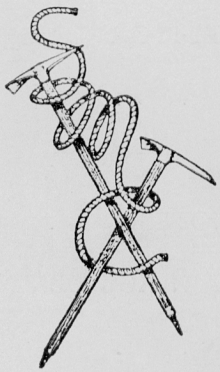
THE SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB JOURNAL



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EDITED BY G. J. DUTTON

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THE SCOTTISH
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THE COUNTRY OF THE BLIND

By W. H. Murray

ONE of the great delights of travel, as of climbing, is exploration—discovering ground, routes, and mountains new to us. Even when we cannot travel beyond the borders of our own country we can find within it so extreme a diversity of natural scene that enjoyment of change and difference need never fail us from one small part of the Scottish Highlands to another. We are offered infinite diversity, hence (if we know how to accept) inexhaustible delight.

The Scottish Highlands have no counterpart on this planet. Ranges abroad often seem like them in some points of detail, like the shape of Pyrenean ridge and corrie, but such points are of superficial kind : comparisons fail to survive even brief examination. What, then, is the outstanding character of the Scottish hills ? What distinguishes them from all others ? Are they worth the great effort now needed to keep the best parts unscarred by otherwise useful industries ?

It greatly helps us to understand the Highlands if we bear in mind a few fundamental facts. They sound as wildly romantic as any saga. The original mountain chain that covered north Scotland heaved out of the sea three hundred million years ago. It may have been of Himalayan scale, but was reduced to a sea-level plain by erosion. Twenty to thirty million years ago ' Scotland ' rose again (about the same period as the Alps), this time as a solid block. Out of that plateau, ice and water carved our present mountains. The land-mass extended beyond the Hebrides, whose separation came in a great western subsidence—the Minch is a rift valley—when the Atlantic flooded into all the westward-running glens, giving the wildly indented coast-line, the fiords running far in

OPPOSITE : Uniquely Scottish : Loch Cluanie and the Glenshiel Hills. (*W. H. Murray*)

among the mountains, and the host of islands, which are together the foremost charm of the West Highland scene and the despair of transport authorities.

That story unfolds the origin of several of the main diversities of scene. It does not make plain the Scottish Highlands' true point of distinction to-day: which is not to be found in mountain shape, nor yet in those leagues of heather rightly beloved of the August visitor—but wrongly extolled by one famous writer as the Scottish hills' 'one point of superiority.' The heather season is colourful, but less so than October. The outstanding quality of the Highlands depends on things altogether different and somewhat more complex. Let us be off to the hills and try to see what these things are.

In the Western Highlands the main geographical feature is the jagged coast-line. Through the long sea-lochs the waters of the Atlantic Drift penetrate far inland. The glens of the seaboard thus enjoy a relatively mild climate. Mean temperatures in mid-winter are several degrees higher than those of the east coast, but this warmth is confined to low ground since temperature is less determined by nearness to the sea than by height above it. The hills rise from the sea abruptly, hence mean temperatures for the west are low while at the same time the coastal strips are milder than anywhere in Britain save the south of England and the west fringe of Wales. In many sheltered places we thus find flowering shrubs and trees, even palms and figs, that do not thrive elsewhere on the mainland outside the sunny south.

The thirty big sea-lochs are one and all names of international repute: Fyne, Etive, Linnhe, Sunart, Nevis, Hourn—these are just a sample. The typical form is that of a wide outer loch separated by narrows from a narrow inner loch, otherwise no two are alike. A splendid pair to cite are Lochs Nevis and Hourn, since they lie side by side. Loch Nevis has much the more open aspect; bayed and sunny, its head is ringed by hills of elegant line; they throng about the seat of the main peak, Sgùrr na Ciche, whose spire (seen from the loch) might have been the Gothic archetype. Loch Hourn has a narrower, twistier inner loch, and an outer one more mountainously noble, curving round the base of Ladhar Bheinn and Beinn Sgriol. The craggier flanks throughout, and their taller walls, give the scene a grim air more akin to that of a Norwegian fiord than any other sea-loch in Scotland. The likeness goes no further. The scale is not Norwegian. The detail when examined is peculiar only to the Scottish west coast, as may well be seen from the clachan at Corran, near Arnisdale. From a foreground of short turf and wild roses, or from simple cottage gardens crowded

with flowers, or from fields of buttercup and clover, the Cuillin of Skye are seen to better advantage through the wide mouth of Loch Hourn than from anywhere else on the coast. Nearly every peak of the range stands clean-cut like the teeth of a rake.

The peculiar character of the western sea-lochs owes much less to their own or to mountain shape than to their channelling the Atlantic Drift. The hills are ' clothed ' by this Atlantic atmosphere. Rain, mist, and cloud form a large part of both summer and winter wardrobe, but the bright dress of spring and the rich of autumn, even the winter nakedness in frosty morning air, all these have a beauty so exhilarating that the days of rain are forgotten or discounted.

This clothing of colour and atmosphere, given by vegetation and climate, is of most obvious value in the low southern hills, like those of the Kintyre peninsula, which are not so much inferior to the tumultuous north as different in kind. These low hills and moors have the delicate and ageless colours of an old tapestry, whereas, if we move farther north into low but more ' highland ' country and make the passage across Loch Moidart early on a sunny morning, say from the woods of Dorlin past the islands of Riskay and Shona Beag, the colours glow as strongly on the waters as the stained glass on the flagstones of Chartres. The scene has not more peace than the southern, but more power.

We move again to the true mountain land of Kintail. From the birch and alder groves of Letterfearn we look toward the Five Sisters, lightly veiled it may be in blue haze. We can see how the brilliant colour of foreground and shore reflect in the nearer waters but dim towards the gleaming centre; there the mountains lie inverted, their flanks, corries, and every shadowed crag spreading subtly different tints across the surface—all this giving depth and distance in what otherwise would seem short space—until suddenly the land leaps up. The mountains do not take the eye by storm as in the Alps, but by grace of colour and haze of enchantment. Although near, they look remote, more mysterious than the unchanging Himalaya. Their shape is not remarkable. Their beauty is.

Let us take a different scene, whose excellence is not dependent on vegetable tints, and is known to us all—the view down Loch Alsh from Eilean Donan. It stopped me at dusk when a low sun was flushing the clouds over Skye. Against that light the sea ran like a river of fire, twisting in and out between distant bays and capes, thinning at last to a burning thread and vanishing into the Cuillin, which gaped black like caverns in the sky. Mountains and the

sea-flooded glen were the indispensable framework, but the magic of the scene came of that soft, west-coast atmosphere.

The North-west Highlands are distinguished by ranges of gneiss and sandstone, often wrongly described as the oldest mountains in the world. As we have seen, they were raised as a plateau and carved to present shapes. It is not the mountains that are so very old, but the rocks of the original chain, now exposed on the moors and hills to give—when seen from high ground—a lunar landscape.

This effect is more usually associated with the gneiss moors of Sutherland, but is found too on plateaux of Torridon sandstone as far south as Applecross. On either side of the Bealach na Ba the plateau stretches desolate and stony from Meall Gorm to Beinn Ban. The walking is bad enough to rival the Rough Bounds of Knoydart. Here is terrain utterly different from that of the lochs, woods, and schistose moorland of the South and West Highlands. It has the beauty of desert—wide skies, strong rock. It is harsh and stern.

But that is only one aspect of the North-west, where western softness overlaps northern harshness, the two providing startling contrasts, more marked in Ross than Sutherland. From the Bealach na Ba, the road to Applecross drops through woods that delight the eye after the moon-like desolation above. Along the coast-road south to Toscaig, clachans on small bays reveal that from Kishorn onwards we have left the West Highlands behind and are now in the North. Time no longer matters. The very air seems to be freer. As elsewhere in the West, foxgloves and irises and wild roses abound by the roadside, but here the fields are tiny, arrayed in strips of varied colour—wind-silvered barley, or the gold of corn, the heavy green of potato, and the hay a riot of big ox-eye daisies, bright yellow charlock, purple and white clover, and lush buttercups —all crowded together, their scents mingling with the scent of the sea. The work of crofting and fishing gets done, but in leisurely fashion.

In well-marked steps or degrees the landscape hardens northward to ruggedness. A first short step into the Forests of Ben Damph, Coulin, and Torridon shows the change. In the Damph group the foremost feature is the corries scooped like quaichs under summit cliffs, among them a scattered score of lochans; in the Coulin it is the famed pass linking Strath Carron to Torridon by the shores of Loch Coulin—pine, birch and heather fringe the water and frame the white sterility of Beinn Eighe's quartzite crest; in Torridon it is sharp and swinging ridges, set spikily between narrow glens and walled high by stratified cliffs. Everywhere the

land is more openly a wedding of rock and water. Thus most of the natural lines of approach go by wild burns, whose waters cascade through cauldrons, guts, and high falls; often these are set among woods of Scots pine, as in Coire Mhic Nobuil, the Allt Coire Roill, and the River Lair.

As seen from seaward, Loch Torridon is the hub from which the hills of Applecross, Ben Damph, and Torridon run out like spokes and by their presence make it the most splendid of the Scottish sea-lochs. The shores maintain this excellence, especially on the Applecross side where a dozen lovely bays look to the rock points of Diabeg or the towers of Torridon. The northern shore is of nearly equal merit, its inner part mountainous, its outer wide open to the Minch.

This mountain land is full in stature and variety. It exhibits more of mountain beauty than any other region in Scotland. The lands to the north, and Skye to the west, are unrivalled of their own kinds, but those kinds are more specialised.

Our second step north is across Loch Maree to the Forests of Strathnasheallag and Fisherfield. This region is a mountainous maze between the great walls of the Letterewe ridge and An Teallach. Here for the first time we have gneiss appearing in big outcropping cliffs on Beinn Lair and Beinn Airidh Charr. These lie in the southern part, whereas the northern part, the An Teallach group, is of pinnacled sandstone. Between lie a dozen other peaks, all exposing much rock. Together they form a tangle of savage complexity: a barrenness greened by the hidden flats of Strath na Sealga and its long waters; a desolation adorned high up in rock folds under the tops by lochans that flash in the sun or glint dully through shifting mists.

In the western half, Fionn Loch covers a vast stretch of low ground. Innumerable bays and feeder lochs form meandering waterways as complicated as the mountains behind. The union of rock and water is more close than in Torridon, and of maze-like spread. It forms here a unique and most beautiful feature of the Scottish mountain scene.

Our third step is to the Sutherland border, into country so distinct from any other that we feel as if entering a new land. The mainland's most wind tormented coast, it is very much the northern promontory of the British Isles and, save in protected glens, bare of trees.

On their rolling floor of Lewisian gneiss, the mountains of Inverpolly and Glencanisp Forests stand stiffly erect, sculptured monuments to a legendary range. Only their plinth is gneiss—

one and all they are sandstone: Cùl Mòr and Cùl Beag and Stac Polly in Ross, Suilven and Canisp in Sutherland, each one an isolated mountain. In the horizontal desert between the two groups lie chains of lochs that take a serpentine course rare even in the Highlands, and these, with peaks that take monumental shape on the vertical plane, give a landscape unparalleled as a marriage of opposites. The principal water is Loch Sionascaig, whose shores form nearly thirty bays. More than two hundred other lochs lie around. When the sky is heavy and the mist twisting about the mountain pinnacles they glint whitely or lie black and fathomless; when the sky brightens they scintillate blue and all about them wild peaks rise stark. The scene passes the hardest test that landscape can be given: in dirty weather it is never dull if it can be seen at all, but weird or brilliant as the skies dictate.

The Central and Southern Highlands show great contrast with the Northern, especially if we turn to the scenic showpiece of the Central Highlands, the populous Tummel valley. Even within themselves, the Central Highlands have extreme diversity (the rocks are largely schistose, but with granite, quartzite, gneiss, and many another mixed in) as seen by comparing the Tummel valley, the Benalder range, Lochaber, Blackmount, and Glencoe.

The Southern Highlands are throughout more markedly schistose, and their mountain slopes grassier. Rugged though some are, as in the Trossachs and Arrochar, they expose no great cliffs like those of Glencoe and Ben Nevis. Together, the south and central regions present every wild aspect of the Highland scene—long, wooded lochs, lively rivers, flat-topped mountains deep-bitten by corries, lochan-bespattered moors fringed by sharp cones, wide slopes of grass rather than the heather of the Cairngorms, peat-hags and bogs, sharp ravines and broad straths. Although readily accessible by road, the regions still boast true fastnesses, like the Benalder Forest, whose interiors are for those who love solitude and their exploration for strong walkers. They are colourful, changeful day by day, and still more so by season.

The Cairngorms have no rival in their forest setting. To all men not blindly climbers that is their principal landscape feature. Deeside and Speyside are the most richly timbered areas in Scotland. The Spey valley approaches go through Abernethy and Rothiemurchus across flat, undulating land wooded heavily—quite different from the Dee valley approaches, which are channelled through glens all made alive by their big burns. On both sides the natural woods are predominantly of old pine and drooping birches. The

trees have space to branch fully and the ground between is deeply carpeted with blaeberry, heather and kindred plants. Hence the Cairngorms are richer in bird life than other Highland areas.

Behind the forests, the granite plateaux appear as featureless masses. Their appeal is not an obvious one. Their wastes of shattered stone form the biggest area of high ground in Britain, but the flat tops and rounded slopes lack distinctive shape. The act of exploring them alters such first impressions. Carved in ranges along their faces are huge corries, on their floors dark lochans ringed by cliffs. Nowhere outside Skye are to be found so many corries within a like area, and only Coruisk can match Loch Avon for the sense of utter remoteness imparted. Gradually, the immense scale on which the scene is set is revealed, and this, with the massive slopes, the long passes, the vast skies, and the very bareness of ground on which the elements work with a power not known on smaller hills, gives these plateaux their distinctive quality—a majesty great enough to cast a spell on man's mind.

Deeply furrowed though the Highlands are, distinct and individual though the mountains often appear from moors and glens, their real form is still that of the old plateau. There is no genuine mountain range in the country. This truth becomes clear enough from the Cairngorm levels, but strikes more sharply to the eye from Ben Nevis. So uniform are the summit heights, they unroll before us like a seascape. Nowhere rise dramatic towers like those thrust up from the folded ranges abroad. We have here no Fitzroy, Cayesh, or Karakoram spire—nothing in mountain shape so crude and raw, nor yet of a beauty so startling.

What, then, is their true point of distinction? It is clearly not to be found in mountain shape, nor in mere seasonal features like snow or heather. But quick as our survey has been, the clues have emerged. First, the extraordinary variety of scene from region to region within a small country, which may owe its skeleton to numerous geological accidents, but shape, flesh, and clothing to our maligned Atlantic atmosphere. This humid climate gives our Highland hills the variety and subtlety of colour so relatively absent in the mountain countries of the sun. They too have colours, strong in contrast, but few in number. The Highlands are richly apparelled. This coat of many colours demands a high price in days of rain. But the coat is ours to enjoy.

To weather we owe our myriad lochs and burns, and here come to the second point of true distinction. The Atlantic and the lochs: these are with us at all times, of all mountain settings the most brilliant. The sweep of sea and winding loch which bursts upon

the man breasting a western mountain-top has its counterpart in every glen where a burn storms under a Highland bridge, and on every moor where water lies at peace in brown pools. This wedding of mountain and water, adorned by an untold wealth of growing things from Caledonian pines down to sphagnum moss, gives rise to a Highland beauty that I have never seen equalled in kind or in colour.

The face of the Highlands can be changed more quickly by the hand of man than by weather. For twenty years or more it has been the field of industrial development in water-power projects, forestry, and latterly tourism, at first slow in growth, more recently fast and accelerating. Every person with regard for Highland prosperity must welcome these industries, and Highland revival means that the face of Scotland must change. Change is not to be feared. The one thing we should fear is continuing haphazard change. The ugliness present in so many of our towns was never desired and planned: it crept in over the years through lack of foresight and control. This same situation is recurring in the Highlands now.

The list of impairments suffered is so long that examples only can be cited. Some far-famed regions of beauty murdered by hydro-electric works are Loch Quoich in Glen Garry, Glen Strathfarrar, Glen Cannich, and Kerrysdale in Gairloch. Among regions disfigured are Loch Ericht, Loch Rannoch, upper Glen Lyon, and Glen Affric. The latter glen has been big enough to take the dam and the flooding of fine woodland and remain one of Scotland's finest glens—but standards have fallen and no longer can it be called the undisputed first. It may have to suffer much further damage. The most splendid private forests, like those of upper Glen Affric, Mar, Derry, and upper Glen Feshie have been allowed in the past to suffer from sheer neglect and are now dying. The Forestry Commission have taken over in Glen Affric and are felling the old Caledonian pines (thirty acres each year over a seventy-year period). They will replant. But Glen Affric, if packed with 'commercial timber' and shorn of its drooping birches, will have lost a very great part of its remaining excellence. Rothiemurchus recently escaped the felling of its old pines only at the intervention of the Prime Minister (and not of the Scottish people).

The straight lines and lanes of early Forestry Commission plantations gave an unpleasing, artificial aspect to many of our hill-slopes (the Cobbler, for example) but such unimaginative planting is now discredited and unlikely to be repeated. A new forestry error has more recently been the close-planting of trees

hard alongside the roadways, notably in Glenelg, where outward views to the Isles would be lost unless wide avenues were opened by felling. So great is the Commission's appetite for more and still more ground that too much country suitable for agriculture is lost, and deciduous woods like those of Loch Lomondside will soon be highly prized as a rarity. In both these tendencies the variety of pattern that lightens and relieves the Highland landscape is in danger of replacement by a coniferous monotony. Hardwoods are not planted.

In the not-distant future, it seems possible that further hydro-electric projects will greatly impair the scene (1) in the Fisherfield Forest, where Lochs Fada and Fionn may be dammed and despoiled on the bath-plug system for feeding Loch Maree (presumably also to be dammed); (2) in the Glen Canisp and Inverpolly Forests, where the myriad lochans may vanish in a damming plan for the River Kirkaig, which would raise the water-level seventy feet; (3) in Glen Nevis, where a dam at the throat may dominate with a concrete wall 240 feet high the only Alpine gorge in Britain; (4) at the head of Loch Lomond in Glen Falloch, which is threatened with the erection of the biggest pylons, about 250 feet high, straddling the breadth of the glen near Inverarnan; (5) in the Trossachs, where these same pylons will be sited on a route west of Loch Katrine. And so the list continues. Even Glen Etive has been surveyed for development, and the River Avon in the Cairngorms.

Instances might be multiplied, but the main points are established. Development of natural assets is a boon to man in the Highlands. The outstanding beauty of the Highland scene, also one of our great natural assets, has been haphazardly expended and no account kept. Assessing it even on the lowest possible plane, as the raw material of the tourist trade, it is worthy of care and conservation. Is there a Scot so devoid of business acumen that he would allow such a goose to be killed? Its annual egg is valued at nearly twenty million pounds in foreign currency alone. Assessing at a higher level, we are aware that the nations live under threat of self-destruction, the peoples under constant pressure of work and distraction; that year by year the pace of living increases —on the roads, in the factories and offices, in classrooms and laboratories; that growing cities enclose man with brick, stone, tarmac, and concrete, and then gas him with exhaust fumes. Thus he has urgent need of access to unspoiled wild country and the refuge of solitary places. They offer refreshment on every plane of his being.

Valid as these arguments are on economic and social grounds, they strike no fire in my own heart. Are Scots so dead to natural beauty that they cannot prize it for its own sake? Must material gain be seen before anything can be valued? Let us strike a balance. Man eats bread, it is said, not beauty. Yet a man with any sanity will know that he cannot live on bread alone and pretend to be civilised. He needs both. There is no reason why he should not have both.

The wasting away of our natural asset is bound to continue, and to accelerate, unless discrimination is brought to bear by a body created for the purpose and granted powers by government so that safeguards may be instituted. That has been done in England. Why not here? The plain answer lies in the apathy and blindness of the Scottish people, who are not alive, or not awake. Our first needful thing is to become more fully alive ourselves, and to awaken others.

MAY THE FIRE BE ALWAYS LIT

By John Nimlin

THERE was a time when two nebulous bodies known as the Scottish Mountaineering Club and the Cairngorm Club appeared to be the only representatives of organised mountaineering in Scotland, and there was a time when we saw a group of climbers on the Cobbler, the leader of which wore a tweed jacket so incredibly tattered as to suggest contrivance. He was, we were told, 'a member of the S.M.C.,' and as we compared our own howff-stained garments against his, it seemed better that we should stay away from nebulous bodies and respectable. We were two, and we were young, but we imagined ourselves to have a wealth of climbing experience behind us, having spent every weekend of the past three years on the hills of Arran, Arrochar and the Trossachs, and longer holidays in the Highlands. Brother climbers were few, moving specks on skylines, sometimes to be confused with deer. Then one day on Ben Lomond we were to meet a wider destiny in an encounter with two climbers who called themselves the 'Craigallion Boys.' We returned with our acquaintances to Balmaha and took a bus to the Halfway House on the Stockiemuir, whence we tramped over a wooded hill in the gathering dusk to a large fire by the path overlooking Craigallion Loch. The firelight played on a ring of

faces; a gallon-size community tea-can bubbled between the logs. Someone threw a handful of tea into the can and pointedly remarked at the newcomers that the can had been a Rodine container. We were not impressed, we used the Rodine half-gallon size ourselves, and we confidently dipped our mugs into the cauldron. Thus we joined the Boys, and the Boys joined us. They represented, rather vaguely, organisation, and we in a relative way represented experience.

The Fire and the people who were drawn into its glow could provide a long tale. The setting, the wooded hollow with its ranks of varied trees reflecting the changing colours of the year on the sheltered loch, and the double echo, sensitive to the lightest bird-call, epitomised the wonder of the wide Scottish landscapes beyond the treetops. Established some time earlier, the Fire had become a magnet for all the outdoor types escaping in growing numbers from the smoke and grime of the Clyde basin. Already it had a *mystique*, a glow which drew the cauldrife into community, and the other fires which were soon to glow in the woods and howffs of the Highlands were projections of this parent; shrines of the heat-worshippers. There was a fire-chant based on the old hymn *Rock of Ages* :—

> Long may old Craigallion woods
> Send forth abundance of their goods;
> May the fire be always lit
> So that we may come and sit.

The songs that followed this invocation were on an abysmally lower level.

In time the faces became names. Christian names, nicknames, but rarely surnames. Through the years came a great roll of names, some forgotten, some unforgettable. Starry, Bones, Sparrow, Peaheid, Scrubbernut, where are you now? Simple-lifers. Not for them the Ramblers' Federation and the Youth Hostels. *Under the wide and starry sky. There's the wind on the heath, Brother.* We quoted Stevenson and Borrow at length. We had an analytical appreciation of Stevenson's *Night Under the Stars*, which expresses the very essence of sleeping out. Only the aboriginals lived a simpler life than we. Our gear was carried in ex-army knapsacks, for rucksacks had not then appeared. We seldom climbed from a fixed base and usually carried our loads across the hills; consequently we cut down weight to the barest needs. One group of us worked in shops until 9 P.M. on Saturdays and, since most of the long-distance trains and buses had retired long before then, we were left

with a handful of late, part-distance vehicles to take us within striking distance of the hills. A quick-change act and a rush for the last train and bus took us to Garelochhead for midnight, then we would climb the hill to Whistlefield and take to the railway, walking from there to Arrochar in the small hours. One always touched down on the Arrochar road with a mincing gait after long attunement to the spacing of the sleepers.

Those late vehicles set the pattern of our activities. One bus got to Balmaha for midnight. From there we could reach Rowardennan before 2 A.M., but sometimes we arranged for a rowing-boat to be ready at Balmaha jetty and rowing with two pairs of oars in two-hour shifts we would cover the fourteen miles to Tarbet by 4 A.M., snatch a few hours' sleep under the trees and walk to Arrochar for a fair day's climbing before facing the return trip to Balmaha. It was our fancy that we could sleep in a concentrated way; cramming eight hours of sleep into three or four. I can still recall the bliss of an off-shift when one curled up between the feet of the swinging oarsmen—took a last look at the swaying stars and drifted into sleep to the slap and gurgle of the water.

There was another useful bus which reached Balfron around midnight, leaving a 15-mile slog to Loch Achray and a rather longer plod by Loch Ard and the Duchray Pass to our howff in the loft of Stronmachair Cottage, four miles short of Ben Lomond. Those journeys could be dreary on a wet or windy night, but we usually enlivened them by various pranks aimed at each other or at people who enjoyed Saturday half-holidays and got down to sleep at a Christian hour. Dougan, one of our 'characters,' carried a bugle. The bugle was for signalling purposes, and a few brazen blasts from the North Corrie of Ben Lomond or from the distant approaches in Glen Dubh would announce our impending arrival to Mrs Campbell, wife of the shepherd in Comer Cottage under the northern slopes of the Ben. The signal gave her time to fill the kettle, grease the girdle, and mix up batter for the scones and pancakes that were our delight. Passing the newly-opened Kinlochard Youth Hostel on a winter's night around 3 A.M., we noted that some fresh-air fiend had left a window open. This brought the old mad light to Dougan's eye. He pulled out his bugle, leaned in and gave his own excruciating rendition of *Reveille*. This, added to the yowls of a dog which had consequently developed hysterics, had a disturbing effect on the sleeping hostellers. Next morning, packing our gear outside Stronmachair *en route* to the Ben, we were quickly surrounded by a large gathering of the Holiday Fellowship Mountaineering Section, last night's tenants

of the Hostel. They had seen Dougan's bugle on top of his pack. There was a warlike brandishing of ice-axes, and history was close to recording the Skirmish of Duchray Pass, but the danger passed, no doubt on account of the ladies in the opposing forces. In time the H.F.M.S. relented enough to become our friends.

With so little time for sleep, our shopkeeper group followed a spartan regime. Sleeping-bags and tents were a useless burden and no one carried them. At night we pulled on sweaters, scarves and gloves, turned up our collars and lay close to a fire in a wood. Howffs were used if they were available. I can never travel by Loch Lomond, Loch Long or the Trossachs without thinking of the woods, overhangs, bridges and decrepit howffs of bygone bivouacs.

One night by Craigallion we solemnly enrolled the members of the Ptarmigan Mountaineering Club. We named it not for the spur by that name on Ben Lomond, but for the tough little bird of the high tops whose most southerly outpost is the summit of the Ben itself. We closed the roll at twenty members, thus seeming to ensure a short life for the club, for the high wastage-rate of climbing club membership can only be balanced by a comparable inflow of new recruits. But if its life was shortened, its legend grew long and, as a test for the mathematician, one can say that fifteen per cent. of its members are still active.

The idea of the small club soon caught on. Some time in 1933 I found myself in a repulsive rent among the carboniferous lavas of the Campsie hills, surely the most friable rocks in the country. My desperate aim was to find at least two points of adhesion for finger and toehold, whilst the alternative rugosities rattled down the crag. Arriving at the top to say good-bye forever to that particular rent, I found myself under the eye of a wiry youth who had been following my moves. He told me I had made the first ascent of Coffin Gully, and it seemed clear that his knowledge of such was not to be questioned. He was Andy Sanders, leader of the newly-born Creag Dhu Mountaineering Club. Andy died a few years ago, but he must be remembered as the inspirer of the vigorous pioneering spirit which has been characteristic of the Creag Dhu ever since. Shortly after, on the Cobbler, I met Johnny Harvey who had recently founded the Lomond Mountaineering Club. Johnny, too, is dead, but not before he had guided the course of the Lomonds for nearly thirty years, and all that time as the Club President. Johnny and Andy shared an unbounded enthusiasm for the hills, and each has played a large part in the story of the smaller climbing clubs.

Thereafter, one joined freely in the activities of both clubs. Howffs were shared and everyone was known to the rest. Bruce's Cave in Glen Loin, Arrochar, was the most popular howff in the West. At one time it recorded more bed-nights than the Youth Hostel in the glen below. Countless songs were roared around its bonfires as the smoke billowed up through the natural chimney in the cave roof. No Viking celebration was wilder than a cavemen's gathering, with up to fifty climbers in the company and all the surrounding caves and overhangs booked to capacity. The war brought an end to the great days of Bruce's Cave. To-day it lies in a forestry plantation (Fine for fires £10). No visitor would dream that the cave had ever been used except perhaps by Bruce or a wandering Pict, but in the chute at its lower end an archæologist will some day unearth several feet of food tins and a corresponding depth of bottles.

Time went on, and the Ptarmigan became a memory. The Craigallion fire had also faded through the efforts of the landowner who now declined to share the goods of Craigallion Woods. But some years later a circular went out calling for a reunion of the Old Craigallion Boys. The gathering, in a Glasgow tavern, was well attended. The Fire-chant and the old songs rang in the rafters, but this was a poor substitute for the tang of wood-smoke, the trees and echoes of Craigallion, and it was therewith decided to hold a one-night revival of the Fire itself. It was further decided that in the event of police action instigated by the landowner, a defence fund would be set up for any members falling into the clutches of the Law. And the Law made its swoop. The firelight flashed on badges. The mob darted into the night like minnows before a pike. Only two men—the ones with the best seats—were captured. The defence organisation started its cash-gathering; no easy task in the Thirties. Then came the shock headline in the *Daily Express*: 'Climber Calls Magistrate A Tinpot Mussolini! Case Adjourned.' Consternation among the collectors. This comment, which might normally have placed the said climber on a pinnacle much higher than that celebrated obelisk in Skye, had to be viewed in the hard light of economics. An order went out, open to interpretation as a request, a command or a threat: *Be good to the magistrate.* The magistrate won in Round Two. That was the last attempt to revive the Fire. To-day, by Craigallion, one cannot find as much as a fire-blackened stone. The echo will never return the sound of camp-fire song, and perhaps the magic of the place is only for those who can see it as it was crystallised in the hungry, receptive eyes of youth.

One thing persisted for years; the primitive approach. Many still travelled without tents, blankets or stoves. Innovations were slow to come, but, in time, rucksacks appeared, home-made ice-axes gave way to Swiss models and clothes-lines were replaced by Beale's climbing ropes. A change to jobs with half-holidays on Saturdays brought more time for sleep, and when blankets appeared it was a short step to sleeping-bags. Some of the softer types even strayed into Youth Hostels.

Little has been said about climbing during the period, but, in fact, it was a time of prolonged activity with projects ranging from the Lakes to Nevis. There was a light-hearted rather than a dedicated approach. No one laid siege to a climb and lay by nights planning its conquest. It seemed enough to wander among the hills, responsive to the lure of a sunlit crag or a mysterious rent in a hillside. It was a period good to recall. It produced a fair number of first ascents relative to the numbers engaged thereon. New routes were made, remembered, but not always recorded. There was no great urge to measure, assess and pin down a route like a moth on a cork slab. Thus, when certain routes appeared in the guidebooks of two decades later as the discoveries of other climbers, it was good to know that the joys of a first ascent should be shared by a larger number of people than might have been.

Back to history. There was still an intermingling of Creag Dhu and Lomond activities. Before the coming of the Club Bus, it was common for combined groups to hire lorries. The lorries were of the covered-wagon type, murderously cold in winter, always overloaded and not entirely legal in this use. Innocent-looking lorries would roll out of Glasgow crammed to the shutters with suffering climbers. There was a time when one such wagon came to a stop on the tramlines of a busy street. The driver could not wake it up, but after some minutes it began to move in a series of jerks. Someone peered out between the tarpaulins and saw a group of tram-drivers, conductors and policemen bursting their braces to get it clear of the lines. He signalled for silence, but a whisper came from a dim corner ' If the polis ask what's in the lorry, make a noise like sheep.' It was a move to complete luxury when Charlie ' Flee-on ' McAteer started to hire his bus to the Lomonds. Charlie took floods and snowdrifts like a hurdler. A few years after the war his bus, *The Mountaineer*, would leave George Square on a July evening with Grindelwald on its destination board.

But the Club Bus in its turn has given way to motor-bikes and cars of varied vintage, and the Alpine-bound have taken to jet aircraft. This trend towards smaller units seems to have weakened

the older community spirit of shared transport, howffs and campfires, but the old attachments are most enduring. Half-forgotten faces turn up for annual dances, club reunions and funerals, and behind such occasions there looms a background of hills. I set out to write about climbing clubs, but what I recall are countless faces coming and going against this background of hills, howffs and fires. They may be grouped for convenience under the badges of many clubs, but they rank in the memory as individuals, all aiming in their individual ways for the same end. Techniques have changed, fashions too, as one observes from old photographs, but climbers still sweat and shiver, laugh and groan and strive as always for the enduring delights of the *tapmaist elevation.*

THE CASCADE MOUNTAINS

By D. J. Bennet

SCOTTISH mountaineers who have not heard of the Cascades can be forgiven, for they are not among the world's best-known mountains, and even in North America they are overshadowed by the greater height of the Rockies, the Tetons, and the Sierra Nevada. But ask any mountaineer from the north-west and he will tell you that the Cascades are the most glaciated mountains in the United States, outside Alaska; that Mount Rainier, while conceding a few feet in height to Mount Whitney in the Sierra Nevada, has every right to be considered the grandest mountain in the forty-eight states; and that the rock peaks bear comparison with the Teton spires and the Yosemite walls. These may sound extravagant claims, but having climbed a few of these mountains in the last year I am inclined to believe them.

The Cascades are a large range, the southward continuation of the Coast Range in British Columbia, extending from the Fraser River through Washington State into Oregon; 500 miles from north to south and about 50 miles in width. The western slopes are heavily forested and swept by the rains from the Pacific, while the dry eastern slopes fall gently towards the cornfields and orchards of the Columbia River plateau. The average height of the mountains is about 8000 feet, but seven or eight peaks, the extinct volcanoes, rise to over 10,000 feet. These volcanoes are part of the " ring of fire " that encircles the Pacific Ocean through North and South America, Japan and the Pacific islands.

The Indians who lived by the Columbia River, and on the coastal plains, were probably well acquainted with the lower slopes of the mountains, and even the high ridges, as they pursued the mountain goat for their daily meat, and gathered blueberries for their wine. The great white volcanoes, some of them still erupting 100 years ago, figured in their legends and were named by them; but the British came, sailing along the Pacific coast, and without setting foot on the mountains Captain George Vancouver renamed them to honour some of his friends; thus Komo Kulshan became Mount Baker, and Tahoma, the highest of them all, Mount Rainier. Then came the gold miners to explore the mountains with a more professional eye; blazing trails over high passes, they carved into the hillsides and panned the streams for the gold that promised wealth and gave only back-breaking toil. The gold rush towns, such as Monte Cristo, perched high in the mountains, had their few years of glory at the end of the last century and then faded away. Now only a few miners remain, patiently panning the creeks, and they probably find more solace in the peace of their mountain cabins than from the prospect of wealth.

The earliest climbing attempts in the second half of the last century were centred on the great volcanoes, and in particular on Mount Rainier, whose early history was almost as eventful as that of Mont Blanc or the Matterhorn. The latter-day history of Mount Rainier is also remarkably like these two mountains, for like them it is a gold mine for the mountain guides who annually haul hundreds of clients to the top. However, many of the finest of the Cascade peaks waited until the nineteen-thirties for their first feel of human boot, and Mount Fury with its outer defences of thick forest and bush and inner defences of steep rock and ice was not climbed until five years ago.

American climbers tend to be gregarious, and the local mountaineers have always delighted in massed ascents of the volcanoes. History tells us that the early ascents were more like military manœuvres, with a party of scouts in front, buglers to sound the *Advance* and *Retreat*, and one or two strong men in the rear to catch those who slipped, for few had alpenstocks. Nowadays such a lack of equipment would be strongly frowned upon, and no mountaineer is considered complete without his " ten essentials " (ice-axe, pen-knife, matches, candles, etc.). And if he is bent on serious mountaineering the American climber is doubly well equipped with all the latest devices such as drills, expansion bolts (like a Rawlplug, only better), and pitons of every shape and size. This I discovered when R. Cameron and I were camped below

Mount Athabaska near some Californian climbers; all evening these keen fellows sorted out pitons, carabiners and étriers, so that we were convinced that they were bound for some extremely hazardous route. Next morning we were awakened by the clanking of iron as they moved off, and it was only when we caught up with them on the glacier two hours later that we discovered that we were all bound for the same route, and not a very difficult one at that. Roderick and I being less heavily laden were able to move ahead and cut a line of steps to the top.

American climbers and clubs are also very safety-conscious, and organise courses of mountain rescue and climbing technique with great enthusiasm. Each spring as the snow bridges begin to melt on the glaciers they hurl themselves into crevasses and haul each other out, and one suspects that the second man who does not use gloves for handling his leader's rope would be drummed out of the club, which is just as it should be. The standard of climbing achieved by local climbers in the Cascades is very high; there are rock climbs comparable to the hardest British climbs, but with more pitons used, and two or three of the routes on the north side of Mount Rainier are in the Alpine north face class. Twice this year I have been told with pride by local climbers the story of a well-known French guide, conqueror of the West Face of the Dru, who failed on a Cascade climb. There were probably extenuating circumstances, however, such as the weather.

A Cascade peak makes an ideal weekend outing, and such a climb includes many of the most pleasant aspects of mountaineering. On the Saturday afternoon the climb up the lower slopes may be through magnificent stands of timber; with any luck there will be a trail and the horrors of bush-whacking (so vividly described by Smart earlier in this volume) can be avoided. On the other hand, if you want to improve your character and have a week to spare there is plenty of untamed forest in which to have a good old whack. High camp, or bivouac if you are a polythene man, is where all high camps should be, at timber line, with the valleys 3000 feet below, the peaks 3000 feet above, and a fire blazing cheerfully. In the nearby meadows and crags mountain goats browse and marmots whistle; but beware, for as soon as you leave camp they will be in, and even if you have put all the food in a rucksack hanging from a tree they may rip your sleeping bag to shreds just for spite. With many mountains to choose from the Cascades offer a wide scope for the mountaineer. The volcanoes and other higher peaks give glacier routes and snow-ice climbing from very easy to very difficult; and rock climbers have a wide

choice including a fine group of peaks round Cascade Pass which live up to their names—Forbidden, Torment, Formidable, and the Cashmere Crags, a wonderful collection of granite pinnacles of great difficulty. Finally, as in Scotland, there is a whole host of mountains of no great interest or difficulty; many of them are tree-covered to their summits and rarely climbed, but they form an effective setting for the higher mountains in the interior.

The Cascade climbing season is as short as an Alpine one, but can be extended by ski-mountaineering early in the year; my own introduction to this branch of the sport was on the slopes of Mount Baker, the northernmost volcano, only a few miles south of the Canadian border. I imagine that Mount Baker could be climbed on skis almost any day the weather permits, but because of the intense cold and short days an ascent in January would probably be much less pleasant than one in May. My first attempt was in mid-February with John Denton, late of Cambridge, and several other climbers from Vancouver, but from the outset everything went wrong. A late start and broken tyre chains meant that at dusk, just when we should have been arriving at the Kulshan cabin, we were plodding on skis up a logging road that ended 1500 feet below the cabin; then in complete darkness we pushed and slithered up the steep hillside, zig-zagging between the trees and trying to follow the trail that was 4 feet under snow. My own pre-expedition training had not included this sort of thing and I was eventually forced to wade uphill dragging my skis behind me. Next day the weather was bad, and after climbing 2000 feet up the Coleman Glacier in zero visibility we skied down again, unable to see either the slope in front of us or the skis under our boots, which were churning along under 2 feet of powder snow. For me at least the time was not entirely wasted and I spent the next few weekends trying to remedy the obvious deficiencies in my ski-ing technique, which up to that point had been learned only on the well-worn pistes. The second attempt was in May, again with Denton and some of his friends, and this time we made sure of an early start to reach the cabin before evening. In the next two days we made two ascents of the mountain, the first in conditions of high wind and cloud, and the second in glorious weather. The climb was remarkably easy; in four miles of glacier we easily avoided all crevasses, and the upper slope of the mountain, the scene of one of the worst avalanhce accidents in American climbing history, was in good condition for crampons. The downhill runs, over miles of open snowfields, were exhilarating and the whole weekend gave a favourable impression of ski-mountaineering, particularly

as a means of avoiding the tedious downhill plod in softening snow and afternoon sun.

As already mentioned, there is a fine group of peaks round Cascade Pass, which was probably at one time an important trade route for the miners. Nowadays, however, the pass is a Mecca for climbers, and its summit is littered with the remains of many a camp fire and many a tin can. Of all the peaks round Cascade Pass, none have the splendid lines of Forbidden Peak, reminiscent of the Zinal Rothorn with its three rock ridges reaching a perfect pointed summit. Forbidden Peak, then, was the objective one August evening as Roderick Cameron, John Armstrong, Dick Pomeroy and I drove up the logging road by Cascade Creek in Armstrong's ancient Chevrolet. As sometimes happens when planning is poor we found we had more food than enough, and certainly too much to carry up the hillside, so we decided to doss down in the woods and eat as much as possible before starting the climb. Soon a fire was blazing cheerfully and half the weekend's supply of food was consumed at one sitting; as we lay down to sleep it off the mice were scampering to collect the remains.

Early next morning we were on the move, there being no need to cook breakfast, and headed up to the Boston Basin, a large corrie dominated by Forbidden's neighbour, Boston Peak. The narrow trail had obviously not been used much of late, for in places it was overgrown with Devil's Club, a large and prickly plant notorious for its unpleasant sting. In two hours we emerged from the forest at about 6000 feet and pitched the tent, for now we felt we had earned our breakfast and a short rest. Forbidden Peak, now rose 3000 feet above us, its east and west ridges in profile and its south face smooth and bare between them. We climbed a short, steep glacier to a narrow snow gully leading to the west ridge several hundred feet below the top. This was the route.

At the foot of the gully a vote was taken and I was sent ahead to cut steps; this was a tiring job, but at least I felt I had earned the right to be led up the rest of the climb. Soon the two others were charging off up the narrow ridge, while Denton and I followed at a more leisurely pace, enjoying the warm sun and wonderful firm rock; we overtook the others at the crux. Here I was surprised to see Pomeroy in the lead, for this was his first major climb whereas Cameron is an old-stager, and the pitch—as I was shortly to find out—was Severe. Cameron, who had done this climb the previous year, had by a clever bit of climbsmanship manœuvred Pomeroy into the lead at the crux, but Dick is a man of iron nerves, and being a part-time aviator by part-time profession has a good head



D. J. Bennett

The Cascades, U.S.A.; Forbidden Peak



A. Watson

A langlauf and a merry one, westwards from Beinn a' Bhùird down to the Yellow Moss and over to Glen Derry and Ben MacDhui.

for heights, so that eventually he hauled himself over the top and we were on our way to the summit, a few ropes' lengths away.

The return journey went smoothly, swinging down the ridge in long rappels and sliding down the slushy surface of the glacier. But a shock awaited us at the tent, for the marmots, unable to reach our food hanging from a tree, had made a fine meal of Cameron's Polar sleeping bag, whose down now lay all around. Doubtless the delicate aroma of two Greenland summers plus innumerable Cobbler howffs had been the attraction, but it was a treacherous act all the same, and the poor boy had a cold night.

Next morning another shock was in store, for the mice had negotiated the tree and rope to the food bag, which was now a mess of mouse-eaten food and less pleasant things; thoughts of breakfast turned the stomach and dark clouds and incipient rain did nothing to cheer us. Waiting long enough for the rain to become heavy, we packed up and trundled off down the trail; climbing was over for another weekend and we counted ourselves lucky to have had one good day.

As has often been remarked, mountains are more or less the same the world over; rock may be rougher here, and ice tougher there, but the essential features are the same, and this is as true of the Cascades as of any other range; this combination of forest and mountain is found in many parts of the world. The Cascades have not the magnetism of the world's highest mountains; the lover of the inaccessible would find them tame compared with the Coast Range of British Columbia with its hundreds of miles of trackless forest; the rock climber might prefer to find his sport on peaks nearer the roads and the ice-man would probably think that once he had done a few routes on Mount Rainier he had done the lot. But the climber who takes his mountains as he finds them, who climbs where the rock is steep and skis where the snow is deep, finds these mountains a wonderful playground; and the pleasures of walking through the forests of fir and cedar, and of mountain camps where the wind sighs in the white pine tops are unforgettable.

CAIRNGORM LANGLAUF

By Adam Watson

It was a Saturday in April 1962, and I'd been burning heather all day on a Deeside moor just below the snow line. We had marched off the hill hot, tired, and thirsty, but a sudden frost soon had us shivering at the contrast from the blazing inferno of a few minutes before. I was looking forward to a long lie in bed next morning. But later that evening I began to wonder. This was the first April since 1958 with so much snow. If I got up early, and the weather held, what a fine langlauf tour could be done on the Cairngorms ! I nipped over to the little shop up the road at 11 o'clock, and bought six tins of fruit, knowing I'd crave sweet liquid rather than food the next day.

I rose very sleepily at three, and after breakfast drove swiftly up Deeside. The sky was cloudless and moonlit, and the ground iron-hard, as I set off at 5 o'clock from Invercauld through the pine woods towards Glen Slugain. A frosty mist hung over the Dee, magnifying the craggy low hills and the tall spruces into a landscape more like the Rockies. I was carrying a pair of long narrow skis, weighing only 7 lb., which I'd bought at the hamlet of Kaaresuvanto in Lapland for 50 shillings, and a fairly full rucksack with ice-axe, sleeping bag, camera, binoculars and food. I was determined not to continue with the ski tour any longer than I was enjoying it, and to sleep at Corrour or some other place if the day became too much of a penance.

From the upper Slugain onwards, the snow lay deep and continuous, so hard that it bore my weight with scarcely a mark. On with the skis, and I rattled away at great speed over the icy surface towards Ben A'an. It was already dawn and cock grouse were cackling all around, standing up on every big snow-free patch and shouting defiance to their next-door neighbours—a cheery Deeside morning sound seldom heard in the barren far west. The sun was flooding in a rosy glow over the great bulk of Beinn a' Bhùird and down into the old green mushroom pines of the Quoich. It was good to be climbing at last, up towards Càrn Eas. Skins were needed for a grip and soon afterwards a problem appeared. The steep south side of Càrn Eas was ringed from end to end by a massive cornice which had been avalanching in yesterday's strong sun. There was only one narrow line of weakness without a cornice—

a 45-degree slope which had thawed partly the day before and was now very hard. It was a case of kicking steps in a long traverse below the cornice, then cutting steps straight up over the line of weakness. Having done no climbing whatsoever for four months, I was glad to inch gradually over the bulge and off this icy slope that swept far down into the murky shadows of the Gairn valley.

At Càrn Eas I was now on the Ben A'an plateau and looking down over the vast Aberdeenshire grouse moors, mostly covered by an early-morning cloud sea. Up here some of the snow had evaporated in the dry sunny air, exposing bits of green moss and grass, and the golden plovers were back, flying like butterflies in their courtship and piping mournfully—always a welcome sign of spring on the hills of Deeside. I tore on at a great, but jolting, pace over hard ridged snow, and soon the black rocks at the summit loomed up above. An icy east wind blew there, showering the fog crystals from the rocks. There was a view of utter desolation towards Tomintoul, where the bleak flat Banffshire moors were an unrelieved expanse of white almost all the way to the Moray Firth. Through binoculars I watched cars crawling like ants on the road towards Glen Livet. It was 8.30 A.M., and I was 3½ hours from Invercauld. Already very thirsty, I sucked fog crystals at the cairn till the cold sent me off. I turned west towards the finer prospect of the Mitre Ridge and Beinn a' Bhùird.

A few minutes and half a mile later, the plateau was behind after a fine run on smooth powder snow. But afterwards the fairly steep descent to the Sneck was slow and tiring on very icy ridged snow, where the long narrow skis were difficult to control. I went down painfully, with a few tumbles and undignified scrapes. Then up the other side, with a spectacular airy view on the right along the great ice-plastered wall of Mitre Ridge.

From Cnap a' Chleirich to the North Top of Beinn a' Bhùird, it might have been an Arctic ice-cap—not a black speck in sight, and psychologically very tiring with the intense glare, flat snowscape and no view. But at last at 10.30 A.M. the tip of the North Top cairn peeped through, and a fine view opened out to the west. The 2-mile descent to the Yellow Moss was the best ski run of the day, with glistening hard-packed powder in every direction. I swooped leisurely from side to side all the way down Coire Rùaraidh, and finally far out on to the Moss in a last straight run. But out on the flat glaring expanse of the Moss I again felt tired, in spite of the perfect snow surface, and started getting cramps up and down my legs. No doubt about it, I wasn't in form, what with no ski-ing at all for over six weeks, and that—of a day yesterday tasting the

preliminaries of hellfire hadn't helped. It was tempting to think what a good finish it would make to ski quickly all the way down to Derry Lodge and have a brew of tea over a fire. This was a signal that it was time for a good rest, and I opened a tin of fruit.

Refreshed, I pushed on swiftly and was soon edging down the steep slopes into Glen Derry. Here the snow was very icy, and the endless fast traverses and kick turns brought the floor of the glen up slower than if I'd been on foot. The Derry Burn was showing at one place, the last water I was to see till Glen Dee, and I drank a good quart. Coire Etchachan was suffocating—no wind, blazing sun, a dark blue sky and utter calm. Every step was an effort, relieved only by watching the infinitely more painful progress of two heavily laden parties on foot. As I climbed, a cornice cracked and tumbled down the 500-foot red wall of Creagan a' Choire Etchachan, and the whole corrie had an air of menace. It was so calm that I could hear my heart thumping as if it was outside my body, and the ' silence you 'most could hear ' swishing in my ears. Some ptarmigan were quietly dozing on top of boulders in the hot sun, their eyes closing lethargically from time to time. I rested for a while on a boulder near them, feeling quite spent.

There was a refreshing change at last up at Loch Etchachan where a cold wind blew over the flat white invisible loch. I was tempted to go down by Derry Cairngorm, but now felt slightly better, so I plugged on uphill mechanically and took heart when I caught up with two skiers from Yorkshire. The snow was smooth but our pace slow to the MacDhui cairn, where about six people had gathered. For the third time I felt like ending the tour by heading off south, but some food and a rest for an hour in good company changed my mind. Ken Armstrong and a friend appeared from Glen More and shortly after headed back, flashing down at a great speed off the North Top. How I envied their fine downhill technique and the stability of their heavy skis. By the time I had wobbled down unsteadily on my birch boards from Lapland, they were distant specks. Still, the plateau was a continuous sheet of silky smooth snow, and now on the flat, my skis had the advantage, I felt stronger, and soon I'd passed ahead of them. After leaving my pack at Lochan Buidhe I felt like jumping in the air with relief and I now flashed quickly on to Cairngorm, through scores of skiers and walkers thronging the summit and the Coire Cas ridge.

Not long afterwards I was ski-ing gingerly down the top of the March Burn. The slope was now 45 degrees and had softened dangerously in the strong afternoon sun, so I fixed the skis to my pack and trod carefully downwards, shoving my ice-axe well into

the snow and sending off minute avalanches all the way down. I skied down the last 200 feet in a glorious steep swoop to the invisible Pools of Dee and suddenly out of warm sun into freezing hard shade.

I ate two more tins of fruit and took stock. It was 5 o'clock and the cramps and weariness of the forenoon had all gone. However, I was now finding climbing very tiresome with the pack but easy without. So—why not leave the pack in the Lairig below Coire Bhrochain, ski round, back a short distance for the pack and on to Corrour? This meant some extra distance and loss of height, but I couldn't enjoy any more climbing with the pack.

The steep climb up Braeriach on skins was easy, on snow so hard in the shade that the skis scarcely left a mark, and yet not so icy and steep that the skins didn't grip. An hour later I was at the top, looking down a Coire Bhrochain precipice heavily sheathed in ice and frost. A bitterly cold breeze was blowing but the few clouds in the sky were all vanishing rapidly. It was good to look away from the glaring snow and ice for a moment, down past the cone of Càrn Eilrig to the warm reddish-brown moors of Strath Spey, the green fields of Tullochgrue and the houses at Coylum among the pines.

I moved off in a long run downhill to the plateau, and an easy 50 minutes later I was on Cairn Toul, looking west over the Great Moss towards Glen Feshie. This was obviously the grand finish to my tour—a long 2-mile run down to the Moss, then another steeper 2-mile run to Achlean. But with a pack in the Lairig and a car at Invercauld, I had to turn east. I clambered down the bouldery ridge of the corrie below the summit and soon came on a drift stretching 2000 feet to the Dee. No place for a solitary fast glissade, but the surface was safe enough for a fast trot downhill, and I was at the bottom within 20 minutes.

I had a good rest at my pack and ate the last two tins of fruit. Dark blue shadows were spreading rapidly in the glen and already tiny daggers of ice were visibly thrusting out over the pools of melt water.

It was good to warm up again, gliding quickly down the moraines to Corrour. The last sun rays were burning red on Ben MacDhui. By contrast the bothy was dark and gloomy, and I was feeling not at all tired, so I moved on across the snow-covered Dee and up round Càrn a'Mhaim. The snow was no longer continuous and many stones appeared, but it was still much quicker to scratch and push forwards with the skis. Finally a last run down to the pines of Glen Luibeg; there was no snow down there, so I

had to walk the remaining mile and a half to Luibeg. I was now so used to the ski-ing motion that I felt I could have kept that going all night, but I found the new movement of walking very tiring.

It was getting dark at 9 o'clock as I reached Derry Lodge, where I met Bob Scott and my father. My father had been ski-ing at the Great Moss and Glen Geusachan and wasn't long off the hill himself. Back to Bob's for cups of tea, and then down the road to Braemar where we swung into the welcoming lights of the hotel for a dram and pints of beer with some of the residents. We left after midnight and collected my car in the Invercauld wood at 1 A.M. The greatest mental effort of the day was now required to drive down Deeside without falling asleep.

I'd had a good 24 hours' worth, seeing the whole Cairngorm range and other parts of the North-East from innumerable viewpoints. Time had passed so slowly that it seemed more like a week—a good indication of a day lived to the full.

I worked it out later at about 38 miles, with 34 on skis and 8700 feet of climbing. It is certainly no more than a hard but enjoyable day in good weather to a lightly laden man, and I would carry a lot less if I did it again. Without a push I think I could have done the tour in 14 hours instead of 16, and still enjoyed it. But I don't think the time could be cut much more without making the day a matter of physical effort rather than of enjoyment. It is a grand way of re-exploring familiar hills, and the Cairngorms, noted originally as a paradise for hill-walking and shown by the recent *Guide* to be equally enjoyable for rock-climbing, should become famed for a third aspect of the sport—ski-mountaineering. Langlauf provides the opportunity, and I'll be back as soon as I can—and this year looks like giving another opportunity.

BEINN DEARG MÒR PAIMIREACH

By Malcolm Slesser

IT is not often that this club participates in an international event. It is a pity that on so prominent an occasion as the 1962 British-Soviet Pamirs expedition local malts should have been blended with so much straight-run spirit. The product didn't sell well in Russia.

Happily for us, George Ritchie had been there in 1961, bearing beneath his S.M.C. cloak the redoubtable McInnes. Hamish sings well; the Russians love singing. Hamish has the common touch; Communists admire Burns. McInnes and Ritchie were tough; so, almost oppressively so, are the Russians. Ritchie could scarcely fail to charm any foreigner if he put his mind to it, which by all accounts he did. And most happily of all the Russians were aware that the U.K. is comprised of more than one nation.

'Do not allow the Alpine Club,' murmured Gippenrieter through the Armenian brandy with which we were helping down *glâce plombière*, a Muscovite delicacy, 'to push the S.M.C. out of it. Demand your rights. We have given you six places. Take them.' By the skin of our teeth we held on to four.

Eighteen men on a single expedition. Three nationalities. No porters. The potentiality for disagreement makes the Dyrenfurth assortment on Kanchenjunga seem Sunday School. Sir John Hunt foresaw the danger. He saw the need to integrate. Is it small wonder that the ultimate treatment was to prescribe a tranquilliser?

The tale may be told in a dozen different ways. Already some versions have come over the air, on television, and in articles of one kind and another. I would not associate myself with them all. Are all Russians 'Trogs'? One expedition member so averred. Because one cannot buy a red ball-point pen in Moscow must one therefore assume the Russians cannot make them? 'The English are insensitive to the feelings of foreigners.' Is member X's opinion a justifiable generalisation? 'I thought you Scots would be tough.' Is member Y working from personal observation? Difficult situations, and there were many on and off the mountain, produce uncompromising statements. Confusion, prejudice, and State Security very nearly came between man and mountain, and between man and man.

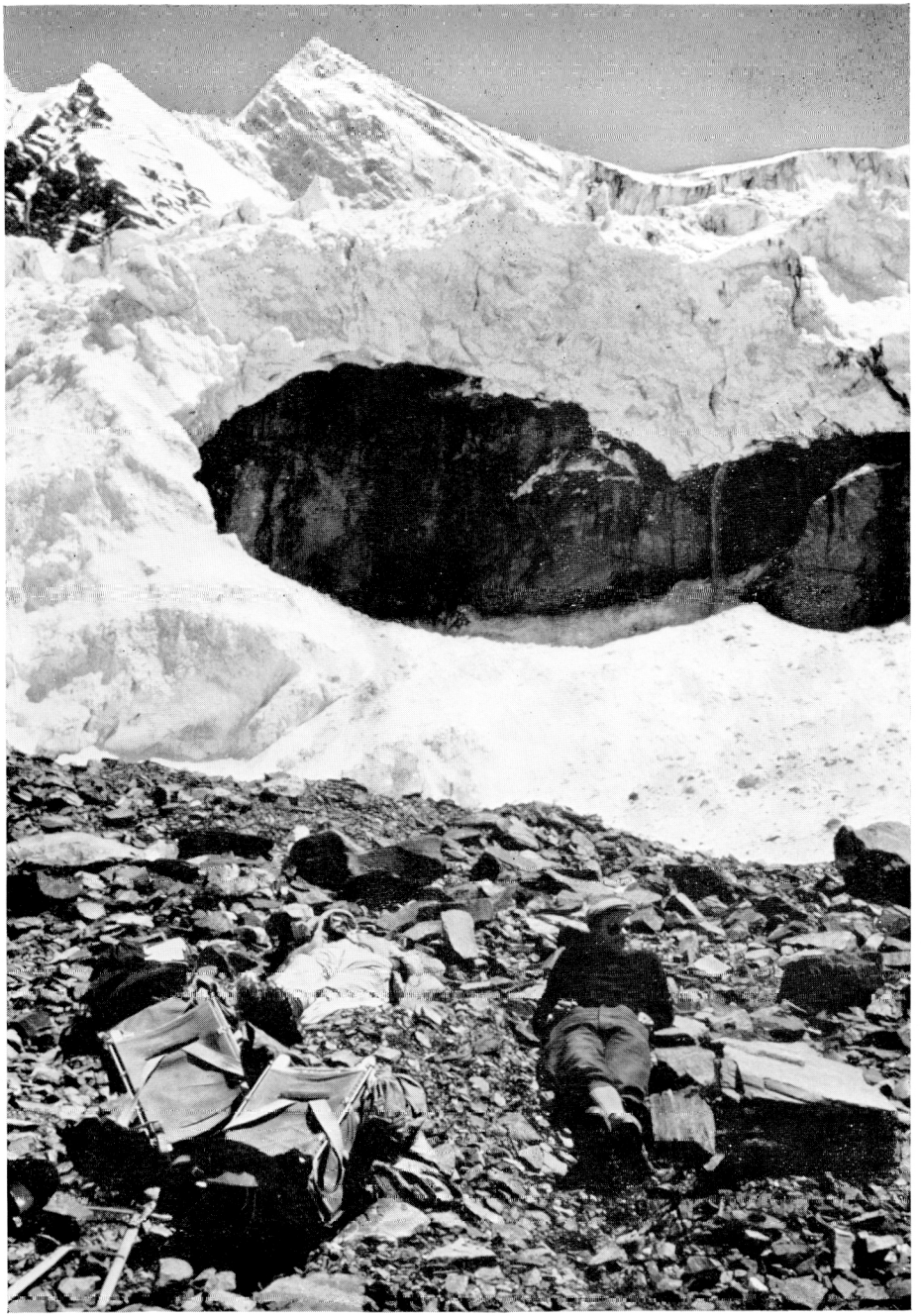
There are Soviet men of every hue. Some wanted to strengthen

the links between the U.K. and the U.S.S.R. An application to visit the Pamir was welcomed, and helped on its way, and, I believe, fought out at a high plane in Moscow. The result, only, we know; permission for six each from the S.M.C. and the A.C. on the condition they joined forces. It would be naïve to go to Russia and expect the mountaineers we mixed with to run down their system; a system, for instance, that can give them two months' free holiday in high mountains 2000 miles from home. As Robin Smith once said in these pages, 'You gotta live with the times.' They do, and we do. They did everything within their power for us, but they had little power. At every turn they were frustrated; it was not their fault that at Dushanbe the local power of Tajikistan prevented fulfilment of plans made earlier in Moscow. There were a dozen similar instances, each and every one galling to us, and to our purses. Inevitably our Russian comrades were identified with the system that made for this difficulty.

We won base camp in the comfort and insecurity of powerful helicopters, whose price made a weekend air trip to New Zealand seem like pin money. We sweated and laid depots. We were manifestly less fit than the Russians who, like the pure of heart, had for six soul-destroying months eschewed life's more sybaritic pleasures that they might humph and climb without puff or muff. But as free men we thought we were entitled to be unfit.

We acclimatised in three groups, four British and two Russians to each. The integration went best in Noyce's. Ovchinikov, the uncomplicated and sincere Russian leader, and our own star, Robin Smith, helped. Smith knew what was meant by 'A man's a man for a' that.' You would often find him talking or playing chess down in the Russian camp. And he was fit. Occasionally he 'burnt off' the Russians, and once he bagged a 5000-metre virgin in an afternoon, alone. 'He's a B.F. to do it solo,' said Brown, and Joe was right. But that was Robin. The accident on Peak Garmo was human error. There was nothing covert about the mountain and its dangers were plain for all to see. Why he and Noyce agreed to take risks, we shall never know. Smith had already demonstrated his powers as a high altitude man, for with the minimum of effort he had made 21,800 feet.

The main top, Pik Kommunisma, was 24,590 feet high, and was almost 15,000 feet above base camp, and 30 miles off. The problem was logistic and gastric, not technical. We did it in 11 days: a second-hand peak by a second-hand route. As a climb it was horribly dangerous, yet not hard enough to force on the group of Russians, English and Scots the necessary solidarity. There



M. Slesser

The Pamirs, U.S.S.R.; K. Bryan and lay figure in foreground, Peak of Communism with its 8,000 ft. S. face behind.

is little camaraderie in running across Sauchiehall Street in the rush hour to catch a bus.

At the end I shared a tent with my friend Tolia Ovchinikov and Eugene Gippenrieter, who spoke almost faultless if slightly square English. One morning he had me answer a thirteen-point questionnaire, which he then laid before the others. Most questions invited criticism, and got it. For instance :—

Q. 6. *What are your impressions of the Pamir mountains?* We endorsed the McNaught-Davis view that in 50 years they would all have fallen down.

Q. 9. *What was the relation between British and Soviet mountaineers?* That was a very personal question with different answers for each man, I suspect. Graham Nicol had the Russian ear at the end, and we learnt that there were those, and such as those.

Q. 10. *What is your opinion of the competition system in Soviet mountaineering?* Personally I thought it stank, but surprisingly, opinion on this score varied amongst us.

Q. 12. *What are the prospects of further joint enterprises?* At the time I was not sanguine. Now I am, for the President of the U.S.S.R. Federation of mountaineers, the kindly Mr Borovikov, has just written to say that the results of our expedition have been considered in committee, and that notwithstanding the tragic accident, they deem the enterprise a success, and look forward to further ventures. For my part, so do I.

NOTE.—The British-Soviet Pamirs Expedition was nominally an A.C.-S.M.C. affair, but in view of the close association of the Climbers' Club in the early English attempts to obtain permission, Sir John Hunt, who became the leader of the joint enterprise, was anxious for that club to be represented. Only two members were neither in the A.C. nor the S.M.C.

The party consisted of: *British*—Joe Brown, Ken Bryan, Derek Bull, Ian McNaught-Davis, John Hunt, Ralph Jones, George Lowe, Graeme Nicol, Wilfrid Noyce, Malcolm Slesser, Robin Smith, Ted Wrangham. *Russian* (all from Moscow)—Anatole Ovchinikov, Anatole Sevastianov, Kolia Shalaev (all Masters of Sport), Eugene Gippenrieter, Vladimir Malachov, and Nikolai Alchutov.

A GREAT DAY

By Robert Grieve

ONE of the great things about having climbed for more than 30 years is that one can look back over a long series of Great Days. Some are greater than others, and this one was a day during the war—and that, I begin to realise, is a long time ago. At that stage I had a very young family who loved Arran because there they got everything they wanted—freedom of movement, fishing, the hills, all that. We were staying, on this particular September weekend, in a cottage, isolated, and standing at the foot of a little rock face beside the sea near Pirnmill. The weekend was that of the Glasgow Autumn Holiday and Hamish had asked me to phone from Pirnmill to his hotel in Brodick when he arrived on the Saturday afternoon. I did so from a lonely roadside kiosk a mile north of the cottage. A cruiser was moving at full speed down the other side of Kilbrannan Sound, a great wave at its bow and firing shells over the Mull of Kintyre to a hidden target out on the Atlantic, and this somewhat interrupted the ebullient one-sided conversation. The substance was that there was a great climb to be done. It had to be straightened out. It was the south face of the Rosa Pinnacle of Cir Mhòr. 'So,' said Hamish, 'I'll see you at Brodick to-morrow morning, early, and we'll bash our way up Glen Rosa.' For the first time I got a word in. 'There are,' I said, 'no buses on a Sunday,' 'Oh,' said Hamish, only momentarily dimmed, 'well, you can walk across.' 'Walk across,' I said, 'what do you mean, walk across?' He said 'Walk across the island, of course, there are only two mountains in the way.' A very persuasive character, Hamish. I agreed, and only later that evening did I realise what I had taken on, what in fact I had to walk across. But there it was; I had contracted to meet him at 11 A.M. at the head of Glen Rosa next morning.

Next morning was dull and misty. The start at 7 A.M. was miserable and my mood was not the best. However, out I went from the back garden straight on to the rocks. And then as I mounted the slopes I saw the great north-west ridge of Beinn Bharrain looming up. My spirits rose and paid no attention to questions of time. I dropped into the corrie and climbed up this well-remembered ridge. A good scramble but time-wasting, and as I came up on to the top of the mountain I realised that I would have to move very fast to get to the head of Glen Rosa so many miles away at 11 o'clock. So I ran down the steep slopes to Loch

Tanna in a series of great leaps through weather which was still misty and dull, but which had bred a fine free wind now beginning to thin and scatter the clouds that hung about the great ridge of A'Chir. So I came to Loch Tanna and skirted its northern end.

Then came the long slopes down to Glen Iorsa and when I reached the Iorsa I had made enough time to look, in a relatively leisurely manner, for a point of passage where I could jump from stone to stone and keep my feet dry. Then the long grind up the Garbh-choire Dubh to the northern end of the ridge of A'Chir and down again, leaping, slithering and jumping and recovering myself, to the head of Glen Rosa in the birth of a perfectly magnificent day.

And here was one of these rare conjunctions because I saw Hamish in golden sunshine, a small black figure, moving up the upper part of the Glen and allegedly yodelling. I yodelled back as he approached. He looked as though he had never realised it sounded like that and it stopped him for a while. The Glen settled into its mountain silence. We sat in comfortable companionship and ate. He talked and told me about his first attempt on this great face with George Roger a year before. We lay back on the heather in the sunshine, soaking up the warmth, and regarded the soaring ribs of the pinnacle with delight.

We rose, then, having taken off our boots and replaced them with rubbers. It was rubbers, be it noted; there were then no vibrams—certainly, we hadn't heard of them—and I think that climbing on rough rock in thin rubbers is an exquisite joy which is probably not so often appreciated by the highly technical and meticulously-equipped younger climbers of to-day.

What a superb climb that day was the Rosa Pinnacle ! Rough clean granite, sparkling sunshine and dazzling clouds. This is not intended to be a technical account of that first ascent; even if I wished it to be, I couldn't write it. I never remember the details of climbs. So I will only say that I remember with particular delight the long layback with its tremendous impression of under-hanging space and only the strength of arms and the friction of feet holding one from the long drop down the immense spread of slabs and rocks. And, of course, I remember the crux where there appeared to be only two little grooves, one at the extreme stretch of the right arm and the other of the left. It couldn't have been like this but feeling is everything in memory. I remember, too, the overhang on which one lay and only managed to move up by means of the changes of position of one's fingertips and the snake-like undulations of one's belly over the rough rock. No footholds, and always, during the struggle at this point, the tremendous impression of exposure

beneath. And, of course, I remember Hamish's splendid lead—that marvellous *élan* which he always displayed and which I always associate with his lively dark eyes and his black moustache. So, then, the summit, and the glorious half-hour which we all know, after a great struggle of this kind—a perfect miracle of beauty and the relaxation which permits one to know it. I can understand W. H. Murray's comment as he stood looking at his first mountain prospect—' I thought of the shortness of life with a pang.'

But Hamish's thoughts were far more earthy. ' Boy,' he said, as he looked over the vast prospect of my return to Pirnmill, ' it must be great to be tough.' His relish was not entirely free of a touch of sadism. An exquisite refinement struck him : 'And you've got to go right down again for your boots, too.' This consideration afforded him extra pleasure, and me some bitterness at lack of forethought. He talked about the nice stroll down to Brodick and dinner. And what nice dinners they had in his hotel, he said. He talked about the short hands-in-pockets saunter down the delightful Glen of Rosa (how right he was) and about a swim in the Rosa at some convenient and leisurely time during his dander. I was not amused at all. For a short time the brightness of the sun was dimmed and I hated him. I hated his little black moustache. I said abruptly and brutally that he looked like an unfit version of Tommy Lorne.

We made friends again and started the long scramble down to the right of the Rosa pinnacle, walking down steep rough granite slopes to the Glen like apes with our legs bowed and our rubbers biting into the roughness. Then a short seat on the heather, the sun beginning to set, and we put our boots on again. And shortly after that there was Hamish, again a little black figure disappearing down the Glen, again making his Alpine noises and rendering the beauty of the Glen nugatory.

A'Chir once more, the passage of the ridge, the long corrie down to the Iorsa and, this time, I went straight through the water. The edge of condition was off me and the struggle was beginning to make itself felt. Of all the elements in that day of 17 hours I suppose the worst was the hellish grind up from the Iorsa to Loch Tanna. Some will understand my use of the technique of 1000 paces. You decide to walk 1000 paces. You achieve that target and you either set your teeth, and try another thousand, or you fall flat on the heather and relax for 5 minutes before attempting the next thousand, or two thousand, or three thousand. During this purgatory, clouds were rolling across the mountain tops and pressing down closer and closer to the surface of the earth

The day was going and thousand paces succeeded thousand paces. Grind, grind, grind. And now the wind was coming in great uneven buffets that sent me reeling from side to side over the heather. There is no indignity, to a tired man, like the indignity of punishment by a great wind, and I was full of hatred of it.

At last, Loch Tanna; and the dusk and the waves and the gathering wind and the great steep slopes of Beinn Bharrain. I could not face them or the struggle in darkness and wind over the tops. It was arguably foolish but I decided to come down Glen Catacol, thereby adding some 6 or 7 miles to my journey. Down, then, I went, down the steep slithery slopes of the path from the Loch. I can remember the reeling miles of bog and slough with the gleaming burn on my left in the darkness of the night and its various sounds—some beautiful, some frightening, but always a kind of companionship in them. And the wind and again the wind, throwing me about, forcing my feet to go where they would not go.

When I arrived at the road at Catacol and felt its calculable texture beneath my boots, I felt that the journey was virtually over. I could not resist sitting under the parapet of the bridge over the Catacol for half an hour, smoking a pipe, secure against the wind and waiting for some transport. But, of course, there was no transport, not during the war, not in Arran, not at that time of night. So eventually I arose, faced into the soaring south-westerly gale, now in its fullness of strength, and beat back down that road to Pirnmill, the whole 6 miles of it, lying against and struggling into the wind. Again the technique of the thousand paces. Thousand paces after thousand paces. Now and again the devilish wind would momentarily stop and let me fall, an undignified bundle, on to the road. It would wait till I rose, with rubbery legs, staggering, and would then throw me down on my back. I heard all the time, on my right, the roar of the waves. Sometimes when the road touched the sea I saw the 'white breakers wander in the dark.' When I reached the house at 11.30 P.M. I was hardly able to recognise it or to appreciate that it was there at all.

I came into the lamp-lit cottage and the roar of the waves came into it with me. My wife at the fire turned to the opening door with a degree of apprehension warranted by the hour, and the place. She looked at my face and then at my clothes. 'Did you have a good day of it?' she asked. I found my lips stiff and reluctant. 'A Great Day,' they said. But I was thinking—as so many times before and so often since—of the difference between the black jolting hostility of the mountains at night, of the intractability of boulders, peat-hags and rivers, and the warm, lighted, comfortable precision of a human dwelling.

KINDRED CLUBS

The Greenock Mountaineering Club

In February 1949 a young climber, Hamish McInnes, noted then more for his exuberance and daring rather than his now internationally-recognised technical ability, decided that a town of Greenock's size should have a mountaineering club. With this in mind he organised a lantern-slide lecture and together with the enthusiasts who turned up, formed the Greenock Mountaineering Club.

On the early meets, mainly to Loch Eck and the Cobbler at Arrochar, the members travelled by push-bike, overloaded with spare clothes, waterproofs and working boots, and festooned with tricouni nails and spare peas for the spare whistles which we were led to believe were indispensable. However, as the Old Guard retired and new members, mainly ex-Servicemen, joined us the pattern of the meets changed and the Glencoe Club (along with many of the smaller Glasgow clubs which were flourishing at that time) offered us transport on their bus outings to the various climbing centres. The membership at this time was around 20, with about a dozen or so active members, so it is not difficult to appreciate the value of these offers. As a result, the climbing standard rose considerably and we were led by two very fine climbers—Sam Jagger, the Club President for many years, and Charles Whyte, Senr., the Secretary. It is interesting to note that the latter only started climbing at the age of 44. The highlight of this partnership came when they joined Hamish and John Cunningham in the first successful attempt on Dalness Gully in Glen Etive.

The club continued to flourish but the membership did not rise quickly enough for us to organise many bus outings. In fact, at one time we had to depend on five ladies to bring the numbers up sufficiently to make it a sound financial proposition. Around this time tragedy struck the Glencoe Club when, during a bad storm at a New Year meet they lost John Bradburn and three of their members. This affected us, for their club never quite recovered and we lost touch with them, and—together with the fact that our ladies either got married or emigrated—forced us to fall back on public transport.

Eventually it was decided to have a recruiting drive and this, aided by a series of lectures, brought the membership up to its present level of around 40.

Again the climbing standard rose and new routes became fairly common; a great number of these were put up in Arran and the club was able to assist in the new Guide to that district. Piton techniques became popular and were taken up with great gusto, so much so that some members can now be recognised from as far away as 3 miles by the clanking of ironmongery.

The ski-ing boom took a hold and is a great help in organising transport during the winter months. Summer holidays are usually spent in Skye or

Torridon but this year, in keeping with the Affluent Society, parties are planned for Norway and the Italian Dolomites. There are no limits on membership, either age or sex, and most of it comes from the Greenock district. However, we do have a sprinkling of very active members from Ardrossan and Saltcoats.

Every club has its social climbers and we are no exception, so an Annual Dance is organised at a local hotel, usually in November, and there, with feet firmly planted on the brass rail, we do our best climbs.

C. W.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Lagangarbh

SIR,—I write in support of the opinions expressed by the pseudonymous ' Inflator ' who contributed such a cogently-argued case against commercialisation of the mountains in the last issue of the *Journal*. His enjoyable exaggerations illustrate the important general principle that immediate expediency is more likely to prevail than the long-term plan.

An interesting though more benign example of immediate expediency carrying the day occurred at the last A.G.M. when the Club was asked to approve a motion in favour of asking the National Trust to alter the lease of Lagangarbh hut by removing a clause originally inserted at the request of the S.M.C. which prohibits the hut being used by mixed parties.

The reasons given in support of the motion were that the National Trust, from whom we lease the building, is continually receiving applications for accommodation from mixed organisations who for one purpose or another wish to stay in upper Glencoe and, as Lagangarbh by virtue of this clause cannot be offered to them, the Trust is under pressure to provide some alternative. By altering the lease in the way suggested we should thus be able to help a friendly organisation and at the same time allow our own members to introduce lady guests, as is possible, though never done, in other S.M.C. huts. The National Trust might, it was hinted, respond with financial assistance towards the installation of electricity, extra staircases, latrines, powder rooms and other accessories for the new look. It was pointed out that by garrisoning Lagangarbh with detachments of the monstrous regiment we should be able to control the acts of destruction carried out by some S.M.C. members and other visiting males who are not even S.M.C.-sponsored.

The motion was carried, to the great satisfaction of certain members, one of whom remarked to me afterwards that he had waited 10 years for this to happen, and then with incredible naïvity added ' There are no such things as male and female mountaineers—there are only mountaineers '. The last statement does not agree with my own personal observation and experience and also conflicts with the general message conveyed on this subject by both biology and the great literatures of the world. Still, these were the emotions which carried the weak-minded floating vote.

I believe, Sir, that the decision should be reconsidered for the following reasons.

The S.M.C. was formed by and for men who were primarily interested in mountains and who could take them neat, a tradition it has managed to maintain to the present day. Men who feel happy or insecure unless accompanied by lady mountaineers and men who wish to enjoy the company of ladies against a backcloth of mountains are adequately catered for by other organisations. The S.M.C. should not respond to the pressures of our present society by providing facilities for the domesticated male and his matriarch. Already there are indications that many would consider the S.M.C., with its amenities, ' well worth joining ', if it were not so exclusively concerned with mountains.

Lagangarbh is particularly vulnerable to the thin end of this wedge. It lies on a main road within three hours' drive of the main midland cities and conveniently close to a ski tow and the pleasures of the essentially social sport of downhill ski-ing. Once a comfortable hut is discovered by the booming numbers of social skiers, our hut custodian will be a harassed hotel proprietor catering for a large alien clientèle.

There will be further problems. The wives and lady friends of members will tend to attain the status of chronic guests, for they cannot under the present regulations aspire to club membership. However, the continual presence of lady guests will become a normal phenomenon. The member who proposed at the last A.G.M. that ladies be invited to the club dinner will find himself at a future A.G.M. with a conditioned audience who will give him his majority (' I have waited 10 years for this to happen ').

A year or two later it will be pointed out that ladies have what amounts to *de facto* membership and that the only gentlemanly thing to do is to remove the ridiculous convention which denies ladies full membership and thus bring the S.M.C. into line with more sensible organisations. (' There are no such things as male and female mountaineers. . . .') The age of the individualists will be over and the comfortable era of the founder hermaphrodites will commence; another tediously dull social organisation will emerge, distinguished by an incidental interest in mountains. (It's *so* much nicer now, dear. How *disgusting* it must have been in the days of that *horrid* Ritchie and Marshall ! And that *impossible* Dr Bell with his *nasty* pipe. Another cocktail ? Do keep your ash off the carpet.)

To some this will seem far-fetched, but the natural history of the hermaphrodite mountaineering club is perfectly clear in the example of the Alpine Club of Canada. Originally it was formed by some excellent men and some equally excellent amazons of awe-inspiring ability. Over the years the social erosion progressed, the excellent amazons declined and were inevitably replaced by the mate-seekers and the socially hungry. It is now a jolly organisation which appeals to such large numbers that it requires a full-time secretary and runs enormous meets which are a great social success. It is prosperous and popular but the spark has died. They have Annual Picnics.

Let us keep the affairs of the S.M.C. simple. Let the man who wishes to

climb with his wife or girl friend do so privately or through another club. Let Lagangarbh be made simply and functionally comfortable, a refuge for the man primarily concerned with some aspect of mountaineering and let it be the minimum of a millstone round the neck of its custodian. Spare us the additional quarrels of Mrs X and Mrs Y and the possibility of S.M.C. picnics. (In fact let us even consider extending the admirable clause in its lease to the leases of our other huts before the social pressure reaches them. At present it seems perfectly constitutional to fill them up with women and children.)

Vandalism is an unrelated question. Lagangarbh by its position will always be subject to it.

Whatever course is followed, windows, skylights and doors must be barricaded until a vandal is obliged to expend uneconomic amounts of time and energy to gain entry. As for acts of treachery by our own members we can only ask them to curb their overweening selfishness or they will land the whole lot of us in the hands of the real fuddy-duddies. There are even worse evils in this world than people who can't climb V.S.'s.—Yours, etc.

I. H. M. Smart.

The above letter was shown (in the absence of MacKenzie in France) to Murray, who replied:

Sir,—Good counsel is so hard to get that members will feel grateful for the one grain offered by Dr Smart (hereinafter named the plaintiff). The grain lies deep-buried under so great a mound of error, mis-statement, and exaggeration that pick-and-shovel work is required of me to lay it bare. E.g., (1) prohibition of mixed parties at Lagangarbh was *not* inserted in the lease at the club's request; (2) the N.T.S. is not 'continually receiving applications from mixed parties'—they received two (from Scottish University clubs); (3) our members *do* introduce women climbers to other S.M.C. huts; (4) who but the plaintiff suggests that we instal powder rooms for the new look at Lagangarbh? (5) who but the plaintiff proposes to garrison the hut with women? (6) who but the plaintiff is unhappy or insecure on mountains unless accompanied or not accompanied by women climbers?—I think not even he.

The plaintiff likewise seems wholly out of touch with facts on the use of our huts. Few of our members use them, and of these only a small minority climb with wives or other women, so that almost all he says on this aspect of the subject is quite divorced from reality. Thus fantasy is spun.

There remains the plaintiff's grain, his fear that Lagangarbh could be over-used by skiers. In fearing as he does, he underestimates the club committee, who can be tougher than he seems to credit. If time were to show the need, they would quickly apply an exclusion order—as they have in the past when dealing with offending clubs.—Yours, etc.,

W. H. Murray.

By a convention of the Editor's, the first writer is allowed the last words, in one sentence. This plaintiff, no doubt as a tribute to Solicitor-General Murray, awarded himself an even longer sentence than editorial justice thought necessary. . . . However:

SIR,—Rhetorical questions aimed off the point are all very well, but it must be realised that organisations such as the S.M.C. are subject to the eroding pressures of the society in which they exist, and one does not break traditions or throw away unique assets such as this interesting clause in the Lagangarbh lease when it is unnecessary, inefficient and unpopular to do so—unnecessary because one of the main reasons advanced by Messrs MacKenzie and Murray for encouraging lady guests was that they would prevent our members from damaging the building's fabric and this has now been withdrawn not to say ridiculed by Mr Murray in point 5 of his letter (invalidating their mandate by so doing), and the two University clubs can still use Lagangarbh by holding all-male meets as was done during my time in the E.U.M.C., and if this is too great a hardship for them then it brings out my point very clearly and answers the question Mr Murray poses in point 6 of his letter,—inefficient because it unnecessarily increases the administrative chores of the committee and leaves them less time for mountaineering—unpopular because the motion was carried by a bare majority and many of the floating voters have since realised the deeper implications and have changed their minds and many who were not at the A.G.M. are dismayed that such an unlikely proposal was not firmly rejected, i.e., the lease-changers may now be a minority group about to use an invalidated mandate to dispense with a club asset for no very clear reason and should stay their hand until the next A.G.M.—Yours, etc.,

I. H. M. SMART.

NEW CLIMBS

ARRAN

Cir Mhòr: Lower North-east Face.—*Greenfinger Grooves.* 500 ft. Very Severe. R. Brown (M.G.C.C.) & H. Howard (S.C.) (alternate leads). 24th August 1961.

At the base of the face is a prominent overhang. This climb starts some 70 ft. left of the right hand end, at a groove just left of, and 30 ft. below, a small black hanging corner.

(1) 80 ft. Surmount overhang and up a thin groove, turning the bulge by a crack leading right to a spike near the black corner; move up left and follow groove to its finish beneath an overhang (peg belay). (2) 40 ft. Step up, then down again to right, and cross delicate slab to grass ledge; peg belay. (3) 100 ft. Climb hanging corner on left to bulge and turn on left (crux) to a spike runner above; continue up grooves to stance and peg belay. (4) 150 ft. Follow grassy grooves and a long grass

ledge to base of wet groove; peg belay. (5) 103 ft. Up groove to good block belays in bottom of Gully A.

—*Eastern Ridge.* 300 ft. Difficult. R. Brown (M.G.C.C.) & H. Howard (S.C.) (alternate leads). 24th August 1961.

Follows crack starting at low left edge of vertical wall above the finish of A Gully.

(1) 100 ft. Climb crack curving right past jammed blocks and up pleasant slabs to good ledge and belay. (2) & (3). Further cracks and slabs wander pleasantly up ridge for 200 ft., keeping near right edge all the way. Top gained after another 100 ft. of scrambling.

Caisteal Abhail: No. 3 Buttress.—*Left Edge.* 220 ft. Difficult. W. Wallace & G. W. Hamilton. April 1962.

This buttress is pyramidal from below with a steep slabby lower half. The lower part of the route is a narrow rib with a huge gully on its left and a thin crack on its right.

Gain rib and follow line of least resistance to top of buttress.

Coire na h-Uaimh, Glen Sannox.—*Central Grooves.* 400 ft. Very Difficult. W. Wallace & G. W. Hamilton. April 1962.

Starts at the lowest point of the slabs.

(1) 110 ft. Climb slab above and follow left edge of prominent groove to stance and belay. (2) 70 ft. Follow same line to huge block belay on lower edge of heathery terrace coming in from left; walk up terrace and bear right at obvious block below initial wall of upper slabs. (3) 80 ft. From block reach slab above, go slightly left, then right, to obvious grooves and small stance and belay. (4) 110 ft. Follow same line to finish.

Beinn Tarsuinn: Meadow Face.—*The Rake.* 480 ft. Very Severe. W. Skidmore & R. Richardson (Greenock M.C.). 18th August 1962.

This route is on the ' remarkable overlapping slabs ' left of Meadow Groove and, in its middle part, uses a hidden grass rake running up to the left. It starts a few feet left of Meadow Grooves and right of the big slab at some broken rocks.

(1) 40 ft. Straight up rocks by rib; flake belay. (2) 65 ft. Straight up by corners and grooves, then cross to grass rake on right and to obvious block belay. (3) & (4) 150 ft. Follow rake up to left to finish below slab and unpleasant corner; peg belay on right wall. (5) 40 ft. Climb slab, passing spike runner on right wall, traverse left below bulges and up to grass ledge; peg belay. (6) 100 ft. (Crux). Up, then round right into corner (good runner); with peg for direct aid climb corner above and gain obvious bay on right; then follow crack in slab on left and rock ledges to grass ledges and belay. (7) 35 ft. Climb corner to grass ledge and peg belay in overhanging cave. (8) 50 ft. Go up back of cave,

stomach-traverse along ledge on left (avoiding loose chockstone) and by unusual move gain slab and groove on other side of roof, following them to choice of belays. Some 50 ft. of scrambling lead very close to the start of Meadow Slabs—an attractive continuation to the summit.

—*Slant.* 340 ft. Severe. P. McKenzie & N. McPhie (Greenock M.C.). 18th August 1962.

On slabs above The Terrace; useful continuation to Meadow Grooves or The Rake. Starts above finish of Meadow Grooves, at cairn and arrow.

(1) 100 ft. Up and left by grassy grooves, over bulge and left until crack leads up to grass ledge; peg belay. (2) 60 ft. Left, to slab, up, and left to loose blocks; belay. (3) 100 ft. Follow turfy grooves to slab below crack in overlap, then up by crack to peg belay. (4) 80 ft. Move right, and up small slab, bearing left and following chimney crack in overlap, surmounting chockstones to stance and belay at top of slabs; finish well to left above start.

SKYE

Sgùrr Dearg.—*Durham Slab Route.* 125 ft. Mild Severe. K. Mosley & R. Wilson (through leads). 11th September 1962.

On the same face as Bishop's and Toolie Grooves. Descend gully behind Window Buttress, walk east to obvious terrace; starts 30 ft. along terrace at cairn.

Climb diagonally up orange block and up slab on right to belay on platform at 60 ft. Then go straight up to triangular flake, go right and round this and then up to finish.

Sgùrr Dearg: Inaccessible Pinnacle, South Face.—*Hadrian's Wall.* 100 ft. Very Severe. K. Mosley & R. Wilson (through leads). 11th September 1962.

Starts 15 ft. west of South Face Crack, on ledge 6 ft. above ground.

Traverse left to diagonal crack, then go straight up face on small holds to a platform belay at 60 ft. Step off right of platform and go up face, finishing over slight overhang.

Sròn na Ciche: Eastern Buttress.— *The Plunge.* 300 ft. Very Severe (A1). B. W. Robertson & E. Cairns. 6th August 1962.

Starts at cairn and arrow at the bottom of the Flake and between the starts of Creagh Dhu Grooves and Strappado (*S.M.C.J.* (1958) xxvi, 273-4). The route goes up between these two others as far as the top of the Flake, whence it strikes out right, crossing Strappado and then turning up to finish at much the same point.

Traverse right and up for 15 ft., then continue up passing bulge to piton belay at 80 ft. Go up corner to sloping ledge, go left under overhang; surmount overhang, then go up to block belay at top of Flake. Traverse right and round overhanging wall for 15 ft., then go up to piton belay near

the arête. Climb up to small ledge, make a peg traverse right for 30 ft., then 10 ft. of A1 Artificial; end traverse with hard move to large platform (belay). Up, by thin flake, to easy ground.

Coir' Uisge.—The following climb, so far un-named, lies on the slabs to the east of Loch Coruisk, which are better and steeper than they look.

—700 ft. Mild Severe. T. M. Lauren & J. Highet (J.M.C.S.). 19th May 1962.

Starts some 30 yds. right of first large boulder at foot of slabs.

(1) 80 ft. Climb left side of cracked wall for 25 ft., then trend right to belay below damp basalt corner fault. (2) 70 ft. Overcome this by left wall, then up slab to grass terrace. (3) 100 ft. Trend right and climb slabs above on small holds (crux), then up left to cracked block belay. (4) 90 ft. Go up line of slab overlaps to narrow leg-and-peg belay. (5) 70 ft. Traverse left on waterslide and then up to second grass terrace. (6) 150 ft. Walk, right, along dyke to peg belay below steep slab. (7) 80 ft. Gain slab, then up to grass field and up to corner with block belay on right. (8) 110 ft. Climb rib direct to fault; block belay in corner. (9) 110 ft. Keep up edge until angle eases. Thenceforward scrambling.

Coir' Uisge, Mad Burn Buttress.—This name seems to have popular assent, and is given to the 350 ft. buttress south of Mad Burn, lying some 500 ft. above sea-level, 20 minutes from the Coir' Uisge Hut. It is a steep diamond-shaped buttress of the finest gabbro, and offers the most attractive climbing to be had within two hours of the hut.

—*Mayday.* 300 ft. Severe. K. Bryan & M. Slesser. May 1961.

On the left hand side of the face is a conspicuous left-sloping dièdre, starting about 80 ft. up the face.

(1) Start about 50 ft. to the left of the lowest rocks where a line of weakness on the steep smooth wall permits one to gain the dièdre via a mantleshelf and left tending crack (80 ft.). (2) The dièdre. Delightful climbing on small holds to a poor stance using a chock-pebble belay (100 ft.). (3) Continue left for 10 ft. then up first by a crack then walls and ledges to easy ground (150 ft.).

—*Warsle.* 300 ft. Severe. Mrs M. Wallace & M. Slesser. April 1962.

The lowest point of the buttress is formed by a 20 ft.-high pulpit, above which a deep crack cleaves the rock for 30 ft. On the first ascent the pulpit was gained from the right, but a later unknown party climbed directly from the lowest point and scratched ' HS ' on wall to right. This makes a better start.

Gain pulpit, and ascend crack above. Up easy looking corner on left to gain broad grass ledge. The face above is seamed by two ledge-cum-crack systems running from the bottom right to top left. Gain the upper

by exiguous crack near north end of grass ledge, and traverse along till one can move up and rightwards to gain a good stance, but inadequate belay (100 ft.). Gain the first terrace immediately above by a delicate slab and thin wall (crux).

—*Diagonal.* 450 ft. Severe. K. Bryan & M. Slesser. May 1962.

Longest possible climb on the crag.

Go to broad grass ledge of Warsle. Ascend 20 ft. of next pitch of Warsle, to gain lower diagonal crack, and climb for 30 ft. to stance (all belays with pitons) (50 ft.). Continue along ledge-cum-crack system till below south end of first terrace, below overhang. Regain the ledge system 10 ft. higher by climbing a steep nose to belay (100 ft.) About 170 ft. of interesting climbing by the easiest route leads to the top.

NORTHERN HIGHLANDS

Ben More Coigeach: Cona Mheall.—*Middle Crag.* 250 ft. Severe. T. W. Patey. May 1962.

The central slabby face enclosed by the two arms of a Y-gully and the second rocky buttress to the right of the Acheninver Pinnacle (*S.M.C.J.* (1957 & 1958) xxvi, 52 & 158). Starting from the lowest rocks, a more or less direct line finishes up a wide shallow chimney which provides a severe straddling pitch.

Other shorter routes of the 100 ft. variety have been made on the right-most buttress. The outcrop is south-facing and accessible; the rock though sound and rough is surprisingly scant of holds.

Stac Polly.—*The Northwest Corner.* 300 ft. Difficult. T. W. Patey. June 1962.

The usual climbing route on the West Buttress follows the South West Corner above Baird's Pinnacle. The corresponding northerly corner of the West Face of the Buttress may also be climbed more or less directly by a narrow rib of no great difficulty, but of less merit, than the South West Corner.

Beinn Eighe: Coire Mhic Fhearchair, East Buttress.—*The Gash.* 200 ft. Severe. T. W. Patey & A. G. Nicol; K. A. Grassick & J. M. Taylor. June 1962.

A bizarre deeply-cleft chimney in the lowest tier of the quartzite (i.e. below level of the Eastern Ramparts proper). It can be seen from the lochside to start up left to end at a terrace some 100 ft. right of the start of Gnome Wall. There are three pitches: the first leads up to a large dry cave, the second utilizes a long through-shaft behind chockstones and the last goes up the clean rib on the left of the chimney. Dangerous loose blocks—but worth a visit for the rock scenery, and as a preamble to Gnome Wall.

Beinn Eighe: Coire Mhic Fhearchair, West Buttress.—*Fusilage Wall.* 300 ft. Mild Severe. T. W. Patey & J. M. Taylor. June 1962.

A short route on excellent rock, on the uppermost tier of the quartzite, overlooking the upper part of Far West Gully (still strewn with aircraft wreckage). It may be included in an ascent of the West Buttress by walking round (right) below the steep upper section, or it may be climbed from the Gully bed.

A semi-detached pinnacle (10 ft.) is about 100 ft. up the cliff overlooking Far West Gully. Gain the slot behind the Pinnacle from the left after climbing steep strenuous cracks (100 ft.). Move to the right of the Pinnacle and climb straight up for some 30 ft. till one can traverse left round an exposed corner into a scoop. (Alternatively, climb directly to this point over a small overhang, starting from the top of the Pinnacle—Severe at least.) Trend rightwards to large platform and so over the final ' eaves ' to easier rocks.

Quinag, West Face.—*Tenement Ridge.* 500 ft. Very Difficult. C. R. Ambler, J. R. Sutcliffe (Gritstone Club) (alternate leads). 3rd August 1961.

From the Inchnadamph-Lochinver road, a prominent rib is seen rising from right to left immediately below the ' small truncated top just N.W. of the Central Top ' of Quinag (i.e. No. 4 in the *Northern Highlands* Guide, p. 122). This rib is separated from the main face of the mountain by a deep gully branching left from the Geodha Rudha; it rises in a series of steep rock steps divided by spacious ledges and can worthily be considered a ' ridge '.

The scree gully (Geodha Rudha) is crossed to gain a heather ledge at the base of the rock ridge. The climb starts up a sloping corner with a slab on its left. Minor variations are possible on most pitches. Thread, or block belays were found on all but the third platform, when a piton was used. In the prevailing conditions of heavy rain, the final steep rock step before the Ridge levels out was passed by a short rightward traverse above the gully and the crest regained by a chimney. Easy scrambling along the final section of the Ridge before it joins the mountain is interrupted by a steep 15 ft. wall which provides an unavoidable problem to finish the climb.

Beinn Dearg (Ross-shire).—The western cliffs at the head of Glensguaib appear to have escaped notice despite the recommendations of the most recent *Northern Highlands* Guide. Although the two climbs described below largely exhaust the rock climbing, opportunities for winter climbs are legion.

A Forestry road leads from the head of Loch Broom for almost two miles up Glen Lael to the east of Inverlael Forest, and beyond that an excellent track passes close to the first of the routes described below. The description of the crags on page 97 of the *Northern Highlands* Guide is adequate to locate the climbs.

—*The Tower of Babel.* 450 ft. Very Difficult. T. W. Patey. 29th April 1962.

' The imposing corner tower ' (cf. *Northern Highlands* Guide) on the right of the wide scree gully, known locally as Cadha Amadan (Fool's Pass);

it also forms the culminating feature of the broken crags lining the south side of Glen Lael. The rock is the best on Beinn Dearg, the climbing airy and pleasantly varied.

One may include a lower 100 ft. tier by starting below the gully entrance, but this has an awkwardly earthy final pull up (M.S.). An easy shelf leads in from the bottom of the gully. Cairn.

Climb the crest of the tower on excellent holds more or less directly for 200 ft. Then climb a cracked rusty slab just left of the true crest, for 60 ft. By a mossy recess on the left climb the steep wall ahead to a level promontory. Beyond are two vertical steps, the first climbed direct, the second by a crack in the slab which forms the left wall of the ridge (V.D.). Step up left into a square cut recess and finish easily.

—*The West Buttress.* 1300 ft. Difficult. T. W. Patey. 29th April 1962.

Beyond the Cadha Amadan the cliffs attain their greatest height in the huge West Buttress of Beinn Dearg. The aspect of this buttress from the Glensguaib approach is anything but inviting, its true corner being mainly steep vegetation. On the North-North-East aspect however, above the small lochan, there is an extensive exposure of slabs bounded on the left by a shallow ill-defined gully, which runs down the full height of the buttress. Immediately right of the gully and forming the left-hand border of the slabs is a poorly defined columnar rib, which offers the most logical line on the buttress, the most clean rock, and a sporting route of the traditional type to the summit of Beinn Dearg. It is vegetated in its lower reaches but improves with height.

Climb rib on right of the shallow gully for 250 ft. to cairn. Traverse right 20 ft., then continue up a secondary rib, turning two successive walls on the right as may be expedient. After 300 ft. of this indeterminate climbing the choice narrows and the rib becomes fluted. From a small cairn mount left to climb a hidden crack behind a giant detached finger (60 ft. D.). Climb the nose above on the right on good rock, and continue straight up on improving holds. The angle eases and the climbing though pleasant is Moderate. 200 ft. from the top is a small shoulder, whence easy scrambling leads to the top. Numerous cairns are *en route*, but not at the bottom (where there was an extensive snowfield).

—*Inverlael Gully* (FIRST WINTER ASCENT). 800 ft. J. M. Taylor, A. G. Nicol, & T. W. Patey. January 1963.

This is the obvious deep gully in the West Buttress next to Cadha Amadan. In summer there is a large chokestone at mid-height, but in an average winter this pitch is mainly covered, and when climbed offered merely 20 ft. of 60° ice.

Foinaven, Creag Dionard.—

The topography of this great face is described in *S.M.C.J.* (1955) xxv, 355; three additional routes (including Pantagruel and Gargantua) near the main Waterfall have been added by R.A.F. Kinloss parties. There is

still much virgin rock, although the recently formed Thurso M.C. has been active here. The following route, on most of the full height of the crag, is on the untouched left hand portion of the cliffs, referred to loosely as the South Face—i.e. all the rock to the left of the main Waterfall. Here, climbing is more continuous, and several exposed routes (800-1000 ft.) might be made.

In the true centre of the crag, and descending from a bowl-shaped upper amphitheatre immediately below its true summit, is an obvious Watercourse, which in wet weather might carry as much water as the main Waterfall (which lies some hundred yards or more further to the right). The following route starts up the rocks on the left of the bottom pitch of the Watercourse, and follows a virtually direct line up the crags diverging leftwards from the Watercourse, crossing two diagonal fault lines, and finishing up the right hand edge of a large dark V-shaped depression in the uppermost tier of the crag, easily identified from the lochside. There is no apparent easier line nearby.

—*Fingal.* 900 ft. Mild Severe. T. W. Patey. 12th June 1962.

(1) Start from a small amphitheatre at the foot of the Watercourse. Climb rocks on the left to a terrace 120 ft. up; return along this to the Watercourse above its first main pitch. (2) Just before re-entering the Watercourse twin cracks forming a shallow fault line split the wall on the left. Climb these, and follow the direct line of the cracks for 250 ft. of exposed Very Difficult climbing to the true first Terrace, in fact more of an indeterminate rocky shelf (shaky cairn). (3) Follow line of least resistance, ascending leftwards for some 50 ft. towards a shallow, inconspicuous gully with a little vegetation, easier than it looks, which breaches the next belt of crags for 200 ft. of Very Difficult-Mild Severe climbing to the Second or Upper Terrace where is another cairn directly below the huge wet V-shaped amphitheatre. (4) Easier routes to the right do not exist. Climb up onto a flake 40 ft. up on the right hand enclosing wall of the amphitheatre, and continue within the amphitheatre confines to a huge rock fang, from below invisible and perhaps 120 ft. directly above the last cairn. Now escape rightwards from the amphitheatres by a traverse round the exposed edge, to an inset slab in a corner, which is the key pitch (Mild Severe) and leads to easier broken rocks, halfway up the great slabby wall which is to the right of the amphitheatre. The final section of wall may yield direct, but the obvious chimney in the right hand corner was followed for 50 ft. It narrows above to an overhanging cleft, but one can traverse horizontally leftwards for 30 ft. over the slabs to emerge with surprising suddenness at the top of the main face. (Cairn.) Scrambling.

Route finding throughout is difficult. This detailed description may avoid confusion with alternative routes, though these might be considerably more difficult. Technically, in good conditions, the standard might not exceed Very Difficult, when the climb would be one of the longest and most serious routes of its category in the country, but most parties should prepare for a Severe climb.

Strath Carron (Easter Ross).—A limited amount of recent exploration in this area suggests that the slabby faces of the deeply-trenched valleys at the headwaters of the River Carron and its tributaries might provide new routes. A road leads up lower Strathcarron from Bonar Bridge, as far as a locked gate one mile below Alladale Lodge.

Alladale Slabs—(see *Northern Highlands* Guide (1950), page 194). This steep bank of slabs, almost 800 ft. in total height and at about 65 degrees, forms the flank of An Socach at the head of Glen Alladale some five miles above Alladale Lodge. From Alladale Lodge an excellent track follows the north side of the river for three miles till it turns off to the right over a bealach. Here an old disused pathway continues as far as the head of the glen.

The rock is extraordinarily hard. There is less talus than one finds below comparable Scottish cliffs, belays are virtually non-existent, and it may even prove difficult to find cracks for pitons. The climbing is superb—mainly delicate balance work on small wrinkles. True incuts are rare and the rock is so polished that during rain its technical difficulties would be much increased.

—*Whigmaleerie.* 800 ft. Severe. T. W. Patey. 26th June 1962.

This route takes a direct central line starting from the lowest rocks. 120 ft. above the start a small rowan sapling helps to fix the location of the climb. A more or less direct line is then followed with, if anything, a very slight trend leftwards—lateral deviations are never more than 30 ft. to either side of this line. Above 300 ft. no further escapes seem possible and the angle steepens insidiously. Here a severe pitch of 40 ft. on the right of a slanting, overhung crack proved to be the hardest on the climb. After this the angle does not relent for a long way, though there is better purchase from the more rugose rock. A final 100 ft. scramble leads to a small cairn at the top.

The Glenbeg Crags.—The *Northern Highlands* Guide (1950), page 104, refers to a ' fine wall of slabs at Glenbeg, near the head of the main valley '. In fact, much of the rock is heavily vegetated.

About half-a-mile from Strathvaich Lodge a new road, built by the Hydro-Electric Board but not shown on current maps, leads up to the head of the glen. Here it crosses into Gleann Mhòr above Deanaich Lodge and, turning up the main glen, ends only a mile short of Glenbeg. There is a locked gate at the foot of the road but the land-owner, Commander Williams of Strathvaich Lodge, has indicated his willingness to co-operate with climbers when proper application is made. This road, eleven miles in all, opens up a hitherto remote tract of mountain country.

The crags are in full view of the roadhead. The main crag is on the north side of Gleann Mhòr, about half-a-mile south of Càrn Loch Sruban Mora, 2406 ft. Total height of the cliff is approximately 600 ft. but the

main face is dissected by parallel, slanting terraces which rob the crag of its rock-climbing ' potential '. The uppermost tier is the most forbidding, being vertical, if not overhanging. It is breached only by a deep chimney which has been climbed—a bizarre if somewhat grimy route of some 200 ft. There is a rowan tree belay about 60 ft. up, a short deep chimney above, and a culminating move round the outside of two large chocks. (*Rowan Chimney*. 200 ft. Mild Severe. T. W. Patey. 14th October 1962.)

The right hand or easterly flank of the crag which confronts the road-head forms a sea of water-worn slabs which lie back at an easy angle and may be climbed almost anywhere. (*Deanaich Slabs*. 600 ft. Moderate. T. W. Patey. October 1962.)

Invisible from the roadhead, but prominent from the footpath to Glenbeg half-a-mile beyond, is a striking twin-headed pinnacle a few hundred yards west of the top of the main crag. The short side of the main pinnacle might be awkward. It was climbed from the valley side where an awkward stride across a 60 ft. deep crevass was the only obstacle. (*The Madonna*. Very Difficult. T. W. Patey. 14th October 1962.)

Other short routes may be possible but scope is limited by the nature of the rock—smooth, wet and lichenous.

WESTERN HIGHLANDS

Ladhar Bheinn.—This grand peak, which towers above the south shore of Loch Hourn, has been unjustly neglected by climbers since the occasion of the celebrated ' Yachting Meet ' of the S.M.C. at Easter 1897.

The main crags are at the head of Coire Dhorrcail, where they form a formidable cirque attaining a maximum height of 1200 ft. In the subsidiary Coire na Cabaig east of the main corrie there is another steep precipice of 700-800 ft.

The rock is gneiss, but the strata is adverse and only smooth and vertical sections are free of moss and vegetation. It may not give therefore, clean rock climbing, but its winter possibilities are legion—thus resembling Creag Meaghaidh. There were ' Alpine ' conditions in April 1962, both corries being masked with excellent firm névé, and the build-up in the gullies was far greater than one expects in the Western Highlands. Whether these conditions often obtain is debatable but the mountain would repay investigation, even with a moderate snow coating.

Coire na Cabaig.—This is the loftier side corrie adjoining Coire Dhorrcail and separated from it by Stob Dhorrcail—a snub-nosed bastion of 500 ft., which should offer an easy if uninteresting scramble up its frontal face, or scope for shorter and harder climbs in the gullies on its flanks.

The main feature of the corrie, however, is the sheer-looking 800 ft. N.W. Face of Stob a' Chearchaill which forms its east wall. From Arnisdale it remotely resembles the Grandes Jorasses. This is not confirmed, for although everywhere steep and well delineated with gullies and chimneys,

it is too well vegetated for continuous rock climbs. In winter, however, it promises at least half a dozen distinctive routes.

—*Gaberlunzie* (FIRST WINTER ASCENT). 800 ft. A. G. Nicol, R. W. P. Barclay & T. W. Patey. 14th April 1962. 3 hours in good conditions.

The main Central Gully, a deep trough in the middle of the face leading up to a small notch on the serrated summit ridge of Stob a' Chearchaill. It is as a winter route that it deserves attention, and is the only recorded climb on these cliffs.

Above a small snow fan the lower 200 ft. of the gully is steep, and gives 100 ft. of hard climbing up to a snow channel which steepens to a large cave beneath a chockstone at 180 ft. This was overcome with difficulty on the left. Then the angle ceases, and there are no major difficulties until 200 ft. from the top, where the walls again converge, and the gully becomes a shallow ice runnel. The last 60 ft. of climbing up the right hand enclosing gully wall were perhaps the hardest on the climb.

Coire Dhorrcail.—The cliffs at the head of this corrie are the finest feature on the mountain. At the back of the corrie the crags attain their greatest height at the Spider Buttress, all of 1200 ft. in height and characterised by a central snowfield reminiscent of the ' White Spider '. The right and left enclosing ribs on either side of the snowfield should be climbable, and might even repay investigation in summer.

In the centre of the cirque the most obvious straight snow gully with a single chockstone pitch at mid height is the gully climbed by Raeburn and his companions in 1898. Its right hand border is a very well-defined square-cut oblong rib of some 500-600 ft., as yet unclimbed. Between Raeburn's Gully (which has an alternative untried left hand variant) and the Spider Buttress there is a long narrow gully with successive concealed ice-pitches which scores the full height of the cliffs and lies well back in the angle where the Spider Buttress abuts upon the main line of crags. It seemed to be the most elegant line in the corrie on a first acquaintance, and, in fact, yielded a fast, exhilarating climb described below.

—*Viking Gully* (FIRST WINTER ASCENT). 1200 ft. A. G. T. W. Patey & Nicol. 15th April 1962. 2 hours in good conditions.

The true first pitch was avoided by a slanting snow rake on the left because of falling ice. The rake entered the gully below a narrow snow funnel. Another ice pitch and a long snow trough led to a narrow twisting channel leading into the recessed upper portion of the gully. For the next 400 ft. there was a series of abrupt ice pitches 50-60 ft. in height. Finally, 300 ft. from the top a long snow fan led to a (possibly corniced) exit into a well-defined col between two small peaks of equal height on the main ridge.

Discounting the exceptionally favourable conditions on the first ascent, the route compares with the classic Crowberry Gully on the Buachaille, and can be thoroughly recommended as a winter climb.

OPPOSITE : Ladhar Bheinn ; the crags of Coire Dhorrcail. Viking Gully starts below the central Y and continues up the shadowed left fork to emerge at the notch right of Spider Buttress, whose apex is the highest point shown. Raeburn's Gully is the straight trench on the extreme right, its unclimbed rib alongside. (*R.Harper*)



CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

Creag Meaghaidh: Coire Ardair.—*The Last Post.* (FIRST WINTER ASCENT). 800 ft. 3 hours—could be longer with less ice. T. W. Patey & R. F. Brooke (A.C.). 5th March 1962.

An obvious winter line left of, and parallel to, the South Post. Starts from Easy Gully bed some 80 yds. up from bottom of S. Post, immediately beyond large icefall; finishes in obvious amphitheatre round corner from exit of S. Post.

Climb where left border of icefall abuts on cliff face. After 60 ft., steepening angle forces short steep traverse right. This and succeeding 20 ft. of near-vertical ice make the crux. Snowfield then steepens to second large icefall 200 ft. from the foot; two 60 ft. pitches go up right hand side. Easy snow then leads to another, 100 ft., icefall avoidable by hidden shelf on left which goes to upper amphitheatre. More difficult than South or Centre Posts, but rather less than the North Post.

—*Post Horn Gallop.* (FIRST WINTER ASCENT.) *c.* 2000 ft. T. W. Patey & R. F. Brooke (A.C.). 28th February 1962.

A winter *divertissement* exploring the more interesting aspects of all four Posts; a diagonal traverse across Coire Ardair, seen from the loch as a linear 45°-slanting snow rake, starting about one-third up Easy Gully and ending in the small snow bowl above Staghorn Gully (where main face turns back into further cliffs receding towards the Window).

Climb first hard pitch of the Last Post, then break right to a narrow ledge entering South Post below its second main pitch. Up slightly, then awkwardly on to a broad snow band circling the next buttress. This turns into Centre Post below the great unclimbed ice pitch. Cross over *via* the crux of Bell's route to snow slopes beyond the Post. Continue on true diagonal line to spectacular easy balcony crossing well above small upper enclosure of the North Post. Thenceforward some 500 ft. of exposed step-cutting to snow bowl above Staghorn Gully.

[These two routes have not been climbed in summer but are primarily winter ones—like every recorded climb in Coire Ardair.]

BEN NEVIS

Ben Nevis: Orion Face.—*Astronomy.* 955 ft. (Mild) Very Severe. I. Clough & G. Grandison. 13th June 1962.

Follows a line of cracks and grooves parallel to and right of Minus One Gully. Starts from grassy ledge about 50 ft. right of the foot of Minus One Gully.

Move diagonally right to slabby crest and follow grassy grooves to flake belays (120 ft.). Up, then right, to large spike belay below twin

grooves (65 ft.). Climb right hand groove, then trend right to corner bounding the Great Slab Rib on its left; up corner to spike belay (120 ft.). Continue up corner, then traverse left to chockstone belay above a smooth groove (junction with Minus One Gully's ' avoiding ' pitches) 80 ft. Up cracks to belay at foot of big slab corner. Up crack in slab to stance and chockstone belay (60 ft. & 50 ft.). Up flake chimney and corner above to belay (70 ft.). (Minus One Gully now trends back to the gully proper.)

Up for 15 ft., traverse right and climb groove to stance below an overhang; peg belay (70 ft.). Turn overhang on right and follow crack to overhung corner (35 ft.). The overhanging crack on left was climbed by second man but the leader traversed round corner on right for 20 ft. until possible to trend left again to rejoin crack line: peg belay (85 ft.). Break out left and continue more easily to grassy ledges and chockstone belay (130 ft.). Traverse left, up to grassy corner and continue left to crest of N.E. Buttress (70 ft.).

Ben Nevis : Creag Coire na Ciste.—*Wendigo.* (FIRST WINTER ASCENT.) 350 ft. T. W. Patey & J. Brown. 24th February 1963.

A new route, lying between Central Gully (*S.M.C.J.* (1959) xxvi, 370) and the wide contour of the North Gully. A steep rake of mixed rock and ice slanting rightwards up the side of the steep buttress overlooking North Gully. There are two 100 ft. pitches of sustained difficulty on heavily-iced rock, with a little snowy amphitheatre just below the top. Probably a pleasant short climb under most winter conditions.

Ben Nevis : Minus Two Buttress.—*Subtraction.* 800 ft. Very Severe. J. McLean & W. Smith (C.D.M.C.). August 1960.

Starts 50 ft. right of Kellett's Right Hand Route on Minus Two Buttress.

Climb a crack and groove 100 ft. to below a left-trending overhung continuation of the groove. Climb this to easier going up a series of grooves leading to Minus Two Gully just above the ' triple chimneys ' (300 ft.). An ascending traverse right leads to a steep groove leading up the crest of Minus One Buttress, which is followed to the crest of the N.E. Buttress (400 ft.).

Ben Nevis : Gardyloo Buttress.—350 ft. Very Severe. J. R. Masrhall, G. J. Ritchie & R. Marshall. June 1962.

Follows the left arête of the buttress, overlooking Gardyloo Gully, passing many rusty old pegs and snaplinks to join the direct finish made by Haston & Stenhouse.

—*The Shield Direct.* 220 ft. Very Severe. J. R. Marshall, G. J. Ritchie & R. Marshall. June 1962.

Starts in the corner just right of Titan's Wall.

Climb the corner, surmounting a large roof at midheight (3 pitons) and in 4 pitches continue to join The Shield after its initial chimney pitch.

Càrn Dearg: Great Buttress.—*Route II, Direct Start.* 250 ft. Hard Severe. B. W. Robertson & G. Chisholm. 19th May 1962.

Starts at cairn on grass ledge, right of Route I.

Climb up centre of smooth slab to small ledge; traverse 4 ft. right to smooth wall and up small slanting corner and traverse left to a stance. Continue up small black crack to flake belay (100 ft.) then climb straight up for 50 ft. to large block below a groove. Climb groove and traverse round an arête (on right) to shattered ledge (30 ft.). Continue up overhanging bulge above belay and thence to small belay at 80 ft. near the chimney of Route II.

Càrn Dearg: Great Buttress.—*The High Girdle.* 1345 ft. Hard Severe. I. Clough & K. Sutcliffe. 1st June 1961.

200 ft. Up the easy groove left of Mourning Slab; belay on the left edge (200 ft.). Up to a grass ledge on the edge above (right), traverse up into the foot of the corner and down to the ledge and belays on Mourning Slab (60 ft.). Traverse up rightwards to the wet diagonal crack; go along this and down crack to stance and chock belay (60 ft.). Up a few feet and along an airy traverse to grass ledge and belay (60 ft.). Cross to the chimney of Route I and descend it to the junction with Route II (above the first deep chimney) (50 ft.). As for Route II to the edge of the buttress (275 ft.). An easy undulating grassy traverse round the corner to Evening Wall; block belays (90 ft.). Go easily right along a broad ledge below a blank wall, passing large block belays to junction with Orgy (130 ft.). Go round the corner and up leftwards by ledges to belay by a large block below a bulging corner (70 ft.). The crack above is hard; continue to a large scree-covered terrace (100 ft.). Easily then for 200 ft. to the top.

—*Mourning Slab.* 350 ft. Very Severe. I. Clough & K. Sutcliffe. 1st June 1961.

Starts at the foot of the big slab corner, left of the chimney of Route I. Climb into the corner then up to stance and line belay on the slab; good spike 6 ft. above (70 ft.). From the belay traverse to the arête and follow it to small stance and poor belays; peg (50 ft.). Up to the overhanging corner (usually wet); move right, then up, crossing leftwards above the roof (crux) to a scoop; this leads to good ledge and belays (70 ft.). Round the corner on the left is a groove; climb this to grass ledge then more easily to join Ledge Route (130 ft.).

—*Orgy.* Over 2000 ft. Very Severe. I. Clough & K. Sutcliffe. 31st May 1961.

The first 250 ft. are as for Route I, as far as the chimney.

From the belay at the foot of the chimney a slightly rising traverse is made rightwards round the corner to a groove; descend 6 ft. and follow a gangway between the overlaps to a good stance and belays; thread runner at top of gangway (80 ft.).

Cross right to a grassy groove; descend to good spike (40 ft.). Up

again, and traverse in the same line, slightly rising, to another groove; descend a few feet and cross to grass ledge and belays on Centurion (50 ft.). Climb down Centurion to the corner with the piton belay (top of pitch 3) (50 ft. & 110 ft.). A long horizontal traverse is made above the great roof and below the overlap ; at 60 ft., climb up to the right with difficulty; jammed knot runner (peg on 1st ascent); protected from above, descend a crack for 10 ft. and traverse to a stance and belay on the nose overlooking the corner of The Bat (80 ft.). Up the slab, rightwards across The Bat to the left arête of the great corner of Sassenach; up a bulge and continue near the edge to the ' grassy terrace ' on Sassenach (110 ft.). Cross to belays on the far side, above the corner (40 ft.). Climb down Sassenach to the top of the second (crux) pitch (200 ft.). The Patey Traverse—a sensational pitch; gain the slab above the roof of Sassenach; continue to traverse, round two corners (peg runner); descend to the stance on Titan's Wall; peg (60 ft.). Along the ledge and continue with difficulty until a peg (in place) enables a move to be made into the crack bounding the wall on the right; up the crack to a magnificent capstan belay near the foot of The Shield (110 ft.).

Climb directly up for 20 ft. (peg) to a wide ledge; move up rightwards to join The Shield above the first pitch (70 ft.). Continue to the top of The Shield and the junction with Evening Wall on ledges with huge block belays (340 ft.).

Up to the left and follow a zig-zag line up gangways and short walls to a grass ledge (130 ft.). Above on the left is a large block below a bulging corner. Climb this (100 ft.) and continue in 200 ft. to the top.

Càrn Dearg : Raeburn's Buttress.—*Winter Chimneys.* 425 ft. Hard Severe. I. Clough & G. Grandison. 11th June 1962.

First climbed in winter under the mistaken impression that this was the line of Compression Crack, this provided a fine wet weather route. Approach as for Compression Crack: at the end of the terrace about 100 ft. right of Compression Crack is an obvious 60 ft. chimney ending in a huge capstone.

Up chimney to stance and belay (20 ft.). (On winter ascent a traverse right was made from here, ascending a bulging crack on channel pegs to reach the stance above the chimney.) Up to capstone; move with difficulty to outside and up to stance and belays (40 ft.). Continue in same line passing a steep corner to easy ground (70 ft.). (The winter ascent traversed left above this pitch to reach a fan-shaped corrie leading out to the summit slopes of Carn Dearg). Continue easily rightwards to belay at foot of another chimney, wide, with a deep narrow chimney in its right hand corner (100 ft.). Climb up outside of narrow chimney with awkward exit to stance and chockstone belay (45 ft.). A through route under the big chockstone is followed by short pitches and scrambling to finish (150 ft.).

Càrn Dearg : South Trident Buttress, Middle Tier.—*Spartacus.* 320 ft. (Mild) Very Severe. I. Clough & G. Grandison. 12th June 1962.

Follows a line up the front of the Middle Tier starting below a big corner about 60 ft. left of The Groove.

Enter and climb the big corner to overhang; up this and traverse right to stance and peg belay (90 ft.). Up a little groove on right to flake; descend a few feet and cross the vertical wall, then up arête to stance and large flake belay (50 ft.). Climb straight up then left above overhang to flake crack; up this a few feet and traverse left to stance and belays on an arête (80 ft.) Up the groove directly above to top of Middle Tier (100 ft.).

Càrn Dearg: No. 5 Gully Buttress.—*The Twist.* 470 ft. Very Severe. I. Clough & G. Grandison. 14th June 1962.

The climb uses the gangway of The Slant (direct), traverses to nose of buttress and takes the easiest line to the top. Starts at corner of buttress below a steep corner marked by a cairn of tattered socks. (The Slant uses the slab corner immediately left.)

Up the short steep groove to ledge; the foot of the gangway; continue to peg belay below a fierce little corner crack (40 ft.) Up crack (combined tactics or sling or boldly) and continue to spike belay (40 ft.). Up to top of gangway, move right then left to gain the stance and belay below the cracked slab (as for Slant) (50 ft.). Traverse right to gain sloping ledges above the overhanging wall; good stance and belays (40 ft.). Diagonally right over big flake then horizontally on sloping shelves to peg belay below an obvious corner (60 ft.). Up corner to block belay in 50 ft. Traverse right then up to chockstone belay by a pinnacle (65 ft.). Up the cracks above to top of huge pedestal block; chockstone belay (50 ft.). Gain ledge above, pull into groove on left and then out right to large block; diagonally left to grassy terrace and belay (75 ft.). Scrambling to top.

CAIRNGORMS

Braeriach: Coire Brochain.—*Brochain Slabs, Direct Start.* D. Reid & D. Pyper. May 1961.

The first 150 ft. of the Brochain Slabs are very scrappy and a better and more direct start can be had about 60 ft. to the left.

Go straight up for about 60 ft. then trend right over small rock ledges, cracks and walls to the slab split by cracks to join the route at the rightmost crack.

Garbh Choire Dhadh.—*Boomerang.* (FIRST WINTER ASCENT.) 4½ hrs. Grade IV. D. Pyper & D. Reid. 23rd February 1962.

600 ft. of climbing including three 100 ft. ice pitches, last of which, up a steep recessed wall, required a piton runner and was the crux.

Cairngorm: Longbow Crag.—*Longbow Direct.* 600 ft. Very Severe. D. Pyper & J. McCartney (Etchachan C.). August 1962.

Starts at the pink water-worn fault at the centre of the face (Arrow).

Go up fault for 100 ft. and belay below steep wet wall. Traverse across wall for 8 ft., then up on small holds and trend left across slab climbing two awkward mantleshelves to ledge at foot of red wall. Belay on wall (80 ft.). Climb straight up wall and overhang and traverse left across smooth slab to a 20 ft. crack which is climbed to a stance and piton belay (80 ft.). A hand traverse right with a very strenuous pull up at the end of it brings one beneath an overhang which is climbed to a ledge. 20 ft. further up the Longbow Roof is reached and traversed under for 20 ft. when a swing round an arête brings one to a stance below a holdless crack (60 ft.). Friction up crack for 20 ft., then traverse across slab to another crack which is laybacked for 15 ft. Make for the square-cut chimney with an awkward move out to the right to land on a ledge with block belay (120 ft.). The next 120 ft. is a series of large blocks and cracks which are followed to terrace at the foot of a small buttress. The crack on the right is climbed for 60 ft. to the plateau. One of the cleanest and best routes in the Cairngorms.

—*The Sand-Pyper*. 600 ft. Very Severe. C. A. Sands (Hall Russell C.C.) & D. Pyper. October 1962.

Starts 50 ft. to right of Longbow Direct at cairn and arrow.

Go over slab to left and climb crack and rib for 30 ft., passing ledge on left, then climb straight up slabs for a further 80 ft. to ledge below overhanging wall. Go up the wall on its right edge and traverse left for 10 ft. and up shallow groove, then series of mantleshelf moves for 50 ft. with a very delicate traverse left to piton belay in corner (80 ft.). Ascend corner and trend left for 40 ft. to shelf, then layback up crack and slab and move to the right for 20 ft. to piton belay on floor of ledge. Climb diagonally across slab to the right and up crack to piton below the overhang. The next 10 ft. are very hard and a short sling is needed to get over the bulge. Trend left across very exposed slab and under large roof to spike belay (60 ft.). Traverse right under roof passing a loose block to a 20 ft. diagonal crack which is hand-traversed to a good jug-handle on the arête. Go round the arête to grass ledge and walk along to a slanting chimney which is climbed to a grass patch. Go up the grass to a small nook. The nook is climbed to a small ledge and a strenuous pull-up to the foot of an overhanging crack. Climb the crack and traverse left to belay below double roof (100 ft.). Go right and climb crack to base of a narrow chimney. Ascend chimney for 40 ft. to finish the climb.

—*Groove and Rib*. 450 ft. Severe. R. Marshall & J. R. Marshall. August 1962.

Starts in Diagonal Gully, 50 ft. up from Deception Inlet, below the leftmost of the three obvious grooves. Arrow. Climb the groove above, then move right into the main groove which is climbed to a stance and belay (90 ft.). Follow the groove, which becomes grassy higher up, then move on to the rib on its right (120 ft.). Climb the crest (120 ft.). Finish by steep cracks and flakes (120 ft.).

—*Wigwag.* 750 ft. Severe. J. Stenhouse & G. J. Ritchie (shared leads). 29th July 1962.

Start on slab below and left of an obvious crack at right-hand end of crag. Arrow. (1) 100 ft. Climb right edge of slabs to Juniper Ledge, then left to belay behind a flake. (2) 100 ft. Continue up to overhangs, avoid on left, traverse rightwards along a shelf and up to belay on left side of prominent triangular overhang. (3) 100 ft. Up good rock above. (4) Go rightward for 30 ft. then up and left to gain top of large flake 20 ft., continue to left end of flake and along narrow shelf to gain large vegetated groove 30 ft., 10 ft. now leads one to the grassy amphitheatre. (5) 110 ft. Climb a series of short walls on the left. (6) Interesting climbing on easy rock for 250 ft. leads to the top of the crag. This climb, starting right of the Sand-pyper, joins that route at the grassy amphitheatre.

Ben MacDhui: Shelter Stone Crag.—*The Needle.* 870 ft. Very Severe. R. Smith & D. Agnew (C.D.M.C.). 8th June 1962.

Start 60 ft. right of Postern, directly below the top of Crag (Arrow & cairn mark start). (1) 100 ft. Climb straight up slab with a step left onto a nose at 70 ft. to a ledge and block belay. (2) 140 ft. Go up, first right then left, 40 ft. straight up by line of twin zig-zag cracks to short steep wall, pull up rightwards onto rib and up to grass ledges (Postern). (3) 80 ft. Step across ledges, straight up slab and flake crack on left to top of huge block. (4) 100 ft. Go up left 20 ft., step right, climb flake crack 20 ft., traverse left 20 ft. along thin ledge, climb bulging crack 15 ft. and continue to ledges. (5) 70 ft. Go up, then up and right along shelf past foot of groove (blocked by poised flakes) to ledge. (6) 120 ft. Go diagonally up and right along crack for thin fingers 60 ft., then go right, up and left by blocks and ledges. (7) 70 ft. Go up grooves to foot of the chimney-crack (obvious from the Shelter Stone) splitting the final rocks of the crag. (8) 110 ft. Climb the chimney crack to ledge and loose blocks. (9) 80 ft. Continue line of chimney to thread pile of chockstones and emerge on plateau.

Creagan a' Choire Etchachan.—*Pikestaff.* (FIRST WINTER ASCENT.) 2½ hrs. Grade IV. D. Pyper & W. B. Gault (Etchachan C.). 15th February 1962.

Sustained difficulty on mixed rock and ice. Crux was the top 80 ft. pitch. Summer route followed.

—*Bastion Wall.* (FIRST WINTER ASCENT.) 3 hrs. Grade III. J. McCartney (Etchachan C.) & D. Pyper. 23rd February 1963.

The route gave 450 ft. of sustained severe climbing after the initial 150 ft. The main features were the long iced grooves and a 100 ft. chimney which led to the plateau.

Beinn a' Bhuird: Garbh Choire.—*Angels' Edgeway.* Very Severe. W. B. Gault & A. Kane (Etchachan C.). August 1959.

This is, in effect, a direct variation on the second pitch of the original Squareface route. Where the old route made a considerable detour up the slabs on the right the party continued straight up the very edge of the buttress. This gave a superb pitch of almost 100 ft., exposed and delicate, but on perfect rock.

Lochnagar: Black Spout Pinnacle.—*Route II.* (FIRST WINTER ASCENT.) J. R. Marshall & J. Stenhouse. February 1962.

The first crack pitch was full of ice and led to the shoulder, which was a magnificent blade of snow (fine situation). The traverse pitch (climbed in crampons) was very hard, involved a piton at half way, and occupied 2½ hrs. The whole ascent, which was under excellent conditions, took 5½ hrs. to the crest of the pinnacle.

—*Parallel Gullies Buttress, Alternative Start.* 200 ft. Very Severe. D. Reid & D. Pyper. May 1961.

Starts about 30 ft. to the right of the unclimbed initial chimney of Parallel Gully A. Climb two walls and a groove to grass ledge at 80 ft. Very Difficult. Then climb smooth groove for 10 ft. and traverse left into a long V-groove of which the last 30 ft. are quite holdless. Exit on the right to ledge and piton belay (120 ft.). Very Severe. Go up slab and ledge to join original route. (A more interesting start than the Direct Start.)

Glen Clova, Corrie Fee.—*B Gully Chimney.* (FIRST WINTER ASCENT.) D. Crabb & D. F. Lang (both Rannoch M.C.). 29th December 1962.

The route followed the right hand side of the watercourse throughout. Trouble was experienced with running water behind the ice; 5 pitches on ice. Probably the best winter climb in this corrie, but conditions would probably be best later in the season.

GLENCOE

Buachaille Etive Mòr: S.E. Face, Central Buttress.—*Hiccup.* 200 ft. Very Severe. B. W. Robertson & J. Houston. 24th September 1962.

Starts at the heather ledge 10 ft. left of the large belay at the start of the Traverse on the North Face route.

Climb straight up and over overhangs and continue straight up for 100 ft. (thread belay at 50 ft.), crossing white slab. Traverse left and belay at blocks. Traverse right for 15 ft. to an arête; climb up, avoiding easier ground on right, and continue to top for 80 ft.

Buachaille Etive Mòr: W. Face, North Buttress.—*Superstition.* 130 ft. Very Severe. D. Todd & W. Gordon. May 1962.

Climb pitch 1 of Revelation.

Then (50 ft.) from block belay climb groove directly above for 35 ft. and then go up rightwards for 15 ft. (crux) to peg belay and awkward corner stance. 'S' has been scored on right wall of corner, which is 10 ft. left of the large flake of Revelation. After this (80 ft.) go up leftwards for 20 ft. to an obvious crack; climb this and easier rocks to the top.

Aonach Dubh: West Face, South Wall of 'E' Buttress.—*Consolation.* 270 ft. (Just) Very Severe. G. Grandison & I. Clough. 23rd April 1962.

Starts about 100 ft. left of Trapeze near nose of buttress. A large spike marks the start of a heathery groove which is followed to belays below twin cracks (70 ft.). Gain right hand crack and ascend it to recess below overhang. Move left round rib to foot of little chimney, belays (60 ft.). Up then left to good belay (40 ft.). Pleasant slabs (100 ft.) are followed by scrambling.

Aonach Dubh: East Face.—*Rough Slab.* 160 ft. Severe. R. Richardson, P. McKenzie & W. Skidmore (Greenock M.C.). 2nd September 1962.

This and the following route are well to the left of Buttress Route (*S.M.C.J.* (1961) xxvii, 168). Although D. Stewart, J. Wilkinson & G. J. Ritchie explored this area in the early '50's, these are the first recorded ascents.

Starts in groove (arrow) on right wall of a broken gully. Go straight up groove past large block runner to a good ledge below small overhangs, piton belay. Then traverse a few feet right from ledge and break through overhangs by a groove; leave this and swing round left on to steep clean slab, and follow this to top.

—*Buckshee Groove.* 160 ft. Very Difficult. P. Richardson, P. McKenzie & W. Skidmore (Greenock M.C.). 2nd September 1962.

Starts some 40 ft. lower down gully from Rough Slab, at undercut nose (arrow).

Climb nose; follow grassy groove on left past small tree to corner crack; up corner and belay behind huge boulder. Traverse left under overhangs and climb groove to ledge below steep wall, which climb on left, and finish by small niche.

Aonach Dubh: North Face.—*Girdle Traverse.* 1000 ft. Very Severe. R. Campbell, D. Haston, N. MacNiven & R. Smith. April 1962.

From above tree belay at mouth of Ossian's Cave, go right and slightly up 50 ft. to piton runner, step down and across loose chimney and climb clean rib 15 ft. to grass ledges. Go up and right 40 ft. to top of short groove to belay below the chimney section of Fingal's chimney. Descend grass ledge and traverse round edge on loose rock to below a jagged roof. Climb 30 ft. up shattered bulge on right, go right 20 ft. round clean rib and cross slab to recess above grass tongue. Traverse delicate wall on right 20 ft., and climb up a crack 100 ft. to where it bends leftwards under a roof. Find a way up and right in two pitches to reach semblance of a break in the overhanging

barrier running up and left across the whole cliff. Cross this, 60 ft. to perch on edge (slings on spikes and 3 pitons). Follow a staircase up and right to shelf and descend into corner of Yo-Yo. Climb Yo-Yo 20 ft., then traverse right 30 ft. round arête and down to slab. Go right then up 40 ft. to ledges and traverse right to foot of huge V notch. Go up 30 ft., climb shallow corner on right 20 ft., step right round arête and climb wall above 30 ft. to ledge. Traverse right 120 ft. and step off the cliff. . . .

Bidean nam Bian : Stob Coire nan Lochain.—*Twisting Grooves.* 400 ft. Very Severe. W. Sproul and T. Carruthers (through leads). 11th March 1962.

Follows line of dièdres on broken buttress on left of Twisting Gully, and starts 100 ft. left of snow funnel at foot of Twisting Gully.

(1) 80 ft. Climb first corner to small snow patch, then continue up crack with overhanging chockstone at top to peg belay. (2) 100 ft. Climb dièdres with peg runner (to snow patch above 1st pitch of Twisting Gully). (3) 180 ft. Over snow to bottom of chimney. (4) 60 ft. Up chimney to broken rocks leading to summit slopes.

ARROCHAR

Ben Ime.—*Ben's Fault.* (FIRST WINTER ASCENT.) 5½ hrs. Severe. W. Skidmore & R. Richardson (Greenock M.C.).

Climb short steep corner at the top of a snow fan left of lowest rocks. An obvious rightward traverse leads into the scoop beneath the series of chimneys which goes direct to the top. In prevailing conditions the chimneys gave fine snow, ice and rock work and difficulties were sustained. Two piton belays and 2 runners were used.

NOTES

Arran Notes

A' Chir, Pagoda Ridge Variation.—In the *Arran* Climbers' Guide, pitch 6 reads ' climb the spikes and go round the corner. . . .'. Instead, D. Goldie and J. Simpson in June 1960 climbed the spikes and ' mantel-shelfed ' straight up on to the sloping slab above the belay. This Severe variation is more direct but, says another correspondent, ' less entertaining '.

Ben Nuis.—W. Wallace writes to report a large rock fall which has transformed the common finish of No. 1 and No. 2 Gullies; taken direct, the new finish seems hard and insecure, and he recommends a more reasonable finish by a rib on the right, some 25 ft. below the chaos.

Cir Mhor, Rosa Pinnacle.—Wallace also remarks the gentle sliding off of a huge bulging mass of turf capping the top of the first steep wall of pitch 1; it used to hold a deeply-embedded iron staple, often happily used by Wallace as a belay and carefully not mentioned by Johnstone in the *Guide*. A clean grooved scoop is left, but the climb is not affected.

Cir Mhòr, Lower N.E. Face.—'**Greenfinger Grooves, April Arête** and **Eastern Ridge** can conveniently be linked to give a climb of some 1250 ft. This was done in August 1961 by R. Brown (M.G.C.C.) and H. Howard (S.V.) who christened the omnibus route **Xanadu.**' J. M. J.

Beinn Tarsuinn, Meadow Face.—W. Skidmore reports much activity by the Greenock M.C. in this area. Besides the routes reported in the issue members have attempted several lines on the lower Meadow face this year. The two long parallel cracks (well seen from lower down the corrie) have both been climbed as far as a belt of overhangs. The left hand crack cuts the overhang as a narrow chimney blocked by an overhanging flake. So far this has proved hopeless and since one of the would-be pioneers made a spectacular exit from it we are leaving it alone until next year (1963). The right hand crack looks quite impossible there.

Skye Notes

Coir' Uisge.—Several routes have been made on the steep wall immediately N.W. of the Coir' Uisge hut. By linking pitches as much as 350 ft. of climbing on good rock may be had. There are at least three known starts to the lower wall, ranging from V.D. to V.S. C.G.M.S.

Northern Highland Notes

An Teallach, Coire a' Ghlas Thuill, Minor Rib.—The 'inviting crack' in the face of the midway tower (cf. *S.M.C.J.* (1957) xxvi, 156, for original winter ascent) was climbed by T. W. Patey, N. Dvardo & C. M. Dixon in May 1962. It raised the standard to Mild Severe and justified an otherwise scrappy rock climb.

Sgùrr a' Chaorachain (Applecross), Cioch Upper Rib.—T. W. Patey and Gwen Moffat Lees in November 1962 avoided the original Mild Severe route up the 'wonderfully steep rock' wall (cf. *S.M.C.J.* (1962) xxvii, 283) by keeping to the left hand edge, which is only Very Difficult. Patey writes that the concerted opinion of 'six different parties now elevates the standard of the **Cioch Nose** to Very Difficult. All agree that the route is among the finest of its category in Scotland and certainly the best on Torridonina Sandstone.'

Strone Nea, Loch Broom.—Patey reports that the rocks of this 250 ft. outcrop overlooking the Braemore-Ullapool road ½ mile above the head of Loch Broom (at the entrance to Glen Lael) are only 30 minutes from the road and well worth a passing visit. ' The most obvious climb is **The Shaft** (250 ft., Very Difficult), a steep pillar on the left of the main face; **Nick-nack** (200 ft., Very Severe) on the blank wall opposite the foot of the shaft, and having a long exposed first pitch (100 ft.) trending rightwards to a tree alcove above an overhanging chockstone crack and a further optional severe pitch which can be added by breaching the next rampart; and **The Stairway** (200 ft., Difficult), an easy-angled initially-vegetated shelf on the right of the main face, not recommended.' Patey climbed these in June, 1962.

Gruinard Jetty Buttress, Gruinard Bay.—C. R. Ambler and J. Bateson report a new climb on this crag (cf. *Northern Highlands* Guide, p. 80), **Reflex Rib,** 85 ft., Severe, climbed in August 1961. The rib is steep, square-cut and right of, and slightly higher than, the main buttress from which it is separated by a forested corner. The route starts on the right side where a large block has become displaced. It goes up the cracks for 20 ft. to a ledge, then directly up a slightly overhanging wall before moving right, round the edge on to a less steep wall and so to the top. Exhilarating, perfect, rock.

Western Highland Notes

Ladhar Bheinn.—Patey suggests that, since Garbh Bheinn of Ardgour has been included in the Glencoe *Guide*, Ladhar Bheinn, the only other Western Highland rock-climbing centre (so far) should be included in the proposed *Northern Highlands Rock Climbers' Guide.*

Left of **Gaberlunzie Gully** (see under **New Climbs**) is a long thin steeper gully well deserving a visit. In the extreme recess of **Coire Dhorrcail** is **Moss Gully,** first climbed by Ferguson & Sturrock in 1939 and a possibly good winter route. Patey also reports that ½ mile west of Glenbeg, on the opposite side of the valley to the crags described under **New Climbs** is a belt of interlocking 200 ft. slabs, the rightmost of which is scored by a promising-looking thin Y-crack. So far as is known, entry is prohibited to the two buildings at Glenbeg.

Central Highland Notes

Creag Meaghaidh.—The first pitch of **The South Post** in Coire Ardair was avoided on the first winter ascent in 1955, as it requires a great build-up. It was climbed by T. W. Patey & R. F. Brooke on 5th March 1962 as an 80 ft. ice pitch tapering to a narrow chute just touching easy-angled snow in the gully bed above. In possibly better-than-average conditions it was of a severe character, though easier than the corresponding pitch of The Last Post.

Ben Nevis Notes

Minus One Gully.—During the ascent of Astronomy the smooth 30 ft. V groove of Minus One Gully's avoiding pitches (which was climbed artificially on the first ascent) was descended and the wooden wedges removed. Two inserted chockstones now give protection on this pitch which is Very Severe.

Glencoe Notes

Buachaille Etive Mòr, East Face, North Buttress.—B. W. Robertson reports a **Variation** on **Gallows Route.** Instead of 'climbing the 2nd overhang on the right by a shelf' he traversed left to an open groove and climbed straight to the top. Marshall believes this is the upper part of the 'unrecorded but well-known' **Bluebell Groove** of J. Cunningham.

Glen Etive.—The Greenock M.C. have been active in this area. W. Skidmore reports good sport on a slabby area of **Ben Starav,** some way up but level with the head of the loch. They found 3 lines of some 400 ft. (Very Difficult). Marshall reports that McInnes has climbed there, but left no record. Skidmore also reports a cliff opposite these slabs, across the glen, on an un-named hill (Approach *via* farm fence and stile and avoid young trees). Three Severe routes were made on steep rough rock—**Crab, Scalp** and **Jungle.** Marshall again remembers earlier ascents on this face, also unrecorded, by Walsh and other Creag Dhu members.

The Grampian Club have announced that their new hut in Glen Etive is now available. Details are to be had from the S.M.C. Meets Secretary.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

Resignations.—Maurice Cooke has resigned from being **Hon. Meets Secretary,** and Jeffrey Mason has taken over. Cooke has done this difficult job, made more difficult each year by a centrifugal club and the holiday rash of skiers, with a quiet competence much appreciated—not least by an Hon. Editor seeking his Meet Reports. Our thanks are due to him and to the **ex-Hon. Distribution Manager,** Percy MacFarlane, whose work, hitherto unsung, shall be lauded here at least. The sorting-out and dispatch of *Journals* to members, kindred clubs and the G.P. is a tediously unpleasant task with many pitfalls and possible cursings. MacFarlane has sent them on their way so smoothly that the Hon. Editor has considered his annual purgatory over when they reach the Distributor's hands; the possibilities of subsequent error are so frightful that he dare not think of them: but never has the good Distributor failed. The replacement is W. L. Coats, whom we welcome.

Hon. Editor.—Unfortunately no exchange kit seems yet available for the spent holder of this office. Sheer weight of unexpected additional commitments, professional and private, have made detailed compilation of the

Journal very difficult for the present Hon. Editor. However, not as bait for an unwary successor or assistant but as a simple truth, let him state that the successful completion of each number of this volume has been a most satisfying experience; that the help given by contributors and other Club members has been indeed magnificent (it is invidious not to mention names and we cannot resist quoting especially those of Dr J. H. B. Bell, J. C. Donaldson, Harrison, Higgins, Humble, Gall Inglis, J. M. and Scott Johnstone, MacKenzie, Marshall, Patey, Slesser, Stewart and Weir and X, Y and Z; and of Robin Smith, that inspired writer and climber—a conscious and disciplined artist in all things essential, enemy of the shallow and the crustaceous); and that he thanks the Club for allowing him the privilege of editing the annals of—what was it?—this 'one curious aberrant society. . . .'

Munros.—Mr Eric Maxwell notes that we have printed two A. McKenzies in our last list (*S.M.C.J.* (1962) xxvii, 287); he only knows of one, dated 1958, and our evidence suggests the first Mr McKenzie to be an artefact, so we must amend our counting to make G. Peat number 31 on our list and Mr P. Tranter number 44. With, as usual, the date of completion of (*a*) Munros, (*b*) of Tops and (*c*) of similar 3000 ft. hills in rest of British Isles, here are the latest creations:—

(45) J. C. I. Wedderburn, 1962; (46) J. M. Burnett, 1962; (47) A. E. Robinson, 1962; (48) K. D. Shaw, 1962; Miss L. Ticehurst, 1962, 1962, 1962; (50) K. M. Andrew, 1962; (51) G. H. Smith, 1962.

K. M. Andrew recounts that he did 201 Munros by himself; 234 summits were found free of cloud and all but 36 hills free of Other People. He required 157 days, of which 6 yielded no bag, 78 gave 1 Munro each, 44:2, 15:3, 8:4, 4:5 and 2 Elysian days 7 each. He estimates his task necessitated travelling on foot 1600 miles horizontally and 500,000 feet upwards.

Additions to the Library

Section numbers in parentheses—(26) *Aiguilles Rouges*, 1946; (26) *Pennine Alps, Selected Climbs* (Alpine Club, 1962); (26) *Berner*, 5 vols., 1948-56; (26) *Chamonix-Mont Blanc-St. Gervais-Les Bains*, 1950; (26) *Stubaier*, 1958; (26) *Valaisannes*, 3 vols., 1952; (26) *Mont Blanc, La Chaine du*, 3 vols., 1951, 1959; (26) *Walliser*, 1955; (26) *Zillertaler*, 1960; (26) *Monte Rosa* 1960 (in Italian); (2) *Crossing of Antarctica* (Hillary & Fuchs); (2) *No Latitude for Error* (Hillary); (9*a*) *Artificial Aids in Mountaineering* (Sutton); (3) *China, Tibet and Assam* (*A Journey*, 1911) (Bailey); (26) *Dolomites*, Guidebooks, 2 vols., 1959; (13) *Rock Climbs in Donegal* (I.M.C.); (1) *The Enchanted Mountains* (Fedden); (8) *Everest-Lhotse Adventure* (Eggler); (22*d*) *New Ways through the Glens* (Haldane); (16) *West Over Sea* (Pochin Mould); (22) *Highland Landscape* (Murray); (8) *Himalayan Village* (Gorer); (13) *Ireland*, Contour Road Book of, (Inglis); (20) *The Roads from the Isles* (Pochin Mould); (3) *Karakoram* (Maraini); (26) *The Lakeland Peaks* (Poucher); (8) *Manaslu Expedition*, 1952-6; *Medical and Psychological Study at High Altitude* (in English) (Japanese A. C.); (21) *Walks Round Peebles* (Maylard); (21) *Pentland Walks, their Literary and Historical Associations* (Cochrane); (26)

Pyrenees: Guidebooks, 4 vols., 1953-1960; (24) *Oberland and its Glaciers* (George); (7) *Salute the Mountains:* 100 *Walks in the Alps* (Pause); (26) *Blue Guide to Scotland*; (1) *Die Wallfahrt zum Wahren Jacob* (Rickmers); (26) *Short History of S.M.C.* (Scots Magazine); (14) *Speyside to Deeside* (Macrow); (11) *Stonehenge* (Sunmer); (19) *Trossachs and Rob Roy Country* (Campbell Nairne).

Scottish Mountain Accidents, 1962

UNLIKE our previous lists this one does not even approach completeness: in addition to those noted below, the Press has recorded accidents and searches on Ben Nevis, Ben More Assynt, Stac Polly, Ben Vorlich, Ben A'an and in Glencoe, Skye, the Cairngorms and other places. At least 49 searches and some 18 deaths have occurred, compared with 42 and 11 in 1961. The lack of reliable information on these other incidents is to be regretted, the more so after the recent reorganisation of Mountain Rescue administration in Scotland; the publication, or at least the collection, of *all* incidents and their probable causes is, quite apart from reference value, surely of importance in the campaign of Educating the Public. We might hope that next year's list will be much shorter and much more complete. It is a pleasure to thank those responsible in the R.A.F. and the Secretary of the M.R.C. for their readiness in making available what data we are able to publish, and of course our gratitude to all those teams and willing helpers engaged in the actual searches need not be further elaborated here.

27TH JANUARY.—Keith Murray, J.M.C.S., fell from near top of Green Gully, Ben Nevis, dragging down second; possibly piton belay pulled out. Second recovered consciousness in dark, found leader dead; dragged himself to C.I.C. hut. Found there by Kinloss M.R. personnel on training exercise, leader found some 400 ft. below foot of gully; brought down by R.A.F.M.R., R.N.S.M.A. and civilians.

1ST MARCH.—W. Garland (30) of Inverness, novice skier, took chair lift to top of Coire Cas. Skied in Coire na Ciste till 4 p.m. in worsening weather. Others had left, but Garland walked towards top station in thick mist. Very soon lost; at 5.30 p.m. sheltered beside rock over a ridge (actually down towards Loch Avon). Dug a hole but too cold to sleep, so paced up and down. At 5 a.m. next day (Friday) tried to get back to N. side of Cairn Gorm; reached a top (probably Stac an Fharaidh) but half-circled on descent and slipped on ice. Rolled almost to bottom again, losing skis, spectacles and a mitten. Depressed, and ceased to care; could not sleep because of violent shuddering. At 1 a.m. on Saturday tried to climb out again but deterred by steep snow in Coire Raibert. Found water to drink (had taken nothing but snow since Thursday) and went down to Loch Avon again. Found at 2.30 p.m. by Glenmore Lodge instructors. This survival for 56 hours may have been helped by (*a*) plenty of clothing—3 pullovers, large oilskin coat and 3 pairs of socks (outer ones iced-up and therefore insulating); (*b*) fitness; (*c*) his descent to shelter at 2500 ft.; (*d*) lack of strong wind. Kinloss M.R. and Army teams and civilians called out.

4th MARCH.—Two climbers in Crowberry Gully, Buachaille Etive Mòr, lost an axe and were stuck below final pitch. Spent night in cave and were unable to go up or down in morning, possibly because of cold. Leuchars M.R.T. with Hamish McInnes found them and brought them up on ropes.

6TH MARCH.—Two members of Vagabond M.C., Liverpool, (18 and 19), fell some 800 ft. from near top of Gardyloo Gully to its foot. Leader's step had collapsed and he dragged down second belayed to ice piton 50 ft. below. Fall fortunately seen by other climbers. Leader had multiple bruises and second a fractured femur. Parties of Kinloss M.R.T., police and Lochaber M.C.

24TH MARCH.—Climber fell 300 ft. on Stob Gabhar, Black Mount. Two of his party stayed with him, rest went for help. Police, Leuchars M.R.T. and civilians in rescue party.

25TH MARCH.—Three Liverpool University students, all 21, left car park in Coire Cas for walk; boots, windproofs but no map, compass or equipment. Lost in mist, swung left and over into Coire Raibert and down to Loch Avon. Followed Glen Avon down to empty Faindouran Lodge (spending part of night there) and then to a farm next day—a walk of 20 miles. Meanwhile many search parties out.

31ST MARCH.—Jane Hobart (35), Lanarkshire, experienced on hills, and Alice Woodward left car park to climb Cairn Gorm and Ben MacDhui in spite of start delayed until 1 p.m. Bad weather met on MacDhui at 3.30 p.m.; in sleet and snow at 9 p.m. they fell over cornice into Coire an t-Sneachda, after mistaking cairn there for cairn above Fiacail of Coire Cas. Jane Hobart killed; companion searched without success. Well equipped but for lack of rope. Kinloss M.R.T. and Glenmore Lodge instructors found body.

8TH APRIL.—Alexander Boyrod (29), Hungarian, ski-ing near Cairngorm chair lift, failed to return to Loch Morlich Y.H. at night. Found at 11.45 a.m. next day in Coire na Ciste. Ankle sprained and one ski lost; exhausted. Had spent some time in operator's hut of Coire na Ciste ski tow. Clear weather.

7TH JUNE.—John Austin (50), from England, with John Devlin (17) and William Binnie (23) both Glasgow novices, failed to return to Glen Brittle Y.H. after leaving Coruisk bothy. Mist and rain. Search parties from Kinloss M.R.T. and Y.H. One climber found at bothy. Other two telephoned from Elgo after losing way on tops; their companion turned back, on his own, after climbing Sgùrr Dùbh Beag slabs. . . .

10TH JUNE.—George Kinnaird (24), novice from England, set out for Coruisk bothy from Glen Brittle, intending to return that day by ridge. Uncertain of capabilities on Dùbh ridge, so returned to bothy for night. Back towards Y.H. early next morning, hoping, unsuccessfully, to anticipate formation of search party from Kinloss M.R.T., police and Y.H. members.

13TH JUNE.—Man separated from companions at 5 p.m., last seen trying to descend steep E. face of Cairn Toul. Only reported missing 24 hours later. . . . Found dead amongst boulders high up on the face, after having

apparently stumbled and received head injuries; these, age and exposure led to his death. R.N., police, Leuchars M.R., Glenmore Lodge and Gordonstoun teams in search; Leuchars brought body down.

24TH JUNE.—Margaret Little (18) staying at Arrochar, lost way in heavy rain on Ben Reoch; collapsed with exhaustion. Police called out after cries at 2 a.m. next morning. Girl found suffering from exposure.

24TH JUNE.—Colin Robertson (25), Glasgow, fell descending Recess Route on Cobbler; rope slipped off rock. Fractured arm and lacerations. No outside rescue team required.

4TH JULY.—Michael Brooks (19), Greenock, slipped on rock of S. Peak, Cobbler, wearing ordinary shoes. Unconscious, with head injuries. One of an organised holiday camping party not equipped for the Cobbler.

15TH JULY.—Mr. and Mrs. Moir and their 6 children (aged 8 to 17) lost in mist on summit of Ben MacDhui. Found next day by Kinloss M.R.T. above Loch Avon. Parties from Gordonstoun also in search. Started late and were ill-equipped—no compass and children in rubber shoes.

1ST AUGUST.—William McIntosh, Leeds, set off at 4.30 a.m. with his dog to climb Ben Nevis by tourist path from camp in Glen Nevis. Compass, clothed and shod well but no map, spare clothing or food. Did not return that night. Body located after dog heard howling; brought down by Kinloss M.R.T.

5TH AUGUST.—Joan Copeman, from England, broke ankle by Loch Brittle. Carried to Glen Brittle by Kinloss M.R.T.

14TH AUGUST.—15-yr.-old boy separated from companion on Beinn Oss; sheltered under groundsheet in a hollow and found there 19 hours later, none the worse despite heavy rain. Police and Leuchars M.R.T. searching.

9TH SEPTEMBER.—James McClymont (52), Ardrossan, left Glen Brittle at 3 p.m. with a companion to do the round of Coire Lagain; companion gave up at the Sgùmain Stone Shoot. McClymont last seen alone at top of Shoot at 7.20 p.m. Searches by civilians and Kinloss M.R.T. for next 6 days were fruitless. McClymont had suffered a ' blackout ' some weeks previously, and his friend had asked him to return with him.

24TH OCTOBER.—Anthony Garlinge (23), from England, broke ankle after slipping on wet rocks below Cobbler N. Peak—wearing Wellington boots. . . . With organised R.N. party from Arrochar. Rescue team out.

27TH NOVEMBER.—Three Naval cadets on navigational exercise from Glenmore wandered off course in allegedly poor conditions and slept out in bags, arriving late next day at Tomintoul. Leuchars M.R.T., R.N. and police searching.

18TH DECEMBER.—Four R.A.F. men traversing Aonach Eagach became benighted; tried to descend difficult part of S. face in deep soft snow. Two leading fell 70 ft. without serious injury. The others remained in a precarious position until rescued with difficulty next day by Leuchars M.R.T. and police.

27TH DECEMBER.—Mrs. Janet Fabian (30), descending S. ridge of Mullach an Rathain to Glen Torridon after traversing Liathach, slipped and fell over small outcrop, sliding 500 ft. down steep hard snow into rocks; unconscious,

with slight injuries. Her husband made her comfortable and went for help, coming back with local men. He remained whilst they returned to bring Kinloss M.R.T. party early next morning. Couple had unroped after major difficulties passed.

30TH DECEMBER.—Two climbers forced to bivouac on Lochnagar overnight in blizzard. Next day, had started to descend when one collapsed with fatigue. His companion made him comfortable and went for help. When help came, late that night, he was dead, some 150 ft. from the spot where he was left; Leuchars M.R.T. and police arrived later and brought him down. His clothing and equipment were excellent and had he used them to full advantage he might well have survived; 100 yards away was a deep snowbank suitable for a snowhole.

30TH DECEMBER.—Kinloss M.R.T. on exercise on Ben Nevis, wearing mixed footgear; member with cleated rubber soles, at a relative disadvantage, slipped on iced Tourist Path and slid 80 ft. until his shoulder-coiled rope caught on a boulder. Rescued by M.R.T. members and others.

31ST DECEMBER.—J. Roycroft (29), T. Reid (22) and J. Methven (19), G.U.M.C., killed in a gully on the S. face of Sgùrr Dùbh na Dha Bheinn. Bodies found next morning, Methven dying shortly after discovery. They were roped, two wearing crampons, and had probably been descending when they fell. Search parties from G.U.M.C., Kinloss M.R.T., police and J.M.C.S.

The inevitable crop of incidents on the ski slopes has been intentionally omitted; they were all relatively minor and ranged from broken bones to a torn udder—the last injury being to an ovine victim of that unmitigated pest, the Skier's Dog.

Glencoe Evening

I desire the high place,
The place of sun-touched night,
Of the veil of mist arising
And eagled wings of light;
Of red crags of Bidean,
The blackness of the ridge
And a late splash in the river
Below the bridge.

HAMISH MACMILLAN BROWN

IN MEMORIAM

W. A. MORRISON

W. A. MORRISON joined the Club in 1902 and was one of the last of what was sometimes called the Ling Sang Fu Dynasty, which exercised such a great influence on the Club. At the meets in his younger days he was often the life and soul of the party. He and Dr Inglis Clark did considerable research into Salisbury Crags Climbs. There is a story told which may or may not be true. Some ladies were climbing on the Crags and the leader got stuck and could neither get up nor down. Somebody hurried to Morrison's house which was in Upper Gray Street and it is said that he arrived in pyjamas on a bicycle and rescued her.

He introduced me to rock climbing on Salisbury Crags after the 1914-18 War and I was with him and a party in Glencoe in 1922. After we had done some easy climbs he suggested that we should do the Crowberry Ridge and I naturally supposed that he would lead. Instead of that he insisted I should do it and so under his expert guidance I made my first ascent of it.

Later we were in Skye at Mary Campbell's in Glen Brittle. Morrison was essentially a scientist and took everything in a deliberate and scientific way. He did not approve of early starts and one morning we started late to 'do the Dubhs' but the Lochan Coir' a' Ghrunnda was so attractive that we had a bathe in it and did not start on the climb till late in the afternoon. When we got to the Thearlaich Dubh gap the leader was so tired that he could not get up the long side but luckily somebody had been left at the top of the short side who assisted the party on the re-ascent. It was now near midnight, luckily in June, and the party split, one part going over and down Coire Lagan and the other down the Slabs of Coir' a' Ghrunnda. We got back to Mary's early in the morning. She had as little sense of time as Morrison and had dinner ready to be followed by a substantial tea and, later, milk before we went to bed. On another occasion as a result of a late start-cum-bathe, he and Menzies spent a night on the top of Sgùrr a' Ghreadaidh after he had led a new climb on the Coruisk side. Notwithstanding this eccentricity, he was a delightful man to climb with.

Mary Campbell had a large collection of clocks, many of which were not in order. Morrison spent his time when the weather was bad mending these clocks. He carried a repair outfit with him.

He had at least one season in the Alps.

He was as much at home in a boat as on the cliff face.

During the latter part of his life he suffered from ill-health and was not able to go to the hills, but to the last he retained his keen sense of humour as well as his love of the heights, and was never happier than when recalling the happenings of his various expeditions or assisting in solving any problem which might arise.

During the 1914-18 War Morrison worked in an explosive factory. The

factory went on fire and William got the girl workers out. He found that he was one short. He went back into the fire, found her unconscious and pulled her out. The whole works then blew up.

He was awarded a medal for this action.

Later he was given a commission in the Navy.

A. H.

SIR JAMES MANN WORDIE
1889-1962

Sir James Wordie was educated at Glasgow and Cambridge. As a young man he went to the hills in summer and winter, especially with his friend George Buchanan Smith, killed in the 1914-18 War; there is a short note on their climb of Elephant Gully on The Brack in volume xi of this *Journal*. He was most often in the Arran and Arrochar districts at that time, but throughout his whole life he was a constant walker on the Scottish hills, spending many vacations beside the Spey.

Before the first war he had climbed in the Alps and visited the Rockies and Alaska, and in 1914 he left with Shackelton for the Antarctic, playing a notable part there. In 1920 he was with the Scottish Spitzbergen Syndicate, and the next year made the first ascent of the Beerenberg (7680 ft.) in Jan Mayen Island; he is commemorated there by Wordie Peak. His expeditions to East Greenland in 1923, 1926 and 1929 with Cambridge undergraduates were famous, and with Courtauld and Vivian Fuchs in the latter year he made the first ascent of Petermann Peak at the head of Franz Joseph's Fjord. In 1934 and 1937 he travelled in Baffin Island, Ellesmere Island and West Greenland.

Towards the end of 1936 Wordie conceived the idea that the Forest of Dalness, which includes the Buachailles and Bidean nam Bian, should be purchased and given to the National Trust, which already held the Aonach Eagach. This was warmly supported by Unna, then President of the Club, and after an appeal to British climbing clubs and with the help of the Pilgrim Trust the purchase was completed.

Wordie joined the S.M.C. in 1912, and the A.C. He was President of the Royal Geographical Society from 1951-4, the first Chairman of the Mount Everest Foundation, 1955-6, and Chairman of the British Mountaineering Council from 1953-6. With his great knowledge of Polar travel, Wordie was a founder member of the management committee of the Scott Polar Research Institute and acted as its chairman from 1937-55. In 1952 he became Master of St John's College, Cambridge ; he was made a C.B.E. in 1947 and knighted in 1957. He left his Polar library to the National Library of Scotland. Though of a retiring disposition, he had a sharp tongue when it was required.

ROBIN SMITH

ROBIN C. SMITH, aged 23. Left Watson's Boys' College in 1956; studied at Edinburgh University and gained an honours degree in Mental Philosophy and was about to study further in London.

City-wise, he was to be found clad in short Italian jacket, with trousered legs arrogantly bowed and tapering dynamically into once-pointed mangled suedes. Banana-fingered hands, a quizzical smile ' What line today? ' and the odd scar or two, and you had Smith. Ready for anything, an extended ' jar '; a feast of jazz; a midnight slog over the Pentlands or the all-night study. Being truly nocturnal, most of his studies were done at night and, for that matter, a great percentage of his climbing.

On the hills he was a tramp, and lived on a lower plane of impoverished interdependence with his friends or associates; tented or dossing he lived on a heap of hopelessly abused good gear, in a confusion of tortured pitons, jam pieces, slings, melons and the inevitable absence of spoon and cup.

He entered the climbing scheme as a quiet, inordinately shy, boy, climbing with a school friend. He chose to ignore the reigning ' tigers ', shocking them by his boldness in attempting some of the most difficult climbs in any conditions. Experienced climbers were known to scuttle off the mountain, fearful of exposing themselves to some rescue, but always the smiling-faced youth would return, often stumbling through the darkness, bubbling enthusiasm; whereupon the old men waited—' it would happen sooner or later '.

It never did, he developed a masterly ability as a cragsman, second to none. Mind you, he had his lucky days; there was his ninety foot ' jump ' off Whiteghyll, just to tear his newly purchased Alpine breeches. Then the time he got a faceful of avalanche on ' peeking ower ' the top of the Rimaye on the Ryan-Lochmatter; when he hung, semi-conscious, from a hastily contrived belay through the buttonhole of his anorak pocket. He was a bit ' cut up ' by this and his face filled out with character.

In maturity he was one of the hardest climbers I have known. His strength and perseverance were shattering. On one climb he hung on a problem, spending five or six hours to gain some ten feet, whilst using a towel to swab the wet weep from the rock. On his winter ascent of Gardyloo he cut for six hours to overcome the near-vertical 150-foot prow of the ice-plated buttress. Or his ascent, under almost winter conditions, of the Fischer Wand, with several unpremeditated bivouacs, frostbite, darkness, enormous cornices, and hunger; in fact, a typical Smith outing. He delighted in impromptu, unexpected incidents which would carry the adventure far into the night, to impress one's memory indelibly with a sense of satisfying fulfilment and a wild belonging to the mountain world.

Within a year or two of his arrival, he pushed the message home to the resident degenerates, and injected newcomers to the group with his virile approach. His was no doctrine of rules or codes, but simply an unbounded enthusiasm at being born into an age of climbing where the overhanging corners, bulging walls and seeping black cracks remained untouched.

Couple this with a never-ending effort to improve his technical ability and a climbing history of inordinate experience and the result was the power-packed agreeable, Smith.

But now Smith's gone, killed unbelievably on some Russian mountain. He is, and always shall be, greatly missed by his friends, and can certainly never be forgotten by the climbing world.

His long list of first ascents, both summer and winter, encompass some of the finest climbs ever to be made in this country. Abroad, his seasons, ill-planned and shambolic, naturally accounted for most of the great routes in both the Dolomites and Western Alps.

Undoubtedly the greatest climber of our generation to join the club, he was possibly the most outstanding mountaineer throughout the long and varied history of the S.M.C. It is hard to avoid the pitfall of remorse and endless eulogies; but he himself would reject these, and we are best to remember him by his wild whoops, the tuneless ballads wailing from some fearful dank wall, the hair-raising climbs far into the night and his wanderings about the moonlit snows of the Highland summits.

We have gained immeasurably from his living among us, he has left us a legacy of great climbs and fine climbers eager to express and extend the climbing ideals by which he brought the S.M.C. back to the forefront of British mountaineering.

We extend our deepest sympathies to his Mother and family.

J.R.M.

THOMAS SPENCE GIBSON CARRUTHERS, J.M.C.S.
1936-1962

FEW people had heard of Tom Carruthers until he climbed the North Face of the Matterhorn in 1961. I was more fortunate. I met him 2 years before and in Tom I found the pefect climbing companion, for his bold leads, devoted sense of security and joyous confidence in any situation. Cheerfulness was, in fact, a built-in response for Tom.

Our first climb together was S.C. gully on Stob Choire nan Lochain. January ice and the first pitch had turned back previous parties. Tom, with little more experience than myself, was not overawed. He hacked a way up, economising on the holds and, with a resource I was to find characteristic, forced the crux without thinking about it too much. Tom felt that this was his kind of climbing, though I was happier on the rocks.

Comb Gully, Tower Scoop and Tower Ridge on Ben Nevis whetted the Alpine instinct further, then with a semi-winter ascent of the Chasm we were into the rock-climbing season, with many long ridge walks in between. Tom had decided to leave his job and take a three months' holiday to climb in the Polish Tatra and the Western Alps. We practically lived on the Buachaille at weekends, treading delicately on the well known V.S.'s, and trips to the Ben saw the three Ridges, the Long and the Italian Climbs ' in the bag '.

At the end of May, Tom sloped off and joined some Polish climbers who introduced him to high standard rock climbs. I met him in Chamonix in July, looking as if he had been on holiday all his life. We had a few climbs, but the big thing for Tom was the Matterhorn North Face, two days of tense, high-angle climbing which stimulated him as nothing else had in his life: ' It was quarter to six as we sat on the crest ; the North Face dropped sharply away at our feet. It had been a disagreeable climb and yet what a splendid climb! I enjoyed every minute of it!! '

The article which Tom wrote in the 1962 *Journal* reveals the man. Before the year was out he was planning to take another long holiday and climb the North Face of the Eiger. He asked me to go with him and I decided I would.

That winter we trained hard, on big ridge walks and long pads with heavy packs and with a fine round of winter climbs, including the North Face on Central Buttress of Buachaille—balancing on crampon points on verglas from Heather Ledge, and breathing more easily when we got into the chimney, iced as it was. Tom's typical comment as I awkwardly cut above him was that I should miss that bit out and carry on. Harder than that was Frostbite on the Brenva Face of Nevis, twelve hours of concentrated ice climbing more demanding than either of us had met before.

We were off to the Dolomites at the end of May, to find the peaks still in wintry condition. Dossing in hay lofts or camping we did several hard climbs, the best of which was the Steger *diretissima* on the East Face of Catinaccio.

Unfortunately the big routes which we had hoped to do in Chamonix were out of condition owing to the late snowfall. However, we did climb the North Face of the Plan and were pleased at our fitness. After the Charmoz and the Ménégaux route on the M, we went for the East Face of the Grand Capucin, where I came a cropper. My pegs came out as I moved up on our étrier, below the first Bonatti bivouac. Tom pulled me up 40 feet, taking most of my weight, for my ankle was pretty useless.

We were lucky to get away with this, and be able to descend, abseiling 400 ft. to the foot of the rocks. My climbing days were over, meantime, but with a fellow Scot, Jimmy Logan, Tom did the South Face of the Aiguille du Midi and the North Face of the Dru. An attempt on the Walker Spur was defeated half way by bad weather, but they withdrew without a bivouac.

Tom had been out in the Alps almost three months now, and his last climb was the North Face of the Eiger. His parting words to me were: ' I don't think I'll bother about the Eiger.'

Well, we know he did bother about the Eiger. He met Egon Moderger from near Salzburg, who had just come down from the second ice-field on the Eiger because his companion did not like the idea of continuing. Moderger was still keen and fate threw him against Tom. They set off together next night and were last seen alive by Bonington and Clough on the second ice-field. They fell 3000 feet. Tom's watch had stopped at quarter to six; exactly a year before, to the day and to the hour, Tom had reached the top of the Matterhorn with Nally.

In his death we have lost a fine mountaineer, and I have lost a friend who cannot be replaced.

Criticism has been passed that Carruthers was not ready for the North Face of the Eiger. To that I can only quote the great Mummery, who had much the same mentality as Tom Carruthers. He wrote:

'Our best efforts must sometimes be seconded by the great goddess of luck; to her should the Alpine Club offer its vows and thanksgivings. The happy climber, like the aged Ulysses, is one who has drunk delight of battle with his peers, and this delight is only attainable by assaulting cliffs which tax to their utmost limits the powers of the mountaineers engaged.'

Tom Carruthers was a cycle racing champion before he became a mountaineer. In the Eiger he sought the same sort of challenge, of giving his best, his all. His ashes lie on a mountain top in Glencoe, on the summit of Geàrr Aonach.

W. S.

GEORGE REID DONALD, M.B.E., LL.D., J.P.
1870-1962

WITH the passing of George R. Donald, in his 93rd year, in Dundee on 27th September 1962, one of our last remaining links with the Golden Age of Mountaineering has gone. It is hard to believe that at the beginning of this century he was already thirty years old, with another sixty years of active life ahead of him, for he continued to attend Club Dinners until a few years before his death.

He was elected a member of the S.M.C. in December 1908, served on the Committee from 1915 to 1919, and was Vice-President from 1939 to 1945.

At the outbreak of the 1914-18 war, although already 45, he joined up with the Sportsmen's Battalion as a private. After serving for six months, he was commissioned in the Black Watch. He went to France and was a combatant officer for a year, taking part in the Somme operations. Later, in view of his profession, he was recalled to the War Office, where he served as Captain until 1918.

A well kept secret of his career was that shortly after the First World War, he was awarded the M.B.E. (Military Division) despite his efforts to decline the decoration. Behind his wish to decline the honour was the fact that he held an office post in the later stages of the war, and he felt that those in the trenches were more deserving of the honour.

George Donald was a keen lover of the country and an enthusiastic angler and shot. His many excursions to Loch Maree over many years earned him the title of 'The Uncrowned King of Loch Maree.'

When the Grampian Club was formed in 1927 he took a keen interest in the Club, and continued to do so until his death. He supported its library very generously by gifts of books on climbing and travel. In 1931 he was elected as first Honorary President of the Grampian Club and held office until he retired in 1936, being thereafter an Honorary Member.

He was for many years an active Member of the Dundee Ramblers' Club, which was founded earlier than either the Cairngorm Club or the Scottish Mountaineering Club, and he was one of the three founder members of the Scottish Ski Club.

As well as all these activities, amidst a very busy professional career, he found time to play golf, and was a Member of the Royal and Ancient Club and Captain of the Panmure Golf Club, Barry.

His valuable and life long contribution to his profession was marked in 1946 by appointment as an Honorary Sheriff Substitute, and further recog nition came in 1957, when he received the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws from St Andrews University.

His wife, a well known figure on Charitable and other Committees in Dundee, died in 1959. Until then, they were both usually present at the Annual Dinner of the Grampian Club and she always accompanied him to Edinburgh or Glasgow for his regular attendances at S.M.C. Dinners. After her death, his genial and kindly presence was missed at these functions and from then on he seemed to withdraw from public life. He latterly suffered from penumonia and was confined to his house for some months before his death. G. H. S.

We must also record with great regret the passing of the following members, for whom no detailed obituary is available as we go to Press: **G. W. T. Fleming, J. B. Shearer, Arthur Dixon, G. G. MacPhee, C. W. Nettleton.**

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB

Easter Meet 1962—Braemar

Blessed with good weather, the southern Cairngorms welcomed the faithful, while the northern slopes were battered by a thousand-strong ski army. The meet being well attended, camp, bothy and hotel contained, in and around Braemar, a goodly representation of the Club. Unfortunately the Ling Hut and C.I.C. Hut were apparently devoid of members but we more than compensated for it. On the Friday, mists hung low, and rain was evident; at least, to those driving blind over the Devil's Elbow at midnight. Saturday and Sunday blossomed fair, with sun and some wind. The snows were thick and many good expeditions ensued. There were excellent camp sites all the way to Derry Lodge gates, and many members took advantage of them. The Secretary reports that six Munros fell to his bag, while members from the Fife Arms carried out lengthy expeditions in various areas including some from Derry Lodge (where a Rolls Royce was seen). Undoubtedly the weather made a success of the meet. Those Present:—At **Fife Arms Hotel:** The President, I. G. Charleson; D. L. Carmichael; W. L. Coats; M. H. Cooke; J. Dow; R. M. Gall Inglis; B. H. Humble; J. N. Ledingham; G. G. Macphee; D. H. McPherson; M. Morrison; D. McArthur; I. M. M. McPhail; R. W. Martin; T. Nicholson; E. C. Thomson; T. E. Thomson; D. G. Turnbull; F. R. Wylie; A. M. Smith. **Camping:** G. J. F. Dutton;

J. Mason; K. Dunn; D. Paterson; T. Ransley; J. S. Stewart; G. S. Johnstone; G. S. Roger; A. C. D. Small; R. Grieve. **At Home:** J. C. Donaldson. **Guests:** H. Allison; J. L. Anderson; J. Nicholson; O. Turnbull.

At the Fife Arms on Sunday a general meeting recommended that the 1963 Easter meet should be held in the Loch Torridon/Kinlochewe area. The meet would also include the Ling and C.I.C. Huts.

J. M.

Reception

THIS is an Austerity Issue, so we must be brief and merely report that Slesser and Bryan talked on the Pamirs and on that Expedition. The Deputy-Leader gives vent to a few cryptic blasts earlier in this issue. Perhaps we shall all hear more later.

Annual General Meeting

The 74th Annual General meeting of the Club was held in the George Hotel, Edinburgh, on Saturday, 1st December 1962, with the President, I. G. Charleson, in the chair.

To ensure that no one takes this brief account as the usual Seriously Informative Report, we will mention things quite at random.

This next year (1963) sees the Club's Diamond Jubilee. We learned that again the Presidency was offered to our Honorary Member, Dr J. H. B. Bell, and that again that formidable individual (cf. *S.M.C.J.* (1960) xxvii, 1) handed it back.

Among the things that stood out was the rapid involuntary glissade by Evershed Thomson into the Association for the Preservation of Rural Scotland; he could not discover who started it. Grieve, keeping moving, had resigned this.

Other resignation-mongers, demonstrating unequivocally their incapacitation by extra Other Work (Other Work? How *can* they have Other Work?) were the Hon. Guide Books General Editor and, as darkly foreshadowed last issue, the Hon. Editor. Amid applause for this last demonstration of their feeling for the Club they returned, temporarily, to their seats.

The dreaded Resolution 4, proposed by the ardent Feminist Murray and by MacKenzie (who desires back stairs in Lagangarbh) just resisted a skilfully consequential speech by an evilly-prognosticating Smart. The Guest House topic continues in ' Letters,' this issue.

The Hon. Treasurer was aghast at various things, including the *Journal* cost. Last issue knocked off all the considerable savings of the previous two and even with increasing costs and New Climbs was really too expensive. But he was uneasy at the suggestion by the Hon. Editor and some others that Guide-book material, topographical and technical, still published at the Club's expense in its *Journal* should now be paid for by the new publishers of Guide-books, the Trust. The Hon. Editor envisaged a Current Guide-book Information Section in the *Journal*, covering New Climbs and Notes and other general Scottish mountain information exactly as hitherto found so useful, but financed by the Trust. Otherwise continuance of this necessary service to the climbing community is doubtful.

Lagangarbh had aroused more emotions when MacKenzie denounced incessant Hooliganism and breakings-in. A surprising number of members (some 13) supported Marshall's calm suggestion that the Club should abandon Langangarbh to the Family Parties and seek a hut in a less explored region. Many others disliked the idea of creating an un-wardened Super-Hut in so vulnerable an area as Glencoe. Lagangarbh has meanwhile been closed for extensive repair. There seems little doubt that criminal prosecution, however distasteful, will be the only solution.

Many other interesting things happened but at present printing rates some five punnd Sasunnach (enough for half a tread of MacKenzie's stair) would be required to tell of them. . . .

Dinner

Our correspondent writes: ' In the evening 79 Members and 34 Guests sat down to Dinner. In the course of his speech the President referred to the loss of two outstanding climbers, Wilfred Noyce and Robin Smith, on the Pamirs Expedition. Their tragic deaths were a great loss to mountaineering. Robin Smith was one of the most brilliant climbers among our younger members.

' The Toast of " Our Guests and Kindred Clubs " was proposed by George Ritchie who revealed hitherto unsuspected talent as a Poet. We feel sure that our Guests were appreciative—the burst of poetry was no doubt inspired by the fact that the Official Guests included the S.M.C. members of the Pamirs Expedition. Malcolm Slesser replied suitably, and Douglas Milner of the Rucksack Club, in his reply for the Kindred Clubs, brought us back to everyday life from the wild Irish and Celtic atmosphere which he felt had been created.'

New Year Meet 1963—Crianlarich

The difficult road conditions lessened the numbers on this Meet; among the casualties was the Hon. Meets Secretary, but we have here a composite report. Coats writes: ' Good snow conditions persisted throughout the Meet. In other respects a foretaste of things not to come was vouchsafed to three early arrivals who on Thursday enjoyed brilliant sunshine, blue skies and extensive views including the islands of Bute, Arran and Jura. Thereafter the predominant feature was the terrific wind, accompanied initially by intermittent clouds and showers which by Sunday had become more or less continuous.'

Climbs included Beinns Chabhair, Dubhcraig, Chaluim and Dorain, Stob Ghabhar, Stob a' Choire Odhar and the Aonach Eagach ridge, and various 2000 ft. summits.

Present were: The President, Baxter, Bowman, Charleson, Coats, Cooke, Dodgson, Elton, B. S. Fraser, Gorrie, Hendry, Gall Inglis, Ledingham, Mills, Morris, E. McEwen, T. Nicholson, I. Ogilvie, O'Riordan, Peat, T. E. Thomson, Wylie, and J. Brown (a camping guest).

J.M.C.S. REPORTS

Perth Section.—This Section has maintained its membership at 25 and has managed to hold its monthly meets with a good attendance of members. A good deal of climbing has also been done between meets and especially on holidays; some of our members were in Norway and in the Alps.

Our annual dinner, which was to have been held in Braemar, had to be postponed because the first snowfall of the winter had blocked the Elbow.

Office-bearers.—Hon. President, J. Anton; *Hon. Vice-President*, J. Proom; *President*, D. Wares; *Vice-President*, R. Milne; *Secretary*, J. Grant, 37 Burghmuir Rd., Perth.

Edinburgh Section.—During the year ended 31st October 1962 membership dropped to 46—with 4 associates—a reduction of 16. Numbers on bus meets, held jointly with the Edinburgh Mountaineering Club, fell off rather badly, until a sudden burst of enthusiasm towards the end of the year improved matters very considerably—changing a slump into a boom and this continues into 1963.

Winter indoor meets have been held jointly with the S.M.C. and have proved very satisfactory—40 being the average attendance. In summer, evening meets were held fortnightly at Traprain Law and Aberdour. Members spent climbing holidays in the Alps, Cuillins, N. W. Scotland, and Ireland. The financial position remains satisfactory, although a loss was recorded on the year—but this was entirely due to buying equipment for hiring out to members.

There now appears to be an increased interest in mountaineering in the club, with a greater percentage of active members than in former years—a smaller active club being better than a large dead one. The future looks as if it will ' go.'

Office-Bearers.—Hon. President, D. Leaver; *Hon. Vice-President*, J. Clarkson; *President*, C. Macpherson; *Bus Convener and Treasurer*, R. Phillips, 13 Inverleith Gardens, Edinburgh, 3 ; *Secretary*, P. A. Larder, 44 Rosslyn Crescent, Edinburgh, 6.

Lochaber Section (Lochaber Mountaineering Club).—Membership has fallen off a little and stands at 37. Some of our most active members left the district, so that support for climbing meets became somewhat sporadic, the best attendance combining with the worst weather on the Saddle. Nevertheless, the stalwart few were active throughout Scotland, as well as in Norway and Switzerland.

The Annual Dinner is now established as our most popular function and last year we again were fortunate to have G. Scott Johnstone there to reveal to us the geological mysteries of the hills around Lochaber.

The loss of active local members, mentioned above, led to an acute shortage of mountain rescue volunteers during the year. It was considered that lack of suitable boots and clothing might well deter volunteers from coming forward to act as stretcher bearers. Following the provision of these items of equipment from club funds and a local Press appeal, it is most satisfactory to record that a dozen enthusiasts are now undergoing training.

Office-bearers for 1963.—*Hon. President*, P. L. J. Heron; *Hon. Vice-President*, D. G. Duff; *President*, K. A. Stanley; *Treasurer and Custodian of Steall Hut*, J. A. Sutherland, British Linen Bank, Fort William; *Secretary*, Miles Hutchinson, Craigmore, Wades Road, Kinlochleven.

Glasgow Section.—This section had a good year's climbing, with many new members and prospective members appearing on the scene. However, the number of actual members remains at about 125.

The frequency of the meets was a steady one per fortnight, and these were well attended in the winter months, but attendance fell away in the summer months: possibly because of people going on holiday or because of lack of transport. The meets in the early part of the summer coincided with what good weather there was, and successful meets were held in Glencoe, Ben Nevis and Arran. The meets to Skye, Torridon and Kintail proved popular. Due to the large number who went over to Skye by boat from Mallaig last May week-end, the cost per head was very reasonable.

Financially, the Club had a slight deficit over the year. Due to rising costs, it was decided that the subscription should be increased to £1 as from 1963.

The Annual General Meeting of the Section was held in the S.M.C. Clubroom in West Nile Street on 8th November 1962. The business was rapidly disposed of before members worked up a thirst.

On 11th January 1963, the Glencoe Hotel bore the shock of the Annual Dinner which, freed of the burden of having an A.G.M. tied to it, turned out to be a light-hearted evening, with the bagpipes playing until midnight.

Several parties went abroad in the summer of 1963, and on their return nearly all produced pictures taken in the Arolla region. Arolla seems to be one of the last tourist-free havens for climbers living on a limited budget.

The club members have several times been involved in rescue operations, and on these occasions everyone showed willingness to assist.

There was a good attendance at all the lectures held during the winter months.

Hon. Secretary, T. Murray, 29 Bagnell St., Springburn, Glasgow, N.1.

London Section.—Membership at the end of the year stood at sixty-four, which is approximately the same as it has been for previous years. The Section continued to hold monthly meets in the English or Welsh Hills. North Wales has come to be regarded as the home ground and some of the meets there have had attendances of more than twenty members. This is no mean feat for a Club domiciled 250 congested miles away from the Mountains. A fairly well attended meet was held at Glencoe at Easter and numerous minor visits have been made to the Sandstone Outcrops of South East England.

During the course of the year the Section became a member of the British Mountaineering Council.

The A.G.M. and Annual Dinner took place at ' The Feathers ' Tudor Street (which keeps a much favoured Scotch Ale) and was a most successful function, although we regretted that for the first time in several years we had no representative from any of the other Sections.

Office-Bearers.—Hon. President, E. Zenthon; *Hon. Vice-President*, W. Wallace; *Hon. Member*, K. Reed; *President*, E. Johnson; *Vice-President*, J. Wright; *Secretary*, H. Jordan, 43 Culverley Road, Catford, London S.E.6. *Meet Secretary*, P. Whitechurch, 89 Allington Road, Paddockwood, Tonbridge.

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

Africa

IAIN H. OGILVIE sends the following note, which he entitles ' Kenya for the Middle-aged.'

' First, about the mountain. Mount Kenya, 17,058 feet, rises from a desolate moorland surrounded by tropical forest. It lies on the equator and therefore has two dry seasons; December to March and July to September. In the former season, with the sun in the south, south facing rocks are clear of snow while the northern faces are iced up. In the other season, the reverse is the case. This is an over-simplification, but it does mean that some routes are in season at one time of the year and some at the other and that a traverse of the mountain involves one route in the off season.

' As to the weather, we were told that in the dry seasons it would cloud over shortly after mid-day and that we might have snow in the afternoon. But while we were on the mountain it clouded over between nine and ten in the morning and we usually had a good deal of snow or rain lower down in the afternoons. I do not think we were unlucky. The truth is that most people climb Mount Kenya by the south-east face in the December-March season. The other routes are not often climbed as they are much more difficult so there is little experience of the " other summer " which may not be as good.

' Our plan was to climb the mountain in a fortnight's holiday from home. I have been told this can be done, but my informant was speaking about the easy route. Our plan was to traverse the two main summits, Nelion and Batian, up the north-west ridge and down the south-east face. The north-west ridge was first climbed by Shipton and Tilman in 1930 and has only been repeated two or three times. If not the most difficult route it is possibly the finest and certainly the longest on the mountain. The route of descent would be iced up.

' The party from home consisted of Dr Charles Warren, Commander George Densham, who did not intend to try for the summit, and myself. From Kenya we were to be joined by Robert Chambers and Kisoi Menyao who had both been to the top before, by another route; Kisoi is the only African so far who has done this.

' We met in Nairobi on September 1st and by the night of 3rd Densham and I were camping in the forest at the head of the Naro Moru jeep track, sorting out porter loads. The Naro Moru route from the south-west is the shortest to the mountain, thanks to a jeep track which rises to about 10,000 feet. Only the game tracks penetrate the forest but about four of these have been kept open and improved by constant use. On the following morning Warren and Kisoi joined us with the porters. Chambers was to join us later.

'Any idea of African porters carrying immense loads on their heads can at once be dispelled. They don't use their heads (in either sense) and have no particular method of carrying, so that loaded with about 50 lb. each, progress was spasmodic and slow. And it rained and hailed and most of them failed to complete the first day's stage so that we had to content ourselves with two rashers of bacon each to split between supper and breakfast. And next morning we had to collect the porters, so that it was the afternoon before we started the second march.

'There are two huts within striking distance of Mount Kenya, both very simple compared with European standards, having six or eight tiered bunks and little else. One, the Two Tarn hut is to the south-west at about 14,750 feet. This we intended to make our base. The other, the Arthur Firman hut, is at 15,750 feet and lies below the south-east face. This we intended to provision for our descent. But porter trouble had delayed us and we had taken all the loads to Two Tarn Hut. We had neither wages nor rations enough to keep the porters longer, so all we could do before dismissing them was to establish our base.

'The next two days were devoted to sweated labour. On the first, we humped two high altitude tents and some provisions over a high col and down the other side of the mountain. On the second, Densham, Kisoi and Chambers, who had now joined us, provisioned the Arthur Firman Hut, and delivered a load of emergency rations there for the Kenya Mountaineering Club. Warren and I took more gear over the col and then relayed two loads each 800 feet up to the junction of the Cesar and Josef Glaciers. The ice was too steep to pitch a tent but we built a miserable platform on a rock ledge, labouring through a long and violent hailstorm. By the time we had finished and the clouds had cleared away at sunset, the snow line had dropped far into the valleys. The tropical night was upon us when we heard shouts and with torches and a rope helped Kisoi and Chambers up the last steep rocks.

'We were all tired next morning as we were now operating at 15,500 feet, after only four days out, but there was no time for off-days on this trip. We set out, rather too late, to cut a line of steps up the ice slope to the Firman Col, the true start of the climb. It was hailing again and very cold when we reached the col. A steep ice slope continued up the first part of the ridge and Chambers cut up it to the end of 120 feet of rope. The rocks were not yet in sight, but he thought they were not far off, so wishful thinking and a cold wind stopped us and we returned to camp.

'On the morning of 9th we were off at sunrise, the time for starting on an equatorial mountain, and made good time to the col. But then for the first time we saw the slope ahead. Only a third of it had been prepared the day before and the ice was steep and hard. Warren cut up it, but it took some time, and then the rocks of the Petit Gendarme rose steeply ahead. They face east and as there is no sun in the afternoon, there was snow and ice on the holds and ledges. We had hoped to reach the top of the Gendarme in four hours, but it had taken us seven.

'We roped off the other side to a narrow gap and to a sharp knife edge of

ice. This led to a jagged stretch of ridge, turned by a ledge on the left. Later we were glad to remember this ledge.

'The next obstacle was the Grand Gendarme, turned on the left again. But now it was snowing. We had been in a mist for a long time and the route was not obvious. We tried to traverse too low and were brought up on the edge of a great gully. Then we returned to the ridge and followed it too far. When we tried to traverse again we were at about 16,500 feet and on very difficult ground. It was after four o'clock. Less than two hours' daylight remained and a night higher up, if indeed we could find a way up, might not be comfortable. We remembered the ledge and beat a retreat.

'We had a fairly comfortable night with some shelter from a wall we built of stones. The night, as always, was fine and so was the dawn. What was more, we could now see the correct route and a further advance was discussed; not I think with much enthusiasm, as we were tired and certainly unacclimatised. In any case we would probably have had to spend another night out, our rations were exhausted and Densham would be worried about us. This was sufficient excuse and we decided to rope off to the Northey Glacier to the north.

'Some downward scrambling brought us to the top of a steep face. There was a short abseil and then a long one. Two 120 foot ropes were tied together and doubled. We lowered them in some trepidation. They just touched the snow. The last 60 feet were free and we were far out on the glacier when we landed.

'But it was not all over. Down the glacier we went to the Kami Tarn, then eastwards round the mountain, up the most abominable of screes, up the Gregory Glacier, between Nelion and Lenana; then down the Lewis Glacier through the gloom and mists until just before dark we reached the Firman Hut, climbed into our bunks and went to sleep.

'The third highest summit of Kenya is Lenana. Though 16,355 feet high it is easy and we could not go home empty handed. We walked up it next morning before breakfast, before the clouds came up from the valleys. Its easy snows were a delight and the views were wonderful.

'Next day we returned to Two Tarn Hut, round the south side of the mountain. We had circled it now. We dumped all we had and set off again to collect our high camp. The less said about that grind the better; we were back by nightfall.

'In the morning the mules arrived on time. Over the moorland we went, down through the giant groundsels, and the giant lobelia, strange prehistoric-looking plants; down through the giant heaths in the pouring rain; down to the bamboo forest. We were following the Burguret route to the west, a longer route than that of our ascent.

'Kenya saw us off in good style with several hours of tropical thunderstorm and torrential downpour. In the forest it was dark and wet and steamy, and we kept finding fresh tracks of buffalo, elephants and rhinoceros. Unlike most who visit Kenya there was nothing we wanted to meet less than a rhino! Then the sun came out and we emerged from the forest.'

North America

G. J. DUTTON, shamelessly intruding his professional trips again, remarks that he had a very brief inhalation of the Great Smoky Mountains of Virginia and Tennessee, fighting the bush above the Motel line and evading hunters. The summit trees would have given a good view.

The Pyrenees

W. H. MURRAY and Mrs Murray spent three weeks in Andorra, in the Pyrenees, in September. They camped at 5000 feet in the Arinsal valley, which (with the neighbouring valley of El Serrat) is the best climbing centre in Andorra. It gives access to the highest peaks, which are between nine and ten thousand feet. The approaches go by splendid gorges wooded in pine, birch, rowan, and holly. The mountains are set in great depth, and since the maps are so inaccurate that their only real value is in the lower valleys, every mountain must be reconnoitred and one's own way up or down found for oneself. There are no guides, or guide-books. The ridges are of narrow and shattered rock, the peaks shapely, and difficulties similar in standard to those of the Cuillin ridge (except that the scale is much greater). An average day is 11 hours. Between the peaks lie hidden bowls, always with sparkling lakes, so that swims may be had before and after climbing.

Above Arinsal, they climbed Pic de l'Estany, Pic Alt de Boet, Pic Alt de la Coma Pedrosa, and several other peaks (all around 10,000 feet) even better but unnamed. They had only one thunderstorm, but that caught them on a rock ridge near a summit with lightning striking the rocks and the jolt going through their bodies. The peaks whitened with egg-size hail and the storm lasted 12 hours with lightning flashing incessantly (a record?) From the El Serrat valley they climbed the Pic de Tristagne by its S.E. ridge (recommended) and several other mountains, one in Spain being shaped like the Muztagh Tower in miniature. None of these peaks held snow save in wreaths in eastern corries.

Norway

G. G. FREEMAN was touring on ski in Norway from 31st March to 10th April with a party of six and the guide Asmund Pederson of Oslo. They skied from Finse to Urdland, following approximately the railway route with excursions from the four stopping points. The contrasts of technique and terrain with those of the Alps were striking. After this period of instruction in the art of climbing with wax instead of skins (a tricky knack) and the use of loose bindings for descent as well as ascent, one was left on the horns of a dilemma as to which method to use when operating independently in Scotland and elsewhere. In spite of the monotony of powder snow and rocks of the higher parts of Norway, unrelieved by Alpine-type views into green valleys, ski-mountaineers will be well repaid by a visit to this birthplace of ski-ing, with its friendly independent people.

The Alps

NEIL MACNIVEN was in the Dolomites and then at Chamonix, from mid-July to mid-August. With A. Ewing (E.U.M.C.) he did the Preuss route on the Cima Piccollissima and the N.E. arête of the Cima Ovest. Then with J. Saklatvata (London) the Yellow Edge, the Cassin on the Piccollissima and the North face of Cima Grande (Comici). After some bad weather they did the Pilastro di Rozes on the Tofana (Via Constantini-Appollonio) and finally the Via Tissi on the Torre Venezia.

Eventually, tearing himself from the pleasures of tourism and Venice, he reached Chamonix where he climbed the Ménégaux route on the M with an Englishman, whose name he never discovered. He now joined Grant Jarvis (London) in an attempt on the West face of the Drus, but a storm on the second day forced a retreat from near the top of the 90 metre dièdre—above the main difficulties.

Deeming himself sufficiently sunburnt, he then returned to the blasted heaths of Caledonia.

JAMES STENHOUSE, with GEORGE RITCHIE, visited the Alps for the first time. In fine weather they enjoyed the following climbs: on 14th August, North East Face Pitz Badile (Via Cassin); 19th, Hörnli Ridge, Matterhorn; 21st, East Ridge, Weisshorn; 23rd, South Ridge, Dent Blanche.

DONALD MILL, in the Spring of 1962, did some skiing which included Mont Blanc, Mont Dolent, ' bits of the High Level Route ' and Monte Rosa.

G. G. FREEMAN was in the Valais, centred on Zermatt, with GEORGE ROGER and JOHN PROOM from 24th August to 6th September. They climbed the Tête Blanche and Tête de Valpelline from the Schonbiel Hut and crossed the Furggjoch to the Luigi Amedeo hut and traversed the Matterhorn to Zermatt. The season was exceptionally dry and the rock routes were in perfect condition.

GEORGE CHISHOLM writes: ' FRED MANTZ (J.M.C.S.) and I spent three weeks in the Pennine Alps from 5th to 26th July. After 2 or 3 days of cold weather, the weather remained fine for the rest of our time.

' From Saas-Fee we spent several nights at the Weissmies Hut. Our first climb was the traverse of the Jagi-grat in 10 hours, our best rock-climb of the tour, involving 6 abseils. The following day we traversed the Laquinhorn, a long, good day, spoiled for me by a touch of mountain sickness. From the Britannia Hut we climbed the Egginer, then next day the Strahlhorn by the Adler Pass.

' Our best climb was the complete traverse of the Rimpfischorn via the Allalin Pass and the west side to join the Rimpfischwange route much ice to the summit; then the traverse of the North Arete by the pinnacles and icy descent for 2000 feet back to Allalin Pass.

' From Zermatt we went to the Bétemps Hut and climbed Monte Rosa by

usual route—very icy from the Saddle. Back to Zermatt, then up to the Rothorn Hut. Next day we climbed the Wellenkuppe in 2½ hours but took a further 1½ hours to get to the top of the Great Gendarme of the Ober Gabelhorn (very icy again). Thence we retreated and lazed on the Wellenkuppe for 2 hours in the sun.

'Next morning in doubtful weather we climbed to the top of the Zinal Rothorn in 4 hours—a very enjoyable climb. We were very pleased because 2 years previously (1960) it was out of condition.

'We then went up to the Hornli for the Matterhorn. In 1960 we did it with a young guide, Alexander Graven, in 3¾ hours from the Belvedere. It has then been unclimbed for a month until 2 days previously, and we thought a guide advisable. This year Fred Mantz was determined to climb it without a guide. We got a beautiful day and managed very well—slower of course. We took 5 hours up and 4 hours down, and sat on top for an hour admiring the glorious view.

'We finished our holiday the next day with a walk up the Breithorn, again with fine views in all directions. We had 10 ascents, including 7 over 4000 metres. We felt that for 2 older men (both 47) without a great deal of Alpine experience, we had done " not too badly " in our 3 weeks.'

Of the London Section of the J.M.C.S., Dick Pursłow, Keith Graville, Andre Zaluski and Hugh Jordan were in the Dolomites from 11th to 24th August. They camped at Canazei and travelled up to huts from there. After limbering-up on the Sella Towers they did the Traverse of the Funffinger and the centre one of the Vajolet Towers. Unsettled weather thwarted an attempt on the South Face of the Marmolada, the party already having had experience of an electrical storm on that summit several days previously, in which three people were killed.

'Miles Hutchinson writes: I was in Saas-Fe for two weeks from 22nd July with M. J. Saunders (J.M.C.S.) and two Northumbrian M.C. friends. In excellent weather we started with the Mittaghorn-Egginer ridge before traversing the Portjengrat from the Almagelleralp. From the Weissmies hut, the Fletschhorn-Laquinhorn traverse provided our first *viertausender*, taking in the Weissmies itself next day by the tourist route. We moved on to the Britannia Hut and our most enjoyable climb of the holiday, the traverse of the N. ridge of the Rimpfischhorn. The crossing of the Adler pass, taking in the Strahlhorn *en route*, proved a fitting approach to Zermatt, although the state of the lateral moraine of the Findeln glacier left much to be desired. Any enjoyment gained from the ascent of the tourist route on the Matterhorn was more than nullified when a falling stone caused the death of one of the party. I must record my appreciation of the sympathy and help subsequently received from Herr Biener of the Hotel Bahnhof and the local police. Needless to say we returned home in low spirits after what should have been a most enjoyable holiday.'

M. G. Anderson (J.M.C.S.) writes: 'In August last year I spent an enjoyable fortnight in the Chamonix district with Tim Taylor of the Army Mountaineering Association. As this was my first Alpine season Taylor

decided on the Arête Forbes of the Aiguille du Chardonnet. By virtue of an early start and great haste we won second place in the glacier plod, thus avoiding traffic congestion on the ridge and enabling us to complete the climb in guide book time, which was probably a record. Unacclimatised, untrained, and unwilling I was dragged over icy bulge and airy ridge to the Chardonnet's summit. There, amidst breathtaking scenery, I toasted my first Alpine peak in lemon juice and sardines. After a few days we did the traverse of the Aiguilles Dorées on rock which varied from frozen dirt to granite of roughness and sharpness just made for climbing. The beauty of the ascent was heightened by our solitude, its difficulty by starting from the wrong end (according to the guide book). From the Couvercle Hut we climbed a variant of the normal route on the Évêque, which was encumbered by two incompetent Englishmen who should never have been near the Alps. This route—which we dignified by calling the West Face—gave a warm sunny rock climb of about Mild Severe standard and was afterwards descended by several anorak-ripping *rappels*. Thus encouraged, we set out for the S.W. Ridge of the Moine—an extremely good but tiring route, which provided a fitting climax to our fortnight's holiday.'

An Edinburgh party consisting of HOWARD BRUNTON, JAMES CLARKSON, IAN DOUGLAS, MICHAEL FLEMING, JOHN KNIGHT and IAN MACEACHERAN was in the Mont Blanc area for three weeks from 20th July. Clarkson writes:

'From the Albert Premier Hut, we climbed the Petit Fourche, the Tête Crettex, Javelle and Trident of the Aiguilles Dorées, the Grande Fourche from the Fenêtre du Tour (Brunton, Clarkson and Douglas), the Aguille Purtscheller (Fleming and MacEacheran), and the traverse of the Chardonnet by the Arête Forbes. We then went to the Couvercle, and our climbs included the traverse of the Courtes, the E. peak of the Droites, and the S.W. Arête Intégrale of the Moine (Knight and MacEacheran). After these peaks, we crossed the Col de Triolet into Italy, a pleasant route up snow and ice on the north side, but involving steep loose rocks and mushy snow with some small stonefalls on the descent.

'Our first climb from Italy was the Jorasses by the ordinary route. Then Knight and MacEacheran were driven off the S. ridge of the Noire by a thunderstorm. The rest climbed the Dent du Géant and Mont Blanc du Tacul from the Torino hut, subsequently descending to Chamonix. From Plan de l'Aiguille, Brunton and Clarkson climbed the N.N.E. Arête of the M, and did the Charmoz-Grépon traverse, Knight and MacEacheran climbed the Peigne by the Ferlet-Terray route up the Chamonix face, the hardest climb of the holiday, and Douglas and Fleming climbed a fair part of the Grütter Arête on the Pèlerins. Finally, Clarkson and Douglas traversed the Petits Charmoz. The weather was consistently fine and settled throughout, with only a few very short breaks, and our spells of climbing were punctuated by enjoyable days at the Chamonix Plage!'

BOOKS

The Enchanted Mountains. By Robin Fedden. (1962: John Murray. 124 pp., 8 illustrations. 18s.)

This book, though slight, deserves to take its place as a minor classic of mountain literature. ' It is not primarily about mountaineering ' says the author, but is rather ' an account of satisfactions to be found in a little-visited region of the Pyrenees.' Satisfactions are less tangible than actions, but Robin Fedden, seeing clearly and writing freshly and sensitively, contrives to put on paper much that will awaken echoes in the mind of the less extroverted mountaineer. He distils into little over a hundred pages the essence of three holidays in which he gradually approaches, and finally climbs, the Encantados—mountains of his dreams. This not very ambitious quest gives unity to a narrative which is itself a mere thread on which he hangs his satisfactions. These he finds not only up amid high peaks but also down in quiet valleys and primitive villages. Many of his descriptions - the climb in the mist, for example, or the pool of snow water lying on the lip of an abyss—are a sheer joy and linger in the memory. Apart from a few mispellings the book is attractively produced, with some pleasant photographs mostly by Basil Goodfellow, and a charming pictorial map.

' The Enchanted Mountains ' will serve a secondary purpose, for, ironically enough, this very subjective book is the most useful introduction to the Spanish Pyrenees that has appeared in English since 1900. It deals with only that part of the range between the Pico de Posets and the Encantados, and the photographs do not show how varied the scenery is even in that area; but one can gather from the narrative a good deal about the attractions and the limitations of the Spanish side. In addition an appendix provides three pages of information not easily available elsewhere concerning inns, huts, books, maps and climbing. Prospective visitors should note, however, that food and blankets *are* provided in the Rifugio de Estos as well as in the Rincluse. This apart the information seems sound, and—equally important!—it is so brief and basic that the wanderer will not be deprived of the pleasures and frustrations of finding his own way about a region that is not yet given over to the Tourist Industry.

B. S. F.

The Climb up to Hell. By Jack Olsen. (1962: Gollancz, London. 191 pp., 26 illustrations. 21s.)

This book by an American journalist could well be described as yet another miserable attempt to cash in on a tragedy on that face of tragedies, the North Face of the Eiger. But I think a little sincerity comes through the professionalism.

The story of the rescue of Claudio Corti in 1957 is well enough known already and if Olsen was trying to throw any light on to the incredible behaviour of the climbers whilst on the wall he must be said to have failed. He does not give detailed descriptions, and I'm sure Corti gave many, of the climbing from day to day and the reasons for the extreme slowness,

Stomach trouble of Nothdurft and slowness of Longhi are quoted. But what about the unbelievably slow movement from the top of the difficult crack to the top of the first ice-field, when both men were still fit and the passage mainly on rock, where the Germans at least were acknowledged experts? The rescue operations are well enough documented in *The White Spider* and in mountaineering journals.

One thing hitherto undisclosed does, however, come to light and here the book makes an important contribution to climbing literature. This is the exposing of the atrocious behaviour of the Grindelwald guides—refusing to lift a hand to help the 'Bergwacht' rescue team on the ground, far less on the mountain. These are the professionals, the dour Oberlanders of the dogged attitude who for so long have been held up to us as paragons of mountaineering virtue against the misdeeds of the 'wild-eyed Teutons'—those Teutons who only pushed up mountaineering standards and who rescue without payment. . . . A necessary book for this alone and well worth reading objectively.

D. H.

The Photography of Scenery. By C. Douglas Milner. (Focal Press. 35s.)

Seventeen years ago Mr Milner's book *Mountain Photography* was published. Since then there have been a number of technical developments in photography, especially in colour film. Instead of producing a new edition of the old book, the author has extended the subject-matter to include scenery of all kinds, there being no difference in principle between the photography of mountains and that of mole-hills.

Although some of the old material has been used, the book has been entirely rewritten and represents the fruits of a great deal of practical experience and mature judgment. The author has brought a keen and perceptive mind to bear on both the technical and the aesthetic aspects of the subject. The mountaineer who takes his photography seriously will find matter to ponder on almost any page of this book. Only the actual taking of the photograph is dealt with directly and anyone going into monochrome photography as deeply as this book does will probably want to do his own developing and enlarging. However, these skills can be acquired and certainly the indispenable basis is what takes place at the moment of pressing the button.

The bulk of photography done nowadays by the mountaineer or anybody else is, of course, in colour and the author has some words of wisdom on this. The production of a really first-class scenic colour transparency is not, it would seem, quite so easy as some have imagined. There are some fascinating illustrations in the book and the old fashioned photographer can take heart from the fact that they are all in monochrome. The reason for this is no doubt mainly one of cost, but the author has some hard things to say about the ordinary run of colour prints.

D. J. F.

The Alpine Guide Books, No. 2: Selected Climbs in the Pennine Alps. Edited by J. Neill. (1962: The Alpine Club, London. 244 pp. text, 53 diagrams. 21s. to the public.)

The Alpine Club is in the process of publishing in English, Guides to the Alps; the General Editor was the late C. W. F. Noyce. The first number to be published is No. 2, The Pennine Alps: the area from the Col Ferret to the Simplon Pass. The book is pocket size, printed on water-resisting paper with a waterproof cover. It is divided into four sections: 1. General information; 2. Huts and Mountain Hotels; 3. Peaks; 4. Passes.

The diagrams are excellent and there are descriptions of numerous routes on the various peaks. The Guide is based on descriptions of climbs in the *Guide des Alpes Valaisannes* by Marcel Kurz, published by the Swiss Alpine Club, and this Club's permission has been received to translate and adapt accounts from this source and also for permission to copy numerous diagrams. This Guide fills a long-felt want and can be recommended with confidence, both to those who are visiting the Alps for the first time and to those who are renewing their acquaintance.

A. H.

Standard Encyclopædia of the World's Mountains. Edited by A. Huxley. (1962: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London. 384 pp., 16 colour plates, many other illustrations. 45s.)

This attractive book contains over 300 articles on the World's Mountains, a short history of mountaineering, a gazetteer and brief biographies of 93 'Mountaineering Pioneers'. For a British publication, it is a pity that British mountains and rock-climbing areas are not covered adequately and less detail given for others of less importance abroad. Why should the Mount of Olives, a 'climb' of a few hundred feet, get 37 lines of text, mostly quite superfluous, and Ben Lawers 55 lines, when Buachaille Etive Mor, Bidean nam Bian (and even Greenland) are not mentioned at all? Ben Nevis, Snowdon and two Irish hills are the only ones in these Islands deemed worthy of detailed mention; the Cuillin, Cairngorms and Lake District are passed over briefly, and Glencoe—together with other famous climbing areas in Britain—is omitted altogether. No mention is made of the foundation of the premier British Climbing Clubs other than the Alpine Club; and one looks in vain for names of the inter-war pioneers of the British rocks, though several post-1945 names and standards appear.

But, overall, this book is worthy of a place in every mountaineering library as a valuable work of reference.

R. G. I.

Artificial Aids in Mountaineering. By Geoffrey Sutton. (1962: Nicholas Kaye, London. 64 pp., 8 diagrams. 9s. 6d.)

An interesting and useful book illustrating and describing the use of equipment employed in artificial climbing on rock and ice. Modern techniques, use of the double rope, bivouacs, etc., are also dealt with in detail.

J. S.

The Lakeland Peaks. By W. A. Poucher. (1960: Constable, London. 367 pp., 181 photographs, 14 maps. 16s.)

An attractive little guide intended for beginners only; of passing interest to the experienced mountaineer. The many excellent photographs are somewhat marred by the white lines indicating routes. Perhaps this latter feature is borrowed from the superb series of Lakeland Guides by Wainwright?

C. V. D.

Mountaineering in Scotland. By W. H. Murray. (2nd ed., 1962: Dent, London. 252 pp., 16 pp. illustrations, 5 pp. maps and diagrams. 25s.)

Scotland's sole buyable climbing classic, wisely unaltered. Needs no bush here. To have to consider buying it shows unco-ordination: should be an involuntary purchase.

G. J. D.

Highland Landscape. By W. H. Murray. (1962: National Trust for Scotland, Edinburgh. 80 pp., maps & plans. 15s.)

Should be a compulsory purchase. A book production worthy of the best of Scotland, recounting the worst. Murray's regional description of the Anatomy and the Pathology of what we have left of the Highlands is clinically clear and precise; behind the restraint that rare thing, a civilised man, is trying to talk to us. How horrid! Offer him a bun, and go on to the next cage.

G. J. D.

The Alps. By Wilfred Noyce and Karl Lukan. (Thames & Hudson, London. £3 3s.)

This is translated from the German and has over 200 photographs. The author's name on the cover is Wilfred Noyce. In fact, only an 8-page introduction and comments on the photographs are by Noyce; the remainder consists of Karl Lukan's text, with more stress on the Eastern than the Western Alps. The photographs are excellent and the reading matter interesting.

A. H. H.

Salute the Mountains. By Walter Pause; translated by Ruth Michaelis Jena and Arthur Ratcliff. (George Harrap, London. 210 pp., 100 illustrations. 45s.)

In this expensive but beautifully-produced translation of Herr Pause's *Berg Heil* the merits of 100 well-selected Alpine rambles are extolled in what may appear to the British reader somewhat flowery language. Helped by clear if over-simple sketch maps the author has comprehensively summarised details and advice for those who might wish to use his book as a practical guide. The carefully-selected accompanying photographs contribute to this end and are most helpful in visualising the differing terrain.

Despite the vastness of the field, the most knowledgeable will find it hard to query Herr Pause's selection, which includes rambles amongst the least, as well as the best, known scenes in the Alps. He is also to be congratulated on concluding with an excellent list of rules of conduct, adherence to which will ensure safe enjoyment of the magnificent scenery through which his rambles pass. J. N. L.

New Ways through the Glens. By A. R. B. Haldane. (1962: Nelson. 248 pp., illus. & maps. 30s.)

In this book, as we learn from an exemplary *précis* on the inside cover, the author has given the first detailed account of the great engineer Thomas Telford and his colleagues in their work in the Highlands.

This is very welcome news to those who not only enjoyed *The Drove Roads of Scotland* but found it an enlightening and overdue experience. For, in matters of Highland history, few other writers—Scots and the lave—can resist immediately taking sides. Generally losing sides! To explain the transformation of those noble savages—our ancestors—into those puir craiturs—us—there has been a determined search for villains. Qualifiers are the Scottish monarchs, the Covenanting armies, the Campbells, the Whig lawyers; and, of course, standing ready-blackened in the wings, the long-suffering English—whose degree of guilt in Highland histories is pretty certain to be in inverse ratio to the amount of original research and scholarship in the work concerned.

Dr Haldane, however . . . well, if he did not exist, it would certainly be necessary to invent him (and Fraser Darling and Telfer-Dunbar as well). The *Drove Roads* lit up and made animated for us the darkness shrouding Tìr nam Beann between two royal visits—those of Cumberland and Queen Victoria. At the beginning of this new book there is an equally absorbing chapter ' Old Problems and New Plans ' giving an understanding, dispassionate account of a pre-feudal ' kindly ' society uneasily facing a crux that was not to be surmounted without heavy damage.

There are, here, no villainous forces to be compared with Time's fell hand and the cold breath of economic progress. There is a near-Marxist insistence on the effects of everyday things and methods of production.

All somewhat at variance with tartan-shop clan histories. But it is decidedly the world of the poems of Rob Donn and the dialogues of Caraid nan Gaidheal.

It would be pleasant to record that this interest is sustained. Alas, —literary qualities have to give way for ' Two large collections of contemporary material, never before used, one in the Record Office of the House of Lords and the other in the cellar of a legal office in Edinburgh.' It pays, nevertheless, to plod pleasantly through the legal tangles. Contractors, workmen and lairds were no better then than now—Col. McDonell of Glengarry who glares boozily at us from a Raeburn in the National Gallery being apparently every bit as difficult as he looks.

There is also the long and intricate story of that enigmatic waterway, the Caledonian Canal. And there are fascinating glimpses into the remarkably

familiar world of blithe business chancers, quill-driving ulcer men and other recognisable types who contributed to the industrious chicanery of 18th-century contracts.

Also some entertaining examples of lack of industry and human failings. Two sample quotations: ' The herring season,' wrote Telford, ' has been most abundant, and the return of the fine weather will enable the indolent Highland creatures to get their plentiful crops and have a glorious spell at the whisky making.' And as for Lowland surveyors: ' Some were stupid, others merely slack, while one, Wilson, sent to Caithness in the late autumn of 1808 virtually disappeared from human ken, only to emerge in the following spring. Hope seems to have had his own idea as to the cause. " Your hospitable Country ruins him," he wrote to James Trail of Hobbister in January, and a few weeks later, reporting to Telford the arrival of the spring thaw, " I wish it may also recall poor Wilson to life and activity "; but an agency more powerful than the spring was needed, and in April Hope wrote to Telford that the errant surveyor's daughter " had passed thro' Foss on her way North in the intention of conducting him home again ".' This may, even in this later age, throw light on S.M.C. members electing to holiday in so flat a county.

Contemporary illustrations, an excellent biography and an attractive antique road map of 1828 complete a God-send of a book for Glen Brittle in July.

R. W. McL.

Climbing with Joseph Georges. By Dorothy E. Thompson; (1962: Titus Wilson, Kendal. Text pp. 159, Illustrations 13 halftones; Published under auspices of Ladies' Alpine Club.)

Joseph Georges of La Forclaz, Val d'Herens, was one of the great Alpine guides. The author, known by her friends as ' Tommy ', climbed regularly with him for a good few years. She was a good and fast goer and lightly built. To this alone and not to special skill she modestly ascribed her good fortune in securing him as her regular guide. There were other and weightier reasons. She had made up her mind to do the greatest and longest routes on the south face of Mont Blanc, in which ambition she was largely successful during her Alpine career from 1923-1935.

The greatest expeditions were the ascents of the Brouillard and the Innominata arêtes and, longest of all in 1933, the traverse of Mont Blanc over the Bionnassay and descent of the Peuteret arête and over the Aiguille Blanche mainly in darkness; then a descent by the Couloir des Dames Anglaises at dawn and crossing of the tangled Fresnay glacier to the Gamba Hut at noon next day (34 hours of exacting climbing). There are other exciting stories of bad weather, crisis and danger and the unfailing resource and cheerfulness of Joseph Georges.

As I knew Tommy well in her later years and have met J. G. several times in the Alps I can believe it all. Tommy has written a great book, but then she had a great story to tell. It is pervaded by modesty and humour.

J. H. B. B.

Rock-climber's Guide to Donegal. (1962: Irish Mountaineering Club. 56 pp., some maps and plans.)

Deals mostly with the Poisoned Glen area. There are a few long Severe-Very Severe climbs. The names are refreshing; they range from Sinn Feinn to Rule Britannia and include, inevitably, Dubliners, Ulysses and Finnegan's Rake. . . .

G. J. D.

Journals of Kindred Clubs. This must be shorter than ever, in an Austerity Issue. But, despite black clouds over the Cairnwell, let us follow the Cam Ruadh and sharpen the quill for a last shot. *The Alpine Journal*, 1962-2, has H. E. L. Porter's Memories in his delightful style, contrasting with the gaunt and racy account of Whillans and his Irishmen in the Andes; more embroidery on two themes this reviewer is heartily sick of—The First Ascent of Mt. Blanc and That Nasty Chinese Photograph; a jolly analysis of *pieds d'éléphant* and an attempt by Busk at a ' Which? ' of climbing kit (advertisers are surely not so necessary to the Free Mountaineering Press that we cannot have at least one critical survey, no holes barred?). *The Yorkshire Ramblers' Club Journal*, 1962, a good 70th anniversary issue—memorable to us for an astonishingly eloquent Stirling, nib loosened by his English sojourn and the sight of Ladhar Bheinn.

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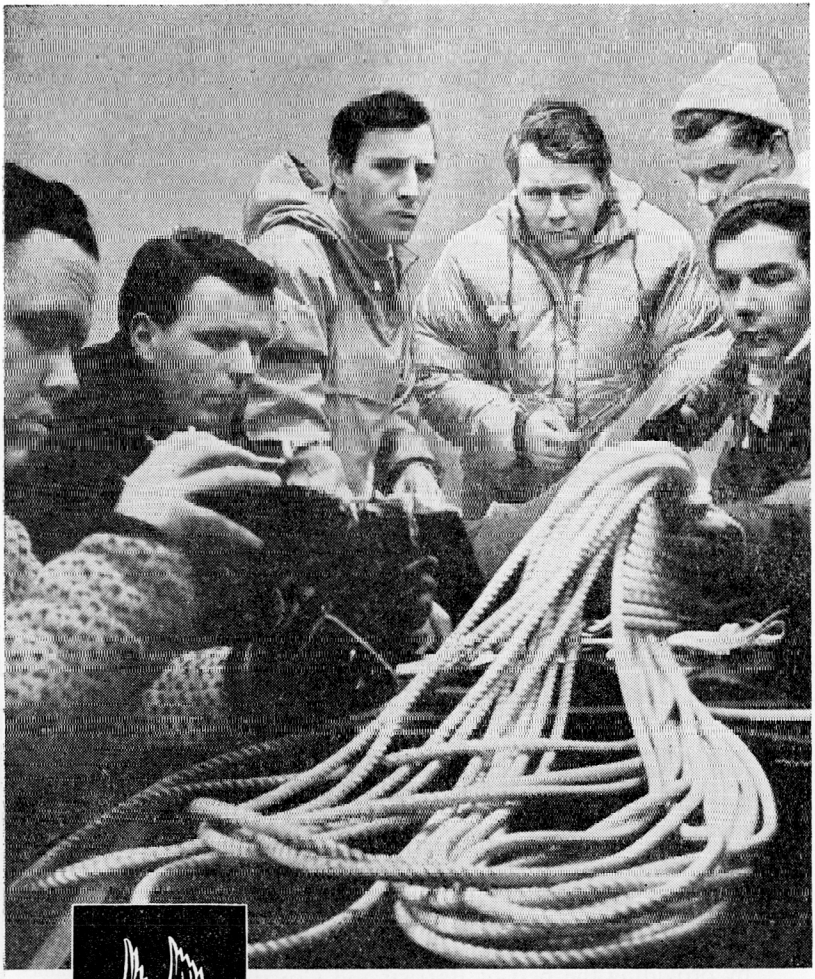



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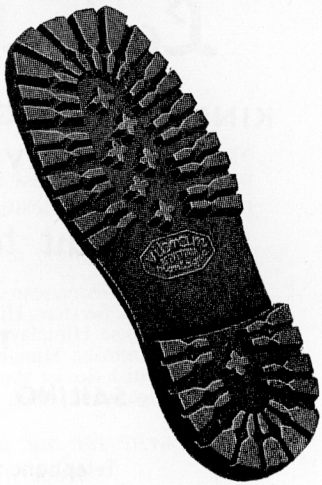

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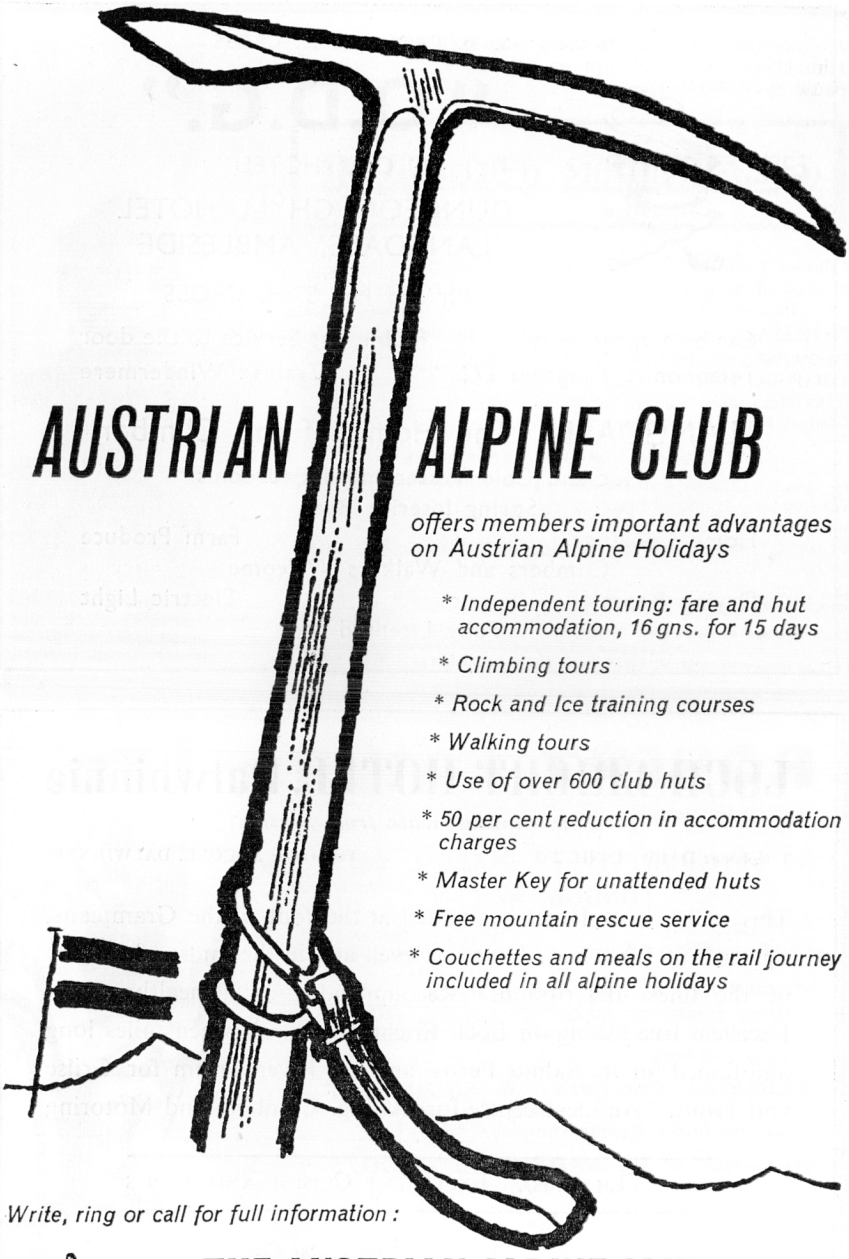

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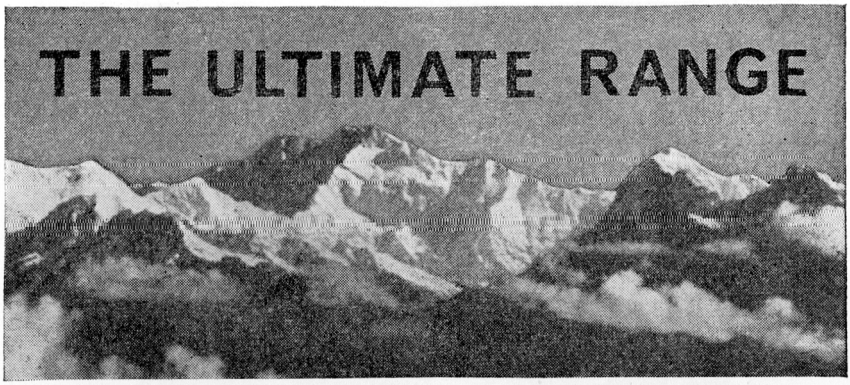

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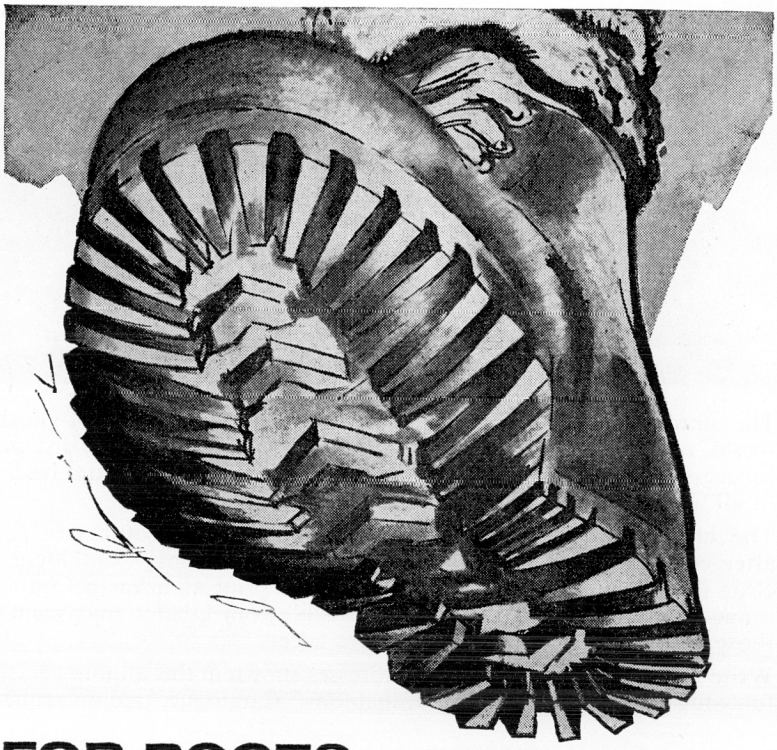

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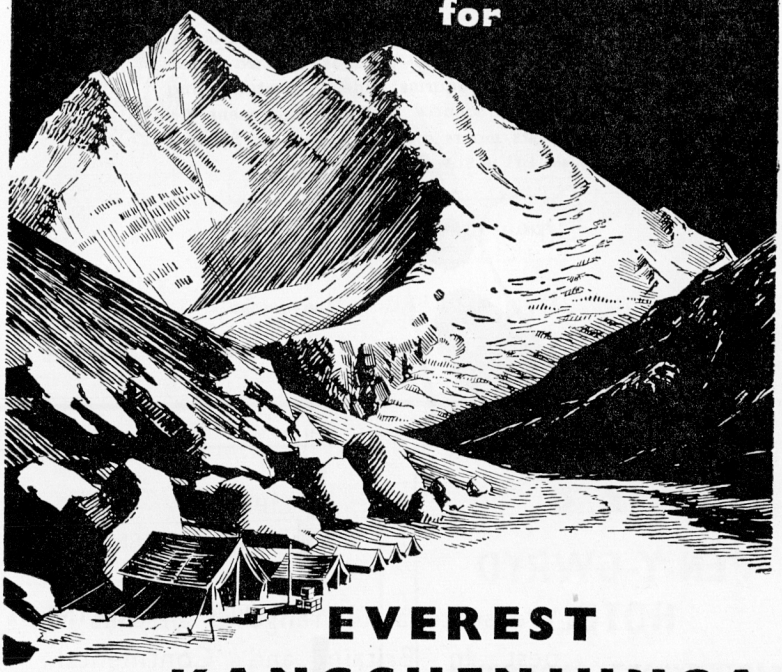

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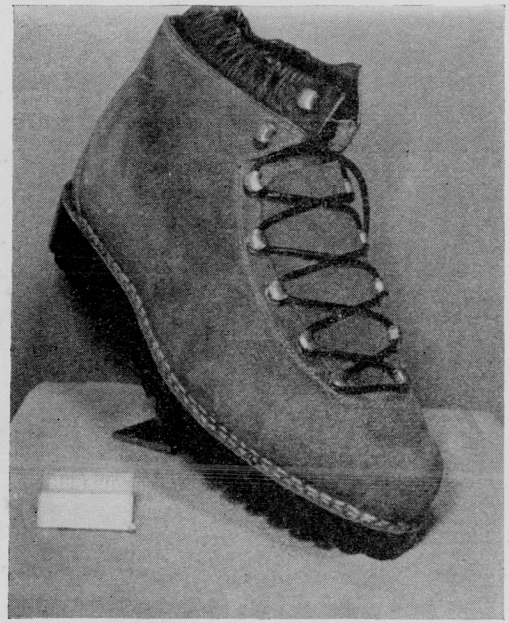

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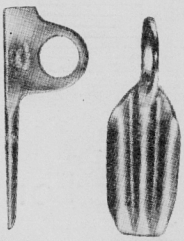

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