24 – Glencoe, Aonach Eagach – Walker fell 60 feet on Aonach Eagach, luckily he came to rest on soft snow. Contact another group on hill by whistle for assistance. Rescued by R177 injuries, chipped shoulder and bruising on ribs! Glencoe MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 1.
- FEBRUARY 13 – Ben Cruachan – Walker got lost on Ben Cruachan, he gave a good description of where he was. Police search planners directed police wagon to dam and put on blue lights. Casualty walked off to blue lights, safe and well. Oban MRT, Strathclyde MRT, 17.
- FEBRUARY 20 – Glencoe, Coire Gabhail – Footbridge Walker slipped after descending from Hidden Valley Glencoe, at bridge and fell in river. Companion alerted Glencoe team, Casualty had skull and shoulder fracture, evacuated by Glencoe MRT. Glencoe MRT, 15.
- MARCH 1 – Glencoe, Stob Coire nan Lochan – Faller fell 700 feet in Glencoe possibly a Cornice collapse reported on SC Gully. Cas minor injuries, leg and back very luck lucky man! Glencoe MRT and R137. Glencoe MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 15.
- MARCH 3 – Glencoe, Pap of Glencoe – 3 walkers lost after climbing Aonach Eagach Ridge, called for assistance in bad weather. Walked off by Glencoe MRT. All unhurt. Glencoe MRT, 14.
- APRIL 2 – Glencoe, Aonach Eagach – Glencoe MRT to assist solo walker with leg injury evacuated by R100 coastguard helicopter from the pinnacles on the Aonach Eagach. She fell backwards and slipped into a small gully where she found a discarded ice axe Glencoe MRT, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 9.
- APRIL 13 – Glencoe, Creag na Chrulaiste – Glencoe to assist 2 walkers cragfast on Creag na Chrulaiste in Glencoe, taken to top of “K rib” assisted of both safe and well. Glencoe MRT, 8.
- APRIL 16 – Nr Mamore Lodge, West Highland Way – Walker on West Highland Way injured knee old injury and was taken off by Glencoe MRT in a landrover about 2 miles from Mamore Lodge Hotel. Glencoe MRT, 4.
- MAY 7 – Beinn Sguillard – Casualty had summited Beinn Sguillard, slipped on wet peaty surface and got walking pole caught between leg, breaking tibia fibula! Stretchered off by Oban and Arrochar to cloud base at 600 metres and

- R177 and R137 for evacuated Arrochar MRT, Oban MRT, Strathclyde MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 24.
- MAY 18 – Glencoe, Bidian Nam Bian – Glencoe MRT assisted a walker lost in mist and rain on Bidian Nam Bian in Glencoe, she called local Police. Located and escorted off hill by Glencoe MRT none the worse for her ordeal. Glencoe MRT, 13.
- MAY 29 – Glencoe, Clachaig Gully path – Report of a party cragfast on the Clachaig Gully path in Glencoe. Made their own way down to the road. Glencoe MRT, 7.
- MAY 29 – Glencoe, Lost Valley – Casualty with a leg injury in Coire Gabhail. located and stabilised by Glencoe MRT and evacuated by R177. Glencoe MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 10.
- MAY 30 – Ben Cruachan – Oban MRT member met a injured walker who had fallen on boulders injuring leg on Ben Cruachan assisted off and walked off to Dam. Oban MRT, 3.
- JUNE 3 – Etive Slabs, Pinch Direct – Glencoe MRT to fallen climber on Etive Slabs Pinch Direct, who had fallen and fractured both ankles. Stretchered off and assistance given by Glen Etive Estate, use of tracked vehicle to waiting ambulance. Glencoe MRT, Nonspecialists (Non-MR), 8.
- JUNE 6 – Aonach Dubh, North Face – Glencoe MRT called to assist 2 walkers who became cragfast on the North Face of Aonach Dubh, walked of mountain by team, no injuries. Glencoe MRT, 14.
- JUNE 10 – Glencoe, Clachaig Gully West – Glencoe MRT to assist 2 walkers who were cragfast and fatigued after completing Aonach Eagach. Recovered by Glencoe MRT from location and no hospital treatment required. Glencoe MRT, 8.
- JUNE 13 – Glencoe, Aonach Eagach – FATALITY. Glencoe MRT to assist in the recovery of a male who fell while descending the Clachaig path on the Aonach Eagach Ridge in Glencoe. R177 assisted in the recovery. Glencoe MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 12.
- JUNE 16 – Glencoe, Lost Valley – Glencoe MRT to casualty who had fallen/slipped descending Lost Valley in Glencoe. He had sustained an ankle injury possible sprain. Escorted off hill by team. Glencoe MRT, 1.
- JUNE 24 – West Highland Way, Lairig Mor – 2 Inexperienced walkers, very heavy packs and unfit, walked 8 miles in 8 hours! on West Highland Way. Called for ambulance who in turn contacted Glencoe MRT, assisted off no injuries, after checked over by team d Glencoe MRT, 5.
- JUNE 25 – Glencoe, Clachaig Gully, West path – Glencoe MRT to assist a walker who had fallen as she descended the Clachaig path on the Aonach Eagach. She fell 40 feet injuring right arm and right leg. Stretchered off by Glencoe MRT to Ambulance. Glencoe MRT, 13.
- JULY 10 – Aonach Eagach, Clachaig Gully West – Two cragfast after descending Clachaig Gully West on Aonach Eagach. Escorted by Glencoe MRT to road. Glencoe MRT, 20.
- JULY 10 – Glencoe, Pap of Glencoe – Three overdue on Pap of glencoe limited information at present. Taken off by Glencoe MRT. Glencoe MRT, 1.
- JULY 15 – Glencoe, Clachaig Gully – FATALITY Walker reported overdue from Clachaig Hotel. He was located on descent from Aonach Eagach in the area

- known as Clachaig Gully, the result of a fall. Located by helicopter Rescue 177 at first light. Second Glencoe MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 14.
- JULY 22 – Glencoe, Aonach Eagach – 2 Walkers cragfast above the Blue Riband on Aonach Eagach attempting to descend. Glencoe MRT Team airlifted in and escorted pair to a site suitable for winching. Glencoe MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 10.
- JULY 22 – Glencoe, Buachille Etive Mor – Lights seen on Buachaille Etive Mor, team searched area. Climbers were on a night climb of Curved Ridge. Glencoe MRT, 11.
- JULY 30 – Glencoe, Aonach Dubh – Glencoe MRT assisted a climber with hand injury adjacent to Ossians Cave, evacuated to road. Glencoe MRT, 8.
- AUGUST 6 – Glencoe, Coire Gabhail – Walker camping in Coire Gabhail Glencoe, and whilst walking was unable to walk next day. Escorted of the hill next day by Glencoe MRT. Glencoe MRT, 10.
- AUGUST 8 – Glencoe, An t Stron – Walker reported missing on An -T Stron, with no torch found near road by Glencoe MRT. Glencoe MRT, 1.
- AUGUST 20 – Kinlochleven, West Highland Way – Walker reported missing on West Highland Way, located near Kinlochleven. Glencoe MRT, 1.
- AUGUST 30 – Glencoe, Church Door Buttress – Two walkers cragfast in mist above Church Door Buttress, Bidean Nam Bian. Mist cleared and they started down assisted by Glencoe MRT. Glencoe MRT, 12.
- AUGUST 30 – Blackmount, Meall Beag – Casualty involved in low level hillwalking, in the Blackmount area. He slipped and fell, resulting in lower leg minor injury. Taken off by Glencoe MRT by means of a tracked supercat to waiting ambulance. Glencoe MRT, 14.
- SEPTEMBER 1 – Glencoe, Aonach Eagach – Ridge 3 Walkers cragfast above the Blue Riband on the Aonach Eagach Ridge in mist, rain and poor visibility. No rucksacks, maps or compasses. Recovered by Glencoe MRT no injuries. Glencoe MRT, 13.
- SEPTEMBER 16 – Glencoe, Sgurr na Ullaidh – Husband and wife walking in Glencoe descending when wife fell behind. He waited but no sign of her. Contacted Police, Glencoe MRT located casualty in Glen Charnan she had fallen further up and injured her he Glencoe MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 12.
- SEPTEMBER 26 – Glencoe, Stob Coire nam Beith – Light were reported by in Glencoe Coire Nam Beith, party of 11 with 5 torches. No assistance required. Glencoe MRT, 1.
- OCTOBER 26 – Glencoe, Clachaig Gully path – 2 walkers cragfast in Clachaig Gully path, talked back on to main path and down by Pap path. Glencoe MRT. Glencoe MRT, 3.
- OCTOBER 28 – Glencoe, Stob Coire nan Lochan – Party of 3 benighted in Stob Coire Nam Lochan talked down by Glencoe MRT, walked off the hill at 2345! Glencoe MRT, 3.
- OCTOBER 29 – Glencoe, Aonach Eagach – 2 walkers tried to descend the ramp on Aonach Eag, talked back on to ridge then continued on ridge Glencoe MRT. Glencoe MRT, 1.
- NOVEMBER 8 – Beinn Trilleachan – Walker fell broke wrist taken of Beinn

- Trilleachan by Glencoe MRT, Oban MRT on way back from training airlifted by Rescue 177 to Oban Hospital. Glencoe MRT, Oban MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 29.
- NOVEMBER 14 – Beinn Sgulaire – Light seen on Beinn Sgulaire and car still in car park. Oban MRT assembled, with search of basic hill route started. Farmer noted lights above farm on track, team members assisted walkers off, no problems. Oban MRT, 10.
- NOVEMBER 18 – Glencoe, Stob Coire nan Lochan – Party of 3 lost bearings on Stob Coire Nam Lochan, in the dark, called the emergency services. They were talked off the hill and met by Glencoe MRT. Poor navigation. Glencoe MRT, 2.
- NOVEMBER 27 – Glencoe, Coire Gabhail path – Walker fell from path into the gorge at Coire Gabhail path at bridge, head injuries and very cold, cableway lift and then stretcher. Glencoe MRT, 15.
- DECEMBER 5 – Glencoe, Aonach Eagach – 3 walkers cragfast on the Aonach Eagach, tied to a pinnacle! Located by Glencoe, moved to area for the helicopter and taken off by R177, no injuries. Glencoe MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 14.
- DECEMBER 12 – Glencoe, Lost Valley path – FATALITY. Walker slipped/fell into river whilst descending near the bridge at Lost Valley. 3 climbers descending heard whistles went to assist. As they were setting up ropes one fell and was fatally injured. Glencoe MRT, 13.
- DECEMBER 13 – Glencoe, Stob Coire nan Lochan – Glencoe MRT assist a faller climber in Coire nan Lochan whilst descending, who slipped. Possibly a 200 metres fall in the Pinnacle Buttress area, taken to Belford hospital. Conditions very hard neve. Glencoe MRT, 1.
- DECEMBER 13 – Glencoe, Stob Coire nan Lochan – Second incident in Coire Nan Lochan Glencoe, in Broad Gully climber fell whilst descending and fell 200 feet. Evacuated to Belford hospital with bruising and pelvis injury by Glencoe, SAIS and Rescue 177. Glencoe MRT, 1.
- DECEMBER 13 – Glencoe, Stob Coire nan Lochan – Third incident in Coire nan Lochan. Climber fell whilst descending Broad Gully, injured head, evacuated by Glencoe MRT and Rescue 177. Glencoe MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 20.
- DECEMBER 26 – Glencoe, Lost Valley path – Walker fell off path when descending and fell into river suffering head injury and fracturing vertebrae, puncturing lung. Casualty taken out by ropes from river by Glencoe MRT, to waiting ambulance. Glencoe MRT, 17.
- DECEMBER 29 – Glencoe, Glen an Fhith – 2 Walkers on Ballahullish Horseshoe left each other on the way down, one ended up in forest, assisted by Glencoe MRT, no injuries. Glencoe MRT, 16.
- DECEMBER 31 – Glencoe, Stob Coire nan Lochan – Reports of two missing climbers following ascent of Boomerang Gully. Spotted descending by nightsight. Glencoe MRT, 1.

## **OTHER CENTRAL HIGHLANDS**

- JANUARY 6 – Ochils, Craigeith – Walker became crag fast ascending the steep

Westward side of Craigleith, fearing he would slip in the snow and fall. He had no ice axe, map compass he was unclear of his whereabouts. He managed to slide himself onto a r Ochils MRT, 5.

JANUARY 13 – Glen Banchor, Newtonmore – The MP had a panic attack and was convinced he was going to slip and die in the dark. Refused all advice given. Had no confidence to navigate and needed to be taken off the mountain. 137 obliged. Cairngorm MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 1.

MARCH 7 – Am Bodach, behind Newtonmore – The 58 Year old male collapsed to the ground whilst on a route to do two Munros. He was placed in a bivvy bag by his friend who dialled 999. He was hypothermic and R137 was called with 8 CMRT at base. Both taken o Cairngorm MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 8.

MARCH 23 – Kingussie, Blair Atholl – 2 walkers left train at Kingussie a 2 day walk/ camp at Glen Tromie. Next day crossed the Minigaig Pass in deep snow. Got lost and ended in Glen Bruar, they camped again. Found at Alt Sheanachan bothy by MRT. Taken SARDA(Scotland), Tayside MRT, Tayside Police MRT, 21.

MARCH 23 – Kinloch Rannoch, Sgor Gaibhre – Walker was in a party of 3 who decided to split, when missing person did not return alarm was raised. R100 located a heat source on hill. dog team located casualty safe and well. Tayside Police MRT. SARDA (Scotland), Tayside MRT, Tayside Police MRT, HMC G Stornaway Helicopter, 19.

MAY 11 – Rannoch Moor, Black Corries – Camper fell whilst getting water from burn hit head, suffered injury to left ear and head. Evacuated by Glencoe MRT by Supacat. Treated by local Doctor. Glencoe MRT, 3.

MAY 16 – Beinn a' Chlachair, near Laggan – FATALITY. A female walker came across a male at 1630 who had collapsed at 1330. He had been unconscious but did manage to talk to her. Exhaustion or medical condition meant he could not move. 137 recovered body Cairngorm MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 14.

MAY 25 – Ben Alder – FATALITY. The MP got separated from his companion. With no map or compass he took the wrong descent route and fell around 150m to his death. Multiple injuries. Huge search over 3 days involving over 1000 man hours and 7 team Cairngorm MRT, Lochaber MRT, RAF Kinloss MRT, SARDA(Scotland), Tayside MRT, Tayside Police MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 78.

MAY 28 – Hills Behind Laggan – A real waste of time. The MP claims to have told his wife he was out for 2 or 3 nights. She told the police and CMRT he was definitely out for 1 night only! A frosty home in Glenrothes I think! Cairngorm MRT, Glenmore Lodge MRT, RAF Kinloss MRT, SARDA(Scotland), RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 36.

JUNE 27 – Ardverikie, Alt Coire Pitridh – Cairngorm MRT assisted a walker possible heart problems during a Sponsored Walk in the Ardverikie Estate, given Oxygen and taken off to ambulance by landrover. Cairngorm MRT, 6.

JUNE 27 – Creag Pitridh – The casualty was on the CMRT sponsored walk. He took ill and our doc recommended an air ambulance. The casualty was paranoid syhizophenic on medication. He was the put on an ambulance to Raigmore. Cairngorm MRT, 4.

- JULY 15 – Blackwater Dam, Rannoch – Woman with injured knee evacuated by landrover by Glencoe MRT, she had managed to walk down track. Glencoe MRT, 2.
- AUGUST 10 – Aberfoyle, Queen Elizabeth Forest – 2 walkers got lost in the Queen Elizabeth Forest Park near Aberfoyle. They contacted the Police and Lomond MRT called out. Both casualties were okay and managed to get back themselves as search started by Lomond MRT, 7.
- SEPTEMBER 9 – Kirkpatrick Hills – Party walking The Wangie Failfley. Police called at 2320 that one member of a party of 2 had fallen and hurt his back/pelvis and ‘could not move. On a forest road. One torch between them. Lomond MRT, cas was taken Lomond MRT, 15.
- OCTOBER 11 – Glen Ample – Member of organised walking group, well equipped, she slipped and fell breaking ankle, assisted by member of Killin MRT. Taken to ambulance and then to Stirling Hospital. Killin MRT, 1.
- OCTOBER 21 – Ben Chonzie – Walker navigating from the summit eastwards fell over a small cliff 20 feet, injuring lower arm and soft tissue injury to leg and head. Tayside Police and Rescue 177 Evacuated casualty to Southern General Hospital. Tayside Police MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 3.
- NOVEMBER 8 – Tillacoultry, Woodhill – Lights seen on the hill by walkers, Ochils MRT searched area nothing found around Woodhill Tillacoultry. Ochils MRT, 6.
- NOVEMBER 8 – Near Ben Alder Cottage Bothy – The two became separated on the path. The MP blacked out (possibly due to whisky) and his companion could not find him. Some hillwalkers from Corroul Lodge were tasked to find the MP which they did. Cairngorm MRT, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 3.

## CAIRNGORMS

- JANUARY 3 – Cairngorms, Beinn Bhrotain – The group split as two decided to do another top. One got home safely the other two were overdue. They had set off at 0500 and were very tired. We decide as it was a long way to give them more time. Cairngorm MRT, 3.
- JANUARY 4 – Cairngorm – EMAIL USED TO ALERT TEAM! The MPs were reported missing ‘somewhere’ on Cairngorm. The car was in the ski car park. Very concerned for their safety. A navigation error put them in Glen Luibeg after completing a route in Sneachd Cairngorm MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 3.
- JANUARY 6 – Cairngorm, Loch An Eilein – An elderly lady and daughter set off at 1400. The husband was worried about their time. No maps compass or torches. CMRT put on standby but not required as they were found at 1800 by police. Cairngorm MRT, 4.
- JANUARY 6 – Lochnagar, Central Buttress – Two climbers reported overdue on Lochnagar on Central Buttress. two Grampian/ Braemar MRT responded. Both walked off cold tired and uninjured. Braemar MRT, Grampian Police MRT, 3.
- JANUARY 15 – Upper Glen Geldie – Teams called for missing 46 yr old reported in upper Glen Geldie, possibly Carn Ealer or Monadh Mor. Team deployed as walker turned up safe at White bridge track. Aberdeen MRT, Braemar MRT, Grampian Police MRT, 17.

- JANUARY 16 – Cairngorms, Carn Ban Mor – The MP's map blew away. He had a gps but was very disorientated. Called the police at 1500. The MP panicked (his words). Police called CMRT. We decided to wait until 1800. Found OK at 1950. Cairngorm MRT, 16.
- JANUARY 18 – Glen Doll, Mayar – Phonecall from 2 person who had become disorientated after the Summit of Mayar. They had a GPS and compass gave an accurate grid of location. Tayside MR located cas on foot, Ri37 Took cas to Control, no injuries, just SARDA(Scotland), SARDA (Southern Scotland), Tayside MRT, Tayside Police MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 21.
- JANUARY 18 – Spittal of Glenshee – Tayside MR after incident on Mayar on same day called to Spittal of Glenshee to overdue waker phoned in by a worried spouse. He turned up safe and well at an early part of the callout. Tayside MRT, Tayside Police MRT, 16.
- JANUARY 19 – Lochnagar, Central Buttress – 2 climbers reported overdue by a friend on Central Buttress Lochnagar. Two Braemar team members called out by Police to make track searches. Located tired and cold but uninjured, navigation and lack of experie Braemar MRT, Grampian Police MRT, 3.
- JANUARY 22 – Mount Keen – Solo walker caught in blizzard on Mount Keen and bivouacked. Wife called Police when he did not return in morning, she was not sure what hill he was on. Located at car at Spittal 1130 next day after walking off hill. Braemar an Braemar MRT, Grampian Police MRT, 11.
- JANUARY 31 – Cairngorms, Coire Cas Head Wall – FATALITY. The casualty tripped/was blown over the head wall of Coire Cas into boulder field. She sustained serious head wounds and died later in Aberdeen Hospital. CPR given by teams training nearby. Casualt Arrochar MRT, Ski Patrol, Cairngorm MRT, Glenmore Lodge MRT, Strathclyde MRT, 20.
- FEBRUARY 1 – Clova, Kilbo path – Walker fell in icy conditions descending from Mayar from ridge above Kilbo path into Corrie about 200 metres, axe and crampons in bag. Tayside MRT located and provided Cas care prior to evacuation by R137. Tayside MRT, Tayside Police MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 17.
- FEBRUARY 1 – Cairngorms, Trident Gullies – The casualty tripped and could not use her axe due to hard surface. Fell/slid 100m, came to rest beside Strath Pol MR. Walked out by SPMRT treated for injuries by SS of CMRT at base station. Cairngorm MRT, Strathclyde MRT, 8.
- FEBRUARY 1 – Goat Track, Coire An t Sneachda – Strong gust of wind blew him off his feet. He did manage to arrest for a while but caught a crampon and spun. Fell 80 m. Again Strath Pol were in the area and SS was coordinating. Cairngorm MRT, Strathclyde MRT, 22.
- FEBRUARY 4 – Cairngorm Plateau – The two MP's completed a route and got lost on the Plateau. Spent the night at The Saddle. One was insulin diabetic. This was a very difficult search due to waist deep snow. Found safe and well next day by Re Cairngorm MRT, RAF Kinloss MRT, SARDA(Scotland), Strathclyde MRT, 57.
- FEBRUARY 8 – Bennachie – 2 walkers one aged 77, lost the path in the snow, they were following footprints on a walk on Bennachie. Due to darkness they ended up above the tree line. They were assisted of by Braemar MRT. Braemar MRT, Grampian Police MRT, 5.

- FEBRUARY 10 – Dinnet, Burn o’ Vat – A very angry foreign walker phoned Police to say he needed a helicopter food as he was in deep snow wearing welly boots on Culbean Hill Dinnet. He was abusive in 3 languages, located by SARDA and Braemar near his vehicle Braemar MRT, Grampian Police MRT, 5.
- FEBRUARY 12 – Loch An Eilein – The two MPs went for a walk round Loch an Eilein and got lost in the dark. Jeans/ poor footwear/ no map /compass no clue really. 3 CMRT sent to get them back to their car. Cairngorm MRT, 4.
- FEBRUARY 12 – Cairngorm, Fiacail Choire Cas – The casualty had been snow holing the night before. On the walk out he tripped and broke his leg in four places. Stretchered off by CMRT assisted by Ski Patrol. RAF Kinloss were at our rescue base. Cairngorm MRT, RAF Kinloss MRT, 21.
- FEBRUARY 17 – Kinveachy Estate, North of Aviemore – The MPs got lost in the dark. No head torch. Couldn’t progress through heather/bog/rivers. Called in using their mobile. Would have been OK if they had a torch. Cairngorm MRT, SARDA(Scotland), RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 5.
- FEBRUARY 20 – Cairn above Coire Cas – The two friends ‘lost’ each other on the way back from Hell’s Lum. They bumped into one of GLMRT who reported it to myself. Both probably would have made it home safely without any help. Cairngorm MRT, Glenmore Lodge MRT, 4.
- FEBRUARY 20 – Goat Track in Sneachda – The casualty took a fall down the Goat Track. He was attended to by a male from Kingussie. CMRT passed control of the incident to Glenmore MRT as they had instructors in the area. Slight injuries. Cairngorm MRT, Glenmore Lodge MRT, 4.
- FEBRUARY 21 – Mullach Clach a’ Bhlair – The two MPs were from the Royal Navy. I was happy to leave it until 2200 before getting concerned but 137 was keen to go right away understandably. The two MP’s turned up safe and well. Cairngorm MRT, 4.
- FEBRUARY 21 – North East of Beinn a’ Ghlo – A walker was overdue as he went East from Carn Nan Gobhar instead of West due to navigation error. Walked through the night and walked off next day to the A924. Located at Moulin after losing path and walking SARDA(Scotland), Tayside MRT, Tayside Police MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 19.
- FEBRUARY 22 – Glen Feshie, Carn Ban Mor – FATALITY. Heart attack. MP went for a walk with his dog. Very poor gear, no waterproofs/rucksack/hat/food or gloves. Cotton clothes. Possible MI or exposure. Huge search 3 days by 6 teams, SARDA. Aberdeen MRT, Braemar MRT, Cairngorm MRT, Glenmore Lodge MRT, Grampian Police MRT, RAF Kinloss MRT, SARDA(Scotland), Tayside MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 117.
- FEBRUARY 22 – Lochnagar – Walker with sprained ankle managed to walk off as far as the Alt na Guibhsaich. He was assisted off hill by Aberdeen MRT, who were out training. Aberdeen MRT, 1.
- FEBRUARY 22 – Creag Choinnich – Walker fell on tree roots and injured ankle. Stretchered 2 miles by Braemar and walker’s party to ambulance 2 miles away. Braemar MRT, Grampian Police MRT, 3.
- MARCH 1 – Cairngorms, Head Wall of Coire Cas – We were called to assist with a walker who had tumbled down the head wall and could no longer weight bear. Simon Steer was on scene and asked for assistance from the ski patrol to evacuate him. Cairngorm MRT, 2.

- MARCH 3 – Lochnagar, Meikle Pap – Walker blown over slipped and broke lower leg in high winds. Taken off by Rescue 137 the rest of the party assisted off by Braemar MRT, Braemar MRT, Grampian Police MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 19.
- MARCH 4 – Cairngorms, Bynack More – The MP's went to Fords of Avon. Did not look at a map when planning to return. Ended up in Findouran for the night. Reported overdue so CMRT asked to assist with 137. Found by 137 near Bynack More. Cairngorm MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 9.
- MARCH 12 – Cairngorm, Coire Cas – Male fell on walk and injured head on rocks, near ski lifts evacuated by Cairngorm Ski patrol and Cairngorm 'Heather'. Cairngorm MRT, 6.
- MARCH 23 – Carn an t-Sagairt Mor – Solo walker lost with no equipment map compass, torch etc overnight, called for assistance, found in well known location Carn an t-Sagairt Mor by Grampian/ Braemar and Leuchars MRT. He was cold but unhurt! Braemar MRT, Grampian Police MRT, RAF Leuchars MRT, 12.
- MARCH 29 – Coire an Lochain – The casualty fell off 'Hoarmaster' and broke his leg. His two companions phoned for help. The group were Aberdeen University. CMRT were out training and able to assist 137 who evacuated to Raigmore. Cairngorm MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 13.
- APRIL 4 – Cairngorm, Ryvoan Bothy – Male walker in a group of 5 after a days hillwalking had severe cramps at Ryvoan bothy. Taken off the hill by Glenmore Lodge. Glenmore Lodge MRT, 2.
- APRIL 18 – Cairngorms, Lairig Ghru – The party camped the night before in the Lairig Ghru. They tried to ascend to Cairngorm and got themselves cragfast. It was a fantastic flying day and 137 dealt with it. 4 CMRT at base on standby. Cairngorm MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 4.
- MAY 1 – Cairngorms, White Bridge – Dutch walker on a multi day trip Blair Atholl Larig Gru, injured ankle whilst camping in a isolated location. He managed to walk to White Bridge area when a cyclist went for assistance. Assisted off by Grampian/ Bra Braemar MRT, Grampian Police MRT, 3.
- MAY 4 – Corroun Bothy – The MP had not contacted family for one week. His last text spoke about a 'bad storm'. We decided to get the bothies checked. CMRT did north of Cairngorm 137 did the south end. Found him in Corroun. Cairngorm MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 3.
- MAY 8 – Cairngorms, West Ridge of Lochan – Walker on West Ridge of Lochan with 2 dogs was blown over in high winds and broke ankle, Glenmore Lodge MRT assisted with pain relief, casualty taken off hill by Rescue 177. Cairngorm MRT, Glenmore Lodge MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 5.
- MAY 9 – Cairngorms, Braeraich – Solo walker caught by full winter conditions on Braeriach, he had split from his father to go to summit. Called police as having navigation problems on Plateau, Cairngorm, SARDA, Kinloss, Leuchars all searched most of Braemar MRT, Cairngorm MRT, Grampian Police MRT, RAF Kinloss MRT, RAF Leuchars MRT, SARDA(Scotland), RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 62.
- MAY 9 – Perthshire, Loch Oisneach – 2 Walkers aged 74 walking Kirmichael Dunkeld with an overnight camp. On the second day they separated and called for help. They managed to get together again. Tayside, SARDA called out and

- R177 located and took of SARDA(Scotland), Tayside MRT, Tayside Police MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 10.
- MAY 10 – Bennachie Mither Tap – Walker had a seizure/ epileptic fit on Bennachie, treated and evacuated by MRT and R177. Taken to Aberdeen RI. Aberdeen MRT, Braemar MRT, Grampian Police MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 15.
- MAY 11 – Braemar, Derry Lodge – Grampian/ Braemar MRT assisted ambulance service to a mountain biker who had fallen near Derry Lodge and suffered a facial injury. Braemar MRT, Grampian Police MRT, 3.
- MAY 17 – Glen Dee, White Bridge area – 2 members of a church group took unwell, one with a sore shoulder, the other sore ankles. Mar Lodge Ranger asked Aberdeen MRT who we training in area for assistance. One taken off by Ranger the other stayed overnig Aberdeen MRT, Grampian Police MRT, 7.
- MAY 23 – Lochnagar – Party of 9, split and 2/2 both lost in heavy rain and cloud! First party located at Little Pap and were taken off by Braemar/ Grampian MRT. Second party located in Glas Alt and recovered. Female suffering from hypothermi Braemar MRT, Grampian Police MRT, 7.
- MAY 24 – Glen Doll, Jock’s Road – Walker in a large group on Jocks Road injured ligaments on walk, (old injury) managed to get to rescue landrover with help and taken off the hill by Tayside/Pol MRT. Tayside MRT, Tayside Police MRT, 14.
- MAY 30 – Lochnagar – Grampian/ Braemar MRT asked to assist an elderly female with an injured arm in the Glas Alt Lochnagar. Team members went to assist, she had been helped off by a University Climbing Club, who took her to hospital. Braemar MRT, Grampian Police MRT, 2.
- MAY 31 – Bennachiea Mither Tap – Casualty slipped on sandy path on Bennachie she fell and slipped and twisted ankle. She attempted to walk off assisted by friends but was unable to continue. She was carried off by Breamar/Aberdeen MRT. Aberdeen MRT, Braemar MRT, Grampian Police MRT, 25.
- JUNE 23 – Ben Vrackie – Walker descending from summit fell and broke ankle, Taypol MRT called out and Rescue 177 took casualty to Stirling Royal Infirmary. Tayside Police MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 3.
- JUNE 26 – Jock’s Road – Male became detached from walking group, companions alerted Taypol Police and teams called out. Subject called in from Glen Isla having made his own way off the hill. Although he had navigtion equipment he was unaware of how to use Tayside MRT, Tayside Police MRT, 2.
- JULY 6 – Upper Glen Feshie – The MP was reported overdue by some other cyclists. Grampian Police asked CMRT to check the bothies etc on our side. The MP turned up safe and well at 0820 next day, his timings were “all out”. Braemar MRT, Cairngorm MRT, Grampian Police MRT, 22.
- JULY 6 – Loch Caller/Loch Muick, Lochnagar – Dutch couple were on a walking holiday and underestimated the walk to Loch Callater from Loch Muick taking in a number of Munros. The casualty was suffering from Dehydration and exhaustion caused by the we Ambulance Personnel , Braemar MRT, Grampian Police MRT, 4.
- JULY 11 – Hill of Fare, Banchory – Husband, wife and dog left for walk up ‘Hill Of Fare’ she felt breathless and decided to return. Husband went on a bit then went back. Wife not at car and Police called. Found at 0300 by SARDA in

- undergrowth, with dog Aberdeen MRT, Braemar MRT, Grampian Police MRT, SARDA(Scotland), 32.
- JULY 12 – Ben Macdui – The MPs were reported overdue by a wife. Simon Steer was called by police and asked for advice about possible routes. The MPs had walked up the wrong hill, turned up safe and well. Cairngorm MRT, 1.
- JULY 12 – Lochnagar – FATALITY. The casualty was part of group run/walk up Lochnagar. He had chest pains and collapsed. Doctor with party gave CPR. MRT fast party with ‘Heart Start’ who spent 2 hours CPR. No helicopter evacuation due to weather condition Aberdeen MRT, Braemar MRT, Grampian Police MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 29.
- JULY 25 – Lairig Ghru – The two MPs were exhausted. The lady had a prosthetic limb from the hip down. She could not go on or make shelter. 137 called and CMRT on standby. Evacuated by 137 to Glenmore Lodge. Cairngorm MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 2.
- JULY 25 – Glen Tilt, North Alt Garbh Bhuidhe – DOE Award group female fell and cut eyebrow, and face. Doctor in other party asked for assistance and Air ambulance evacuated and R137 was in area in case air ambulance could not take casualty off. Tayside Tayside MRT, Tayside Police MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, AA Scottish Air Ambulance, 4.
- JULY 30 – Glen Dye, Clachnaben – Walker slipped in Glen Dye Clachnaben and suffered a lower leg injury, ambulance could not get to her. Braemar MRT evacuated casualty to ambulance. Braemar MRT, Grampian Police MRT, 3.
- AUGUST 2 – Lochnagar – Walker fell/slipped on Lochnagar near Foxeswells on the East side, suffering a head injury and very cold. Casualty was evacuated by Braemar MRT to a waiting SAIS helicopter where he was taken to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary. Braemar MRT, Grampian Police MRT, AA Scottish Air Ambulance, 3.
- AUGUST 8 – Braeriach – The MPs were reported overdue. The police called Simon Steer who advised to give them till morning. Braemar and ARCC given ‘head up’ but not used. The two MP’s turned up safe and well next day. Cairngorm MRT, 2.
- AUGUST 13 – Lochnagar, Glen Alt Sheil path – Walker slipped and fell and cut knee/abrasions on Lochnagar path. Assisted of the hill by Braemar/ Grampian police. Braemar MRT, Grampian Police MRT, 6.
- AUGUST 17 – Derry Lodge, Dee Side – Whilst on organised Duke of Edinburgh Event one of the girls suffered a hypoglycaemic problem at Derry Lodge. She had been a diabetic for 3 years. Assisted by local GP and Braemar MRT and was able to continue with w Braemar MRT, Grampian Police MRT, 2.
- AUGUST 18 – Cairngorm – The MPs thought they were on Ben Macdui or near the Goat Track. They were in fact near the summit of Cairngorm. Cairngorm T/L talked them down to the Ptarmigan where they were escorted off by CMRT. Cairngorm MRT, 4.
- AUGUST 30 – Lairig Ghru, (White Bridge) – Two ladies were overdue having set out from Glenmore. Grampian police called me at 0100 stating they had sent a team out. I offered them assistance from 1000 next day. MP’s located at 0815. Party had no map, tor Aberdeen MRT, Braemar MRT, Cairngorm MRT, Grampian Police MRT, SARDA(Scotland), SARDA (Southern Scotland), 39.
- SEPTEMBER 10 – Ben Rinnas – Sole Walker aged 79 slipped and fell on descent of

- Ben Rinnes, injuring leg and back. He was assisted of by another walker who carried rucksack. Rescue 137 Taken off to Elgin hospital detained overnight with back and leg inju Braemar MRT, Grampian Police MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 7.
- SEPTEMBER 13 – Lairig Ghru – A walker reported finding a rucsac in the Lairig Ghru. Police called SS to ask for advice. After discussion with Al gilmour we decided to do nothing! If someone was reported missing we would respond. Cairngorm MRT, 2.
- SEPTEMBER 23 – Cairn Toul – The MPs lost their GPS and map somewhere near Cairn Toul. Very inexperienced. Called for help and told to stay put. Both located as their condition was about to get worse. A good result. Cairngorm MRT, RAF Kinloss, Braemar, Braemar MRT, Cairngorm MRT, Grampian Police MRT, RAF Kinloss MRT, SARDA(Scotland), RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 55.
- SEPTEMBER 24 – Bynack Stables – The MP was reported missing overnight. Willie Anderson advised police to send a patrol car to Ryvoan and Bynack in case he was walking out. Located by police on Bynack track. Cairngorm MRT, 1.
- SEPTEMBER 25 – Braeriach – Police called with an overdue local lad. WA advised to wait for a few hours before doing a call out. MP turned up safe and well sometime later. Cairngorm MRT, 1.
- SEPTEMBER 26 – Loch Muick – Walker on Loch Muick path, slipped and fell injured arm, breaking it. A cyclist assisted, called in to the visitor centre and Braemar and Grampian Police called to assist. Casualty taken to Aberdeen Hospital. Braemar MRT, Grampian Police MRT, 2.
- SEPTEMBER 27 – Glen Banchor, Newtonmore – The MP had spent all night out. She had very poor skills but good gear. Very poor eyesight too, mistaking a pile of stones for a house. A great effort by RAF Kinloss R137 and CMRT. Casualty promised to go on a Cairngorm MRT, RAF Kinloss MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 41.
- OCTOBER 6 – Glen Lui, Braemar – Elderly walker in a group of 4 one called Police due to party member suffering from chest pains.the hill in Glen Lui west of Linn of Dee. Rescue 137 took casualty to Raigmore and Braemar escorted other 3 walkers of the Braemar MRT, Glenmore Lodge MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 5.
- OCTOBER 9 – Cairngorm, Lurchers Meadow – The MP had been camping the night before on the plateau. He was getting blown over by strong winds and was scared to descend the ridge of Lochain. We went to escort him off the hill. Cairngorm MRT, 4.
- OCTOBER 11 – Braemar, Glen Lui – Walker with chest pains evacuated from Glen Lui by Breamar/ Grampian Police and Rescue 137, also companions were assisted off the hill. Braemar MRT, Grampian Police MRT, 4.
- OCTOBER 13 – Ballater, Craigendarroch Hill – Walker alone became disorientated, called for help assisted of by Breamar MRT. Braemar MRT, Grampian Police MRT, 2.
- OCTOBER 21 – Meall a’ Bhuachaille – Walker had a severe asthma attack on the path between Ryvoan and Meall a’ Bhuachaille. Oxygen and nebulizer used by Glenmore Lodge MRT, evacuated by Rescue 137. Glenmore Lodge MRT, 3.
- OCTOBER 26 – Lairig Ghru – The MPs had no torches and were caught out in the

dark. No map. One had damaged his hand in a stumble. Called 999 for assistance off the hill. Forecast was bad so we walked them off. Cairngorm MRT, 2.

NOVEMBER 28 – Tom Bhuide, Jock's Road – Tayside Police requested assistance of Braemar MRT in the search of a father and son on a walk from Glendoll Toll Mount. Located by Rescue 137 at Loch Esk. Braemar MRT, Grampian Police MRT, SARDA (Scotland), Tayside MRT, Tayside Police MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 26.

DECEMBER 17 – Coire an t-Sneachda – Female climber took a lead fall and ripped out the snow belay on 'Invernookie'. She and her husband fell 500 feet. Both survived. She had broken collar bone and broken ribs. Evacuated by 137 and CMRTand Glenmore MRT. Cairngorm MRT, Glenmore Lodge MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 8.

DECEMBER 19 – Lochnagar, Giants Head Chimney – 2 climbers cragfast on Giants Head Chimney Grade 4 Lochnagar, rescue by Braemar MRT by ropes from Summit to both climbers evacuated to bottom of cliff. Climbers injuries cold, frostnip taken out by Rescue Braemar MRT, Grampian Police MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 20.

DECEMBER 22 – Coire Raibert – MP left ski area for final run of the day. Over shot intended route and ended up in Coire Raibert in the mist and dark. very cold at minus 16 so decided on an aircraft to get him out. CMRT assisted. Cairngorm MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 5.

## **SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS**

JANUARY 10 – Ben Cruachan, East Corrie – Oban MRT Team member injured when abseiling suffering a tumbling fall with serious injuries.on training day. Winds in excess of 100 mph no helicopter assistance possible, Taken to Southern General Hospital. Oban MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 16.

JANUARY 17 – Arrochar Alps, Srath Dubh Uisge – 2 walkers took wrong route and were given bad advice from fellow walkers and guide book. They became lost and overdue, called MRT who located them. Arrochar MRT, Strathclyde MRT, 20.

FEBRUARY 1 – Coire Achaladair – Male descending Gully slip/trip caught crampon on gaiter on steep ground. Failed to arrest fall, axe on rucksack. Attempted to walk out had to stop, stayed in shelter, bothy bag and made 999 call. Evacuated by helicopter Arrochar MRT, Oban MRT, Strathclyde MRT, 24.

FEBRUARY 1 – West of Tom Fithich, Ben Lomond – Navigational error and inadequately equipped for activity extending into darkness. Lomond MRT, 19.

FEBRUARY 2 – Area of Lochan Bein Chabhair – Solo walker had fallen and injured his leg. Lomond MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 14.

FEBRUARY 8 – Ben Lomond – Two walkers, though well-equipped, lacked fitness and became benighted in poor, wintry conditions. Taken off by Lomond MRT. Lomond MRT, SARDA(Scotland), SARDA (Southern Scotland), RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 29.

FEBRUARY 8 – The Cobbler, Arrochar – Female slipped whilst descending towards Bealach a' Mhain, injuring head and back. MRT airlifted on to hill carried out first aid. Weather deteriorated and casualty carried off by teams.

- Strathclyde and Arrochar MRT. Arrochar MRT, Strathclyde MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 2.
- FEBRUARY 22 – Lochgilphead, Cairnbaan – Missing walker slipped in ditch at side of forestry track and injured a leg whilst out walking in a forest. She became disorientated and lost her way. Walked off by Oban MRT with minor injury to leg. Arrochar MRT, Oban MRT, SARDA (Southern Scotland), Strathclyde MRT, 39.
- MARCH 27 – Gleann Dubh, East of Ben Lomond – Walker crossing shoulder of Ben Lomond from Rowardennan to Kinlochard got benighted and ‘lost’ within Queen Elizabeth Forest. Lomond MRT, Ochils MRT, SARDA(Scotland), SARDA (Southern Scotland), RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 24.
- MARCH 28 – Ben Ledi (Stank Glen), Callander – Casualty descending track into Stank Glen, slipped on damp grass sustaining broken right ankle. Casualty packaged and stretchered off hill by KMRT. Killin MRT, 8.
- APRIL 6 – Killin, Breachloch – Solo walker on Rob Roy Way was reported missing by his wife as she was concerned that he had not phoned and could not get him on his mobile. KMRT/ SARDA Southern searched route and found him OK. He kept on walking. Killin MRT, SARDA (Southern Scotland), 17.
- MAY 3 – Ben Lui – Killin MRT called to assist same party as incident 3568, when 2 of the party were reported overdue, As team deployed party turned up. Killin MRT, 5.
- MAY 3 – Arrochar, The Cobbler – Walker fell/slipped and injured ankle on the Cobbler near the dam. Stretchered off by Arrochar MRT. Arrochar MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 8.
- MAY 3 – Ben Lui – Female in a large party slipped and fell on the lower slopes of Ben Lui. Killin MRT and SARDA Scotland, casualty recovered by R177. Casualty taken to Paisley hospital. Killin MRT, SARDA(Scotland), HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 18.
- MAY 6 – Glen Strae – A walker on the third day of a camping trip was trapped by heavy rain making the rivers very difficult to cross. He had fallen in trying to cross and was very cold. Oban MRT assisted, warmed up and walked off. Oban MRT, SARDA(Scotland), SARDA (Southern Scotland), 25.
- MAY 12 – Tyndrum, West Highland Way – 49 year old walker, on West Highland Way possibly depressed was reported to police, Killin MRT and SARDA searched area round Tyndrum. Search called off as mobile phone traced to near Kingshouse Hotel. Incident handled by Glencoe MRT, Killin MRT, Oban MRT, SARDA(Scotland), 32.
- MAY 15 – Beinn Ghlas – Killin Team assisted in a rescue of a male with a possible angina attack whilst walking in Beinn Ghlas. R177 managed to get in to casualty in very high winds and take cas to hospital. Tayside/ police also involved. SARDA recalled Killin MRT, SARDA(Scotland), Tayside MRT, Tayside Police MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 18.
- MAY 17 – Ben Lomond, Tom Eas – Lomond MRT called to assist a poorly equipped walker no map and compass. He had descended Ben Lomond after a planned night out with a companion and split up. There was a concern as he suffered from asthma. Located as Ben Lomond MRT, 6.
- MAY 23 – Ben Oss – Party of 7 with 2 children got lost and called Police, gave a GPS Grid. Weather, wet, misty and cold. They could not find a safe way of

- Ben Oss to Connish Farm. Killin MRT and Rescue 177 located party in Glen cold but all OK. Killin MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 16.
- MAY 24 – Ben Lomond, Ptarmigan Ridge – Lomond assisted a walker on Ben Lomond who had split from companion suffering from asthma, exhaustion and hypothermia. Assisted by passing walkers put in a bivy bag. Lomond team assisted with hot drinks and oxygen. Lomond MRT, AA Scottish Air Ambulance, 16.
- JUNE 11 – Schiehallion – Walker stumbled near summit and broke ankle and injured wrist, foot slipped between boulders. Evacuated by R137, Tayside MRT in attendance. Tayside MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 5.
- JUNE 16 – Ben Venue – 65 year old walker, he had been a cancer patient and had previous medical history of a broken back, fell and broke lower leg. Evacuated by Lomond MRT from Ben Venue one mile North of Ledhard farm. Lomond MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 14.
- JUNE 25 – Ben Vorlich – Walker descending from the summit stumbled and broke ankle, companion made way off and alerted Police. Taypol MRT called out and Rescue 177 evacuated casualty to Stirling Hospital. Tayside Police MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 2.
- JULY 12 – Ben Venue – 2 walkers got lost on way of Ben Venue, lost map, no torch and one fell in water wet, tired and injured hip, thighs. Taken off from Bealach Nan Bo by Lomond MRT. One stretchered off the other walked off, both recovered and not hospi Lomond MRT, 21.
- JULY 13 – Beinn Ghlas – Walker poorly equipped, smooth shoes! slipped and fell injuring ankle near waterfall path on Beinn Ghlas. Stretchered off to farm. Killin MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 15.
- JULY 18 – Dumgoyne, Campsies – Walker injured ankle (fracture) when he slipped and fell, poor quality boots no ankle support! Helimed tried to get him out but could not. Evacuated by Lomond MRT. Lomond MRT, AA Scottish Air Ambulance, 11.
- JULY 18 – Ben Lawyers – Solo walker made summit of Ben Lawyers, weather wet and misty. He could not navigate or went back to summit 4 times! Called Police and unable to get off alone. Taken off by Tayside MRT, No map or compass. Tayside MRT, 1.
- AUGUST 6 – The Cobbler, Centre Peak – Report of person stranded/cragfast on top of Centre Peak of The Cobbler. Arrochar and Strathclyde MRT despatched at the same time as R177 rescued casualty safe and well. Arrochar MRT, Strathclyde MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 18.
- AUGUST 30 – Meall Ghaordaidh, Glen Lochy – 2 walkers got lost on Meall Ghaordaidh in mist and called Police. Talked of the hill by Killin MRT, met at road head by DTL Killin MRT and team member, both walkers okay. Poor navigation. Killin MRT, 2.
- SEPTEMBER 5 – Cobbler Foot path – 3 walkers lost on Bealach between Beinn Ime and the Cobbler, called for assistance. Located on path by Arrochar MRT and walked off. SARDA assisted. Arrochar MRT, SARDA(Scotland), 19.
- SEPTEMBER 7 – Ben Dorain – Walker fell on Ben Dorain path, injuring ankle evacuated by Strathclyde MRT by stretcher who were training in area and Oban MRT. Oban MRT, Strathclyde MRT, 24.
- SEPTEMBER 8 – Creag Mhor, Glen Lochy – 26 yr old male well equipped and

- experienced was supposed to be climbing Ben Challum. When he did not turn up wife called Police, car found and Killin MRT/ SARDA in night search. Found by R177 with broken leg on Killin MRT, SARDA(Scotland), SARDA (Southern Scotland), RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 21.
- SEPTEMBER 12 – Ben Lui, Stob Garbh area – Walkers separated at summit of Ben Lui after disagreement about way off. When one did not return friend called Police. Missing person spoke no English, had no map, torch or equipment. Located by light of mobile Killin MRT, Tayside MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 15.
- SEPTEMBER 21 – Ben Lui – Solo walker (ex military was on Ben Lui, he was well equipped and experienced, his wife called Police when he did not return and she had not received call from him. His car at Dalrigh. Located at Connonish farm as Killin and S Killin MRT, SARDA (Southern Scotland), 15.
- SEPTEMBER 26 – Ben Lui, Central Gully – Solo walker in Central Gully Ben Lui, in poor weather. He had mild hypothermia, due to weather( no waterproof trousers, torch and poor boots). Killin team deployed by helicopter to cloud base, cas gave accurate lo Killin MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 15.
- OCTOBER 19 – Stuc a' Chroin, Beinn Each – Walker lost in mist due to poor navigation, Beinn Each called Police. Killin MRT and SARDA deployed Rescue 177. Casualty located, 'he was near a metal fence post', there are lots in the area. Located and walked Killin MRT, SARDA(Scotland), 16.
- OCTOBER 23 – Beinn Dorain – Solo walker lost on Beinn Dorain, talked off hill by Strathclyde Police, Oban assisted casualty off hill. Arrochar/ Oban and SARDA involved. Arrochar MRT, Oban MRT, SARDA(Scotland), Strathclyde MRT, 24.
- OCTOBER 24 – Ben Achaladair – Walker in a group fell/slipped and injured back companions tried to walk him off, but back to painful. Arrochar MRT/ Strathpol / Oban MRT called out evacuated by Rescue 177. Arrochar MRT, Oban MRT, Strathclyde MRT, 34.
- NOVEMBER 7 – Dumyat – Walker fell/slipped on path on Dumyat, poor footwear, had previous medical history, suspected broken leg, spiral fracture and possible back injury. 12 Ochils MRT on first aid course located casualty, first aid given! Evacuated by Ochils MRT, 12.
- NOVEMBER 9 – Ben Heasgarnaich, Creag Mor – 2 walkers caught out by darkness, possible navigational error on Ben Heasgarnich no torches reported overdue by wife. Both had set off on mountain bike. Located on hill road, Glen Lochay one had fallen off slig Killin MRT, 2.
- DECEMBER 5 – Arrochar, The Cobbler – Arrochar Team member came across a walker with chest pains, near the Narnain Boulders on the Cobbler. Assisted by Arrochar MRT, the Air ambulance and Rescue 177. Arrochar MRT, 16.
- DECEMBER 6 – Ben Vorlich/Stuc a' Chroin – 3 walkers lost misty, descending the wrong way, poor navigation. Killin MRT managed to speak to cas and locate them at Beinn Each. Evacuated by helicopter cold and hungry, limited food carried for hill day. I Killin MRT, SARDA(Scotland), RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 30.
- DECEMBER 30 – Beinn An Dothaidh, West Gully – Two climbers avalanched in the West Gully Area of Beinn an Dothaidh. Rescue 137 was able to fly both casualties into the Belford hospital. Injuries laceration to head and sternum.

Oban/Strathclyde MRT on St Arrochar MRT, Oban MRT, SARDA(Scotland), Strathclyde MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 45.

DECEMBER 30 – Beinn Udlaidh, Central Gully – AVALANCHE in Central gully (grade 2) Beinn Udlaidh, limited info at present, Allan Kimber Guide on scene. One casualty has a broken leg, Rescue 177, Strathclyde MRT and Oban MRT. This was the Third Avalanc Arrochar MRT, Oban MRT, Strathclyde MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 44.

## SKYE

JANUARY 24 – Skye, Ollisdale Bothy – MRT member escorted 2 police dog handlers to location. Where Police interviewed a missing person who had been reported as staying there. All OK. Skye MRT, 1.

JANUARY 26 – Skye, Coire a' Bhashtier – Party had set out to climb Sgurr nan Gillean on 24th bivouacked that night and set off to complete climb on 25th. Weather deteriorated (blizzard) and they bivouacked on 25th. Contacted MRT by mobile morning, assist Skye MRT, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 11.

APRIL 12 – Skye, Sron na Ciche – Party of 2 climbers reported overdue after setting off to climb Integrity route on Sron na Ciche. Returned to Glenbrittle 9 hours later than planned. MRT leader alerted and standing by till party turned up. Skye MRT, 1.

APRIL 12 – Skye, Sgurr Dubh Mor – Member of party dislodged rock which fell hitting one of the other party members in the chest, near summit of Sgurr Dubh Mor. Casualty evacuated by R100 helicopter to Broadford Hospital. Skye MRT, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 6.

APRIL 13 – Skye, Northern Black Cuillin – One member of party decided to go ahead, at his own pace, when hill walking in the Northern Black Cuillin. When remainder of party got back to Sligachan there was no sign of him there and the alarm was raised Skye MRT, 1.

MAY 5 – Skye, Inaccessible Pinnacle – Casualty slipped & fell when traversing the final slabs on the short side of the Pin. Her protection failed & she fell 15m. Evacuated by Skye MRT. Skye MRT, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 17.

MAY 6 – Allt Na Measarroch, Glen Sligachan – Party couldn't cross burn in spate were too tired to go back & called for help. Better planning and decision making would have avoided incident. Skye MRT, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 9.

MAY 18 – Skye, Bealach Coir an Lochain – Casualty fell breaking her left wrist. She was helped off the hill by her party. R100 & Team broke off Am Bastier shout to try to locate & evacuate casualty. Short air search revealed casualty airlifted off. Skye MRT, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 3.

MAY 18 – Skye, Am Bastier – FATALITY. Skye MRT recovered a casualty who slipped and fell when scrambling up to the summit of Am Bastier from the Tooth. Skye MRT, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 18.

MAY 19 – Skye, Sgurr nan Eag – Skye MRT to assist a party who set off to do Cuillin ridge, went off route. While attempting to round a block on a path the block gave way causing the casualty to fall approx 30m. Strechered below cloud then evacuated Skye MRT, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 16.

MAY 20 – Skye, Quiraing area – Subject decided to go climb hill behind Quiraing





- alone without map & compass (but with car keys) in misty condition. Remainder of party returned to car via main path. Party eventually raised alarm, assisted off. Skye MRT, 2.
- MAY 25 – Skye, Blaven/Camusunary – Subject set off for Camusunary bothy on 23rd to climb Blaven on 24th. Reported overdue morning of 25th. Turned up safe & well before full team call out initiated. Skye MRT, 1.
- MAY 28 – Skye, Coruisk/ Dubh Slabs – Subject set out from Kilmarie to do Dubh Slabs. Got lost and was reported missing. Managed to make her way back to Loch Coruisk and returned to Kilmarie at 0200. Skye MRT, 1.
- MAY 30 – Skye, Bealach Coir an Lochan – Casualty slipped and fell a short distance onto his outstretched arm, causing him to dislocate his shoulder. Stretchered below cloud base and evacuated by R100 heli. Skye MRT, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 17.
- JUNE 1 – Skye, Quiraing – Casualty stumbled and fell breaking her ankle. Her calls for help were heard by a cyclist on the public road below who raised the alarm. Evacuated by R100 with MRT standing by. Skye MRT, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 5.
- JUNE 1 – Skye, Sgurr Thormaid – Casualty dislodged a boulder when descending a scree slope the boulder landed on her fingers severely crushing them. Evacuated by R100 MRT on standby at GB. Skye MRT, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 7.
- JUNE 6 – Skye, Old Man of Storr – Skye MRT assisted walker poorly equipped wearing trainers who slipped and fell injuring leg, due to slip or trip. Taken off by team and R100. Skye MRT, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 6.
- JUNE 9 – Glenbrittle Campsite – Party of 6 reported overdue from campsite by couple in neighbouring tent after the party failed to return to their tent by 10pm. Turned out to be a well intended false alarm. Skye MRT, 2.
- JUNE 10 – Skye, Glen Brittle – Report to Police of whistle blast heard in Glenbrittle area of Cullin Ridge. Skye MRT searched area for 6 hours along with Rescue 100. No find well intentioned false alarm. Skye MRT, 12.
- JUNE 13 – Skye, Coire a' Ghrunnda – Walker slipped and fell in Coire a' Grunnda at Beleach injuring her face. One of the party went for help. As team and helicopter assembled she had made her way down to camp site with help from her companions. Skye MRT, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 13.
- JUNE 26 – Skye, Am Bastier, North Face – FATALITY. Walker in group slipped, fell whilst on ledges on North Face trying to reach the beleach. Casualty recovered by Skye MRT and R100. Skye MRT, 15.
- JULY 2 – Skye, Sgurr Dubh Mor – Party (Organised Group) underestimated length of route and spent night on mountain, Sgurr Dubh Mor. At 0500 made their way down to Loch Coruisk. Casualty slipped, fell 75–100 metres breaking both legs. Skye stretchered Skye MRT, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 12.
- JULY 13 – Skye, Coire Lagan path – Skye MRT alerted by walker who had injured her ankle on the Coire Lagan path about 3 minutes from the phone box at Glen brittle. She was taken off path by Skye MRT and found to have a fractured ankle. Skye MRT, 4.
- JULY 22 – Skye, Glaic Moire – Subject planned to cross through Glaic Moire on way to Glenbrittle with dog. Dog refused to go on steep ground. Subject

- retreated and stayed out overnight before continuing to GB in morning via Sligachan. Skye MRT, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 13.
- AUGUST 4 – Sgurr a’ Mhadaidh – Party set off on ridge traverse previous day in good weather. Bivied out. Woke up in clag and couldn’t find a route in any direction called for assistance stating they were on Sgurr na Banachdich. Skye MRT, 13.
- AUGUST 8 – Skye, Sgurr a’ Mhadaidh – Two climbers overnigheted after a day on the Cuillin on Sgurr a’ Mhadaidh. In mist, rain and poor weather next day they requested assistance. Walked off by Skye MRT. Skye MRT, 14.
- AUGUST 17 – Skye, Flank of Sgurr nan Gillean – FATALITY. Casualty slipped and fell down slabs then over a 5m drop to his death while attempting to descend broken ground to Glen Sligachan. Skye MRT, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 15.
- AUGUST 23 – Coire na Criche – Family group got caught on far side of a burn by torrential downpour and flash flooding. Escorted up stream by MRT to safer crossing point and assisted off hill crossing/avoiding several other burns. Skye MRT, 19.
- AUGUST 23 – Skye, near Sligachan – 6 of the party involved in previous incident (09029) continued their walk. Torrential downpour and flashflooding caused them to get stuck between 2 burns. MRT escorted them upstream to a road bridge. Skye MRT, 3.
- AUGUST 23 – Base of Ben Lee, Loch Sligachan – Party set off along rough path along the north shore of Loch Sligachan. 1km in the casualty slipped while crossing a burn dislocating her fibula. MRT commandeered small boat and its owner to carry out. Skye MRT, 5.
- AUGUST 24 – Sgurr nan Gillean, SE Ridge – As party ascended ridge a large boulder dislodged knocking casualty off his feet. He fell approx 20m to his serious injury. Air lifted by R100. MRT at base. Skye MRT, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 12.
- SEPTEMBER 28 – Glenbrittle – Party reported overdue on ridge. 2 Skye MRT involved in tracing parties vehicle, etc. Party turned up late. Skye MRT, 2.
- OCTOBER 28 – Skye, Sgurr Dubh Mor – Walker overnigheted and bivied on Sgurr Dubh Mor with dog (a Munroists) who injured his paws. No signal on GPS, Lost path, he was unable to call his wife due to poor communication Police informed and casualty located by RAF Kinloss MRT, Skye MRT, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 27.

### **ISLANDS OTHER THAN SKYE**

- JANUARY 13 – Arran, Glen Rosa – Walker became exhausted and left behind by party. Walked off by Arran team. Arran MRT, 3.
- FEBRUARY 1 – Arran, Stacach Ridge, Goat Fell – FATALITY. Walker blown off ridge and fell of 100 metres, Arran MR and R177 and Police Helicopter used. Arran MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, ASU Strathclyde Police Helicopter, 16.
- MARCH 17 – Isle of Harris, Clisham – Walker fell whilst descending Clisham, broke ankle, taken off by R100 Stornoway. Nonspecialists (Non-MR), HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 1.

- APRIL 17 – Arran, Rosa Slabs – Male walker lost on the Rosa Slabs on very steep dangerous ground, phoned for assistance. Arran MRT rescued casualty, no injuries. Arran MRT, 15.
- MAY 22 – Isle of Harris, Urseval Hill – FATALITY. Walker collapsed on Isle of Harris Uresval Hill whilst walking with his wife. Taken to Western Islands Hospital, unknown illness caused death. Coastguard Personnel, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 1.
- MAY 25 – Arran, Goatfell – Arran MRT to injured walker on Goatfell who had fallen and injured leg whilst taking a shortcut on the path. Carried off by team, Splints used. Arran MRT, 16.
- MAY 27 – Arran, Goatfell path – Walker fell and injured leg, taken off by Arran MRT and Argo cat. Leg splinted. Arran MRT, 14.
- JUNE 14 – Mull, Loch Ba – Member of DOE group injured leg, when she slipped and fell, airlifted off, Strathclyde and Oban MRT alerted and on standby to assist. Oban MRT, SARDA (Southern Scotland), Strathclyde MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 16.
- JUNE 17 – Arran, Holy Island – Shouts for assistance heard on the mainland for help from Holy Island Arran. Gannet, helicopter, Arran MRT, Coastguard and life boat assisted. Casualty was a foreign visitor poorly equipped and hypothermic, cuts and bruise Arran MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 13.
- JUNE 25 – Arran, Glen Rosa – Solo walker fell/ slipped in Glen Rosa and was unable to walk assisted by a passing walker who called Police. Taken off by Arran MRT using Argocat to Lamlash Hospital. Arran MRT, 13.
- JULY 6 – Arran, Glen Easan Biorach – Walker in large group slipped and fell, poorly equipped. Stretchered off by Arran MRT to waiting ambulance. Arran MRT, 17.
- JULY 21 – Arran, Corrie Lan – 2 Walkers very poor kit, no food or drink out in very wet, cold conditions, exhausted/exposed. The male stretchered off by Arran MRT, female walked off and treated for hypothermia. Temperature at road was 36 degrees. Arran MRT, SARDA(Scotland), 19.
- JULY 24 – Arran, An Tunna – 14-year old stuck on top of boulder, parents could not get to him, called Police. Arran MRT walked casualty off. He had got off boulder but ground still too steep for parents to assist! Arran MRT, 3.
- SEPTEMBER 28 – Arran, North Sannox – 2 walkers lost in bad weather, due to poor navigation. They told police they were on Goatfell. Arran MRT deployed around paths on Goatfell. Walkers turned up at North Sannox Car park. They were definitely not on Goatfell. Arran MRT, SARDA (Southern Scotland), 15.
- DECEMBER 3 – Arran, Ben Varren – Arran, Strathclyde and SARDA were deployed for a missing walker in Arran Ben Varren, located by car as teams were deploying. Arran MRT, SARDA (Southern Scotland), Strathclyde MRT, 12.

### **SOUTHERN UPLANDS**

- JANUARY 2 – Galloway, Rhinns of Kell – 2 Walkers reported overdue on the Rhinns of Kell were found on a local road by a Galloway team member. They were tired but okay. Poorly equipped and experienced they were lucky to have found their way down safely. Galloway SAR, 1.

- FEBRUARY 7 – Galloway, Clatteringshaws – Loch Galloway MRT to assist Police for report of 2 missing walkers in the Clatteringshaws Loch area, located by Police on forestry track. Galloway SAR, 2.
- FEBRUARY 9 – Hope Reservoir – Borders SARU to assisted helicopter with casualty, near Hope Reservoir, due to weather. Border SAR, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 14.
- MARCH 15 – Galloway, Scree Hill – Galloway MRT assisted helimed and R177 in the recovery of a walker with a broken ankle near Scree Hill summit. R177 winced casualty due to location. Ambulance Personnel, Galloway SAR, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, AA Scottish Air Ambulance, 16.
- APRIL 16 – Galloway, Glen Trool – Galloway MRT assisted a 61 year old walker who had broken her leg, team members assisted in the evacuation by R177. Galloway SAR, SARDA(Scotland), HMC Stornaway Helicopter, 5.
- JUNE 12 – Criffel – SARDA Southern, Moffat MRT assisted Police in the search for a missing walker on Criffel. Whilst the search was ongoing the casualty walked off in the early hours to a farmhouse and the search was stood down. Moffat MRT, SARDA (Southern Scotland), 20.
- JUNE 27 – Moffat Hills – SARDA Southern assisted Moffat MRT in the search for two missing walkers in the Moffat hills. They had phoned in lost in mist and cloud, they were located at night by Moffat MRT cold and wet and evacuated from the hill. Moffat MRT, SARDA (Southern Scotland), 17.
- JULY 11 – Criffel Hill – FATALITY. Search for a missing male on Criffel hill by Moffat, Galloway and SARDAS was found in a burn by hillwalker missing since 20 June. Recovered by Rescue team due to difficult access to the burn. Galloway SAR, Moffat MRT, SARDA (Southern Scotland), 48.
- AUGUST 29 – Pentland Hills – Evacuation of Polish lady with broken lower leg. Tweed Valley MRT, 9.
- AUGUST 30 – Galloway, Rhinns of Kell – 2 walkers (no compass) came down to the forest in the Rhinns of Kell on the West side of hill not East as indicated. Located by Galloway MRT at 0230 and returned to Hotel. Galloway SAR, 8.
- SEPTEMBER 8 – Pentland Hills, Dreghorn – Search for man missing in Dreghorn area and Pentland Hills Found safe by Police dog handler in woodland area. SARDA(Scotland), SARDA (Southern Scotland), Tweed Valley MRT, 10.
- SEPTEMBER 29 – Pentland Hills – Search of areas around farm in Pentland Hills for lady who was overdue overnight while walking her dog. Found safe in early morning having fallen down steep bank into gully and could not climb out. Border SAR, SARDA(Scotland), SARDA (Southern Scotland), Tweed Valley MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 18.
- OCTOBER 6 – Criffel Hill – 3 young walkers set of late in day to climb Criffel hill in Borders, poorly equipped. No torches, caught out by darkness, called Police and Rescue 177 recovered all three to nearby farm and Moffat MRT. All three all okay bu Moffat MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 4.
- OCTOBER 11 – Galloway, Loch Whinyeon – FATALITY. Walker missing for 2 days, camper van by side of road, search by Galloway MRT located casualty near hill top deceased (heart attack). Galloway SAR, SARDA(Scotland), 23.
- OCTOBER 25 – Hills Around Stow – Callout for two overdue hill walkers in hills around Stow. Team mobilised and en-route but found by farmer and brought to safety OK. SARDA (Southern Scotland), Tweed Valley MRT, 12.

- NOVEMBER 4 – Southern Upland Way, near Sanquar – Walker missing in Southern Upland Way, after a protracted search through the night and into next day he was located by local searchers. He was evacuated to hospital suffering from hypothermia. Galloway, Border SAR, Galloway SAR, Moffat MRT, SARDA(Scotland), SARDA (Southern Scotland), 36.
- NOVEMBER 15 – Carrick, Argyll – Solo walker on a 17 mile circular route from the town of Girvan, he slipped about 1400 and broke his leg, (lower) and was unable to continue. His sister raised alarm, located after all night Search by Strathclyde Police, SARDA(Scotland), SARDA (Southern Scotland), Strathclyde MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, ASU Strathclyde Police Helicopter, 16.
- NOVEMBER 25 – Carrick Hills, Ayrshire – Male left car for local walk, when he did not return Police called. Located after a all night search by Strathclyde Police MRT, SARDA, Police Helicopter and Rescue 177. Located with a broken leg after a slip. SARDA (Southern Scotland), Strathclyde MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, ASU Strathclyde Police Helicopter, 14.
- DECEMBER 23 – Arthur’s Seat, Edinburgh – Request to assist with cragfast person on Arthurs Seat. Stood down within 30 minutes when recovered safe. Tweed Valley MRT, 20.

### **NON-MOUNTAINEERING**

- JANUARY 1 – Broxburn – Requested to assist in search for female missing after leaving care home. Known absconder. Tweed Valley Team and SARDAS put on standby for 4.5 hours and then misper located safe by Police. Team stood down. SARDA (Southern Scotland), Tweed Valley MRT, 14.
- JANUARY 2 – Hawick – Request to assist with search for male who left a party heading into open hill ground behind Hawick. Reported as depressed and possibly suicidal. Located on road by Police as team being called. Tweed Valley MRT, 1.
- JANUARY 8 – Dunfermline – SARDAS assisted Police in the search for a missing boy near Dunfermline. He was located by the Police while the search was ongoing! SARDA (Southern Scotland), 1.
- JANUARY 9 – Cupar, Fife – FATALITY. SARDA assisted the Fife Police in the search for a missing man in the Cupar area. After an all night search nothing was found and the search was stood down pending further Police enquires! Cas found later in mo SARDA (Scotland), SARDA (Southern Scotland), 2.
- JANUARY 11 – Succoth, Arrochar – FATALITY. Male suffering from depression left house during the night and was found drowned in nearby stream. Arrochar MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 11.
- JANUARY 12 – St Andrews – FATALITY. Search for a missing female in the St Andrews area over the 11 and 12 Jan. A large search through the night by SARDA and RAF LMRT next day, nothing found. Casualty located later in month after various other searches RAF Leuchars MRT, SARDA(Scotland), SARDA (Southern Scotland), 18.
- JANUARY 16 – Selkirk, Riverside area – 2 dogs on route to search for a missing man in the Selkirk area. He was located by Police as dogs were on route. Tweed Valley MRT also involved in search. SARDA(Scotland), SARDA (Southern Scotland), Tweed Valley MRT, 15.

- JANUARY 17 – Craigmore, Nr Aberfoyle, Stirling – Dog went missing a fortnight earlier. Family's friend dog located missing Labrador in a 15 foot deep fissure. Lomond MRT, 5.
- JANUARY 21 – Fauldhouse, Lothian –FATALITY. non mountain. Large search by 4 MRT for a missing 43 yr old, Teams located casualty in a forestry area, teams stood down. Border SAR, RAF Leuchars MRT, SARDA (Southern Scotland), Strathclyde MRT, Tweed Valley MRT, 43.
- January 21 – East Fife, Urban – Searches 2 Missing persons separate incidents, unreleased low level urban searches, Tayside MR, Leuchars MR SARDA. Female located in river drowned and male in in wood land suicide. Search area 43 Square Kilometres. RAF Leuchars MRT, SARDA(Scotland), SARDA (Southern Scotland), 12.
- JANUARY 31 – Cairngorms, Rothiemurcus – Male with mental health problems, lost in the Rothiemurcus area. Located by R137. Cairngorm MRT, Police Dogs, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 2.
- JANUARY 31 – Leadburn, Whim Hall, Near Penicuik – Search into the night and next day for a missing woman in the Leadburn area by 4 Teams including SARDA. She was located by Police in Edinburgh and the search was stood down. Great help from the WRVS. Border SAR, Moffat MRT, SARDA(Scotland), SARDA (Southern Scotland), Tweed Valley MRT, 41.
- FEBRUARY 1 – Galloway, Loch Skerrow – FATALITY. Galloway team called to assist ambulance sevice with a mountain biker who had a heart attack near Loch Skerrow. Evacuated by R177. Ambulance Personnel, Galloway SAR, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 6.
- FEBRUARY 10 – Arbroath, Sea Cliffs – FATALITY. Tayside police MRT involved in the search for a missing Polish fisherman, sea fishing who fell into sea. Tayside Police MRT, 1.
- FEBRUARY 10 – Innerleithen – Search for suicidal (left note) female. Reported as heading into hills / forests surrounding town. Returned to family home as team arrived at search base to start operations. SARDA(Scotland), SARDA (Southern Scotland), Tweed Valley MRT, 20.
- FEBRUARY 13 – Isle of Lewis, Barvas Moor Area – Local lost on moor with dog, due to low mist, found by R100 after a large search. Flash lighter to attract R100. Coastguard Personnel, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 19.
- FEBRUARY 15 – Caithness, Holburn Head/Dunnet Head – Assynt team member out running found discarded clothing, search of area by SARDA, Assynt and HMCG. Body located by RNLI of Dunnet Head. Assynt MRT, SARDA(Scotland), 4.
- FEBRUARY 15 – Achililtibue – Search for a missing vulnerable person located safe and well. Dundonnell MRT, Police Dogs, SARDA (Scotland), 7.
- FEBRUARY 18 – Kelso – Assisting Police Borders SARU to assist Police in localised heavy snow in Kelso, team used 4x4 to assist with transport problems. Border SAR, 6.
- FEBRUARY 25 – Strathpeffer, Urban – Search for a depressed male, found dead in woodland. Torridon, SARDA Scotland and Dundonnell MRT. Cas located by Police Dog handler. FATALITY. Dundonnell MRT, Police Dogs, SARDA(Scotland), Torridon MRT, 30.
- FEBRUARY 26 – Carnoustie – Leuchars searched for a missing vulnerable male in

- Carnoustie in woodland. Misper located by Rescue 137. RAF Leuchars MRT, SARDA(Scotland), 14.
- FEBRUARY 28 – Galloway, Corsock House – Galloway MRT asked to assist with Swift water technicians for the recovery of a 72 year old fatality, trapped in a sluice gate. FATALITY. Galloway SAR, SARDA (Southern Scotland), 7.
- MARCH 1 – Alyth – Pensioner missing overnight from home, she was to visit hospital for schedule visit. Check with hospital was negative. Tayside, SARDA and R177 started search and recalled at 1100. Missing person was safe in hospital! Police enquiry on SARDA(Scotland), SARDA (Southern Scotland), Tayside MRT, Tayside Police MRT, 20.
- MARCH 1 – Strathblane, Blanefield – Huge search over 2 days, 1–2 March, for ‘Despondent’, reported missing the evening before. No find. Lomond MRT, Ochils MRT, SARDA(Scotland), SARDA (Southern Scotland), RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 54.
- MARCH 3 – Kinnoull Hill, Perth – Search by Tayside Police of well known suicide spot for missing person, nothing found. SARDA (Southern Scotland), Tayside Police MRT, 4.
- MARCH 8 – Laggan, Road-Traffic Accident – RAF Leuchars MRT on scene to a road crash on the Laggan Road, team assisted ambulance and heli med with casualties. RAF Leuchars MRT, AA Scottish Air Ambulance, 10.
- MARCH 8 – Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban – Search for a missing 75 year old vulnerable missing male, suffering from dementia and diabetes. Extensive searches by MRT located by Police helicopter suffering from exhaustion. Arrochar MRT, Oban MRT, SARDA(Scotland), SARDA (Southern Scotland), Strathclyde MRT, AA Scottish Air Ambulance, 39.
- MARCH 10 – Kirkbean – SARDA and Moffat MRT en route to assist in the search for a missing female in the Kirkbean area. The search was stood down while the teams were on route. Moffat MRT, SARDA(Scotland), SARDA (Southern Scotland), 3.
- MARCH 13 – Ballahullish Quarry – Glencoe MRT asked by SSPCA to rescue sheep in Ballahullish quarry! Glencoe MRT, 4.
- MARCH 18 – Eyemouth – SARDA Southern and Scotland and Borders SRU were involved in a search for a missing man in the Eyemouth area. After a search during the night nothing was found and the search stood down pending further police enquires. Search over Border SAR, SARDA(Scotland), SARDA (Southern Scotland), 38.
- MARCH 18 – River Tay, Kinfauns Castle – Taypol Police MRT assisted in the recovery of human remains. Person had gone missing on the 27 Feb, confused and circumstances stated that he may have fallen in river. FATALITY. Tayside Police MRT, 1.
- MARCH 18 – Musselburgh – Borders and SARDA in the search for a missing 58 year old from Musselburgh, located in the River Esk. FATALITY. Border SAR, SARDA (Southern Scotland), 19.
- MARCH 20 – Loch Long – Search for missing canoeist last seen on Loch near Cove, canoe found. CG and Strathpol/SARDA and Arrochar searched shoreline. Searches on various dates during March by teams. Located in loch in June FATAL. Arrochar MRT, Coastguard Personnel, SARDA(Scotland), Strathclyde MRT, 34.

- MARCH 21 – Ballagan Glen, by Strathblane – Body recovery from water course. FATALITY. Lomond MRT, 14.
- MARCH 21 – Loch Awe – 4 males in distress on Loch Awe, at present 2 recovered deceased by Fire and Rescue service. Shoreline searches by CG, and MRT, Strathpol, Oban and Police divers/ MRT assisted in recovery of fatalities. Coastguard Personnel, Oban MRT, Non-specialists (Non-MR), Strathclyde MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 34.
- MARCH 22 – Glencoe, Coire Gabhail – Glencoe MRT assisted in the recovery of a team members dog (fatal) that fell 200 feet into the Coire Gabhail Gorge. Glencoe MRT, 9.
- MARCH 24 – Kirkcudbright – Galloway MRT involved in the search for a missing 72 yr old despondent near Kirkcudbright. Casualty located by MRT and SARDA in woods 2 miles from home, confused and bruised. Evacuated to road and ambulance. Galloway SAR, SARDA (Southern Scotland), 15.
- MARCH 26 – Coupar, Angus – Search of ditch and recovery of human remains, police investigation. No further details as sub judicie. Tayside Police MRT, 1.
- MARCH 28 – Bruar Falls – Car found nearby with note. The body recovery of a suicide victim was recovered by a abseil and hoist cableway by Tayside MRT. Team using swift water capabilities. FATALITY. Tayside MRT, Tayside Police MRT, 14.
- MARCH 31 – Inverurie – SARDA and Grampian police involved in a search for a missing 82 year old despondent in the Inverurie area. Night searches carried out by SARDA, MRT and R137, Casualty located by Police and taken to hospital. Grampian Police MRT, RAF Kinloss MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 2.
- APRIL 3 – Strath Conan, Wester Ross – Dundonnell, Kinloss, SARDA and R100 in a search for a missing 60 year old walker despondent and intending self harm. Located safe and well on a track. Dundonnell MRT, Police Dogs, RAF Kinloss MRT, SARDA (Scotland), HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 34.
- APRIL 8 – Tillicoultry, Wood Hill – 14/15 March Search for a missing depressed/ suicidal male with dog, both found in Quarry. Highline rope system used to recover fatalities from Quarry. Phone trace used to assist in location of casualties! Ochils MR Ochils MRT, SARDA(Scotland), SARDA (Southern Scotland), RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 21.
- APRIL 9 – Lochaline, Ardgour – Male reported missing overnight in Lochaline, Glencoe MR recalled when he turned up safe! Glencoe MRT, 1.
- APRIL 10 – Cairngorms, Stac na h Lolaire – The MP had left a suicide note for 1300 at Stac na h lolaire. He had a history of this and was vulnerable. We were asked to assist locating him. He was apprehended at the Ranger Base by Police. Cairngorm MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 5.
- APRIL 11 – Kintail, Shiel Bridge – Two members returning from setting up an exercise were asked by police to assist with an RTA. Duties included traffic control and guiding in RAF Helo for casualty evacuation. No casualty handling done. Kintail MRT, 2.
- APRIL 15 – Stranraer – Galloway MRT assisted in the search for a missing person near Stranraer, not found by team. Casualty located deceased next day outside search area. FATALITY. Galloway SAR, SARDA (Southern Scotland), 17.
- APRIL 19 – Grey Corries, Coire Easain – Paraglider with back injury in Coire

- Easain, spent night on hill before reported missing. Evacuated by helicopter who spotted canopy. Glencoe MRT, RAF Leuchars MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 22.
- APRIL 20 – Perth, Kinnoull Hill – FATALITY, suicide, found by passer by at locus below cliffs. Recovered by Taypol MRT. Tayside Police MRT, 3.
- APRIL 24 – Loch Killin, East of Loch Ness – Police control asked for assistance with the recovery of a body which was on steep ground. He had been there for about 9 days. A burned out heather fire was evident all around. Smoke inhalation. FATALITY. Cairngorm MRT, 5.
- APRIL 25 – Heads of Ayr – 4 females got stuck on sea cliffs at Heads Of Ayr. Strathclyde MRT on route, rescued by local Coastguard with rope and R177. All had poor footwear!. Coastguard Personnel, Strathclyde MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 10.
- APRIL 26 – Fife – SARDA Scotland/ Southern assisted Fife Police in the search for a missing 8 year old boy. He was traced by Police whilst search was ongoing. SARDA(Scotland), SARDA (Southern Scotland), 2.
- APRIL 28 Glamis Dean Water Tayside search for a missing person who was living rough in Glamis area of Angus. Tent and equipment found,abandoned and subject located at home address. SARDA(Scotland), Tayside Police MRT, 2.
- APRIL 28 – Innerleithen – SARDA Southern, Tweed Valley and Borders SRU were involved in the search for a missing male in the Innerleithen area. Casualty located by Borders SARU. FATALITY. Border SAR, SARDA (Southern Scotland), Tweed Valley MRT, 19.
- APRIL 28 – Arran, South Corriegills – Young male went missing after a walk along the coast His rucksack and clothing found by Arran team in a large search. His body was located in the sea below steep ground. Arran/ Strathclyde MRT/ SARDA and Gannet R1 Arran MRT, SARDA(Scotland), SARDA (Southern Scotland), RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, ASU Strathclyde Police Helicopter, 22.
- MAY 1 – Sound of Mull – Glencoe team boat and landrover asked to assist in the search for a missing diver in area of the Rubha Ridge Sound of Mull. Glencoe MRT, 12.
- MAY 3 – Plockton Village Hall – Missing depressed casualty search by Kintail MRT found deceased by coastguard. FATALITY. Kintail MRT, SARDA(Scotland), 15.
- MAY 4 – Balerno – Borders SARU requested to assist with search for missing 10yr old. Standby cancelled after and hour when child found safe by Police. Border SAR, SARDA(Scotland), SARDA (Southern Scotland), 22.
- MAY 4 – Kentallen – Spectator at Six day trail with a fractured leg after a fall taken off by Glencoe MRT and stretchered to road. Glencoe MRT, 6.
- MAY 4 – Dalness, River Etive – 2 campers in Island on river Etive near Dalness, were stuck due to heavy rain overnight, to such an extent that they could not get off Island. Walked off by Glencoe both okay. Fire service also in attendance! Glencoe MRT, 12.
- MAY 8 – Resipol, Ardgour – Search for a missing depressed/ woman at Reispole, by Glencoe MRT, SARDA S recalled on route. FATALITY. Glencoe MRT, Lochaber MRT, SARDA(Scotland), 16.

- MAY 9 – Ben Lomond – Lomond MRT, assisted a well equipped hill runner near the summit, who collapsed. Team re warmed and treated with hot drinks, and managed to walk her off. Lomond MRT, 22.
- MAY 12 – East Linton – SARDA Southern/ Scotland and Borders SRU searched for a missing female in the East Linton area. She was located by MRT safe and well. Border SAR, SARDA(Scotland), SARDA (Southern Scotland), 12.
- MAY 13 – Dalbeattie, Guffogland Farm – Galloway and SARDA in search for a missing female despondent on high ground adjacent to farm. Casualty located by SARDA. Team assisted with casualty management and recovery. FATALITY. Galloway SAR, SARDA(Scotland), SARDA (Southern Scotland), 19.
- MAY 16 – Arran, Goatfell Hill Race – 2 runners fell in the same place on Goatfell during hill race, injuring leg, both bleeding badly from leg and arms/ one with concussion. One ran on after treatment the other taken off hill by Argo cat. Arran MRT, 14.
- MAY 16 – Dumfries – SARDA Southern and Moffat MRT assisted in the search for a missing boy in the outskirts of Dumfries under the influence of alcohol. He was located by the Police whilst the search was ongoing. Moffat MRT, SARDA(Scotland), SARDA (Southern Scotland), 17.
- MAY 18 – Pentland Hills – SARDA Southern, Leuchars, Tweed Valley and Borders SRU, RAF Boulmer Helicopter were involved in a search for a missing male despondent in the Pentland Hills. Located by Police casualty was safe and well. Phone pings used to narrow search Border SAR, RAF Leuchars MRT, SARDA(Scotland), SARDA (Southern Scotland), Tweed Valley MRT, RAF Boulmer SAR Helicopter, 32.
- MAY 24 – Elgin – FATALITY. SARDA assisted Police in a search for a 44 year old male in Elgin, believed intending self harm. Kinloss MRT/ SARDA assisted in search, cas located in woodland after 30 minutes searching by SARDA Handler. RAF Kinloss MRT, SARDA(Scotland), 4.
- MAY 25 – Kinross, Kinnes Wood – Search for a missing person (suicidal). Traced by Fife Police on Forth Road Bridge. Tayside Police MRT, 4.
- MAY 26 – Fearnan, Loch Tay, Stirling – Subject reported missing from home address, near Stirling known depressive, Ochils, Tayside/ Pol MRT assisted POLSAR to search rough ground and forestry. Found later in area outside search area in Inverness safe Ochils MRT, SARDA(Scotland), SARDA (Southern Scotland), Tayside MRT, Tayside Police MRT, 27.
- MAY 26 – Kirkbean, Lotts Farm – FATALITY. Moffat MRT and SARDA Southern/ Scotland assisted on a search for a missing farmer in the Kirkbean area. Located by MRT. Moffat MRT, SARDA(Scotland), SARDA (Southern Scotland), 12.
- MAY 27 – Stirling, Royal Infirmary Woods – FATALITY. Recovery of a body from dense woodland by Ochils MRT. The casualty was a patient at Stirling Royal Infirmary who had taken had own life, unrelated to search of 26 May. Ochils MRT, 4.
- MAY 29 – Falkirk – SARDA Southern assisted Central Police in the search for a missing male in the Falkirk area. He was traced by the Police whilst the search was ongoing. SARDA (Southern Scotland), 2.

- MAY 31 – Kelso, Junction Pool – Child got into trouble on water at Kelso Junction Pool. Borders SARU assisted ambulance and Fire brigade with casualty. FATALITY. Border SAR, 10.
- JUNE 3 – Glencoe, Stob na Doire – Dog stuck in gully after a fall, on Buachaille Etive Mor, Stob na Doire recovered by Glencoe MRT. Glencoe MRT, 8.
- JUNE 4 – Bennachie – Mountain biker with neck injury, friends were holding his neck in brace position. Breamar Team assisted ambulance/ Police and carried casualty 1.5 k down steep path. Casualty was diagnosed with a neck fracture. Ambulance Personnel, Braemar MRT, Grampian Police MRT, 7.
- JUNE 6 – Stonehaven – Grampian/Braemar MRT To assist in the search of a steep bank the A90. Grampian Police MRT, 3.
- JUNE 8 – Davaar Island – Oban MRT carried out a sheep rescue on a cliff Davaar Island, sheep rescued by abseil, ‘sheep snatch’! Oban MRT, 3.
- JUNE 13 – Galloway, Newton Stewart – Due to difficult access Galloway MRT assisted paramedics with a woman who had fallen over a wall by a river. Recovered by Rescue 177. Galloway SAR, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 6.
- JUNE 14 – Lochaline – Man reported missing overnight. Glencoe recalled when he turned up safe. Glencoe MRT, 8.
- JUNE 17 – Falkirk – SARDA Southern & SARDA Scotland were involved in a search for a male who had been looking unwell in the Falkirk area. After a search nothing was found and the search stood down while police enquires continue. SARDA(Scotland), SARDA (Southern Scotland), 2.
- JUNE 20 – Lomond, Sallochay Bay – Whilst covering the annual West Highland Way race, Lomond MRT were asked to assist a 20 year fell on rocks whilst camping, heavily intoxicated, facial injury, smashed teeth. Treated by Lomond MRT and taken to ambulance Lomond MRT, 2.
- JUNE 21 – Carlton Hill, Edinburgh – Requested to assist search rough and steep areas on Carlton Hill for evidence of missing peron (missing 12 months). Nothing found but remains later found (Oct 09) in garden in Edinburgh. SARDA(Scotland), Tweed Valley MRT, 9.
- JUNE 23 – Allt na Dunaiche Waterfalls, Strath – Casualty slipped on rocks near water and fell heavily onto his side breaking his pelvis. Skye MRT, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 2.
- JUNE 23 – River Tummel, Pitlochry – Taypol MRT in the search and recovery of a female suicide victim. Tayside Police MRT, 3.
- JUNE 26 – Arran, Brodick/Lamlash – 14 year old left a suicide note at 2300 then set off to walk from Brodick to Lamlash. Arran team located casualty safe and well in Lamlash! Arran MRT, SARDA (Southern Scotland), 15.
- JULY 2 – Glen Kinglass, Arrochar – FATALITIES. Aircraft crash RAF Tornado 2 killed when aircraft crashed into Glen Kinglass
- JULY 2–8 RAF Kinloss/ Leuchars/ Strathclyde Police MRT. Arrochar on standby for incident. Over 1000 hours on this incid Arrochar MRT, RAF Kinloss MRT, RAF Leuchars MRT, Strathclyde MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, ASU Strathclyde Police Helicopter, 48.
- JULY 4 – River Lochy – Lochaber MRT to incident at River Lochy. Report of people lost at mouth of river. NO FURTHER INFO AT PRESENT. Lochaber MRT, 1.

- JULY 5 – Inchree Waterfalls – Suspected heart attack at Inchree Waterfalls. Casualty taken to ambulance before team arrived. Glencoe MRT, 1.
- JULY 12 – Cowdenbeath – SARDA Southern assisted Fife Police and R177 in the search for a missing man in the Cowdenbeath area. The search was stood down pending further enquires. SARDA (Southern Scotland), RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 1.
- JULY 15 – Auchtermuchty – SARDA Southern assisted Police in a search for a missing man in Auchtermuchty in the early hours. The search was stood down pending further Police enquires! SARDA (Southern Scotland), ASU Strathclyde Police Helicopter, 1.
- JULY 18 – Borders, Rideout – Borders SARU assisted with an injured rider with a possible broken leg. Border SAR, 1.
- JULY 18 – Borders, Rural – Borders SARU assisted the ambulance service in a rural evacuation, possible food poisoning. Border SAR, 4.
- JULY 18 – Borders, Rural – Borders SARU assisted horse rider with a possible appendix pain in a rural area. Borders SAR, 3.
- JULY 20 – Dunning Glen – Male camping fell in ravine, Ochils MRT assisted Fire service and Ambulance with casualty evacuation from area by a simple stretcher raise. Ochils MRT, 12.
- JULY 21 – Glencoe Forest Walk – 2 Walkers lost on Glencoe Lochan forest walk, located by Glencoe MRT and taken to Glencoe Bus Stop! Glencoe MRT, 1.
- JULY 24 – Larkhall – 13 Year old fell off tree swing down into a steep glen, he suffered a suspect broken pelvis, Recovered by Strathclyde MRT and R177 who assisted the Fire and Rescue Services. Non-specialists (Non-MR), Strathclyde MRT, RNAS Gannet SAR Helicopter, 12.
- JULY 30 – Mildren Estate – Tayside Police MRT to gather evidence in wildlife and countryside offences under the Wildlife Act of 1981. Tayside Police MRT, 6.
- JULY 30 – Kinclaven – Fisherman carried away in river. Search by Taypol Police MRT and boats. FATALITY. Tayside Police MRT, 6.
- AUGUST 1 – Dollar – Initial callout for a fell runner who split from a running party. Ended up at Kinross Service station as Ochil team were deploying. His phone battery was flat hence no communication. Ochils MRT, 1.
- AUGUST 3 – Commonsides, Nr Hawick – FATALITY. Prolonged multiday search for missing 89 yr old gentleman. Eventually located out of immediate search area by local farmer at NT426046. Search over 5 days 3/8 -16/8. Border SAR, Moffat MRT, SARDA (Scotland), SARDA (Southern Scotland), Tweed Valley MRT, RAF Boulmer SAR Helicopter, 68.
- AUGUST 5 – Loch An Eilein – Female came off her mountain bike fracturing leg and tearing ligaments. CMRT treated and evacuated. Cairngorm MRT, 2.
- AUGUST 5 – Falkirk, Callander Park – FATALITY. Male depressed patient from a psychiatric unit with a history of attempted suicide, left hospital after treatment. Partner reported him missing large search by Ochils MRT and SARDA, found in canal day aft Ochils MRT, SARDA (Southern Scotland), 19.
- AUGUST 6 – Skye, An Tom, Ben Tianavaig – The casualty, a geologist, was visiting the area to examine the rocks & strata. He slipped on steep grassy ground above a line of coastal cliffs, falling over cliffs to the shore below. Body recovery. Skye MRT, 8.

- AUGUST 7 – Lairig Ghru, Derry Lodge – Mountain biker fell off bike hitting drainage ditch injuring face, possible broken jaw and lost teeth, dazed and confused! Companion called from telephone box at Derry Lodge. Braemar MRT and R137 evacuated casualty. Braemar MRT, Grampian Police MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 5.
- AUGUST 8 – Ardesie – Walker scattering ashes near Dundonnell fell and injured knee on shoreline at Ardesie. He was treated and assisted by two team members. Dundonnell MRT, 2.
- AUGUST 8 – Inverness, Culloden – Dundonnell called to assist in the search for a missing vulnerable person. Called off early by the Police. Dundonnell MRT, 2.
- AUGUST 11 – Clachnaben, Mount Shade – Runner got separated on Mount Shade, no torch map etc manged to make own way off. Grampian Police MRT. Grampian Police MRT, 2.
- AUGUST 12 – Glenelg, Eileanreach Brae – Glenleg MRT assisted the local doctor with a bike accident, casualty treated for multiple abrasions and possible spinal and head injuries. Glenelg MRT, 3.
- AUGUST 13 – Kintyre, Ballmeanach Hill – Oban MRT rescued a calf stuck in a ravine. They assisted 2 vets who abseiled in with team, and team raised calf out by various rescue methods. Oban MRT, 3.
- AUGUST 17 – Glen Lyon, Gleanan Meran – Mountain Biker injured groin when fell of bike injury from handlebars. Killin MRT member present and due to seriousness of injuries set up radio relay for assistance. No mobile phone present. Helimed evacuated cas Killin MRT, AA Scottish Air Ambulance, 1.
- AUGUST 17 – Kinnoull Hill, Perth – Search for a despondent in the Kinnoull Hill area Perth. Casualty recovered by Tayside Police MRT. FATALITY. Tayside MRT, 3.
- AUGUST 18 – Glen Ogle – Driver went off the road in Glen Ogle ended up in river. Killin MRT assisted Fire and ambulance with recovery of the casualty from the gorge. Killin lowered stretcher into gorge and then evacuated to ambulance. Killin MRT, 4.
- AUGUST 19 – Durisdeer area – Moffat and SARDA Southern assisted Police and Fire Service in the search for a missing suicidal male in the Durisdeer area. He was located by MRT and treated at the scene, unconscious but alive before being stretchered to Border SAR, Moffat MRT, SARDA (Southern Scotland), 47.
- AUGUST 21 – Nr Hawick – Recovery of body of lady who had committed suicide in tent by river. Tweed Valley MRT, 11.
- AUGUST 28 – Croy Quarry, Lanarkshire – Strathclyde MRT recovered 2 dogs from Croy quarry, that had run over the edge and landed on ledge approximately 18 metres. Strathclyde MRT, 7.
- SEPTEMBER 6 – Canonbie, Bruntshelbog – Casualty was alcoholic who suffers from epileptic seizures last seen at 1600 outside his cottage. Found by Moffat MRT wearing only shorts and tee shirt, no shoes, barely conscious. Taken to Carlisle hospital. SARDA Moffat MRT, SARDA(Scotland), SARDA (Southern Scotland), 24.
- SEPTEMBER 7 – Nevis Range – Red Run Lochaber to assist a mountain bike incident at Nevis Range. Limited info at present. Lochaber MRT, 5.
- SEPTEMBER 9 – Kenmore – Husband and wife walking near to river Tay, wife

- thought that husband had fallen into river, which was in spate. Tayside Pol MRT called out but stood down when uniform located subject safe and well. Tayside MRT, Tayside Police MRT, 2.
- SEPTEMBER 9 – Kinshaldy Beach, Tentsmuir – Clothes found on beach search by SARDAS. SARDA(Scotland), 1.
- SEPTEMBER 9 – River Foyers – The MP jumped into the river with friends, never surfaced. A multi agency event trying to find the body. CMRT assisted, recovered the teenager after 3 days. A complicated rescue in all ways. Glenmore Lodge MRT Provided Swif Cairngorm MRT, Glenmore Lodge MRT, 8.
- SEPTEMBER 12 – Livingston, River Almond – River search by Borders SARU for a missing person, who jumped from the Simpson Parway bridge, located below search area. Border SAR, 9.
- SEPTEMBER 17 – A68 Soutra – Request to assist search for person missing near A68, Soutra. Found safe before team arrived. Tweed Valley MRT, 10.
- SEPTEMBER 19 – Caresman Hill, Glentress – Request to assist evacuate injured cyclist with broken femur in Glentress. One member on scene from start, others arrived to assist with evacuation. Tweed Valley MRT, 4.
- SEPTEMBER 22 –Denny – SARDAS to search for missing male in the Denny area, located as SARDA arrived on scene. SARDA(Scotland), SARDA (Southern Scotland), 2.
- SEPTEMBER 27 – Beauly – FATALITY. Dundonnell MRT in search for a missing 72 year old vulnerable woman. Located within an hour 1 km of locus. Dundonnell MRT, 15.
- SEPTEMBER 30 – Poolewe – FATALITY. Dundonnell recovered a fatality from a drowning incident for a vulnerable male. Dundonnell MRT, Police Dogs, SARDA(Scotland), 21.
- SEPTEMBER 30 – Brechin, Backbraes – Tayside Police to a missing person from a domestic incidents. Tracking specialist worked out that the Misper would have had to climb 12 feet fence, to get into wood land area. No footprints and Misper located in to Tayside Police MRT, 1.
- OCTOBER 2 – Leiter Fura Trails, Kinloch, Sleat – Casualty set out on a 4 mile walk on way-marked trail in forest plantation. Reported missing when he failed to return to his hotel for dinner. Located in Jan 2010 at 749164 Search from 2/10 to 6/10 and o Glenelg MRT, Kintail MRT, Police Dogs , RAF Kinloss MRT, Skye MRT, SARDA(Scotland), Torridon MRT, HMCg Stornaway Helicopter, 70.
- OCTOBER 2 – Borders, Palace Farm – Borders SARU involved in the recovery of a fatality from the St Cuthbert's way. FATALITY. Border SAR, 6.
- OCTOBER 4 – Glengarry Forest – Two mountain bikers set off from Laggan Locks Invergarry, following a route in a mountain bike book. When the track ended they became lost and called Police. Rescue 137 and Police Dogs involved, casualties located. Police Dogs, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 1.
- OCTOBER 7 – Cribbilaw Hill, near Stow – Search for missing person. Team dog handler located body in early hours of morning 8/10/09. Casualty was probationary member of TVMRT. Both dog handlers who attended were TVMRT. Border SAR, SARDA (Southern Scotland), 22.
- OCTOBER 12 – Roseisle Woods, Moray – Kinloss MRT tasked by Police to search

- for young child in the Roseisle woods after a walker had been approached by a young child who ran off into the woods. RAF Kinloss MRT, 15.
- OCTOBER 13 – Galloway, Kirkinner – Galloway MRT to search for despondent missing overnight, located as team were deploying. Galloway SAR, SARDA(Scotland), 11.
- OCTOBER 13 – Skye, Camasunary, Loch Slapin – Human remains located by walker on a coastal path. Skye MRT assisted in the recovery of casualty. FATALITY. Skye MRT, 2.
- OCTOBER 14 – Galloway, MOD Range – Galloway MRT assisted in the recovery of a body on the foreshore in the MOD Range South of Kirkcudbright. Galloway SAR, 10.
- OCTOBER 14 – Cupar – RAF Leuchars/SARDA Dogs assisted Fife police in the search for a farm worker near Cupar. The search was stood down while Police enquires continue. RAF Leuchars MRT, SARDA(Scotland), SARDA (Southern Scotland), 16.
- OCTOBER 16 – Spean Gorge – Lochaber assisted a canoeist with a dislocated shoulder in Spean Gorge. Lochaber MRT, 1.
- OCTOBER 20 – Fife, Kinglassie – SARDA dog to assist in a search in Fife for a missing boy, missing boy located as SARDA was deploying. SARDA (Southern Scotland), 1.
- OCTOBER 21 – Holywood, Dumfries – SARDA, Moffat MRT called in to search for a missing male in the Dumfries area. He was located by Police as and Dogs were being deployed. Moffat MRT, SARDA(Scotland), 12.
- OCTOBER 21 – Killikrankie Gorge – Tent reported abandoned near Killikrankie Gorge. After search by Tayside Police it was assessed that the tent had been abandoned. Beer and BBQ remains. Tayside Police MRT, 3.
- OCTOBER 22 – Perth, Kinnoull area – Search for a missing male aged 73 despondent, round the castle and table area Kinnoull area by Tayside Police MRT. Nothing found. SARDA(Scotland), Tayside Police MRT, 4.
- OCTOBER 23 – Glenrothes – SARDA asked to assist Fife Police with a search for a missing man near Glenrothes. After a protracted search through the night a body was located by a Police search team. FATALITY. SARDA(Scotland), SARDA (Southern Scotland), 5.
- OCTOBER 24 – Perth, Kinnoull Hill – Despondent missing for 2 days found by Tayside Police MRT, Kinoull Hill, Perth. He was concealed in deep undergrowth away from the usual places, that despondants are found. Hypothermic and distressed and stretchered Tayside Police MRT, 5.
- OCTOBER 27 – Beinn Sgurrach (near Loch Ness) – The estate worker rolled the Argo then fell 250 feet. Extensive bruising to back and dislocated shoulder, treated in Raigmore. 137 called and evacuated. CMRT put on standby due to low cloud level. Cairngorm MRT, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 7.
- OCTOBER 27 – Dulsie Bridge – Kinloss MRT assisted the recovery of an injured canoeist at Dulsie Bridge with head and spine injuries. Evacuated by Rescue 100. RAF Kinloss MRT, HMCG Stornaway Helicopter, 11.
- NOVEMBER 3 – Glencoe, Meall Mhor – Walker surveying for SNH got stuck on a ledge about 500 feet from river. He did not have a torch walked off by Glencoe MRT. Glencoe MRT, 7.

- NOVEMBER 19 – Glenmore Forest – Police control in Inverness asked for help to locate a female with suicidal tendencies. Police found her before we left the base. Removed the hose pipe from car in time to save her life. Cairngorm MRT, 1.
- NOVEMBER 21 – Wallaces Monument, Stirling – Search for a missing Labrador dog by Ochils MRT – no find! Ochils MRT, 5.
- NOVEMBER 27 – Drongon, Ayrshire – SARDA, Galloway assisted Strathclyde MRT in the search for a missing man in the Drongon area. He was located by Police on the second day of search outwith the search area. Galloway SAR, SARDA(Scotland), SARDA (Southern Scotland), Strathclyde MRT, 17.
- NOVEMBER 27 – Blair Atholl – 2 males were seen to come out their kayaks and carried downstream. Traced by Tayside Police as they managed to get to the river bank. Tayside Police MRT, 1.
- DECEMBER 3 – Dalbeattie Forest – Galloway, Moffat, SARDA Scotland/Lakes, RAF Boulmer HM Coastguard and Forestry workers in the search for a missing walker. Located after a protracted search in a loch in the forestry. FATAL. Coastguard Personnel, Galloway SAR, Moffat MRT, Non-specialists (Non-MR), SARDA(Scotland), SARDA (Southern Scotland), RAF Boulmer SAR Helicopter, 47.
- DECEMBER 4 – Rural Area around Hawick – Standby to assist in search for vulnerable 38yr old female in Hawick/Denholm area. Stood down after 1hr when located safe. Tweed Valley MRT, 12.
- DECEMBER 7 – Bo’ness – SARDA S assisted in the search for a missing man near Bo’ness, after a search through the night he was located safe and well outwith the search area. SARDA (Southern Scotland), 2.
- DECEMBER 9 – Dunkeld Gorge – Tayside MRT to assist a fallen walker in a gorge, RAF Leuchars recalled whilst on route. Recovery by Rescue 177. RAF Leuchars MRT, Tayside MRT, Tayside Police MRT, 30.
- DECEMBER 11 – Dalmally, Achlain Farm – SARDA S, Oban and Strathclyde in the search for an elderly man in a forest near Dalmally. He was talked into the Police control point by mobile phone while teams and dog handlers were on route. Oban MRT, SARDA (Southern Scotland), 19.
- DECEMBER 12 – Ben Lomond area – FATALITY Stalker missing overnight major search Lomond, Killin, Ochils, SARDA, 12/13 Dec, Search of likely hill areas by all teams. Casualty located and stretchered off, POSSIBLE MEDICAL ILLNESS! Over 1200 hours by teams. Killin MRT, Lomond MRT, Ochils MRT, SARDA(Scotland), SARDA (Southern Scotland), ASU Strathclyde Police Helicopter, RAF Lossiemouth SAR Helicopter, 64.
- DECEMBER 13 – Loch Doon, Hoodin Hill – Strathclyde Police MRT assist in the search for a cragfast dog near Loch Doon on Hoodin Hill. When team arrived dog was lost not cragfast. After a search nothing was found. Dog located by RSPCA two days later. Strathclyde MRT, 6.
- DECEMBER 16 – Kingshill Plantation, North Lanark – Family of 4 lost in forest, in thick fog, and dark. Strathclyde Police MRT and Police helicopter called in. Family found refuge in a house all OK. Strathclyde MRT, 6.
- DECEMBER 16 – Hamilton, Chatenhaith Country Park – Walker slipped and fell in gorge. A search in dark by Strathclyde Police who abseiled into gorge no sign

*Top: Ski-Mountaineering Meet 2010 – Skiing off the summit of Beinn a' Ghlo.*

*Bottom: Adam Kassyk descending Allt a' Choire Mhoir, Beinn MacDuibh, May 2010.*

*Both photos: Des Rubens.*





- of casualty. Police divers are now searching River Avon, still no sign of casualty at present. Strathclyde MRT, 6.
- DECEMBER 19 – Glencoe, Local Moors – Glencoe Team Leader asked to assist local Police as no one available to investigate moor fire in Glencoe area. Glencoe MRT, 1.
- DECEMBER 20 – Braemar – Helicopter Guard Rescue 177 went u/s at Braemar, guarded by Leuchars MRT overnight. RAF Leuchars MRT, 2.
- DECEMBER 21 – Arran – SARDA S and Arran MRT to shouts for help heard. On investigation it was a farmer herding his sheep! Well intentioned 'False Alarm'. Arran MRT, SARDA (Southern Scotland), 3.
- DECEMBER 22 – Stirling – 3 SARDA dogs enroute to assist Central Police in the search for a missing elderly gentleman. He was located by Police as SARDA was on route. SARDA (Southern Scotland), 3.
- DECEMBER 23 – Perth area, Kinnoull Hill – Missing despondent last seen in Perth area, speculative search of locus by Taypol revealed body below cliffs. FATALITY. Tayside Police MRT, 6.
- DECEMBER 23 – Galloway, Castle Douglas – Galloway MRT assisted in the recovery of a farmer who had been gored by a bull, FATAL. Galloway SAR, 6.
- DECEMBER 23 – Central Borders and Tweed – Standby to assist police during period of heavy snow in Borders area. Team and vehicles on standby. 20 hours recorded although standby was over 48 hour period. Tweed Valley MRT, 20.
- DECEMBER 24 – Auchterhouse, Dundee – Despondent male left house intimating suicide and last seen in wood land area. Taypol and Police dog traced Misper. Police Dogs, Tayside Police MRT, 5.
- DECEMBER 28 – Kelso – Missing depressed male found after a short night search by Borders SARU, freezing weather. Border SAR, 14.
- DECEMBER 30 – Hassendean Common – Request to assist evacuate casualty with dislocated knee. Bulk of team on another incident but retasked helicopter from incident 863 29/12/09 and sent team vehicle. One member on site with casualty. Tweed Valley MRT, 4.
- DECEMBER 30 – Woodlands near to Gorebridge – Request to assist in search for missing vulnerable female, suicidal. Located late in afternoon in woodland near to home village and in area where she was know to walk. Found by team from Cave Rescue FATAL Border SAR, Scottish Cave Rescue CRO, SARDA(Scotland), SARDA (Southern Scotland), Tweed Valley MRT, 31.
- DECEMBER 31 – Dalkeith – SARDA, Borders SARU, Cave Rescue and Boulmer Helicopter in the search for a missing woman in the Dalkeith area. Casualty was located by Cave Rescue in a river during the search. FATALITY. Border SAR, Scottish Cave Rescue CRO, SARDA(Scotland), SARDA (Southern Scotland), RAF Boulmer SAR Helicopter, 26.
- DECEMBER 31 – Central Borders – Team put on standby to assist with severe weather incidents. Tweed Valley MRT, 1.

## IN MEMORIAM

### DONALD MCINTYRE j. 1946

DONALD MCINTYRE, geologist, mountaineer, piper, scholar and writer was born in Edinburgh in 1923. He did most of his climbing in Scotland during the nineteen forties while a geology student and later staff member at Edinburgh University.

He was an all round mountaineer ranging widely throughout the Highlands. He climbed his first Munro aged eleven. In the autumn of 1941 he climbed the seven highest Cairngorms in a day, a feat recorded in the *SMCJ* for 1941. Later he made classical winter ascents on Nevis and the Buachaille, climbing during the war years with such luminaries as Archie Hendry, George Peat and Gordon Parish. In July 1943 he records climbing Ben Mor Assynt, Cul Mor, Stac Polly, Conival and Canisp. During the war years this was in a closed area. He must have got special permission, perhaps to further his geological studies. What a privilege it must have been to roam this spectacular landscape when the roads were narrow and empty and not a stockbroker or tourist in sight!

After the war, during the golden years, he climbed *Crowberry Gully* with Bill Murray and Bill MacKenzie. He made ascents elsewhere with his proposer and seconder G. C. Williams and G. G. Elliot and in the Cuillins with J. K. W. Dunn. One of his Cuillin days was the ascent of *Water-Pipe Gully Direct* followed by a traverse of the Inaccessible Pinnacle sharing leads with Lord Malcolm Douglas Hamilton. He also climbed a variety of classic routes on Nevis with Malcolm Slessor. He, Malcolm and Geoff Dutton were keen pipers at this time and the first two continued practicing the art seriously throughout their lives.

His Geological career began with research on the origin of Scottish granite, focussing on the granite mass near the Merrick.

He spent most of his later life in California as Professor of Geology and later Chairman of Department at Pomona College. He became a respected figure in the geological world with a long list of significant publications and international honours. As well as research he was an innovative teacher, pioneering the role of computers in geological sciences.

He retired to Perthshire and became active in the conservation field, being for a time Chairman of the Perth Civic Trust. He played a major part in saving Dunsinane Hill from being quarried away. Donald, Geoff Dutton and Malcolm Slessor acquired their piping skills together from Hans Gates while students in Edinburgh in the immediate post-war period. Donald continued a scholarly interest in Piobaireachd after his return to Scotland.

IHMS

Donald McIntyre was the Club's first Archivist, appointed in 1992 following a suggestion made by Bill Murray that such a post should be established, and serving until 1997, when he resigned because of increasing commitments in other areas. He began by compiling an inventory of the archives, and proceeded with the co-operation of Robin Chalmers, who was Librarian at the time, to relocate several bags of precious documents from the Club Library to the National Library Deposit. These comprised Hut Books, the diaries and other papers of several

important members, a variety of other Club documents, and the grangerized volumes 3 to 7 of the Journal, in which William Douglas had inserted all his incoming correspondence relating to Journal contributions. Subsequently, the National Library purchased Volume 2 from this series, which had strayed from its owner. The fate of Volumes 8 to 10 remains unknown. The National Library, thanks to the enthusiasm and effort of Iain Brown and Olive Geddes, then combined these several Club Deposits into a single collection. Donald also added to the archive the diaries of Joseph A. Garrick (of the erstwhile Garrick's Shelf) and an extensive collection of diaries and other papers and photographs belonging to James Logan Aikman, Assistant Secretary 1931–5 and Secretary 1935–46.

When I succeeded Donald as Archivist in 1998, he presented me with an immaculate paper trail describing these transfers. I am happy to add my debt of gratitude to that owed by the Club for his hard work on our behalf.

Robin N Campbell

### PETER HODGKISS j.1975

FIVE A.M. OF A raw winter morning, in the gloom of the pre-enlargement CIC Hut. Long before the first hint of dawn, purposeful rummagings, the glimmer of a head-torch, the muted clatter of breakfast preparations disturb the snug sleep of the occupants. A stage whisper of complaint is heard from the bunks: 'It's that bugger Hodgkiss again'. That scenario – and tags like 'Peter Pan' and 'die Bergfuhrer', weighted with a mixture of admiration and exasperation – illustrate Peter's life-long, unquenchable, driving enthusiasm for mountain experience.

I first encountered Peter in the later 1960s, on the train back down to Glasgow from a dreich day on the Crianlarich hills. He had not long before moved up from the south with Joy and their young family. We quickly discovered a mutual interest in climbing literature and a shared admiration for W.H. Murray. A little later we met again in Sandy and Moira Cousins' hospitable flat in Kirklee, at a roup resulting from the merger of Western District and JMCS libraries. Peter and I came away with a mighty haul of ancient classics, our one later regret being that we hadn't connived beforehand to minimise our competition for the prize items. Peter considerably gave me and my hefty booty, in a tea-chest supplied by Sandy, a lift back to my student single-end in Partick. So we started going to the hills together.

Mountain days with Peter had a consistent quality of Homeric epic, as I and his many companions in the Glasgow JMCS quickly learned. They were marked by very early starts and correspondingly late finishes ('you can always sleep during the week' is a typical Hodgkiss aphorism, recalled by Ron Hockey); by great exhilarating sweeps across Scotland looking for better weather (usually yielding only a different kind of bad weather); by forays over multiple Munros into the gloaming and beyond, to squeeze the last drops of enjoyment from the day; by marathon classic climbs, with Peter pouring cheerful scorn on the feebleness of reluctant ropemates, particularly in the face of clag and rain ('just condensation, Boab'). John Miller vividly remembers a 19-hour April day on Nevis in conditions so fine that, having relished an ascent of *Bob Run* in the

morning, Peter dragooned three JMCSers back down Coire Leis and round to tackle *Observatory Ridge*. All these days were enriched by a stream of good crack about mountains, mountaineers, and multifarious other topics, enlivened by sardonic humour forged in Yorkshire and tempered in Glasgow.

Although Peter came relatively late to the Alps, he quickly became a regular visitor. His Alpine activity followed his connoisseur's fastidious taste. He largely eschewed the brashness of Chamonix and Zermatt for quieter areas like the Vanoise, and particularly the valleys either side of the Val d'Aosta. Installing Joy and the family for weeks in the Epinel campsite below Cogne, often with Madens or Hockeys, Peter developed an intimate familiarity with the Paradiso group, specialising in obscure routes to little-visited summits. Ron Hockey attests to Peter's mastery of mountain topography, and his penchant for 'the wrong side of the mountain and the wrong time of day' to avoid the beaten trails of the voies normales.

For Peter the historical and literary context lent his climbing a vital extra dimension. In Scotland he always relished repeating classic climbs (thus he felt it vital to experience *Clachaig Gully* in waterfall mode, as well as in the dry). The names of the pioneers, and quotations from their writings, were never far from his lips. Similarly, in the mountains of Cogne the Victorian George Yeld was his guide; in the Vanoise, Janet Adam Smith. Her under-rated classic Mountain Holidays became a kind of Bible for Peter. He and Janet conducted a decades-long correspondence, much valued on both sides; Janet came to regard herself as Peter's tante de montagne. It gave them great mutual pleasure when the Ernest Press reissued *Mountain Holidays* – 'the essence of what mountains are all about', as Roger Chorley epitomised it – for Janet's 90th birthday. That was the perfect expression of their shared lifelong passion for mountain country, for mountaineering and for its literature.

Later, Peter and Joy became devotees of Mallorca's fine rough hills. Then 'quality control inspection' visits to printers in Bilbao and Turin offered Peter the bonus of stravaiging trips into local mountain ranges, often out of season. From these he enriched his cornucopia of self-mocking tales about climbing adventures and local characters. Ever open and ready to chat with anyone, his infectious enthusiasm and unquenchable friendly curiosity quickly won over total strangers.

Perhaps because of his sharply critical eye for good writing, Peter was diffident about his own ability. His contributions to the Journal are limited to one or two notes. He even resisted contributing to 'SMC Abroad', feeling in his ascetic way that it was somehow immodest to record his expeditions. His one substantial piece of writing is the SMC's Central Highlands district guide, rich in character, informed by painstaking fieldwork and profound appreciation of the hills in all weathers and at all seasons. That guide and The Munros also benefited from Peter's very fine photographs; inevitably he took a meticulous approach to photography, doing his own printing.

It was Peter's misfortune to have made his career in the paper industry at a time when it was undergoing radical restructuring under pressures of globalisation. Friends recall his almost comic utter dismay when he won a post with a Glasgow papermaking company, only to discover that he would be based in Blackburn. Happily that exile did not last long, but neither did his employment.

However Peter's misfortune turned out to be very much to the benefit of the climbing fraternity. In the 1980s Peter became print agent and production

controller for the SMT, just as the Trust's historic but modest programme of producing climbers' guides and District guides to the Scottish mountains took off with the publication of *The Munros*. Peter had a major hand in design and production of the Munros and Corbetts guides, and the revamping of all the SMC's guidebooks. He progressively carried that forward into a central role in the production of journals, guidebooks and other publications for the Alpine Club, the Fell & Rock, and the Climbers' Club, his inputs of professional expertise far exceeding the modest recompense the clubs could provide. Handling all this material, dealing with authors and Club officers meant that Peter found himself at the hub of a national and international network of mountaineers, so that he came to occupy almost the kind of position that Percy Farrar did at the beginning of last century as editor of the *Alpine Journal*. He hugely enjoyed those links, which also enlarged his already vast knowledge of contemporary and historical mountaineering and its literature. He maintained an extensive correspondence, much of it carried on in his precise, fastidious handwriting by fountain pen.

Peter's important contribution to the literature of mountaineering through the Ernest Press has been affirmed in a number of other obituaries, and need not be recounted in detail here. He left his mark on the literature with a select range of books, modest in number but rich in quality, that resuscitated neglected personalities from the climbing world in Scotland and far beyond, and explored more reflective dimensions of the mountain experience. The Ernest Press, named after his father, began gently, with reprints of mountain classics long out of print, but from the outset Peter sought to add value, for instance by commissioning W.H. Murray to add a biographical foreword to the handsome reprint of Ben Humble's *Cuillin of Skye*. Peter was delighted that he had drawn out from Bill Murray a talent for affectionate yet penetrating character description. Before long the reprints were complemented by new titles, one of the first and best being *In Monte Viso's Horizon*, a superb essay on Alpine mountaineering by Will McLewin, an acerbic individualist with an aesthetic passion for the high Alps, a man after Peter's own heart. The Ernest Press climbing list eventually included over 40 titles, with climbing history and biography as major themes, but also encompassing that rarity, mountaineering fiction. The consistently high quality of content and presentation of Peter's titles is attested by their success in winning the key awards in the field; six were short-listed for the Boardman-Tasker prize for mountain literature, and four were winners. Most of these books, aimed at a highly specialised market, were relatively small print runs; their financial underpinning derived from a series of very popular and effective compact mountain biking guides, which eventually ran to 20 titles. Peter was the first to admit that he was almost entirely devoid of commercial instinct and marketing skills. These were supplied by Peter's partner Jack Baines until he died in 1996; thereafter the stalwart Joy took over a good deal of the distribution work for the Press.

One of Peter's favourite mountain writers, Claude Schuster, sets forth in his *Postscript to Adventure* a characteristically resounding Romantic summation of the climber's experience, with a sentiment entirely germane to Peter: 'where you seized on life with both hands, whether you succeeded or failed, there you triumphed.' Peter did seize on life with both hands, and he certainly triumphed. Though he has gone far too soon, he leaves behind the happy close-knit family

he established with Joy, four children and nine grandchildren, a source of huge pride and some surprise to him – ‘how did we manage to create such lovely but such different people?’; a full shelf of high-quality additions to the rich literature of mountaineering; and a brimming reservoir of vivid memories and wry tales among his legion of friends across the mountaineering world in Scotland and beyond, whose lives have been enhanced by his.

RA

## DAVID ROLLO GRIEVE J. 1977

DAVID DIED on 1 April 2010 after a long illness. He was one of Scotland’s foremost ski mountaineers always seeking new adventures, with ice-axe and crampon complementing his easy competence with gear, his route finding skills and his super downhill style.

AGN writes:

David and I were classmates at Aberdeen Grammar School in the late 1940s and joined the excursions of the School Rambling and Mountaineering Club until forbidden from further attendance because we were regarded as a dangerous influence on the group. Fortunately, his parents were keen caravaners and I joined family holidays where we set about exploring the West Highlands. Unknown to his mother, we soon ventured onto the more direct and vertical ascents. Those were the days of nailed boots (initially Muggers and Clinkers, then Tricounis) and Italian hemp ropes. (Nylon was coming in but was too expensive.)

Like so many other North-East climbers, we spent a lot of time at Bob Scott’s bothy at Luibeg and also Corrour bothy with ex-army Bergen packs filled with tinned food and weighing almost more than we did. Our group expanded to include other Grammarians, and comments by other bothy-dwellers led to our adoption of the title ‘The Boor-Boys’ as our nom-de-guerre. In retrospect, we were extremely lucky to survive the hazards of both mountain and bothy.

Once at university David came increasingly to focus on skiing (also however playing rugby at club level). His enthusiasm for skiing increased when a certain Swiss student, Madeleine Schumacher, came to Aberdeen for a one year exchange programme to learn English, and who was conscripted into the Aberdeen University ski team. There followed several Aberdeen University ski trips to Wangs-Pizol in Switzerland, brilliantly organised by David and Madeleine.

JMT writes:

In 1958, after his hospital training year, David drove to Switzerland to marry Madeleine in Wangs. He luckily arrived in one piece with his Morris Minor skilfully roped together after an encounter with a careless German truck.

They sailed to Canada for David to serve three years in the RCAF as a medical officer. He learned to love the Canadian life, expanding his medical skills as well as enjoying the winter wilderness on ski.

In 1962, he decided to return to Aberdeen to re-invigorate the family medical

practice which was widely recognised for progressive excellence. He set out to renew his love of the Cairngorms especially in winter, increasingly on long and enterprising ski-mountaineering expeditions accompanied by a handful of old climbing pals. Following a terrible accident to a Swiss friend, he decided to give up thoughts of [Boor-Boy] escapades on rock and ice.

With great energy and resource he largely built the interior of his new home, complemented by Madeleine's sense of Swiss decor. Needless to say, he was bilingual in English and French (with fond use of Doric when apt). He was a knowledgeable and keen gardener and a first-class cook.

He was a regular guest at SMC dinners in the sixties. He used to delight his Aberdeen pals with competent high speed drives to the great SMC dinner. The ritual comprising cold, icy starts, pub-lunch, lecture, reception, AGM, dinner, drinks and chats in flats, sleeping bags, a new Southern Munro, and a late drive home via the Chipper in Blairgowrie.

He climbed his Munros gradually, as many as possible on ski. He was an early enthusiast for the mountain bike on jeep roads, often with skis securely strapped to the frame.

In 1973, he did a rapid crossing of the four highest Cairngorms from Coire Cas to Glen Feshie; and back home to Aberdeen in 14 hours. In 1978, he established and completed the Scottish Haute Route (*SMCJ* 1978, 169, 227-36), having completed the original Chamonix Zermatt Haute Route with an SMC party the previous year.

In 1979, he did the so-called Norwegian Haute Route. On this trip he saved the day, when two sets of bindings broke, by extracting with his great strong hands, fine reinforcing steel rods from the blackened concrete of a burned down building and bending them to rebuild the bindings. This allowed the ascent of Glittertind and Gald-Hoppigen and the subsequent long journey to the sea in order to catch the scheduled ferry to Bergen.

In 1980, he was part of a very enjoyable SMC ski tour to the Vanoise. In 1983, he toured the Oberland, bagging several peaks, before attempting a ski traverse of Mont Blanc with Claude Rey, thwarted by storm.

For many years he and family camped winter and summer, followed by caravanning on a farm near Aviemore. In 1980, he bought a tiny Barratts house in Aviemore and converted the interior into a perfect Alpine hut. From these bases he met friends, extended his hill-roving to the North and West and taught his family to become expert skiers (no professional ski instructors sought!). For his friends he established the early-May habit of 'Grieve's Gully' – a cycle ride up Glen Einich, the very steep Harscheisen ascent to the Braeriach plateau, followed by the finest swoop from the summit on Spring snow.

In 1989 he took early retirement from General Practice. He then tackled the building, again much by his own hands, of a delightful house in Kincaid. From there, Madeleine and he were able to complete David's Munros. His continuing fluid climbing skills allowed him to complete the Cullin with old Aberdeen friends. In this Highland home, they enjoyed receiving their adult family, all four very successful in the oil engineering field, as well as travelling widely to visit them in various parts of the world.

Sadly, deteriorating health forced a gradual withdrawal from his beloved outdoor activities. David was much respected by his patients, his colleagues and his mountain friends. All remember his sometimes grave mien, softening to

reveal a keen and robust sense of humour and a warm kindness. He is greatly missed

He is survived by Madeleine, three sons and a daughter to whom our respects and sympathy are expressed.

AGN  
JMT

## GEOFFREY DUTTON j. 1954

HOW CAN ONE memorialise this complex character, this polymath, this Renaissance man, this walter-scott-tory who respected genuine worth, irrespective of conventional social status, this man of enthusiasms and brilliant command of language, this far-out eccentric who could, nevertheless, albeit for a limited period, give a convincing imitation of a conventional rational human being.

In his early Edinburgh period 1946-51 he was at first a member of the EUMC where he edited an edition or two of the club journal, newly revived after the war. He left the EUMC after a while because in his opinion the university club lacked any serious cultural roots. Thereafter, he spent his time with the Edinburgh JMCS where he revelled in the rich array of genuinely Scottish, specifically Edinburgh characters. At this time Scotland had yet to be flooded with people escaping from the anglo-saxon twilight. The flavour of the time can be got from MacLennan's article 'We Happy Few' in *SMCJ* xxvii, 151, 1960 and Dutton's own 'Those JMCS Bus Meets' in *SMCJ* xxvii, 152, 1961, p153. These articles should be mandatory reading for all club members as a counterbalance to the opulence of the present gross superabundance of gear, gadgets and glossy magazines. This was the time of the flowering of George Ritchie (*SMCJ* xxxvi, 188 1997, p426), Bob McLennan (*SMCJ*, xxix, 159, 1968, p89-91), Dick Broon (*SMCJ* xxxiv, 180 1989, p328), Jimmie Russell (*SMCJ*, xl, 198, 2007, p648), Jimmie Marshal (before the arrival of the Currie Boys), Archie Hendry, Iain Haig, Scrubbernut and Cannon Ba' Heid. The Doctor Stories are also located in this time when Scotland was happily undiscovered by the outside world and still itself. There is a lot of MacLennan in the Doctor and Jimmie Russel is the founding figure of the Apprentice. Daddy McKay's was a couthy hostelry in a gas-lit side street where the climbing fraternity foregathered on Thursday evenings to discuss the ploys for the next weekend. It had rough tables and chairs and subdued brown, worn-in-service decor. Now it is probably a flashy up-market hovel, the haunt of shifty cosmopolitans, rootless moderns and enthusiastic catamites of Mammon. In the frugal forties and fifties the clientele were real people who did comprehensible jobs like plumbing and brick-laying but were nevertheless familiar with the cannon of European literature, music and art. (See again MacLennan's 1960 article on the Club Room – even if only for the cameo of Fred Mantz: 'The click of bricks falling professionally into place was accompanied by dissertations on the Hayden quartets or whistled illustrations from Gluck's Orphée.')

By comparison the University crowd I ran with was effete, callow and wishy-washy. We modeled ourselves on the disastrous example of Captain Scott and thought there was no future beyond Whympet, Mummery and Frank Smythe. We

looked backwards instead of forwards. I number myself among this group of shallowly-romantic youths. I was only dimly aware of the contemporaneous existence of MacDairmid, MacLean, Hamish Henderson, and the like who were trying to forge a new civilized native Scotland to counteract the appalling provincial cringe of the prevailing unionism – douce at its best, embarrassingly abject at its worst – whereas Dutton was plugged in to this living well of creativity. He was present, I believe, at Hamish Henderson's famous ceilidh in Oddfellows Hall in August 1951 when, for a moment, it seemed that Scotland might get a grip on itself. Dutton was my real window on a wider intellectual world, just as Slesser showed me how to go forward boldly. These two were in many ways my real University – picking up a medical degree was a bonus.

In those student days he and Slesser and Donald MacIntyre were much deeper into the cultural bedrock of Scotland than I ever was. All three were competent pipers. The Edinburgh piping fraternity at that time was almost literarily a cultural underground conducted in the remote backrooms of certain pubs in the High Street. In such smoky, whisky-flavoured privacy the old tunes were performed among the cognoscenti who were both practitioners and lore-masters. 'I got this tune from . . . and he got it from . . . and he got it from . . .' and so on. Each tune had retained its lineage. Dutton was particularly fond of his own playing of the piobreachd 'I got a kiss of the King's hand' which, he averred, was superior to the version of his teacher Hans Gates. He played it once before a member of the fraternity. After a pause the inscrutable comment came, 'You never got it like that fae Hans Gates.' It was never clear whether this was an expression of approval or not. This was the sort of specifically Scottish subtlety that the good Dutton appreciated. He played the pipes sporadically for many years thereafter. I remember merry evenings in his house hidden in the woods of Glen Shee. One of his favourite tunes from his ceol beag repertoire was the 'Earl of Mansfield's March', played, if I remember correctly, while dancing around the room in his stocking feet.

After the drinking in Daddie MacKay's, Dutton held court in the Marble Arch, a chip shop just off Lothian Road. As you must have gathered by now, he was a brilliant conversationalist, or perhaps I should say solo performer. We listened to him enthralled, sides aching with laughter. As MacIennan observed, the flow of his conversation would only be interrupted to contradict the objection that was half-forming in your mind. He was a delight to listen to, a brilliant mimic and sparkling wit, talents he used to expand people's awareness of the world. He could identify the originality within apparently dull people and present them to his audience as interesting individuals with their own original view of the world. See again 'Those JMCS Bus Meets' in *SMCJ* xxvii, 152, 1961, p153, particularly the cameo of 'Wally'. Although he respected average people for their roles as pillars of society, he was far more interested in people who showed some positive idiosyncrasy. He despaired of those who allowed themselves to be moulded by commercially driven culture when they were capable of better and had a teeth-grinding dislike for those who debased other people to make a profit and was sad for those who allowed themselves to be debased without even realising they were being debased. His prophetic article of forty years ago 'Eating the Cake' in *SMCJ*, xxvii, 153, 1962, p259 et seq. is a manifesto for the mountaineer of independent mind who rebels against the ultimate black insult of being treated, for the purposes of the usurping outdoor industry, as a 'customer' – a customer

being 'sold' your native land – oh, the black burning, disgraceful shame of it! Nevertheless, he was a careful, prudent man and it is only fair to state that he was not averse to making a profit himself, provided, of course, it involved producing something of a high standard. He was the first person to introduce the © sign into the Journal.

He did most of his climbing and ski mountaineering before marrying and settling down in his unique patch of hillside north of Bridge of Cally. As a mountaineer he was a frank Salvationist, a consequence of having a vivid imagination. That is, of course, why we Salvationists are the way we are; we are highly strung and like to experience danger, but only from a safe distance. Giving up active climbing was no handicap for a man with his imagination. He only had to do an activity a few times to find out its basic pattern, after which he could generate in his mind all the possible permutations and cross references both surd and absurd that could occur. Thus he did not actually need to have the actual experiences before writing adventures about them. He once said to me about one of his books, 'One day all the adventures in these stories will actually have happened.'

After joining the SMC he was a participant in a gentle bloodless coup when the Editorship of the Journal passed from the great JHB Bell to himself. His greatest service to the Club was in dealing intelligently with the next generation of climbers. Our generation was constrained by the lack of resources and the lower expectations of the frugal postwar period. We were also overawed by the tales of war veterans. It was difficult to look down on our elders when they had parachuted from burning aircraft over enemy territory or endured imprisonment at the hands of the Japanese. Two thirds of the student intake was 'ex-service'. The generations that came after us had no such constraints and were free to despise their elders. They were also much more affluent – they could afford two pints of beer a week and were well enough off to go away every other weekend. This generation revelled in their freedom and, en passant as it were, knocked over any conventions, people or real estate they regarded as obsolete and fuddy-duddy. Their saving grace was that they were bold, competent and innovative climbers. If you are going to destroy you have to put something better in its place and they did – at least as far as climbing standards were concerned. I refer of course to Robin Smith, 'Wheech' to his friends – for reasons not difficult to guess, Dougal Haston, 'the Painter of Lagan Garbh', the later Jimmie Marshall, 'the Maister', Big Elly, 'the Gentle Giant' and of course Robin Campbell, subsequently an upholder of tradition, educator of committees, deplorer of windmills and generally beneficial thorn-in-the-side of the present Establishment. These enfants terribles respected Dutton's judgement and were careful to avoid anything that Dutton would have condemned as 'Bad Art'. The fear of committing such a solecism was one of the few deterrents that Smith acknowledged. Dutton similarly valued the originality and verve of the Squirrels. See the exchange of poems in *SMCJ* xxxviii, 158, 1967, p315 and the brilliant Squirrel letter in *SMCJ*, xxx, 164, 1973, p164 putting Dutton squarely in his place! This period was rightly known as the time of the 'Duttonian Enlightenment'. Here I must mention the folksong he 'collected' and published in *SMCJ*, xxx, 1972, p23. It is entitled 'Old Hooligans' and contrasts the direct, earthy primitive approach to the hills with the modern interposition of the increasing amounts of technology that intervene between a man and his mountain. It is sung to the tune of 'Nicky

Tams', 'suitably soured'. I believe it has escaped from the pages of the Journal and is sung out there in the wild.

A memory of the early Dutton comes back as I write. Just after the war Slessor, Dutton and I went to the Alps. All our knowledge of high mountains was gleaned from books. A malady that mountaineers were supposed to suffer from was 'glacier lassitude'. We had scarcely set foot on our very first glacier when Dutton, always a stickler for etiquette, lay down flat on the ice with 'glacier lassitude'. As a first year medical student I did the only thing I knew: I took his pulse. That cured him. He got up and went on for another eight hours. None of us ever mentioned this episode again.

Under Dutton the Journal matured from a good Club Journal into an internationally respected repository for Scottish mountain lore, interesting enough to be readable by a wider public. He saw the Editor's task as 'shepherding the Club through the fourth dimension'. In those days manuscripts were sent in longhand, often difficult to decode. 'It is easier to turn a toad into a princess than a Squirrel MS into an article' as his successor Campbell wearily opined. Editing the Journal required long hours at night in his cold Dundee flat before the advent of affluence. Re-read Crocket's, 'Between the Lines' in *SMCJ* xxxiv, 181, 1990, p371 and Dutton's own 'Editor the Tenth' on page 374 et seq of the same Journal. For his labours he was accorded Honorary Membership and released from the disagreeable burden of paying an annual subscription.

His Editorship was a difficult act to follow but such is the calibre of our membership that we have had no difficulty in finding worthy replacements who maintained his high standard and, dare I say, it even from time to time improved on it.

He was also an explorer of rivers and coastline with flippers and schnorkel and his book 'Swimming Free' is a good read, particularly if you like convoluted sentences and lots of adjectives. In the early days he swam without a wet suit. When someone asked him, 'Don't you feel cold?' He replied, 'No, I just snuggle down beneath the waves.'

In later life he matured into a dignified sage and spent increasing time in his large garden. Originally a rough, windswept hillside, he crafted it into one of the historically important gardens in Europe. Aficionados come on pilgrimage from distant lands to see it. He wrote several much-respected books on different aspects of the gardening art. There was even a television program about his garden in which he appeared as a sort of wise old Gandalf or better still a wise old Ent in the forest of Fangorn. I remember him standing among his trees in the gloaming looking like one of them.

He was of course a highly competent and original scientist, respected and honoured by his peers with an FRSE, two honorary degrees, and an emeritus professorship. His subject was detoxification of xenobiotics by the liver, a field he opened up by noticing a minimal, easily overlooked trend in his data which turned out to be the signal leading to an important new field of considerable clinical relevance.

His status as a conventional scientist was important to him. Indeed he frequently pointed out that he was 'an internationally known scientist.' When in 'scientific mode' he assumed a mantle of astuteness, conventional intellectual agility and seemingly gravitas. Competent science was the necessary foil for his really creative work in poetry and writing. His demonstrable ability to master the

rational gave validity to his intuitions and to his bolder explorations of the suprarational. He sensed that immortality, such as it is, lies in the insights you leave behind in works of Art. He knew that, for him, this lay in creative writing rather than competitive scientific hyperactivity.

His 'Doctor Stories' have a permanent and respected place in the canon of mountaineering literature. They are witty and in places hilarious. They also display a knowledge of some fundamentals of Scottish character and humour and reveal his democratic respect for people who have escaped from, or are immune to, the reductionism of the market economy. He was widely read in the history, literature, music and song of Highland and Lowland Scotland and saw them in the European context in which they are rooted. (He was peripherally involved in the protests against the imposition of the ERII logo on post boxes in Scotland and the perpetration of other ERII arrogances.) He supported independence as a necessary step for creating and maintaining a uniquely Scottish contribution to the fabric of the world. In the new educated Scotland we all hoped for the *Tabloid Press* would go bankrupt from lack of readers – as predicted in MacDairmid's poem 'Glasgow 1960'. Alas, that this has not come to pass.

His poems were minimal and as crystalline as diamonds, each word polished and placed exactly in the right position. The reflections from each word resonated inside and outside the poem. The poems tend to indicate disturbing things such as transience and hidden menace, balanced by the implication that something worthy will always survive the passage of time. One of his peers, an accomplished poet herself, described him as 'Scotland's most remarkable poet', an opinion backed up by awards of prestigious poetry prizes for his published collections.

Had this man then no faults, no imperfections, no inconsistencies? Plenty. But this is not the appropriate time, nor is there space in the *Journal*, to go into this fascinating side of the character of the Great Dutton. Suffice it to say that once his friends started reminiscing about him the conversation would go on all night as each story was capped by yet another of equal eccentricity. Among his many achievements he undoubtedly would get into the Guinness Book of Records for pouring the smallest dram ever poured in Scotland outside the Free Kirk manse of Zoar McKinley McSigh (See *SMCJ*, xxxii, 173, 1982, p233 et seq).

This was written in 2002. I seem to remember that Slesser, Dutton and I agreed to compile each other's obituaries pre-humously in order to write with some authority about the most interesting period of our lives – the more rambunctious early years before we grew up and became boring old fuddy-duddies.

**Note added in 2010:** Geoffrey Dutton died on 1 June after a long debilitating illness borne philosophically. He was the recipient of three honorary degrees, not two as stated above. Although a mighty individual with an immense disciplined imagination he needed a lot of support. This he received selflessly and with tolerant humour from his wife Elizabeth, backed up by his daughter Kirstie. His two sons Alasdair and Rory gave mature support and maintained their father's high professional standards. Alasdair was a piper and Rory a noted traditional fiddler.

He was buried in Glenshee kirkyard below Ben Gulabin on a fine sunny summer's day. Aptly enough the ashes of that great original and multitalented non-conformist Hamish Henderson are buried on the summit of Ben Gulabin. Geoff was instrumental in getting Dundee University to accord Hamish the first

of his Honorary Degrees. Geoff commented: 'It was one of those rare occasions when a University does what it should.' – a typical salty Duttonian utterance.

IHMS

I will add a few words about my association with Geoff in connection with our Journal. Geoff gave the Journal new life and character when he became Editor in 1960. His wit was evident everywhere – in captions, linking paragraphs and microscopic footnotes, and in the manner of his editing. I became involved with the Journal in 1965 and advanced to the magnificent status of Joint Editor in 1966. This was merely a contrivance of Geoff's so that he could avoid attending boring meetings by sending me in his place. Our method of joint working involved an amount of voluminous correspondence – in his case usually written on the backs of typed accounts of the demise of unfortunate laboratory mice – but twice a year we would meet. I would go to Dundee where he would be found concealed in a stained white coat in the shabby Biochemistry building, a brick shed which would now barely accommodate the bicycles of the present enormous staff. The business of the Journal would be accomplished over pies and pints of ale in civilized long-demolished Dundee drinking dens. Then we would retire to his flat overlooking the Tay. This home from home, though entirely stuffed with books, contained no scientific matter so far as I could see, but was completely given over to literature and particularly to poetry. Geoff, now loosened with whisky, would then attempt to educate me. His literary interests ranged far and wide across a country largely unknown to me, but were centred on James Frazer's 'Golden Bough', Robert Graves' 'White Goddess' and 20th Century American poetry, especially Robert Frost, Robinson Jeffers, and Wallace Stevens. The evenings would usually end with Geoff reading 'Fire and Ice', 'November Surf' and 'Sunday Morning', or other favourites from this exceptional poetry. It was very much a matter of offering pearls to a swine, but I came to enjoy these struggles to understand enormously. And of course it was an enormous privilege to work with our best Editor since William Douglas.

In 1971 Geoff retired from the Editorship of the Journal, and I carried on for a while. But the '70s were not the '60s, on or off the page. I am greatly indebted to Geoff. He taught me all manner of things: how to write decently, how to read poetry, and the basics of gardening. I learned more from him than from any other teacher. The Club rewarded him for his efforts with the gift of Honorary Membership, which was just as well, since otherwise his innate financial caution would have deprived the Club of his continuing wise counsel, and Geoff of these obituaries.

Robin N Campbell

### **ROB ANDERSON j. 1945**

ROB ANDERSON died this year, aged one hundred. He was our last link with the post-war Golden Age. Allan McNicol evokes the spirit of that time and Rob's many-sided character:

In the late 1940s I was seated at 'the big round table' in the dining room at

Inverarnan, saying little, for I was overawed, being in the company of senior SMC members, some of whom were prominent in Bill Murray's classic *Mountaineering In Scotland*. Sadly they have all now passed on, and the last of that gathering to leave us was Rob Anderson in his 101st year.

Rob grew up in the Cambuslang area of Glasgow, was Dux of the local school and at the age of 13 came First in a UK wide drawing competition. His gift of drawing later enabled him to provide excellent maps and route diagrams to go with climbing articles and in particular with the texts of Bill Murray's publications, but it also led him into his career in the Design department of the then world famous carpet manufacturers Templetons. He must have impressed the department management, as he was sent to London for a year, where as he later recalled he 'practically lived in the Victoria and Albert Museum absorbing everything'.

In the Design department he met two people who influenced his life, Helen Hughes who became his wife and mother of his three children, and Douglas Scott who introduced him to the higher hills. That he was fit for the hills is illustrated by the tale that as Rob was a winning member of the local Harriers, his father was approached by a local 'bookie' suggesting that he should give up work and secretly train for six months in preparation for professional racing at Powderhall, where running as an unknown, he would make a clean sweep for the 'bookie'. Neither Rob nor his father were persuaded.

Amongst other hobbies which he enjoyed were painting, sailing and canoeing. Documents from his own archives, provided by his daughter, include copies of entries in JMCS and SMC journals dealing with meets which he had attended between 1932 and 1936; they record climbs in the Cuillin, Nevis and Glen Coe. There were also photographs of Rob and his young companions including Scott and Humble around the door of the CIC hut, sleeping out at the Narnain Boulder and one of 22-year-old Rob with the famous John Mackenzie (MhicCoinnich) at Sligachan. No doubt he enjoyed many other days on the Scottish mountains. I do not know that he climbed elsewhere. Also of historic interest is his handwritten accounts of the ascent of *Gardyloo Gully*, during which Douglas Scott used, what is believed to be the first 'short' ice axe. This axe started life as a miner's pick. Rob tells of taking it to the local blacksmith who modified it to Rob's design, by turning one spike into an adze, care being taken with the 'tempering' to ensure performance at low temperatures. To quote from a letter of Rob's 'It was carried successfully on several "epic" climbs, notably *Crowberry Gully* (second ascent), *Gardyloo Gully* on Nevis, Stob Ghabhar couloir etc.'

Rob joined up in the 1939-45 war, first in the Army Physical Training Corp and then as a Sergeant in the Royal Corp of Signals.

Demobilisation brought the return of the pleasures of the pre-war hobbies, with the addition of skiing, which proved to be very memorable on one particular day. On that occasion, whilst on Meall a' Bhuridh, he had the misfortune to break his ankle. This being before the days of mountain rescue, those that were around at the time tried various methods of helping him off the hill. Eventually carrying Rob on ones back, like a rucksack proved to cause him the least pain, and by this method the writer and his brother, in turns got Rob safely down to Black Rock cottage and by car to Inverarnan. Rob was feeling reasonably comfortable, so another pleasant dinner was enjoyed round 'the big round table' and amongst those present was J.F. (Hamish) Hamilton. Hamish had recently acquired a new

car, an Allard, which was notable for its speed. With dinner past Hamish decided that the situation with Rob was now serious and that he should be delivered to the Victoria Infirmary in Glasgow without delay. Then there were no delays; Rob averred that the 'journey' with Hamish was the most traumatic part of the memorable day.

Iain Smart continues:

I met Rob long after the glory days of the Inverarnan Round Table. He had diversified his interests and lived a polymathic lifestyle. He was the last of the non-academic intellectuals who enriched the Club in the post-war period and I learned much in his company. He was widely read in many arcane byways of Scottish history. He also had a knowledge of Art History and, as a frequenter of auctions, picked up many interesting paintings. I remember him telling me of seeing a picture of a rural scene with a horseman in the foreground, unremarkable except for the fact that the brim of the horseman's hat was turned up on one side. It turned out to be a rare early painting of a New Zealand scene and of considerable historical interest.

During the destruction of the Glasgow churches He rescued and recycled irreplaceable woodwork. For example, there are a few churches in the Western Isles that have elegant pulpits provided by Rob at his own expense. The lectern in the little chapel at Insh in Strath Spey originally belonged to a well-known Glasgow street preacher which was rescued by Rob who found this new home.

As well as retaining his interest in mountains he was a canoeist of considerable experience, a weel-kennt member of the Clyde sea canoeing fraternity. He spent decades exploring the coasts and inland lochs of the West – the 'roots' of the mountains rather than their tops. My encounters with Rob were on the memorable Ancient Mariners' Kayak Meets on the first weekend of November each year with Dougie Scott and Malcolm Slessor – see Dougie's obituary in last year's Journal (*SMCJ* 2009, XL, 200, p 518–20).

Rob in his later years became a convert to the Church of Rome. I suspect it was the nearest thing he could find to the old Celtic Church of Saint Columba. In it he found the sense of a community surviving through the centuries. It was soil for his own deep roots. A service he rendered the Club was during an illness of Bill Murray. Bill was at death's door and Rob had a Mass of Intercession held for Bill at (?) Nunraw Abbey. Bill made a recovery very soon after.

## **T. BRYAN FLEMING j. 1977**

BRYAN FLEMING was born in Glasgow in 1932. He was educated at Hillington Primary School and at Allan Glen's School. He served his apprenticeship as a Chartered Accountant, qualifying in 1956, and served in the Royal Air Force for two years as a pay clerk in Singapore.

After returning to Scotland he worked in a professional office for four years then joined BMK in Kilmarnock, then a well known carpet factory and a substantial public company. After nine years he moved to an engineering company in Ardrossan where he remained for eighteen years, latterly as managing director. When that company failed he moved to the Glasgow Garden Festival and when the Festival ended he joined a clothing manufacturer in

Kilbirnie which lasted five years, at the end of which he and two colleagues bought the remains from the receiver and set up Glengarnock Garments Ltd. This enabled him to continue working until he was 74 years old and, as many will remember, provided an inexhaustible supply of elegant, if somewhat old-fashioned, tweed breeches.

He married his first wife, Christine Reid, in 1963 and they had two children, a son and a daughter. They moved to Dalry in 1970. Christine died in 1984 and in 1988 Bryan married again, to Ann Bryson, a teacher in Dalry Primary School.

He thought that his inclination towards mountaineering probably came from reading the books of John Buchan in his teens but his start in the sport came in the early fifties when his life-long friend, Ian Cumming, bought his first motorcycle, a 250 Panther Sloper, using which they went to Glencoe Youth Hostel. In the evening, when they were wondering what to do next day, they saw the hard men, festooned with ropes, slings and karabiners, coming in out of the rain in twos and threes and realised that this was the real thing. They then contacted another school friend, John Hendry, who was known to be a climber and was the owner of an eighty foot hemp rope. This team's activities started on the Cobbler and culminated in two weeks in Skye in 1955, one of the best summers of the twentieth century. He reckoned that this was one of the three best holidays of his life, the other two being his first visit to the Austrian Alps with Robin Reid and, of course, the 1997 yachting meet.

His mountaineering career spanned more than fifty years from the mid-fifties but he would have been the first to say that he had no claims to fame in the sport – his ideal climb was always the mythical 1000 foot V-Diff. However, he climbed or walked all over Scotland, in the Lake District and both North Wales and the Gower sea cliffs. He made only two visits to the Alps in his earlier days but, later, he and Ann went to Obergurgl every three or four years and spent many wonderful days on the easy peaks and passes.

He joined the Glasgow JMCS in 1959 and the SMC in 1977. He was Honorary Treasurer from 1989 until 1997 and President in 1999 and 2000. He then automatically became Chairman of the Scottish Mountaineering Trust and then a Director, later Chairman, of Scottish Mountaineering Trust Publications Ltd.

He believed strongly that one should give one's active support to the organisations which are the vehicles for one's sporting and cultural activities and as a result was a committee man almost all his life. This included several years on the council of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland and as chairman of its South West Scotland area committee.

His other sports included fencing, which he took up in the Royal Air Force and continued for twenty years, canoeing and in later life he kept a small yacht in Largs. From his mid sixties his main enthusiasm was shooting, both clay pigeons and walked up game. He also tried stalking and killed his first stag at age 69. He also dabbled in fishing but rarely caught anything.

Music was one of his main interests throughout his life. He was, in his own words, an incompetent self taught pianist and also played the bagpipes. To list the various clubs and societies he was a member of would take more paper than this journal can allow but we must at least mention Trinity Church, Dalry, of which he and Ann were active members throughout their life together.

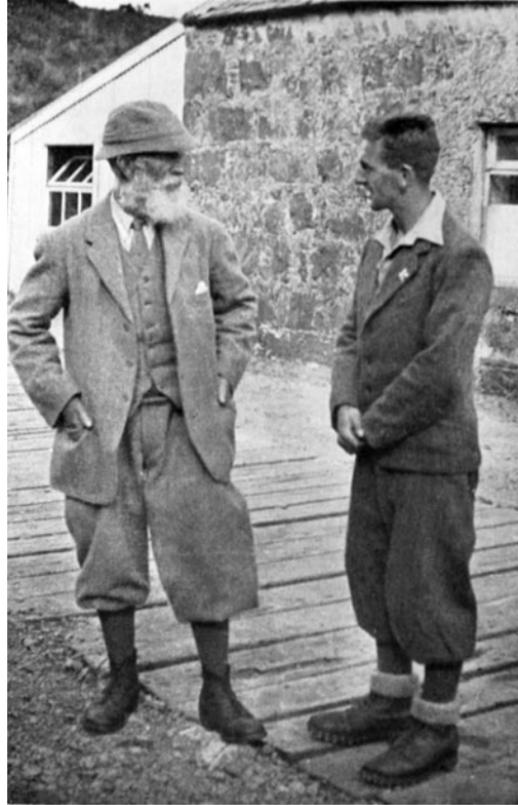
Bryan himself thought that he had had a wonderful life and who could disagree?

*Top Left: Donald McIntyre.*

*Top Right: Peter Hodgkiss. Photo: Bob Aitken.*

*Bottom: Geoffrey Dutton.*





## ED GRINDLEY

WE OCCASIONALLY record the passing of non-members in these pages and few could be more deserving than Ed Grindley. I had the good fortune to be teaching at Lochaber High School when Ed joined the science staff some thirty years ago. I knew of Ed's reputation as a talented climber and had seen his exploits reported in Mountain magazine. An Ian Roper photo of him climbing in the Great Zawn had stuck in my memory, and his profile had been raised when he put up *Fallen Angel* on Pavey Ark. I never imagined that one day I might climb with him.

Nearer to home he had put up *The Clearances* next to *Yo-Yo* in Glen Coe. Climbing ethics were at a crossroads at the time and the old school frowned on prior cleaning by abseil. Ed's ascent was mis-reported in Crocket's guide, and an acrimonious exchange with Tiso followed. There was no way back. Ed and the SMC were never reconciled.

Ed had qualified as a mountain guide in the late 1970s, but he had found that guiding wasn't much fun in winter when the weather was bad. He wasn't into suffering. When I first met Ed I was struck by how laid-back and quiet spoken he was. It was only when I got to know him that I found he had a steely determination whenever a project interested him. We tried, without success, to get a climbing wall included in the school's new PE block. Ed was not to be deterred, however, and he eventually got the go ahead to create a wall inside a cooling tower. One of the perks of teaching in Highland Region is the two-week holiday in October. We used to dash off in the autumn to go climbing in Wales, The Peak, and the southwest. We collected rocks from all these places and, back at school, we cemented them into the holes we chiselled out in our lunch hour. In no time we had our own climbing wall. Many pupils were to get their first taste of climbing on it over subsequent years.

I was very keen in those days and was always looking for new crags. However, my eyes were invariably bigger than my stomach. Ed got to hear about the line I was cleaning at Neist and he threatened to go there without me. I didn't realise it was a just a ploy so that he could find out exactly where it was! As it happened I would never have got up *Supercharger* under my own steam. It was pleasing to hear Ed say some twenty years later that it was the best adventure he ever had.

Several parties started doing new routes in Glen Nevis around this time. Ed discovered some of the plumbs and I was lucky enough to be involved with some of them – *Plague of Blazes*, *Edgehog*, and *Going for Gold* were among the memorable routes. Ed climbed *Going for Gold* in immaculate style. I had the greatest of difficulty following it on aid.

We climbed *Yankee Doodle* at Lands End one Easter – before it got washed away – and on our return to Scotland we headed back to Skye. Ed led the very first route at Kilt Rock – *Road to Ruin*. He followed that up with *Internationale* and *Grey Panther*, two of the most popular routes there.

In 1981 Ed updated the Cicerone winter guide to Ben Nevis and Glen Coe, and introduced Grade VI without fuss for the first time. We dropped in on Walt Unsworth in the Lakes on one of our trips. Ed managed to persuade Walt to publish a new guide to Glen Nevis detailing all the new climbs. In those days the SMC did not seem interested in outcrop climbing. Walt remarked on how well the Cicerone scrambles guides were selling. He suggested it would be a good idea to do a scrambles guide for Lochaber as well.

*Top Left: David Grieve – on the Lochaber 4000s, 1977. Photo: Mike Taylor.*

*Top Right: Rob Anderson (age 22) with John Mackenzie at Sligachan.*

*Bottom Left: Bryan Fleming. Bottom Right: Ed Grindley, at the top of Road to Ruin, Kilt Rock.*

Ed was one of the contributors to *Extreme Rock*. He was also a skilful photographer and several of his photos were used in that book including the one of Cubby on the cover.

Parapenting was another activity he became proficient at, and he took off in the Highlands and the Alps as the fancy took him. He seemed to be good at getting others to carry his chute. He bagged a respectable number of Munros (well over 200) without ever being obsessive about completing. He was also a keen skier and made good use of the facilities on his doorstep – on Aonach Mòr.

For a while Ed wrote a regular column in *High* magazine. He also had a strong liking for practical jokes. He managed to combine the two by writing a spoof article for an April edition in which he described the Cioch breaking off and falling into Loch Lagan, thereby displacing a great wave of water which wreaked havoc in the corrie below. Ed was absolutely delighted when he spoke to a motorist in Glen Coe who had given a lift to a hitch-hiker travelling from Liverpool to Skye in order to see the reported devastation.

Although Ed was a private sort of guy, he enjoyed social activities too. He organised a strong team to develop the Staffin Slip crag on Skye. Each October he arranged a 'meet' to Cornwall which became popular with his friends in Fort William. He also went to Chamonix with his family in the summer. He would drive there straight from school and have his tent up in Argentière in double quick time. His tent became a popular meeting place for climbers. Later on he bought a flat in the Chamonix valley and he started going there not only in the summer, but also in the winter for the skiing.

Ed was also involved in setting up the Polldubh Club – a new climbing club in Fort William. With the blessing of SNH and the Nevis Partnership he organised some of the members in felling some of the luxuriant tree growth around the Polldubh crags. In no time the place was transformed.

Ed had only just retired, and last year he was climbing as well as ever and still putting up new routes in the glen. He suddenly became ill before Christmas. It was devastating to see someone as strong and determined as Ed succumb so quickly.

I had some wonderful adventures with Ed and through knowing him lots of doors opened for me. I count myself extremely lucky to have had him as a friend.

We extend our deepest sympathies to his wife Rona, Eilidh and Joe.

DNW

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB

The following mountaineers were admitted to the Club in 2010.  
We welcome:

PETER ASHWORTH (57), Agricultural Consultant, Thackthwaite, Cumbria.  
 STEWART D BAUCHOP (42), Architect, Aberdour, Fife.  
 STEVEN CARTER (29), Teacher, Burghead, Morayshire.  
 SIMON FRASER (57), Chartered Town Planner, Braes, Isle of Skye.  
 DOUGLAS H HAWTHORN (45), Crofter, Glenelg, Ross-shire.  
 SIMON HAYES (45), Civil Engineer, Tain, Ross-shire.  
 JAMES T KINNAIRD (37), Grocer, Dalbeattie, Dumfries & Galloway.  
 GARY M KINSEY (49), Electrician, Inverness.  
 LAUBIUS P LAUBSCHER (35), Plumber, Cheltenham.  
 SAMUEL G LOVEDAY (29), Trainee Teacher, Edinburgh.  
 PAUL M MANSON (32), Software Engineer, Edinburgh.  
 SIMON NADIN (44), Rope Access Worker, Brora, Caithness.  
 TANIA M NOAKES (35), Mountaineering Instructor, Chamonix, France.  
 DAVID SMALL (53), Advocate, Edinburgh.  
 D JOHN TEMPLE (75), Retired, Eskdale Green, Cumbria  
 HENNING WACKERHAGE (43), University Lecturer, Aberdeen  
 ANDREW WARDLE (29), Mountaineering Instructor, Inverness

### The One-Hundred-and-Twenty First AGM and Dinner

The Ben Wyvis Hotel in Strathpeffer has been popular venue for some years. So again the hotel was booked and Dinner plans made. However, the club was taken aback to find that despite the vast number of rooms at the hotel there weren't enough for all the members on the night of the Dinner! Fortunately there are numerous B&Bs nearby. The days of the SMC being the only visitors to the Highlands at the start of December are passed.

The afternoon entertainment was provided by Ken Crocket and Simon Richardson. The talk was based on the new edition of their Ben Nevis book. Ken started with some early history including some old photographs and some detective work by him and Robin Campbell in identifying the characters. Then Simon took over, describing some of the more recent exploration as the standard of climbing on the Ben has been taken to the very highest level.

We had another well attended AGM despite a bright wintery day outside and much snow to walk and climb on. There was much to report, including the accounts for the extension to the CIC, an update on the latest repair to the CIC wind turbine, and it was reported that there continues to be quite low usage of the huts by members in general. Changes to the font used for the headings in the Journal were explained but there will be no change to the main text. This seemed to reassure many in the room that nothing was changing too fast. A lengthy discussion was had on whether the Journal should include all new climbs. For now the Journal will continue to be the repository of all routes. The Web continues to be an option but would fewer routes in the Journal affect sales?

With the Club business concluded at an appropriate time, we made our way to the spacious bar and dining room. Names badges were on offer again and the take up was almost 100%. Older members may be surprised that the younger newer folk find them useful for making links between names and faces.

President Des Rubens controlled the proceedings and gave a suitably short summary of the Club Year. Sad to note the death of our most senior member Douglas Scott, who until very recently was a regular attender at the Dinner. The main entertainment came from our guest speaker Rab Carrington. Rab needed no introduction as a one time member of the Creagh Dhu, nearly a member of the SMC (according to him he was informed that membership of both clubs was impossible and somehow he managed to become club-less) and latterly a quality sleeping bag and clothing manufacturer. Clearly an accomplished speaker he talked of his early days in the Scottish hills, before winter seasons in the Alps and alpine style ascents in South America and the Himalaya took him to the forefront of British Climbing. A recent withdrawal from business has meant Rab is now free to take on the role of President of the BMC. Even he acknowledged changed days from the Creagh Dhu.

Our President closed the evening with an invitation for us all to join him on the President's walk next day and it was off to the bar.

Chris Huntley

### CIC Hut Meets 2010

29–31 January

Seven members plus a guest were in attendance. Most had an enjoyable walk up and the later ones had the benefit of a full moon. The electric lighting only lasted the Friday night as the forecasted gales did not materialise leaving the wind turbine motionless.

On Saturday President Des Rubens & David Broadhead climbed *Vanishing Gully* then finished up *Tower Ridge*. The Davids Adams and Myatt were on *No. 3 Gully Buttress*, while Susan Jensen and her guest ascended *Comb Gully* followed by *Gardh Gully*, then Susan soloed *Moonlight Gully*. Stead and Lang's 3rd choice route, *Slingby's Chimney* gave a grade IV exit, then a very serious descent to Coire Leis.

On Sunday, Rubens and Broadhead climbed *Waterfall Gully*. Susan and guest climbed *Glovers Chimney*. The Davids A & M climbed *Vanishing Gully*. Lang and Stead ascended *Comb Gully*.

The weather was amenable throughout but the likes of *Indicator Wall* was very bare.

Being crook at the time of the 6–7 March Meet, I can report that there were 9 SMC members with 3 guests.

*Minus 2 Gully* then *N.E.B.* was climbed by John Higham and Brian Findlay. *Minus 3 Gully* by Colwyn Jones and Anne MacDonald. *Vanishing Gully* was climbed by Mike and Pippa Cocker. While Nigel Sues & his guest climbed *Tower Scoop*.

The Sunday activity saw Colwyn Jones and Jeremy Morris climb *Orion Direct* while Mike and Pippa Cocker climbed *Minus 3 Gully*. Having been contacted

about the fact that this meet was meant to be exclusive to SMC Members and their guests, I questioned CIC custodian Robin why there were seven Marines at the meet and his response was that they were his guests!

The 2-4 April meet coincided with Easter and as a result Ben Nevis was very busy. On Friday night there were 10 members and 6 guests but bedding down was a problem due to a massive amount of snow having worked its way into the loft space. Were the mid-week gales to blame or had the re-roofing left gaps? Anyway the dormitory was flooded, and four of us took turns to fill trugs with the offending snow. Four slept on the floor in the new kitchen area.

Two teams climbed *N.E.B.* viz. President Rubens and Stan Pearson and the threesome Vice Pres. Jim Beaton, Billy McMillan and Mark Boyd. *Comb Gully* was ascended by I & P McCallum and also by Jim Graham and his guest T. Bain. While John MacKenzie & guest were on *No 3 Gully Buttress*.

Lang and Stead climbed *Observatory Buttress*. Messrs Clothier, Forsyth and McEwan climbed an Orion face medley by starting up *Slav Route* then over various sections of other routes before finally ending up *Astral Highway*. These last three were now domiciled on the Saturday night in a much drier sleeping quarter. Saturday had been very misty most of the day with a thaw attacking the Ben. Overnight about a foot of snow had fallen and it was still snowing by mid morning. All but messrs Clothier, Forsyth and McEwan headed down but even they were thwarted by the conditions higher on the mountain.

DFL

### **Ski Mountaineering Meet 2010**

Forest Lodge, Glen Tilt, Perthshire.

GR NN933741 (300metres). 12-14 March 2010.

Members; Ewan Clark, Colwyn Jones, Ann MacDonald, Bob Reid, Des Rubens, Graham Tough. Guests; Moira Baptie, Adrian Hart, David Howard & Dave Coustick.

Eagle Ski Club members; Angus Armstrong, John Barnard, Paul Cook, John Gay, Catherine Mangham, Andrea Nightingale, Chris Ottley, Alan Sloan, Richard Sweet, Neil Raitt.

The remote but rather tasty lodge, a long way up the land rover track in Glen Tilt was the venue for the 2010 Scottish Mountaineering Club ski touring meet. This was a joint meet held with the Eagle Ski Club.

Members and guests gradually arrived at Forest Lodge during Friday. Ann & Colwyn did their traditional preparation for the annual ski meet by going off climbing; ticking *Aladdin's Mirror Direct* in Coire an t-Sneachda, Cairngorm. The crux icefall being a full 6 feet high!

Ewan, Dave H and Dave C headed for the mighty Carn Liath (975m) but Dave C, lacking harscheisen, had to avoid the steep icy summit approach, using a gully instead. An exciting ski down to the river used just about every available patch of snow; a precedent which was copied for the remainder of the meet.

The low temperatures which had accompanied the start of 2010 meant that the track up Glen Tilt proved to be more testing than anticipated for the drivers of standard cars. The mud and ruts dictated a bold approach and three of the Eagle ski club members with an off-road vehicle went to spend a night in Tarf bothy. Angus, John and Alan parked up the glen and had their skis on one hour from the car ascending Braigh Coire na Contaich (835m) before skiing down to the well maintained and comfortable Tarf 'Hotel'. The earliest reference we can find to the Tarf bothy (Feith Uaine Bothy) was in 1794. In 1799 Palliser the Estate Factor said it needed repair and by 1806 a stone and slated bothy was built. In 1870 the tenant rebuilt a thatched bothy and the 7th Duke of Atholl had it reslated in 1873 and made further additions in 1881. However, it burnt down in 1909 and was rebuilt in 1914 as it stands today, maintained by the mountain bothies association. On the Friday night a suitable ambience was created with peat blocks burning in the grate, which they had carried in with them. On Saturday they made an ascent of the remote Carn Ealar(994m) and An Sgarsoch(1006m) before recrossing the Tarf Water on skis, this time at the stables, before skiing down to the 460m contour and returning on foot to the comfort and convenience of their car.

Glen Tilt was dramatic and beautiful, with the River Tilt flowing through snowy pastures and coursing down rocky ravines. Forest Lodge is a classic Victorian shooting lodge which enjoys a dramatic, sheltered setting 8 miles up the glen, adjacent to the river. The well appointed and comfortable lodge has accommodation for 20 people with two drying rooms and a gun room, which was most useful for storing skis, now that they are getting shorter!

The lodge, originally of only two rooms, was built in 1779 by the 4th Duke of Atholl, John Murray, with an experimental floor of larch which he was pioneering as a commercial crop. The 4th Duke of Atholl, the largest landowner in Perthshire, was unsurprisingly interested in agricultural improvements and one method used was accurate map making. Land surveyors and estate factors were key to these changes and maps were one of their most powerful tools.

James Stobie acted as estate factor to the 4th Duke of Atholl for over 25 years from the late 1780s until 1804, and produced the famous 1783 map of Perthshire and Clackmannanshire.

This map was not only the largest, but is considered by many to be the greatest Scottish county map ever published. Never before had these counties been mapped in such detail, so accurately, or presented in such a graphically stunning composition, measuring over six feet high and five feet wide. The map also reflected the optimism and ambition of its author, James Stobie, illustrating his talents as a land-surveyor, mathematician, estate factor and artist.

In the early 1780s, the Duke commissioned Stobie to create new, accurate maps of virtually all his estates, quantifying their acreages and economic potential.

After publication Stobie spent the next two decades actively working to transform the world depicted on his map, dividing common land, consolidating farms, planning new roads, draining low-lying fields, introducing new crops and rotations, buying and selling land, collecting rents, and developing new manufacturing. Stobie helped design the new water tunnel powering Stanley mills in the 1780s and the layout for Stanley village (see below). For interested folk there is still a working water mill in Blair Atholl which doubles as a tea shop

and sells excellent cakes. Stobie's map epitomises a bustling, optimistic time, where in spite of regular shortages of food, and economic and social hardships (that Stobie himself was partly responsible for creating), it still seemed possible to divert new sources of wealth to rural areas. Sadly, Stobie, dogged by a recurring leg injury, and bouts of influenza, finally died in 1804, like so many other Scots, his death 'hastened by intemperance'.

A sketch of Forest Lodge from 1815 shows a building on either side of the road joined by an arch. The 7th Duke of Atholl (1840–1917) recalled being told by the Duke of Buccleuch, who rented the forest and lodge from 1834, that one windy night the joint for dinner blew away being carried between the two buildings! Buccleuch made additions to the lodge and the 7th Duke also did major works in 1907/8, making it look as it does today.

Queen Victoria's explorations of this area during long jaunts from Balmoral, in the company of Prince Albert and ghillie John Brown, led her into the glen. The story goes that in crossing the River Tarf, about halfway through the glen, two pipers led the way, waist deep in water and playing throughout, with the Queen on horseback following, Brown clutching the reins. We considered resurrecting this regal approach for our own SMC president, who was happy to give his consent. Mercifully, it proved to be unnecessary as the crossing can be made by a footbridge these days!

Saturday morning, led by the President, all of the SMC team except Bob headed up Glen Tilt to climb the Beinn a' Ghlo Munros on the south of the Glen. After nearly driving a borrowed Landrover into the river, a short walk to a footbridge at grid reference NN 957 763 got them onto the snow just above the 300m contour with discontinuous, soft, granular snow (at least the way they went up!) to the summit. It was somewhat windy on the approach to the summit of Carn nan Gabher (1129m) but the cairn was reached in good order. They continued traversing the peak and skied down delightful snow to the intervening bealach (850m) and ascended Braigh Coire Chruinn-bhalgain (1070m) to tick their second Munro for the day. Turning north there was a fabulous ski down Allt Air Chul to the 700m contour and there followed a series of eastern traverses to get back, via Luib Mhor, to the bridge at grid reference NN 957 763. This included the aptly named 'Jones death traverse' across a snow field at the top of a cliff, where a fall would have been fatal, apparently! Large herds of red deer were seen just below the snow line.

Some of the Eagle ski club members, rather than battling against the winds on the summit ridge, found some spring snow, and made several re-ascents for more runs before finding a narrow strip of snow leading back to the Tilt, one section of which was more suited to what was described as bum-sliding.

Meanwhile, unsociable Bob was after a 'remote tick'. What looked like a simple 8km as the crow flies, was a taxing, undulating haul for those who evolved without wings! However, like a true bagger, he reported that Beinn Dearg was worth it in the end. A lack of snow cover obliged a more conventional approach, starting from Marble Lodge and heading over the outlier of Beinn a' Chat (899m) where the snow began. Deep snow thereafter was hard going, and not an enticing prospect in retreat. A superb walk out along Gleann Diridh (encountering huge avalanche debris from the west flank of Beinn Mheadhonach) completed an 8 hour day. The early start had almost been thwarted by a brief altercation with a ditch which the local ghillie and his landrover kindly resolved.

The 4th Duke of Atholl (1755–1830) also developed Stanley Mills on his land, just north of the city of Perth. He wanted to process cotton by making use of the flow of water around what is effectively a peninsula formed by a tight bend in the river Tay. The river level on the north side of the peninsula is 21ft higher than it is on the south side, and as early as 1729 a tunnel had been bored through the peninsula to allow water to power a corn mill.

Richard Arkwright, the father of cotton mills helped establish one at Stanley; the Bell Mill, which opened for business in 1787. Within 10 years 350 people were employed and the East Mill was added in the 1790s. The Napoleonic Wars produced an economic downturn, and after the East Mill burned down in 1799, Stanley Mills closed.

James Craig, a Glasgow manufacturer bought the mills in 1801, in partnership with David Dale, best known for the cotton mills at New Lanark on the River Clyde. However, the enterprise failed again in 1813. Stanley Mills reopened once more in 1823 being expanded, to include the Mid Mill, replacing the East Mill, and overhauling the water management system to allow the much larger power demands of the expanded mills to be met through new waterwheels. The arrival of the railway in Stanley in 1848 proved a boon to Stanley Mills. The five day cart journey of the raw cotton and finished product, between Stanley and Glasgow docks took only a matter of hours by train.

In 1852 Stanley Mills were sold to Samuel Howard, who, during the American Civil War, preferred to speculate with his stocks of cotton rather than keep the mills in production. Another upturn followed the purchase of Stanley Mills by Frank Stewart Sandeman in 1880 who replaced the old waterwheels with more efficient water turbines and diversified into the production of cotton belts for industrial machines, and selvedge cotton for the booming jute and linen industries. From 1916 he also introduced a secret process that allowed much more efficient production of cotton tape for use in cigarette filters; a shrewd move as the steady consumer demand for tobacco stems from addiction, not from choice!

The two world wars saw Stanley Mills also producing large quantities of webbing material for the army, but the general trend from the 1920s onwards was one of decline. By 1967, only the cotton tape for cigarettes was still being produced here, and Stanley Mills closed for good in 1989. Historic Scotland purchased the site. The East Mill and part of the Mid Mill have since been converted to housing, and in early 2008 restoration of the rest of the complex allowed parts of the Bell Mill and Mid Mill to be opened to visitors.

Back at Forest Lodge Sunday dawned milder and windier and leaving directly north west from the Lodge to a snow filled gully, skis were donned at the 365m contour, by the depleted SMC team, for an ascent of the northerly Munro; Carn a' Chlamain (963m) and the adjacent Corbett; Beinn Mheadhonach (901m). Conditions were windy and cloudy on both summits, which required some careful navigation by the President and his entourage, but again they managed to ski down to the 350m contour before a short walk back to Marble Lodge after a second splendid day of touring.

Marble Lodge was named because in the early 1800s small scale marble quarrying was carried out in the glen and items made of Glen Tilt marble can be seen in nearby Blair Castle. The marble quarry opened about 1815 and the

blocks were transported to Inver, near Dunkeld, where a polishing mill was built. However, this did not prove economic and work stopped on the death of the 4th Duke in 1830. However, Tilt marble was used by Bullock in producing two cabinets now in Blair Castle drawing room. George Bullock (DoB unclear 1778 or 1782/3–1818) was an influential early nineteenth century cabinet maker, and supplied Gothic furniture to Great Tew Park, Cholmondely Castle and Abbotsford in the Scottish Borders. By 1806 he acquired the Mona Marble quarries in Anglesey selling his Neo-Classical, Gothic, Elizabethan and Jacobean furniture from Oxford Street. The use of marble continued in Bullock's furniture designs – Tilt marble did not often feature – and he also incorporated gilt metal ornamentation and ebony marquetry within the pieces. Bullock's inimitable style, gave a particularly recognisable 'signature' to his work.

Linen production was another early form of industry in the area. Regular shallow depressions close to the path up Glen Tilt are old lint pools – here the flax would be soaked to help separate the fibres so they could then be spun to make linen. Flax production was important as a means of producing cash to pay the Factor his rent!

A team of five Eagles members skied Carn an Gabhar on Sunday. They had wisely delayed starting in the hope of improving weather arriving, but it was still windy on top. Like the SMC team the day before, they were rewarded by a good steep run back to the bridge.

Many attendees had to head home on the Sunday night and on Monday the two Johns, Gay and Barnard, skied up Carn a Chlainn.

The two Daves and Ewan attempted Schiehallion on Monday and got about 1km from the car park before abandoning their planned ascent owing to the lack of snow! They report that they should have gone to Glenshee or Glen Clova by the look of the hills on the way home.

So a splendid weekend in a remote and rare setting with excellent skiing despite the somewhat strong winds – in fact a typically Scottish meet really!

With thanks to Jane Anderson, Archivist at the Atholl Estates Office.

Colwyn Jones

### **Easter Meet 2010 – Kintail**

The 'Easter' meet was held at the Kintail Lodge Hotel on the weekend after Easter, Thursday 8 April to Monday 12 April. The glorious, hot, sunny conditions combined with easy access to Skye and Kintail produced an endless selection of possibilities, seized upon with great gusto by the twenty four members and guests. Brilliant blue skies and dazzling snow patches gave many a dreich hill a transitory Alpine aspect.

Saturday evening's meal saw a ripple of movement among the rubicund faces when P.P. Ian Smart, having earlier taken a tumble from a twenty gear velocipede, was sedan chaired out by a cavalcade of P.P.s and medical advisors, into cooler climes where he quickly recovered his equilibrium.

Members climbed and walked on Sgùrr a' Mhaoraich, A' Ghlas-bheinn, Sgùrr an Airgid, Gleouraich & Spidean Mialach, Loch Lungard to Kintail via Glen

Elchaig, also Ciste Dubh. Sgùrr an Fhuairail, Sgùrr a' Bhealaich Dheirg & Saileag, Beinn Loinne, and A' Chioch, Tigh Mor na Seilge, Sail Chaorainn on Thursday and Friday.

Continuing on Saturday and Sunday with A' Chralaig & Mulloch Fraochoire, Boc Beag, 6 of 7 on South Cluanie Ridge, Bla Bheinn, Beinn nan Caorach & Beinn na h-Eaglaise, The Saddle, Ben Sgritheall, Aonach Buidhe & Faochaig, Sgùrr Mhic Bharraich, Biod an Fhithich, Five Sisters of Kintail, and Beinn Fhada.

During the course of the meet there was climbing on both the Ben Alligan and Sheildaig Crags, also *Route 2* and *Diabeg Pillar* at Diabeg. The President and Geoff Cohen ending with a flourish on Vulcan Wall.

Members present were President Des Rubens, Bob Aitken, Paul Brian, Dave Broadhead and guest Moira Broadhead, Peter Biggar, Robin Campbell, Robin Chalmers, Geoff Cohen, Helen Forde, John Fowler, Phil Gibbon, John Hay, Andrew James, Doug Lang, Peter McDonald and guest Calum Anton, Bill McKerrow, Gordon McNair, Roger Robb, Raymond Simpson, Iain Smart, Colin Stead and David Stone.

Helen G S Forde

### **Skye Spring Meet 2010 – Allt Dearg Cottage**

This year we booked the week of 22–29 May. The meet was, for the first time, an official club meet and was unusually well attended. Although the weather was not great a good variety of climbing and peak bagging was done. Peter Wilson and Alan Smith climbed at Suidhe Biorach, Neist, Rubha Hunish and the Cuillin. Their ascents included *Master of Morgana* at Rubha Hunish. John Mackenzie and Eve Austin ventured into the Cuillin and their ascents included *Stormy Petrel* and *Integrity*. Paul Brian, Robin Campbell and Peter Macdonald climbed the Inn Pinn to inspect the damage on the summit. The new guide is eagerly awaited. Parties also visited the Western Red Hills and Cuillin Outliers. Other outings included the Quiraing, the plane wreck on Ben Edra and the very pleasant coastal walk around Suisnish and Boreraig.

Members present: Paul Brian, Hamish Brown, Robin Campbell, Peter Macdonald, John Mackenzie, Tom Prentice, Raymond Simpson, Alan Smith, Noel Williams and Peter Wilson.

Guests: Eve Austin and Linda Simpson.

DNW

### **Naismith Hut Meet – 5–6 June**

A meet intended essentially for northern members was hi-jacked in the nicest possible way by folk from the south but never-the-less a full hut ensured a pleasant few days. 6 members and 2 guests attended. The weather did not favour the longer routes but climbing took place on Stac Pollaidh (new routes recorded!) along with Reiff and some of the more esoteric crags around Laxford Bridge and Rhiconich.

John Fowler

## JMCS REPORTS

**Edinburgh Section:** JMCS members have had another active year in the mountains. The core activities are of course rock and winter climbing and hillwalking, but many members also reach their mountains using skis, kayaks, sailing boats, snow shoes, mountain bikes and even fell running attire.

This year members have climbed everywhere from North Berwick Law to Everest; one member definitely reached the summit of the latter and several members claim that they can manage one or two of the easier routes on the former. As you would expect, the mega winter of 2009/10 saw us hastening out to tick the routes that aren't usually there. Early summer brought the usual burst of rock climbing activity in the UK until the weather broke with the coming of the school holidays, during which many folk headed off abroad. The annual slide show in November should be particularly wide-ranging this year.

Unfortunately (or fortunately in the view of many) the Wednesday night finger-trashing visits to Heriot Watt during the winter are no more. We now go to Ratho on winter Wednesdays and Alien Rock on winter Mondays. During the summer we tend to climb outside on local outcrops on both days; you can see where we are going by looking on our website which also lists forthcoming weekend meets. Just Google 'Edinburgh JMCS'.

Our new hut 'The Cabin' in Balgowan, between Laggan and Newtonmore has proved a hit with both members and other clubs. Being in the middle of the country, it is ideally placed for climbing on the Ben, Aonach Mòr or Creag Meagaidh one day and then in the Cairngorms the next. A new shower room will now help you to wash off the sweat on both days. Clubs interested in making a booking should contact the custodian Ali Borthwick (see below).

Our other hut, the Smiddy at Dundonnell, has also had a facelift this year. Astronomers will now have to go outside to look at the stars at night, as it is no longer possible to sit by the fireside and look up to see them. Helen Forde is the custodian (again, see below).

We always welcome new faces. Come along to our Monday or Wednesday night activities and meet some of the existing members. It is probably best to contact Terry Lansdown, the Membership Secretary, beforehand to make sure there has been no last minute change of venue.

The present committee is; Honorary President: John Fowler, Honorary Vice-President: Euan Scott, President: Patrick Winter; Vice President and Smiddy Custodian: Helen Forde (30 Reid Terrace, Edinburgh EH3 5JH, 0131 332 0071), Secretary: David Small (5 Afton Place, Edinburgh, EH5 3RB, <secretary@edinburghjmcs.org.uk>), Treasurer: Bryan Rynne, Meets Secretary: Sue Marvell, The Cabin Custodian: Ali Borthwick (01383 732 232, before 9pm please); Membership Secretary Terry Lansdown <t.lansdown@hw.ac.uk>

David Small

**Glasgow Section:** The Glasgow JMCS continues to thrive with a large number of weekend meets throughout the year. Apart from a short hiatus during the summer months, the meets are held every fortnight at venues across Scotland and as far afield as the English Lake District and even Wales!

After the first meet of 2009 at Inver cottage the club Burns Supper was held at the Raeburn hut at the end of January. There were two weekend trips to the CIC hut during February and March were the weather prevented stretching of the collective performance envelope! In fact stormy weather often seemed to coincide with weekends, but persistence paid off. One stormy Saturday in February saw three members as the only people in the Loch Avon basin – one on a ski tour, including a descent of Castlegates Gully, while the other two climbed Deepcut Chimney and bivvied under the powder-filled Shelterstone before climbing Route Major in the gales and whiteout the following day.

Four JMCS members went to La Grave in January for some roadside ice. Conditions were good, even on the sunny side of the valley, although the one minute walk-ins did not always give much chance to warm up in the -16°C temperatures. Rest days were spent skiing at the large local resorts.

Ski mountaineering during April saw two members achieve ascents of Rosa Blanche, The Jungfrau, Gross Fiescherhorn and Les Diablerets, in a mad dash following the weather across The Alps.

April and May saw Scottish meets to Elphin and Dundonnell where the fine conditions allowed rock climbing at Reiff, Stac Pollaidh and Gruinard.

The late May bank holiday weekend was given over to the work meet at the Coruisk Memorial Hut to check that the new roof installed the previous year was still intact. Happily it was functioning well and the hut is available to other clubs see [www.glasgowjmcs.org.uk](http://www.glasgowjmcs.org.uk).

The traditional midsummer evening meet to the Cobbler, held on the 23 June, was a lovely evening, sunny and mostly with a light breeze to keep the midges at bay. Members assembled on the top of the North Peak for beers, tea and cakes, to watch a superb sunset over the Western Isles at midnight. An early start in the morning allowed most folk to be at their places of work in time (some reaching Edinburgh by 9 a.m.).

Two members visited Corsica and enjoyed sunny climbing on the island's unique granite formations. They went to the Col de Bavella area in June, before the main holiday season crowds and heat arrived. No other climbers were encountered on the mountain routes, which were found to have short walk-ins and excellent rock, with weird granite 'tafoni' climbing which can be very steep for the grade. The swimming pools in the mountain rivers and the excellent snorkelling on the nearby coast were appreciated on the hotter days.

The summer holidays saw, among other trips, visits to Canada, Lofoten Islands (twice), Fontainbleu, Old man of Hoy, Grignetta in Italy, Dolomites, with an attempt on Norway's National mountain, Stetind, failing just 100 metres short of the summit; again bad weather being to blame.

As the nights started to 'draw in' the club calendar again became hectic. The annual club dinner was held at the Kingshouse Hotel and it was enjoyed by over 40 members proving to be the most popular meet of the year.

The Presidents retiral meet was held in November at Backhill of Bush and was entitled the Minch Moor Mystery Meet in Galloway.

In early December Mill Cottage at Feshiebridge was the venue. There was atrocious weather on the Saturday, but one pair succeeded in climbing Grooved Rib in the Cairngorms while an avalanche swept another pair down the Northern Corries. They were unharmed but the result was that the following teams all packed up and went back to the hut to drink the excellent ale supplied by the

Loch Leven brewery. Next day the crown wall of the avalanche was an impressive sight.

As always the year ended well with the annual Christmas meet at Lagangarbh famous for the mince pies and a chance to show-off one's annual activities in the annual slide show. Fortuitously the meet coincided with a cold snap resulting in early season routes being climbed.

Officers for 2010: President and Secretary; Paul Hammond. Treasurer; Richard Jewell.

For more information on meets and other events see: [www.glasgowjmcs.org.uk](http://www.glasgowjmcs.org.uk)

Colwyn Jones

**Perth Section (Perth Mountaineering Club):** The Perth Section of the JMCS continues to thrive with a welcome injection of younger members (i.e. under 40 years old) breathing more life into the ancient club. Meets have been held throughout Scotland, experiencing the usual extremes of weather. Many members made full use of the excellent ski touring conditions of February and early March and the Milehouse meet at that time was blessed with pristine snow conditions and wall to wall sunshine. More good weather was experienced in Skye in August although recent rain provided an opportunity for the club to downgrade the 3\* VDiff *Whispering Wall* route in Coire a Mhadaidh to a 0\*, wet and poorly protected VS first pitch. Better climbing was found later on the Neist Sea Cliffs. A number of focussed (and obsessive?) Munro Baggers continue to drive the hillwalking forward – one member managed 43 Munros in the eleven weeks leading up to her 'completion'. In addition, plenty of peripheral activities are in place with bikes being used more and more to access the hills. The Club shows a healthy disregard for the current climate change mania. A recent meet attracted thirteen members who did six different combinations of hills in the Glen Lyon area using seven cars and making a considerable contribution to the world's carbon footprint.

Late in 2009 the club lost three long standing members – Donald McIntyre, David Wares and Tom Rix. Donald Wares was active in the club in the fifties and remained a member through to his death. Donald McIntyre had a brief climbing career but during that time he was associated with some of the giants of Scottish mountaineering, including Bill Murray, Bill Mackenzie and Malcolm Slesser. Tom was a metaphorical giant of the club for years taking a full part in the various offices and being active throughout until illness took its toll in the last eight years. Although not a rock climber he climbed all the Munros and Corbetts, was a photographer with a keen eye and a writer of poems, some of which were published in the SMC Journal. The loss of these three is yet another sad break with a past era.

Desmond Bassett

## SMC AND JMCS ABROAD

### NORTH AMERICA

#### Mount Hunter, Alaska – May/June 2009

On 14 May 2009, forty-two hours of travel, frantic shopping and packing after leaving Edinburgh, we arrived somewhat bewildered at Denali base camp on the Kahiltna glacier. On arrival, we discovered that a Swiss team had just climbed our main objective – the Z-buttress on Mount Hunter the week before, so with an excellent forecast and reports of good conditions we decided to ‘warm-up’ on the classic Stump-Aubery/Bibler-Klewin Moonflower route on the famous north buttress of Mount Hunter. Starting up the route at 3 a.m., we reached the first icefield at ¼ height in the early evening, where melting ice put paid to further progress for the day. Following a so-so bivy, we started again around 5 a.m., reaching the top of the technical climbing in the late evening. After a brew stop in a convenient crevasse, we continued to the summit arriving via some unacclimatised gasping and crawling around 3 a.m. With a quick stop to admire the view, we started the descent of the West Ridge which initially went very quickly but slowed as more technical ground, poor snow conditions, our underestimated food supplies and general fatigue took their toll. Reaching the glacier in the late evening a long slog back to base camp led to a well deserved steak and collapse.

The Stump route gave superb continuously high quality and very sustained and varied technical climbing- the finest route any of us has yet climbed in the mountains and Tony put his productive scottish winter to good use, freeing all the aid sections at about Scottish VII 7 with the exception of the pendulum into the McNethery ice dagger. It was a great season for the north buttress of Mount Hunter, with at least half a dozen ascents. The Moonflower route had at least two other ascents and while we were on it teams also climbed the French route, Deprivation, and the Wall of Shadows.

After a few days rest and a stormy day, we tracked down the Swiss who’s description of the objective dangers posed by cornicing and snow mushrooms on their new route decided us against further investigation on Mount Hunter. Instead, we switched our aims to the south face of Mount Foraker, but were irritatingly thwarted less by the actual weather than by the weather forecast, which kept predicting the arrival of a big storm system within the next couple of days. Wanting to keep some acclimatisation we made an overnight trip to the 11,000ft camp on the west buttress of Denali, then watched several days of excellent weather slip past at base camp as the forecast storm held off, though Steve and Viv had a fun day traversing Mount Frances via the classic (and excellent) South-West Ridge. With the storm still forecast the commitment factor of Foraker was uninviting so we decided to try and explore other options on the much easier to retreat from north buttress of Hunter, but this plan was scuppered by the belated arrival of the storm system.

Grim weather tent bound boredom was interrupted by the ranger, who requested our help extracting a suspected heart attack victim from 7800ft on the West Buttress. Teaming up with another climber we towed a stretcher and

medical supplies to 7800ft then helped bring him back to base camp where we made major inroads on the rangers supplies of pancake batter.

After a few more storm days, the weather started to clear but remained unsettled with high nighttime temperatures leading to very poor snow conditions. After waiting out a few more days, we decided to pull out of the mountains with further bad weather forecast as Steve had to make his flight home a few days later.

Back in civilisation with a few days to kill, we hitched north to Fairbanks then hired a car to go in search of some rumoured rock climbing in the Chena valley. An afternoon hike into the hills led to a bothy in a spectacular landscape of slightly crumbly granite tors, on which after some exploration we eventually located a good looking route. Next morning, Tony led the route – a sustained crack leading to a bold finnish (approx E4 ish – subsequent research led us to believe this was a second lead ascent of ‘Dead-End crack’) then we hiked down and headed to the Chena valley’s main attraction – hot springs – for an afternoon of R&R.

Next morning, Steve headed back south to the airport and the UK, while Tony and Viv encouraged by a better forecast hitched back south to Talkeetna. A brief negotiation got Tony and Viv a bargain two day fly-in to the Ruth gorge, so following some more frantic packing we headed back to the mountains. With limited time, we set out the next morning to try the much talked about but seldom climbed Cobra pillar on Mount Barille. This slightly failed to live up to the hype with the first six pitches ranging from merely scrappy rock to disintigrating rotten gravel – notably on the crux 5.11 pitch... Above, the rock improved with some excellent climbing and the infamous 5.11 offwidth leading to the top of the pillar feature and the end of the major rock difficulties at about 3 a.m. After a quick snack, with the way ahead looking scrappy and uninspiring and very warm temperatures we decided to apply ‘Chamonix ethics’ and abseil off to enable us to cross the avalanching Japanese Couloir approach at a sensible hour. Back at base camp the weather closed in but thankfully Paul Roderick of Talkeetna Air Taxi managed to snatch a break in the clouds to return us to the fleshpots of Talkeetna for a beer or three...

Huge thanks to the Mark Clifford Award, BMC and NZAC for funding support. Thanks to Rab, Lyon Equipment, OMM, Chocolate Fish, Crux, DMM, Wild Country, Anatom and Mountain equipment for help with kit. Thanks to Paul Roderick and everyone else at Talkeetna Air Taxi for their help and to the base camp rangers for good times and pancakes.

Vivian Scott, Tony Stone, Steven Fortune

## **AFRICA**

### **South Africa**

DAVE PRITCHARD REPORTS: It had been an ambition of mine to climb in South Africa since 1986 when I had spent the summer at Snell’s field climbing mainly with a group of South Africans including the renowned Andy de Klerk. Their tales of spectacular crags, great weather and fantastic lines were an inspiration on indoor walls during many a wet November night. It was almost a quarter of a century until that ambition was to be realised, but February finally saw me

heading to Cape Town with Simon Laker, a long standing climbing partner with whom I have visited many parts of the world. A great advantage of heading to South Africa is that although Cape Town is over ten thousand kilometres from Scotland there is very little time difference, so upon arrival from an overnight flight we immediately headed off to Silvermine Crags where the sports routes were just the thing to get our muscles working. The following day, somewhat lulled into a false sense of security by the cool and misty conditions that we had encountered at Silvermine, we headed around to Table Mountain. We had decided on an area that proved to be very much in the sun, and our mistake in doing so became increasingly evident. The relatively short walk up to the base of the crag seemed unduly tough, and even after deciding to drop the grade of route that we were going to do, we felt incredibly weak as we climbed, the heat (we subsequently discovered that the temperature in the shade had been around 38°C) continuously draining the energy from us. Drinking litres of water seemed to have little restorative effect, and the conditions were so tiring that even taking in the rope required multiple rests. We were relieved to finally reach the top of the route, and find a tiny patch of shade below an overlap where we could recover before the descent.

The next few days were spent a few hours north of Cape Town in the Cederberg area combining high quality sports routes and world-class bouldering at Rocklands, with multi-pitch Trad routes at Tafelberg. This latter venue was an undoubted highlight of the trip, reached by dirt track and a three hour walk-in (which having learnt from our experience on Table Mountain, was done before dawn). Tafelberg presents a huge impressive wall of solid and highly featured rock. Although the route that we did was technically relatively straight-forward, rarely have I climbed somewhere that felt as remote or as committing. We headed back to Cape Town for the final few days of our trip, knocking off a number of the Table Mountain 'Classics', of which the most memorable was *Jacob's Ladder* whose third pitch involves jug-pulling with a great deal of space beneath one's heels. I would thoroughly recommend heading to South Africa as an exciting alternative to the annual winter migration to Spain. The crags and routes are of the highest quality, and cater for all tastes across the grade range. Just remember to avoid the example set by Mad Dogs and Englishmen, and stay out of the mid-day sun.

## HIMALAYA

### Scottish-American Sikkim Expedition, 2010

In late April 2010 a group of SMC stalwarts might have been observed lingering in the duty-free shop at Glasgow airport. What were they doing? Were they on a trade mission to promote Scotland's most important export? Maybe, though an observer who had noticed their cover-up game involving heavy rucksacks, double boots, ice axes etc, checked in some time earlier at the 'outsize luggage' counter might have been given pause despite the many hundreds of pounds worth of 'water of life' in their trolleys.

Some twenty-four hours later a sweating Steve Kennedy, Bob Hamilton, Dave Ritchie and Geoff Cohen, holed up in a somewhat drab Calcutta hotel, celebrated the late arrival of American Paul Swinton by broaching one of the 'trade samples', and indeed entirely demolishing it. But it was only after a rendez-vous

*Top: SMC Abroad – Steve Fortune on Tamara's Traverse, Moonflower Buttress, Mount Hunter.*

*Bottom: Steve Fortune descending the West Ridge of Mount Hunter.*

*Both photos: Viv Scott.*





with lead 'refreshment expert' Dick Isherwood at Bagdogra airport next day that the mission could be said to be fully on its way to Sikkim.

We were met by our agent Barap Namgyal and the guide he had assigned to us, Sanjeev Tamang. Barap, who had been recommended by Roger Payne, a recent expert on Sikkimese mountaineering, would probably have been quite happy if our mission truly had been devoted exclusively to whisky. Though commendably efficient and supportive throughout our trip, one had the impression he could very comfortably adapt to the playboy lifestyle of the successful entrepreneur once his trekking business expands sufficiently. He arranged for us to visit a Buddhist monastery, helped us look over the tents and food he had provided and very kindly invited us to his home to dine and sample Sikkimese spirits. Much as we enjoyed the evening our feeling was that the trade balance in spirits is likely to remain in Scotland's favour for some time.

From Gangtok, we drove for six hours over wooded ridges to Yoksam the ancient capital of Sikkim. Though not much more than a village, it had a very comfortable and well-run hotel where we were royally treated. Barap's staff did everything for us, the organising of yak loads, camp cooking tents and so on; all we had to do was pack our personal gear, enjoy the scenery and keep well – something Steve unfortunately failed to do as he spent most of his time in Yoksam with his head over the toilet. Despite this he bravely kept up with the party next day as we trailed through very steep forest to a height of about 3000m. Here Dick, a veteran of many years in Nepal, introduced the party to the delights of 'tumba', and gave the locals the first hints of his drinking prowess.

What is tumba? Many will have heard of chang, the millet beer that is drunk widely throughout the Himalayan regions. Apparently 'tumba' refers to the receptacle as well as the drink it contains – a section of bamboo into which the warmed beer is poured, together with a bamboo straw that has a clever feather at its base to prevent the drinker sucking up solid matter. Dick had an unerring instinct for the low huts where such drinks could be found, and always made certain he had a spare one warm by his side for when the drink in progress became exhausted.

We were following an old and popular route to a viewpoint at Dzongri (4100m) where a magnificent panorama of Kangchenjunga and its satellites can be seen. Another day took us to base camp at Thangsing (3960m), a flat plain in the Prek Chu valley, with a few stone huts, staffed in summer by a diminutive chowkidar (caretaker) who kept an interesting collection of libations in the depths of his den. It took us a few more days to establish an advanced base camp among moraine boulders at about 4900m, with our sherpa Karma and liaison officer Bhai-Chung for company.

Above us was Jopuno (5936m) which has had a number of attempts and at least one ascent. It was first claimed in 1883 by W.W. Graham who later climbed Kabru (7317m) the highest peak ever climbed at that time. More recently an American party climbed its attractive west ridge, following a long snow arete, then a band of golden rock and finally a less steep section of loose black rock. The nominal objective of our expedition was exploration of the east side of the Jopuno range, which has never been visited. However we started our campaign with a climb on neighbouring Lama Lamani (5600m). The lower North top of this peak had already been climbed by Roger Payne in 2005, but Kennedy's eagle eye spotted an alternative route which four of us enjoyed on 11 May. We

had pleasant mixed climbing at about Scottish grade II/III finishing by a very elegant snow arête in perfect condition. Unfortunately, like Roger Payne, we didn't have time to traverse to the higher South top.

Further exploration did not reveal any obvious way to get over to the east side of the range. And at this time Dave, though he climbed a small peak of about 5500m with Bob, was suffering from high altitude oedema, while Dick had important seminars to conduct with the chowkidar in his den. The remaining four of us, helped by our formidable sherpa, carried to a small camp at about 5100m under the west ridge of Jopuno. We had hoped to attempt a new route on the North-west face, but a day of poor weather together with a bit of illness for Bob and my lamentably laboured breathing persuaded us that our best hope of reaching the summit was to repeat the American route. This we attempted on 18 May, and had a very good Alpine day, involving some icy slopes and good quality mixed climbing on the golden band. However we were too slow to get up and down safely in the day, so retreated from the foot of the black band, well short of the summit.

Indifferent weather prevented further ascents, though Bob and Dave stayed high as long as possible; while down at Tangshing the chowkidar provided singing, dancing and local spirits in exchange for our malts. The programme that Barap had organised for us (unasked) involved several days of sightseeing and meant that in the end we only had 12 days above base. We were taken on a tour of old Sikkimese palaces and monasteries, ending up at Darjeeling, where the Glasgow-built steam engine was much admired.

Our thanks go to the Mount Everest Foundation and the Mountaineering Council of Scotland who gave generous financial support; to Barap who was not just an agent but a generous friend; and to Roger Payne who was a mine of information and advice.

Geoff Cohen

## REVIEWS

**On Belay: Adventures in Mountaineering On Two Continents:** MG Anderson (AuthorHouse, 2009, paperback, 220pp, ISBN 9781438957982, \$11.99)

This is a book of 19 short stories, most but not all with a climbing setting. The venues are scattered around three continents and range from Glencoe and the Ben, through the Alps to the Andes and back down to outcrop climbs in the USA. The climbing parts are obviously rooted in the author's real experiences, to the extent that one or two read more as reportage than fiction, but the evocative descriptions and convincing dialogue more than make up for this.

By and large the Scottish-based stories work better than the North American ones. Perhaps the author still has his heart in the Highlands, or maybe it's just that early experiences are felt more intensely? Certainly the author has to be congratulated on the range of stories included here, with ghost stories, a murder, a morality tale and a couple of 'twists in time' tales as well as more conventional climbing tales.

The best of the lot in my opinion is *Glen of Weeping* where the twist in time comes over as wholly appropriate after the travails that precede it, and the descriptions of both hard times on a route and festering in a soggy tent in foul weather are excellent and will strike a chord with many if not most climbers. Details such as the drip following him around the tent and the sheep's lack of conversation add a welcome note of humour.

Also excellent is *Warning, Ice!*, although I suspect that it's debateable whether it qualifies as fiction. In fact that doesn't matter in the least, as it's a well-told tale of a great day on a great route, and captures the feel of Scottish winter climbing superbly. The author describes landscape well, often in an attractively quirky way (although I'm not sure I'd describe the view of the Buachaille from Rannoch Moor as 'melodious' – harmonious, maybe?). I particularly like the concept that having given the Buachaille the perfect frontage the architect just couldn't be bothered with the rest of it – Ladhar Bheinn, Beinn Lair and Kerry's Brandon would fit the same idea.

The *Highland Hogmanay* tale rings horribly true in its description of Highland hospitality at its alcoholic best and will awaken shuddering memories in many people. Substitute Glen Clova for Dundonnell and a birthday for Hogmanay and pretty much everything else in it happened to me, and no doubt to many others. However, I've never come across the suggestion that 'anyone south of Loch Lomond is immediately suspected of Englishry' – in my experience all Scots know exactly where the Border is!

The story of the epic on the Ben has the ring of real experience about it too, allowing for a small amount of acceptable exaggeration. It loses out slightly because the writer can't make up his mind whether Dudley is effete Lapsang Souchong/Wedgewood china dilettante or loud pushy 'couldn't give a stuff' Mancunian thruster. Either would work but mixing the stereotypes doesn't.

Many of the characters certainly are stereotypical, but presumably that's intentional, as they are there to have fun poked at them, frequently deservedly so. Where this approach doesn't work is in the Andean stories where it just makes the narrator appear the pampered westerner whinging about third world lifestyles.

It sounds like the writer didn't enjoy his South American trips much and he obviously didn't get on well with the locals. On the plus side, he certainly manages to bring out the sheer drudgery of climbing at altitude and the descriptive passages are good, as indeed they are throughout the book.

The Alpine ghost story is nicely done too – even if you can see the ending coming well before it does. Again the best bits are the climbing descriptions, capturing the feel both of those days when you flow up the rock without apparent effort and of the jerky, nervous, on-the-edge-of fouling-up state when things aren't going so well.

The writer also has a good ear for speech, which comes over especially well in *Reg crosses the Rio*, where the teenage girls' conversation is both true to life and very funny. Nice ending too. That and *The Sandwich Bag* are much the best of the non-Scottish stories, with better plots, more believable characters and snappier dialogue. Jake in the latter is probably the best developed and most convincing character in the book (not counting the ones who are obviously the writer thinly disguised!).

Of the non-climbing stories *Tiptoe through the Treetops* is well observed, with a genuinely surprising ending (to me, at least), although I felt that the author's rather jaundiced view of the modern world rather detracted from it, and the same is true of *A Day without a Hug*. The Garden Gnome's moral tale is more in tune with current sensibilities, but because of the previous stories you feel that the author's heart isn't really in it. Much better is the other 'time twist' story, *Afraid of his own Shade*, where the mists and mirk of a Northern English moorland town seep through convincingly.

For me the least successful stories were the 'Algy' ones, as the main character neither comes across as a believable individual in his own right or as a recognisable target to be sent up. Sometimes the author has him as a figure of fun, as in the Callander Roman site incident and at others he is more of a cartoon superhero, as in the Andean story. I like the idea of having his story told by a female admirer, but feel that this conflicts with the rather overblown prose and classical references which feel more like the sort of thing that the main character might have written himself. Even the climbing sequences don't seem to work as well as in most of the other stories.

One minor general point is that of spelling, particularly of Gaelic words, the Buachaille, Ben Lawers and Creagh Dhu are all misspelled, for instance, while Lagangarbh has acquired a Welsh double L. I doubt there are many highlanders called Donhail either. However as I'm looking at a pre-publication copy then hopefully a good proof reading will pick these up.

All in all, the author's strike rate is pretty good. I enjoyed a good half of the stories, especially the Scottish ones, where I felt that he had a much more ingrained feel for and affection for the place. The climbing sequences feel authentic, the landscape description is vivid and much of the dialogue is well-observed. The first three stories and *Reg Crosses the Rio* are excellent.

Iain Thow

**Ben Nevis – Britain’s Highest Mountain:** Ken Crocket & Simon Richardson (SMT, 2009, hardback, 416pp, ISBN 978-1-907233-10-4, £27.50)

It was with some trepidation that I said ‘yes’ when asked to review the second edition of *Ben Nevis – Britain’s Highest Mountain* by Ken Crocket and Simon Richardson. Not really being into history and, as with many other people, I’d rather be on Ben Nevis climbing, trying to make my own history, instead of reading about others. However, over the fifteen years I’ve been climbing here I must have notched up well over one thousand visits to Ben Nevis and not surprisingly I have developed a sincere attachment to the mountain. The sense of history is hard to escape and very often I have found myself considering being in the same position on a climb with the equipment and uncertainty of the first ascent. Being most impressed by these first ascents but very vague on the details doing this review gave me the opportunity to learn more. On reading this book I have learned far more than I anticipated and future trips to Ben Nevis will be richer as a result.

There is no doubt that this is a good looking book. Full colour images throughout will distract you from reading any of the text the first few times you pick up the book. Putting faces to names you have known for years and spotting pictures of people you know amongst the hundreds of inspiring images is reason enough to buy this book. There’s even a picture of me in it. When you do start to read you’ll find the text is laid out with eye-catching headlines on every page so no matter where you open up your attention will be grabbed and you’ll have no choice but to read on and discover more.

The first edition of the book is included in its entirety, starting with the origin of the name Ben Nevis and the first recorded explorations of the forebidding looking mountain. The sense of adventure in exploring new areas is clear and is a theme that runs through the whole book. Being written by climbers for climbers there is inevitably much listing of first ascents, names and dates. Woven in to these are the tales behind those first ascents revealing much of the character of the climbers involved. Every one of these people is there for the unique combination of beauty, challenge and style of climbing that Ben Nevis has given successive generations.

We all know that this chance coming together has given us the ‘ultimate mountain’ on which are presented infinite challenges for us to test ourselves. We all know that these challenges, approached with a pure and fiercely defended style of climbing, have given British mountaineers the grounding to become some of the best in the world and that foreign climbers leave here so inspired that they adopt this style back in their home nations. As the final sentence says ‘The equipment, techniques and ethics developed on Ben Nevis have influenced Alpinism across the globe, and without doubt the mountain will continue to inspire those that venture onto its flanks for many years to come.’

These are bold claims, easy to state but difficult to defend without knowledge of the details. *Ben Nevis – Britain’s Highest Mountain* is the definitive work that puts Ben Nevis in its place on the world stage of mountaineering. Every little boy’s room should have a copy on the shelf to dip in and out of in those quiet moments. Dreams of future climbing adventures will surely be inspired.

Mike Pescod

**The Weekend Fix:** Craig Weldon (Sandstone Press, 2009, 216pp, ISBN 978-1-905207-26-8, £11.99)

When I first picked up this book I expected the worst: the expanded diaries of a rabid hill bagger with little engaging prose and not much going on, apart from reaching another obscure cairn on an even obscurer list. And how pleasantly surprised I was when I settled down to read it.

It is very much a young person's account of his engagement with the hills. From his first outings close to his home in Helensburgh, his burgeoning obsession is facilitated by his membership of the GUM Club. Escapes to the mountains become more necessary as time goes on, to offset his disillusionment with his university degree and his failure to get a rewarding job or a girlfriend.

There's little in the way of mountaineering technicalities here. Indeed the In Pinn represents the zenith of such outings and the Tourist Route up Sgurr nan Gillean gives him enough food for thought. In terms of effort, a lot of the smaller hills are little more than gentle rambles. Yet he is quite capable of a challenge. Reaching the summit of Seana Bhraigh in deep snow from Inverlael, after the sun had gone down on 2 January, would be more than testing for most people. He traverses the peaks on both sides of Loch Mullardoch in a day and climbs the three highest peaks of Great Britain in under 24 hours. There's no doubt the man is keen. He goes out in all weathers and often after a heavy night's drinking. So did I when I was younger. It is likely to evoke a nice air of nostalgia for older readers.

Each section is split into sub chapters describing a day out on various hills and mountains, a 'meandering stravaig' all over upland Britain. He often writes about events and details other than those actually to do with the mountain climbed. This rang true for me. Sometimes it can be a person met, a current preoccupation in your weekday life, an incident in a pub or even problems with a car which influences the overall memory. Not all hill days are stellar and this is reflected in the book. A couple of times he wonders why he ever bothered going out in the first place. It was always interesting to anticipate what his next 'thought for today' would be. His accounts are never dull even when hardly anything significant happens. This is due to the direct, unaffected, honest prose, peppered with some arresting descriptions of mountains, nature and the cathartic quality of the activity. You don't have to be doing anything heroic or challenging for the latter to be satisfied. Friendships with fellow hill goers is a common thread and his regular pals pop up all over the place.

Perhaps he stretches the 'small is beautiful' dictum a little too far as I found the forays when he was working in Birmingham not as interesting. The trouble is, that apart from the Welsh and Lake District mountains, the hills suffer in comparison to the galaxy of the Highlands. For several of them the biggest challenge is to find a parking place prior to the swift tick. His trip to the Llyn peninsula in North Wales conveys nothing of the exquisite charm of this area. His quest is concentrated on the seven Marilyns there, which he fails to knock off in one go. Several times he seems to miss the bigger picture but I forgive him because of the overriding enthusiasm that shines off the page.

It's a pity he didn't delve further into his state of mind when he fails to realise personal goals and societal expectations: 'I couldn't get a decent job, I lived with my parents, I walked alone. I wasn't happy, and what I was doing seemed essentially pointless. But I did it anyway.' Deeper exploration of this would have

added a darker but more interesting strand. He's older now. Perhaps he's realised that even when you get the job and the girl the need for the fix is still there, even greater in some cases.

After I'd finished the book I found myself dipping in randomly to enjoy some of the vignettes again. Always a good sign that I'd enjoyed it. Guess I still need that fix too.

Mike Dixon

**Sligachan Inn / Hotel – Visitors' Books 1869–1936 – Selected Entries:**

Mrs Fiona Campbell (Portree Local History Society & Mrs Fiona Campbell, £4.99). Available from Skye and Lochalsh Archive Centre, Elgin Hostel, Dunvegan Road, Portree.

During the 1880s and 90s, when rock climbing in Britain as we now know it became a recognised sport, the pioneers had based themselves at strategic hostelries within reach of the peaks and crags they wished to explore. In the Lake District, where history would have it that it all started (a pity about the Pilkington brothers climbing the Inaccessible Pinnacle in August 1880 then!), the main centre was at Wasdale Head, where climbers gathered at Wastwater Hotel (later the Wasdale Head Inn), and Row Farm managed by Mr. and Mrs. Tyson. In Wales, Pen-y-Gwryd Hotel run by the Owen family had long served as a winter retreat for Alpinists, and, for a few years up to 1914 and the outbreak of war, Geoffrey Winthrop Young had virtually commandeered the Pen-y-Pass establishment for the Christmas and Easter holidays, filling it with his climbing friends.

Many of these same climbers ventured further north to Scotland, finding accommodation at Kingshouse Inn and Clachaig Inn at the eastern and western extremities of Glencoe, from where they attacked the nearby peaks.

Above all, one of the great attractions for many alpine climbers and mountaineers were the Cuillin of Skye, Britain's most savage and spectacular range of peaks, and even in the 1880s and 90s still offering the pioneers not only virgin ascents but acres of unclimbed rock.

The headquarters for all Cuillin climbing and exploration during this period was the Sligachan Inn (now Hotel), though a few lucky ones, like the great Alpine party led by Charles Pilkington in 1890, managed to get accommodation at Glen Brittle Lodge.

All these establishments held visitors' books, and many a guest left not just their names and addresses but also various comments regarding the hospitality, weather, scenery and their adventurous escapades, whether it be fishers, artists, geologists, walkers or climbers.

Some of these early books record important first ascents and climbs, and at Wasdale, Pen-y-Gwryd and Sligachan the respective landlords, realising the importance of these entries, supplied a separate 'Climbers' Book' to be used specifically for records of new, or variations to, climbs undertaken by the new incoming breed of rock climber.

Meanwhile, the 'ordinary' visitors' books ran concurrently, recording the everyday comings and goings of the hotel.

The Sligachan collection of Visitors' Books (plus the important Climbers' Book and Angler's Register, which lie outside the present work) is probably the

most important set of historical documents of their kind.

Apart from one missing volume covering the years 1873-1885 there are complete records from 1869 through to 1936 (with a short appendix for 1941 and 1942.).

The wealth of interesting historical and social material bound in these volumes is astonishing and of utmost importance to all who have interests in not only the Cuillin, but also in Skye and Scotland in general, as well as the social manners of the Victorian and Edwardian British society whilst at leisure.

It is to the great credit of the Sligachan Hotel and Fiona Campbell, the present owner, that all these items (bar the Visitors' Book for 1885-1903, which is held in the SMC archives in Edinburgh) are on display in the small but very well organised and informative exhibition at the hotel. Furthermore, all the visitors' books (including the one held by the SMC) have been photocopied and made available to the public so that anyone staying there or passing through can peruse them at will.

Even more fortunate, a few years ago, Mrs Campbell decided that she would make her own personal list of important entries taken from the collection and furnish them with comments, historical notes, anecdotes, photographs and the like. The result is a small yet highly enjoyable volume that is full of surprises and delights. As a member of the Campbell family that has been associated with Sligachan for well over sixty and more years, Fiona has been able to draw on her own reminiscences and references, which has resulted in a work that is of interest not just to the walker and climber, but also to the historian, both local and in general.

It should be of no surprise that the whole enterprise was done with pen and paper – no lap-top 'cut and paste' here - and with the exception of an acknowledgment to google for an entry on Harold Raeburn, all the research has been painstakingly done by hand.

Beautifully laid out, the slim volume introduces with a brief historical background followed by a record of innkeepers and some early travel writers before launching into the first of the Visitors' Books.

The variety of guests who stayed at the Inn in the early days is exceptional (mainly English, though some came from as far away as Australia), and range from the likes of the first Duke of Connaught (Queen Victoria's third son, Arthur) and Archbishop of York to several local men and women who spent the occasional night there on their way to the mainland from Portree.

Of climbing interest, the earliest book carries the first reference to an ascent in the Cuillin – Sgurr nan Gilleann, which was climbed on 27 August 1869 by Richard Abbay, a Fellow of Wadham College, Oxford. (Mrs Campbell has 'R. Abbay Wadham', one of the very few minor slips in the book).

Names such as Alexander Nicolson and a whole canon of Alpine climbers pepper the pages of the 1885–1903 records (the Pilkington brothers, Slingsby, Dent, Walker, Hastings and the Hopkinson family etc.), and one of the reasons that this volume is now held by the S.M.C. is that when Mrs Sharp was about to leave Sligachan as innkeeper in 1903, she generously passed this and the treasured Climbers' Book (which her late husband had provided for climbing guests in 1893) to the Club for safe keeping.

There are also detailed entries for Norman Collie and John Mackenzie as well as notes on the early SMC pioneers such as Naismith, Munro and Raeburn.

Choice entries are a personal affectation, but the following tit-bits caught my eye: although it is well known that famous Alpine artist Alfred Williams lived for several weeks each year in makeshift wooden cabins at Scaavaig from which he made his paintings of the Cuillin, Mrs Campbell tells us that at 'a recent showing of the Antiques Road Show, a painting of Loch Coruisk by Alfred Williams was valued at £60,000.'

Then again: in 1890 a Mrs H.H. Granville Wells of Sconcer Lodge stayed at Sligachan. According to the book, Sconcer Lodge had been 'used as a hunting lodge by Lord Macdonald. Architect John MacKenzie of Portree. Furniture from Maples, London, delivered 1882.'

Then there were the famous (and infamous) guests: Aleister Crowley visited Sligachan in August 1892 and though only a young teenager, he was encouraged by Sir Joseph Lister (of Listerine fame) to go scrambling with a group of climbers. For Crowley this was the beginning of his meteoric rise to climbing fame – a short lived one however, as his increasing involvement with black magic and the occult put paid to his acceptance by the establishment.

Harry Lauder visited the Inn in 1924 and famously left the following quatrain:

The hills are bare and bonny  
The road is lang and steep  
But the air is soft and balmy  
Skye's the place to sleep.

All in all, Fiona Campbell's book is full of fascinating snippets on a whole range of topics, and as well as the main text dealing with the records in the Visitors' Books, she fleshes out her compilation with several entertaining lists including those of day trippers who were staying on their expensive steam yachts anchored in Loch Sligachan, as well as selected entries on botanists, geologists, physicists, geographers and other famous names who made it to this very special place on Skye.

There are a few minor slips: Fiona Campbell writes 'When G T Cumming visited in 1886 he found (etc)'. This was in fact the formidable Constance Frederica Gordon Cumming (1837–1924), a remarkable lady and a compulsive traveller and writer. Known as 'Eka', she sailed as far a field as Egypt, India, Fiji, China, Japan, California and Hawaii, as well as making two visits to Skye and the Hebrides in 1876 – all of which were featured in her numerous volumes.

One final mistake concerns the famous George Mallory. According to Fiona Campbell, she had learnt from the late John Foster (then custodian of the Glen Brittle Memorial Hut) that after their visit to Sligachan in July 1918 the Mallory party had moved on to Glen Brittle where they stayed with Mary Campbell at Cuillin Cottage. But Foster was in error, as the Visitors' Book for the Glen Brittle Post Office confirms that George and Ruth Mallory, David Pye and Leslie Shadbolt spent 28–30 July there as guest of Mrs Chisholm.

These trifles apart, Fiona Campbell's book is a sheer delight, and one that should be on the shelf of anyone interested in the history of Sligachan, the Cuillin, Skye, and the Hebridean scene in general. As a personal historical document it is a significant work, and if not already so, it deserves to become a classic.

Stuart Pedlar

**ERRATA**

Some unfortunate errors occurred in the previous Journal (2009).

1. The caption for the Front Cover should have read:

Mark 'Ed' Edwards leading on the first ascent of Unleashed (VII,6), Number Three Gully Buttress, Ben Nevis. Photo: Jana Edward-Lihochá.

The following inexcusable errors were entirely the fault of the Editor.

2. P. 315

[now known to be the third highest after Sgurr Alasdair and the Inaccessible Pinnacle]

should read

[now known to be the fifth highest after Sgurr Alasdair, the Inaccessible Pinnacle, Sgurr a' Ghreadaidh, and Sgurr na Banachdaich]

3. P. 490

[It's now given as only 892m Ed.]

should read

[It's now given as only 899m Ed.]

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### INSTRUCTIONS TO CONTRIBUTORS

The Editor welcomes contributions from members and non-members alike. Priority will be given to articles relating to Scottish mountaineering. Articles should be submitted before the end of March if they are to be considered for inclusion in the Journal of the same year. Material is preferred in electronic form and should be sent by e-mail direct to the Editor.

Acceptable file formats in order of preference are (best) Open Document Format (odt), Rich Text Format (rtf), Plain Text (txt) or MS Word (doc/docx). *Open Office* is an open-source, multi-platform productivity suite which is free for individuals to download from <http://www.openoffice.org/>

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**Custodian:** Robin Clothier, 35 Broompark Drive, Newton Mearns, Glasgow, G77 5DZ.

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e-mail <ling@smc.org.uk>.

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Location: (NC 216 118) In the community of Elphin on the east side of the A835.

**Custodian:** Andrew Tibbs, Crown Cottage, 4 Crown Circus, Inverness, IV2 3NQ.

e-mail <naismith@smc.org.uk>.

### **RAEBURN HUT, LAGGAN**

Location: (NN 636 909) On the north side of the A889 between Dalwhinnie and Laggan.

**Custodian:** Clive Rowland, Inverene, Links Place, Nairn, IV12 4NH.

e-mail <raeburn@smc.org.uk>.

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