

# THE SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB JOURNAL

EDITED BY J. H. B. BELL



	PAGE
Old Tracks and "Coffin" Roads and Cross-country Routes in the North-west Highlands . . . A. E. Robertson . . . . .	327
Night Up There . . . G. D. V. . . . .	352
Night Up There—IV. Glow-worms and Summer Nights T. M. Wedderburn and E. W. Hodge	353
Since War Began . . . Campbell R. Steven . . . . .	362
A Ben Nevis Constellation of Climbs . . . J. H. B. Bell . . . . .	367
The Glomach Falls and Glen Affric . . . Allan Arthur . . . . .	377
In Memoriam . . . F. S. Goggs; R. Corry; E. W. Steeple . . . . .	380
Proceedings—Notes—J.M.C.S.—Reviews . . . . .	385

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## EDITORIAL NOTES.

WE are glad to be able to continue the publication of the *Journal* and we expect to be able to bring out the next number. Paper rationing, however, continues to make the future more difficult and uncertain, and economy of space is essential.

It has been necessary to hold over one or two articles as well as the record of a number of new ascents until the next issue. Contributions to "Notes and Excursions" are, however, always welcome, and should combine interest with brevity.

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**The Library.** The Club is indebted to the family of the late Professor Clark for the gift of a number of publications to the Library. These include past issues of the *Journal* as well as of the *Climbers' Club Journal* and *Bulletins*, the *Alpine Journal*, the *Cairngorm Club Journal*, and *Die Alpen*.

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All Notices for the April Number should be sent to the Hon. Editor, Dr J. H. B. BELL, THE KNOWE, CLACKMANNAN, as soon as possible, and not later than 15th February 1942.



*May 1941*

BEN NEVIS

*D. M'Kellar*

# THE SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB JOURNAL

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## OLD TRACKS AND "COFFIN" ROADS AND CROSS-COUNTRY ROUTES IN THE NORTH- WEST HIGHLANDS.

By A. E. Robertson.

INFORMATION about the cross-country routes and "coffin" roads in the Highlands will, in coming years, be of increasing interest and value to those who want to leave the tar-mac and feel the heather under their heel—getting away from the crowds and the stir of modern urban life. In the course of my misspent life I have picked up a considerable amount of such information, and it is but right that this should be set down on paper, else some of it might be lost.

Ignorance is what some of the Highland proprietors and many of their factors count on. "You know too much, Mr Robertson," said a well-known factor playfully to me one day in Inverness. "What I would like to do to you is to stick a knife in your ribs and tumble you into a peat hole, and then all that information you have would perish with you." It is to help to combat that eventuality that this article has been written! The public have the right to use these old paths and drove roads and "coffin" roads, no man making them afraid; and, so long as they do not blaze their trail with litter

and empty tins and broken bottles, I say "God speed them."

A right-of-way has to be used unless it is to lapse (disuse for fifty years constituting a lapse), and it is up to the walking public and hikers and hill-walkers to traverse these roads and not be daunted by misleading signposts.

"Private Road" is one of the commonest of these. It may be that the owner of the land has constructed at his own expense a motor road for his own use along the line of part of an old drove road, but, while this road may be "private" as far as motors are concerned, it does not debar the walking public from going over it. The route was a right-of-way long before the "private" motor road was made over it.

### **Poolewe to Kinlochewe.**

Let me begin by describing the old post road and line of communication from Poolewe to the east and south. Poolewe, before Oban and Mallaig came into being, was a very important harbour and place of call in the north-west. The packet boats carrying the mails for Lewis and Stornoway started from it, and foreign vessels with goods and contraband from the Low Countries and elsewhere used it. Prince Charlie, skulking in the Highlands after Culloden in 1746, sent messengers from Glen Cannich to Poolewe for tidings of a French vessel which might be cruising about in the hope of picking him up. It was by this route I am about to describe that these messengers undoubtedly went. Starting from Poolewe it goes eastwards to Kernsary, then south by the west side of Loch Tholldhoire to the shores of Loch Maree at Ardlair, and along through the rocky slopes of Creag Tharbh (the Bull Rock) to Letterewe. The late Mr Osgood Mackenzie in his book, "A Hundred Years in the Highlands," in Chapter III. gives a vivid description of the "perils" of this bit of the road. From Letterewe it keeps mostly near the shores of the loch

past Furnace to Kinlochewe, a rough track but fairly distinguishable all the way. Over two hundred years ago the woods on this side of the loch were cut down for the smelting of iron ore: and the "bloomeries" are still here and there traceable.

Please do not make this path a jumping-off place at Glen Bannisdale to go up the Glen *en route* for Slioch in the shooting season. It is one of the best "beats" in the Kinlochewe Forest, and it is hardly fair to disturb it.

Kinlochewe is a name of comparatively recent origin. There is no mention of it in General Roy's Military Map, 1747-55, but the names of three hamlets are given—Rinach, Bord, and Froskans. Rinach is where the existing ancient graveyard stands; Bord is the site of the old change-house beside a small modern merchant's shop; and Froskans stood across the river near the present Parish Church.

From Kinlochewe a very old and interesting right-of-way goes north-east to the "Heights of Kinlochewe," then up the Gleann na Muice to an old ruined bothy, then over the Bealach na Croise by Loch an Nid and the head of Strath na Sheallag to Dundonnell. One mile south of Loch an Nid a branch track goes off east by Loch a' Bhraoin to Braemore and Ullapool. This, in reverse direction, was the route that Lord Loudon and Principal Forbes of Culloden with about eight hundred men took in their retreat from Dornoch to Skye in March 1746 to avoid being captured by Prince Charlie's troops. They came up Strath Oykell to Oykell Bridge, then turned down Glen Einig, Loch na Daimh, and by Rhidorroch to Loch Broom. That day they reached Kinlochewe, so it must have been by the route south through the hills that they travelled; thereafter they went by the Coulin Pass to Loch Carron and so to Skye. This is a very interesting sidelight on the use made of these cross-country routes two hundred years ago, and on horseback too! Loudon and Forbes undoubtedly would be riding, not to speak of many of the eight hundred men with them. *For an account of this episode consult "More Culloden Papers," Vol. 5, p. 47 and following.*

**Kinlochewe to Coulin and Strath Carron.**

Carrying on southwards by the Poolewe line of communication to the Lowlands, the route goes up the east bank of the Allt Ghairbh at Kinlochewe (a gateway on the main road just beside the Parish Church giving access to the track). At first for about a mile or so the path is fairly distinct, but when it begins to slope upwards over the north-west side of Carn Dhomhnuil Mhic a' Ghobha it fades away in parts, going over rough and boggy ground. It becomes clearer and better nearing Torran-cuilinn. Here you cross the river by a foot-bridge and reach the "private" motor road which has been constructed along the line of the old right-of-way. It is now good going across the Easan Dorcha stone bridge made by the late Lord Leeds when the Dingwall and Skye railway came into being, and on over the Coulin Pass to Achnashellach Station. Before the days of the railway the drove road descended steeply from the Pass to Craig, the old inn and stance. Near where the Easan Dorcha Bridge now stands the path in the old days divided; one branch going north by Torran-cuilinn to Kinlochewe, the other by the south-west side of Loch Clair and Loch Bharranch to Torridon. This path went through the private policies of Coulin Lodge, which meant a certain amount of disturbance and unpleasantness. Accordingly, some years ago the Scottish Rights-of-Way Society took the matter up, and an arrangement was made whereby wayleave was granted from Torran-cuilinn along the north side of Loch Coulin and Loch Clair to the main road in Glen Torridon. By this arrangement the private policies of Coulin Lodge are left undisturbed and the public are given a clear route, the scenic qualities of which are unsurpassed. In this connection let me advise all pedestrians going to Kinlochewe from Torran-cuilinn to take the path by Loch Coulin and Loch Clair to the Glen Torridon road, thence along it to Kinlochewe. Avoid the old route by Carn Dhomhnuil Mhic a' Ghobha, which, although it may be



June 1905

LOCH MONAR (looking west)

*A. E. Robertson*

Lurg Mhòr, Bidean a' Choire Sheasbaich and the Bealach an Sgoltaidh to left;  
Bidean an Eòin Deirg, the sharp peak in centre; Maoile Lunndaich to right.

a little shorter, is a very fatiguing route. Contrariwise, when going from Kinlochewe to Torran-cuilinn I strongly advise taking the Glen Torridon road to Loch Clair, and thence by the good path along the north side of Loch Coulin. It is one of the most beautiful walks in the Highlands. It is interesting to note that James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, explored this region in 1803, and he describes his experiences in a series of letters to Sir Walter Scott. They were reprinted in a small volume entitled "A Tour in the Highlands in 1803," by Alex. Gardner, Paisley, 1888, and are well worth perusal. He had walked from Lochaber by Glen Garry, Loch Duich, and Strath Carron. He reached Craig expecting to be put up for the night, but he could only get whisky. The master and mistress were away, leaving girls in charge who had no English. As Hogg had no Gaelic the situation became perplexing and difficult, and it ended in Hogg taking the Coulin route, late in the day, and reaching Kinlochewe very hungry and tired. His whole account of his travels is very vivid and interesting and well worth reading.

### **Strath Carron to Monar, Cannich, Tomich, Fort Augustus.**

There is now no inn at Craig, but a very well-equipped and much-frequented "Youth Hostel" is near at Achnasshellach. The right-of-way crosses the railway here (gates and even side gates being provided for the passage of the droves); it then follows a very rough motor road which has been made along the line of the old track up the Allt a Chonais to Glenuaig Lodge. From the Lodge the way is clear into Strath Conon by the River Meig. By this way Principal Forbes of Culloden travelled from Skye to Inverness in April 1746 (vide "*More Culloden Papers*," Vol. 5, p. 64). The south-going route, however, breaks off a little to the west of Glenuaig Lodge and goes up the Crom-allt and down by the side of Loch Mhuilich to the west end of Loch Monar, thence east

along the loch side by Lub an Inbhir to East Monar. At Inchvuilt it crosses the River Farrar at a ford just above the present wooden bridge, and then takes the hillside through the wood, gradually rising to the Bealach between Meall an Odhar and An Soutar and down the burnside to Liatric in Glen Cannich. It was hereabout that Prince Charlie waited for the return of the messengers he had sent to Poolewe for tidings, 5th to 7th August 1746. It is now a good road down Glen Cannich to Strath Glass and up by Fasnakyle to Tomich. From Tomich it is only a track going up past the Guisachan farm-steading to the high ground above Hilton Cottage and up the Eas Socach along the east side of Loch na Beinn Baine, following hard ground in a winding course on the west side of Beinn Bhreac and Meall na Doire to Torgyle in Glen Moriston, close to the little R.C. Church. You then cross the Torgyle Bridge and go due south from the end of the bridge joining the old military road which is followed down to Fort Augustus. From Fort Augustus the route to the south climbs over the Corrieyairack to Laggan and Dalwhinnie—a well-used track which need not be described here. It may be recorded that Lord Tweedmouth and Mr Winans had a lawsuit in 1888 over the rights-of-way in Guisachan. The Court of Session declared the track from Tomich to Torgyle and from Tomich to Corrimony to be rights-of-way (vide "*General Collection of Session Papers*," 1888, 7th February to 10th March).

### **Glen Strath Farrar to Kintail.**

Now to describe some little-known routes branching off to the west of the Poolewe-Fort Augustus line of communication. There is a very important right-of-way and "coffin" road which runs westward from Broulin (Glen Strath Farrar) to Kintail. It starts from the head keeper's house at Inchvuilt and goes west up the Uisge Misgeach on what is now a well-made shooting path. About  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Inchvuilt it turns up to the Bealach

between Meallan Odhar and Beinn Dubh an Iaruinn. The path now fades away, but it is fair going north-west down to Aultfearn on the march burn near the shore of Loch Monar. The remains of a "watcher's" house (Cosac) built during Mr Winan's tenancy over fifty years ago are seen on a small plot of green ground. Close by—roughly 200 yards south—are the ruins of old Jamie MacRae's smuggling bothies. It was here that Jamie's father, Alastair Mor na Pait, was caught by the *Gaugers* and taken prisoner to Inverness. Jamie and his father were famous old smugglers and did a good trade in the district. The story is told that for a while the proprietor, Captain Stirling of Fairburn, just winked at Jamie's trade, but when the thing got too notorious he felt he had to do something about it. So he made a pact with Jamie that if he would stop his smuggling the laird would see to it that it would be made up to him in other ways. Jamie agreed and kept loyally to his bargain; he dismantled his bothies and buried his still. The Government offers a reward of £5 for information which will lead to the capture of a still. Jamie was aware of this, and, when down at Beaully Market some time after, let it be known to the excisemen that he might be able to help them to discover a still, if the reward was forthcoming. So up came a posse of excisemen to Patt, and Jamie solemnly led them to a peat hole and pulled up his own copper pot and received £5 for his pains! I well remember old Jamie and his sister Mary forty years ago. They lived in their old thatched croft near the Patt Lodge jetty on Loch Monar. They left Patt a few years before their death, at Kilmorack, and their remains were taken (they were Kintail people) via Glen Convinth, Glen Moriston, and Glen Shiel to Kintail Churchyard, but the coffins of their father and mother were carried from Patt to Kintail Churchyard via Coire nan Each, Carnach, Killilan, and boat on Loch Long. The late Kenneth McLellan, who was keeper at East Monar, once told me that he was one of the company who carried Jamie MacRae's mother's coffin from Patt to Kintail. When they reached Carnach they were met by the Loch

Alsh men, who relieved them of their long carry. "We were very tired when we got there," Kenneth remarked to me; "she was a big heavy woman too!"

From Patt the coffin road and right-of-way goes by the south side of An Gead Loch and up the Allt Coire nan Each, down by Loch Mhoicean, and on to Carnach. A mile and a half north-east of Carnach there is a "private" motor road down to Killilan, but foot passengers and droves and coffins use it as it is on the line of the old right-of-way. At Carnach the direct route to Kintail fords the river and goes south-west by the east shoulder of Meall Scouman, crossing the river at a point just above the Falls of Glomach, then over the Bealach na Sroine and down to Dorusduain.

A very touching little tale was told me some years ago by the head keeper of Broulin, Mr Peter Macdonald. His fellow-keeper was a man Campbell at Deanie in Glen Strath Farrar, and he lost his baby boy. Campbell was a Kintail man and the body of his wee boy had to be taken to Kintail. So he and Peter started off from Deanie by the route I have described by Inchvuilt, Patt, Coire Each, and Carnach. The story is now best told in Peter's own words: "We came to cross the river above the Falls of Glomach. I had never seen the falls before. I had the coffin under my arm, but I thought the wee fellow in it would not mind, and so I dropped down the hillside for a few hundred feet to where I could see the falls and 'we' had a good look and then went on our way to Kintail."

I expect it will be news to many people that Cromwell's General Monck in 1654 went westwards this way to overawe the clans. He commanded a force of horse and foot which included his own regiment, now the famous Coldstream Guards. This was a very daring enterprise in these days. He started from Perth and went by Aberfeldy to Kingussie, then across by Loch Laggan and Loch Lochy to Loch Quoich. From here he crossed over to Kintail by what must have been the Bealach Duibh Leac. Thereafter he went north by Glen Elchaig and Coire Each to the swampy ground near the Allt an Loin Fhiodha

—just south of Loch an Gobhlach. In his dispatch he calls this camp "Glen-teuch," which is his English attempt at the pronunciation of the original Gaelic! Here are his own words: "29th July—I came to Glen-teuch in the Shields of Kintail, the night was very tempestuous and blew down most of the tents. In all this march we saw only two women of the inhabitants and one man. The 30th—The Army march't from Glen-teuch to Brouling. The way for neere 5 miles soe boggie that about 100 baggage horses were left behinde and many other horses bogg'd or tir'd. Never any horse men (much less an armie) were observed to march that way" (vide "*Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*," Vol. 18, p. 70 and following).

### Attadale.

Attadale and North Kintail are little-known and seldom-traversed regions except by local sportsmen. But there are several old routes and rights-of-way through them, and it is right that they be here recorded.

Bendronaig Lodge is a sort of meeting-place for many of them. It should be noted that this "Lodge" is often only occupied in the shooting season so that pedestrians cannot count on rest and refreshment in spring or early summer. Make sure beforehand what the situation is.

From Bendronaig Lodge a right-of-way runs north by the east side of Loch an Laoigh through the Bealach Bhearnais and connects up west of Glenuaig Lodge with the routes to Strathconon. Also a right-of-way lies through the Bealach Sgoltaidh to Loch Monar. When the Dingwall and Skye Railway was first planned, it was up Glen Strath Farrar and through this Bealach that the line was to have been taken and not by Garve and Achnasheen.

There is a private road from Bendronaig Lodge westwards to Attadale House; the right-of-way path is by the Bealach Alltan Ruairidh with a branch

going north-west to Achintee, half a mile to the west of Lochan Fuara.

Eastwards from the Lodge a right-of-way goes by the north shore of Loch Calavie and An Gead Loch to Patt and southwards down the west bank of the River Ling to Killilan. A private motor road runs up the east bank of the Ling from Killilan to Coire Domhain and stops there. From Killilan also a right-of-way runs by Nonach Lodge to Attadale.

### **Glenelg to Glen Garry and Lochaber.**

In the old days sheep and cattle were ferried, or swam at slack tides, across Kylerhea from Skye to the mainland at Glenelg. What route did they then take to the southern markets? I feel pretty confident from personal acquaintance with the ground that it was by the Bealach Aoidhdailean (approximate pronunciation *oi-che-lun*). The Bernera Barracks were erected in 1722, and doubtless they were staffed and supplied by sea. I have examined an old military map in the British Museum (K. XLVIII. 62) by Daniel Paterson, dated 1746. In it a track is shown over the Mam Ratachan with the zigzags duly marked, proving that at that date there must have been a horse track to Kintail and up Glen Shiel. The road for wheeled traffic from Bernera to Fort Augustus was not made till 1775. When Boswell and Johnson passed through Glen Moriston on their way to Skye—31st August 1773—a party of soldiers were working on it.

The direct and easier route, however, for droves to the south would be by the Bealach Aoidhdailean to Kinloch Hourn and Glen Garry. This is a good track all the way, and it can be confidently recommended as a splendid cross-country walk.

There is a fair motor road through Glen Elg and up Glen Beag, which fades out as a road a mile or so beyond Balvraid. Thereafter it is a good horse track to Ruighe na Corpaich where you turn southwards up the Allt

Ghleann Aoidhdailean to the Bealach. Over the summit the track is not at all distinct, but it is all good hard ground, and the track again becomes clear down the Allt an Tomain Odhar and on past Lochan Torr a' Choit through a narrow pass and then steeply down to Kinloch Hourn. Here the public road is joined. In the old days the droves would go to Greenfield practically along the line of the present road, fording the River Garry just west of Loch Garry.

From Greenfield there is a right-of-way south by Fedden and down Glen Cia-aig to Loch Arkaig. But the most frequented route would be eastwards from Greenfield for 2 miles and then up the east bank of the Ladaidh Burn and through by the north slopes of Ben Tee to Kilfinnan. Here is a very old and formerly much-used graveyard. The Glengarry Chiefs are buried here, and burial or memorial cairns where the coffin was rested can be seen here and there along the route.

At Kilfinnan there was easy access to the farther shore of Loch Lochy. (Before the canal was made it was dry ground here.) The droves would then go south by Letterfinlay to Lochaber or, alternatively, up Glen Gloy to Brae Roy and on to join the Corrieyairack road at Meallgarbha. This is still known as "the soft road for the hogs." From Kilfinnan a good path runs along the west shore of Loch Lochy to the "Dark Mile" at Achnacarry. This was the path Prince Charlie took when making for safety and France, two days after Culloden—April 1746.

I must not forget to record here a very important branch north from Quoich Bridge up Glen Quoich to Alltbeithe and then north-west over the Bealach Duibh Leac and down to Glen Shiel.

This was the route General Monck and his army used in July 1654. It is a "coffin" road also. Cairns may be seen at the side of the track in Wester Glen Quoich. On the Bealach itself, where there is a massive county stone dyke, a wide slap in the dyke has been made to let the droves and horses through. The track down the Allt Mhalagain is pretty steep at first just below the summit

but perfectly feasible for cattle and horses, let alone sheep and "humans."

It was over this pass that Prince Charlie and his party, six in all, travelled in July 1746. They had managed to slip through the line of sentries posted to intercept them in Coire Hoo. Reaching Coire Sgoir-adail they spent the day in "a bit of hollow ground covered with long heather and branches of young birch bushes" in full view of the soldiers encamped at the head of Loch Hourn. Setting out that night they stumbled up Coire Sgoir-adail in pitch darkness and over the Bealach Duibh Leac down to Malagan in Glen Shiel, where they found shelter for the day behind a great boulder on the north bank of the river, about a mile east of Achnagart. This boulder is well known to the local inhabitants, and it is pointed out as "Prince Charlie's Stone."

Farther down Glen Garry there is an interesting old cut across from Glen Garry to Glen Moriston. It is a "coffin" road and used as such until recently.

The route starts from a place called Seanna-bhaile (old ground) about a mile west from Invergarry Bridge, and it goes more or less straight to Loch Lundie and on to near the top of Ceann a Mhaim where the coffin was rested, refreshments partaken of, and a cairn built. A number of the cairns are still seen.

The route then went over the east shoulder of the hill and down to Achlean in Glen Moriston. The graveyard is on the opposite side of the river, and there is a ford below the farmhouse quite close to the churchyard.

Here is a quaint tale told me by a Glen Moriston man. His uncle was staying at Invergarry when something went wrong with his leg and he had to have it amputated. His brother came across and carried the leg over Ceann a Mhaim and buried it in the old graveyard where they would all one day rest. This was forty-six years ago and shows what store the old Highlanders laid on their being buried, as far as possible, whole and intact, so that at the resurrection they would arise perfect and entire.

### **Kintail to Glen Cannich and Glen Affric.**

There are two well-used passes from Kintail to the east—one by Glen Cannich and the other by Glen Affric.

The right-of-way to Cannich starts from "The Iron Lodge" two miles north-east from Carnach in Glen Elchaig. It turns up east by a rough track and, passing Loch an Droma on the right, crosses the main watershed of the Atlantic and North Sea and goes on to Lungard, a keeper's cottage at present empty. In the old days the route kept along the north side of Loch Lungard past An Mam to the west end of Loch Mullardoch at Coire-na-Cuillan.

There are still traces of one or two ruined houses to be seen along this route, but it is never used now, as a far easier and better way is to cross the river below Lungard by ford. A good shooting path is now struck which takes you easily to Ben Ula Lodge and then down the motor road past Cosac to Invercannich in Strath Glass. This road is a public one from Strath Glass as far as Liatrie, but thereafter it is kept up by the proprietors, and motors are accordingly not allowed on it except by permission. This is usually readily given except in the shooting season. There is no restriction to pedestrians; it is a right-of-way through to Kintail.

The other well-known pass from west to east is via Glen Affric, starting from Morvich at the head of Loch Duich.

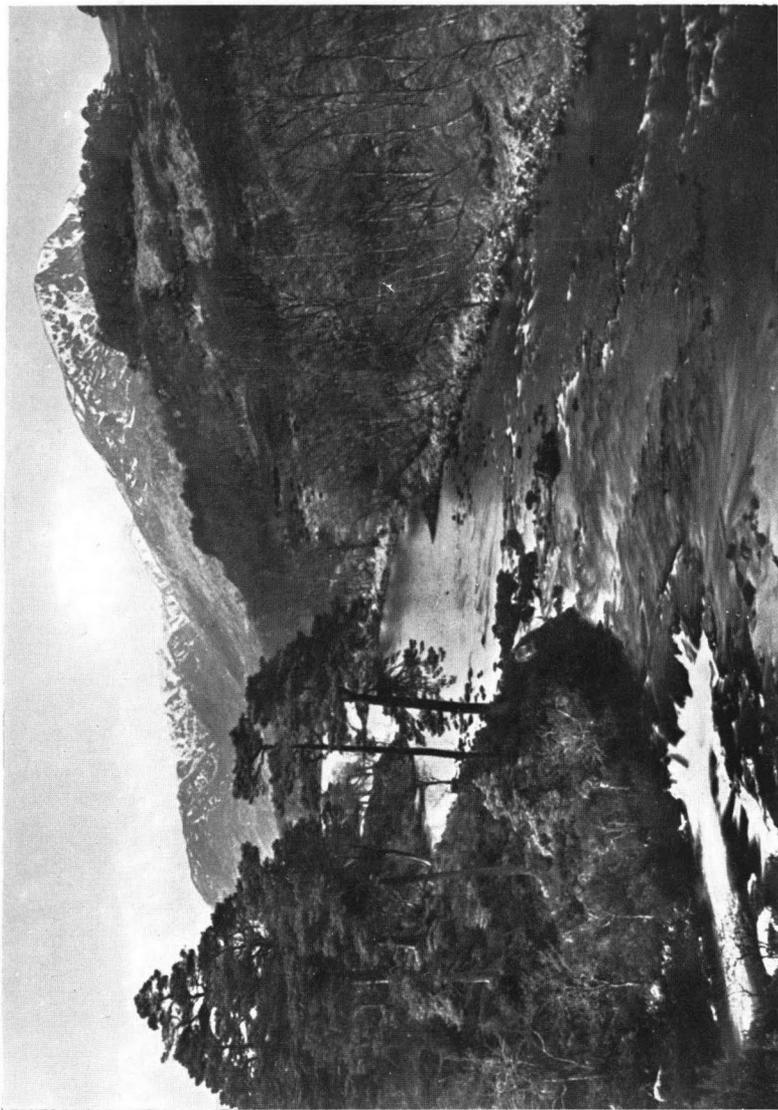
This pass is undoubtedly one of the most ancient and much-frequented routes from west to east. St Duthac, an Irish saint and missionary, away back in the eleventh century, must often have used this route, travelling from Ireland to his shrine and church at Tain in Easter Ross. Loch Duich is St Duthac's Loch. The Bealach an Sgairne is also locally known as the Cadha Dhuich, which in Gaelic means St Duthac's Pass. A fine well near the top on the east side is called Topar Dhuich, St Duthac's Well.

From Morvich you go east for three-quarters of a mile and there cross the River Croe to Innis a' Chro'. You are apt to lose the track about here, but if you keep on north up the side of the burn you are sure to hit it, and thereafter it becomes a perfectly clear path up Gleann Choinneachain and through the Bealach an Sgairne, then down past the south end of Loch a' Bhealaich to the county march. The track about here becomes rather indistinct, but just keep on down the north bank of the Allt Gleann Griomhaidh where the track again becomes quite good, and in another mile or so you are at Alltbeath, a hospitable keeper's house. From here it is plain and easy going down the north side of Loch Affric to Affric Lodge. Two miles farther on you reach the public road.

There is an alternative route from Morvich by the River Croe and Gleann Lichd and thence by the Allt Granda past Camban (now a deserted ruin) and so to Alltbeath. This route is perfectly feasible, but it is pretty rocky and steep going up the Allt Granda. The way over the Bealach an Sgairne is the historic one, and on the whole the easier.

The old and original route from Strath Glass to the west coast started from Tomich and went by Knockfin and across the slopes of Beinn nan Sparra, passing Loch an Eang, Loch a' Chlaidheimh, and Loch Pollan Buidhe on the left. It then crossed the Allt Garbh, where may be seen the ruins of an old change-house, and going west by what is now an excellent shooting path giving wonderful views to the north of Mam Sodhail and Loch Affric, it reached Athnamulloch. Here the River Affric was forded and Alltbeath reached some three miles farther on.

This route is now seldom used, the customary way now being through the Chisholm's Pass at Fasnakyle and along the north shore of Loch Benevian and the north shore of Loch Affric. The old route, as may be observed, kept on the south side of these lochs and joined the newer route beyond Athnamulloch at the west end of Loch Affric. There is a bit for about two miles west of Loch a' Chlaidheimh which is very rough going indeed, the old track, from disuse, being overgrown with rank old heather.



*Easter 1932*

THE EAST END OF LOCH AFFRIC

*A. E. Robertson*

The route on the north side is all very good going. But it is right that the Knockfin Pass should be known about and occasionally used.

Athnamulloch (the ford of the Mull men) was the scene of a skirmish in 1721. After the Rebellion of 1715 the Estates of Seaforth, The Chisholm, and Grant of Glenmoriston were forfeited to the Crown, Estate Commissioners being appointed to collect the rents on behalf of the Crown. Donald Murchison, Seaforth's Chamberlain, ignored the forfeiture and continued to collect the rents and send them to the Earl on the Continent. The Chisholm and the Laird of Glenmoriston also continued to obtain their old patrimonies.

In 1721 more effective measures were decided on. On 13th September two Ross-shire Whigs, William Ross of Easter Fearn, and his brother, Robert Ross, a Bailie of Tain, under the escort of Lieutenant John Allardyce and a company of the Royal Regiment of the North British Fusiliers started from Inverness, passed through Glen Urquhart, and reached Glen Moriston. Thereafter they proceeded to Strath Glass and then prepared to make their way to Kintail by Glen Affric. Patrick Grant, Glenmoriston's second son, a lad of eighteen, who had watched these proceedings at Invermoriston, took the short route to Kintail and informed Donald Murchison of their intention to visit Kintail. Donald, who had some military experience as an officer in the Jacobite Army in 1715, determined to oppose them, and with about three hundred men crossed the hills towards Strath Glass.

They met at Athnamulloch on 2nd October, and after an exchange of fire Murchison and Easter Fearn had a parley, with the result that the factors retraced their steps. In the skirmish, Easter Fearn and his son Walter and several others were wounded. Walter's injuries proved fatal, and his body was carried by the Fusiliers via Wester Knockfin to Beauly and buried in the old Priory (vide "*Gaelic Society of Inverness Transactions*," Vol. 19, p. 1 and following).

*The above account is largely quoted from Mr Mackay's paper.*

Affric Lodge is one of the most beautifully situated lodges in the Highlands. It was built by the first Lord Tweedmouth in 1870, and shortly thereafter a sort of gentleman's agreement was come to providing that, if the old right-of-way via Knockfin and Sparra and the south side of Loch Affric was left unfrequented in order to give privacy to that side of the forest, Lord Tweedmouth would construct a good path along the north side and give the public wayleave over it. This was done, and both the proprietor and the public got the benefit.

When traversing these paths in this, and indeed in all deer-forest ground in August and September, don't make detours up the hillside; it's not fair to the shooting tenants, for you may spoil their dearly bought sport for days. So long as you are on the path, the deer will just stand and look at you. The moment you leave the path they're off "over the hills and far away" and the sportsman may not see them again for weeks.

I remember the head keeper at Affric Lodge telling me how one year, just before the shooting began and before the then tenant, Lord Furness, had come north, he was watching and nursing a nice little parcel of good stags which had settled down in a corrie which runs up towards Mam Sodhail, just off the right-of-way path. One morning he was out and about the lodge when three walkers came up and proceeded along the right-of-way path. He spoke to them and gave them information as to their way to the west coast, when one of them said, "Oh, but we are going to branch off in 3 miles up the corrie and climb Mam Sodhail." "Well, gentlemen," said the keeper, "may I ask you not to do that. I'm expecting Lord Furness to-morrow for the shooting. I have some nice stags up that corrie which I want him to see and later on to have a shot at. If you go up there to-day they will vanish, and I'll be blamed for having no stags on my beat. If you'll come back again when we're not shooting I'll do everything I can to help you, and I'll give you a day's fishing on Loch Affric as well!" The walkers were, I am glad to say, decent fellows and saw his point, and they gave up their climb and stuck to the

path, and later on they came back and climbed their hill and had a splendid day's fishing in addition! This story, I think, shows the right way to go about the "trespassing" difficulty, alike from the keeper's and from the walker's point of view.

### **Lochaber to Rannoch.**

I will now describe the old drove roads in Lochaber going to Rannoch and Argyllshire. Wade's High Bridge over the River Spean was the rallying point.

It was made about 1727, and before that date the ford at Dalnabea just below Corriecoillie would be the crossing used. It was this ford that Montrose used in his historic pounce on Argyll's forces at Inverlochy.

The Marquis was at Aberchalder when Ian Lom, the Keppoch Bard, arrived hot-foot to give the news that Argyll with a force of 3,000 men was at Inverlochy threatening his rear. With characteristic swiftness Montrose determined to surprise him. Turning south up the Allt Chalder and over by the head-waters of the Turret into Brae Roy, he hurried down Glen Roy to Achavady, where he camped for the night. Next day he sped on through Bohontine and crossed the Spean at Dalnabea by a ford below Corriecoillie. He then took the backroad (to avoid observation) by Kylliehonnet, Lianachan, and Tomnafet. He came into the open at Torlundy and fell upon Argyll's outposts, who never dreamed that Montrose would have been able to bring armed forces that way. The next day—2nd February 1645—the Battle of Inverlochy was fought and Argyll and his forces routed, the Duke escaping by sea.

Starting from Fort William the great drove road southwards went by Spean Bridge and then by the south side of the River Spean, past Kylliehonnet and Corriecoillie and up the Larig between Cruach Innse and Stob Coire na Ceannain.

There is a road, just practicable for motors, which

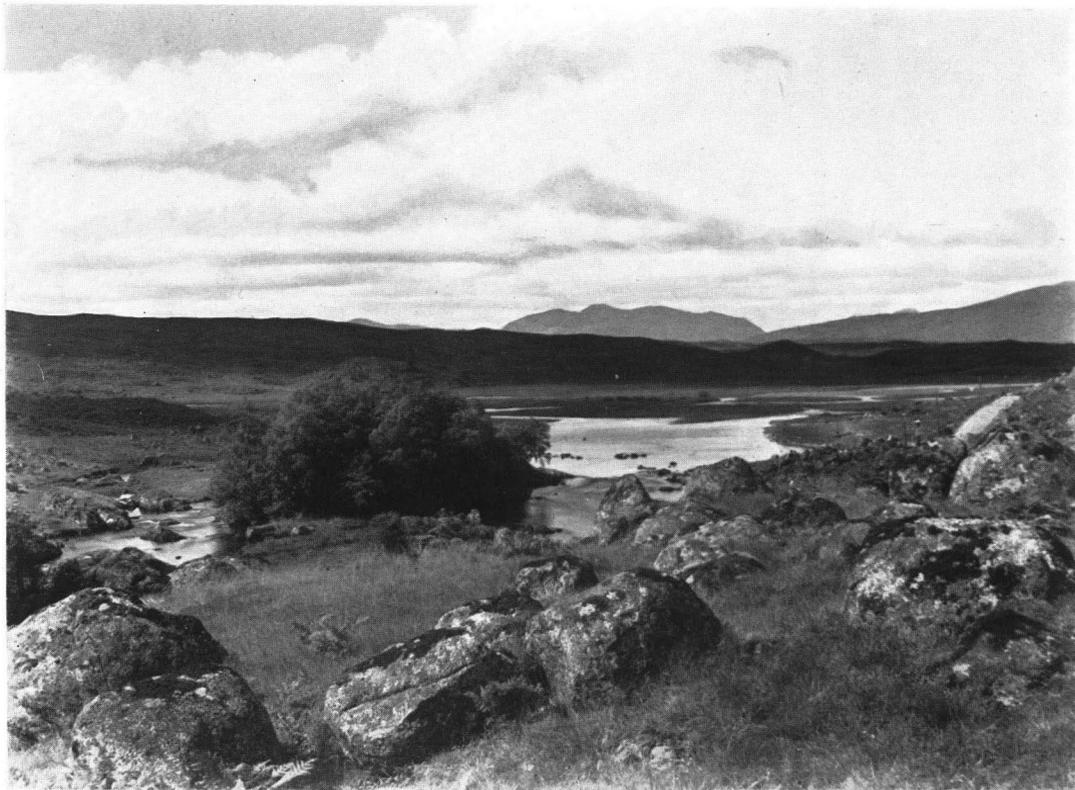
goes to a bothy about a mile beyond the summit of the pass. One has to be careful when on foot not to go as far as this bothy but to go through the gate in a sheep fence to the east, near the summit, and keep down the rough track on the south-west slopes of Stob Coire Easain. This takes one to Creaguaineach at the head of Loch Treig. From here the droves went south up Gleann Iolairean and down the Ciaran water to Ciaran, which was an old change-house and drove stance between Lochan Inbhir and Lochan-na-Salach Uidhre. These two lochs are now merged in the Kinlochleven Reservoir and Ciaran is under the waters. From Ciaran the droves went south by the Allt nam Fuaran and down to Kingshouse in Glencoe by the Allt Chailleach. At Kingshouse they struck the old military road which took them to Tyndrum and the south.

From Ciaran there was a branch eastwards up the Black Water and over the Bealach Triadan at Lochan a' Chlaidheimh where the three counties of Perth, Argyll, and Inverness meet; thereafter a junction would be made with the "Road to the Isles" near the ford on the Allt Eigheach. This route from Fort William was the one most frequently used; it was easy going and afforded grazing *en route*.

The alternative route was along the old military road by Blarmachfoldach to Kinlochleven and over the Devil's Staircase to Kingshouse. This was much rougher and steeper and not so suitable for droves as the Larig route. At Lairigmor on the military road there was a drove road south to Callert on Loch Leven. Here was a ferry which took you across to Invercoe. This ferry has long been discontinued.

From Loch Treig head there is a fine right-of-way through to Glen Nevis by Steall. Formerly it was a poor track, but now it is much clearer and better owing to the use made of it by members of the Youth Hostels' Association travelling between the Hostels of Loch Ossian and Glen Nevis.

From Loch Treig head eastwards the drove road went steeply up the pass, crossing the Allt Luib Ruairidh just



*June 1907*

THE MOOR OF RANNOCH

Loch Eigheach in the foreground; the Blackmount Hills in the distance

*A. E. Robertson*

close to the railway. Here may be seen the ruins of an old house, probably a change-house and stance. The track then went east, skirting the west shores of Loch Ossian, and then along by the south side of the loch rising over the slopes of Meall na Lice, and on to old Corroul Lodge. This is now a roofless ruin, having been demolished after the building of the new lodge at the east end of Loch Ossian in 1897. (The Fort William railway was opened in August 1894.) From the old lodge the route goes on south-east, a clear and distinct track, fording the Allt Eigheach and coming out on the main road half a mile east of Doire na-h Innis. This route just described is the "Road to the Isles" and is a well-established right-of-way.

From Doire na-h Innis the droves, if eastward bound, would go down the road past Loch Eigheach and Dunan to Camusericht, then along the north side of Loch Rannoch. The drove route north from Loch Rannoch strikes off at Annet and goes north to Duinish, then along the west shore of Loch Garry to Dalnaspidal.

From Rannoch Station, a mile west of Doire na-h Innis (which was an old stance in existence long before the railway was made), a right-of-way goes through by the north side of Loch Laidon to Kingshouse. The track, which is pretty rough and uncertain, keeps by the loch side for about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles, and then slopes upwards, and passing above Tigh na Cruaiche (an old shepherd's house now a ruin) goes on west to the Black Corries Lodge. Here a motor road is picked up and the way is plain to Kingshouse. Coming in the reverse direction one has to be careful not to hold to the good path east of the lodge too long. This path leads down into the moor. At or about the Allt Dubh Mor you will see some small cairns leading eastwards; forsake the path and follow the cairns as best you can. As an old keeper once said to me, "You're not to keep to the path here, it will take you clean off the road!"

### **Rannoch to Gorton and Argyllshire.**

From the Braes of Rannoch the great outgate to Argyllshire started at Invercomrie and went up the west side of the Allt Chomraidh to the Grund nan Darachan. A private motor road has been made substantially along the line of the old drove road from Invercomrie to the Grund, and this bit is "private" as far as motors are concerned, but a right-of-way for pedestrians and droves. From the Grund you go through the gate in the sheep fence and on south-west to the "Shielings," a cluster of ruined houses beside the Allt Beathe Beag at a height of about 1,200 feet. From here you follow through the heather, but quite easy going, south-west, keeping the same height till you come to "The Clach" or the Rocking Stone. It is a group of granite "Erratics" piled on top of each other, and forms a remarkable feature, like the Sphinx in the desert, and a well-known rendezvous. It is about half a mile south-east of the Allt an Fhail, 1,200 feet above sea-level.

It should be noted that there is now no track hereabouts. Until about thirty years ago thousands of sheep went through here in September from Argyllshire to the wintering in Morayshire and back again in spring, and in these days the hoofmarks made the way distinct. To-day, owing to motor transport, the sheep are hardly ever taken through the moor, and the heather and the grass are supreme, but it is a well-established right-of-way and a valuable cross-country route for experienced hill-walkers. From "The Clach" the way goes on keeping the same height and direction till you come to the march fence; here, at the point marked 1,228 feet on the O.S. map there is a gate to let the sheep and cattle through. Soon you reach the ruins of one or two shepherd's houses ("the caim hirsle").

Thereafter there is rather a boggy stretch to where the railway crosses the Water of Tulla. Under the railway and beside the water is a wide concrete passage, made to afford an easy passage for the beasts. The drove road

then goes on down the riverside to Gorton, a shepherd's house (occupied and hospitable). From here there is a cart track down to Barravurich and past Achallader Farm, which joins the new Glencoe road at Loch Tulla.

Beside the new, comfortable little hotel at Bridge of Orchy there is a shepherd's house. "The stance cottage" it is called, and the Achallader farmer is under obligation to allow night quarters for the droves and the men passing the stance.

From Bridge of Orchy the droves went down Glen Orchy to Loch Awe.

On the "Road to the Isles" between Dunan and Loch Eigheach there was a connection south joining up with the Invercomrie-Gorton track near Grund nan Darachan.

It crossed the River Gaur by a ford just above "Collie's Pool" below Loch Eigheach, and went up the west side of Gleann Duibhe to the Grund.

The "soldiers' trenches" beside the railway some 3 miles west of the Grund are not trenches in the strict sense at all. They are an attempt at land reclamation on the part of Ensign James Small, the Government factor of the forfeited estate of Strowan Robertson. In 1763-64 he caused five great drains to be cut by soldier labour near where the Rannoch folk had their summer shielings, in an endeavour to sweeten up the ground, in the hope that crops might be made to grow there, but the experiment was not a success. These abandoned "lazy beds" were for long an object of speculation, but I chanced on the explanation a few years ago (vide *Scottish History Society*, "*Forfeited Estate Papers*," p. 236).

The pass leading south into Glen Lyon from Gorton was in the old days a very important and much-used route. Caterans and raiders, drovers and packmen, Prince Charlie's men and the Hanoverian troops, all passed to and fro through this defile. The route struck off the Invercomrie-Gorton passage at "the caim hirsell" and went south to the Allt Learg Mhearan and down to Invermeran in Glen Lyon—easy ground and good

going if you keep up on the hillside a little, avoiding the boggy flats. It crossed the River Lyon at a ford at Lubroch 3 miles down from Invermeran, then south up the Larig nan Lunn and down the Allt Truchill to Kenknock in Glen Lochay and so to Killin. This route is still used. There is a huge cairn at the summit of the Larig and guiding cairns here and there on the track.

It may be of interest to record that Thomas Telford, the great road and bridge maker, in 1810, put forward a proposal to the Commissioners for Highland Roads and Bridges that a road be constructed from Tulloch in Glen Spean to Killin. It was to cost £15,360; but the proposal was never carried out owing to "local" indifference. The road was to have started at Tulloch, held along the east shore of Loch Treig and up into the Moor of Rannoch at Corroul; it was then to have run south and, crossing the River Gaur just east of Loch Laidon, would have gone right through the moor, practically following the line of the West Highland Railway to Gorton, then through the pass to Invermeran in Glen Lyon, up into Glen Lochay by the Larig, and down Glen Lochay to Killin.

Had this proposal of Telford's been carried out it would have been a wonderful road, opening up the country seventy years before the railway did so (vide "*Fifth Report of the Commissioners for Roads and Bridges in the Highlands of Scotland.*" Printed April 1811. *All these Reports contain much valuable information to those who are interested in this subject*).

### **The Highland Military Patrols after 1745.**

After the Rising of 1745 the Highlands remained for several years in a very unsettled state and the Hanoverian Government took steps to control the situation. They established in various parts of the north a series of military posts to watch the Highlanders, that there should be no chance of their gathering together again, to put a stop to cattle raiding, and to enforce the Disarming Act which

forbade all carrying of arms and the wearing of the Highland dress.

In the north-west Highlands, the district which I have dealt with, there was a Captain's Command at Laggan Achadrom, between Loch Lochy and Loch Oich, and another at the west end of Loch Rannoch at Invercomrie (the shooting lodge there still bears the name of "The Barracks").

At Laggan Achadrom (the headquarters) there were a captain, a sergeant, a corporal, and ten men. There were ten outlying posts, each having a non-commissioned officer and five to eight men; also a moving patrol of a lieutenant, a sergeant, a corporal, and twenty men.

These posts were established at:—

1. The head of Glen Moriston.
2. Knockfin.
3. Strath Cluny.
4. Head of Glen Shiel.
5. On the Bealach between Loch Garry and Loch Quoich.
6. Garvamore in the Corrieyairack.
7. Leichroy at the head of Glen Roy.
8. Head of Glen Spean.
9. High Bridge.
10. Nine Mile Bridge (at foot of Glen Gloy).

As constant communication must have been kept up between these posts and their headquarters it meant that many of the routes described in this article must have been constantly used by the soldiers going to and fro with prisoners, information, and supplies.

Here is an extract of the patrolling officer's report:—

Places visited (from Laggan Achadrom).

June 6,	1749.	Station between Loch Garry and Quoich.
„ 7,	„	Glen Shiel.
„ 8,	„	Strath Cluny.
„ 8,	„	Head of Glen Moriston.
„ 9,	„	Knockfin.

June 9-10,	1749.	Fort Augustus.
„ 11,	„	Garvamore and Garvabeg.
„ 12,	„	Glen Spean.
„ 12,	„	Leichroy.
„ 12,	„	Nine Mile Bridge.
„ 12,	„	High Bridge.

Reading between the lines of the above itinerary the patrol travelled from Laggan Achadrom past Invergarry and up along the side of Loch Garry and Loch Quoich.

Turning north up Glen Quoich it must have crossed over the Bealach Duibh Leac and down into Glen Shiel, then up to Strath Cluny and down Glen Moriston. From Torgyle over by Loch na Beinn Baine to Knockfin (near Tomich); back by the same way and across to Fort Augustus; over the Corrieyairack to Garvamore and westwards to Glen Spean; up Glen Roy to Leichroy and then through to Glen Gloy and down to Nine Mile Bridge (still fresh and intact near Glen Fintaig Farm), down Wade's road to High Bridge and back by the same way to Laggan Achadrom.

The officer in charge of the moving patrol would almost certainly be on horseback, so the routes involved must in 1749 have been practicable for horses and not mainly foot tracks, which is interesting.

Another important centre was at Invercomrie, Loch Rannoch. Here were stationed a captain, a sergeant, a corporal, and eight men.

There were outlying posts, each having a non-commissioned officer and four to six men; also a moving patrol of a lieutenant, two sergeants, a corporal, and twenty-one men. These posts were established at:—

1. The head of Loch Leven.
2. The head of Glencoe.
3. Derrybeg (on the north side of the Tulla Water at Achallader).
4. The Bridge of Kinnachan (Tummel Bridge).
5. Dalnacardoch.
6. Inderchadden.
7. The head of Glen Lyon (Invermeran).

Here is a report in the actual words of the officer commanding, Captain Patten of General Guise's Regiment:—

" June 15, 1750. I visited all the Posts within my district from Invercomery by Slis Mine (*i.e.*, the north side of Loch Rannoch) and Laudakin (?) to Dalnacardock. From Dalnacardock across the Bridge of Innesour (Trinafour) to the Bridge of Kinnachan (Tummel Bridge). From Kinnachan through the wood along the River Tumble to Inderchadden. From Inderchadden by Cary in Slis Garrow (south side of Loch Rannoch) to Glen Lion head. From Glen Lion head by Golaviran (Gorton) to Derry Begg (Achallader). From Derry Begg by Loch Ball (Baa) and Glen Esky (Etive) to Glencoe head. From Glencoe head across the Ferry on Loch Leven (at Callert) and up to the head of the Lochs.

" From Loch Leven head by Loch Erach (Eigheach) across the Tickek-a-Doughe which divides Perth, Argyle, and Inverness-shire to Invercomery."

Here too, reading between the lines, we can picture the officer on horseback and his twenty-one weary men making their way from Invercomery down the north side of Loch Rannoch to Annet and then up and over by Loch Garry to Dalnacardoch; from Dalnacardoch they would come back by Wade's road to Tummel Bridge, then turning west they reached Inderchadden at Kinloch Rannoch. Their route would now be by the south side of Loch Rannoch past Carie to Dall and over the " Kirk Road " to Innerwick in Glen Lyon and up Glen Lyon to Invermeran; then through the Caim Pass to Gorton and down to Derrybeg over against Achallader. From Derrybeg they must have cut through to Loch Baa and the top of Glen Etive to Glencoe head. This post would probably be somewhere near Altnafeadh. Down Glencoe and across the ferry to Callert and up the north side of Loch Leven to its head and on to Ciaran. From Ciaran they would travel up the Black Water and join the " Road to the Isles," following it down past Loch Eigheach to Invercomrie.

A great trek, and this done in 1750! Even to-day it

would be some walk. But I imagine that in those far-off days the tracks across the moors would be even better than they are to-day. They would be more used then than now and this would make them harder, more distinct, and better going.

*For a partial rescript of these Military Reports consult Allardyce's "Historical Papers," Vol. 2, p. 513 and following. New Spalding Club, 1896. These Reports throw a vivid light on the condition of the Highlands after the Forty-five.*

### NIGHT UP THERE.

THE moon is down,  
 But leaves a glow  
 Of gold, diffused from yon broad cloud  
 Below the brightest star.  
 Now sleeps the mountain, every promontory,  
 Ravine and crag, and crest of drifted snow.

We labour still,  
 O'er an abyss  
 Benumbed, on the wan, stubborn ice  
 Forming our fragile steps,  
 And pause for utter weariness, to glance  
 From gloom above into the night below.

So black a depth!  
 The ridges close;  
 The cliff shuts out the very stars.  
 The snow runs hissing past.  
 The noise of the mad torrent in the vale  
 Is faint indeed—and how the dawn delays!

G. D. V.

**NIGHT UP THERE.****IV.—GLOW-WORMS AND SUMMER NIGHTS.****By Messrs T. M. Wedderburn and E. W. Hodge.****(1) Exploits of the Glow-worms.**

T. M. WEDDERBURN.

BEFORE I start this article it might be as well to explain the title. While I was at Cambridge a small and very select club was formed. Membership was limited to those who had involuntarily spent a night out on a mountain under winter conditions. I qualified for membership very early during my stay, and later I qualified again, so that in my last year I became President, and I and the other member used to have a Club dinner once a term at which guests were invited, the club trophies displayed, and toasts to Warm Beds and "The Medical Base" were solemnly drunk. All this tended to provide the only glamour for what is a most uncomfortable pastime and usually a confession of bad mountaineering. This can definitely be said of my two experiences.

As I am now away from home I can only give an account of these two nights from memory, so that dates and so forth must be omitted and times are only approximate.

After two terms at Cambridge I joined a party of five during the Easter Vacation, and we all went up to the Nevis Hut. It was a very cold March. All the rocks were well plastered with snow and ice, and there were grand cornices at the top of all the gullies which were very full of snow. We spent about two days doing gully climbs. I, being a complete novice, found them rather exciting but damnably cold. I remember standing in steps for half an hour while the leader showered me with chips of ice. That experience caused me to make a point of taking warm clothes and chocolate with me. Then, tiring of gullies, we looked to the rocks, and two of us set out to climb the N.E. Buttress while the others went to the Douglas Boulder. We started early and were on the climb

by 8 A.M. It was a fine day with a very cold wind, the sort of day on which your ice axe becomes sticky. The rocks were all covered with about an inch of hard ice, and, wherever it could lie, there was thick snow, with a crust which was just not hard enough to take our weight. We plodded on, moving mostly one at a time because of my inexperience and the icy conditions. All holds had to be cleared of snow and ice, and between outcrops of rock 1 to 2 feet of snow had to be cleared and steps cut. We simply went on and on, with only a pause for a quick lunch. At last it got darker and darker. The ice shone with a faint luminous green, but it became almost impossible to see where rock holds might be, and at about 7 P.M. we halted below a curtain of ice and decided to stay for the night. We had only about 200 feet of climbing left to be done, but could only move very slowly and with more risk than we cared to take. So we hollowed out seats and settled down for the night. It was still clear; but the wind had dropped and we put on our spare clothing, belayed ourselves securely, and sat with our feet in our rucksacks. Later in the night we discovered that, while doing this, my companion had untied himself and was not roped on at all. As food we had a little chocolate and a small tin of condensed milk. I don't think I've ever known anything taste better than that milk sucked laboriously through a hole in the tin made with the spike of a clasp-knife. To while away the time we sang. We sang hymns and psalms in harmony. I had been brought up in an Episcopalian school, so we desecrated the quiet of a Scottish night with "Hymns Ancient and Modern," the Psalms (not in metre), and the Canticles. Our plain-song rendering of the "Te Deum" was particularly inspiring. The moon came up behind Carn Mor Dearg and it was a beautiful night. Towards dawn we were rescued by the other three, who gave us a doubled rope from the top. I don't remember having been particularly cold, but I do remember that when we got going my sense of balance seemed to have gone completely, and on level ground I reeled to and fro and staggered like a drunken man.

My second experience was almost a year later at New Year. A party of us went up to Kingshouse in Glencoe to bring in the New Year with proper spirit. The party was not a climbing one, but to get a real appetite and thirst for the more serious objects of the holiday most members went walks during the day. We had one young R.A.M.C. doctor in the party, who was later to establish a most efficient "medical base" in the hotel, and the rest were drawn from all walks of life, but all with the one object in view—to have an enjoyable New Year. On New Year's Eve two of us, who had done some climbing before and could both lead so-called "difficult" climbs fairly easily, decided to do a climb, and a third man who had done a little climbing wanted to join us. So, in a light-hearted fashion, we started out late in the day to climb the Crowberry Direct. I think all of us were in rather bad training and the trudge up to the climb made us fairly out of breath. However, we eventually got to the climb and started off in fine style. The sky was overcast but it was quite fair. There was very little ice about, and things went quite well till we got over the Direct Route. Then, when bringing up the second man, I knocked my glasses off with the rope. So, from there on we changed the rope and I went last. It was now getting late, so we resolved to hurry up to the top of the Tower and go down from there. Unfortunately this did not work out as we intended. We were all a little tired and our progress was very slow, so that when we got to the top of the Tower it was beginning to get dark. We had heard that there was a quick way down by the gully on our left, and we decided to try this. In deepening gloom we fumbled our way, only to be forced farther from the Crowberry by slippery slabs with water cascading down them. I, in particular, without glasses, spent most of my time ruining the seat of a good pair of climbing trousers. Meanwhile it got darker, and eventually became too black to see. I was now third on the rope, but we moved together most of the time. Ultimately we arrived on a grassy ledge with what appeared to be a bottomless precipice in front of us. I belayed and let the first man

down about 10 feet. He reported that he had doubtful holds and could see nothing further, so I brought him up and we settled down where we were for the night. Our perch was a grassy ledge of reasonable proportions, but rather damp; then mist came down to our level and sometimes below. It cannot have been a really cold night, but the effect was much worse than that of my night on Ben Nevis. Every half-hour or so we got up and stamped our feet, after which our teeth would chatter and our bodies would shake with quite uncontrollable shivers for several minutes. I have never experienced anything quite like these shivering fits. Our sole means of warmth was one small petrol cigarette-lighter with a wind-guard. This we lit from time to time and held in our hands. It lasted out the night and subsequently became a relic of the Glow-worms Club. The light was seen by the rest of our party below, who all swore that there were three lights spaced out on the hillside, and they concluded that we were strung out on a rock face, unable to move. Sure evidence of the presence of evil spirits on a New Year's Eve in Scottish hills! Here, again, we sang to pass the time, but now our songs were more in keeping with our situation. A version of "Lost in a Fog" was the favourite, while "On Yonder Rock Reclining" came fairly close. Most of the rest of the songs were unprintable, as was our language when dawn came. There we saw, 15 feet below us, a shallow scree gully, leading gently down to the valley, "Ladies' Gully" it is called. From 5 feet lower than the first man had gone we could walk off the mountain blindfold. Half-way down we met a search party coming up complete with blankets, ropes, and hot coffee, while on the road the advance "medical base" was established with some whisky. We were soon back at Kingshouse, and after a morning's sleep started our New Year celebrations just about fifteen hours late, but I believe we made up for the lateness in other ways.

Such is the account of two chapters in the Glow-worms' history. There remains but to draw the moral. Never be benighted. But, as all circumstances cannot always

be foreseen, the only way to guarantee that this will not happen is always to make a point of sleeping out on your climb. Which, as Euclid would say, is absurd.

## (2) Summer Nights.

E. W. HODGE.

*"In all our wanderings through the Highlands," says Christopher North, somewhere in old Blackwood, "toward night we have always found ourselves at home. What though no human dwelling was at hand? We cared not—for we could find a bedroom among the casual inclinations of rocks . . . many a cave we know of—cool by day and warm by night—where no man but ourselves ever slept, or ever will sleep, and sometimes on starting a deer at evening in a thicket, we have lain down in her lair."* How far such ambrosial nights-out were habitual and how far fanciful the students of Wilson, if nowadays there are any such, may judge. Yet he, more than any man of his own time, harnessed equally the physical and the poetic faculties in the enjoyment of Nature, and thus showed the way to those who followed.

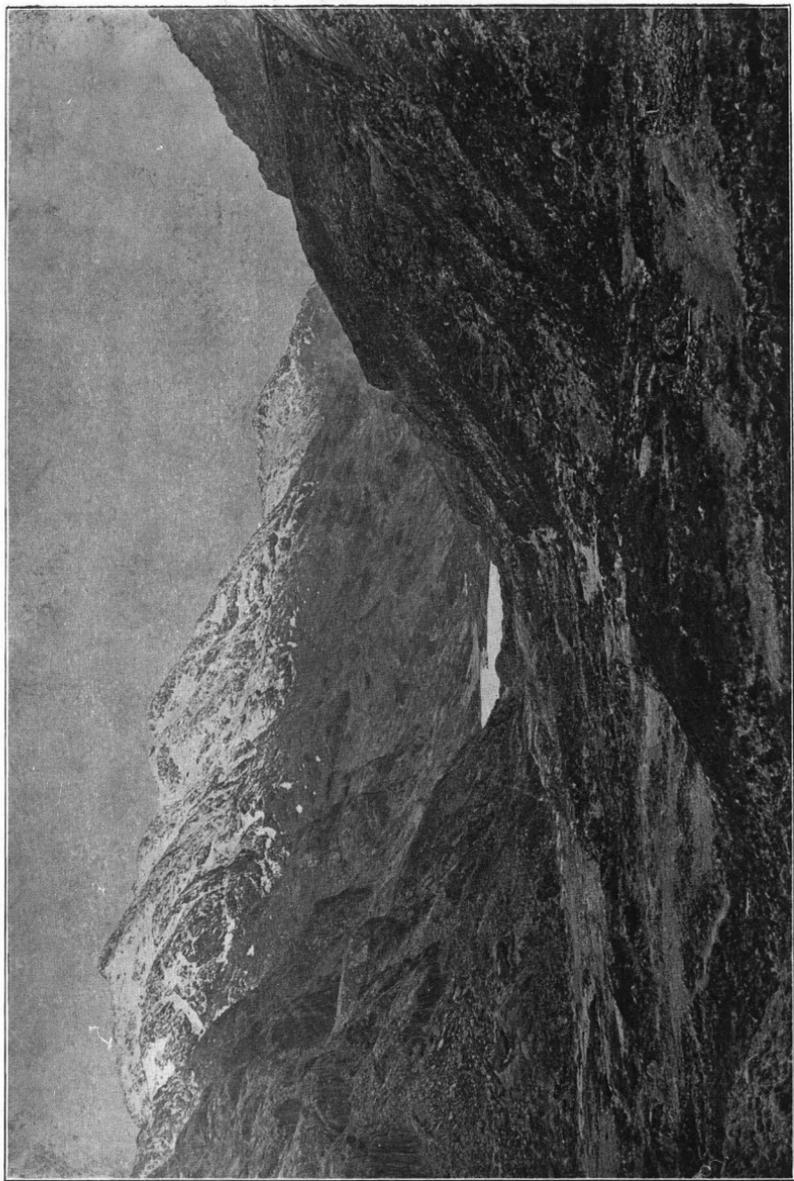
Although less heroic than some of the wintry *Nights Up There* described in recent issues, Christopher's conception is by no means uninspiring, and, as compared with them it stands for the difference between winter and summer on the hills. In winter one is an armed intruder, never off guard. But in summer one may almost make free as a humble denizen of the wild. Whilst yielding to no one in my preference for the winter, it is with the summer I deal here. The man who, on his mountain excursions, can refuse to be a slave to timetable, to food, to fatigue, or to unnecessary planning, is free to gain an intimacy with Nature otherwise denied. All nights-out, however, do not yield this reward. Some night excursions in summer have been as much dominated by the artificial standards of the clock and the map as if I had been merely peak-bagging by day. In particular, we climbed many hills by night from our yacht, in order to lose nothing of precious fortnights the days of which

were bespoken for travel by sea to the next objective. But the incidental atmospheric beauties of the night-time, and of the time that is neither night nor day, in themselves fully rewarded us. Thus it is mainly at dawn, I suppose, that one is likely to see from Ben More of Mull the peaks of Skye and Nevis through the clear, still, upper air, standing as islands above the unbroken sea of cloud, whose dense waves were lapping round our very feet.

Happiest of all my night excursions was the ascent of Sgùrr na Cíche from Kinlochnevis. As usual, we were already tired and behind with our plans, and we set out late on a very hot afternoon. The trackless scramble up the steep nose straight from the loch needed all the determination of one of us at least. But, as always, there came the blessed moment when the satisfaction of having got well up outweighed the recent agony of getting there. The great masses of *Silene acaulis* on the western exposure of the hill gave off a strong scent of honey in the evening heat as we scrambled the last steep thousand feet up staircases of clear pink felspar, with sheets of pure mica several inches across. At 8 P.M., headache forgotten, we sat in a shallow depression on the peak's narrow top, as in an eyrie, and looked the level sun in the eye. Gem-like rock-pools twinkled through the haze, right on the crest of the neighbouring ridges. Very leisurely, in the half-darkness of summer, we made our way along to Sgùrr nan Coireachan,\* stumbling over the sleeping ptarmigan. We thought of the fugitive Prince who on a summer night nearly two hundred years before had crossed this ridge northwards into Coire nan Gall on one of his numerous and rather wonderful night journeys as he tried to break through the Hanoverian cordon to the east. As, somnambulistically, we stumbled homeward along Màm na Cloich' Airde, the ghostly gleam of the lochans divided our senses with the stony surprises of the supposed track. When at last the darkness of the ravine forced a couple of hours' halt, the slight chill merely

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\* For heights of tops on this ridge see *S.M.C.J.*, Vol. 21, p. 289.



May 1906

MAM NA CLOICH' AIRDE

A. E. Robertson

served to emphasise the solitude. It was half-past two as we descended past Sourlies and set all the dogs in the lonely cottage barking furiously. I do not suppose that, on the average, one party of strangers per month passes by here—and that those who come so rarely should pass like thieves in the night! By the time we were at the shore the northern horizon was ablaze with clear yellow light, no more than a few handsbreadths from where, the night before, the sun had sidled behind a hill. We finished our round by wading several hundred yards across a tidal arm of the loch, and returned once more from the midnight peace of the mountains to the feverish round of housework, gymnastics, and calculation which makes up life afloat.

An attempt to repeat such experiences on the same June evening in the following year on the neighbouring Meall Buidhe was not so successful. Immobilised by darkness at about 1,800 feet in the drizzling rain, I enjoyed the sensations so familiar to bivouackers, of pretending to oneself to be asleep, whilst really only paralysed by chilly discomfort and boredom. A fine, grim vermilion dawn somewhat belatedly greeted me, but very soon afterwards the rainy mist descended on all the hills. I went on to what I supposed to be the summit, only to learn on descending that the real top was a couple of hundred yards farther on.

A night much more in the spirit of the passage quoted from Wilson was one in late September in Fisherfield Forest. We had been camping near the head of Loch Maree. The weather was very close, and we were slothful in getting on the move; this in itself often for me the best of all signs for a long and productive day. Programmes I hate, and my ideal is that of a party so well-matched in judgment, so ready and so flexible, that they should be able to set out on the most difficult expeditions in intuitive agreement, without even mention of the ultimate objective of which circumstances might or might not permit the attainment.

In a holiday whose main purpose was photography, an excursion on such a day was wasted, but the heavy weather

made us restless. With some difficulty we forded the Kinlochewe river and sauntered up Bianasdail. At Lochan Fada, under a sallow sky, the hillsides were leaden coloured and totally lacking in modelling—but tantalisingly far away showed up A'Mhaighdean, one of the peak collector's rarest.\* "Let's stroll along a bit farther to see it better," said we, well knowing that with its less interesting side turned towards us, nothing could really help which did not involve a long day. With no food and no spare clothing we would put ourselves in Fortune's hands. She would not fail to reward us with a bright memory, even though she might add some slight hardship to give it pungency.

Six o'clock accordingly found us on the summit. Spread before us in striking contrast were the pale, rounded gneiss slabs, the dark red towers of the sandstone, like Egyptian temples, the immense screes and plateaux of the quartzite thinly sprinkled with moss or yellow-withered grass respectively, and, in all gradations of height and size, shade and brightness, into the hazy evening, the many lonely pools and lochs. We looked to the great, bare western slopes of An Teallach culminating in their machicolations, the truncated cone of Ruadh Stac Mòr, the queer, deep, squarish basin-levels of the sandstone, each with its loch, and the whole system of little-trodden moors and valleys. As one lay face down, almost on the summit, nothing met the eye on the north-west till the valley floor 2,000 feet below. We were evidently on the edge of a very great cliff. We had as little time as I now have to describe the view, but we felt our day and our night well spent.

Pride forbade us to ask for shelter at Carnmore, on the domains of which we were probably trespassing, so we passed over the curious causeway between Dubh-loch and Fionn-loch, with the intention of going on walking

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\* By a curious coincidence of two lower but sharp peaks 4 and 8 miles west, I was able to fix its height very narrowly at 3,070 to 3,080 feet. By comparative angle with Fionnbheinn Tarsuinn is a couple of score feet lower.

through the night until we reached Poolewe. Our reckoning was that Carnmore *must* be, as it appeared to be from the map, connected by some sort of track with Kernsary. Also, we believed that it could not be totally dark on an open moor with a great loch near by, and some prospect of moonlight, and that one's feet, if one trusted them, were as good guides as one's eyes. The path began excellently, but our first disappointment came when its main branch turned off to Letterewe. Our own route, though still a made path, had an unaccountably disused look. Blundering on in the almost-darkness, I was puzzled to find that it seemed to run right into a pool of water. Peering before me, I discerned about a yard away a half-sunken boat. We consulted the map. It turned out that we had only seven or eight matches between us. These were of course soon gone, and we little the wiser. It did appear, however, that we ought to have forked left a couple of hundred yards back. There was, however, no other path visible there. By the time we had discussed the matter (about 9 o'clock) one could barely see one's own hand against the sky. We filled a small peat-hag with heather, and lay down comfortably enough, pulling more heather over us and trying rather vainly to keep it in place by a light oilskin cycling cape which was the only top garment I had besides a thin shirt. We slept well (but for being awakened every hour or so by the cold) until soon after 6, when it was light enough to go on. In spite of its being shown on the "Popular" One-inch Ordnance Map, there certainly was no through track between Carnmore and Kernsary; this being a rare occasion when I have found this map (usually so reliable as regards any physically existing track, however unimportant) to fail.

THE END.

**SINCE WAR BEGAN.****By Campbell R. Steven.**

THE full moon was climbing steeply above the ridge, flooding the slopes behind Glenbrittle House. Everywhere it was utterly still: behind the black pool of Coire Lagain "there was no sound between those breathless hills"; below slept the silvered waters of Loch Brittle.

Unspeaking and only half awake, we had emerged on to the familiar path and begun the slow plod upwards across the moor to Gars-bheinn. The war was barely a month old, and this, our last day in Skye, was to be a fitting farewell to the Ridge. Probably, we imagined, it was in the nature of a farewell for some time to come to climbing of any kind, and this was why, as we walked up into the moonlight, the flickering banners of the northern lights "seemed the faint ghosts of summers long since gone."

Our attempt on the Ridge was a failure, but as a holiday climax it was an unqualified success. The moon had paled by the time we reached the cairn of Sgùrr nan Eag, and as we circled Coir a'Ghrunnda the sun gained in strength behind the mainland hills. The wind sought us out in the cleft of the Thearlaich-Dubh gap, battered us on Alasdair and Mhic Coinnich and Dearg, but by the time we had reached Banachdich we were much more troubled by thirst and the midday heat. Our effort was almost over; somewhere beyond Ghreadaidh we gave up the contest, well content to leave our object unattained—till after the war.

But the assumption that mountaineering was finished for the duration soon proved to be an agreeably big mistake. Within eighteen months a beneficent War Office had made possible expeditions in four different countries, and if Ushba and Mount Kenya were, by some oversight, not included in this programme, at least the opportunity should yet occur for a scramble on the Forum or a girdle traverse of the Brandenburger Tor.

The end of December 1939 found us on the Cobbler *en route* for the New Year Meet. The programme—a north-south traverse—was made more interesting by the snow conditions, which called for care, especially on the descent of Jean. Nevertheless we were decidedly surprised on the following two days to find how much more Alpine was the appearance of the hills farther north. Beinn Achaladair and Beinn Creachan, visited for the first time, provided a sunny welcome and superb views, only to be outdone, or at any rate equalled, by the south-east ridge of Beinn Laoigh on New Year's Day.

March, however, was the outstanding month of 1940, beginning with the French Alps and ending with the Easter Meet at Fort William. Chamonix's contribution was a week of perfect weather, sun-warmed days and freezing, starlit nights. Even a bed on the draughty wooden floor of the "Boby Dancing" night club and the morning ordeal of iced shaving water did nothing to impair the spell cast by Mont Blanc and the Aiguilles. Certainly rifle inspection and pay parade seemed rather out of place in the shadow of the Grépon, but other less trivial incidents were anything but a mockery. One was an expedition to the Col de Voza with several hours' ski-running on spitefully iced snow, another a visit to the superb 8,000-foot view-point of the Brévent. If we were denied the actual pleasures of any major achievements, at least we were able to work out at agreeably close quarters an infinity of might-have-beens.

Ten days' leave, conveniently including Easter, formed the wages of this virtue. It was thus possible to record attendance at the Fort William Meet, though our two expeditions—one from Clachaig, the other from Kinlochleven—no more than touched the fringe. The first was directed to the west face of Aonach Dubh. Often before the war, when passing to or from Coire nam Beith, halts had been gladly called to look up at the intricate architecture of buttress and gully, and though other plans on Bidean had always claimed precedence, an exploratory visit had merely been a pleasure deferred. The buttress we chose—No. 2—was no disappointment, suiting alike

our training and our mood, and we climbed quickly from terrace to terrace. There was a delight in the handling of these rocks which the showers that beset us failed to chill, and it was almost a disappointment to tread the easier ridge of Stob Coire nan Lochan.

The weather was even more capricious two days later on the Mamores, when we made the round of Na Grua-gaichean, Stob Choire a'Chairn, and Am Bodach, several heavy sleet-squalls storming the ridges, blanketing the tops and driving us at times to unwonted haste. But the lulls between—and fortunately they were many—made adequate compensation with sunlit views down Loch Leven and north to the deeper snows of Nevis.

Only one more Scottish expedition was possible in 1940—a visit to the summit climbs of Beinn Narnain. It was a grey, cold April day, but nevertheless the rocks gave so much sport that only the clock cut short our ups and downs on the Spearhead and in the less agreeable recesses of the Jamblock Chimney.

At the end of July came a more unexpected change of scene, this time to Iceland. Prospects looked rosy, and plans, helped out by a roll of impressively complex maps, became more than ambitious. It was not long, however, before the bubbles were punctured. Several factors contributed to this: lack of climbing companions, of time, of tricounis, and above all of attractive routes, though expeditions to some seven different summits, with unpronounceable and probably censorable names, were made from three separate centres, and each provided its share of interest and enjoyment. At times one imagined oneself on a top in the Cairngorms, above the endless folds of corrie and glen; at others some tower on a ridge became momentarily the gendarme of Sgùrr nan Gilleann; or maybe a long fjord, golden in the sunset, would suggest the more familiar splendours of Loch Awe or Loch Linnhé. It was all exactly like some new corner of Scotland, though finer features were sought for in vain. Only once, on a solitary midnight expedition, when the northern lights threw a great white arc across the zenith and splashed the rest of the sky with a confusion of

coloured beauty, did it seem that the Arctic had put on a show more exclusively its own.

There was no opportunity to return to the hills of Britain until February 1941, when Arrochar once again provided a chance few hours. From the rim of the corrie the Cobbler looked to be in superlative condition, with ledges and gullies dazzling white, every ridge and rib clearly defined in the sunshine. But disenchantment awaited us higher up. The snow was as powdery as wind-dried sand, and footholds were anything but reassuring in the frostbound turf beneath. Our plan had been a rapid ascent of Centre Gully, but in the end we failed to climb it at all and had to choose an easier though still awkward route to the summit rock. By this time the sun had become hidden and an unfriendly wind soon froze damp gloves solid. We therefore trod the window ledge at speed, and after a quick look-round through the gathering mists, made for the shelter of lower levels.

Derbyshire in March offered many attractive possibilities, with old acquaintances to be renewed and new territory to be explored. Unfortunately Laddow was out of range, and plans for a day on The Peak had likewise to be abandoned owing to transport difficulties, but the Black Rocks near Cromford and Rainster Rocks above Brassington provided excellent compensation.

The gritstone problems of the Black Rocks were not new; in 1937 we had wrestled with them after a night encamped by the roadside copse. That had been a warm day of early summer, heralded by an unforgettable "dawn chorus," but on our two afternoon visits this year the rocks were wind-whipped and greasy and decidedly detrimental to parade-ground turnout. There was, however, no lack of entertainment in the gullies right and left of the Cioch-like Promontory, on the moderate 25 feet of South Gully, and finally on the pillar-box slab and polished knife-edge of Stonnis Buttress, which the Derbyshire gymnasts concede is "very difficult." Details of other less distinctive climbs merge hazily in the picture of ultimate grime and wear-

ness, and memory dwells more accurately on the size and stimulus of two cottage teas.

The weather was even less considerate at Rainster, with driving sleet and a cutting north wind. The rocks, however, face south, so that we were little disturbed on the outcrops of honeycombed dolomite. The Long Climb, with its many variations, chiefly occupied our attention, though Smooth Chimney and its airy traverse finish provided one interesting interlude.

Finally, my war-time diary records a memorable walk over "the little hills" on the east side of Loch Long. We left the train at Glen Douglas Station and made quickly over the moor to the slopes of Doune Hill. It was a typical April day, with May sunshine and a March wind. Behind the Cobbler, Beinn Ime was lavishly decked with snow, though still no match for the whiteness of Ben More and Stobinian, tantalisingly indicative of the grand conditions farther north and east. Not that our own route was devoid of interest, for beyond Doune Hill and on the descent of Cruach an t'Sithein, our second top, we had several amusing if damp glissades. We passed the head of Glen Luss and, cutting over the shoulder of Beinn Mhanaich, wound our way down to Whistlefield.

And there the diary ends. And to-morrow? If to-morrow the War Office decree is for the sands of Syria or merely Salisbury Plain, there can be no good grounds for complaint.

## A BEN NEVIS CONSTELLATION OF CLIMBS.

By J. H. B. Bell.

### Historical.

FOR me the story begins with the Easter Meet of 1925 when Frank Smythe, who was my guest, suggested that something ought to be done about the two formidable unclimbed gullies running up to the summit plateau of Ben Nevis along the flanks of the Observatory Ridge and Buttress respectively. The day we nearly climbed the Tower Ridge there was an incipient thaw and we heard the roar and swish of avalanches pouring down these rifts, which was not very encouraging. In early June 1932 Smythe was again with me on Ben Nevis but the weather was poor. So there was much talk of a revised project of attempting a direct ascent from the base of Zero Gully so as to reach the small snowfield which lingered at that time in the centre of the face (now called the Basin). It seemed quite practicable to finish the climb above the Basin. No serious attempt was then made, but I prospected the start of the proposed route. The rocks were streaming with water, yet I felt convinced that a determined attack under favourable conditions would have a good chance of success.

Two years went by, and in September 1934 I was fated to be a spectator when the first route was made up this face. Sandy Wedderburn was entertaining two expert Jugo-Slav climbers at the C.I.C. Hut and he approached me for advice. They were in the first flight of rock-climbers, he said, and none of the known routes were difficult enough to give them a due impression of the majesty of the Ben. So I passed on the new idea, and that excellent climb, now known as the Slav route, was discovered (see *Journal*, Vol. 20, p. 233). The main difficulties were encountered in the first 350 feet or so and two pitons were used. The conditions were very bad, however, and a frightful rainstorm swept over the party as it was strung out over the main difficulty. The upper

part of the climb, parallel and fairly close to Zero Gully, was not so difficult, for the party of three reached the summit almost as quickly as my guest and myself, who were moving fairly rapidly up the Observatory Ridge alongside.

The Slav route was not the 1932 project of Smythe and myself. It did not go anywhere near the Basin. Two things seemed clear enough. Fine, settled weather and dry rocks would be essential to success. Also, Wedderburn had told me that it did not seem practicable to attain the Basin from the lower part of Slav route. The next opportunity came to me early in July 1935, when I was accompanied by Miss Violet Roy of the Grampian Club. The conditions were perfect, so the direct route to the Basin and a somewhat less direct upper continuation (we had to traverse to the right to avoid an overhang) to the crest of the N.E. Buttress were duly accomplished. The climb was very difficult, neither nailed boots nor rubbers affording security on some of the pitches; so we adopted the stocking-sole technique, but we did not use any pitons (see *Journal*, Vol. 20, p. 408).

A further sidelight on the climbing possibilities of this face was afforded in early April 1936 when Colin Allan and I made a snow ascent of Zero Gully, except for the lower, icicle-bedecked portion where we were forced on to Slav route. It was evident that a moderately difficult, level traverse could be effected from this route to the Basin. No doubt Dr Graham Macphee, who repeated this climb a week later, came to the same conclusion, but the actual traverse was only made in July 1938 by A. C. D. Small, J. Wood, and A. Anderson (J.M.C.S.). They found it easy.

*Note.*—All the routes mentioned and those about to be discussed, along with their conspicuous features, can be clearly followed on the accompanying line drawing, which is a tracing of the photograph. Several of the upper ones are marked on the other photographs.

### **The Routes of Summer 1940.**

A period now supervened when this attractive face of sound rock and difficult situations was unaccountably

neglected. This is surprising, as the period was one of great and meritorious activity amongst the younger Scottish climbers, as is evidenced by the new routes on Rannoch Wall, Ravens Gully, Clachaig Gully, and many others. The face kept its secrets, for there was the unsatisfactory traverse to be straightened out on the Upper Basin route, the question of the direct ascent to the Basin from lower Slav route, and, best of all, the chance of making the longest climb on the face by working out a direct route from the Basin to the summit cairn of N.E. Buttress.

Two parties were at the C.I.C. Hut in the glorious weather of early June 1940. Bill Murray, D. Laidlaw, and Redman of the J.M.C.S. were there to make a second ascent of the Basin. I was with Capt. J. E. MacEwen, and we went up Slav route in order to photograph the others, which was done from the First Platform of Slav route just as Murray was poised at the foot of the great Slab Rib, the outstanding feature of the lower Basin climb. Actually Murray did not climb this, but led up the easier slabs on its left, and gained the top of the Rib by a rather nasty chimney. I myself prospected the direct ascent to the Basin from our platform as far as the severe crux, but MacEwen and I then continued up Slav route and entered the Basin by the level traverse. Then we all lunched together in the sunshine.

After lunch MacEwen and I ascended by the steep, narrow chimney at the back of the Basin, a moderately difficult ascent, very steep, but provided with ample holds. Above it there was little difficulty in reaching the top of the original Basin route: it is an easy way out. Meanwhile Redman ascended by the original route and belayed the others from above while they came up by a more difficult way. But they did traverse somewhat to the right, and the direct "Straight Left" climb was still unsolved.

The good weather persisted, and on the 14th June J. D. B. Wilson and I enjoyed our finest Scottish rock climb and made a direct new route from the Basin to the summit of the N.E. Buttress. We carried a surveying

aneroid with a  $4\frac{1}{2}$ -inch dial, a most reliable instrument, and followed the original route to the Basin. We left our boots below, carried rubbers (possibly a trifle worn), but stocking soles were the order of the day on all the major difficulties. They gave us a great sense of security on these smooth, steep slabs where there was nothing by way of a positive handhold, but only press-holds on gently rounded bulges. From the base of the rocks in Zero Gully there was 150 feet of easy climbing followed by 400 feet of difficulty to the Basin, although the last part of this is moderate. This took us two and three-quarter hours.

After lunch we ascended a moderate buttress for 120 feet to an easy terrace. Then the difficulties recommenced and continued for about 600 feet. The crux is at and just above a remarkable, prominent, steep slab overhung by a wall on the right. This main feature is well seen from the Hut and so is the second great slab. One follows an oblique, upward line to the left towards this double slab, which is about 200 feet in height. There is a short, bad traverse above it, some easier rocks, and then a final steep wall with knobs of quartzite for holds. Above the difficulty we gained the crest of the N.E. Buttress above the Mantrap and reached the cairn on the top of the Buttress after 215 feet of easier climbing. The upper part of the climb took us three and a half hours. We are both convinced that this "Long Climb" of 1,480 feet is the longest and finest route of sustained difficulty on the Ben.

In August 1940 I was able to spend a few days at the Hut along with George Dwyer, a splendid rock-climber and one who had previously found the value of stocking-sole technique on the newer climbs of Clogwyn Du'r-arddu in Wales. We were able to solve the two chief remaining problems of this face. On 4th August we straightened out the original route so as to make a direct line up the characteristic inclined rib of rock to the original finish. As seen from the Hut, the whole of this face from Slingsby's Chimney upwards to the right as far as Zero Gully is built up of a series of huge ribs of

rock, all inclined somewhat to the left. Most of these are impossibly undercut in their lower sections, so that it is very unlikely that another climb will be effected between Platforms Rib and the "Straight Left" Basin climb. This route goes, like the original, to the top of the great Slab Rib. Then it goes straight on up the main rib, with sustained but moderate difficulty, until one gains the left rocky rim of the Basin. It does not enter the Basin. We now proceeded up the crest of the rim until we encountered the overhang where the original route traverses to the right. Ours proceeded directly along a tenuous groove just on the left of the crest; then we negotiated a severe pitch, and broke through the difficulty by climbing up into a smooth scoop giving steep and direct access to the easier upper rocks. The holds are just sufficient. There was an excellent belay above, and we ran out 80 feet of rope.

The direct ascent to the Basin from the First Platform of Slav Route was effected a few days later. We climbed in boots to the crux, so far as I had prospected in June. There is little belay available, so Dwyer discarded boots and swarmed up an awkward, steeply inclined mantelshelf of smooth, rounded slabs on the right and progressed for about 30 or 40 feet to a positive anchorage and belay. Even in stockings and on the rope I found the first few feet very trying. It is about the limit of what can be done by faith and friction. Yet I suppose there was some truth in George's remark that socks grip best of all on wet slabs! It is strictly accurate so long as the cold does not numb the feet. An overhanging wall ahead now enjoined a short traverse to the right and this enabled us to break through upwards to the lower right-hand corner of the Basin.

We followed this up with a relatively easy traverse from the left rim of the Basin which emerged on the crest of the N.E. Buttress at the Second Platform. One descends a little from the rim and the route is quite obvious. If one is approaching the Basin by this traverse from the N.E. Buttress there are, however, one or two awkward places. As seen from a little higher on Observa-

tory Ridge the start of the traverse is at a conspicuous V notch. The route therefore names itself, especially at this present time when Europe is plastered with such symbols. It is an easy approach to the Basin, but its main interest and importance reside in the fact that it can be made the start of a complete Girdle Traverse of the cliffs of Ben Nevis and Carn Dearg, of which more anon.

### **The Naming of the Climbing Routes.**

From what has been said about the new and older routes on this great face of smooth, slabby ribs it is evident that we were faced with a difficult and vexatious problem in nomenclature. For instance, after Wilson and I had completed the Long Climb, many and various were the names proposed. At length Wilson suggested, "Oh well, let's call it the Fall of Paris climb," although neither of us knew on that perfect climbing day how unfortunately apposite was that casual suggestion. There was no hint of such a tragedy on those glorious cliffs. The discoveries of August and the crossing of various routes at the Basin made matters no easier. No geometrical, directional, or architectural terms were at all satisfactory. The Basin was a specially appropriate name, peculiarly so in late spring when it retained a lingering snowfield, but it was not a suitable basis for naming the other routes, which all formed part of a connected, harmonious system; a kind of constellation of climbs, in fact.

So it came about that a solitary mid-winter ramble on the lesser hills provided an unusual idea, which on closer consideration seemed more and more appropriate. Why not name the whole group of climbs from that oldest of the constellations, Orion? A comparison of the star map with the diagram of climbing routes which illustrates this article presents a striking similarity. From some closer point of view the resemblance must be even greater. There are, no doubt, distortions and discrepancies, but if only the principal stars are considered, the Greek letters

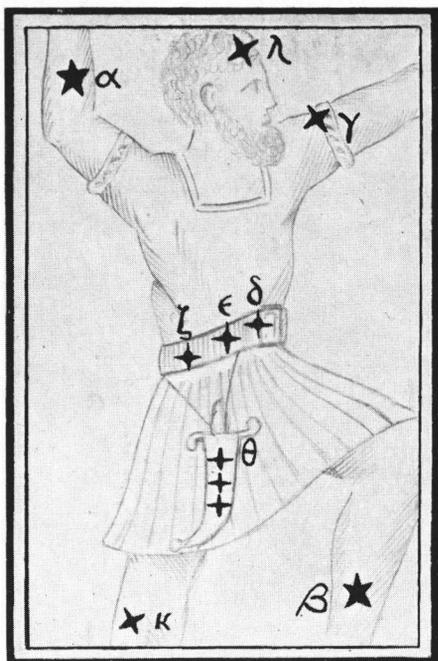


June 1940

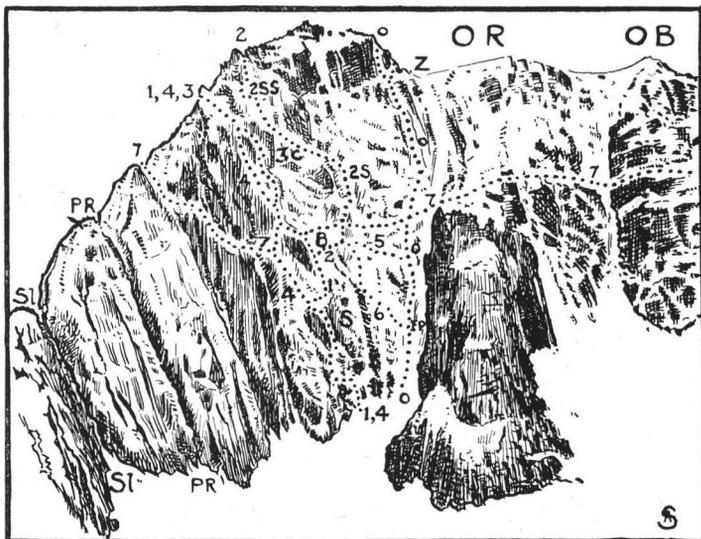
J. E. MacEwen

ALPHA ROUTE

(from First Platform, Slav Route. W. H. Murray is at the base of the great Slab Rib)



ORION



(Drawing by Alex. Small, J.M.C.S.)

BEN NEVIS: THE ORION CLIMBS

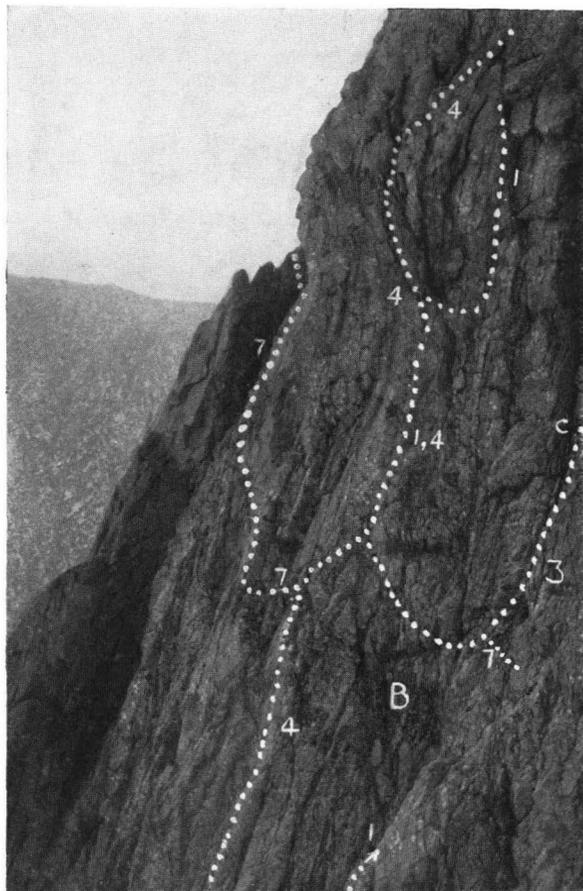
SI, Slingsby's Chimney; PR, Platforms Rib; Z, Top of Zero Gully; OR, Top Observatory Ridge; OB, Top Observatory Buttress; B, The Basin; S (to left of dotted line), Great Slab Rib (or the Sword), Alpha Route; FP, First Platform, Slav Route; 2S, The first Slab Rib, Delta Route; 2SS, The second Slab, Delta Route. ∞, Slav Route; 11, Original Route (Zeta Route above Basin); 22, Delta Route; 3C, Epsilon Chimney; 44, Alpha Route; 5, Easy Traverse, Slav Route to Basin; 6, Beta Route; 77, V Traverse, leading onwards along Girdle Traverse.



June 1940

DELTA ROUTE  
(Upper Section of the Long Climb)

J. D. B. Wilson



September 1941

V TRAVERSE  
(from Observatory Ridge)

J. D. B. Wilson

which are used by astronomers to identify them would form a simple and unified system of naming not only the present climbing routes but a certain number of future discoveries. The dabbler in mythology may find other curious reasons in favour of the scheme. It is said that Orion the mighty hunter was beloved of Eos the goddess of the dawn, and it is only at such times that the great face is so bathed in glancing sunlight as to make good photography possible—and there may be other reasons of a similar nature. At any rate the scheme is the outcome of a good deal of thought. Its novelty may be against its adoption, but only time and usage will decide the issue.

The Basin would occupy the position of the three stars of the Belt, or the Bands of Orion, and from each of these would spring one of the upper routes. The "Straight Left" climb would terminate at the red-giant star Betelgeux, and would accordingly be the Alpha route. The original route above the Basin would be Zeta; in the middle would be the Epsilon Chimney; and to the right would be the Delta route forming the upper half of the Long Climb. This would terminate at the group of small stars forming the Head of Orion. Below the Belt is that vertical line of stars usually known as the Sword, clearly a feature name for the great Slab Rib of the original route. The Slav route, of course, would retain its historic title. It commences at the bright star Rigel, so that the direct approach to the Basin from there would be the Beta route.

### **The Girdle Traverse of the Ben.**

The idea of attempting a Girdle Traverse of all the cliffs of Ben Nevis and Carn Dearg was mooted in the C.I.C. Hut during very bad weather in August 1940. Although we had not yet done the **V** Traverse, the project appealed to Dwyer and myself, and it was not our idea. I expected the **V** Traverse would go, and I knew that we could easily reach Observatory Ridge from the Basin. There was a big element of doubt about crossing the steep

cliff and the terrific unclimbed gully so as to reach Observatory Buttress, but from there it would be easy to pass below the cliff of Gardyloo Buttress and gain the Eastern Traverse of the Great Tower. A descent must follow by Goodeve's route and part of Glover's Chimney, and a doubtful, steep section should land one as high as possible in No. 2 Gully. There were two ways of crossing the Comb, both well known to me. The lower route along the rising trap terrace, beneath the overhanging Nose, and across Green Gully leads by a system of ledges to No. 3 Gully. A more adventurous alternative would climb the loose rock buttress next No. 2 Gully so as to cross Comb Gully opposite the start of Hesperides Ledge (see *Journal*, Vol. 22, p. 250). This remarkable ledge gains the crest of the Comb far above the Nose, and a rather difficult descent must be made down the lower part of Green Gully.

Loaded with all this mass of information, George Dwyer and I set out on the last day of our holiday for the rocks on the valley side of Castle Ridge. We gained the crest at 11 A.M., by which time the fine morning had already given way to gathering cloud. This did not at first incommode us. We descended the ridge and crossed the two Castle Gullies and the Castle without much difficulty. From South Castle Gully we moved along a splendid continuous ledge which took us conveniently across the foot of the upper climbs on Raeburn's and Cousins' Buttresses, and so by easy screes to the crest of Carn Dearg Buttress. Here we were in dense cloud and my memory was at fault, so we lost much time, finally descending and crossing No. 5 Gully far too low. This got us messed up with North Trident Buttress, and I believe we were later impaled on a length of Jubilee Climb before we reached better-known ground at the easy terrace below the final cliff of South Trident Buttress. There we lunched from 1.30 to 2 P.M. Half an hour enabled us to cross No. 4 Gully and the rocks of Creag Coire na Ciste to No. 3 Gully. At 3 P.M. it was thicker than ever, so we called a council of war under the Nose of the Comb. As we had to go home that evening we

abandoned the Traverse and started up Pigott's route on the Comb instead.

There was no further opportunity to attempt the Traverse until my one visit to the Ben this year on the 21st September. The weather conditions were perfect, and J. D. B. Wilson and I left the Hut at 7.30 A.M. We went up Coire Leis, gained our height on the Arête, and crossed to the Second Platform of the N.E. Buttress by 9.15 A.M. The V notch was easily found and we roped up for the traverse to the Basin, which took us forty minutes. All went well to Observatory Ridge, and then we followed a curving ledge until it petered out about 80 feet short of the great unclimbed gully dividing us from Observatory Buttress. This part of the route had to be prospected in stocking soles, as it involved crossing extremely steep, exposed slabs with no holds to speak of. But we were in luck, for the gully offered a good crossing between two pitches, and the farther exit was not really difficult. We were above Rubicon Wall and there was no further difficulty, but just an easy walk to the base of the Great Tower where we lunched in sunshine and comfort along with Alan Horne, who was climbing Tower Ridge by himself.

After a half-hour's siesta we proceeded at 12.35 P.M. There was one short section, almost severe, half-way between our leaving Glover's Chimney and our arrival in No. 2 Gully. Then we ascended into Comb Gully and crossed the Comb by Hesperides Ledge and Green Gully, eventually landing in No. 3 Gully at 3.20 P.M. Wilson made it quite clear that he hated the very sight of the beautiful plants on Hesperides Ledge and considered that he had done enough for the day. So I rashly agreed to meet him at Achintee at half-past six.

Craig Coire na Ciste cost me half an hour, as the descent to No. 4 Gully is hard to find, but thereafter things went with phenomenal speed. I felt positively ashamed of the amount of scree-running between South Trident and Carn Dearg Buttresses. Some future improver of this Girdle Traverse must really devise a more difficult up and down route along the other Trident

cliffs and across the verticalities of Carn Dearg Buttress face. Be that as it may, it took me less than an hour to go from No. 4 to South Castle Gully, and at 5.22 P.M. I sat down and lit my pipe on the top of Castle Ridge. I wonder who will be the first to try out this Girdle Traverse under snow conditions ?

### Notes on the Orion Climbs.

*The Alpha Route.*—A little way above the starting cairn there is a short severity. One has to get up on to the rib on the left. The original route went on a little to the right and up left over the overhang. Perhaps the best way is to climb straight up at once, a severe 15-foot pitch. It is also possible to traverse left a little lower; less strenuous but very exposed. Once on the rib one should traverse left as little as possible and ascend straight to the great Slab Rib. Farther left, one is simply avoiding difficulties on an indefinite face. The Slab Rib is very hard in nailed boots. It should be taken direct in good rubbers or stockings.

*The Delta Route.*—The photograph shows this clearly with a kink half-way up the First Slab. This is a hard but necessary traverse. The crux is in getting up from the apex of the Slab crest. It is an upward traverse to the right and is very smooth and holdless. Stockings are excellent for secure balance. The Second Slab rib is then aimed at. One really climbs cracks here, the Slab being impracticable. There is a bad traverse above it. Then one makes for the prominent, highest rock tower on the skyline.

*Heights on the Long Climb.*—Start of Alpha, 3,070 feet, 11.12 A.M.; Basin, 3,480 feet, 1.30 to 2 P.M.; Top First Upper Slab, 3,670 feet, 3 P.M.; Top Second Slab, 3,920 feet, 5 P.M.; Rope off, 4,190 feet; Crest N.E. Buttress, 4,300 feet, 5.40 P.M.

*Heights on Girdle Traverse.*—Leave Hut, 2,080 ft., 7.30 A.M.; Leave Arête, 3,870 feet, 8.45 A.M.; V Notch, 3,670 feet, 9.15 A.M.; Basin, 3,585 feet, 10 A.M.; Crest Observatory Buttress, 3,710 feet, 11.50 A.M.; Foot Gardyloo, 3,830 feet; Foot Great Tower, 3,980 feet, 12.10 P.M.; No. 2 Gully, 3,460 feet, 1.45 P.M.; Comb Crest, 3,785 feet, 2.20 P.M.; No. 3 Gully, 3,225 ft., 3.20 P.M.; No. 4 Gully, 3,330 feet, 3.50 P.M.; South Trident, 3,500 feet, 3.57 P.M.; Carn Dearg Buttress Cairn, 3,570 feet, 4.22 P.M.; South Castle Gully, 3,060 feet, 4.47 P.M.; North Castle Gully, 2,940 feet; Top Castle Ridge, 3,370 ft., 5.22 P.M.

*Standards of Difficulty.*—It is neither easy nor desirable to lay down standards until these routes are better known. Alpha, Beta, and Delta contain pitches of severe standard. A run-out of 100 feet of rope may be necessary, but in no case should the routes be degraded with pitons. The climbs are only suitable for reasonably expert parties under good conditions and on dry rocks.

## THE GLOMACH FALLS AND GLEN AFFRIC.

By Allan Arthur, A.M.I.C.E.

THE recent announcement in the press that the Glomach Falls and their catchment area are to be transferred to the National Trust for Scotland must be a source of great satisfaction to the members of the S.M.C. and to all patriotic Scotsmen.

As one who has been interested in the negotiations which have now culminated in this announcement, I should like to express thanks to Mrs Douglas of Killilan and Captain G. B. Portman of Inverinate, for the gift of this property of such outstanding beauty. Glomach is the highest fall in Britain, with a drop of some 370 feet, and the point of view from which it can best be seen is so close to the deep gorge that it is difficult to take in, in one glance, the significance and power of these rushing waters, and even more difficult to obtain a photograph which will do justice to the grandeur and inspiring beauty of the unique scene. A composite photograph of the falls appeared as frontispiece in the No. 128 issue of the *Journal*. This was made up of three vertical photographs in panorama, the taking of the lowest one requiring the assistance of the President to prevent the photographer slithering down to the pool at the foot.

The Falls can be approached from either end of the old "coffin" road, which is a right-of-way and runs from Carnach in Glen Elchaig, across the river just above the gorge, and then over the Bealach and down to Kintail at the head of Loch Duich.

The handing over of this property to the Trust is of considerable national importance, as it safeguards it for all time against spoliation and depredatory interests more effectively than would be possible were it still under private ownership.

There is a very close connection between this and the Glen Affric Power Bill which was thrown out by Parliament in 1929, and no doubt the strong opposition of the

proprietors against the tunnelling of the Bealach connecting Ben Attow and Sgurr nan Ceathreamhnan, thus diverting all the waters of the Glomach watershed, which naturally run west into Little Loch Long, to flow into the Affric and down to Beauy on the east coast, had considerable influence in the rejection of the Bill.

The promoters of the 1941 Bill wisely did not include this watershed in their scheme, although in 1929 a provisional sum of £15,000 was allowed for a concrete dam to impound this water, but as it was referred to in the provisional order as "a potential supplementary supply," there is little doubt it would ultimately have been requisitioned when the need for further extension became necessary, had the recent Bill been approved by Parliament. Thus the finest fall in Britain would have been denuded of its beauty, only bare rock and a gaping gorge being left in its place.

The Bill, referred to as an "irrelevancy" in one of our leading newspapers, had nothing to recommend it except national emergency. As work on the scheme could not have been started until after the war, and as it could not be completed in three years thereafter, even were it possible, which is doubtful, to obtain the labour and materials necessary for its construction, the only reason urged in its favour had little effect. There were, however, many objections to the Bill. These included the fact that the power generated could be produced at 35 per cent. less cost from coal where it was required, thus in addition saving the heavy transmission losses from the hydro-electric power station to site. Further, some hundreds of miners in distressed areas would have been thrown out of permanent employment.

Nor would the scheme benefit the Highlander, who would have been charged for his electricity far beyond his capacity to pay, but it would have exploited the Highlands and benefited only the financiers, industrialists, and engineers who promoted the scheme.

It is well known that Glen Affric and Glen Cannich are, without compare, the most beautiful of Scotland's many lovely glens, and attract thousands of visitors

annually who spend liberally during their holidays in the North. This tourist traffic will increase when times become normal again, but had the scheme gone through, these glens would have been turned into large lakes in winter and mud flats and dry, rocky river beds in summer—not to speak of pylons and ugly concrete dams, which would have ruined for all time this more than beautiful district.

The development of the Highlands, after the war, is bound up with the supply of cheap electricity which can be obtained in sufficient quantity from the normal flow of the rivers in the individual glens without destroying their natural beauties and amenities by impounding large quantities of water and erecting unsightly power-houses and pylons, and it is along these lines, it is hoped, such supplies will be developed.

We shall await with interest the details of such Government schemes promised by the Secretary of State for Scotland when moving the rejection of the Bill, believing that the Government will be more concerned than any private company to placate the interests and appreciate the feelings of many Scots and other people who are so strongly opposed to interference with the amenities of these glorious glens.

The opposition is growing against such spoliation, and it is of great importance that all those who are opposed to these depredations should be on their guard that their rights and privileges should not be taken away from them. The fact that Glomach and its catchment area is now the property of the National Trust for Scotland is bound to have an important bearing on the preservation of Glen Affric, which ought to be a National Park.

## In Memoriam.

## FRANK SIDNEY GOGGS.

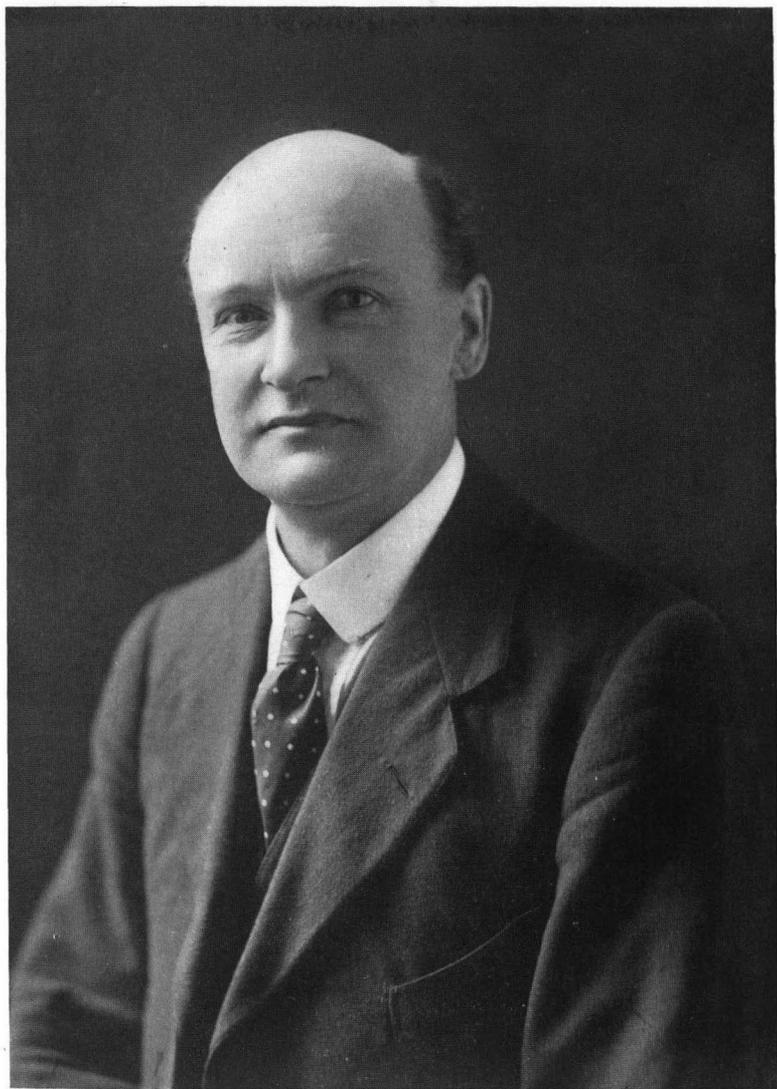
1871-1941.

THE death of F. S. Goggs, within five days of his seventieth birthday, has robbed the Club of an old and valued member who never spared himself in its service, and his energy and goodwill will not be lightly forgotten.

He joined the Club in 1901, and in his forty years' membership he held the office of Librarian for six years, Custodian of Slides for two years, Editor of the *Journal* for ten years, and, finally, President in 1926-28; a notable record of service.

It was his pleasure to call himself a Salvationist, and his first paper in the *Journal*, entitled "A Salvationist on Lochnagar," is an amusing account of an expedition with Raeburn and Mackay, neither of whom could justly be said to come under this heading. As a matter of fact he was a good and steady rock-climber and an exceptionally fast and strong goer, and had already had six seasons in the Alps before he joined our Club, during which he had visited the Oberland, Dauphiné, Tarentaise, Mont Blanc district, Dolomites, Tyrol, Bernina, and Pyrenees, and with ten seasons to his credit he was elected to the Alpine Club in 1906.

But it is in connection with our own Club that we are here more concerned. On becoming a member he threw himself with enthusiasm into all its activities. He attended the Meets and other functions of the Club with great regularity, and his facile pen was soon busily engaged in adorning the pages of the *Journal*, the conduct of which he took over in 1910, and for ten years carried on with great success through the difficult war years, till his removal to London made it difficult to keep in touch with the activities of the Club, which reluctantly accepted his resignation from the duties which he had carried out so well. He was still, however, able to come to the Meets occasionally, and in 1925 he joined the



FRANK SIDNEY GOGGS

cheery S.M.C. party in the Oberland and added much to the pleasure of the expedition.

The following year he was elected President of the Club, to the great satisfaction of the members, and brought to his new duties the same energy and thoroughness he had shown in his other offices.

Outside the Club his life was spent in the insurance world, and he held very responsible positions during the forty-five years of his service, and contributed much to insurance technical literature.

To his many friends his passing leaves a deep sense of loss, and his genial comradeship will be long remembered. He deserved well of his generation.

W. N. LING.

The Editor has asked me to add a short personal note to the above.

I first met Goggs at the Easter Meet, 1906, at Kings-house Inn. That was a memorable Meet on account of the extremely bad weather and the highly entertaining games which were invented to absorb the pent-up energy of a particularly active and robust gathering of the Club. In the small confines of that Inn were to be found such notables as Harold Raeburn, Ted Goodeve, Harry Walker, Charlie Walker, Ling, Goggs, and Inglis Clark. The last-named wrote an amusing account in the *Journal* of this Meet, and referred to the gladiatorial contests of "Brother, are you there?" in which the beef and brawn of Goodeve and Harry Walker triumphed over the lighter weights, but how in the more delicate operations involving the racing of the "Peripatetic Frogs," in which the laws of inertia and momentum were alternately invoked to urge the paper frogs on their course, Goggs came out an easy victor and was duly crowned "Frog King."

The Monday of that Meet was as bad as ever, but Goggs and I literally raced 5 miles down Glen Etive and then traversed Stob Ghabhar by the long Aonach Mor Ridge to Bridge of Orchy, all in one of the most blinding rainstorms either of us ever experienced.

Another memorable occasion was when I spent the

night in Edinburgh with him after a Committee Meeting. Goggs, of all people, slept in next morning; but undismayed we ran, half-dressed, from his house in Grange Terrace to Waverley Station to catch the 5.50 A.M. train to Arrochar. We were both completely laid out, and only recovered after a very fine breakfast in Glen Croe under the slopes of Ben Donich.

Goggs was always a most delightful companion. The reason for this was probably his intense interest in and appreciation of the other fellow's point of view. And this characteristic was not in any sense merely a pose; that he was genuinely interested was proved not only by his words but by his actions.

The Club has certainly lost one of its outstanding personalities.

H. MACROBERT.

The S.M.C. is much the poorer for the passing of F. S. Goggs.

When I joined the Club he was Honorary Editor of the *Journal*, which for many years was issued under his able guidance and critical eye. From the very first we became associated, although I was then a comparative novice, and our five days together—at a Cave Meet in Glen Affric and Glen Cannich at Easter, 1911, when in a memorable holiday along with the genial Honorary Librarian, happily still with us, we bagged thirteen Munros—cemented a friendship which grew stronger as the years passed, and remained true to the end.

As long as he remained in Scotland, the land of his adoption, we often climbed together, and one could not wish for a nicer companion nor a better goer. His return to London was a real break to him and a great loss to the Club, as he was a unique man with a strong and attractive personality. He was also a religious man, and what he lacked in humour he made up for by his cryptic sayings and his clear insight into the characteristics of his fellow-men.

He was an early starter, and woe betide the laggard in his party who was not ready to accompany him at the

hour arranged the previous night for a start, probably as early as 8 A.M. on a winter's morning.

In his later years, owing to his business location, he was unable to attend many of the Meets or Club functions, but he was present at the Jubilee Dinner, and I was privileged to sit next to him, when many happy memories were recalled.

It was a pleasure to know him, a privilege denied through circumstances to many of the younger members, but the Club owes him much, and I can truly say I am glad of every remembrance of him.

ALLAN ARTHUR.

### **ROBERT CORRY.**

ROBERT CORRY, who died on 4th April 1941 at the age of seventy-five, was a well-known shipowner, having been for many years a Director of the Commonwealth & Dominion Line—now known as the Port Line—which operates a large fleet of steam and motor vessels engaged in the Australian and New Zealand trade.

He joined the Alpine Club in 1895 and served on the Committee in 1922. His first visit to the Alps was in 1890, and from that time until 1938 he was out almost every summer. He had climbed in all the principal Alpine districts, but I think that on the whole he preferred the Dolomites. In his prime he made many guideless ascents of first-class peaks. In his last three seasons (1936, 1937, and 1938) he was in Tirol with Ling and Unna.

He does not appear to have climbed in Scotland until 1910, the year in which he was elected to the Club. In that year he attended the Easter Meet at Kinlochewe, when he climbed Ben Airidh Charr, Ben Eighe, Slioch, and Liathach (Northern and Fasarinen pinnacles). From that date until 1919 he was a regular attender at Easter Meets.

He was a man of strong character, fine physique, and of quite remarkable staying power.

Comparatively few of the younger members of the

Club will have met Corry, but many older members will have happy recollections of their expeditions with one who was a safe and capable climber and who loved and appreciated the hills.

ROBERT JEFFREY.

### **E. W. STEEPLE.**

**1872-1940.**

MR E. W. STEEPLE, who died in September 1940, would not be well known to many members of our Club. He joined in 1921, and although he attended several Meets of the Club his activities were almost entirely confined to Skye. He really came into prominence in our Club as one of the editors of the "Skye Guide Book," and in this work he was the moving spirit, both in the details of the rock climbs and in connection with the many diagrams illustrating these climbs. His list of first ascents in Skye is almost too lengthy to be mentioned. They include most of the important early routes on Sron na Ciche, and the climbs on the Ghrunnda Faces of Alasdair and Sgumain.

Steeple took a great interest in the Midland Association of Mountaineers, of which he was a Founder Member. He was also a member of the Swiss Alpine Club, which he joined in 1911, becoming a Veteran Member in 1936; but his real interests in climbing appear to have been in Wales and Skye.

HARRY MACROBERT.

Mr Steeple has an enormous list of first ascents to his credit, covering the period from 1906 to 1924 inclusive. The most of these were in Skye prior to the publication of the "S.M.C. Guide to the Isle of Skye" in 1923, but a few followed its appearance. Practically all the others were in Wales. His Alpine climbing included visits to Zermatt in 1911, Saas Fee in 1934, Fionnay and Argentière in 1936, and Val d'Isère in 1938. He climbed in Lofoten in 1923.

He was a charming man to meet, and I well remember a fortnight in 1924 when I was climbing with F. S. Smythe in the Cuillins. We stayed at Mary Campbell's in Glen-

brittle, and after the day's climbing we always had our evening meal and a long discussion afterwards in the company of Barlow and Steeple, who were staying there too. When the weather was bad they used to go out and engage in a singular competition, identifying the various bench marks in Coire Lagain. Then they took pity on us, planted out a few rain gauges, and the weather promptly improved. It was a great privilege and help to us younger mountaineers to have the assistance and advice of such eminent veterans when we traversed the Main Ridge on that holiday. Steeple was a modest, retiring man, but pure gold when you got to know him.

J. H. B. BELL.

We regret to announce the deaths of the following members: Col. William Lamont, one of the few surviving original members, Mr John James Waugh who joined in 1904, Mr John Gibson who joined in 1908, Mr Robert Watson who joined in 1912, and Professor A. J. Clark who joined the Club in 1931. All of these except the last named were Life Members.

## **PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB.**

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### **EASTER MEET 1941—AVIEMORE.**

THE Meet was originally fixed for Fort William, but owing to the large number who wanted to and could not go, accommodation had to be found for those who wanted and could at the alternative decided on, viz., Aviemore. J. G. MacLean arrived with skis on the Tuesday from Glen More Lodge, where, with a select party of the Scottish Ski Club, he had made several ascents of Cairngorm, and on Good Friday and Saturday continued his activities on Sgoran Dubh Mor and Carn Ban respectively. W. N. Ling arrived on Wednesday, had a walk to Loch Morlich and back, Loch-an-Eilein on Thursday, and in the evening was joined by Allan Arthur, who completed the party.

It was a record and most unique Meet in several ways.

1. Probably the smallest on record—officially only two—as MacLean was there as a skier and therefore could only be reckoned as a guest.
2. The average quality was exceptional.
3. The starts were unusually late.
4. The entrance hall was crowded with skis and sticks, not ice axes.
5. The lounge in the evenings with *shes*, who added colour (not all natural) and vivacity to the accustomed masculine stolidity.

On Good Friday the Meet motored to Balacroich in Glen Feshie, climbed Sgoran Dubh, where near the top they encountered four skiers, and returned home via Glen Einich and Coylum Bridge. On Saturday Braeriach was its objective from the locked gate. All went well until the summit plateau, but there, as the snow consisted of slush which overtopped one's boots, the going in the thick mist was questionable pleasure.

On Sunday half the Meet had a walk over Craigel-lachie, while the other half went to church and later watched the skiers in Glen Einich. On Monday both halves motored to Glen More by the Slugan and climbed Cairn Lochan by the Fiacail Ridge. This ridge, which runs up between Coires-an-Lochain and an-t-Sneachda, under the prevailing conditions gave a wet but sporting climb. The effort was well repaid by the views of the snow-plastered precipices and heavy cornices on the journey to the summit of Cairngorm, where snow was falling heavily with not a breath of wind—so different from its usual reputation. The return was made down the path to Glen More Lodge and back to Aviemore by the Slugan.

The weather above 2,000 feet was continually misty and cold, with strong westerly winds, although below this level there was some sunshine and little rain. There was much snow everywhere when we first arrived, but this was rapidly disappearing when the Meet broke up on Tuesday morning.

ALLAN ARTHUR.

## NOTES AND EXCURSIONS.

*The Editor will be glad to receive brief notices of any noteworthy expeditions. These are not meant to supersede longer articles, but many members who may not care to undertake the one will have no difficulty in imparting information in the other form.*

**Arran : Cir Mhor : South Ridge of Rosa Pinnacle.**

Mr E. W. Hodge writes :—

I was very glad to see in the last *Journal* that the South Ridge of the Rosa Pinnacle is again being visited. Myself and friends about 1933 spent several days on the main climb and variations, as we considered the buttress offered a climb of the soundest rock, the least artificial character, greatest length, and some of the finest situations in Arran. A description of this and of lesser climbs on various Arran hills, Ben Nuis, Ben Tarsuinn, and Caisteal Abhail appeared in the defunct *Mountaineering Journal*, Vol. 3, No. 1, but as Mr Hamilton's note is in somewhat different terms and the correspondence of the two descriptions is not entirely clear, I may perhaps be excused for repeating my own for comparison and reference in this *Journal*.

Seen from the floor of Glen Rosa the Pinnacle is most imposing, and I roughly estimated the first-rate part of the climb at 500 feet, with a quantity of scrambling below. Our start on the climb proper was slightly on the right side of the ridge. A crack, becoming a grassy groove, makes the first pitch of about 40 feet. Then follows a 9-foot wall, needing "combined tactics," or one may ascend the groove on the right, and traverse. Then comes 100 feet of exposed face-climbing, with a half-way belay. Like so much in Arran, where holds are few, all this is considerably harder to come down than to go up.

The first section of the climb thus ends on a commodious but sloping rock platform with a good belay. Now comes a crack which for about 20 feet lies at a most awkward angle, with no holds to speak of, apart, of course, from the friction of its exceedingly rough granite. Perhaps this is the one which Mr Hamilton says "should go next time." Though we went up and down it many times with the safeguard (to say no more) of the rope, it defied all our attempts to lead it, even though we tried with partial success to introduce artificial chock-stones. Perhaps a strong pair of gardening gloves, but without finger-tips, and similar protection for the elbows would be of most benefit. Its position, right on the arête where it steepens, is similar to that of the crack pitch on the Cioch Buttress. Two alternatives, however, each almost equally as hard as the first crack, lie to the left on clean rock—one very similar crack, and a corner groove, still farther to the left. These start from the top edge of the huge slab

which is the principal feature of the west face of the arête. After numerous attempts my friends conquered the latter groove in 1935. The remainder of the climb does not pass "very difficult" standard.

The crack bends over into a gently sloping trough, and a small crack up a slab to the right leads to a big recess under an overhang. To the left of the overhang, three short sections of chimney form the next pitch, rising about 30 feet. The angle of the arête is now moderate, and easy going on its actual spine leads to the Terrace dividing the Upper from the Lower Pinnacle.

Above this, the final section of the climb, which begins with a little overhang, is evidently the same as Mr Hamilton's. I have also a note of climbing the grassy gully on the right which Mr Hamilton mentions, and very earthy indeed it was. It runs straight down, I think, into the major gully which forms the continuation of the Terrace. I do not now recollect the connection between its foot and the lower part of the climb below the severe cracks, but anyone must feel that one or other of the cracks, with their clean rock and magnificent exposed situation on the arête, are the real kernel of the climb. I do not suppose I shall attempt it again, and wish Mr Hamilton every success on a further visit.

### **The Seven Highest Cairngorms in a Day.**

The seven highest Cairngorms have been climbed on Friday, 5th September of this year by two of the younger generation of Scottish mountaineers, Mr Donald B. M'Intyre and Mr Ian Baikie (both round about eighteen years of age). Comparison may be made with summaries of previous traverses of the six and four highest Cairngorms respectively as recorded in the "Cairngorms Guide." Our young friends have most justifiably added to the six the "separate mountain Munro" Beinn Mheadhoin (3,883 feet), clearly higher than Ben Avon. The start of the expedition was at the Green Loch of Ryvoan where bicycles were left, but a kindly fairy took them across to the Lower Einich Bothy where they were a godsend to the party returning down Coire Dhondail from Cairn Toul the next evening. The first night was spent in an open shed at the Avon bridge near the Allt an t-Sluichd. It will be noted that much time was spent between Ben Avon and Beinn a' Bhuirid owing to an adverse conspiracy of darkness, cloud, aneroid, and lack of previous acquaintance with this section of the traverse. The total distance from the Avon to the Einich Bothy is about 35 miles and involves some 10,300 feet of ascent. The expedition lasted from 1 A.M. until 9.5 P.M. (sun times). We are sorry that limitations of space do not permit of printing a fuller account than a mere timetable, but we heartily congratulate the party on their enterprise and achievement. Apart from the clouding of the Eastern Cairngorms during the dark hours the weather was good.

Leave Avon bridge, 1 A.M.; Ben Avon, 2.50 A.M.; Beinn a' Bhuid, 5.40 A.M.; Beinn Mheadhoin, 9.25 A.M.; Ben Macdhuil, 10.50 A.M.; Cairngorm, 1 P.M.; Braeriach, 4.45 P.M.; Cairn Toul, 6.30 P.M.; Lower Bothy Glen Einich, 9.5 P.M.

### **A Night on the Tower Ridge.**

In March 1940 a party of three, Messrs A. E. Harding, E. R. Wickham, and J. H. Young, attempted Tower Ridge. They were late and reached Douglas Boulder Gap at 1 P.M. The Great Tower was badly iced and difficult. The far side of Tower Gap proved impassable, and after two hours of struggle the party bivouacked at 7 P.M. in a hole in the snow short of the Gap. Next morning they roped down the gully on the eastern side of the Gap and so, in bad conditions—mist, wind, and driving snow—down Observatory Gully, reaching a camp at Achintee at 5 P.M. A golden eagle settled close to the leader at the top of the Great Tower and almost at once sailed off down the glen.

### **REVIEWS.**

**The West Highlands and the Hebrides.** A Geologist's Guide for Amateurs. By Alfred Harker. Cambridge University Press. 1941. 8s. 6d. 128 pp. 81 illustrations. 8 maps.

Dr Harker was a geologist of world-wide reputation. He was also a mountaineer of no mean ability, and for many years prior to his death was a member of the Club. The geology and scenery of the Western Highlands held a particular attraction for him, and he had long desired to present a simple exposition of the geology of that area in relation to its scenery, which would not only be useful to geologists but, at the same time, arouse the interest of the ordinary traveller as well. To the mountaineer in particular, the study of geology in relation to scenery should have a definite appeal, and certainly none can have appreciated better than Dr Harker, whose work included the detailed surveying of the Red and Black Cuillins of Skye, the close dependence of topography upon geology. It is felt, however, that this book, which is published posthumously, does not entirely fulfil all the purposes the author had in view. It deals in small compass with the western seaboard of Scotland from the Mull of Kintyre to Cape Wrath, but for the ordinary reader much of the descriptive matter will appear too technical and over-concerned with detail. To offset this, however, there are eight maps and eighty-one simple but effective line drawings which materially help to elucidate the text and greatly enhance the value and attractiveness of the book. A brief résumé of the geology of the area is given in an introductory section and an exhaustive glossary explains the technicalities used. The book also includes a biographical sketch of the author by Sir Albert Seward. J. K.

**Assam Adventure.** By F. Kingdon Ward. Jonathan Cape. 12s. 6d. 304 pp. 16 photos. 1 map.

The plant-hunter's latest book gains much by the fact that it was not written immediately after his journey from Assam through Southern Tibet in 1935 but delayed till he again visited the area in 1938, so enabling him to describe the wonderful flora more fully and accurately. In the Assam Himalayas he crossed six high passes for the first time; in many places he was the first white man ever seen, and brought back much valuable geographical, ethnological, and climatic data. Mr Ward counts no hardship too great for the sake of flowers, and no one, surely, has described them so lovingly. Some passages linger. What did it matter that the night was cold (he was at a height of 17,500 feet), the mountain steep, snow falling and mist swirling when he caught sight of the Himalayan forget-me-not, "the most heavenly of all alpine plants, bulging up out of the hard, hungry earth, glistening silver-grey, each rug-headed cushion encrusted with large turquoise-blue jewels, shimmering like stars in the lilac dusk." The photographs are of high standard and the book one to read and treasure.

B. H. H.

**Five Miles High.** By the Members of the Karakoram Expedition. Edited by Robert H. Bates. Robert Hale. 15s. net. 319 pp. 31 illustrations. 3 maps.

The American expedition to K. 2 was at work at the same time in 1938 as the German expedition to Nanga Parbat; and the contrast between this book and "Himalayan Quest" is striking and significant. The Germans were probably the greater masters of mountaineering technique, and in courage and enterprise unsurpassed; but the inferiority complex so pathetically evident in their narratives is worlds apart from the easy poise and unself-consciousness of the Americans.

The weather of the K. 2 area would appear to be on the whole less fierce than that of the Eastern Himalaya, and Houston's party went near to achieving what would have been a sensational success. They confirmed the correctness of the opinion formed in 1909 by the Duke of the Abruzzi that the best route of ascent is the south-east ridge; and, profiting by their labours, the prospects of the next expedition, in some happier year of the future, should indeed be rosy. The photographs, though perhaps hardly attaining the high standard of those in Paul Bauer's books, are excellent. All things considered, this is perhaps the most engrossing mountain story of recent years.

J. D.

**Mountaineering.** By T. A. H. Peacocke. Vol. 29, The Sportsman's Library. A. & C. Black. 5s. net. 212 pp. 15 illustrations.

This little book has chapters on the elements of rock climbing and of snow and ice technique, followed by practical applications

based on English and Welsh rocks and Alpine snow; only one or two casual references are made to Scottish hills. There are also hints on alpine photography, methods of training, and foods desirable or otherwise for use on mountain expeditions. The book is well written and the matter is good so far as it goes. There are some useful illustrations.

J. D.

**English Lakeland.** By Doreen Wallace. Batsford. 8s. 6d. 116 pp. 103 illustrations.

A stimulating general introduction to the Lakes, like all Batsford books it assumes intelligence in the reader. The author avoids trespassing on the technicalities of climbing. She speaks as a native, but a native who is able to see her subject as a whole from the wider world outside. The numerous photographs, which are by different hands, are well selected.

E. W. H.

**The Alpine Journal**, Vol. 52, No. 262. This number has been restricted in size owing to paper rationing, and deals more with the past than the present. Colonel Strutt's article, "Memorable Days," gives his recollection of famous guides, and will be of more interest to old mountaineers than to the younger generation, but the President's Valedictory Address will appeal to all both on account of its style and its subject-matter. Professor Graham Brown continues his story of the early attempts on Mont Blanc. One envies these early pioneers their opportunities of attempting new ascents. The last main article is the account by S. B. Blake and Dr Jakub Bujak of the Polish Ascent of Nanda Devi East Peak in 1939. In spite of difficult conditions the Editor has presented a wonderful variety of articles.

A. H.

**Sierra Club Bulletin**, February 1941. The gems of this number are "Ascent of Mt. Avon," a potpourri of mountaineering phrases culled from Shakespeare's plays, and put together to form a short drama, also "Little Gem Co. Equipment Catalogue," a series of cartoons on special gadgets that might be used in our sport. We envy the Club on a twenty-eight day Meet, as recounted in "High and Dry." An excellent set of photos is included.

**Canadian Alpine Journal**, 1941. A good number, describing many fine expeditions. "In Praise of Little Hills" refers to the English Lake District and to Wales.

**New Zealand Alpine Club**, Jubilee Number, 1941. Congratulations to the Club on its fiftieth birthday! Mainly a number of reminiscences plentifully sprinkled with photographs of progress from these early days until now.

**Other Journals received:** *Nos Montagnes, Les Alpes, Tararua Tramper, Camping, Ladies Alpine Club Journal, Climbers' Club Journal.*

## THE JUNIOR MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF SCOTLAND.

### London Association Notes.

THE London Association has been unable to undertake any organised activity during the past year. Nevertheless members have visited the hills whenever opportunity has occurred and several noteworthy expeditions have been done. Some serving members have been especially fortunate in being quartered in mountainous districts; one has climbed and walked on Dartmoor and Exmoor, another extensively in North and South Wales; others, less fortunate, have been condemned to long periods in the plains.

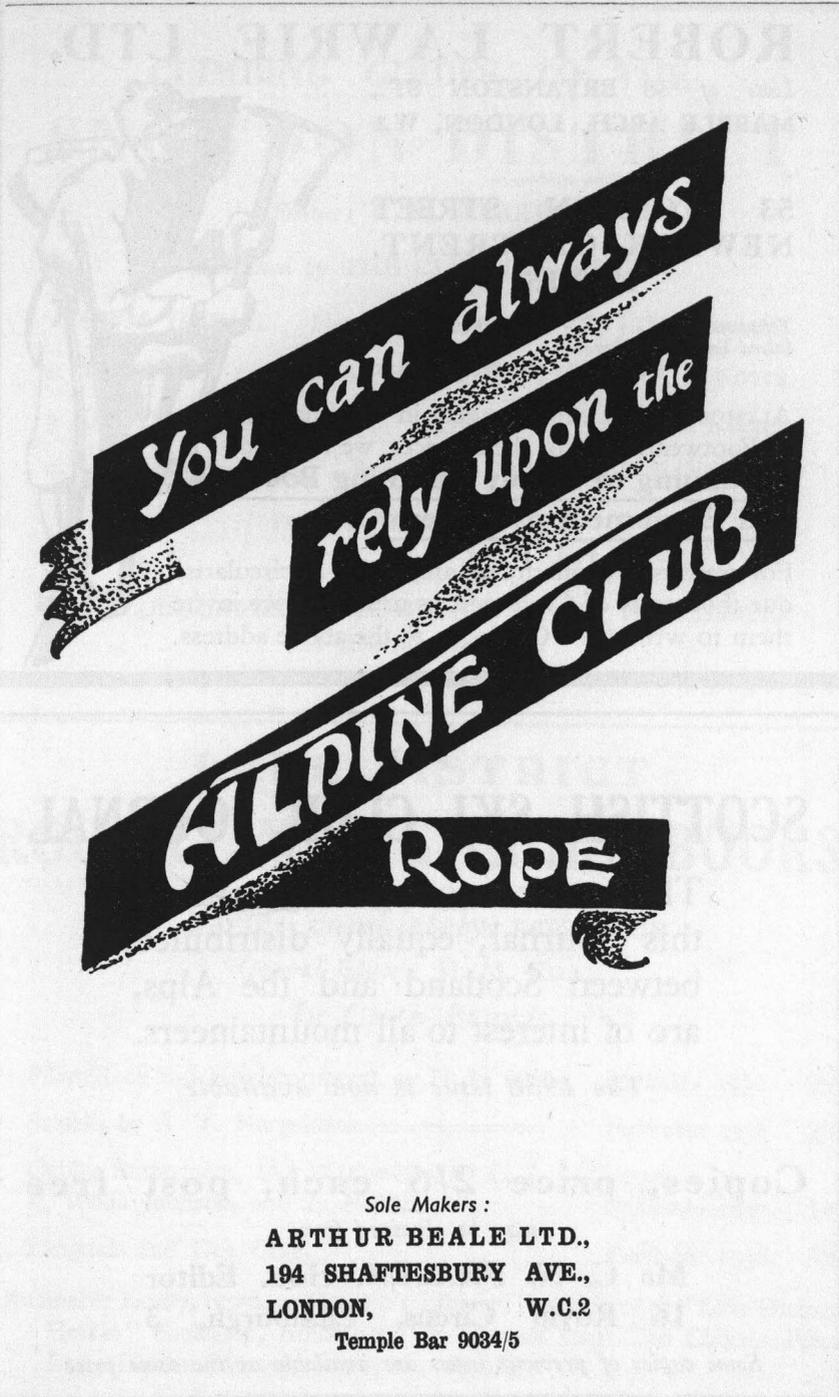
The local London sandstone outcrops have been visited on numerous occasions and a number of new climbs done. The outstanding feat of the year has been a magnificent girdle traverse worked out by E. R. Zenthon at Harrison Rocks near Tunbridge Wells. This is a 1,500-foot climb of very severe standard.

The Association is publishing periodically a small printed bulletin dealing with London mountaineering, while at the same time a file of written material is being constantly circulated in which members write articles, notes, etc., on any mountaineering subjects.

E. C. PYATT.

Mr F. E. O'Riordan of the Edinburgh Section announces with deep regret the death on active service of John R. Down, Midshipman, H.M.S. "Hood."

Mr David M'Lean of the Glasgow J.M.C.S., whose ship was torpedoed last year and who was missing for nine months, is now known to be a prisoner of war in Germany. He is fit and well and would be glad to hear from climbing friends, who should carefully comply with official instructions when writing to David M'Lean, British Prisoner of War No. 91418, Stalag XB (Marlag), Germany.



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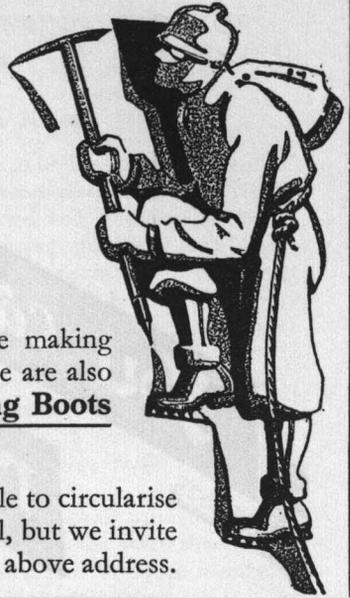
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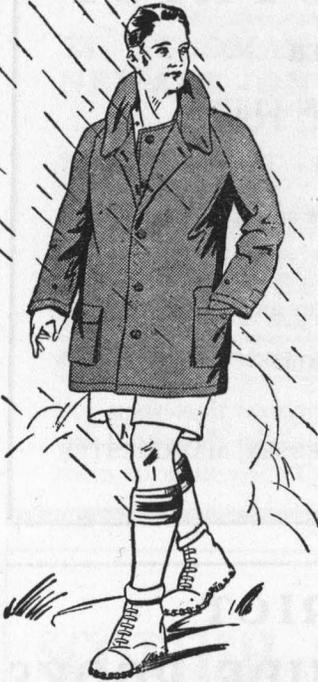
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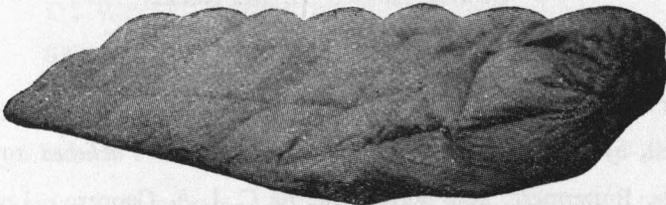
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