MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

The W. H. Murray Literary Prize.

As a tribute to the late Bill Murray, whose mountain and environment writings have been an inspiration to many a budding mountaineer, the SMC have set up a modest writing prize, to be run through the pages of the Journal. The basic rules are set out below, and will be re-printed each year. The prize is run with a deadline, as is normal, of the end of January each year. So assuming you are reading this in early July, you have, for the next issue, six months in which to set the pencil, pen or word processor on fire.

The Rules:

1. There shall be a competition for the best entry on Scottish Mountaineering published in the *Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal.* The competition shall be called the 'W. H. Murray Literary Prize', hereafter called the 'Prize.'

2. The judging panel shall consist of, in the first instance, the following: The current Editor of the *SMC Journal;* The current President of the SMC; and two or three lay members, who may be drawn from the membership of the SMC. The lay members of the panel will sit for three years after which they will be replaced.

3. If, in the view of the panel, there is in any year no entries suitable for the Prize, then there shall be no award that year.

4. Entries shall be writing on the general theme of 'Scottish Mountaineering', and may be prose articles of up to approximately 5000 words in length, or shorter verse. Entries may be fictional.

5. Panel members may not enter for the competition during the period of their membership.

6. Entries must be of original, previously unpublished material. Entries should be submitted to the Editor of the *SMC Journal* before the end of January for consideration that year. Lengthy contributions are preferably word-processed and submitted either on 3.5" PC disk or sent via e-mail. (See Office Bearers page at end of this Journal for address etc.) Any contributor to the SMC Journal is entitled to exclude their material from consideration of the Prize and should so notify the Editor of this wish in advance.

7. The prize will be a cheque for the amount £250.

8. Contributors may make different submissions in different years.

9. The decision of the panel is final.

10. Any winning entry will be announced in the *SMC Journal* and will be published in the *SMC Journal* and on the SMC Web site. Thereafter, authors retain copyright.

The W. H. Murray Literary Prize (2003).

THE winner of the 2003 W. H. Murray Literary Prize is regular Journal contributor, Peter Biggar, for his short story *The Second Sight.* As his previous work has shown, Peter is very much at home with this genre, an opinion borne out by judge Terry Gifford's comment: "This writer has learned from good storytellers some of the tricks of the well-crafted tale."

In creating a work that addresses myth and mortality, the author evokes, if not past times, then certainly gentler and unfortunately passing ones, where one inhabits the world of the primus and real porridge oats as opposed to Trangias and energy bars. Having said that, the introduction of a pair of "pink shell-suit trousers" is perhaps indicative of the way the author moves freely and seamlessly between points of view.

His ability to create a sense of place with a deft choice of language is excellent, as evidenced by passages such as: "As the breeze shifted the clouds, warm shafts of sunlight came through making the myriad dewdrops sparkle on the spider's webs. Away down in the valley, smoke rose from the dwellings by the river and a small boat moved imperceptibly over the surface of the sea loch on its round from one orange buoy to the next."

Three other articles could be said to be runners-up in terms of the attention and comment they attracted from the judges.

Dave MacLeod gave us a well-written piece on just what lies behind a major first ascent at the very cutting edge of today's rock climbing scene. In describing his new route which fills in a blank space on the Chemin de Fer face at Dumbarton Rock, Dave produced, in the words of our new President in his first term as a W. H. M. judge, a piece which was " very focused (as befits a climber at this level) and well written." The Ian Nicolson of his generation as far as 'Dumbie' is concerned anyway.

Stephen Reid produced a well-written piece about what must be an ever more ephemeral pastime, that of ice climbing in the Galloway Hills, *Dow Spout* which the President found to be, "in many ways a model climbing article – informative, evocative and conveying the exhilaration and satisfaction of a good day on the hills".

A final mention goes to M. G. Anderson, again, as last year, in the position of bridesmaid with his humorous piece *Dropping In On Friends* which I feel may well be a cross genre work, best listed under the heading 'Faction.'

Terry Gifford commented that this piece would "delight readers of the Journal, especially with its use of the Royal language of Lower Deeside." (perhaps that should be the Lower language of Royal Deeside!). Derek Pyper has kindly offered his services as translator for any of our more southerly-based readers who may experience difficulty with this one.

Congratulations again to Peter Biggar, and to the other contributors and all you budding authors out there, there's always next year. The winning article as well as appearing in this year's Journal can also be read in full on the SMC Website.

Charlie Orr.

Scottish Mountain Accidents

DUE to the death of club member John Hinde, (obituary appears elsewhere) who compiled the Scottish Mountain Accident statistics for over 20 years, there is no Accidents Section this year. The Scottish Mountain Rescue Committee has appointed a successor but, due to the vast amount of work involved, in what for John was undoubtedly a labour of love, it has not been possible to manage a seamless transition. The Club, and indeed, the wider community is indebted to John for his meticulous recording of these valuable statistics over the years.

MEN, MOUNTAINS AND ADVENTURE

By Walter Bonatti

(Address to The International Festival of Mountaineering Literature – Leeds University 2002)

I have only one aim when I talk about my experiences – to remind you what wise men have always pointed out as the correct path to follow. They say that each of us must be the author of his own story as it unfolds throughout the course of his life. From this precept it is easy to conclude that if you wish to build your own spiritual identity, your basic need, your only goal, should be to assert yourself and grow. This calls for a commitment which demands passion, perseverance and integrity concerning the sound principles one must accept. This will have excellent results – you will feel stronger and firmer and as a result will feel like a winner. We therefore should never wait for anything to come as a gift from others, and still less for so-called 'luck'. Our 'lucky stars' are merely what we manage to create for ourselves – step by step, year after year, experience after experience. Everything must be paid for with our own hides. This then is not luck, but continuing growth. To reaffirm what I have just said, I offer the experience of an entire lifetime – my own life.

I am not a mountain man by birth, but became wedded to the mountains by pure passion after growing up in the flattest part of Italy – the plain of the Po valley. I will say at once that my adventurous instincts, which were to become the driving force of my life, were undoubtedly produced by curiosity, an abiding curiosity which little by little became ever more associated with fantasy, with dreams, with the insuppressible need to give concrete reality to all this. But a hard, difficult adolescence also contributed a great deal to the development of my character, formed not only by the defeat of Italy in the Second World War but also by the resultant sudden collapse of human values and the lack of any real prospects – totally absent in my country at that time. This happened to a lad who just then was facing the realities of life.

As a repercussion, such precedents could have been transformed into moral degradation for the poor in spirit, or to the exact opposite in those with positive potential. Fortunately, this latter alternative was what happened to me.

While still very young – only 18 years old – I began to practice mountaineering at the highest level, and this led me, in less than a year, to repeat the most difficult climbs achieved up till then by my predecessors. But doing extreme climbs was for me not so much a flight from the daily round (however understandable that might have been), nor rebellion against the misery of the all too unexciting society of the time, it was rather above all, an obstinate and irrepressible need to succeed over and over again.

From that time, for the next 16 years, I travelled in the Alps and the other mountains of the world, following my dreams as a means of fulfilment – going always a little farther. I believe that only when you dream with open eyes can you conceive things that represent the limits of your sensitivity. In fact, my exploits always started to exist from the very moment they first took form in my thoughts. To transform them into reality was no more than a logical consequence off that

first thought, that first idea. When I first imagined what would eventually become my most significant ascents, I found myself in a peculiar state of mind – I would say almost unreal – when anything seemed possible, even normal. To then achieve the climb itself was no more than the natural and inevitable consequence of that idea, certainly no more real than its conception. It is when you are imagining things that you live intensely and it is only when you believe in yourself that you are able to really develop concepts. So, up there, as exploit followed exploit, I felt more and more alive, free and true to myself. I was also able to satisfy that innate need of every man to test and prove himself – to know and to understand. I add and underline that I have always followed my emotions – let alone my creative and contemplative impulses.

Right from the start, mountaineering for me was adventure – it should not and could not have been otherwise – and I always wished to live adventurously to the measure of man, with due respect for tradition. Soon, however, this became a fascinating way of living and knowing myself and it was also helpful to my physical and mental well-being.

I have always admired mountaineers of every epoch but I have never regarded any of them as a model. So I read their books, saw, heard and evaluated many mountain men, but only to create my own self, not to copy them. I am convinced that mountaineering improves only those who improve themselves – it certainly doesn't improve the apathetic or the arrogant. It isn't being a mountaineer that enriches a man – indeed, as I have already said, what he carries inside himself grows in a particular way if he has integrity.

All my climbs have been equally important to me, leaving aside the difficulty and commitment they demanded. I remember them all in the same way, with satisfaction, because they were all imagined, wanted, sought after, experienced, delighted in and they have all been cut to my measure and so were right for me at the moment they happened. Everyone knows that great trials either toughen you or annihilate you – this is the story of life. It follows from this that each of us is the sum, the end result of his own experiences. Mine have made me grow and so my limits have expanded.

It was by practicing traditional alpinism that I was able to enter into harmony with Mother Nature, but it was only solo climbing – I mean at the highest level – that released the deepest inborn energy of my being. In this way I was able better to know my motivation and my limitations, moreover, I learned how to make crucial decisions for myself, to judge them by my own measure and, naturally enough, pay for them with my own hide. In brief, solo climbing was an effective, formative school for me, a precious condition, then a real necessity at times. So I reaffirm my conviction that in a climb there is nothing more profitable than solitude and isolation to sharpen your sensations and amplify your emotions. It was really thanks to the preliminaries just set out that I was able to complete every time a fascinating internal voyage of discovery, the better to examine and understand myself but also to understand other people and the world around me. I can say now that I know myself better, know what I have achieved and what I want from myself and others. As far as others are concerned, naturally I fight against ill-will if it arises, but I can accept criticism – it can be helpful if it is constructive, whereas destructive criticism is like the air to me, it doesn't affect me.

One could say I have been lucky but I don't believe in luck, nor in fate. Fate

then, I repeat, is what we knowingly create for ourselves (with the sole limitation of the unforeseeable). Many years have passed since the time of my climbs but the mountains have left within me, still vital and indelible, the imposing images of their architecture, of their superb severe outlines suspended in the sky – alien at times to the measure of man and certainly far beyond his limitations. With the eyes of the mind I can still recall those freezing, silent heights in every detail and, as before, my thoughts fly in a constant circuit from things to imagination and back again, liberating new perceptions, unknown dimensions which constantly slide away from any attempt to explain them. How true it is that by understanding beauty we possess it.

This and more besides, is what I described in my book *Mountains Of My Life* about my experiences, chapter after chapter, until the day of my winter ascent of the north face of the Matterhorn in 1965. It was really then that I concluded my climbing career. I realized then that after this adventure of mine, achieved by classical, fair means, I would not have been able to push on farther without accepting the compromises inherent in the new climbing techniques with its whole armamentarium that I had always disdained.

And here, even so many years after the epilogue of my mountaineering career, I wish to set out some concepts, perhaps debatable according to some people, but drawn from what were my motivations in mountaineering. What makes me speak of them is the ever more obvious derangement that nowadays compounds and disturbs the mountaineering world, making orphans of the values it regards as outmoded while, at the same time persisting in the laboured search for alternative incentives in which to believe.

Granted that we all are free to believe whatever we wish, to adopt whatever rules we find are most convenient for our aspirations, free also to climb in our own way. I too, for the same reasons, chose a mountaineering philosophy to my own tastes and measure, consistent with my ideology. So I repeat – it was traditional methods that inspired me right from the beginning. This habitual, classical way of climbing is an alpinism that, in the act of measuring your limits against the great mountains, puts your whole being to the test – physical endurance, principles and moral values, with nothing whatever held back. And this, which I define as 'greater mountaineering' becomes especially austere and demanding precisely because of the limitations put on the technical means we choose to accept in confronting the mountains. But greater mountaineering is still more fascinating and gratifying if we keep in mind its historic and ethical values, quite apart from aesthetics. Personally, I have never been able to separate these three elements nor choose between them, since for me they are fundamental. To this end, I committed myself and conformed to the mountaineering methods of the Thirties – obviously adopting the essentials, not to mention the elementary and limited equipment used in those times.

But why would I have chosen limitations so 'anachronistic' in relation to my own times? Certainly not because of masochistic perversion, but rather so I could conserve an unchangeable measuring rod for comparison – a sort of Greenwich Meridian, unalterable by time or conditions, to be precise the only reliable constant that could allow me to reach an impartial judgment about things and also about myself.

So that is what I believe are the just, fair rules of the game I had chosen, rules

which I imposed on myself right from the beginning and which I would still choose today, really to guarantee myself a bond and a sure means of comparison with the past to which I had always referred. Committing myself to my summits in this way, I repeat, I have been able to test myself to the depths by comparison with those who went before me and I have also been able to remain in harmony with the physical and psychological conditions involved in the exploits of the past. I have also been able to evaluate objectively the importance of what I had managed to achieve compared with what was known to have been done before.

If we ignore the past and refer only to the present in making judgments about mountaineering – an ever more technological present, ever more liable to remove from a climb its peculiar difficulties, its unknown problems, even its impossibility, a present in which a mountaineering exploit, most times, has the sole merit of confirming the success of the technical equipment used – well then, I believe we will never be able to formulate just and clear criteria which will allow us to understand what mountaineering really is and this will be because we have never really understood what its limits and motivations were in the past.

Experienced in this way, the mountains have given me more than I could ever have hoped for. This despite the fact that I realized I had been 'also' a mountaineer till then, but not 'just' a mountaineer. Actually, as the years passed I had come to understand that my true character was driving me always more to experience adventure in its widest universal expression. So I had to broaden my horizons through the entire 360° of a world which at that time was still almost unknown to me. I was then transferring my extreme mountaineering, with all its psychological components, out of its vertical surroundings and putting it into an adventurous context which was just as extreme but, for the most part, as yet unknown. I therefore had to trust the instincts of my life in an even vaster multi-dimensional cultural world, where the real space in which I was travelling would be, above all, that of the mind. In short, I felt that I was embarking on a period of personal growth. After the great mountains, a huge world now awaited me. From then on I went everywhere, and came to grips with forests, deserts, lost islands, the depths of the sea, volcanoes, icy and tropical latitudes, not to mention primitive peoples, wild animals, and the remains of ancient civilizations. But everything I did provided me with the most beautiful, significant and richest of sensations because, as before, I used to intensely long for every one of these experiences before living through them.

I had the chance to become a journalist, a special correspondent of the then great Italian weekly journal *Epoca* (published by Mondadori) and had *carte blanche* to produce, where and when I wished, my 'extreme journalism' and 'introspections'. But how did it start, this new adventure? First of all, I revisited my childish fantasies and the books I had read as a boy concerning the things I use to dream about so much. At a certain age we all dream about what we read, I was now able to give life to these dreams and made from them the motive for my travels. At that time, in the Sixties and Seventies, there were almost always some difficulties, few people had been to those places and very few knew anything about them. I must say too that in the experiences I encountered I tried never to fight with anyone or anything, whether people or fearsome animals were concerned – on the contrary, I was seeking a point of contact with the savage world in order to know it better, assimilate it and transmit this world to others by means of words

and pictures. This is what I wanted to do, developing my own variety of journalism, making the reader understand that behind the notebook and camera was a mere man, full of curiosity and alone with his emotions.

It is now clear to everyone that I am instinctively attracted to and fascinated by primordial nature. Because of this I climbed down into active volcanoes and I went into those smoking craters above all to see how the world was made when it began, to imagine how things would have looked the day after its creation if anyone had been there to see. One can therefore imagine how much emotion, surprise and admiration was aroused in me by an episode of that sort.

I can certainly say that what drove me on and sustained me in all those situations I lived through – in every experience I had after I had given up mountaineering – were the same motivating forces which had thrust me on to 'impossible' mountains. Nothing had changed. But in all this, my intention was always to know and to consider, to try myself out and test myself, entering as far as possible into conditions that were able to awaken those modes of thought, those endowments from other times which certainly still exist in all of us, even if they are somewhat dormant nowadays. Moreover, I wanted to experience to the full the freedom of knowing myself to be absolutely detached from any sort of technical, organized support which if necessary would have helped me, supplied me with provisions or even saved me if I got into trouble. Naturally, the places and situations I chose offered all those ingredients which could give life and logical sense to my adventure as I envisaged it.

In this way, detached and far away from all that one might regard as the developed world, I can say that on most occasions I came to know a world still untouched from the time of its origin. On my travels I encountered all manner of wild animals, and also primitive tribes whose mode of dress had remained unchanged for millennia. In those places sun and rain, birth and death remained the only reality, which regulated their lives; their survival was torn tenaciously from a miserable environment hostile to life; they were ignorant of the rest of the world, which ignored them in its turn. But then, in those far-off lands, huge and without history, where nothing changes, everything repeats itself in an endless cycle. I experienced fears and hopes, discomfort and exaltation. There I listened to absolute silence, to hurricanes, I inhaled the vapour of volcanoes, the smells of the jungle and during dark nights my merest glance encompassed a plethora of stars. With my mind floating I have wandered, dreaming of impossible horizons, giving human proportions to the infinite, until I have lost myself in the universe. Now more than ever I am convinced that a man's life makes sense only if it encompasses everything he has within his being. It is there, in the mind, that real spaces are created.

However, although on my new travels in the six continents there was no lack of great mountains, Mont Blanc has remained the one I have most assiduously explored again and again by all its ridges and valleys. I have done this much as a man returns to his own father, to converse together with all the affection and memories a son looks for in a parent.

Would you like to know what conclusions I have drawn from my intense wandering life? Well, I have never been sated by dreaming about far off lands – my imagination has always been captivated by their intense silence.

Translated by Robert Marshall.

SCOTTISH WINTER NOTES

THE winter of 2002-2003 will not be remembered as one of the great Scottish winter seasons. Although there was early snow in October, and it was consistently cold from November onwards, the season was too dry for consistently good winter climbing. The West in particular suffered from a real lack of snow, and at the beginning of January, Number Four Gully on the Ben was just bare scree – something that I have never witnessed in winter before. Inevitably, the lean conditions significantly reduced new route activity. Although there were a respectable number of new climbs, many were variations or very short routes. There were some good additions nevertheless, and this report summarises a selection of the significant new routes.

Some of the most rewarding new climbs were those that follow natural watercourses and drainage lines. Andy Nisbet was most adept at combining his encyclopaedic knowledge of the Highlands with an accurate assessment of the best type of climbing on offer. In January, he visited Foinaven with Dave McGimpsey and climbed Moss Ghyll (IV,5), an impressive frozen stream bed in Lower Corrie Lice, and a line he had first spotted in the late 1970s. They soloed the first three pitches, and then roped up for an imposing barrier icefall. Fortunately, wind had made the ice form in a contorted structure that allowed the pitch to be climbed with relative ease giving access to easier ice above. Nisbet and McGimpsey were also responsible for the other major addition in the North-west when they climbed a 300m ice smear on Ben Mor Coigach in the company of Erik Brunskill and Malcolm Bass. This fine discovery lies just left of Consolation Gully on the North Face and gave an excellent Grade IV outing. Farther south, Andy Nisbet visited Stob Poite Coire Ardair just east of Creag Meagaidh and soloed two icefalls he had noted several years ago. Mer de Glace and La Rive Gauche are both fine Grade III climbs and the first recorded routes in the corrie.

Creag Meagaidh came into good condition in February after one of the heaviest snowfalls of the winter. The gullies on the Post Face saw many ascents, and Kevin Neal and Iain Rudkin made a good addition to the left side of the face when they made the first ascent of The Lost Post (VI,5), a fine two-pitch icefall just right of Post Haste. South of Loch Laggan, Colin Wells and Mary Twomey visited Coire nam Cnamh on Meall Garbh where they found Merciless Mary (IV,3), a two-pitch icefall to the right of the main crag. Farther west in Coire an Lochain on Aonach Mor, the lean conditions exposed a considerable quantity of ice to the left of Easy Gully over an area that is normally banked up by snow. Gareth Hobson, Julia Baron, Ed Hartley, Rachel Wilson and Tim Fairbrother took advantage of the settled weather over the New Year period and climbed five Grade III ice routes. These lines provided good ice climbing through the season, and being less exposed to the late winter sun than the routes farther right, they proved popular until the end of the winter.

One of the finest ascents in the Cairngorms was the first ascent of Tearaway (III/IV) on Glaucous Buttress in Coire an Dubh Lochan on Beinn a'Bhuird by Alex Runciman and partner. This buttress often ices up well early in the season, and it is somewhat surprising that this classic VS line had remained untouched in winter conditions for so long. In the centre of the massif, Steve Helmore and Keith Milne visited Creagan a'Choire Etchachan where they climbed Infidelity (V,6), a series of steep, blocky corners cutting through the upper right-hand side of the crag near the summer route Stanley. Dave McGimpsey and Andy Nisbet

had a wild day in Coire Bhrochain on Braeriach when they made the first ascent of Bell's Direct Route on the Black Pinnacle. A blizzard, ferocious winds and limited daylight made this a particularly hard-fought V,6. Farther south on Creag an Dubh Loch, Guy Robertson and Tim Rankin climbed Snakes and Ladders (V,7) on the buttress to the right of Sabre Cut, and Chris Cartwright and I polished off Bonanza (V,7), one of the last remaining lines on the North-West Face of The Stuic. The most interesting Cairngorms climb was the first ascent of Where Eagles Dare (V,5) by Neil Batchelor and Fiona Watt. The route follows a frozen watercourse with a steep icicle crux and is the first recorded climb on the cliffs at the head of the Canness Burn in Glen Isla.

The North-west suffered from limited snowfall throughout the season, which severely limited exploratory activity. The most difficult new route was climbed by Guy Robertson, Matt Halls and Phillip Ebert on the remote Maoile Lunndaidh to the south of Glen Carron. Hellfire and Brimstone (VII,7) takes a very steep direct line over an overhang up the buttress climbed by Spiral Search. Robertson returned a few weeks later with his brother Peter to climb FB Gully (IV) on the left side of the buttress, and The Shiner (III), an icy scoop on the right. In Garbh Choire Mor of An Coileachan in the Fannaichs, Andy Nisbet and Dave McGimpsey took advantage of a heavy fall of snow in January to make the first ascent of Triffid (VI,7) a steep line up the right side of the steep buttress climbed by Venus Fly Trap. The same pair also visited Coire Ruadh-Staca on Beinn Eighe and made the first winter ascent of the short but good groove-line of Smilodon (IV,5) on the right side of the crag. Dave Broadhead and John Mackenzie added several new climbs to the Strathfarrar crags including Sleeping Beauty (IV,5), a good route to the right of Red Campion on Sgurr na Fearstaig.

Andy Nisbet and Jonathan Preston took advantage of early snowfall on Ben Nevis when they made the first winter ascent of Spartacus (VI,7) on South Trident Buttress. This makes a fine companion to The Slab Climb climbed by the same team at a similar grade two winters before. Chris Cartwright and I made a couple of successful early season visits to Coire na Ciste. Pinncer (IV,4) takes the unclimbed north ridge of Pinnacle Buttress starting a little way up Broad Gully. Four varied pitches with a final squeeze chimney led to the summit of The Pinnacle leaving us rather surprised why such an obvious feature had been overlooked for so long. Farther right we climbed the prominent fault-line on the front face of Goodeve's Buttress to the right of Goodytwoshoes. The Borg Collective (V,6) was a surprisingly amenable climb with a chockstone runner whenever the going got steep. The following day we climbed The Great Circle (VI,7) on Comb Gully Buttress. This left-curving line takes the wall left of Clough's Chimney before climbing an awkward offwidth and finishing up the tower left of Comb Gully Buttress.

Nisbet and McGimpsey continued their development of Stob Coire an Laoigh in the Grey Corries with Black Widow (V,6), the deep groove right of Spider Man, and Tarantula (V,6), the crack-line to its right. They also climbed Sloppy Suzie (V,5), the left-hand groove in the face right of Loopy Louie, Sleeping Dog (IV,5), the upper of two faults on the right wall of Central Gully, and Hoverfly, a wild line with a very exposed traverse along the lip of a big roof right of Taliballan. They also teamed up with Brian Davison to climb Cobra Corner (VI,6), the huge roofed gully right of Calf Buttress. Erik Brunskill and Dafydd Morris visited the cliff after the first prolonged cold spell in November when the crag was thick with rime. They headed straight for the impressive crack-line on the left side of Calf

buttress and climbed MooMoo (V,7) which turned out to be sensational – incredibly steep but highly amenable, and with very good protection. Their second new route, Cameron's Cooz (V,6), which takes the unlikely looking cracked wall just left of MooMoo epitomises the climbing on the cliff with hook after hook and big blobs of turf where required. James Edwards and Gareth Hughes made a productive visit to the crag in January and came away with a good haul of routes included Laughing Cow (V,6) the fault about 10m left of MooMoo, Choc-a-Block (VI,6), the first fault line on the left-hand wall of Central Gully and The Epithany (V,6), the easiest line in the middle of a bay at the right end of the leftmost buttress. A week later, Edwards was back with James Thacker to add The Alternate (IV,5), the fault to the right of The Epithany and Chaf Direct (IV,6) to the right of Choc-a-Block.

Farther east, Iain Small could not resist the diagram of Ben Alder's Garbh Coire Beag in the new Ben Nevis guide that shows a prominent unclimbed gully up the centre of the cliff. The resulting climb was a fine Grade III named McCook's Gully. The finest addition in Glen Coe was Long Chimney Direct (VII,6) on Cunieform Buttress on Buachaille Etive Mor by Erik Brunskill and Stuart McFarlane. This is a sustained and direct version of Long Chimney, stepping right from groove to groove with a serious traverse to reach hanging flakes to finish. Over on Bishop's Buttress of Bidean, Blair Fyffe and Dave Hollinger made the first winter ascent of Ambush (VI,7) – a route that packed a fair punch into its 70 metres. Farther south there were some good additions to the Bridge of Orchy crags. Dave MacLeod and Dave Redpath visited Creag Coire an Dothaidh and found a line left of Beelzebub to give Cool Riders (IV,5), and Eddie McHutchison, Chris McDaid and Raymond Wallace climbed Off the Beaten Track (III/IV) on Beinn Udhlaidh, which takes a good line up ice right of Ramshead Gully. Andy Clarke and Mark Garthwaite visited the North Peak of The Cobbler where they made the first winter ascent of Cat Crawl (VI,7) the obvious fault left of Direct Direct.

Over in Coire an Lochain on Aonach Mor, Chris Cartwright and I put a long-standing problem to bed with the first ascent of Jaws (VII,6), the well-defined buttress between White Shark and Tinsel Town. I first attempted this line in 1989 with Roger Everett, but the rock is more compact than elsewhere in the corrie and it requires ice to enter 'the jaws', a hanging groove slicing through the final tower. Farther left, Jose Bermúdez and M. Gray found Is This the Way to St Louis? (IV,4), the icy groove left of Back Street Boogie, and David Brown and Fiona Murray, climbed a new Left-Hand Finish (III) to Spider Rib, which provides a longer and more interesting continuation to the original route. Nearby on the West Face of Aonach Beag, Alan Kimber, Tony Coar and Peter Foulkes found Snake Charmer (II/III), a good mixed route on the right side of Broken Axe Buttress.

The vast east face of Aonach Beag saw one of the most interesting ascents of the season when Andy Nisbet and Dave McGimpsey climbed a long Grade II ridge-line to the left of the classic North-East Ridge. Remarkably, this led to an unrecorded Munro Top. Andy Nisbet explained later that the "face is so huge that the easier upper section of the ridge contained a large rounded summit with as much of a drop as some of the smaller Tops. Now named Munro's Last Ridge, it might see lots of ascents from folk updating their Tops. We'll have to get it in the next edition of the Munro's Tables!"

Who said exploratory mountaineering in Scotland is dead?

Simon Richardson.

100 YEARS AGO . . .

THE Club Year began with the Annual Meeting and Dinner in the Carlton Hotel, Edinburgh, on Friday, December 5, 1902, with President Ernest Maylard in the Chair. The Treasurer, Robert Napier, reported a 'healthy' balance of £176 4s. 6d, and Secretary Willie Inglis Clark announced a total of 152 members. Archie Robertson boasted about the success of the Slide Collection, now numbering 700 slides. President Maylard then gave way to the new incumbent Sheriff William C. Smith.

At Dinner – a French menu of 13 courses – after the President's Toasts, Sandy Mackay toasted the Alpine Club (reply by Cecil Slingsby), Frederic Squance toasted the Visitors (reply by David Christison) and Professor Ramsay proposed a most unusual Toast – 'Our Dundee Members' (reply by Harry Walker of Ardvreck, Perth Road).

The New Year Meet, at Killin, was visited by deep snow, hard frost, dark misty weather and a lady guest, Jane Inglis Clark. A gully somewhere on the Cam Chreag crags of Tarmachan was mastered by the very miscellaneous cordée of Mr and Mrs Clark, their small son Charles, the Reverend Robertson and an indeterminate individual identified by the pseudonym 'Ben Alder'. On Sunday, when the mass of the Meet had departed, Harold Raeburn and the Walker cousins struggled up to Creag na Caillich through the drifts, and made short work of the arête bounding the Great Gully on the right. The Walkers (Charles W. and Harry) were, of course, two of the recently-toasted Dundee members, if Newport may be counted a part of Dundee.

The Easter Meet, one of the most extraordinary gatherings of the Club, took place in Skye, in rotation and counter-rotation between the comforts of Sligachan Inn, Camasunary Lodge and Glenbrittle House. A number of grand traverses were accomplished in the thoroughly wintry conditions which obtained. One of the most impressive was executed by Willie Ling, Raeburn and the Walkers, who took only 12 hours to traverse Druim Hain to Coruisk, and the Dubhs, the Tearlaich-Dubh Gap, Alasdair and Sgumain to Glenbrittle! Secretary Clark contrived a logistic triumph in which all beds in the three residences were kept full, and everyone moved to a new residence each day.

In June, the Clarks drove in their magnificent new motor to Kingshouse where they were joined by Raeburn (delayed by yacht-racing), who reached Kingshouse by old-fashioned methods at 5.45am on the 14th (night mail from Edinburgh to Tyndrum, then bicycle). The party then made the second ascent of Crowberry Direct. Raeburn used *kletterschuhen* to surmount the crux, belayed after a fashion by Frau Clark, and photographed by Clark 'standing on [his] head' in order to use a 12-inch tripod. On the following day the party attacked a portion of the snowy Chasm, dropping into it from the North Wall perhaps just above the 100-foot pitch, though the description is none too clear, and escaping below the Cauldron to the south *via* a forgotten Buachaille feature, the Lady's Pinnacle.

In early July, Raeburn and Reverend Robertson visited Ben Nevis, making 'the first descent' of Observatory Ridge in torrential rain and returning to the Summit Hotel in two hours *via* the North-East Buttress. On the following day they repeated the Staircase Climb.

The summer season saw Club members at work in various parts of the Alps. However, the more enterprising ascents were made elsewhere.

Two Willies, Garden and Douglas, visited Western Canada, and climbed a

number of peaks in the Rockies and the Selkirks. The most notable ascent was Douglas's first ascent of the North Ridge of Mount Assiniboine with the guides Christian Hasler and Christian Kaufmann.

In the Caucasus, Tom Longstaff made a number of ascents with Lancelot Rolleston, the most noteworthy being the West Peak of Shkara by its South Ridge (see 'The Finest Climb' in *This My Voyage*). John H. Wigner, another Dundee member, made the first ascent of Shtavler then joined forces with Oskar Schuster to climb a number of Caucasus peaks, several being first ascents. Schuster was part of the large German expedition led by Willy Rickmer Rickmers (who joined our Club in 1904), and was one of the party of four which made the intrepid first ascent of Ushba's South peak that year.

In Norway, Ling, Raeburn and Howard Priestman enjoyed good weather in July and made a number of fine new climbs in the Söndmöre group, including the huge south-west face route on Slogen from Oye (Ling and Raeburn). Raeburn once again had recourse to his trusty *kletterschuhen* in overcoming the difficult sections, and they reckoned the route as "the biggest rock-climb they has ever had the luck to be on". At the end of the month the pair moved south to Turtegro, but encountered bad weather during the remainder of the trip. Meanwhile, Norman Collie, with Slingsby *père et fils* and R. Northall-Laurie, was in the Lofoten Islands. The party made the first ascents of both peaks of Rulten, young Will Slingsby playing a decisive role in these successes.

In October, William Newbigging made the first ascent of D Gully Buttress on Buachaille. This "gave good sport under the very wet conditions, assistance having to be given to the leader at two points". At the end of the month, Raeburn and the Walkers explored Creag Meagaidh, climbing the gully below the Pinnacle Face and the Centre Post, avoiding the big pitch by a leftward excursion. The party reached their base at the Loch Laggan Hotel by cycling 15 miles in the moonlight from Dalwhinnie – a traverse which moved Raeburn to stray from his usual dry reporting style.

"There is a great charm in this kind of cycling, in the dark on a good, but unknown, road...Every sense is keenly on the alert, sight and hearing appear to become abnormally acute. The eye ranges the contours of the hills, faintly silhouetted against the lesser darkness of the sky, in the endeavour to recognise some familiar outline. Back again to the road in front, in the attempt to pierce the darkness ahead of the swiftly shifting patch of light formed by the rays of the lamp. The sudden cry of a plover, rising from the slopes below, shatters the outer silence of the night with almost painful loudness. The murmur of a distant fall is now heard, now lost, as we sweep round the hollows and over the shoulders of the moor. The whisper of the night breeze through the heath and sedge is scarcely audible above the soft rush of the wheels on the smooth damp sand, and clicking 'purr' of the ratchet as the leader 'frees'."

While returning in similar fashion to Kingussie, the party stopped to fight their way up two gullies on Creag Dubh.

The Club Journal, besides recording the events described above, published the first guidebooks to Arran, Monadhliath, and all the Cairngorms. Norman Collie (with Stutfield) published his *Climbs and Exploration in the Canadian Rockies*, and Cecil Slingsby published his *Norway, the Northern Playground.*

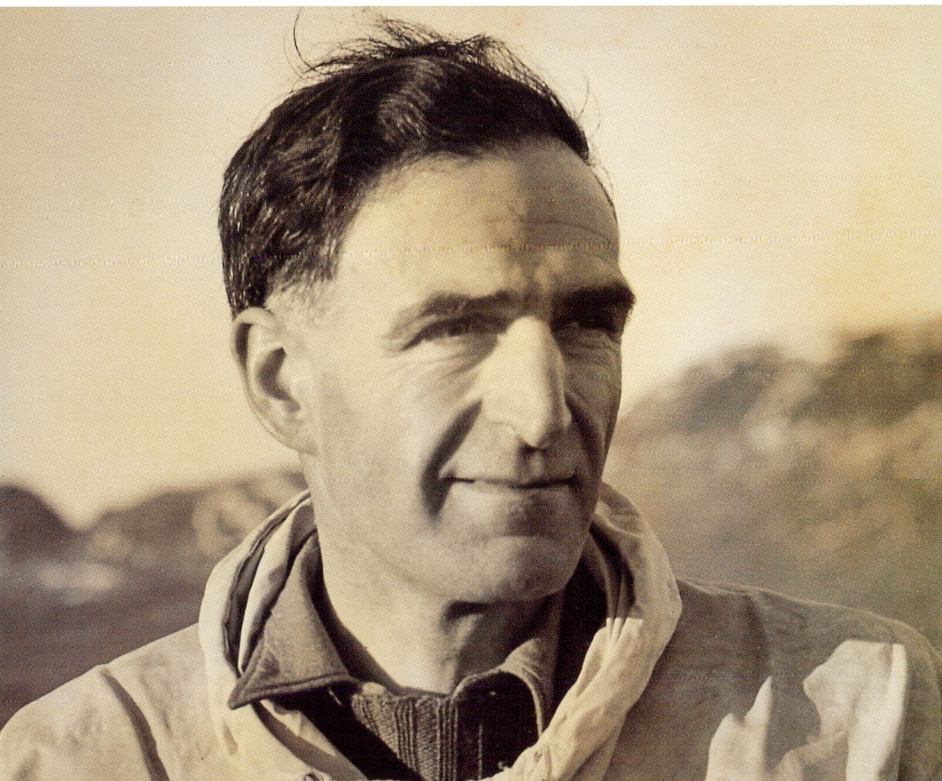
In what was otherwise a productive year, particularly abroad, there were, remarkably, no routes recorded on Ben Nevis or Skye.

Robin. N. Campbell.

Campbell Steven.

Hal Taylor.









GARRICK'S STAIRCASE AND MACROBERT'S SHELF

THE Shelf Route on Buachaille's Crowberry Ridge has a rich and interesting history. Most of this history is well-known. However, there is a part of it – the earliest part – which has disappeared from our guidebooks. The purpose of this note is to provide a reminder of this first encounter.

The Easter Meet of March 24-28, 1910, was spread over four locations: Kinlochewe, Dundonell, Kingshouse and Inveroran. According to the reporter G. L. Collins the Meet enjoyed "the best weather since 1894" (*SMCJ*, xi, 103). Howie's well-known view of the south side of Beinn Eighe from Loch Coulin, taken at the Meet, shows good tidy snow cover. The Kingshouse party included Harry MacRobert and Arnold Brown and on Monday 28, they "had a long day on the Crowberry Ridge of Buachaille Etive – being roped from 9.30 to 6.30, but did not succeed in gaining the summit. Arrived at Abraham's Ledge they had a very difficult traverse to the right, and then climbed up to a point near the tower, but were cut off by slabs and ice, and were forced to retreat by the same route. It was found impossible to regain the ridge owing to the rocks being badly iced, the west side of the ridge being of course in shadow all day." This laconic report by Brown (*SMCJ*, xi, 111) hardly does justice to what was a tremendous feat of ice climbing, involving a difficult ascent, at the absolute limit of the standards of the time, and a perilous descent without benefit of adequate anchors or abseil devices.

So far as I can tell, neither MacRobert nor Brown gave any fuller account of their interesting day until April 1924, when MacRobert added a note to J. A. Garrick's article *The North Wall Variation of Crowberry Ridge* (*SMCJ*, 17, 1-10). This is, of course, the account of what Garrick took to be the first ascent of the route by himself and D. Biggart in May 1923. MacRobert's description (*ibid.* 9) is as follows: "On Easter Monday 1910 Arnold Brown and I, after a Sunday of torrential rains, followed by a night of keen frost, set off for the Crowberry Ridge. It was, as we expected, badly iced, and the 100 feet of steep rock below Abraham's Ledge took us over an hour to negotiate. It took another hour to descend the little chimney on the right and cross over to Naismith's route. This was sheeted in ice, and so we tried the more broken-up gully to the right (Garrick's route). After a further strenuous four hours we had reached the final difficult pitch referred to by Garrick. Here the take-off was badly iced, and the second man had neither secure stance nor hitch. The place completely beat us, and we turned at 3 pm. The descent of the ice-pitches and the glazed rocks took some time, and it was not till 6.30pm that we got off the rocks on to the snow slope between the foot of Crowberry and Curved Ridges."

Neither Garrick nor MacRobert refers to the route as a 'shelf'. Garrick describes it as a gully, but adds that "the gully would be more accurately described as a gangway, or staircase, with three flights and two landings. It slants up the north wall of the ridge in much the same way as an emergency fire-escape staircase on the wall of a building".

According to MacRobert: "The gully is really a ledge or rake running up the steep bounding wall of the deeply-cut Crowberry Gully. On its left the wall rises steeply to the Ridge, shutting off all access thereto, while on its right the climber looks down into the dark rift of the Crowberry Gully".

Nevertheless in his 1934 *Central Highlands Guidebook*, MacRobert refers to

John Hinde. Photo: Roger Wild.
George Chisholm. Photo: G. Scott Johnstone.

the route as "The Crowberry Shelf Route" (p. 56) and "Garrick's Shelf Route" (diagram, p. 52), and the latter name came into common use. The route is not mentioned in the *SMCJ* in the intervening period of 10 years, so it seems likely that this name must have been coined by MacRobert.

In fact, the route had first been climbed by Fred Pigott and John Wilding in September 1920. They reported their discovery in the *Rucksack Club Journal* (4, 190), but this was evidently not known in Scotland until much later. Alex Small's *Crowberry Commentary* in 1940 (*SMCJ*, xxii, 190) doesn't mention Pigott and Wilding's ascent and – so far as I am aware – it is not until the publication of Bill Murray's *Rock Climbs – Glencoe and Ardgour* in 1949 that there is explicit acknowledgement of their primacy.

It was Murray and Bill Mackenzie who recorded the first winter ascent of the route (*SMCJ*, xxi, 244) in March 1937, but in December 1936, together with Archie MacAlpine and Kenneth Dunn, they had been defeated by the Shelf, in much the same manner as MacRobert and Brown nearly 27 years before, by icing on the exit pitch. However, due to an excessively late start, and the short December day, the retreat was a much less orderly affair than MacRobert's, consuming some 12 hours of dire struggle. Although Murray's account of this heroic battle (*ibid.* 237*ff.*) didn't refer to the 1910 defeat, the Editor (Bell) added a footnote about it. It is therefore curious that Murray didn't include mention of it when he revised his account for inclusion in *Mountaineering in Scotland*. Moreover, his acknowledgement of MacRobert's effort in the 1949 guidebook (p. 145) is only a perfunctory note "Previous attempts, April 1910, J 17.7", buried in the general entry for Crowberry Ridge.

Whatever one makes of the neglect of MacRobert and Brown's brilliant failure, it passed out of the guidebooks from that point on. So the route's history is doubly ironic: it was once named for Garrick, who didn't make the first ascent, and became famous for a valiant defeat, but for the wrong valiant defeat! Since 'Shelf' is probably MacRobert's name for it, I suggest that we personify the thing again, and call it – in the tradition of the Douglas-Gibson Gully of Lochnagar – MacRobert's Shelf.

Robin N. Campbell.

JAMES ROBERTSON'S MONADLIATH TRAVERSE IN 1771.

THE name of James Robertson is well known to those with an interest in the history of mountain exploration in Scotland.

A protégé of Hope, Professor of Botany at Edinburgh University, Robertson worked as an 'assistant gardener' in the Botanic Gardens and was educated by Hope to carry out surveys. Though these were funded by the Commissioners for the Annexed Estates, they were not direct surveys of those estates, rather, a general survey of Scottish flora was the aim. The commissioners granted Robertson £25 a year, later raised to £50. After his surveys, Robertson was in debt, so in 1772 he joined the British Navy, and eventually ended up in Bengal, returning to buy an estate at Balgarvie near Cupar in Fife in 1789.

He built a new mansion house, costing £14,000 and died in 1796. (Details from *A Naturalist in the Highlands, James Robertson. His Life and Travels in Scotland,* 1994, ed. D. M. Henderson and J. H. Dixon.)

According to D. B. Horn in *The Origins of Mountaineering in Scotland – (SMCJ)* XXVII, 1966) – Robertson climbed Ben Hope (1767) Ben Klibreck (1767) and Ben Wyvis (twice, 1767 and 1771) as well as Scaraben and Morven, both in 1767.

In 1771 he climbed Mayar and Ben Avon as well as Ben Nevis (all first ascents). It is doubtful if he ascended Lochnagar, as stated by Horn and later by Campbell Steven in *The Story of Scotland's Hills* (1975). Robertson does not mention an ascent, just the mountain itself. (*A Naturalist*....p155). He may have traversed the Sgoran Dhu/Mor Range "I traversed the mountains which ly(sic) South of Invereichy" (*A Naturalist*...p168), though this could just as easily refer to the Corbett range west of the Feshie, not the Munro range to the east. Additionally, Cairngorm was climbed by Robertson, but this was a repeat ascent. However, I am now convinced that Robertson's claim to another first ascent has been overlooked.

Campbell Steven (*The Story*...p66-7) mentions Robertson's crossing of the Monadliath on June 26, 1771, and his being caught in a severe thunderstorm with huge hailstones, and steering by map and compass. He does not hazard a guess as to the route taken. In my own *Scotland's Mountains before the Mountaineers* (1998) I state: "Robertson ascended a Monadliath summit on his 1771 tour, but the evidence is too scanty to determine which one." (p76.) Mea Culpa. A re-examination of his accounts of his traverse allows for a fairly informed calculation to be made of the route of the crossing and the summit(s) ascended – though Robertson himself mentions no names.

Travelling from Pitmain near Kingussie in Badenoch to Strath Dearn (the Findhorn) Robertson mentions "crossing the mountains that ly(sic) at the head of the water of Findhorn." (*A Naturalist*...p170), but without naming any. He started at Pitmain and he stayed at the former hotel near today's Pitmain farm, not the eponymous lodge. "About 9 o'Clock in the morning...I set out from Pitmain towards a very high hill situated North West from it...Between 11 and 12o'Clock I was at the foot of the mountain." (p171).

A'Chailleach lies five miles from Pitmain which tallies with the two to three hours taken. He sheltered from a violent thunderstorm for possibly three hours and he tells us that when it passed: "I ascended the mountain and reached its top about 4 in the afternoon." (It would take one to two hours to climb A'Chailleach from its foot). Hence directions and times combine to argue that the mountain Robertson climbed from Pitmain was probably A'Chailleach (930m.) and/or its Carn Sgulain outlying peak at 920m.

We can confirm this by Robertson's next moves. "Having fixed the rout(sic) by Map and Compass I advanced towards Strath-Dearn which tho' 10 miles distant is the nearest inhabited place."

Between nine and 10 miles from A'Chailleach's summit, in the glen of the Findhorn (Strath Dearn) lie the ruins of an extensive settlement named Coignafeuinternich. Robertson reached "the nearest inhabited place", soaked and exhausted, in six hours from A'Chailleach: six hours for those nine or 10 miles would seem reasonable. The next day, the 27th, Robertson attended a wedding and he said the wedding party marched to "the church which is nine miles distant" (*A Naturalist*...p174). Coignafeuinternich lies approx. that same distance from Tomatin where the church for Strath Dearn was, and still is. On the 28th, Robertson

travelled down the glen: "I proceeded down the valley by Dalmagachie" – to Speyside – and the first clachan down river from Coignafeuinternich is Dalmigavie.

Distances times and locations all indicate that Robertson climbed A'Chailleach or Carn Sgulain – or both – probably by the Allt na Beinne from Pitmain; then he took a bearing which posibly led him across another Carn Sgulain (812m) and Carn Icean Duibhe (805m) and proceeded down the Allt a Mhullin (or Alt Fionndairnich) to Coignafeuinternich. This was important enough to have a mill, and the wedding appears very well attended, so it was a considerable centre of population in 1771 and logically, the one he would have headed for. Crucially, and finally, A'Chailleach lies "at the head of the waters of the Findhorn" – where Robertson states his mountain lay.

I considered the possibility of Robertson having followed the road by Carn an Fhreiceadain marked in Roy's map of 1755 (*Scottish Hill Tracks,* SRWS p114-5), which would have been an easier traverse of the Monadhliath, but the details do not tally. Carn an Fhreiceadain is (a) due north of Pitmain (Robertson specifically says he went north-west) and (b) the summit of Fhreiceadain is but six miles from Coignafeuinternich, not the nine or 10 miles from Robertson's ascended summit and (c) Fhreiceadain is at the head of the Dulnain River not the Findhorn.

Probably, Roberston was not the first to reach the summit of Lochnagar, but in all probability he was the first to ascend a Monadliath peak, A'Chailleach, showing a high degree of mountaineering skill and endurance in the process. Amend your records.

Ian R. Mitchell.

The International Festival of Mountaineering Literature 2002

A CHANGE of venue for the Festival this year, occasioned by refurbishment work at Bretton Hall, took it into the city centre and Leeds University's main auditorium which, while being acoustically perfect, was a bit too big and a bit too cold. Apparently, someone had forgotten to clock the heating on!

These however, are minor details and once again Terry Gifford and his team provided an excellent event which was tailored around the appearance of the legendary Walter Bonatti. Anyone who has any doubts about the status of the Leeds Festival need only ponder that Bonatti rarely gives presentations of this type, his last being at Buxton 19 years ago, (It probably says a lot about Terry's powers of persuasion as well).

The undoubted highlight of the event was a very polished simultaneous translation presentation, the text of which is reproduced in full elsewhere in this Journal, by a very fit looking Bonatti belying his 74 years. This was based around the publication of his book *The Mountains of My Life* which covers much more than just climbing. It seems strange to think that Bonatti's last great ground-breaking climb, the solo winter ascent of the Matterhorn was in 1965, nearly 40 years ago.

A second highlight was our own Douglas Scott's unaided slide presentation (no mean feat at 91 years of age!) of his 1938 Himalayan expedition with Bill Murray, Tom Mackinnon and Tom Weir, as related in Murray's biography *The Evidence of Things Not Seen.* The quality of the slides was superb given their age and the technology of the day and it was clear from his delight in the recalling and retelling

of these events to a captivated audience, that Douglas's memories of these great pioneering days have dulled not a bit.

This year's Boardman/Tasker award went to American Robert Roper for *Fatal Mountaineer* – his biographical account of the life of Willie Unsoeld. It was probably unfortunate that on this occasion the chairman of the judges, Mike Vause, was also an American, who in his address referred to Murray's book as "probably the best mountaineering book he had ever read". Judging from the winning author's own reading of his work, followed by some ill-prepared ramblings on it by a visiting American professor, perhaps Mr Vause should have followed his instincts. (*conspiracy theorist-moi!* Ed.)

Colin Mortlock's presentation on his book *Beyond Adventure* (reviewed elsewhere in this Journal) was certainly one to get the audience thinking. His subject is just what it says on the tin, trying to see beyond the outdoor experience as a mere extension of the gymnasium that it has become for so many. If I were in charge of classification at Waterstones I would definitely place this book in the Philosophy section. Homespun it may be but, then again, so was Aristotle's.

Jim Curran was next up with his usual shambolic, but one suspects well rehearsed, absent-minded professor routine. On this occasion his remit was to talk on *20 years of The Boardman Tasker Award.* His view however, was probably somewhat coloured by his having been shortlisted no less than five times but being always being the 'Bridesmaid.' I liked his account of how this particular Shiny Prize is adjudicated – That the judges are full of praise for the runners-up, the shortlisted writers get savaged and the one who gets savaged the least is the winner! – Well if you will put your head above the parapet.

A regular that I look forward to at these things is Ian Smith's reading of the winning entry in that other Shiny Prize 'The *High* Mountain Writing Competition.' In recent years though, I feel that this has been more to do with Smith's performance than with the quality of the material he has had to work with. Happily, this year saw the two coming together with a fine piece of writing *Bolt Hangar* by Jon Sharrat. I think we will be hearing more from him.

The next Festival will be delayed until March 2004, due to building work being behind schedule at the Bretton Hall Campus, so although it is only a delay of three months it will mean that there will be no event in 2003. The main man, already booked for 2004, is Royal Robbins – he of White Cap on El Cap fame – so it should be a good one.

Charlie Orr.

THE NATIONAL MOUNTAINEERING EXHIBITION

MANY of us will have memories of wet weekends in Keswick when once you'd been round Fishers a few times, the pub was the only option. And even then, if it was after two o'clock in the afternoon you were snookered.

Well, things have changed, the main focus of Fishers it now seems, is to fulfil the role of a coffee and clothes shop where the leisured, four-wheel driven, middle classes can be relieved of their disposable income in a sort of 'Four-Wheel Drive meets Harvey Nicks' kind of way. The only remnant of how things used to be is a small nook, housed discreetly, so's not to cause offence perhaps, in the basement of this multi-storey paean to the ravages of market forces.

You do, of course, now have the option of visiting the other 38 'outdoor' shops in the town, all selling the same stuff, at the same price and be pestered by the

same earnest featured youngsters wanting to know, "what exactly does sir want to use the sock for?" The only exception I found to this general rule was Needlsports. It's the one painted a sunglasses required yellow. It's still a climbing shop.

But all is not lost. The saviour is Rheged, that is the Rheged of Arthurian legend, The Village In The Hill. And what, I hear you say, has this got to do with climbing? Well – I'm not one for visitor centres and the like, but this – this is different. You know when you turn right at Penrith off the M6 (or left if you come from south/ middle England) to head for the Lakes, well, over to your left, (I think that's right, right that is as in correct not as in the opposite of left, right) totally invisible from the road and built into the side of a hill is Rheged, home to the Helly Hansen National Mountaineering Exhibition.

It's a huge, airy, cavernous place infused by natural light from a huge glass frontage, built between walls of natural rock, and portals in the roof, which is at ground level. There is a theatre showing IMAX films of Everest, Shackleton and the like, cafes and restaurants and, joy of joy, a few shops where long-suffering spouses can do their thing while the lads enjoy what, for the likes of us, is the meat of the place, the National Mountaineering Exhibition. (My lack of PC and what might be perceived as stereotyping of women in that last sentence was purely a matter of frivolous levity, just in case Heather, Ann and the rest of the ever-growing band of female members, all of whom climb better and harder than me, decide to get together and take retribution, let's face it, they probably wouldn't even need to get together these days!)

I digress – to the Exhibition. The days when exhibitions of this nature were simply a matter of looking at labelled exhibits in glass topped cases is a thing of the past and Rheged employs the cutting edge of technology in its use of video, sound and interactive programming to breathe life into what is a fascinating account of our abiding passion (I always hesitate to call it sport) from it's inception up to the present day. I must admit to being a bit sceptical when I found out that the role of interactive video guide to the exhibition was entrusted to that well known non-mountaineer John Peel (di ye ken fa ah mean?) but, with his dry self deprecating sense of humour, he actually comes across very well and there are substantial video interview contributions from well respected figures in all the climbing disciplines to give the Exhibition the required weight of authority.

The whole thing is set out in a logical progression or 'Time Line' leading the visitor on an 'ascent' through various 'Camps' taking them from the 'Golden Age of Alpine Climbing' in Camp 1 to 'Climbing Today' in Camp 5. It was rather disconcerting when my wife (newly returned from the shops!) noticed that some stuff on display, somewhere between Camp 3 and 4 was the same as some of the gear in my cupboard at home!

If I have one criticism of the Exhibition it is that the Scots could, and indeed should, have been more strongly represented. We do get a mention at several points but I feel that given the contributions of the likes of Smith, Marshall, Patey, Raeburn and others, we don't get our full slice of the cake. But hey, we're all Europeans now anyway, so didn't let a minor detail like that stop you from going.

I think the best thing I can tell you about Rheged, and the National Mountaineering Exhibition in particular, is that I, a born sceptic, always wary of such projects, would quite happily spend a full day here – albeit, preferably a rainy one!

Charlie Orr.

SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING TRUST – 2002-2003

THE Trustees met on September 26, 2002 and February 20, 2003.

During the course of these meetings support was given to the National Trust for Scotland; Scotland's Mountain Heritage Project; the Jonathan Conville Memorial Trust Winter Courses 2002-2003; the Mountaineering Council of Scotland Upland Path Advisory Group; the Alpine Club for the Alpine Club Library; an expedition to South Georgia 2003; an expedition to Baffin Island 2003; footpath work on Ben Rinnes.

John Gilmour CA ,of Hardie Caldwell, Chartered Accountants, Glasgow, attended the meeting of the Trustees on September 26, and gave advice on regulations affecting charities relative to the trust accounts.

Douglas Anderson having retired as Convener of the Publications Sub-Committee of the Club also retired as Trustee ex-officio of the Trust. The Trustees recognised the services which Douglas Anderson had rendered to the Trust since 1991, when he took over as Convener. His contribution is greatly appreciated.

Bryan Fleming retired as Chairman of the Trust at the end of 2002. Bryan has been involved with the Trust as Treasurer from 1988 to 1999, and more recently, as Trustee for 1999 and 2000 and then as Chairman of the Trust for 2001 and 2002. He has played an enormous role in guiding the Trustees with expert financial advice on Trust affairs since 1988. His steady approach and input into Trust meetings will be much missed.

The present Directors of the Publication Company are R. K. Bott (Chairman), K. V. Crocket, W. C. Runciman, M. G. D. Shaw and T. Prentice (Publications Manager).

The present Trustees are K. V. Crocket (Chairman), P. MacDonald, R. W. Milne, C. J. Orr, R. K. Bott, G. S. Nicoll, M. G. D. Shaw, G. E. Irvine, W. C. Runciman and A. Tibbs. R. K. Bott. W. C. Runciman and M. G. D. Shaw are Trustees/Directors and provide liaison between the Publications Company and the Trust. J. M. Shaw is the Trust Treasurer. The Trustees wish to record their gratitude to P. W. F. Gribbon for his services to the Trust as Trustee until recent retirement by rotation.

The following grants have been committed by the Trustees:

General Grant Fund:	
National Trust for Scotland, Scotland's Mountain Heritage (£4000 per annum for five years)	£20,000
Jonathan Conville Winter Courses 2002/2003	£1014
Mountaineering Council of Scotland, Upland Path Advisory Group	£250
Alpine Club, Alpine Club Library	£500
South Georgia 2003 Expedition	£500
Baffin Island 2003 Expedition	£250
Ben Rinnes footpath work	£5000

James D. Hotchkis,
Trust Secretary.

MUNRO MATTERS

By David Kirk (Clerk of the List)

Another buoyant year of hill going has taken place and I thank everyone who has written to me to register a Compleation, or to amend their original entry. I continue to be amused at and touched by the anecdotes your letters contain. The total number of new Compleaters for the last year is 192.

The Munro Society is growing and developing and Iain Robertson, the Society Secretary has produced a report at the end of *Munro Matters*.

I urge everyone on the List to dig out an old final summit photograph of yourself, and send a copy (or the original along with SAE) to – Ken Crocket, Glenisla, Long Row, Menstrie, Clacks. FK 11 7EA – so it can be part of the SMC Website, Munroist Section, and be recorded for posterity.

As before, the first five columns are number, name, Munro, Top and Furth Compleation years.

2693	Alan Steele	2002		2732	Jim Johnstone	2002	
2694	Deanne Steele	2002		2733	David Underdown	2002	
2695	Helen L. McLaren	1992		2734	Elizabeth Swain	2002	
2696	Peter Bibby	1992		2735	Rita Gallie	2002	
2697	Peter Baines	2000		2736	Margaret Sinclair	1996	
2698	Alan Whatley	1987	1987 2002	2737	Rod Mumford	2000	
2699	Gordon Booth	2002		2738	Paul Exley	2002	
2700	Stanley Stirton	2002		2739	Catherine Exley	2002	
2701	Kay Lloyd	1998		2740	J. K. Dale Smith	2002	
2702	Billy McIsaac	2002		2741	James T. Christie	2002	
2703	Colin Goldsworthy	2002		2742	Chris J. Cleare	2002	
2704	Melanie Nicoll	2002		2743	Anne Jago	2002	
2705	Deryk Mead	2002		2744	Michael Brian Webb	2002	
2706	Mark Bull	2002		2745	Anthony George Bladon	2002	
2707	Gillian Duncan	2002		2746	Robert J. Forsyth	2002	
2708	Jeremy Martin Wright	2002		2747	David J. Bryan	2002	
2709	David Rutherford	2002		2748	Ben MacGregor	2002	
2710	Louis G. Skinner	2002		2749	Raymund Johnstone	2002	
2711	Norman Barker	2002		2750	Peter Goodwin	2002	
2712	Philip Brown	2001		2751	Jean Veitch	2002	
2713	Doug Clarke	2002		2752	Alister Macdonald	2002	
2714	Gillian Webb	2002		2753	Jan Rumsey	2002	
2715	John Kennedy	2002		2754	David Flatman	2002	
2716	Mike J. Perry	2002		2755	Robert Sparkes	2002	
2717	Iain Lambert	2002		2756	Joy Biggin	2002	
2718	Iain F. Macdonald	2002		2757	Paul Biggin	2002	
2719	Doug Hughes	2002		2758	Stewart Fraser Knight	2002	
2720	Kenny Duncan	2002		2759	Helen K. Morgan	2002	
2721	Nigel Walsh	2002		2760	Alan Morgan	2002	
2722	Alan Maude	2002		2761	Pamela Black	2002	
2723	Gerald A. Davies	2002		2762	Brian Griffiths	2002	
2724	Robin A. Campbell	2002		2763	Sheana P. Griffiths	2002	
2725	Alexander M.G.Campbell	2002		2764	Donald F. M. Stevenson	2002	
2726	Ian H. Cameron	2002		2765	Derek Beverley	2002	
2727	Colin H. Campbell	2002	2002	2766	Christine Taylor	2002	
2728	John Potter	2002		2767	Robert Taylor	2002	
2729	Mike Gill	2002		2768	Robert Bingham	2002	
2730	R. G. Mahaffy	1987		2769	Mr W. P. Reed	2002	2002
2731	Douglas Johnson	2002		2770	Douglas Flynn	2002	

2771	Alex Stobie	2002	
2772	Dennis Latham	2002	
2773	Ranald N. Macinnes	2002	
2774	Howard Jones	2002	
2775	Irene McCulloch	2002	
2776	David McCulloch	2002	
2777	Andy Scott	2001	
2778	Peter Barclay-Watt	2002	
2779	Gordon Nuttall	2002	
2780	Colin Ballantyne	1991	
2781	John P. Moir	2002	
2782	Terry Shaw	2002	
2783	John Bishop	2002	
2784	*Reg Pillinger	2002	
2785	J. Reynolds	2002	
2786	Iain Ellis	2002	
2787	Vince Mason	2002	
2788	Murray Tosh	2002	
2789	Janet MacDonald	2002	
2790	Hugh MacDonald	2002	
2791	Jonathan Ridge	2002	
2792	Susan Sharpe	2002	
2793	Moira Finlayson	2002	
2794	Rigby Russell	2002	
2795	Maria R. Hybszer	2002	
2796	Willie Munro	2002	
2797	George Flint	2002	
2798	Carol Flint	2002	
2799	David Wharton	2002	
2800	John Ormerod	2002	
2801	Richard T. Daly	2002	
2802	Caroline Thompson	2002	
2803	Jamie Brogan	2002	
2804	Brian Whitworth	2002	
2805	Heike Puchan	2002	
2806	David M. M. Wilson	2002	
2807	John G. Moncrieff	2002	2002
2808	Barry T. Shaw	2002	
2809	Ian Matthews	2002	
2810	Anne Matthews	2002	
2811	Jim Bremner	2002	
2812	Helen Bremner	2002	
2813	Peter Woolverton	2002	
2814	Jean Philips	2002	
2815	John Blair	2002	
2816	Iain Alexander Blair	2002	
2817	John Meldrum	2002	
2818	Geoff Carson	2002	
2819	Robert Copeland	2002	
2820	David M. Russell	2002	
2821	Alfred McGhie	2002	
2822	Alan Smith	2002	
2823	Fred Ward	2002	
2824	David Tolmie	2002	
2825	Ian C. Smith	2002	
2826	Julie Dundas	2002	
2827	Michael Johnson	2002	
2828	Susan Mossman	2002	
2829	Alan Mossman	2002	
2830	Alistair Reid	2002	
2831	Peter Simpson	2002	
2832	Richard A. Lloyd	2002	
2833	Pamela Manning	2002	
2834	Jack Brindle	1999	2002
2835	Keith Slinger	2000	
2836	David Nunn	2002	
2837	Steve Bonham	2002	
2838	Ian S. Roy	2002	
2839	David E. Minnikin	2002	
2840	Rob Mackean	2002	
2841	Neil Jones	2002	
2842	Gerrie Somerville	2002	
2843	John Brian Rhodes	2002	
2844	Norman Keith Fraser	2002	
2845	Alan Green	2002	
2846	Roy Miller	2002	
2847	Michael K. Taylor	2002	
2848	Marian S. Larson	2002	
2849	James T. Watters	2002	
2850	Valerie Scott	2002	
2851	John Steel	2002	
2852	Robert Allan	2002	
2853	Douglas Clark	2002	
2854	Ian McNeish	2002	
2855	Janet Munro	2002	
2856	Miss S. D. P. Gould	1989	
2857	Keith Harold Bennetto	2002	
2858	Allan W. Taylor	2002	
2859	Graham Galloway	1986	
2860	Cath M'Caul	2002	
2861	William S. D. Mill	2002	
2862	John Edward Casson	2002	
2863	David Dickson	2002	
2864	Iain Forrest	2002	
2865	John Duncan Beaton	1993	
2866	David Harrison	2003	
2867	Leslie Robin Mackie	2002	
2868	Tom G. Hall	2002	
2869	Ben McGinn	2001	
2870	David Kidd	2002	
2871	Peter Hamilton	1992	
2872	Alan Don	2002	
2873	John E Barnett	2002	
2874	Anthony Dyer	2001	
2875	Jackie Butler	2002	
2876	Christopher M. Martin	2002	
2877	Marion Gibson	1999	
2878	Alan Mitchell	1999	
2879	Sheila I. Nicoll	2002	
2880	Alex Findlay	2003	
2881	*Richard 'Rusty' Bale	2002	
2882	Clive Summerson	2003	
2883	Harold C. Smith	2003	
2884	Martin Bott	2002	

This year, we have had the unusual situation of two people registering for the first time, having compleated two Munro rounds. They were: Colin Ballantyne (2780) and Peter Hamilton (2871). Their first round compleation years are recorded on the previous page. Both their second rounds were compleated in 2002.

As ever, the tales of the various triumphs and antics of this year's Compleaters make interesting reading.

Stories of large groups on summits featured often this year. David Harrison's (2866) final summit party of 11 friends had to wait at the bottom of Schiehallion as he had to return to Pitlochry for his boots. It proved a bonus, however, as they saw a Brocken Spectre near the top. Mark Bull (2706) and Gillian Duncan (2707) managed to get 25 people, aged between eight and 72, to their Compleation on Ben More (Mull). David Underdown (2733) got 22 up Sgurr an Lochain on the Clunie Ridge, including his companion from his first Munro who'd flown especially from Paris. Marion Lawson (2848) also managed to get 30 folk on Devil's Point. When Susan (2828) and Alan Mossman (2829) compleated together, it was a true family occasion, as their children, Paul and Fiona, also climbed it as their first Munro. Their party included more than 30 on the summit of Sgurr na Lapaich.

The largest group of the year goes to father and son Robin (2724) and Alexander Campbell (2725), on Sgurr a Mhaoraich in June 2002. They managed more than 40 in their group and enjoyed champagne and smoked salmon on top. They also managed some path repair work during the day. Robin has the unusual hill claim of having found a toothbrush in his boot following a hill day above Glen Etive. Since they wrote to me, more of the Clan Campbell have been in touch about their round. Colin Campbell, (2727) compleated both Munros and Tops, finishing on Sgurr Dubh. He compleated "anything which had ever been anything" since 1974, hoping to avoid being caught out by a later revision – there's a challenge for you Mr Bearhop!

Father and son Compleations are not uncommon. Like the Campbells above, John (2815) and Iain Blair (2816) also compleated together, on Carn nan Gobhar. John had started his Munros 51 years earlier on Cairn Gorm before there was "a road up it".

Doug Clarke (2713) finished on Bidean in 2002. Although he did not compleat with any of his children, he did do a lot with them. They all had a total epic due to a slab avalanche on Stob Coire Sgriodain in 1990 and Doug enclosed his children's log pages giving very interesting reading from different sides of the story.

Filing a contender for *Primiere Munroius Youngus,* David Bryan (2747) reports that during his round, he managed to get his two-year-old daughter, Natasha ,up Carn Aosda 'unassisted', He wonders if this is a record?

Husband and wife teams feature a lot too. Brian (2762) and Sheana Griffiths (2763), who compleated on Ladhar Bheinn were rewarded for having introduced their son, Duncan, to the mountains – he became a climber and was able to help them on the Inaccessible Pinnacle. Paul and Catherine Exley (2738 and 2739) reported eagles soaring below them on their final summit ridge of Ben More (more of this popular final hill anon). Hugh (2790) and Janet MacDonald (2789) climbed all hills as a husband and wife team, however Janet, I am told, touched the final summit (Slioch) first. At the opposite end of the spectrum, David Rutherford (2709) left his wife in Broadford Hospital while he compleated alone on Sgurr Mhic Choinnich – she had damaged her ankle the day before on Sgurr a Mhadaidh. Indeed, Pamela Black's (2761) husband found a great solution to the yearly problem of a suitable birthday present when he gave her, "the Aonach Eagach ridge, guided".

Eight years later, in 2002, she compleated. Tales of epics in the mountains feature a lot in the letters that I receive and a fair proportion of these involve Skye. Dennis Latham (2772) did the Skye ridge in May 1972 as some of his earliest Munros. He had two days of sunshine, but effectively got the ridge in full winter conditions, with snow up to his armpits in places. You don't get winter conditions in May on Skye much these days! Ben MacGregor (2748) reports that the Inaccessible Pinnacle was the only summit he had a companion for – the rest were done alone. Howard Jones (2774) also did all of Skye first, then finished with another island – Ben More on Mull. Iain Forrest's (2864) most memorable Munro, Ben Macdui, also gave him his most terrifying moment in the hills. He did it on a wet autumn day by way of Crystal Ridge. In the conditions, he found the ridge a greasy gearless slab.

By far the greatest (worst!) epic that was described to me however, was from Bob Sparkes (2755). Bob had a break in his bagging after falling off the Corbett, Stob Dubh, in 1995. Lochaber Rescue Team and the SAR helicopter team took six days to find him, and the search and subsequent rescue became headline material. He took two years to recover, but went on to continue his round.

A standard section of *Munro Matters* seems to now concern Ben More on Mull, and this year is no different. Deryk Mead (2705) intended playing his bagpipes on this, his final hill, but the wind in May meant he needed a tin whistle instead. David Flatman (2754) also completed on Ben More and claimed the honour of being the first 'Flatman' to complete the Munros. His name, he explained, originated in Norfolk. Gerald Davies (2723), another Ben More compleater, was impressed by the improved relations between walkers and estate staff during his years in the hills. One estate worker in Attadale invited them to stay at the local estate bothy.

Largest multiple Compleation of the year goes to Ian (2809) and Anne Matthews (2810) and Jim (2811) and Helen Bremner (2812), who all compleated together on October 5. Yes, you've guessed the hill!

Munro logs are often sent to me, and along with the other letters, these go on to form a part of the Scottish Mountaineering archives. Iain Ellis (2786), then later, Ian Smith (2825) and Alan Green (2845) supplied these. Barry Shaw (2808) also supplied a log, detailing his three-year round, which he compleated after he celebrated his 60th birthday (climbing Kilimanjaro). Barry recorded 37 hillwalking trips to Scotland from Cheshire in one 42-month period.

Speaking of records, Gordon Booth (2699) is an ex-over 60 British Marathon Champion. He ran a lot of his summits, including Ceannaichean and back in two hours from Gerry's hostel on New Years Day, aged 57. Also with an impressive finish was Mel Nicoll (2704), who was six months pregnant for her final Munro (Beinn Liath Mhor from the Ling Hut). She now feels she has served her Scottish mountaineering apprenticeship.

This year's *Munroist Longius* must go to Reg Pillinger (2784*) who quotes more than 50 years between starting on the Buachaille and finishing on Schiehallion. And this year's political summiteer was Murray Tosh MSP (2788), who is, as far as I can tell, the first MSP to compleat. Murray finished on Ben Hope. Most supplied information of the year goes to Richard Daly (2801). Thanks, Richard for your short story concerning your Assynt trips. The escape from the house fire in your holiday home was definitely not the usual type of epic I hear of. Terry Shaw (2782) has the West Highland Way to thank for getting him hooked on Munro-bagging. He decided that it was too much of a West Lowland Way, so took in several hills including the Stob Ghabhar to Meall a'Bhuiridh group.

Humour always forms a good part of the letters I receive. I was highly amused by the names of the hillwalking clubs founded by John Casson (2862). These were the 'Conquistadors' and 'Wazeks.' And like myself, Ian McNeish (2854) attributes his original interest in the hills to Poucher's *The Scottish Peaks* – that, and being able to see the Ochils from Brockville football ground! My thanks, however, for probably the funniest article of the year goes to Peter Smith (2831). Peter's satirical article concerning his trips with his walking companion, Richard Lloyd (2832), left me in stitches. Despite Peter's statement to the contrary, they sound like the best of friends.

It is becoming quite common for people who are arranging Final Munro Celebrations to ask for certificates in advance, to present the Compleater on the day. Stan Stirton (2700) was presented his, by his daughter, Sheila. Along the same lines, Channel TV (from Jersey) planned to make a film about Norman Barker's (2711) final Munro. His daughter's partner (a Channel TV employee) requested a certificate in advance to present at the occasion.

AMENDMENTS

The following have added to their entries on the List. Each Munroist's record is shown in full. The columns refer to Number, Name, Munros, Tops, Furths and Corbetts.

1441	Jim Bryce	1995	1995		2002
2637	Christopher J. Horton	2001	2001	2002	
375	Robert H. MacDonald	1984		1989	
		1987			
		1990			
		1992			
		1995			
		2002			
1801	Lindsay Boyd	1997	2002		
		2000			
		2002			
1991	Pat Hay	1998		2002	
1992	Alan Crichton	1998		2002	
1239	Roger C. Henshaw	1993	2001	2002	
336	Stephen T. Ramsden	1984		1989	1993
		1993			1999
		1996			2000
927	Dorothy Spencer	1991	1991	1997	2002
781	Norma Sutherland	1990	2002	1991	
		1996			
152	Erlend Flett	1977			2002
2561	Andrew Hyams	2001	2002		
1100	Christopher Bantoft	1992		2002	
1920	Ernie Potter	1998	2002		
202	H. Thomson	1979			2002
1401	Alan Bellis	1995			2002
1397	Douglas R. MacLeod	1995	1007	1998	
		2000	2002		
668	Ian Henderson	1989		1989	1994
		2002			
290	Kenneth J. MacIver	1982		2002	
		2000			

1240	Michael Atkins	1993 2002 2002
2230	Rod Crawford	1999 2002
1691	George W. Graham	1996 2002
2172	Ian Clark	1999 2002
2173	Alan Clark	1999 2002
2058	Alan Stewart	1998 1999 2002
1308	Audrey M. Litterick	1994 2002
2475	Alan Sewell	2000 2002
555	Robin Howie	1982 1984 1987
		1984 1987
		1987 1992
		1990
		1992
		1995
		1999
		2002
1406	Charles D. M. Black	1995 2002
832	Les Rothnie	1990 1990 2002
1213	Andy Whitehead	1992
		2002
1067	Frank Malloy	1992
		2002
225	Alan L. Brook	1980 1980 1078
		2002 2002
2628	Rob Pearson	2001 2001 2002
2629	Margaret Pearson	2001 2001 2002
1331	John Mackay	1994 1994 1997 2002
700	Terry McDonagh	1989 1990 1995
		1998
		2002
832	Les Rothnie	1989 1989 2002
1477	David Claymore	1995 1995 2000
1478	Graham Jackson	1995 1995 2000
825	Bernard Smith	1990 2000 1979
23	*M. Hutchinson	1955 1955 1970 1992
		1992 1998
		1998
1611	Alex Smith	1996 1999 1999
		2003

Those who wish to register a Compleation or an Amendment and who would like to receive a certificate (either for Munro or Corbett Compleation) should send a letter with a second class SAE (A4) to me at: Greenhowe Farmhouse, Banchory Devenick, Aberdeenshire, AB12 5YJ.

If a certificate isn't required, and an e-mail address is given on a received letter, I can speed up return of information, by e-mailing back. My e-mail is: Dave.Kirk@greenhowefarm.fsnet.co.uk.

Dave Kirk.

Iain Robertson reports: The Munro Society is one year old in April 2003, a new group within the Scottish mountaineering community and one that is still defining its role and pre-occupations. Membership is drawn from the ever-expanding cohort of those who have compleated a round of the Munros. That part of the cohort which is recorded by the Clerk of the List seems likely to exceed the innately

significant number, 3000, during 2003, though the actual number of compleaters must be above that figure. Membership of *TMS* is a more modest 135, but there has been a 50% increase in members since the inaugural meeting. Within the membership there is neither a preponderance of recent compleaters, nor those of longer standing, which suggests the Society has broad appeal.

On the social side, both the inaugural meeting in Dundee and the first dinner in Fort William were well attended and enjoyable events. The numbers participating are not insignificant as members of the Society live throughout the UK and abroad.

The first annual meeting, to be held at Stirling University, is yet to come and this will be followed by the inaugural Munro Lecture given by Sue Harvey of Harvey's Maps. The Munro Lecture is open to the public and it is intended that this be an annual event. In addition to social events the Society has responded to members' wishes by establishing an archive which is housed in the A. K. Bell Library, Perth. While in no way wishing to restrict the nature of items deposited, particular stress has been laid on securing the personal records of Munroists and also matters of interest concerning particular Munros. Those wishing to deposit relevant items need not be members of *TMS*.

One of the fundamental ideas endorsed by members of *TMS* is that the Society is a means by which they have the opportunity to give something back to the mountains. Given the number of organisations already concerned with mountains and the mountain environment, the Society is still intent on finding the niche in which it will be most effective. But it is determined to establish itself as an organisation recognised as being both independent and knowledgeable on matters affecting Scottish mountains and the Munros in particular.

All communications should be addressed to: Iain Robertson, 28 Fairies Road, Perth, PH1 1LZ.

IN MEMORIAM

WILLIAM M. MACKENZIE j 1937

MOUNTAINEERING was Bill's major leisure-time interest. He participated and competed successfully in many sports and recreations and was blessed with a natural talent which we all envied. In addition to mountaineering he achieved high standards in golf, in football, in sking and in fishing.

From what he himself described as 'minor mountaineering' in his native Moray in the 1920s, he became the leader of the group who were climbing new and harder routes in both summer and winter in the 1930s, firstly as a member of the Glasgow JMCS and from 1937 as a member of the SMC. He was never a member of the Alpine Club, probably because he considered he was already a member of Britain's premier mountaineering club. He was, however, a member of the UIAA, a vice-chairman of the BMC and the first president of the MC of S which had arisen, phoenix-like, from the ashes of the ASCC. Nevertheless, he took greatest pride in his election as president of the SMC in 1966.

Most of Bill's climbing was in Glencoe, on Ben Nevis and in the Cuillin of Skye, but his first contribution to the Journal described a new route, climbed in 1935, on the Braeriach Pinnacle in the Cairngorms. Between 1935 and 1939 the climbs log book from the CIC Hut records his climbs there. His regular companions at that time were Kenneth Dunn, Archie McAlpine, Tom Mackinnon, Bill Murray and Douglas Scott.

Bill's name was invariably listed first – a sure indication that he led most of the climbs. One entry from February 1938, records an ascent of Observatory Ridge/ Zero Gully which took 14 hours from the hut to the summit. A note reports that there was much windslab on the ridge and much ice in the gully, the latter requiring step-cutting by torch-light! Another entry describes a variation to Rubicon Wall which Bill described as steep and exposed – and that they carried both socks and boots – perhaps bare feet are better than rock boots.

Bill was once asked: "Did you climb with Bill Murray?" His terse reply was: "No, Bill climbed with me."

In the hills his mountaineering skills were matched with skis, particularly for touring. He took up this sport in the 1930s when it was not wholly acceptable to the climbing fraternity. Nevertheless, he pursued it with his usual vigour and encouraged others to participate. In 1936 he joined the Territorial Army and at the Munich crisis was called up for a short time with French Alpine troops at Chamonix. Later, during the war, his climbing, ski-ing and mountain survival experience led to his being attached to Special Forces and he saw service in various mountain warfare training establishments including Achnacarry, Iceland, the Rocky Mountains and Alaska.

In the years following the end of the war Bill was an active climber and skier. In Europe he climbed in Chamonix, the Pennine Alps, the Bernese Oberland, the Bernina area and the Dolomites. He also led ski-touring parties to Norway, accompanied among others by Hamish Hamilton, Tom Weir and Bill Bennet. In 1946 he became a member of the Alpine Ski Club and was elected an honorary member in 1986. He was also, for a time, secretary and treasurer of the Scottish Ski Club.

Bill contributed a substantial article to the Journal in 1946, *Bad Weather and Bivouacs,* which drew on his wartime experience and included advice on mountain clothing and bivouacs. A second article in 1947, *The Snow and Ice Climbs of Glencoe,* reviewed the winter routes climbed up to that time. In 1958, following years of climbing in the Cuillin, he was author of the new climbers' guide*The Cuillin of Skye.*

Bill enjoyed a full life with his many friends. He climbed in his 70s, skied in his 80s and golfed and fished in his 90s. His philosophy is summarised by his own quotation: "The one thing that matters among mountains is that we enjoy them."

Bill Wallace.

CAMPBELL R. STEVEN J. 1934.

In May 2002, I received a copy in the post of a book from an old friend and fellow SMC member – Campbell Steven. The book was his latest, and, as it happens, his last, as one month later he died at the good age of 91. He had enjoyed good health right to the end and there was no illness.

Many outside of the club may well have come across Campbell's writings in the past, especially through a book called *The Story of Scotland's Hills*. This is probably out of print, but is well worth finding in a library, being a very readable account of various aspects of our mountains – their names, heights, scenic attractions, climbing history, scientific connections and so on. Over the years I have found it to be a useful basic source of material as well as being a good read.

I first met Campbell in 1978, when he was updating one of the SMC guidebooks, *The Central Highlands*, and he was needing a primer on the latest climbing exploits of younger climbers. He was a mild-mannered man, a true gentleman if you will, and over dinner in our home in Glasgow happy to listen to my outpourings of the stories of the latest horror climbs being done in Glen Coe and other areas. I was then fully engaged in writing a new edition of the Glen Coe Climbers' Guide.

We since then visited him and his wife Maisie, herself an author, at their home in Aberfeldy. Maisie pressed upon us a copy of her book *the Good Scots Diet - what Happened to it?* She was a nutritionist, and it may not be too idle speculation to ascribe her husband's long, healthy life to her cooking!

Campbell was born in 1911, in Helensburgh, and his earliest memory was of watching the liner *Aquitania* moving down the Clyde, having been recently launched from John Brown's Clydebank works. He was then three years of age.

Happy early years in Helensburgh led to more sporty times at school and university; rugby, golf (at competitive levels) and others. The collection of birds' eggs is confessed to, which led to a healthier life-long interest in ornithology. The mountains arrived almost unbid, and in 1934 Campbell joined the SMC. He was proposed by George Todd and seconded by I. G. Jack. His application form began its list of routes and hills in 1927, with an ascent of Braeriach. Many of his early walking was done in company with his younger brother, Colin.

In September 1934, when he submitted the form, he listed a traverse of the Cobbler peaks, Right-Angle Gully, Spearhead Arete and Jamblock Chimney, possibly solo, as no other names are mentioned for these routes. Increasing experience led to Alpine seasons just before the Second World War broke out, when he served in a ski battalion raised to fight in Finland.

Campbell joined the Commandos, as a climbing instructor, and was also active in small boat reconnaissance. There are many tales of the usual military mix-ups, but

Bill MacKenzie. Photo: Mary MacKenzie.

Andy Wightman. Photo: David Stone.









essentially, Campbell made it through the war unscathed. Times then became hard, as they were for many following the war. Campbell, although blessed in many ways, had his share of personal tragedies, including the loss of his first wife, Helen, through illness, and the death of an older brother Douglas, also through illness.

As an indication of how short of money one could be in these days, Campbell, although a member of the Alpine Club for 20 years, resigned when their annual fee rose to the giddy height of four guineas!

Meanwhile, Maisie, who was to become his second wife, was also experiencing the hand of fate, though in a very different way. She was, in June 1962, a lecturer in nutrition and dietetics at Queen's College in Glasgow (long and affectionately known to Glaswegians as *The Dough School*). She was due to enjoy a foursome with two friends and her fiancé Jock, on Jock's yacht *Suva*. This was to be a sail in the Firth of Clyde. At the last minute, some changes at the College meant that Maisie felt obliged to attend a dinner party for one of her pupils. Faced with the choice, Maisie did as duty told her and attended the dinner, leaving the three on the yacht. That Saturday night, a fierce storm hit the West Coast. *Suva*, moored off Millport, had her anchor chain snapped. The yacht broke up and foundered in the Firth. On the Sunday, Maisie heard the news on television that the three bodies had been washed ashore near Wemyss Bay.

When I read this, I thought how unusual it must have been to experience such a storm in June, and in the perceived shelter of the Firth of Clyde. A week later, in June 2002, I helped John Peden sail his yacht across the Firth of Clyde, from Troon to Brodick, on Arran. We made it in a Force 8, jib only, with the wind and waves crossing our beam from the south. I have never heard the rigging make such a noise, a threnody, a constant scream. At the time I had no real fear – there's too much to do anyway – steering as good a course as you can, adjusting the tiller for the odd, random big wave, hanging on with one hand when the angle increases. Both of us were pretty tired when we finally picked up a mooring in the shelter of Brodick Bay, and John had been exhausted to begin with, having just finished the Scottish Three Peaks' race. After that, I wondered about June storms no more.

Three years after that disaster, Campbell met Maisie for the first time. They were married the following spring. Over the years, Campbell had been collecting a series of brief notes – special quotes which had appealed to him. This collection grew and grew, until he began to think of publishing them, perhaps in some sort of Christian context. They were quotes which had helped him deal with the personal tragedies which he had experienced. In all it was to take some 26 years' of work before the collection was ready to publish.

Finally, after many trials, *An Anthology of Hope* saw the light of day. You should have no problem in finding it, and hopefully, it may raise any sprits which are downcast, as it did for Campbell over the years. He was the author of another eight books, including *The Central Highlands* already mentioned, a history of the Glasgow Fire Service and *Enjoying Perthshire*. For many years Campbell had a regular monthly column in *Scottish Field*. Campbell's last book, *Eye to the Hills,* subtitled *A Scotsman's Memories of an Outdoor life*, is as the title suggests, autobiographical.

The hills were always a source of pleasure for Campbell and his wife who survives him, and to whom we pass on our thoughts. There are many stories in his last book which you will enjoy reading. It's a neat encapsulation of his life. There's no big expedition story, no rock or ice climb at the forefront of technical difficulty. It's a series of tales from a long life well spent, and what's wrong with that?

Ken Crocket.

John Bickerdike. Photo: Colwyn Jones.

Oliver Turnbull. Photo: Dick Allen.

RIGHT up to the very week of his death, aged 91, my father Campbell Steven's enthusiasm for adventure remained undimmed. Plans were still being hatched for a cycle expedition over Ryvoan pass, maps were inevitably brought out and suitably easy Munros for the 90-year-olds pondered over. Indeed, the last Munro that he and his wife, Maisie, climbed was A'Bhuidheanach Bbeag in 2001 at the age of 90.

He was already hooked by the mountains at the age of 16. As with so many, it was the lure of the Caimgorms that was the original inspiration for Campbell's love of the high tops. Braeriach of the wide skies, hidden lochans and sudden plunging corries remained high on his list of favourites, long before the days of made footpaths, funiculars, or even a surfaced road to Loch Morlich.

There is a wonderful freshness of new discoveries in Campbell Steven's descriptions of climbing in the early 1930s. Routes that have become mountaineering household names, such as Shadbolt's North Chimney route on the Bhasteir Tooth, Window Buttress, Collie's Climb on Sgurr Alasdair, Clachaig Gully, have all the excitement of recent discovery. The people he met, too, read like a *Who's Who* of the early pioneers – Norman Collie, Shadbolt, A. E. Robertson, Glover, Ling and Rooke Corbett, to name but a few.

In the early 30s Campbell and his brother Colin, companion of many climbing adventures, joined the JMCS, and then in 1934 he became a member of the SMC. He describes the qualifications for entry in these days, somewhat modestly perhaps, as "good sound familiarity over several years with the Scottish hills, summer and winter, with rock and snow experience to match". But always the emphasis was on all-round competence and genuine love of' the hills. Campbell's qualities admirably fitted the bill, for it was this deep love of the hills in all weathers and seasons, rather than any tigerish first ascents that characterises Campbell Steven's mountain career. Not that he was a slouch in respect of hard rock routes in those early days, as his list of routes in the company of such climbing companions as Graham MacPhee, Norman Tennant, Bill Murray, and Theo Nicholson would suggest. It was with Hamish Hamilton, George Roger and Torn McKinnon that he made the first ascent of Chancellor Gully in Glencoe.

The summer of 1938 and 1939 saw Campbell aspiring to the high Alps. In spite of somewhat mixed weather, ascents were made of the Fletschhorn, the Laquinhorn, the Weissmiess, the Rimpfischhorn and Monte Rosa in 1938, and in 1939, the Schreckhorn and the Finsteraarhorn, which he said: "Stand out brilliantly as dazzling peaks to remember." Four weeks later war had begun and Alpine expeditions were brought to an abrupt end. However, a brief and somewhat hilarious time spent with the 5th Battalion seconded to join the Chasseurs Alpins at Chamonix extended the alpine season

In 1943, Campbell was able to put his mountain skills to good use by joining the recently-formed Commando Mountain Warfare Training Centre. After initial training in Lochailort, he was stationed first in Wales, and then at St Ives, Cornwall, where he trained units in rocky landings and cliff climbing from small boats. Having to turn out in all weathers and climb with serious deadly intent, I think somewhat blunted his passion for rock-climbing, and he often spoke of the cliffs at Sennen Cove with a shudder. Ironically, the action for which he was decorated was not in the mountains, but below sea level on the island of Walcheren.

After the war, as a man deeply committed to his family, Campbell put Alpine

adventures and hard routes behind him, concentrating rather on discovering the full potential of the Scottish hills. Campbell was a true all-round lover of the hills, and this is vividly expressed in his writing. He had eight books published, including the SMC Central Highlands Guide (1968). His wide knowledge of the history and background of the mountains is described in *The Story of Scotland's Hills* and *The Glens and Straths of Scotland,* but it is his sheer love of adventure and originality that shines through his first book *The Island Hills* and *Enjoying Scotland.* Crazy exploits of a true original who had the imagination to discover Scotland's hidden potential. Some of these unlikely exploits included being stormbound on Ailsa Craig, sunbaked on the A'Chir Ridge, boating by moonlight over Rannoch Moor, and traversing the Cairngorm Plateau on skis as a relative novice

Campbell completed his Munros in 1976 choosing Fionn Bheinn near Achnasheen as a suitably easy and accessible top, but Campbell was never a fanatical Munro bagger. Mountains were to be enjoyed and delighted in. Another great passion was bird watching and often specific outings or long detours were made to see a peregrine's nest or to spot a dotterel near the cairn or to find a crested grebe on a lochan. In his Eighties as the hills became unaccountably steeper, the bicycle became his favoured mode of reaching mountain terrain, and with Maisie he traversed the Gaick and the Corrieyarraick. Sitting listening for the grumble of the ptarmigan, battling blizzards above the corries of the Fannichs, bothying and bivvying in Fisherfield, Arran or Jura, all of Scotland was his playground and his joy.

As a deeply committed Christian, Campbell rarely climbed on a Sunday, as church always took precedence over the hills, but it is this reverence for life and the glories of creation that was the mainspring of Campbell's love of the mountains. He truly lived life 'in all its fullness' and has left us a rich legacy. As Campbell's daughter and a member of the LSCC, I feel privileged to have this opportunity to express my gratitude for that legacy.

Helen Steven.

JOHN HINDE j1963

John died suddenly at home in Findochty on June 28, 2002. He had just spent a week walking in the Cairngorms. He had been based at Muir Cottage in Braemar, a favourite haunt of latter years, in the company of good friends. He had had a great time, loving every new experience with his usual exuberant enthusiasm. His diary record extends to the day before his death. It does not, however, cover his last hill. On his last day, on his way home, he climbed Bennachie with a friend.

From the days of childhood exploration from his home in Staveley, to the day of his death, John's life was dominated by his love of the hills and the great outdoors. Born on December 21, 1927, he kept a detailed record of his adventures dating from his 14th birthday. His logbooks provide a fascinating account of a life rich with the joy he found in the hills and the interest he took in his companions. He started exploring the hills of Derbyshire at the age of about 11, at the beginning of the war, inspired not by friends or family like many of us, but by Frank Smythe's *The Spirit of the Hills*. He did not know any climbers and to the best of his knowledge there were none in the town.

He would head off by bus or train, with or without his bike, with or without a companion, into the apparent wilds of rural Derbyshire. Being from a working

class background, there was never much money about but he seemed to exist on a diet of bread, butter, boiled eggs and cocoa in those schoolboy jaunts. He was an early member of the YHA. His hostel card of 1941 records destinations long since forgotten or even flooded by the encroaching waters of the reservoirs of the Derwent valley.

An early diary entry of May 1942 records a weekend spent exploring the area around Edale. He caught the bus into Chesterfield on Sunday afternoon and there bought a return rail ticket for Edale. He details his wanderings across the moors between Edale, Castleton, Buxton, Chapel-en-le-Frith and back to Edale.

At the tender age of 14, he writes: "After crossing the Nick I ascended to the summit of Mam Tor which is known as the Shivering Mountain. Then I descended the steep grassy slope by zigzags until I came to Greenlands Farm and I followed the path by easy stages into Edale where I caught a train home after waiting in the warm sun on the station for a half-hour. This has been one of the most pleasant weekends I have had despite the fact that I have been on my own."

This gives a flavour of the passion that inspired this lad to a lifetime of enthusiasm for the hills. He was born in an area of strong mining tradition. His father was a lorry driver and his mother worked in a local factory. Widowed when John was only five years' old, his mother was left to bring up John, his older brother Frank, and his sister Beth, alone.

John was a pupil at Netherthorpe Grammar School from 1938 to 1943. At 15, he followed his brother, Frank, into the RAF as a boy entrant, and for a while he was its youngest recruit. At about this time, based in Halton, a Christmas card he sent to a friend reads: "Thinking of the day we spent together on Bleaklow, reminded me of the passage we read in Edale. 'And in the darkest hours of urban depression I will sometimes take out that dog-eared map and dream awhile of more spacious days, and perhaps a dried blade of grass will fall out to remind me that once I was a free man on the hill.' I hope we spend many more days as good as that together."

Trained as an aircraft engineer, he worked on engines for the first 18 years of his RAF career. Posted to Kinloss for the first of three times in 1948, his association with RAF Mountain Rescue, and his intimate knowledge of the Scottish mountains, began.

At age 33, John's mountaineering experience was recognised and most of the remainder of his 30 years' service career was spent as leader of RAF mountain rescue teams. In 1961, he took over the Kinloss team, responsible at that time for the north of Scotland and most of the islands. This at a time when there were very few civilian teams, and even less use of helicopters. Rescues often involved protracted searches and long stretcher carries. John remained at Kinloss throughout the Sixties, managing to wangle consecutive three-year stints, unheard of in normal service life. During this time he was awarded the BEM for services to mountain rescue. A joint services expedition took him to Mount McKinley in 1962, and another to the Himalayas to climb one of the Dhaulagiris in 1965. During his time at Kinloss, the idea of multi-Munro bagging trips was conceived. He was involved in an east-west route in 1966, from Sgurr na Banachdich to Mount Keen, with 14 days walking and covering 30 Munros, and a north-south journey from Ben Hope to Ben Lomond in 1968, including 48 Munros.

A posting to lead the team at RAF Akrotiri in Cyprus in 1969 gave the opportunity

for more exotic adventures: Alum Kuh and Demavend in the Elburz, Kuh-i-Dinar in the Zagros mountains in 1972, Mount Kenya and a holiday trip to Mount Etna. There was also a trans-Iceland trip in 1972.

It was during his time with the RAF that John gained the Mountaineering Instructors Certificate, the civilian qualification that was to form the basis of a major career move. Posted back to Kinloss and back to his trade in 1972, his appetite for adventure was whetted by an advert for Chief Expeditions Officer on the schooner *Captain Scott,* built in Buckie, at the Herd and MacKenzie shipyard. Buckie was the family home of his wife, Betty, and since the schooner was to operate between the Outward Bound establishments of Moray Sea School at Burghead and Loch Eil Centre, near Fort William, its appeal was so much the stronger.

The job was his, and without more ado, he resigned from the RAF after 30 years' service. The adventure courses run on board involved a month-long sail and land activities for young people in which they sailed the ship all around the west and north of the Highlands and Islands, with three land-based expeditions organised and led by John, that gave access to wild country from the sea. Using his words: "Three adventurous years doing this were probably the best years of my life." The photographic record of this era illustrates his pleasure in that lifestyle.

With the decommissioning of the schooner, John became an instructor at Outward Bound Loch Eil, teaching sailing, canoeing, rock and snow climbing, general mountaineering and organising the Skye Treks. During this time he touched the lives of countless folk, young and not so young, and their many letters, included in his diaries, bear witness to this. He worked with Outward Bound for 20 years.

A great admirer and friend of the late Ben Humble, and a long-term member of the Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland, John eventually fell heir to his predecessor's work as its mountain rescue statistician. The compiling and recording of this information has provided an invaluable service to Scottish mountain rescue for more than 20 years and gave John a great deal of satisfaction. He continued with the task until his death.

Since their retirement from full-time work about eight years ago, John and Betty had spent more time than ever before in each other's company and obviously thrived on it being as active and adventurous as ever. At home they were stalwart members of the local rambling group, exploring the wonderful countryside of Banffshire and the surrounding areas and abroad they roamed the hills of Canada, Spain, Cyprus, Tenerife, Portugal and Poland together. John had taken up Scottish country dancing in recent years. He realised that he couldn't beat Betty's love of it, so he had to join in too. Together they had some great fun and made many new friends. As recently as 1998, aged 70, John helped organise a reunion trip to the Himalayas. Targets varied with age, fitness and enthusiasm, but true to character, John had a great time and was delighted with Kala Pattar as his achievement.

His irrepressible enjoyment in the hills knew no bounds. He had been out walking every day of 2002, his last week in Braemar a culmination of all he loved best. To those of us who knew him, climbing companions and youngsters on his courses, he was a true inspiration and a great friend. He will be sorely missed by a multitude of hill-goers of all ages and backgrounds.

John is survived by his wife, Betty, son Neil, daughter Fiona, and four grandsons.

Fiona Wild.

WILLIAM LINDESAY WOOD

BILL WOOD was born in Aberfeldy on Christmas Day 1912. He joined the Customs and Excise Service after leaving St. Andrews University, and was initially posted to Stornoway. His career as a mountaineer took off when he transferred to Skye as His Majesty's representative at the Talisker Distillery, a dream posting, where he promptly went native.

He regarded the West Highland way of life as "the only one worth a damn", and his refreshingly irreverent attitude towards the authority that he himself represented became legendary in the island. Wood anecdotes of the 'now it can be told' variety are legion. His prowess with a stalking rifle earned him the sobriquet of 'the Duke of Kinlochainort', where as captain of the Skye Home Guard he put his arsenal of weaponry to its only constructive use. His sergeant, who happened to be his bank manager, was the troop's recognised expert on angling for salmon with hand grenades. Bill was on the fringe of official action on the Whisky Galore affair; as at Talisker, his very reasonable attitude was that "nobody gets his dram until the exciseman's had his". There is a wonderful and very accurate pen-portrait of him in Elizabeth Coxhead's novel *A Wind in the West.*

He also features in Benny Humble's classic book on the Cuillin of Skye. As a resident on the island, and very largely his own boss, he had every opportunity to do all the famous routes at his leisure when the weather was optimal. There is a spectacular photo of him standing upright on the late lamented gendarme on the West Ridge of Sgurr nan Gillean.

Being small of stature, albeit larger than life in character, he liked climbing with me, because I could often manage the salvation hold that was beyond his reach. He was intimately friendly with the great Professor Norman Collie during the latter's retirement at Sligachan. In fact, under wartime conditions, Bill Wood was the only mountaineer present at Collie's funeral. He related to me how, before tackling the Window Buttress, he asked Collie how difficult it was, and how Collie replied in his squeaky voice: "I can't remember much about it except that I've taken hundreds of women and children up it." Since Bill had naturally done the complete Cuillin ridge several times, he proposed – years later, after he had left Skye – that we should attempt the first winter traverse. However, we never got the right weather conditions at the times we were free, and eventually another group beat us to it.

From Skye, Bill transferred to Oban, then to the distillery in Dumbarton, and finally as exciseman in the Singer factory at Clydebank. Our main stamping grounds by then were Arrochar, and above all, Glencoe, where we did most of the classic routes of the day in summer and winter, very often meeting up with other SMC members like J. H. B. Bell, or Myles Morrison with his antique Rolls-Royce. I never managed to climb with Bill in the Alps after I moved to Central Europe, and to the major peaks around Innsbruck, Zermatt and Chamonix, but I went out with him every time I could get home. We had several years of an Indian summer with Frankie Milne in the bothy of Alice Campbell's Cuillin Cottage at Glen Brittle. My last Cuillin climb with Bill was the southern half of the main ridge out to Sgurr Dubh Mor on a day of glorious sunshine with the Hebrides laid out at our feet.

With time getting on, Bill went over to Munro-bagging, and was on his second

round when the blow fell. In the winter of 1981 he had a stroke while driving on the A9 at Dunkeld, with the result that he went off the road and lay for 12 hours in the snow before he was discovered. In response to his anxious question when he regained consciousness, the neurologist replied: "Oh yes, you will be able to climb again, but you won't enjoy your dram as much" – a fate that Bill regarded as worse than death. I and my 12-year-old son managed to get him up Ben Lomond the following year, but that was his last Munro. He let his SMC membership lapse, but for some years continued doing some modest hillwalking around Dumbarton in company with a young woman doctor. With his powers failing, he spent the last years of his life in hospital in Dumbarton, where, as a great-great grandfather, he died on September 1, 2001 in his 89th year.

Jim Wilkie.

HARRY F. W. TAYLOR j.1986

HAL TAYLOR'S climbing and hillwalking life began in 1943 or 1944 when he was a member of the Lancashire Caving and Climbing Club – a small, but active, club based in Bolton. He was a participant in monthly meets, caving in the Yorkshire Dales or climbing on Peak District gritstone and crags in the Lakes or Wales. His involvement with Scotland began in 1947 when he and his wife, Joan, hitch-hiked to Skye from London and did most of the Cuillin and the Pinnacle Ridge of Gillean. They were back in Skye in 1949 when the weather conditions were very different. A route-finding error enforced a long and very wet return to Glenbrittle from Coruisk. Near the end of this Hal collapsed with hypothermia, only being saved from an untimely end by some nearby campers.

These visits marked the start of an attachment to Scottish mountains reinforced by climbing trips to Glencoe and Ben Nevis. Torridon, and especially Liathach, were favourites as were the Cuillin where he twice did the Main Ridge traverse. He completed the Munros with Ben Wyvis in 1976; but Hal cast his mountaineering net widely and became a dedicated alpinist, finishing all the 4000m peaks of the Alps with the Aiguille Blanche de Peuterey in 1985.

The first Alpine visit was to the Dauphine with Joan in 1950. With very limited experience and guidebook in hand they did some easy peaks. In this self-taught manner was experience gained. Having joined the Climbers Club he attended several of their Alpine meets and began to notch up some 4000m summits. In the Seventies he set himself the target of doing all 61 of them.

A frequent companion was Peter Edwards who lived in Switzerland. He remembers: "The Scottish hills were something of a yardstick for him. For instance he liked to translate the names of Alpine peaks into Gaelic and often referred to Mont Blanc as Beinn Bhan. When he was staying with us on his trips to the Alps, Hal was really obsessed with the hills and climbing them. He could think and talk of little else. I used to ration his access to books, photographs and so on but, when not occupied with these, he would listen to radio reports and phone various sources for the latest conditions and weather prospects. Once we gave ourselves the go-ahead, Hal more or less steam-rollered us to the top and back. His determination was extraordinary. He didn't care how rough we slept or whether we ate or not, as long as we were moving towards our goal."

He was not a hard climber, but was a man of remarkable willpower which often

meant he would overcome obstacles or adverse conditions which seemed to be beyond him.

Hal Taylor was in the Chemistry Department of Aberdeen University from 1953-1983, being head of department for four of those years. He became a world authority on cement chemistry, a subject for which he had a similar fixation as he had for mountains. His expertise was used by a number of cement companies and if he went abroad for them, or for scientific reasons, he was usually able to fit in some mountain activity.

After he retired Hal enjoyed a kind of second youth, doing a great deal of climbing all over the place and of all kinds – Scottish winter with ice tools, Nevis, Glencoe, Meaghaidh, Lochnagar, the North-east sea cliffs, Arran, the Lake District, Pembroke, Cornwall, Gritstone edges and farther afield to North America, Kenya and New Zealand. He went on climbing courses in Glencoe and met some young enthusiasts who went on to become guides and took Hal on various trips. A frequent companion was Tony Brindle with whom he returned to the Alps for an ascent of the Meije and also did Mount Aspiring in New Zealand. It was in this period that he joined the Club, membership of which he valued highly.

I only got to know Hal Taylor fairly late in his career and much of the detail in this account has come from Peter Edwards and from Joan Taylor herself. Hal would sometimes speculate on whether the mountains or science would last him the longer. It was in doubt to the end. He had to stop climbing after an operation six years ago but was up Bidean nam Bian in May, 2002.

However, in November he attended a scientific meeting in Denmark but died while returning to his home in Cumbria.

W. D. Brooker.

JOHN BICKERDIKE j.1996

JOHN BICKERDIKE died tragically on October 23, 2002 near his work at the premature age of 53.

John was born on February 1, 1949, in Newton Heath in Manchester. He was the youngest of five children enjoying the care and attention of his mother and three elder sisters, especially his sister Marjorie. His father had served in the First World War and was a brass moulder making armaments and serving in the Home Guard during the Second World War. His mother worked for British Avros building Lancaster bombers. Soon after the war his father was unable to work as the toxic fumes of smelting brass had chronically damaged his chest and he died when John was nine years old. His mother was the breadwinner working from 4am each morning cleaning local offices while his sister, Marjorie, got him ready for school.

John attended Briscoe Lane Primary School, and being a bright child, got into Grammar school. However, his education might have stopped there if a benevolent primary teacher had not arranged for a loan from the education department so his mother could buy him a school uniform for the best local Grammar school, Openshaw Technical College. John never forgot the sacrifices of his mother.

Despite the dangerous transport of a BSA Bantam and never seeming to study, he did well at Grammar school and went on to study Civil Engineering at Nottingham University where he met his wife, Barbara. He got a taste for pot-holing when first at university and at the insistence of his mother he gave it up, but he became a climber!

He was vice-president of Nottingham University mountaineering club in 1969 and succeeded in what may have been the first and only free ascent of the laundry chimney at Nottingham University. Using the bolts placed by the builders for protection, John and others forced an ascent under cover of darkness but were dismayed to find a security guard waiting when they abseiled down. Taking the situation in hand, John explained that they were doing a health-and-safety inspection of the chimney and that they always did them at night to avoid alarming passers-by. The reason why the guard had not seen one before. They eventually departed with the promise that they would be back next year for the annual inspection.

British Aerospace was where John was an apprentice in engineering. It was here that he crafted a lot of his own climbing equipment from locally available aviation grade aluminium. It reflected his attention to detail and art, perfectly engineered to a level of precision not found in commercial climbing equipment. Last winter, a snow belay device called a deadman which had been in use for all these years, was still in excellent condition. The quality of build and raw materials was unmistakable.

His daughter, Alison, was born when he worked in Northampton for the council where he designed and built a public toilet, before moving to Largs in Scotland to work for ICI in the mid-Seventies where his son, Robert, was born. He was even the harbour-master at the ICI plant for a time and worked there until his death.

John had an ultramontane approach and did a number of first British ascents in the Alps. The North-east Spur Direct of the Droites in 1975 with Martin Wragg was probably their best alpine ascent. The worst was the first British ascent of the North Face Direct of the Grosshorn. The lower face was hard ice and the middle section dramatically bad rock. When John was leading, a large pillar fell and shattered Martin's helmet. Later, they could not descend from the summit because of the snow conditions and had to bivouac, enduring a night of continuous thunderstorms, where the only thing to be seen was the zipper of his sleeping bag faintly glowing with static electricity.

John climbed many other Alpine routes often with Barbara. The harder routes included the Kanzelgrat (Rothorn), Gervasutti Pillar, North Face Piz Badille, Eiger, Aiguille de Blatiere. He also visited North America climbing in Yosemite where he reached the Stove Leg bivi on El Cap before deciding they couldn't haul the gear any higher. He did climb The Headache in Zion, Exxon Direct on Grand Teton, Canyon Lands Supercrack, Pingora in the Windrivers, Casual Route on the Diamond Face of Long's Peak and perhaps the first British ascent of Sabre in Estes Park. In 1978 he became an aspirant member of the Alpine Climbing Group proposed by Pete Boardman and seconded by Paul Braithwaite.

Across Scotland he climbed widely including King Kong on the Ben, Dragon and Gob at Carnmore, Rhino and Skydiver on Arran, King Rat and Blue Max at the Dubh Loch and the Old Man of Hoy. One successful ascent of Left Edge route of Gardyloo Buttress was almost stopped as the way was barred by the perpetual snows of Observatory Gully. Only the chance finding of a plastic boot complete with crampon, which John clipped to his fell running shoe, allowed the team to successfully cross the snow to reach the foot of the climb.

Living in Largs in Ayrshire, sailing was another passion for John and he combined sailing and his love of the mountains doing the Scottish Islands Peaks Races many

times, sailing and running up the mountains of offshore west coast islands. His determination was clear as the team won the all-rounders trophy almost every year they competed.

I first met John in 1994 on a trip to Chamonix where we spent the time skiing and climbing with Tim Pettifer and my partner, Ann. We had a superb week, out every day no matter what the weather, which was typical of John. We were also on a modeling assignment. I wonder how many people knew that John had been a male model. When we came back to Scotland, John and I climbed regularly in winter. Astral Highway and Minus One Gully on Ben Nevis being the hardest but including most of the classics. He was an accomplished downhill skier and ski-mountaineer and we occasionally used skis to ascend to the CIC hut for the weekend.

Many people felt safe climbing with John, he took many of us to places we could not have reached on our own, even when we didn't want to go there! I had the pleasure of proposing John's membership to the SMC in 1996. Tim Pettifer, Ian Angell and Bob Richardson seconded his application. Contrary to the usual system he later joined the Junior Mountaineering Club of Scotland in 1999 and was an active member.

More recently, John took part in two Scottish Mountaineering Club expeditions to the Staunings Alps in Northeast Greenland. The main achievement was the first ascent of the South Ridge of Hjornespids. It was a serious rock climb which would never have been completed without John's cunning, nerve and strength.

The new peaks climbed in Greenland John named after his two children. Giving a new peak someone else's name is a unique and rare gift and was John's way of saying how much he loved Alison and Robert, trying to give them immortality.

His climbing was not without incident as he broke an arm in the US. He also broke both of his ankles at the Quadrocks near Largs. Although he described them as "cracked" and was soon back on the hill well before the orthopaedic advice suggested he should be.

John was a very private, powerful, caring man, with a steely determination and a surprising lack of fear. At his funeral he was described as a catalyst, promoting change in all those around him, while remaining unchanged himself. The change he catalysed in other people was to bring them happiness. He once flew out to South Africa to a surprise party for his brother's 60th birthday. He was also very gentle and caring with a great propensity to worry. Climbing was his escape from the pressures of life and work, and he excelled as a climber. His premature and tragic death is a painful loss to his family and those who shared the pleasure of his company on the hills, crags and on the open sea.

John is survived by his two children, Alison and Robert and his partner Pat Grant.

C. M. Jones.

JOHN LOGAN AIKMAN j1928

LOGAN AIKMAN was born in Glasgow on September 5, 1902, the son of Patrick H. Aikman. He was educated at Glasgow Academy and Fettes College. He lived in Novar, Tannoch Drive, Milngavie for more than 30 years, commuting by train to Glasgow. In 1963, he and his wife, who predeceased him in 1989, moved to a small cottage in Station Road, Balfron. He lived the last eight years of his life at Dalnair House, Croftamie, where he died on November 1, 2002, in his 101st year.

His interest in climbing began on leaving school when he was training to be a chartered accountant, and working in the family firm of Aikman and Glen in St. Vincent Street. After the early death of his father in 1924, he took his place in the business and ran it almost single-handedly during the war, as well as being in the Home Guard – which necessitated many sleepless nights on duty. The firm was later taken over by a larger company and he retired in the early 1960s.

He was at his most active in the hills in the 1920s and 30s. He kept a regular mountaineering diary for the years between 1924 and 1930, which covers the period of the formation of the JMCS (he was a member of the Glasgow Section from January 1926) and his first years of membership in our Club, which he joined in 1928.

The diaries are a very full record of his mountaineering, running to 1854 pages. Although he climbed all over the country, there are frequent accounts of visits to Ben Nevis and to Skye, and it is plain from the enthusiasm of the writing that these were his favoured haunts. He was particularly fond of the Ben Nevis Hut, and stayed in it even before the official opening. He enjoyed a memorable encounter with A. E. Robertson there, and recorded a wonderfully racy vignette of Robertson huffily presiding over 'his' Hut, which was recently published in *The Munroist's Companion*. He arranged special Dinners at the Hut for his friends, garnished with decorated French Menus, and followed by lengthy Toasts and Speeches. His only substantial contribution to the Journal (*Joys of the Hut,* 1937, 21, 163-4) was a piece deploring the low levels of use of the Hut by members – only 22 of 300 members used it in 1936. The later diary expeditions were assisted by his Austin 7 named Beckmesser after the character in Wagner's *Mastersingers,* who sings badly!

Although many of his friends, such as Norman Mowbray, Gordon Robinson, George Williams and the Speirs brothers, were active rock-climbers, Aikman's diaries record few climbs – he seemed content to climb the hills, and to be as happy with a repeat ascent in good company as with a new mountain. Perhaps for that reason, despite his excellent start (93 Munros on application in 1928), he fell a few short of completion. His last Munros were climbed in the late 1950s with his daughter, Patricia. The diaries, together with much other interesting material, were donated to the Club in 1997 – thanks to the generosity of the family – and are now in our National Library archive.

In 1931, Aikman was recruited by George Sang as Assistant Secretary, and appointed to the Club Committee. He assisted Sang until 1935, then took over the Secretaryship, which he held until 1946 when Ian Charleson succeeded him. His office coincided with the efforts of Arthur Russell, Percy Unna, James Wordie and others to bring about the various Glencoe purchases for the benefit of the nation in 1935-37. The Club was at the centre of this process, and it must have been exciting and exacting work for a young Secretary, new to the job. In 1938 he undertook the task of organizing the enormous, and very successful, Jubilee Dinner in Glasgow. During his time as Secretary he was a regular attender at Meets and was also involved in rescue work, at that time often carried out by Club members recruited by the Club Secretary at the request of the police. Aikman's distinguished tenure of the office of Secretary was marked by a short, but fulsome, appreciation in the Journal by Alex Harrison and J. W. Baxter (*SMCJ* 1947, 23, 446).

I am indebted to Aikman's daughters, Patricia Knutson and Morag Maddy, for their generous assistance in preparing this obituary.

Robin N. Campbell.

OLIVER TURNBULL j 1987

OLIVER TURNBULL'S passion for mountaineering began during the Second World War, when his uncle, Professor Herbert Turnbull, a past President of the club, took him walking in North Wales. Later they attended the Club's Easter meet 1949. His uncle, who was Professor of Mathematics at St Andrews, also introduced Oliver to golf and he soon had a handicap in single figures.

Oliver was born at Bowden, near Altrincham, Cheshire on August 8, 1933, the youngest child of the Reverend Peveril and The Lady Jane Turnbull (née Grey). He was educated at Marlborough, where he learned to play the oboe, and there developed his three great interests in life – literature, mountains and music. It was these wider interests that made his holidays almost a cultural experience. Poor weather in the Dolomites and he would point towards Verona and an opera in the Roman Arena. After a hard climb on Mont Blanc he would relax in Aosta in an ornate rural church listening to an organ recital.

After completing National Service, when he was able to continue hill walking and take up rock climbing, he instructed, for short time, at the Ullswater Outward Bound School admitting that he had to learn quickly to keep one step ahead of the students. Later in life he became chairman of the school and took a great interest in the young.

In 1957, Oliver joined the Wayfarers' Club and climbed in the Alps for the first time with club friends. This was the first of more than 20 seasons in the Alps – many with Charles Warren, Iain Ogilvie and myself. He also climbed in the Canadian Rockies and trekked in the Himalayas. It was these members who reintroduced Oliver to SMC Easter Meets as their guest in 1977. After continuing to attend these meets for almost 20 years, he was pleased, when we returned very late from a day on the hills, to hear that a past President had commented: "You don't want to worry about those two." His friends Charles, Iain and Ivan Waller encouraged him to apply for membership of the Club. He was told, by John Fowler, that it was important to enjoy "gadding about in the hills" – a phrase that described Oliver's approach so very well.

Oliver took great trouble choosing which areas to visit and his anticipation and enthusiasm were infectious. He would quietly pour over maps and guidebooks for days looking up references in his climbing library before telephoning with a firm, but thoughtful, suggestion. On one occasion he spent hours with his friend, Ivan Waller, planning his 'Ultimate Challenge' route across Scotland. His friends often said when he was planning these trips that you could see his 'tail wagging'.

He was delighted to have climbed North East Buttress in winter and the Long Climb in summer, both from Fort William, but most of all he loved to wander the Scottish hills (accompanied by his lovely dog 'Widge'). His active interest in the club and his enthusiasm for the Easter meets culminated in his taking on the role of Meets Secretary. The meets had declined in popularity but Oliver's first meet in 1996 at Tomdoun Hotel was a huge success with wonderful weather, ice on the loch and the largest turnout for several years.

After working for a timber importer in Finland, Newcastle and Liverpool, he moved to Lancaster to work for Courtaulds before settling in Kendal where he owned and managed Titus Wilson, publishers and printers. The company merged

with Dixon Printing and Oliver concentrated on encouraging local authors and the production of antiquarian book catalogues – a job he loved. He had a natural charm and gained the trust and respect of his colleagues and clients, many of whom became friends.

He frequently searched through second-hand bookshops, and on one occasion, found the original CIC hut book on a Kendal bookshelf, which he bought and returned to the club. His collection of mountaineering books was auctioned shortly after his death comprising 180 lots and described as 'A Fine Collection collected over 30 years including Charles Fellows's own copy of his book *A Narrative of an Ascent of Mt Blanc,* a unique copy, arguably the most desirable work on Alpine Mountaineering to be offered for sale in recent years'.

Oliver didn't talk openly about his climbing plans. He preferred to keep his options open. He only once let a thought slip – the Matterhorn. In the hut, after good climbing days, he would talk of other routes and mountains and he frequently commented that he didn't want to climb the ordinary route on the Matterhorn jostling with the crowd. So an ascent had to be by a good route, in good style.

The Zmutt ridge was in poor condition so we walked to Cervinia from Zermatt. Next day we climbed to the Carrel hut on the Italian ridge. Out well before first light the next morning we set off up the ridge with its fixed ropes and rope ladder; the sun rose as we climbed. We had the ridge to ourselves and were alone on the summit. It was Oliver's 60th birthday. We descended the Hörnli Ridge, mostly on the East face avoiding the crowds as they ascended, reaching the hut seven hours later. Tired but elated, Oliver's first thought was to phone his wife, Viv and the children – Lucy, Clare, Sarah and Harry. He was extremely proud of his children and grandchildren.

Oliver had many varied interests and an inquiring mind. When travelling a plan would emerge; go and look at a grand house; visit an art gallery, or call on an interesting friend. Even rainy days could be a great adventure.

After he and his wife moved to Suffolk in 1998, he returned to golf and took up a new interest – silver making. Oliver, who had a classical education and maintained he wasn't good with his hands, created many lovely gifts for his family. He was quietly proud of his newfound talent. He frequently returned to Kendal for business and pleasure and would delight in walking along the High Street greeting old friends and colleagues on the way.

His trips to Scotland continued until the last months of his life and he attended Robin Campbell's Skye meet. Along with others we set out from Allt Dearg House to climb Pinnacle Ridge. Oliver was in two minds but was encouraged by Iain Smart to continue and at the abseil on the last pinnacle Oliver produced a thin line that he had carried for many years. "This rope is just the right length." Much to the amusement and heckling of those above we then proceeded to struggle down this rope. On returning to the house the rope was carefully measured and only then did Oliver admit, with a wry smile, that it was "a bit short".

It is hard to imagine, that less than a year before he died from cancer, he walked more than 100 miles in the Pyrenees, in both snow and sun. But we will all remember the vibrant enthusiastic man who shared his wide interests with so many friends. He was always great company, especially on the hills.

Dick Allen.

ANDREW WIGHTMAN j. 1960

DURING the mid-1950s Iain Haig and I escorted members of the Edinburgh scouting fraternity over a few Easter hill weekends. On one of these I first met Andy as a slight, quiet, youngster (fortunate for him) for my part was to burn off the aggressive lads while Iain nurtured the others along at a sensible pace – a technique which successfully endowed the latter group with new-found confidence in comparative abilities.

He later appeared at University as a six-footer (I was unaware of the past connection till he let on) and fell in with some of the most dynamic climbers hitherto grace the Scottish climbing scene.

By the early 60s he joined the Currie lads labouring on our self-build house; in between wild goings-on, extensive climbing weekends and final-year studies, he patently lived life in the fast track.

Given his grasp of the subject matter he was unhappy about the finals result, but when he moaned about a 3rd, we all gave him a hard time, calling him a 3rd class citizen which possibly led to his eschewal of chemistry, opting instead into the high-tech revolution. We thought this was rejection in the extreme but it proved to be an astute move and led to a very successful career of world-wide service with IBM.

In mountaineering terms, Andy was brought up hard, and endured the rigours of old-style climbing well. One weekend we were to rendezvous at the CIC, I didn't have a key, wrongly assuming that someone would be in residence, but on arriving in a healthy blizzard had to force entry by the 'wee door'. In following up Andy missed the snow plastered hut and ended up in an unscheduled bivouac under an old army cape in Coire Leis. I was awakened at first light by his energetic assault on the front door, but fortunately, saved the place from destruction with a loud hail from the temporary 'door'.

A good breakfast saw him to rights and we spent the day achieving nothing, dodging avalanches etc. but enjoying the wildness of our situation.

His middle man role on the 'nightshift' ascent of Zero Gully has passed into history, but prior to the Eiger, he and Dougal tried a bold winter attempt on Route II which certainly impressed Andy for Dougal took a slithering fall from high up under the overhangs onto a baby nylon runner with little else of a belay between them.

Retreat from the Eiger can be misconstrued as failure whereas in reality, getting safely off any big mountain in storm condition is the ultimate test of climbing competence. Our pair had almost succeeded but on the home stretch Andy tripped and tumbled, only arresting his fall just before the abyss.

He suffered enormous pain from a smashed ankle but his tenacious courage plus the super endeavours of Dougal and two selfless Italian rescuers returned him to safety and a future life.

His post-Eiger life was greatly enriched in marriage to Mary, his alter ego and equal and despite nagging discomfort from the ankle injury, they regularly enjoyed sorties on home hills or farther afield.

Having only recently resettled in Edinburgh, we all anticipated entertaining social interaction to follow, but fate intervened as Andy fell victim to cancer where once again he displayed the courage and determination of his earlier days, but sadly, to no avail.

Regrettably, Mary succumbed to the big C within a year of Andy's demise.

J. R. Marshall.

EDINBURGH University in the early 1960s was a daunting place for a young climber. Smith, Haston, Wightman and Holt were all at the height of their powers and those of a more modest ability were left in no doubt as to their station.

To Smith we were 'Boy Scouts', to Haston 'hangers on'. Andy regarded this hierarchy as something of a joke. In particular, he viewed the Teutonic posturings and ambitions of the young squirrels as totally hilarious! Andrew simply loved the outdoors and would walk or climb with anyone who shared his enthusiasm – regardless of their abilities.

After the Eiger incident, especially, his gregarious and social nature came to the fore and there was no more popular member of the EUMC. He was relaxed and humorous and always first choice for any student party. His friendship and subsequent long and happy marriage to Mary Paine, a fellow EUMC member, came as no surprise to their friends.

As a student of Nuclear Chemistry, he was the first to agree, (he found out) the going was hard and like most of us he survived, rather than enjoyed, what he claimed was the toughest course in the world! Nevertheless he was quietly pleased with his hard-won Honours degree, and the same qualities of determination and hard work carried him through a demanding and highly-successful career in business.

Of his many qualities, he will be remembered particularly for his generosity. As a young man he would do anything to help a friend. On my own first trip to the Alps he loaned me his rucksack, his crampons and even his Lawries 23Rs – surely greater love hath no man!

This generosity of spirit endured and grew throughout his life. Mary and he were never happier than when providing hospitality for friends, be it in Edinburgh, London or North America.

Andrew's love of mountains and the open spaces remained undiminished by time or failing health. He discovered ski-touring fairly late in life and, despite a busy professional life, he made time for an extended trip to the Fann Mountains in Russia. Less than one year before his final illness he joined a group of friends for a testing 10-day trip in the Pyrenees. He was his usual cheerful, self-deprecating self. His last painful weeks were borne with immense courage and dignity an inspiration and example to all. We mourn our loss.

Paul Brian.

GEORGE T. B. CHISHOLM j. 1954

WHEN George Chisholm died on August 27, 2002, at the age of 87 after a lifetime of service to the community and devotion to the Scottish hills, most of the then members of the SMC would only remember him as a regular attender at the AGMs and less frequent participant in the Easter Meets for the past 20 years. His climbing record would probably be unknown to them and many would have been surprised to learn that although no 'Tiger of yesterday', neither was he a 'pussycat' and had a list of climbs, both at home and abroad, that many would be happy to attain today. Although his climbing career ceased in 1978 after the death of his regular climbing partner Fred Mantz in a scrambling accident on B buttress on Aonach Dubh, George continued to go on the hills winter and summer until three years before his death. His last winter Munro without the aid of mechanical uplift was in 1996 when he climbed Spidean Mialach on the Tomdoun Easter Meet. His first recorded Munro was Ben Lomond in 1936 – 60 years earlier! He was among the first 100 Munroists.

He had walked with his wife, Olive, from the time of the Ben Lomond ascent (they were married in 1941) and his first 'Rock or Snow' climb in his application for the SMC was also with her – Ben Lui's Central Gully in 1946.

He joined the JMCS, which in those days was almost a pre-requisite to SMC membership and was President of that club in 1947-48. His application records the usual selection of climbs for the period up to V. Diff standard – par for the course – and he joined the SMC in 1954. While he climbed with many present SMC members of subsequent high reputation, his usual companion was Fred Mantz who only came to the SMC in 1971 and led him into high grade climbing.

As a Primary school teacher, George had no holiday problems and went to the Alps nine times, again with the more experienced Fred as leader. Among notable ascents were the Jagigrat – a quality rock climb above Saas – three ascents of the Matterhorn including a traverse in poor weather conditions, most of the major peaks of the Valais, the Piz Bernina and Piz Palu. Apart from the Alps, George walked and scrambled in the Drakensburg during wartime service in South Africa. His last rock climb was Eagle Ridge on Lochnagar in 1977, led by Fred, in a day trip from Edinburgh.

Like George, I continued climbing with friends, other than Eastern District SMC, until about 1980, so I only knew him by rather casual acquaintance until then. From that time onward however, we formed part of the Eastern District walking group, loosely organised after the death of Ken Macrae by Bill Myles. This became a regular Saturday outing and, thanks to Bill's driving, we covered Scotland from the Cairngorms to Criffel and Misty Law to Hartfell. George was an excellent walker and repeated many of his earlier Munro ascents, although chairlift was used if available to make days feasible. Even after he recovered from a cardiac arrest he could still manage good days and his last Munro was a worthy one without mechanical aid. It was deliberately intended as a final gesture, which it was.

Latterly, his days on the hills were somewhat curtailed by the need to assist Olive during a severe terminal illness, but he managed to get out for short days for several months. He made arrangements to cope with the situation with several Highland hotels that they formerly patronised, which no doubt revived old memories of happier times.

George was a teacher all his working life in several schools in the Tynecastle area of Edinburgh and when he retired he was Headmaster of Burdiehouse School in the city. To judge from appearances he must have been well liked as he had a long list of correspondents who had been pupils and several came to visit him when he was in a nursing home before his death as a result of a stroke. Indeed, it sometimes seemed that the Scottish hills were populated by ex-pupils or church friends as we were constantly meeting them on the paths. It must be said that George, as an inherently friendly soul, was a great talker and he often lagged behind chatting to his friends but usually managing to be not too far behind at the summits.

He and Olive were dedicated churchgoers and he was organist at Gorgie and Stenhouse Baptist Church from the age of 30 where they took part in much of the associated life of the Church. His two sons follow in the tradition of public service. Iain, the elder, is a senior Civil Servant in Whitehall, while Malcolm is at present Minister of Health in the Scottish Parliament.

G. Scott Johnstone.

Jason Currie on the Grand Traverse of the Rabada-Navarro (ED-) on the West Face of El Naranjo de Bulnes, Picos de Europa, Northern Spain. Photo: Adam Liversedge. (Jason Currie collection).





PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB

The following new members were admitted and welcomed to the Club in 2002-2003.

David Adam, (46), Artist, Brechin.

P. John Armstrong, (??), Mountain Guide, Carrbridge.

Colin M. Bell, (33), Environmental Consultant, Innerleithen.

Erik W. Brunskill, (28), Network Analyst, Glasgow.

Martin Cooper, (33), Youth Worker, Musselburgh.

Nicholas L. Cruden, (29), Doctor of Medicine, Edinburgh.

Christopher Dale, (41), Mountain Guide, Penrith.

Blair Fyffe, (23), Mountaineering Assistant to SAIS, Aviemore.

Joanna M. George, (33), Designer, Ballachulish.

Kathryn Grindrod, (37), Mountaineering Assistant to SAIS, Coniston.

Ross I. Jones, (34), H. R. Consultant, Edinburgh.

Michael R. Lates, (36), Mountain Guide, Broadford.

Derek Morley, (32), Chartered Water Engineer, Motherwell.

David J. Pritchard, (39), Medical Research Scientist, Scone.

Mark Robson, (33), Information Systems Manager, Throsk.

Euan J. M. Scott, (38), Company General Manager, Edinburgh.

Iain G. Small, (36), Mountain Footpath Contractor, South Queensferry.

Ian W. Taylor, (38), Retailer, Edinburgh.

Michael L. Watson, (54), Physician, Edinburgh.

Colin Wells, (42), Writer and Ecological Consultant, Dyce.

The One-Hundreth-and-Thirteenth AGM and Dinner

PITLOCHRY and the Atholl Palace – the safe choice and an overdue change from the West Coast. The weather, however, showed no improvement, which guaranteed a respectable turn out for the afternoon slide shows where Hamish Brown, Tom Prentice and Simon Richardson described varying styles of our sport in distant places.

The AGM was a parochial affair – some more chairs might have helped – with issues such as the annual loss, the colour of our Journal cover, hut access rights, subscription levels and the future of the slide collection exciting members. And on to dinner where a record 189 members and guests attended table, including Annie Haston, whose late husband, Dougal, our former member, had that afternoon been introduced into Scotland's sporting Hall of Fame.

As for the meal, I remember the slick service and the haggis parcels – or rather the absence of haggis parcels due to a menu mix-up. But no-one complained.

The hotel's reluctance to move its concert grand piano left the entertainers with a problem, but they did their best with the Club song. The President recited a list of members' climbing achievements – phew! – to be followed by a brilliant Toast

Scott Muir topping out on Pema M9+ in the Haston Cave, Val Savaranche, Aosta, Italy. Photo: Scott Muir collection.

to the Guests by Charlie Orr – a memorable highlight (I didn't write this but I wholeheartedly concur – *Ed.*). Chris Bonington provided the response with a polished performance and finally, Peter Macdonald accepted Raeburn's axe with the normal modesty to commence his Presidential stint.

Many said afterwards it was a great Dinner. Was it due to the food? Unlikely. Or the famous guest? Perhaps. Or the location? More likely. Or the members themselves? Almost certainly. And so we're taking a great risk – going back. Clear your diaries for November 29.

J. R. R. Fowler.

Ski-mountaineering Meet 2003.

Members present: Dick Allen, Donald Ballance, Richard Bott, Ewan Clark, Colwyn Jones, Ann MacDonald, Peter Macdonald, Chris Ravey, Bob Reid, Bill Wallace. Guests: Gordon Clark, Bill Shaw, Nick Walmsley.

The participants arrived at Mar Lodge throughout Friday evening, renewing auld acquaintances and planning for the weekend ahead.

On Saturday 8, February, DB, CJ, PM, CR, BS, and NW ascended Glas Maol via Meall Odhar, mostly on skis. There was soft, patchy snow and the Meall Odhar café was closed. After a swift lunch on the summit we returned via the Sunnyside ski run and the open fire at the Fife Arms.

During the above expedition Chris demonstrated the strengths and weaknesses of his new GPS. One strength was that it guided us to within 30m of the summit in whiteout conditions, this despite our indirect route attempting to find patches of snow to string together. One weakness of GPS is that shortly after arriving the batteries ran out and Chris had to revert to map and compass to guide us off the hill.

One guest said: "I had long looked forward to my first experience of the sport under the watchful eye of this internationally well known group of exponents of the genre. My head was soon reeling with the technicalities of skinning, partial release, high stepping and so on. As we trudged up the line of a non-functional t-bar, however, I could begin to see the possibilities of the freedom to roam that this technological and financial investment might achieve.

"The clamber to the summit, much the same as walking up (only less elegant), soon gave way to appreciation of the diversity of a day out like this. I counted 23 different changes from skin to ski, 117 binding adjustments, several disputes of direction, and the thrill of walking down a boulder field with my skis cleverly mounted on my rucksack to catch the wind in the manner of a windsurfer sail. Determined to substitute enthusiasm for my lack of experience, I was excited to see how my companions threw themselves into the snow in a series of spectacular car boot sales, and had no difficulty in matching their flair. In short, this is a sport for everyone seeking an alternative day on the mountain."

Another member said: "Within the company present on this year's ski meet I consider myself a mere junior to the sport. It was with eager enthusiasm that I set out with five of the finest of these wilderness mountain explorers on Saturday. You can imagine that I was a little taken aback when the car stopped at the local ski resort.

"However, on skinning up a steep hill my confidence was restored that a fine day witnessing perfect turns on virgin snow lay ahead. I was a little shocked on entering the cloud to find that my companions were happy to follow a little device,

which apparently talks to satellites. It must be the modern way I thought and followed their lead. I must say that I was shocked when they proceeded to use mechanical means later in the day.

"In fairness, it had been a long adventure under less-than-ideal conditions. Worse was yet to come. At the top of the long and daring descent back to the glen all five of my childhood heroes paused, fumbled with their bindings and, shock, horror, clipped in their heels. Please my friends restore my faith in you. Free the heel and free the mind. It is the only way."

SYSTEMS TESTING: The Clarks and Reid recorded on digital camera cycling with skis on. Truly this is a sight to behold. Various techniques were employed including rucsac mounted skis, crossbar mounted skis and variations on both these themes. Directional diversions tended to occur to the crossbar-mounted set-ups as wheels pointed one way and skis pointed another. Ski boots were carried or worn to various effect. Bow legged-ness ensued.

SYSTEM FAILURE: This occurred following a cycle from Mar Lodge Stables along to the Linn. Intentions on the Derry Lodge track failed after 60 enervating metres – Ewan Clark getting farthest through the difficulties. These it has to be noted were the result of 25 cm of frozen slush recently compacted by a vehicle known as an Argocat (a more sensible means of transporting skis).

Bikes abandoned, skins put on skis and a modest tour up Sgor Mor via Sgor Dubh ensued, but the summit was not reached owing to rain, wet snow and absence of lead in pencil.

BW, DA and RB looking for the maximum snow with the minimum carry to it, headed for the fleshpots of the Glenshee Trois Vallees. Greeted with mist, mud and squalor they carried on south to the old iron bridge. From the lay-by they were able to ski non-stop to a large area of heather and gravel high on the south ridge of the Cairnwell, followed by another similar area. The summit of the Cairnwell is an abomination of masts and tin sheds. The air-conditioning of the buildings on the summit spoke volumes for the expected conditions at the top of one of Scotland's premier ski resorts. They had a fine run down on almost continuous snow and were back at the car so early that they had to kill time in the shops of Braemar before showing face at Mar Lodge again.

Ann enjoyed a birthday that evening. Champagne, roses, presents and best wishes sung in true SMC style with harmony and much revelry – but thankfully, no *Old Hobnailers.*

Sunday dawned with more promising weather and everyone headed along to Linn of Quoich for an ascent of Carn na Drochaide. With our President to the fore, we skinned up the patches of snow as the cloud cleared and the sun shone from a clear blue sky. The views were superb in all directions over Ben Macdhui, Beinn a' Bhuird and Lochnagar. We finally heather-hopped our way to the summit to enjoy a light lunch in the lee of the summit cairn. However, the breeze cooled us sufficiently not to dally overlong and we skied from just below the summit to just above the cars at Linn of Quoich. This Corbett is an excellent viewpoint and was an excellent choice on an excellent day.

There only remained handing in some skis at the hire shop and the customary cup of tea before heading for home.

C. M. Jones.

JMCS REPORTS

Perth Mountaineering Club (JMCS, Perth Section): The year got off to a good start with a well attended meet at Milehouse, during which no fewer than 21 members plus one prospective member (aged six months) put in an appearance at one stage or another.

This was the start of a typically active year with 11 weekend meets and 10 day meets. The club membership continued to climb slightly to 105.

Those taking part in an unusually popular day meet to Glen Lochay in December were rewarded with a superb temperature inversion. Above the clouds there was almost perfect visibility in all directions.

The New Year started with the usual social New Year's Day walk at Birnam Hill. Later in the month the atrocious winter weather was exemplified by a weekend spent in Glen Etive. There was some respite from the gale-force winds and sleet on the Saturday, but by Sunday, thunder and lighting added to the overall menace and no-one ventured out.

February's CIC hut meet was convened by Mark James who climbed Comb Gully and No. 2 Gully Buttress in rather less than perfect conditions.

The February meet to the Smiddy at Dundonnel was a victim of its own popularity with an overflow party having to be accommodated at a local bunkhouse. This, in spite of a rather uninspiring forecast, which turned out to be accurate.

In contrast, an equally dubious outlook for the Ling Hut meet in March turned out to be overly pessimistic, and the Saturday was fine, enabling three members to traverse the Black Carl pinnacles on the Beinn Eighe ridge in Alpine conditions.

A select group ventured into deepest Aberdeenshire in April to the Allargue Arms bunkhouse at Cockbridge. A new venue, with interesting new route possibilities in the eastern Cairngorms, was enjoyed with the first sign of spring weather on the summits.

The year's most successful meet was arguably the camping meet to Glen Brittle in early May. No fewer than 27 members and guests took part, and 16 climbed a dry and sunny Pinnacle Ridge on the Saturday. Had we realised then that this was about the last decent weather we would get all summer, perhaps the perfect conditions would have been savoured even more.

The annual backpacking trip was to the Knoydart peninsula. Being the 'Jubilee weekend' the area was mobbed and in some instances by people who were rather alarmingly unprepared for a visit to remote country in poor conditions.

The year was rounded off with a September family meet – now becoming a regular fixture.

The Wednesday evening rock-climbing was a washout. Only a few evenings early on in the season were graced with anything like summer weather – most were too wet to contemplate going out.

The Club now has another Munroist with Melanie Nicoll climbing her last few over the summer while expecting her second child.

The Annual Dinner was held at the Cultoquhey Hotel at Gilmerton in November.

Officials elected: *President,* Phillip Taylor; *Vice-President,* Karen Campbell; *Secretary,* Sue Barrie, Glensaugh Lodge, Laurencekirk, AB3O IBH. Tel: 01561 340673; *Treasurer,* Pam Dutton; *Newsletter Editor,* Des Bassett; *Meets Convener,* Beverley Robertson; *Committee,* Dave Prentice, Mike Aldridge, Melanie Nicoll and Carolann Petrie.

Sue Barrie.

Edinburgh Section: Membership is currently 95 – including a number of aspirants.

The section continues to hold mid-week meets at the Heriot-Watt climbing wall during the winter months and various crags around Edinburgh during the summer. Traprain and Aberdour feature regularly, but there are also visits to Dunkeld and Kyloe. Particularly dedicated members also meet on Monday nights at Alien Rock. For those more partial to less strenuous evening entertainment, the section meets on the first Thursday of the month at Kay's Bar in Jamaica Street.

Weekend meets in winter have tended to be better attended than those in summer, mostly due to last summer's unsettled weather. The Lakes have been a popular rock-climbing destination, and some members were at Stanage in June. In Scotland, a meet at Jock's in August saw parties climbing at Creag Dubh, Kingussie and Duntelchaig.

The January meet at Muir of Inverey cottage was memorable for some great weather on the Saturday that saw members visiting Creag an Dubh Loch, Lochnagar and Corrie Kander for winter climbing. Others went ski-mountaineering around Glen Shee. Unfortunately, a thaw set in on the Sunday and those that ventured out went hill walking. Mild conditions also affected February's meet at Invercroft in Achnasheen, and the only climbing done in the area was the traverse of A'Chioch. Conditions improved for the March meet at Blackrock Cottage in Glen Coe while the winter ended with a visit to the CIC Hut for such staples as Comb Gully, Tower Ridge and Good Friday Climb.

Club trips abroad have taken in a variety of destinations. Rock climbing in the sun is proving popular, with Spain and Italy being the favoured locations. Various groups visited the Costa Blanca and Sardinia during the winter months. The Alps continue to be widely visited during the summer months, with members climbing around Chamonix, Zermatt and the Dolomites. A small party spent some time in Chamonix in February for some winter alpinism and valley ice climbing. Farther afield, other members visited the US, Canada, Norway and Greenland.

The Annual Dinner took place at the Atholl Arms Hotel in Blair Atholl. An excellent meal was followed by an entertaining speech from Doug Lang. Doug recounted tales of first ascents in summer and winter, including the ever-popular Ardverikie Wall on Binnein Shuas and Slav Route on the Ben. The only complaints related to the non-availability of the hotel's specially brewed beer at the bar. This will be rectified in time for our intended return in 2003.

The section's huts have continued to prove popular with both members and other clubs. Jock's was the venue of a couple of memorable meets for new members, and Hogmanay at the Smiddy is as popular as ever. Comfort levels at the Smiddy have increased with the purchase of mattresses, and bookings have increased.

The Joint Eastern Section SMC/JMCS slide nights have continued to be interesting events with speakers on a wide-range of subjects associated with climbing and the hills. The slide nights take place at 7:30pm on the second Tuesday of the month from October to March at Edinburgh University Pollock Halls.

Rab Anderson kindly agreed to give an additional lecture and slide show in October on the subject of Scottish winter climbing. Many of Rab's new routes were featured as well as classics such as Mitre Ridge and Poachers Fall. The evening was also an opportunity for members to hear first hand about developments at the Ratho Adventure centre.

Officials elected: *Hon. President*, John Fowler; *Hon. Vice-President*, Alan Smith; *President*, Helen Forde; *Vice-President*, Sally Dipple; *Treasurer*, Bryan Rynne; *Secretary*, Neil Cuthbert, 25 Plewlands Gardens, Edinburgh (cuthbertneil@netscape.net); *Web Master*, Douglas Hall; *Smiddy Custodian*, Alec Dunn, 4 King's Cramond, Edinburgh; *Jock Spot's Custodian*, Ali Borthwick, 2 Aytoun Grove, Dunfermline. *Ordinary Members*, Patrick Winter (Meets Secretary), Stewart Bauchop.

Neil Cuthbert.

London Section: After the quiet year imposed by Foot and Mouth restrictions of 2001, we have made a concerted effort to infuse new vigour into the club.

The meets program has had an increased number of meets at the club cottage which has helped attract a dozen or so new members.

It may be of interest for other clubs to know that most (if not all) inquiries to the secretary were from enthusiastic walkers who wanted to develop into mountaineers and climbers. They were looking for clubs to provide training, coaching and opportunities to develop the necessary skills safely and in enjoyable company. Most of the interest has come by word of mouth and we have had one inquiry as a result of our new website!

The club has made substantial improvements to the cottage in Bethesda, including a new drying room, repaired flat-roof and new bedding. This is part of the longer-term plan to make better use of the cottage and improve the overall quality of the JMCS experience.

In response to requests from new and prospective members we ran a series of introductory, beginner and improver weekends aimed at inspiring and coaching new-comers to the sport. These proved very successful and suited those people who like to plan their development rather than our traditional 'have a go' style. The highlight must be the group of four 30-somethings who were surprised to find themselves outpaced and intimidated by a retired Civil Servant who took them swimming in a series of pools and cascades by Snowdon's Watkin path on our introductory weekend! I don't think they expected to be quite so immersed in the experience. Other first-timers went climbing on Milestone Buttress and ended up on the Adam and Eve stones of Tryfan – an instant buzz and they want to join.

As a well-established club with several mature members, 2002 saw many self-contained expeditions to various places. Our best year yet I feel.

Chris Comerie and Gordon Dalgarno had an interesting trip on the Gervasutti Pillar when they couldn't locate their stash of gear for the overnight bivi. But it didn't stop them going on to take a party up Mont Blanc.

Tony Buj took Geoff Howes, Jamie Ward and Andy 'Paz' Parrish to the Alps for their first time and he also did Mont Blanc, as well as the Monch and the Mirroire d'Argentiere – the three Ms. Congratulations to the Alpine novices.

Peter Stokes spent a few months taking his yacht to Greenland exploring the fjords, icebergs and mountains of the West Coast.

We have had other meets where members arrive by sailing boat – a growing interest within the club with several members acquiring qualifications and experience of different levels.

We would be interested to hear from other climbers with sailing interests with

a view to linking crews to boats, organizing mini-expeditions and creating a general 'community' of sailing mountaineers.

All these exploits and more are recorded on the new website www.jmcs.freewire.co.uk

The finale of the year is as always the Annual Dinner and the annual meeting which was again at the Giler Arms on the outskirts of Snowdonia.

Usually, great mountain biking conditions pertain and the new 'Marin' trail at Betys-y-coed must be the best bike route in the area – well worth exploring for anyone with three hours to spare on a wet weekend in Wales.

All in all, a healthy year for the club.

Officials elected: President, Marcus Harvey; Vice-President, John Firmin; Meets Secretary, Roy Hibbert; Treasurer and Hogwash Editor, Dave Hughes; Secretary and webmaster, Chris Bashforth; Hut Custodian, Rod Kleckham; Hut Works, Pete Turner; AGM/Dinner Secretary, Geoff Deady.

Glasgow Section: Club membership is 106, including 13 female members. Several new members have joined this year.

Fortnightly pub meets are popular, and serve as a good point of contact with prospective members. Members can now be found at the climbing wall on at least two nights of the week

Weekend meets have been mostly well attended, but numbers as always are subject to the weather forecast.

Twenty-three weekend meets took place, covering most of the mountaineering areas of Scotland. A whole club meet in Arran in May was well attended by Glasgow and London sections, but they unfortunately, never met due to the distractions of climbing. Members have also made trips to the Lakes, Pembrokeshire, and the Peak. As usual, the AGM and Dinner in Glencoe was well attended.

Activity abroad included a ski-mountaineering trip to the Pennine Alps by Colwyn Jones and Ann MacDonald, climbing Fluchthorn, Rimpfischorn, Briethorn and Strahlhorn. They also climbed Mount Olympus on a separate trip. Vicky Stewart spent several months in South America, and climbed Iskinka (5545m) in Peru. Autumn saw Davie MacDonald and Neil Marshall visiting Sardinia for some bolt-clipping, followed by Colwyn and Ann a few weeks later. Other trips by members have included climbing in Spain and walking in China.

Officicials elected: President, Scott Stewart; Vice-President; Ann MacDonald; Treasurer, Scott Stewart; Secretary, Vicky Stewart; Coruisk Hut Bookings, John Fenemore; Coruisk Hut Custodian, Alex Haddow.

Jeremy Morris.

SMC AND JMCS ABROAD

Greenland

Alpine Club/ACG Lemon Mountains Expedition

Geoff Cohen reports: Yesterday, had been a long day. We left 'advance base camp', a tiny tent, in the midst of the vast Frederiksborg Glacier and skied for many hours up to a col. We were aiming for the North Lemon Mountains, a group never before visited, at latitude 68° in East Greenland. A previous attempt, a week earlier, via a different col, had been thwarted by a steeply crevassed glacier descent – impossible to take pulks over. From our new col, Dave had led us cleverly through the crevasses by huge gentle curves till we reached a broad highway running south-west, with the spiky peaks that we had seen in the distance when we first landed on the ice-cap now hidden from view. Finally, as we got once more into a crevassed area and the glacier prepared to flow over steeper ground down to a major junction, we put up our tent and retired for a well-earned rest.

Now we were embarking on a reconnaissance. With light sacks we would go down the icefall to the junction and see if we could establish a camp within striking distance of a soaring mountain of classical sharp triangular outline that had dominated the distant view. This was the day I enjoyed most. In spite of the slushy ice on the lower glacier and the inevitable zig-zagging when finding a route for the first time, we had the thrill of exploration in an entirely new area, with untold magnificent mountains on every side and without the mood-altering heavy loads that so often numb the experience of exploration.

We first outflanked the icefall by a dirty gully on the right bank, then walked with ease for a mile or so over a flat glacier past the junctions with two inflowing tributary glaciers. Not all the mountains looked pleasant to climb. One that we dubbed the Nesthorn had a repellingly steep snow face, another, on the opposite side of the main glacier, had few safe lines apart from a ridge with a large gendarme which would require some down-climbing. Still, with a greedy urge to omnipotence, my imagination ranged over ascents of them all. I wanted to penetrate each of those glacier recesses, wending couloirs, complex icefalls and rock towers fitfully betraying their sharp secrets by their shadows. My body would certainly not be up to such a programme and, of course, we had little time and only food for a few days, but it was wonderful to dream, especially with easy walking in such a dramatic setting.

After a few hours we ascended a short icefall, had a brief hiatus in a maze of crevasses and then found an excellent campsite on dry ice with running water nearby and a full-on view of the major peak, later dubbed 'Spear.' It was about 2500m high, rising 1200m above the glacier. Its north-west face was steep, compact rock, a 'big wall' far beyond our aims or capacities. But the north-east aspect was a steep snow/ice face with a broken rib seaming its centre. Rising below this face was a narrow glacier with a jumble of icefalls bordered by a steep couloir. Obviously, this was our challenge, whether we would get the weather and have the strength to do it remained to be seen.

We returned to our ski/pulk camp and next day brought food for a week over to the Spear camp. The weather remained excellent, for the first time on this

expedition. The trip, ably organised by Roy Ruddle of the ACG, comprised eight Alpine Club members. We had been dropped on the Sorgenfri Glacier 10 days previously at a point about 12 miles from our intended base camp on the Frederiksborg.

Four of the party, with Salvationist tendencies, had decided to ski some easier mountains before proceeding to the Frederiksborg, while the more Ultramontane half of the party had hastened towards the spiky Lemon Mountains that lie south of the Frederiksborg. Roy and Robert Durran (SMC), definitely the A team, had gone to attempt Mitivagkat, a formidably steep and rocky objective at the north-east corner of the Lemons, while Dave Wilkinson (SMC) and I had gone to our first col and climbed a Skye-like rock ridge and a Cairngorm-like snowy plateau *in lieu* of descent to the North Lemons.

Now, after a rest day, we were all set for a 9pm departure to our major objective when, all of a sudden, we saw figures in the distance. Surely, another party could not have come to this same never-visited mountain group? My mind flitted through various unlikely possibilities. We had seen no-one for about 10 days – sure enough the obvious answer was the right one – Roy and Robert had followed our tracks over the col, having endured even worse weather than we in the preceding week. Full of enthusiasm they planned an ascent that same night, but decided not to accompany us, so we set off as planned.

The first part of our route followed excellent snow-ice in an avalanche couloir. All seemed to be going well till we met a vast bergschrund, the other side of which formed an overhanging ice wall at least 60ft high. The crevasse was big enough to park a dozen lorries in. Fortunately, we were able to outflank it by a long descending traverse, only to encounter more of the same above. The next lorry park, however, provided a comfortable ice grotto with a fine icicle curtain and a jumble of blocks enabling us to pass onto the upper slopes of the approach glacier. Finally, after about four or five hours of climbing we were at the foot of the face.

Initial apprehension, faced with a steepish ice gully from an ice-axe belay in the deep soft snow of the upper glacier, gave way to steady progress as we found excellent belays on the rock rib and the lower ice pitches were replaced by snow at a forgiving angle. Though we rose steadily, as on many an Alpine route, the pinnacles far above seemed never to get closer. Finally, after about 16 rope lengths we debouched onto a ridge and a dramatic window onto the peaks to the south-east. Thereafter, we were presented with more mixed climbing, but by weaving between buttresses, never encountered anything more than Scottish Grade III. We approached a fore-summit that had to be bypassed by a traverse on steep snow, then more mixed ground, rock flakes and short steep icy sections as the bright weather of the morning gave way to thin layers of cloud.

About noon we reached a little rock shelf below the summit. Two rock pinnacles, about 25ft high, rather like Tryfan's Adam and Eve, constituted the highest point, and necessitated taking it in turns to stand on top, belayed from below. This was the only pitch where we had to remove our crampons. All this time we had looked forward to a view out to sea, and especially to a neighbouring peak which we suspected was the point marked 2600m on the map, and presumably the highest in the group. But tantalisingly, the wreaths of mist rose continuously from below preventing us from getting more than the briefest of glimpses. After about half-

an-hour we gave up and began the descent. The summit ridge had to be pitched and provided almost as much route-finding perplexity in descent as it had on the way up. It was nearly 5pm by the time we had descended the nine pitches that took us to the point where we had to leave the ridge. Tiring by now, after being on the go for 20 hours, we stopped for a brew. Dave wrapped himself in his duvet, but I found that, even with all my layers on, I was far too cold to sleep. Soon we continued the descent, laboriously kicking down pitch after pitch. It was not really steep enough to abseil, in any case we didn't have enough gear for that option and the rocks of the rib would probably have caused a lot of rope jams. It was interesting to observe, as though in another person, the extraordinary contortions the mind went through to try and stay awake, memory, speculation, longing. Bed, far more than food or drink, was what I craved.

By perhaps three in the morning we had descended the 16 pitches of the face. Only the last involved an abseil, as I decided to entrust myself to a piece of ice that seemed well adhered to the base of the rocks. Then there was a tortured, and doubtless unsafe, descent of the glacier – moving together around those huge crevasses while the exhausted mind made feeble attempts to keep the rope coils in order and provide a semblance of mutual protection. From the avalanche couloir we gave up with the ropes and each painfully front-pointed down. From time to time, at an easing of the angle, I would face outwards or sideways, then feeling too insecure in both mind and body, would be forced to face in again. Somehow, the endless passed, we reached flattish ground and found that Roy and Robert had very kindly left us a bottle of drink by our ski-sticks. Enveloped in thin cloud we traced our way back, mesmerised by the strange sastrugi and barely able to detect up from down on this gentle glacier. We were back at the tents by about 8am after nearly 36 hours of continuous climbing.

After recovering and waiting out several cold, wet days we were fortunate to get fine weather for two hard and long days of skiing back to the air drop point. The Salvationists had completed an excellent tour and climbed about a dozen hills, but the A-team had been very unlucky with the weather and had had to restrict themselves to skiing over snowy domes. A final couple of days were spent enjoying some fine Arctic sun, eating copiously and feeling relieved that we would never have to ski the ice cap.

IAIN SMART REPORTS: In 1999 and 2000 John Hay and I made boat journeys in East Greenland to the area north of Mestersvig. For both journeys we had the use of an Avon inflatable with a hard keel driven by a 40hp engine which allowed us to get up on the plane and proceed fully loaded at speeds of up to 20mph with food for two weeks, fuel for 250 miles and a spare 15hp motor. Both journeys were made during the second part of August when the mosquitoes had gone and the autumn colours were in full splendour.

The plan for the 1999 expedition was to travel south down the coast of Liverpool Land to Ittoqiarmiut, the Inuit capital of North-east Greenland. The distance is about 150 miles. In good conditions it would take three days in bad conditions it cannot be done. From Mestersvig the first part of this journey crosses open bays 10 miles across with laid-back mountains. After 50 miles the north end of Liverpool Land is reached. The coast here is exuberantly indented with bays and narrow fiords which cradle glaciers at their heads. The mountains are rocky, steep and

serrated and descend to the sea. (See Slesser's article in *SMCJ,* 2001,192, xxxvii, 731-735).

If the conditions were right we would climb what we could *en passant.* The greater part of the proposed journey was exposed to the open coast with its stream of moving ice. Most years this coast is blocked by heavy pack and even landfast ice from the previous winter and impossible for navigation. Some years the ice is open and ornamental and opens up access to some remote, little-visited country and if you are caught by a sudden return of the pack you can always find your way eastwards on foot to the airfield at Constable Point or Ittoqiarmiut. It is essentially an opportunistic journey: if the conditions are right then go for it, if not then best not try; it could be a trying experience. 1999 turned out to be a bad ice year not only along the outer coast but also in the inner fiords; Kong Oscar's Fiord, for example, was plentifully supplied with ice. We could see most of the route as we flew in and it didn't look good.

To give the ice time to go out we decided to go north from Mestersvig where the ice was lighter and to re-explore Alpe Fjord, the site of the memorable 1958 expedition. We camped for the first night in the solitude of the second Menander's Island 10 miles from the airfield. That morning we had left Iceland and the night before Glasgow and now we sipped our goodnight dram of Lagavuillin below the jagged Stauning Alps with the midnight glow over Ella Island and the immensity of the open fiord and the distant skyline of Traill Island at our backs. It is good to be lucky but doubly fortunate to actually know you are lucky and able to extract a double dose of the aesthetic content of one's surroundings.

The next morning we went to the head of Alpe Fiord. It took us a few hours to get there with our powerful rig. In 1958 the journey had taken many days to relay the eight of us in a heavy 10ft wooden pram dinghy driven at walking speed by a 5hp British Seagull outboard. The head of Alpe Fjord is an impressive place. The immediate approach is guarded by the tongue of the conjoined Gully and Seftstrom Glaciers which extends across the fiord leaving a narrow navigable channel between its terminal ice cliffs and the steep screes of the opposite shore. The water in the channel is muddy and strewn with sub-surface boulder, dangerous for propellers.

Once through this hazard the head of the fiord is a magic place, steep and girt with mountains and glacier tongues. We tried to find the site of the base camp of the 1958 expedition but without success. Solifluction seemed to have altered the landscape. All we could find was a rusted Crawford's biscuit tin on a nearby hillside. We went up to the Seftstrom Glacier and sun-bathed for an hour as we viewed the derring-do peaks of 50 years ago. At the very head of the fjord we could see the jumbled end of the Sporre Glacier the route Malcolm and I had followed to cross the southern Staunings to Syd Kap almost 50 years ago. A feature of the extreme head of the fiord is a long stripe of snow high up on the mountain running for a mile or more across buttresses and gullys. It must represent a geological continuity of some kind, a broad terrace or ledge hopping from one mountain to the next.

We returned to the outer fiord, turned left into Forsblad Fiord and camped near its head then returned to the hunter's hut at Kap Petersen where we found a note from the Simpsons who had passed by a couple of days before on their way south. There was still a lot of ice around which did not bode good for the southern voyage. We crossed over to Arwidsson's Island – one of the bigger islands at the mouth of 'Royal Swedish Yacht Club Fiord' the clumsy name of the outer part of the Alpe Fiord system.

Two things of particular interest happened there. One day we watched an iceberg calve over a mile away. It was small as icebergs go and it was not a particular large piece that fell off. The fjord here was wide open and so exerted none of the throttling effect you get in confined waters. We watched with interest wondering if the wave would even reach us. The noise when it reached us was not particularly loud. Then to our dismay a few minutes later the wave arrived about a metre high. Only the bow of the boat was drawn up on the shingle. We couldn't do much about it and had to watch the heavy boat being tossed in the air and swamped. No damage was done as the boat was empty. This episode highlights one of the main dangers of navigation among icebergs. You are safe enough when you are out travelling as a decent boat will ride a smooth wave nae bother, but when the wave reaches the shore it is forced to dissipate its considerable energy in a second or two by running up the beach against gravity and finally bursting into turbulence. In enclosed waters even a small berg calving can send a wave several metres farther up the beach than you expect.

For safety a boat must be hauled well above the high tide mark unless in a small land-locked harbour with no bergs in it. Anchoring offshore is not a solution as you can never really get the boat anchored far enough out as noted in *SMCJ*, 1995, 186, 773. In any case, floating ice can snag a boat anchored offshore. Things are not so bad if there is a lot of pack ice around or even if other bergs lie between you and the one that's calving as they absorb much of the kinetic energy before it reaches you. The moral is: choose a landing in unconstricted water well away from bergs and haul the boat up on rollers, farther than you think you will need to, particularly if you are leaving it for any length of time.

While we are on the subject of icebergs it may be worth mentioning that when travelling in open water they provide shelter from the wind. As we all know, most of an iceberg is underwater like an ice cube in a glass of gin and tonic to use a familiar example. An iceberg is a floating hulk with an enormous underwater hull and a relatively small sail. They are therefore more subject to the grip of the dense sea than the thin air. When wind and tide move in opposite directions the greater grip of the sea pulls the iceberg through the wind. This configuration is intimidating but it at least provides a lea in the berg's wake where a small boat can shelter.

When both wind and tide are in the same direction the lea side is the bow-wave and there is less shelter. All in all, you are better not being out in conditions like that. The bergs we encountered north of Mestersvig were fairly sparsely scattered, and as they were old and had come a long distance, they had become beautifully sculptured over the years. Although some were big, with the above water part about the size of St Giles's Cathedral, they do not compare with some of the ones in inner Scoresby Sound. Many bergs in this part of the Arctic are pieces of glacier, maybe a kilometre or more square, that have floated off complete with crevasses. They are ancient wrinkled parts of the Inland Ice that have embarked on their last cruise. These crevassed plateau bergs are noted for building up internal tensions and then comprehensively splitting asunder. As their fragments collapse into the sea gigajoules of energy are released and generate waves of commensurate size. When they hit the shore enormous energy is dissipated. It is better not to be there. Nevertheless, if you are prudent and choose landings with care, travel among icebergs is a whole lot safer than driving up the A9 or along many a winding Highland road on a Saturday night. Sorry, I seem to have got distracted.

Meanwhile, back on Ardwidson's Island at the end of August 1999 we emptied

the water from the boat hauled it well up the shore where it should have been in the first place. We now had our camp on a little shelf well above the grasp of an enterprising wave. As we sat in the gloom of a sort of a twilight-of-the-Gods evening enjoying our goodnight dram of Lagavuillin five adolescent hares wandered into the camp. They were unsophisticated and unwordly. After inspecting us closely then scratching a bit they wandered off, skipping and hopping as if they lived in Disneyland when in reality they were off on a dinner date with a fox or gyrfalcon.

The weather continued in a windless mode. There was still a lot of ice around which did not bode good for the southern voyage. So we crossed the 20 miles of open fjord through widely scattered pack to the continent-sized Traill Island and explored for a bit. The weather changed to winter drizzle and cold. We sought refuge in a Sirius Hut. Then the weather turned into dramatic mode with layers of cloud and sunshine and banks of mist. We climbed up to the top of some cliffs and sat in the warm sunshine enjoying the vast landscape. We saw about a dozen ravens cavorting around in the air with a provocative gyrfalcon. Truly spectacular aerobatics, all the participants seemed to be enjoying it. On the way back John saw a lone figure! We eventually identified a tent near a hunter's hut at the head of the bay. We visited it the next day. Two delightful French scientists were there studying predator-prey relationships using state of the art radio-collars. They entertained us hospitably with good coffee and rich chocolates.

Finally, we crossed back to the mainland and pushed south. This was an empty gesture; there was no hope of going very far. We got just south of the Pictet Bjerg before the leads gave out. Honour was satisfied. Nevertheless, it was tempting...it might be better just a little farther on... Very sensibly we turned back. We camped on Archer's Island, a red basalt formation about a square mile in area, surrounded by loose pack. We enjoyed here a period of calm weather with dramatic cloudscapes, changing light and autumn colour; the midnight period was particularly haunting.

In 2000 we used the same boat but were indebted to Douglas Anderson for supplying the engines and petrol/oil mix. He and his family had spent the previous six weeks exploring northwards beyond Ella Island. In that year floe ice was practically absent. Our plan was to proceed northwards beyond Ella into the outer reaches of Kaiser Franz Joesef's Fiord and then turn north to reach Geolog Fiord where we had heard a rumour that a volcanic vent might exist. According to my informant it had been seen once from a distance. A line of geothermal activity does extend up the East Greenland coast so it was not an impossible sighting.

Once again we arrived at Mestersvig one midday towards the end of August and the same evening found ourselves camped on Menanders Island amid the usual, but still overwhelming, glory of a fine evening. Thereafter we proceeded north in generally fine weather reaching Maria Island on the next night and the foot of the Devil's Castle, an enormous ziggurat on the west side of the outer, northern arm of KFJ fiord We had a plan to climb it and tried to get into Leonora Bay to land at its foot. The bay, however, shallowed rapidly and it was difficult to get ashore through the mud, and when we did the ground was rough and disagreeable.

So we did a rethink. We were running out of fuel. We only had enough to get us back the 100 miles or so to Mestersvig, allowing enough spare for detours around ice. Geolog Fiord was out of our range. We decided to cross to Ymer's Island on

the east side and spend a few days exploring rather than travelling. Blomster Bay where we made our base has been described elsewhere – *SMCJ*. It is a good base for exploring some very textured country, We spent some happy days there. John carried out an inspection of the local wild life, especially the numerous musk oxen while I climbed the Chocolate Mountain and was rewarded with spectacular views. We then returned to Maria Island where we camped for a couple of nights while exploring the island. My main memories are of a sudden windstorm that flattened the tent, the discovery of a wartime German fuel dump with oil drums stamped with 'Deurtshe Wehrmacht' and 'Kriegsmarine', and a memorable evening of approaching night and a big crescent moon reflected in a shimmering loch.

We then crossed to Ella Island to the Sirius sledge patrol base. As we approached two men came from the base hut to meet us. We landed at the jetty and shook hands. They had no idea anyone was to the north of them. We had applied for permission late and our permit had not reached them. After a pause one asked tentatively: "Where is the rest of the expedition?"

A couple of old men arriving unexpectedly and unsupervised from the wild uninhabited north required some explanation. There was none beyond a sort of mild eccentricity on our part and a civilised tolerance on the part of the authorities in distant Nuuk. We had our faxed permission with us so bureaucracy was satisfied and we all relaxed. They offered us floor space in one of the huts and an invitation to join them for supper. We brought a bottle of good French wine we had kept for a special occasion. They had an even better bottle so it was quite a pleasant evening.

Dinner with good wine, good company and good conversation sitting by a window looking north over the Arctic sea towards a spectacular sunset is better than the anything an expensive restaurant in some millionaires' ghetto can provide. For that all you need is money: for dinner at Ella you need something more than money. The sledge patrol people were picturesque types. The C-in-C was half-Danish half-Japanese, his 2-in-C was a romantic who wore a pistol in a holster and had his hair tied behind. They had stopped a huge Russian icebreaker full of tourists some time in the summer in order to assert Greenlandic Authority by examining their papers. The icebreaker took a long time to realise that this little inflatable with two men aboard required them to stop and be inspected.

The next day we went to climb to the top of the island, the massive Bastion. It is a plateau girt with 4000ft cliffs, a long climb but with spectacular views as it stands at the confluence of five fiords. Dinner that night was a big party as another four of the sledge patrol had arrived in a big launch from the south. They were discussing plans for the coming winter. We had to head south. Nevertheless, we had two further days of good weather and ended up with another final night on Archer's Island – this time gloomier than the year before – the landscape was in a forbidding mode.

As PART of an Anglo-American expedition, Graham Little and Scott Muir, spent two weeks in the Kangikitsoq Fjord area of south-east Greenland (access via Aappilattoq).

Despite the unwelcome attention of millions of mosquitos and black fly, they made the first ascents of four peaks, including the 'inaccessible' Sgorr a' Ceo (2001m) at N6025 W4413.

They also made, a bold, but futile lightweight attempt on the huge South Buttress of Titan I (1736m). This peak, together with its higher neighbour Titan II (1811m), offers vast scope for high standard rock climbing on an array of 1000m high walls and buttresses.

BILL WALLACE REPORTS: A relatively new hut accommodating up to 12 now exists in the very attractive and scenic mountains north of Tasiilaq (formerly Angmagssalik) in East Greenland. The plan was to use this hut as a springboard for ski-touring at the Karale Glacier.

Included in our group of 13 were Dick Allen, John Hay, Iain Smart and Mike Taylor; also David and Mary-Lucy More (Edinburgh JMCS) and two Norwegian telemarking friends from Tromso.

Almost from the outset problems materialised. On arrival in Reykjavik our Icelandic agent advised that all our food which had been sent in advance via Copenhagen was still there. Fortunately, this turned out to be untrue and all but one carton was awaiting us at Kulusuk. At Reykjavik airport the following morning we were told that the plane was full and there was considerable excess baggage. All passengers were asked to leave behind some non-essentials. We left our skis – we had to have camping equipment.

As it happened, the weather in the mountains prevented helicopter flying for four days by which time our skis had arrived. The fifth day dawned clear and sunny and a French Trans-Greenland Kite Expedition was airlifted to its starting point with our lift promised for the afternoon. By that time the weather had again deteriorated. As there were now insufficient days remaining to follow even part of our original plans, re-appraisal resulted in our taking the scheduled helicopter to Tasiilaq and basing ourselves in the middle of Angmagssalik Island where we had seven days of excellent weather and ascended all the peaks within reach.

We then returned to the airstrip on Kulusuk Island where the weather again turned bad and for six days we waited, becoming increasingly frustrated, for a plane to fly us out to Iceland.

BILL WALLACE REPORTS: Because of the poor weather we experienced in the Tasiilaq region of Greenland in 2002, we (six of us) decided to return to the Roscoe Bjerg at 71° N in 2003 where good weather is more likely.

The party included Dick Allen, Peter Macdonald and myself. We assembled at Glasgow airport on April 25, stayed overnight in Reykjavik and flew on to Constable Point airstrip the following day. Access to the Roscoe Bjerg from Constable Point is by the helicopter based there. We flew to site three of our planned five camp sites, left a dump of food, fuel and whisky there and flew on to site one.

The manager at Constable Point had told us that prior to our arrival a 'Pitorak' (a warm gale force south wind) had been blowing which had firmed up the snow in the mountains and this, combined with two inches of new powder snow, gave ideal ski-ing conditions throughout our two-week stay. We occupied each camp site for two or three nights and ascended many peaks on ski, some new and others which we had ascended on previous expeditions. The highest peaks are 1300m-1400m and consequently, the glaciers are of manageable size.

Unlike the previous year, everything went according to plan. All members thoroughly enjoyed themselves and some are anxious to return in 2004.

South America.

ROB MILNE reports: New Year 2003 found me at Casa Piedre, the end of the second day of the approach walk for the Polish Glacier side of Aconcagua, Argentina. At 6869m (22,800ft) it is the highest point of the South American continent. Although we were enthusiastic to celebrate the New Year, the evening was windy and cool, so we celebrated the Ukrainian New Year during dinner (7pm local time), then the French New Year at 8pm local time. My climbing partner was Louise Trave-Massuyes from France who provided the appropriate champagne. By Scottish New Year we were settled in our tent for the night, but managed one last celebration.

The previous two days had been spent walking up the wide river valley, starting at Punta de Vacas. In general, the surrounding peaks were covered in scree and not interesting, but the river valley provided constant new views as it turned this way and that. The wind was ever present and we seemed to always be going uphill over an alluvial fan and then losing the height gain again.

On January 1, we crossed the wide river on mule back and enjoyed a leisurely walk to the base camp, Plaza Argentina at 4000m. We even found a great boulder for some climbing fun to break the walk. The Amara agency had transported all our gear on mule back to here and welcomed us with tea and cakes in their cook tent. We were well catered for at base camp, with steak most nights and even pizza cooked in an oven that the mules had carried up. Base camp was full of groups, some coming down happy, but most anxious about what lay above. We fitted in the latter category.

Our first carry to Camp 1 was more fun than work. We had our first exposure to the Penitents. This unusual snow pattern creates great fields of snow spikes. Since the sun is almost directly overhead, the sides of any small pinnacle get shaded and don't melt. The gaps between the small pinnacles then melt down, leaving spires as high as eight feet. They were great fun to weave between and across, for an hour. Another hour though and it was all getting to be like hard work. Luckily, the path was mostly on scree across a glacier. The final pull to Camp 1 was up a broad snowfield, proving a torturous introduction to 16,000ft. I'd like to say the view was great, but the way ahead was mostly scree at the head of a wide valley.

After another day of rest, it was time to finally move up to Camp 1. We needed the day of rest for the endless discussions of what gear to take and what to leave. How cold would it get? How much of the medical kit do we need? Will we really eat all the food our agency provided? Do we really need all those socks? Hours and hours of discussion packing and repacking filled the day. I barely had time to sharpen my crampons. Dulled from many Scottish mixed routes, they didn't seem to stick in hard glacial ice any more.

The final move to Camp 1 was fine. Although the packs were heavy, we were getting much fitter and more acclimatised and, so far the weather had been blue skies and virtually cloudless. But the wind never stopped and this put a big dent in my sunbathing time.

Settled in to Camp 1, summit fever started to grip us. The normal plan is to carry to Camp 2, followed by a rest day before moving up. Our local mountain guide and cook, Matias, thought we were strong enough to do a half carry and then move up quickly. Luckily, for us, his agency had other groups on the mountain with enough leftover food at the high camp that we didn't need to take more up. However, he always seemed to have another bundle of food for me to carry. I am

The West Face of Mount Gilbert in the Canadian Coast Mountains. The West Pillar climbed by Chris Cartwright and Simon Richardson takes the centre of the barrel-shaped buttress directly in line with the summit. Photo: Simon Richardson.





sure I carried up everything we actually ate! We were pleased that so far we had been fully healthy, with no headaches or eating problems. It seemed most groups were losing at least one person to altitude sickness. We just made sure to move very slowly and drink lots and lots. Unfortunately, the side effects of drinking a lot were not always welcome with the ever-present high winds.

It was a slow move to Camp 2. Although we were feeling acclimatised, walking at 18,000ft is always hard work. Louise, being much smaller couldn't carry much weight and the winds were around 50mph. Sometimes I could twist in such a way that the wind would give me a boost up the endless scree slopes. Needless to say, we were ready to crawl into our tent when we got to Camp 2 at 19,000ft.

Our original plan was to climb the Polish Glacier Direct. But this was an icy year and so far, no parties had done it. It seems that the organised groups only do it when it is mostly snow. This year there was a lot of bare and brittle ice. Like many groups, we easily gave in and agreed to do The Traverse.

The night at Camp 2 was dominated by the wind. It arrived like a freight train. You could hear it a minute before charging around the mountain, getting louder and louder until it slammed into the tent. The tent would shake for a couple of minutes and then all would become quiet. A few minutes later, we heard the next gust coming. We felt for sure that it was going to be too windy to go for the summit.

At 4am, Matias had not wakened us, so we assumed he agreed. At 5am, I could hear him shouting my name. I shone my torch at his tent to make contact and he screamed over the wind: "We go." The plans of a rest day to explore the base of the Polish Glacier disappeared as we started the rush to get ready.

Dawn had broken by the time we were ready to move and it was very cold. Our position was similar to sleeping on top of Kilimanjaro (highest mountain in Africa) and then climbing Ben Nevis (highest point in the UK) so that we get to the highest point in South America. But, all of this offset to 5km up into the atmosphere.

Slowly, we worked our way up the very boring path. The views were great and as we turned onto the north side we could see the full width of the Andes stretching north. The wind was a steady 30 to 40mph and although it was –10°C, we were comfortable. As always, the trick is to go slowly enough so you never get out of breath. Of course ,at 20,000ft, this can mean pretty slow.

At the ruined Independencia Hut, Louise dropped her pack. She was doing fine, but the pack was just too much. We cached some gear and I took what was left. The crux of the climb was next, the Windy Col. It is just a wide smooth col and an almost horizontal path. But the wind funnels up it and can be very strong. On Matias's previous trip, they had to turn back here, unable to cross in the wind. We were more fortunate, and although it was hard work, it was no worse than a windy day in the Cairngorms (but at 6000+ metres).

I felt good up to the lunch break at the base of the Cannaleta, the final broad scree gully to the summit. Twenty paces after we re-started, my legs became very tired. Time to cache more gear. Luckily, we could follow snow for most of the final climb, rather than the loose scree. There were three other groups ahead of us, not to mention the solo Japanese climber we passed as he was sleeping on the trail.

All of us arrived at the summit at the same time, breaking into a quick celebration. The views north and south were great and the usual photos seemed to take up the

Spear, 2500m, climbed in the summer of 2002, North Lemon Mountains, East Greenland. Photo: Geoff Cohen.

time quickly. It was 3pm and we had enough time to descend, but not much extra. It always seems strange that after a year of planning, the summit passes so quickly.

The descent to Camp 2 was fine, although we were all pretty tired. Dinner was pretty minimal, although we desperately needed to rehydrate. We had summited a day ahead of schedule and not used any contingency days, so I was ready to hang about and explore some. But like most trips, we bolted for the roadhead. The next day was spent descending with very heavy packs to Base Camp. I didn't mind, it was all downhill. Beer was waiting for us at base camp, followed by a superb steak dinner. Or was it from the slowest mule?

The normal return to the road takes two days, but Matias was keen to get back. So, we did the 30-mile walk in one 13-hour day, longer than the summit day. This is not recommended, especially as we had been accompanied by Matias's fiancée. She had little hiking experience, and found it a very hard introduction. Although a professional dancer, her legs weren't designed for this. Ah well, at least she found out what her future husband's job is like.

Celebrations, showers and a soak in the natural hot spring marked the end of my fourth Continental summit and the start of the plans for my fifth one.

Canada

Alistair Robertson Reports: Squamish on the west coast of Canada about 40 miles north of Vancouver is one of the world's finest granite rocking climbing areas. The main attraction is the Stawamus Chief- a granite monolith that rises 2000ft above the Howe Sound fjord. The most famous route is probably *The Grand Wall* which is an ultra-classic and one of the great long 'free' (there is a short A0 bolt ladder) climbs of North America. I had wanted to do this route for years, and finally, in August this year the opportunity arose to visit the area and, hopefully, realise this dream. My climbing partner for the week was Scott Rietsma, a friend from when I had lived in Boston a few years ago. Scott is an excellent climber but the arrival of fatherhood had slowed him down a bit the last 18 months and he was keen to climb some stone again.

We had arrived pretty late the night before and were both feeling pretty tired and jet lagged – the eight-hour time difference from Scotland takes a few days to get over. The weather, however, was perfect, blue skies and a nice breeze, so the desire to get on something reasonably substantial overcame any weariness we were feeling. We settled on one of Squamish's most famous face climbs on the Chief, *Cruel Shoes,* six pitches long with every pitch being British 5b or 5c and worth E3 overall. Scott led the first pitch, an immaculate 35m E2 5b layback crack with the crux near the top. It was just brilliant, this was why we had come here.

The next pitch was probably the crux and proved a real baptism of fire for me. Beware, my experience has discovered that North Americans are extremely good at climbing thin face routes and they have a tendency to feel pretty thin for the expected British grade. I managed to wobble my way up the steep slab and belayed to a very solid two-bolt anchor, you don't get those at home on the Dubh Loch. The route continued for another four pitches winding a logical, yet slightly cunning, path through the lower walls to the tree at the base of the *Split Pillar.* This 40m incredible corner-crack is one of the most famous pitches at Squamish and the start of the Grand Wall proper. It was tempting to continue but instead we decided

to call it a day and opted for three long 50m abseils back down to the sacks. We had climbed six long pitches and yet hadn't reached halfway up the face – what a crag.

The forecast for the next two days suggested the chance of a shower, then perfect weather for the rest of the week. The main objective of the trip for us both was the Grand Wall, but we were really keen to do it in good style and not have to bail out because of the weather. So, the next day we went to Murrin Park, about five miles south from Squamish and home to a selection of single pitch crags, the most famous being the Petrifying Wall – a 30m plum vertical crag with mainly sport climbs ranging from mild 5.11 to 5.13b+. We started off with the easiest sport route *Pleasant Pheasant,* 5.11a (F6b+) which gave exhilarating climbing on mainly big holds with the crux quite high. Next up was *No-Name Road,* 5.11b, which felt really stiff for the grade, but excellent. The highlight was the final four-foot roof at the top, a real stamina test. We then did the crag classic *Burning down the Couch,* 5.11d, which also felt pretty full on for the grade but is a real must-do. Harder routes such as *Flingus Cling* 5.12b also look brilliant, but by this point we were getting tired and after doing a 5.9 trad route called *The World's Toughest Milkman* we headed back to the Howe Sound Brew Pub where it was half-price fish-and-chips night.

Day three, and the boys were feeling a bit stiff after only two days cranking. As the weather forecast was still excellent for the rest of the week we decided to take a rest day, with an aim at attempting the Grand Wall the following day. We went to Vancouver and made the must-do trip to Mountain Equipment Co-op which is a gear freaks' paradise and very reasonably priced.

What amazes me is how they can sell British-made gear 20% cheaper than at home. My major purchase for the day was 5m of tape, out of which I made some basic home-made etriers, not bad for $5 or £2. We then drove back to Squamish and sorted our rack out for the next day, the Grand Wall beckoned. Dinner at the Howe Sound Brew Pub was becoming routine. Although re-marketing itself as the Outdoor Recreation Capital of Canada, Squamish is still very much a working town with little in the way of exciting nightlife (do not come here for all-night raves). However, the brew pub offers a range of in-house ales and a good selection of food. Do not miss out on the all-you-can-eat salmon buffet on Sunday nights – only $10CDN (about £4). There are other places, but we just ate at the Brew Pub every night as it was hard to beat.

Next morning at 6 am, the alarm goes off. We wanted to get an early start to avoid the heat and crowds. A hearty breakfast of pancakes liberally covered in maple sauce and a couple of mugs of strong coffee at the Mountain Burger House – Squamish's equivalent of Pete's Eats in Llanberis, and we headed off to the Chief. There were a couple of other cars in the car park but a brief conversation with the pair parked next to us revealed that they were off to do *The Angel's Crest* another of the Chief's long area classics – great, no competition. We racked up, stuffed one waterproof, two litres of water and a handful of energy bars into our small communal sack and headed off through the trees and boulders to the base of the route. The lower section of the Grand Wall is most commonly climbed by either the layback cracks of *Apron Strings* followed by *Merci Me* a run out 5.8 or *Cruel Shoes.* As we had done *Cruel Shoes* on Sunday we opted for the *Apron Strings/Merci Me* combination. We started climbing at 7.45am, not quite an Alpine

start but early enough. I was not completely over my jet lag so it didn't feel that early.

The first pitches went very smoothly – a couple of pitches of laybacking with some moderate crack climbing led to *Flake Ledge.* Above, run-out, but positive climbing on the slabby dykes of *Merci Me* led to an exposed belay and some large roofs. The next pitch had a tricky traverse right under these roofs before rising rightwards to the tree at the base of the *Split Pillar*, where *Cruel Shoes* comes in from the right. This pitch features three points of aid up an A0 bolt ladder and provided an opportunity to christen my home-made etriers. I had never done any aid climbing before, but years of frigging on sport routes served me well enough. Belayed beside the tree, I called to Scott to climb on up and was aware that the lower wall was now swarming with several parties. One pair, in particular, were really motoring and *simul* climbed the first four pitches – impressive. Scott methodically racked up for the next pitch, *The Split Pillar,* one of the real highlights of the climb. It is given a fairly low rating, 5.10b, but offers very sustained jamming or laybacking up an impeccable corner crack for 40m widening from thin hands through to wide fist.

My advice is take lots of cams with a double set being advisable. Scott had a hard time on the lead, neither of us were used to anything quite so long and sustained, but he managed to persevere and after some good old-fashioned thrutching up the final chimney he flopped onto the spacious ledge pumped but satisfied. I followed and amazed myself by really enjoying it. At least I was on the blunt end of the rope. By the time I joined Scott at the ledge there were a couple of parties at the base of the pillar and another climbing the left side of the split pillar – a somewhat more challenging 5.12a version complete with a 5.10 off-width-Friend 5 territory, hmm!

We took time to have a drink and another energy bar before I geared up for the next mega classic pitch, *The Sword.* This pitch is also truly amazing, it starts off very wide (Camalot 4) then quickly narrows to finger-tips width through a bulge which provides the technical crux. Above, an incredibly exposed step left led to a hidden crack on the otherwise blank face. Stretching out onto a foothold on the wall I reached blindly into the crack to gratefully grab a good hold. Quickly, committing myself, I swung onto the face and threw a sling over a hollow spike. The climbing above was pretty straight-forward on good holds, but I had to take care with a few rattling spikes. The crack faded after 5m, and again I had to step back right into the main corner line. The walls are pretty blank but the thin corner-crack provides perfect protection and succumbed with a few strenuous layback moves after which I could gratefully grab the belay chain over a small roof. This stance is hanging and I decided to link the next pitch, a 15m A0 bolt ladder. It was time to test those etriers again. Everything went very smoothly but it was time consuming and there was mutual relief when I reached the belay above.

By this time, there were two other parties right behind us and Scott wasted no time in seconding the long pitch. We were both now really psyched, and in particular, I was talking incoherent but enthusiastic gibberish. The next pitch is possibly the physical crux, a 5.11a offwidth/undercling crack, *Perry's Lieback*, that is, thankfully, bolted. There is an unusual rest near the top where you can lean backwards and brace your head against a large flake. Looking down at this point it is a sheer 250m to the valley floor.

By now we were on a fairly spacious ledge system and the sun had started to hit the face. Fortunately, the regular afternoon breeze had picked up so conditions were still ideal. I climbed a rather wandery 5.10a pitch that was mainly bolt protected then it was Scott's turn for the 10th and final pitch to *Bellygood Ledge,* a ledge system that runs across the face and provides an alternative to the notorious 5.1a *Roman Chimneys.* This last pitch provided more strenuous, exposed underclinging and laybacking and was a fitting end to what had been a fantastic climb. One of the parties had caught us up and we enthused about the route together at the top. They had climbed the original before and this time had done the much harder left side of the split pillar then higher up climbed a 5.12c variation with a couple of rests before French-freeing back into the original line at *Perry's Lieback.* These guys were no slouches! It is possible to free the whole climb at 5.13b, but I doubt it is more enjoyable than the original.

We kept the rope on for the 150m traverse along *Bellygood Ledge,* which is only a couple of feet wide at one point. In reality, it is little more than a walk, but there is a 330m drop, so a slip is not to be advised. We then stumbled back down the tourist trail and back to the car, the climb having taken eight hours. Not the fastest time but we were in no rush. It was a climb we wanted to savour and enjoy to the full. That night we treated ourselves to a (relatively) expensive meal and a few single malts to round off a perfect day and the highlight of my summer.

We woke up the next day to more perfect weather, although the forecast said it was going to get hot, up to 28°C, so an early start was required if we were going to get much done. I have never been an avid slab climber, but once in a while, have the urge to go out and purge the system. The Apron Slabs at Squamish seemed like a suitable destination – up to six or seven pitches long with some notable runouts between spaced bolts.

Routes such as *Dancing in the Light* 5.11b, *Unfinished Symphony* 5.11b and *White Lightning* 5.10c all have quite fearful reputations. There are numerous easier less scary classics too such as *Snake* 5.9 and *Diedre* 5.8, but expect to get up very early, or very late, if you want to avoid the queues. Being ambitious we thought we would see what one of the bolder routes was like – big mistake. I started up the first pitch and was about 25m up when, having clipped only one bolt, found myself sliding more than 11m back down again. Fortunately, I escaped with only some grazes to my ankle and hand – it could have been a lot worse. Scott declined when I offered him the lead and so we retreated with our tails firmly between our legs. Scott attempted a better protected 50m sport climb but it was equally thin, if not worse, and we eventually abseiled off having climbed little more than a rope-length between us. By now, the sun had moved around onto the face making friction climbing even more desperate. Today was not going to plan and proving a bit of a let down after the day before. We opted to go in search of some steep rock with holds and preferably in the shade. The Chek, which is halfway between Squamish and Whistler and only 25 minutes away fitted the bill. The short drive up was amazing with stunning views over to the glacier-ridden mountains of the Tantalus range. The rock at the Chek is also granite but much, much steeper than at the Chief and is home to some of the hardest sport climbs in Canada. We spent the late afternoon clipping bolts and although the routes were fun we both really wanted to be climbing somewhere else – the Chief.

We only had two days' climbing left, so the plan was to spend one day climbing

some of the area's best cracks then do another long classic multi-pitch adventure on the Saturday to finish.

Top of the list of cracks for both of us was *Exasperator* 5.10c which is a stunning two-pitch finger crack and is a must-do for all E2+ leaders. It is just perfect. After this we thought we would try *Ghostdancing* a three pitch 5.11 face climb close to the base of the Grand Wall and a five-minute walk from *Exasperator.* I volunteered to lead the first pitch which at 5.11b was the hardest trad pitch either of us had tried so far this trip. I was pretty nervous but managed to solve the complexities of the initial overlap to become established on a nice footledge where I could suss out the rest of the pitch – a tricky rightward traverse across a steep slab with good footholds but no real handholds into yet another layback flake with a rather pokey section round a blankish bulge. It all went pretty well and I completed it in good style which was a real confidence booster. The next pitch was also rated 5.11b but was less steep and looked really thin. Also, rather ominously, there was a karabiner hanging off a bolt about halfway up, not a good sign, but at least it was Scott's lead.

It started off innocuously enough on really positive little flakes then the holds ran out just where it steepened above a slight recess and the bolt with krab beckoned. Scott had a brave attempt but just couldn't do it free and eventually decided he had had enough. My turn, I was feeling confident after the first pitch and gave it a real good go but it was desperate on tiny flakes and crystals for footholds. Needless to say I also failed miserably – these locals really know how to climb low angle face/steep slabs!

The sun had by this time come round onto the face and the temperature was really soaring so we just abseiled off. All wasn't lost, though, as we had spotted a very appealing rattley 5.10 finger crack called *Seasoned in the Sun* just down the path. It was only one pitch, but long, and pretty sustained with the hardest section at the top, another must-do area classic. It didn't disappoint.

After *Seasoned,* we were both feeling a bit tired and had a siesta for a couple of hours lazing around in the sun. I was still keen for a final challenging climb to round off the day but preferably one which had holds and was in the shade. We headed back off to Murrin Park where most of the cliffs are east or south-east facing and so get the sun in the morning and early afternoon but by late afternoon/ early evening are nice and cool. In order to maintain the day's theme of classic cracks, we headed over to Nightmare Rock which has a bunch of tough single-pitch climbs all rated 5.10-5.12 and all guaranteed to generate lactic acid overdoses. I led one of the easiest climbs there called *Perspective,* 5.11a, which was brilliant. It is about 30m long with strenuous hard climbing all the way interspersed with a couple of good bridging rests and perfect protection. Although not technically that hard it was a real pumper and felt E4 5c just for effort. I arrived at the belay with heavy arms but thoroughly psyched. The view from the top over to the Chief in the fading evening light was amazing and rounded off a perfect end to another great day's climbing.

Saturday morning, our last day's climbing, and *The Angel's Crest* was our final objective. This is one of the longest climbs on the Chief and is a 600m adventure that has five mild 5.10 pitches, a bunch of easier climbing, a little bit of scrambling, an exposed knife-edge arête and a 10m abseil off a gendarme. All in all, it feels a real Alpine experience. A quick stop at Tim Horton's for coffee and doughnuts

then we drove the couple of miles to the trailhead. A steep 20-minute hike led up to the base of the climb. We kitted up then soloed the first pitch – scrambling with a short technical section over a bulge using a convenient tree root. The next pitch was the start of the proper technical climbing and more conventional techniques were employed. The third pitch is called *The Angel's Flake* and is one of the best pitches of the route – a beautiful diagonal 5.10 layback flake across a steep wall with the crux at the top (again). The efforts of the previous six days had started to take their toll and it felt a lot stiffer than it should have done, but really fun nonetheless. There then followed a couple of other 5.10-ish pitches and we caught sight of a couple of parties above us. Some people were also coming up behind us so it was turning out to be very Alpine-like. After a couple of short forest walks (I kid you not) interspersed with some more technical climbing we found ourselves at the start of the knife-edge arête. The climbing was no more than Hard Severe but the position spectacular and the exposure really wild. The ridge led to a little gendarme where a short abseil off followed by a short scramble led to the base of the final steep headwall. Three final steep pitches of sustained VS-E1 jamming led quickly to the top.

We were both pretty tired when we topped out, but elated, it was a fitting end to a superb week's climbing. The views from the summit of the Chief were incredible, down the Howe sound to the south and up north to the snow-capped Tantalus and Garibaldi mountains. It was also very busy with plenty of hikers enjoying the vistas. A quick stumble back down to the car in the late afternoon heat then it was time to hit the pub for a few final ales, another all-you-can eat barbeque, and to reflect on what had been a really excellent trip.

SIMON RICHARDSON REPORTS: Mount Gilbert (10,225ft) is an impressive granite peak that lies 90km south-east of Mount Waddington deep in Canada's Coast Mountains. Although it is the closest 10,000ft peak to Vancouver it is one of the most difficult mountains to access in the range and is rarely climbed. In early August, Chris Cartwright and I flew in by helicopter from Bluff Lake across the Homathko Icefield to the wide glacial bowl below Gilbert's west face. The West Pillar rose directly above our tents – it looked totally compelling – we just had to climb it.

Unfortunately, the weather had other ideas. It snowed for the next three days, dropping a couple of feet of snow. When it stopped we climbed the glacier shelf on the north-west face of Gilbert, and made the first ascent of a fine 8900ft rock peak via the East Ridge. It was bitterly cold and the rock on Gilbert showed little sign of clearing. The weather got bad again, but fortunately, this time it rained which cleared the rock of snow. Finally, after two more days waiting in the tent, the sun came out, so we packed our sacks with three days food and set off for the pillar.

Gilbert's 2500ft-high West Pillar is guarded by a large bergschrund system. Access is further complicated by a hanging serac and ice couloir that regularly spew rock and ice down the approach slopes. The whole approach would be unjustifiable if it were not for the Little Tower, a steep rocky crest that cuts into the left side of the serac and shields a narrow segment of the approach slopes from ice fall.

From a little way up the crest of the tower it is possible to cross the couloir to reach the West Pillar. The base of the pillar is undercut by a series of roofs, but

these are breached on their right side by the Beak, a prominent prow with a corner running up its left side. The only weakness up the smooth central section of the pillar is the Great Flake, a hanging, left-facing flake system that leads through seemingly blank walls to the exit chimneys and summit snow slope.

We crossed the bergschrund at dawn, climbed the Little Tower and traversed across the couloir to reach the foot of the pillar. We expected the climbing to get very technical at this point, but the rock was superbly featured and gave a brilliant series of 5a and 5b pitches. All those days in the tent, snatching views of the face with the binoculars and working out the easiest way to go, had paid off.

The line slotted together perfectly and that evening we found ourselves racing towards the exit chimneys as a big storm approached. Fortunately, this fizzled out before it reached us, but we ran out of time and had a very uncomfortable bivvy in the chimneys. Next morning half-a-dozen more pitches took us to the top of a superb climb – perfect granite, all free and far easier than it had any right to be!

The Pennine Alps

COLWYN JONES REPORTS: SMC members Mark Litterick, Brian Shackleton, Colwyn Jones and Ann MacDonald assembled at a bustling Schipol Airport on Saturday, 20 April 2002, after early morning flights from Edinburgh and Glasgow. The connecting KLM flight to Geneva was on time, which is where they met the final member of the team, Colin Read from Keswick, arriving direct from Manchester. The following train journey, direct from the airport around Lake Geneva and up the Rhone valley, deposited them in Visp in time to catch an evening bus up the Saas Valley to Saas Grund. Proof that a co-ordinated transport policy can work.

After being repulsed by avalanche conditions the year before, Ann and Colwyn were planning a return to ski up the Weissmeis, but as the Hohsaas ski lifts had inconveniently closed for the season, everyone rose next morning to catch the first bus over to Saas Fee to access that all-important uplift. After the short walk through the car free village and last-minute shopping, the efficient lift system whisked them up through the crowds to the top of the Metro Alpin at a respectable 3454m. The cloud caused enough consternation at the bergschrund for a rope, but they soon skinned up the 573m via the Feejoch to bag the first 4000m peak of the trip, the Allalinhorn via the west-north-west ridge. Above the bergschrund the early cloud cleared and they all enjoyed fine views from the summit.

A splendid ski descent brought them to the short traverse of the Egginerjoch over to the Britanniahutte. This excellent, and busy, hut at 3030m was both the base and source of acclimatisation for the next two nights.

Sunday was taken up doing a training peak called the Flucthorn (3794m). This is a fine summit halfway up the Adlerpass on the same ridge as the Strahlhorn and they enjoyed another fine descent back down the Allalin Glacier to the junction with the Hohlaub Glacier before the snow got too soft. From there a short ascent back up to the hut ended a short and enjoyable day.

In the pre-dawn of the next morning, bathed in the eerie glow from LED headtorches, they followed quietly in the tracks of fellow guests back up the Allalin glacier. After dawn broke and halfway towards the pass, they displayed some independence from the crowds and branched off right between the Allalinhorn and the North Ridge of the target for the day, the Rimpfischorn (4199m). From the Allalinpass the approach was arduous contouring the entire length of the peak. Other teams abandoned their attempt that day, but perseverance paid off and the Rimpfischsattel, just below 4000m was finally reached.

Abandoning skis they romped up the well-protected west-south-west ridge to the foresummit and were soon exchanging places below the recently refurbished summit cross, posing for the obligatory photographs. Back at the skis the planned route down to Fluealp was abandoned in favour of the visually tempting direct descent of the Mellich Glacier by the side of the Vor Der Wand to Ottovan. Here, Brian assured them (although he later denied it!), they could call a taxi and get driven down to Tasch where they planned to spend the night.

The vision was realised and they enjoyed a splendid descent down untracked powder snow off the glacier into the Mellichbach Valley. Colwyn did his usual impersonation of a crevasse poodle when the group stopped for a comfort break, but moving with uncharacteristic speed promptly snapped back into his bindings. All too soon the snow ran out and they trudged cheerfully down the thawing valley to find that the village was closed. There was no phone to be found and no one to ask for directions. The village was literally closed for the winter. Walking down towards Tasch they discovered why. The road was blocked, not only by snow, but by some large and recent avalanches. However, by following a snowmobile track they made it to Tasch arriving at 8.45pm, where Mark negotiated a splendid chalet just in time for supper.

Next day started with a long lie and a late train up to Zermatt. The dependable Hotel Bahnhof had been booked and they squeezed into the typically crowded dormitories. Here, was another SMC member who had more palatial accommodation. John Bickerdike had just led a party along the High Level Route and had booked the luxury of a hotel room.

Next morning they were up early to catch the Klein Matterhorn lift up into the cloud. From the 3883m top station they had planned to attempt Castor but conditions dictated a more modest day and they skinned up the Briethorn (4184m) following a GPS bearing, achieving the summit just in front of the first guided party of the day. The cloud parted, but then closed in again and they skied back down to Furi where they, and everyone else, were forced to endure the attention seeking noise and chaos of a group of visiting French ski instructors. Abandoning the spectacle, they enjoyed a peaceful afternoon walk down to Zermatt.

The forecast was good for next morning and they caught the early train up to Gornergrat, with the workers, followed by the two vintage cable cars up to the Stockhorn. A short climb to the summit and a pleasant descent to the Stockhornpass preceded a traverse across the top of the Findel Glacier to pass between the Strahlchnubel and Adlerhorn. The steep ascent up the Adler Glacier to the Adlerpass confirmed the value of harschiesen, especially to those lacking this piece of gear. From the pass they ticked the Stralhorn (4190m) and skied down the splendid Allalin glacier and back to the Brittaniahutte to sunbathe for an hour before the snow started.

Low cloud and light snowfall on the final day dictated retreat from the hill so they skied down into what they thought would be a bustling ski area. However, as the resort had closed for the season the piste was deserted as they slowly skied back to Saas Fee for tea and cakes. A fine way to end a superb trip.

JOHN HIGHAM REPORTS: In the last two weeks of July and first week of August 2001, my son, Richard, my wife, Alison, and I joined the LSCC meet in Saas Grund. As we arrived a couple of days ahead of the main party and the sun was shining, Richard, Alison and I had an enjoyable training day climbing the Fletschhorn (NW Ridge PD).

As we finished and the rest of the party started arriving, including Jon Hutchison

and Chris Gilmore (both SMC) the rain and snow fell and I began to have nightmares that this was going to be a repeat of 2000. That year's holiday had started with a week of some of the worst weather I had seen in the Alps and ruined long-laid plans. This time was not as bad although a planned ascent soon after of the Grand Cornier with Chris and Richard degenerated into a deep snow slog terminated on the conveniently nearer and lower peak the Bouquetins as exhaustion took its toll. The weather stabilised soon after and Richard, Alison and I accompanied by Chris and Eve Gilmore and probably a 100 other people made an ascent of the Weismeiss via the SW ridge (PD) on a bitterly cold, but crystal clear day.

High pressure had now settled over the Alps and I was keen to take as much advantage of it as possible. Richard and I started the campaign with a traverse of the Nordend and Dufourspitz via the North Flank (AD). Instead of being rock, the latter was still plastered with snow and ice from the recent storms and provided an exciting ascent at about Scottish IV. It also meant no crowds. Chris had been unable to accompany us because of a persistent knee problem but joined us when Richard and I decided to do the Northern Nadelgrat (AD).

Kate Ross and Mary Lothian of the LSCC made up a second team on the day. We traversed the Nadelgrat from the north starting at the Durrenhorn and gaining the ridge via the Durrenjoch Couloir, a long day followed with no technical problems, but considerable exposure and commitment. As the two weeks of the LSCC meet came to an end, lots of peaks had been done and people began to go home or move to a different area. Jon and Chris decided that it was time for some hot rocking and headed for Locarno where they reported excellent rock and plenty of sun. Richard had time for one more route before he had to return separately to the UK so we headed for the Weisshorn, a mountain I had wanted to do for a long time. I had tried it in the debacle of 2000, tempted during a short spell of good weather, but turned back in the face of deep snow. The conditions were much better this time although there was more snow on the East Ridge (AD) than normal and Richard and I had an uneventful and fast ascent, but with no views as the cloud rolled in at midday.

The end of the holiday was fast approaching but the weather was still just holding and we had time for one more route before returning home and decided to move across to Chamonix for this. Alison had had enough of the big mountains and went for a tour while I teamed up with Kate Ross to tackle the Jardin Ridge (D–) and continue to the Aiguille Verte over the Grand Rocheuse. A very early start ensured it was still dark when we reached the bergschrund and we stumbled around for quite a while looking for a way up the seemingly impassable wall of ice. We found the narrowest point and in the absence of any ice tools and with some dim memories of the Sixties returning, we soon cut our way up the ice and continued quickly up the gully above. A difficult chimney, loose and overhanging, led us onto the ridge proper which although narrow and intimidating was not too difficult and provided exciting positions on icy rock or corniced snow arêtes.

We made good time to the Verte but the weather had deteriorated through the day and as the wind picked up, we decided it was time to make our way down the Whymper Couloir. The descent was slow and frightening as the abseiling on one rope took forever and occasional massive rockfalls down the opposite side of the couloir showed us this was not the best place to be in this warm weather.

Unfortunately, the light ran out just above the seracs that run across the base of the couloir and we could not find a way through. As it stayed warm, a relatively comfortable night was spent on some rocks at the edge of the couloir. Some free abseils over the seracs the next morning saw us safely down to join the others and to head back home.

New Zealand

Ross Hewitt reports: Diana Ross and myself spent five weeks climbing in New Zealand during November and December 2002.

On arrival we headed straight into the mountains with a friend, Evan Cameron, who has been working as a Registrar in Dunedin Hospital. During this trip we climbed Mt. Beatrice and Nazomi in an attempt to get fit.

Poor weather in the mountains forced us onto the crags and we travelled around the South Island sampling quality rock routes at Castle Rock, Long beach, Wanaka, Paynes Ford, Quantum Field, Elephant Rocks, Doctor's Point, Mihiwaki and Duntroon.

All of these venues offer contrasting climbing in very different, but beautiful, settings from the white sandy beaches of Dunedin to the lakes and snowcapped mountains at Wanaka. The two places that stand out in my mind most for cragging and bouldering are the limestone at Quantum Field and Paynes Ford.

For sports climbing, Paynes Ford offers limestone climbing similar to our favourite Spanish winter venues complete with flowstones, tufas and pockets. If you like it steep then visit Thug's wall. Need I say more.

The end of the trip promised good weather in the mountains for a few days and we made a dash into the Plateau Hut via the Haast Ridge. A lot of fresh snow and time constraint to get back to Christchurch influenced our decision to give Mount Cook's Zubriggen Ridge a miss and go for the Linda Glacier Route. Climbing Cook in near perfect weather made a great end to the trip despite the slog in deep snow.

Spain

Jason Currie reports: In July and August 2002, with Adam Liversedge, I visited the Picos de Europa of northern Spain, basing ourselves in the tourist village of Potes.

We climbed a number of routes including Maraya (TD+) and the Regil route (TD-) on the south face of the Torre de los Horcados Rojos, Pilar de Nazaret (TD+) on the Torre de las Coteras Rojas, Las Placas (ED) on the Pena Olvidada and a traverse of the classic Madejuno-Tiro Llago ridge (AD).

The culmination of our trip was an ascent of the Rabada-Navarro (ED-) on the 500m west face of El Naranjo de Bulnes on August 7.

Visits were also made to the excellent sport-climbing venues of Valdehuesa, La Pedrosa-Valverdin and the impressive gorge of the Hoces de Vegacervera – all to the south of the Picos proper and within an hour's drive of Leon.

Throughout the trip the weather was largely very good in marked contrast to the reputation the area has for frequent frontal troughs. This coupled with a noticeable lack of other climbers made for a great experience that can be heartily recommended.

Indian Himalaya

THE first ascent of Suitilla West (6373m) in the Kumaon Himalaya was made by Graham Little and Jim Lowther.

After an abortive attempt on the 2000m north-west face (stopped by very poor snow conditions), they climbed the peak via the 1100m south face in 22 hours of continuous climbing (15hrs up and 7hrs down from a high camp at 5270m).

The face was climbed mostly on ice by a fairly central line with some objective danger from stonefall and avalanches. The route was christened *Moonlight Express* and was repeated a few days later by an Indian Navy team using extensive fixed ropes.

REVIEWS

The Evidence Of Things Not Seen – A Mountaineers Tale:– W. H. Murray (Baton Wicks, 2002, hardback 325pp. 133 photos, ISBN1898573247). £20.

When the Journal editor offered me the opportunity of reviewing this book I wondered whether it could turn out to be a bit of a poisoned chalice. After all, the legendary W. H. Murray, Honorary President of the SMC at the time of his death in 1996, was not only an inspirational figure to many but was as distinguished a literary figure in the Scottish mountaineering realm as I was ever likely to see. Additionally, I'm rather sceptical about book reviews with their attempts to rationalise and categorise, efforts which often reveal more about the reviewer than they do about the book. By what presumption, and I ask the question of myself, do we sit in judgment of such a man? But, for me, Murray has always had a cloak of mystery about him and, sooner or later, I was going to have to read this book to try to understand the undercurrents that influenced the author of those post-war classics *Mountaineering in Scotland* and *Undiscovered Scotland.* If for no other reason, I would imagine that the cognoscenti will already have done the same. So I offer you no definitive or analytical approach but rather one of a sense of feeling which, I hope, is in keeping with the theme of the book.

Basically, this is Bill Murray's autobiography with the apparently strange title of *The Evidence of Things Not Seen.* This is, in fact, the title of chapter 22 in *Mountaineering in Scotland* (and is also included as an article in the *SMCJ* 23, 1946) but is not reproduced in this book, which seems odd given its crucial and pivotal significance to Murray. But perhaps he intended his readers to do a bit of homework for themselves. It concerns an incomparable night ascent of the Buachaille in December 1939, with Douglas Laidlaw, a moonlit night of utmost clarity. Murray describes the scene as…well, no, I cannot paraphrase it. You'll have to read it, let it whisper its message, or shrug off the references to Coleridge and Goethe as you decide.

W. H. would take his reader to the water and then leave it up to them whether or not they drank but suffice to say that, for him, the hills that night were big with the "truth made manifest". If trying to decipher his meaning sounds too much like hard work and if, for you, reading a book should be pure entertainment, then some of his writing may leave you struggling. But take his advice – "therefore and above all persist" – because he was well aware of the problems. Books, through all categories of literature, were a core part of his life from his earliest years. By his own admission the writings of Plato stretched his mind in his late teens but he persevered and they came to be as "heavily bracing as hill winds…they enlarged all concepts of life and purpose". Perhaps here was nourishing ground for an inbuilt tenaciousness, of a resoluteness of purpose. Persist. On the Buachaille "something in that night cried out to us, not low, nor faltering, but clear, true, urgent – that this was not all".

Here, unseen, despite the brilliance of the moonlight, was Bill Murray's evidence for his God. He is unequivocal, Providence was seen as a law of life

and, whatever fate held in store, there was no such thing as luck. Fighting in North Africa as an inexperienced subaltern in the Highland Light Infantry, Bill Murray first encountered the realities of battle in a suicidal mission over open ground, against massed German tanks at the Battle of the Cauldron in 1942. His battalion was decimated.

"One bomb landed just a yard to my right-hand side. It blew out a crater, but all stone and metal lifted close above my prone body. One golden rule in artillery attack is that no shell lands twice in the same spot ...therefore, get into a crater – the one safe place. I had tensed up my muscles to make the sideways move when I felt inwardly a sudden negative command: 'Stay put!' It came not from my own will or mind, which intended otherwise, yet while soundless, was so authoritative that I chose not to argue. I sank back in position. Just a few seconds later, another bomb came down exactly on that first crater."

Murray reflected on this episode for more than a year:

"My experience is that on rare occasions a human being may be open to direction from a power higher than his own. The direction is never over-riding of mind or will, but a simple impulse that one is free to ignore. I had chosen not to ignore. For want of another word, men often refer to such beneficent impulse as their guardian angel. Whatever the name given, I have no doubt of its reality."

William Hutchison Murray was just two years old when his father was killed in action at Gallipoli in the Dardanelles Campaign of 1915. Inevitably, a sense of deprivation came to him in his early teens and much had then to be learned alone, always the hard way, but he does not dwell upon these years. Perhaps here is an inkling as to the essence of the man. Mountains held no attraction for him until his attention was gripped by an overheard conversation about a traverse of An Teallach which inspired him to make a solo trip to the Cobbler and henceforth he was smitten. He joined the JMCS and, with Archie MacAlpine, who was to become his brother-in law, Bill Mackenzie, and Kenneth Dunn, formed an exceptional team which lifted Scottish mountaineering from the doldrums of the 1920s. It was a time when three of Scotland's finest glens – Affric, Cannich and Strathfarrar – had not been despoiled by dams and the West Highlands adulterated by a spreading coniferous monotony. Murray gives the background and captures the flavour of this bygone age with his customary flair. It fills one with envy for: "It was a golden age, and even felt like it at the time."

The section on pre-war climbing in Scotland, although brief, is highly informative, giving the background to those advances. The simple expedient of lengthening ropes from the 80 feet recommended by Raeburn for a party of three, and the use of waist belays, opened up alluring possibilities, allowing access onto the great walls, slabs and faces. Following the example of Colin Kirkus and others in England and Wales, who led long, unprotected run-outs on exposed faces, George Williams and Graham Macphee, both SMC members, climbed Route 1 on the Buachaille's Rannoch Wall. This demonstration of how nerve, control and balance could be more important than power-to-weight ratio and muscle size, cheered Murray who was tall

and sparsely built. Unlike most of the SMC old-guard, who thoroughly disapproved of these unjustifiable new routes, J. H. B. Bell, then editor of the SMC Journal, took Murray and friends under his wing and it is clear that Bell, with his visionary approach to Scottish climbing, was highly influential, making the various new climbing groups known to each other.

Similarly, with winter climbing. Douglas Scott, realising the limitations imposed by long-shafted axes in confined spaces, had a new short axe made for him by a Glasgow blacksmith. When Murray and Bill Mackenzie saw this new tool they realised that slaters' hammers, with the side claw removed, would be just the right weight and length, and, using nailed boots, their various routes culminated in a first winter ascent of Garrick's Shelf on Crowberry Ridge in 1937. A couple of years more of intense climbing activity and then world war swallowed everyone up. "We knew only that in the last five years Scottish climbing had been re-founded."

The discomforts of winter mountaineering were to stand Bill Murray in good stead, enabling him to stand the strains of basic army training with relative ease. He was less comfortable with the dull and noisy life in barracks, but was eventually, commissioned in December 1940, and posted to the Highland Light Infantry. The chapters describing his war years, in two sections *Fortunes of War* and *Incarceration* are gripping, and full of sage observation, as relevant now as it was then. It is well documented that Murray sought escape from the sordid realities of prison camp, inspired by the sight of the first snows on the soaring Gran Sasso, the highest spire of the Abruzzi mountains, by writing about his own mountains. The only available material on which to write was toilet paper and so he set to work. But this was more than writing. It was a gateway to living in the mind as he sought to extract the detail of his memories from their pigeonholes, learning to concentrate by the very necessity of detachment, a trait that became ingrained.

Murray witnessed the depravities of a concentration camp called Moosburg in Bavaria, spending two months there before being moved to Czechoslovakia, where the Gestapo discovered his scribbled manuscript. Here, for the first time, were men with faces like corpses, who had the ability to send shivers down his spine. This was genuine evil and the justification for war. In the end they let him go but the manuscript was gone. It is a measure of his strength of purpose that he started again, even coming to the conclusion that the destruction of the original draft was a blessing in disguise for, believing that he would never climb mountains again, he wrote with an honesty about beauty and delight, effort and fun, of truth only.

About that time, Murray met a fellow prisoner, Herbert Buck, a man of real moral strength, who introduced him to the study and practice of mystical religion and meditation, which became an integral part of his life thereafter, and he describes this encounter as the most important and far-reaching personal experience of the war. That second manuscript was to become, of course, Murray's first book, *Mountaineering in Scotland.* There are accounts, too, of the exploits of fellow Scottish mountaineers, Alistair Cram and Tommy Wedderburn, who, like many others, risked all in their courageous escape

attempts. "During this last year, I had not once thought of myself as imprisoned. I lived on mountains and had the freedom of them."

The next section of the book details Murray's post-war world. He took a decision, then, that would change the course of his life: to earn his living as a writer or to enter a monastery, or both. After a week's trial at a Benedictine Abbey, he rejected the monastic life, despite its attractions. A return to Scottish climbing and the highs and lows of the Alps are part of an attempt to shape his life. All this is followed by perhaps, the meat of the book, his accounts of his various Himalayan trips. Six chapters abridged from his 1950 Scottish Himalayan Expedition book are included. This was a trip to the Garhwal in northern India with Douglas Scott, Tom MacKinnon and Tom Weir and followed in the exploratory tradition of Tom Lonstaff, Eric Shipton and Bill Tilman. The Longstaff philosophy was one of always attempting to lose consciousness of self and the realisation that, should one do so, almost any part of the world is as good as another.

These were significant Himalayan trips – a 1951 Everest Reconnaissance Expedition and a 1953 trip to Api/Nampa in western Nepal with a clandestine entry into Tibet with John Tyson – and yet there occurred nothing to make a more lasting impression on his mind than the simple act of being given a small bunch of flowers by Matbir, a Dotial porter: "Again and again it recurs, accompanied by one or other of its witnessed opposites: Italian sentries at Tobruk staving in a prisoner's face with rifle butts ...from these I can turn to Matbir at Lampak and feel respect for man."

Throughout Murray's writings run the common threads of humanity and good sense. I can detect little of the so-called romanticism which is sometimes, often disparagingly, used to categorise his work. As he makes clear: "An author should not start writing in earnest until his feeling is aroused."

Murray can never be accused of writing without feeling. Some may call it romantic, I prefer to recognise it as honesty. After his return from the Himalaya, Bill Murray, turned his attention to full-time writing and enjoying the peace of Lochwood, his home by Loch Goil. He married Anne Clark whom he had met after a good day on the hills and became increasingly involved in conservation work, being a founder member, among many other bodies, of the John Muir Trust. He died before seeing his book published and he knew that it still needed much work. Anne, his wife, continued the editing and contributed all the poetry. Ken Wilson has contributed photo captions and various informative footnotes. There are several chapters and appendices towards the end of the book that may seem a bit out of place but it is a minor matter given the overall context.

I need not have worried, it has been a privilege to have reviewed this book for the Journal, for Bill Murray was an extraordinary man and one of a handful to have put his feelings on paper.

"The past was a good age to live in. I was lucky to view the world earlier when more was unspoiled, untouched. Looking back over a wide landscape, cloud shadows racing over the mountain, sun, wind. I know that I have known beauty."

Mike Jacob.

Escape From Lucania – An Epic Struggle For Survival:– David Roberts (Little Brown, ISBN 0 316724882).

What is the link between a Trans-Atlantic passenger liner and two of the world's greatest mountain photographers, and why should a well established writer like David Roberts want to write about it?

In 1897, His Royal Highness, Prince Luigi Amedo di Savoia, Duke of the Abruzzi, sailed across to North America and made the first ascent of Mount Saint Elias (18,008ft). Long thought to be the highest peak on that continent, it was subsequently overshadowed by McKinley (20,320ft) and Logan (19,550ft). From their summit, the Italians noted another major peak, which they named Lucania (17,147ft) after the ship on which they had sailed from Liverpool to New York.

Among the duke's companions on this and other notable expeditions was Vittorio Sella, whose magnificent photographs have inspired generations of mountain lovers. One such acolyte was the young Bradford Washburn. Graduating from Harvard in 1933, Washburn had developed an interest in aerial photography and a taste for climbing in the Far North, in a style described as "fast-and-light".

By 1937, remote Lucania remained the highest unclimbed peak on the continent, and with this objective Washburn put together a team of four, including fellow Harvard alumnus Bob Bates. With the help of bush pilot Bob Reeve, supplies were flown high onto a glacier, but plans went seriously awry when a change in the weather marooned the two climbers and their transport at the foot of the mountain. A few days later, Reeve managed to escape by the skin of his teeth in his empty plane, leaving the diminished party to climb their peak and walk 156 miles back to civilisation. Director of the Boston Museum of Science for 40 years, Washburn became a noted cartographer, photographer and leading authority on the mountains and glaciers of Alaska and the Yukon, while Bates, a teacher of English, went on to lead two American attempts on K2.

Apart from a few brief reports published at the time, the full details of this remarkable adventure have never been told. With the help of both protagonists, happily still hale and hearty in their Nineties, David Roberts sets the record straight with great enthusiasm. The author's own involvement in climbing in the Far North is extensive. *The Mountain of my Fear* (1968) remains a classic, describing his first ascent of the west face of Mt. Huntington (12,240ft) and he collaborated with Washburn on the superbly illustrated *Mount McKinley – The Conquest of Denali* (1991). In telling the story of Lucania, Roberts weaves in some of the climbing history of the main Alaska and Yukon peaks, along with a little biographical background of the personalities involved.

Over the years, British and English translation of European mountaineering literature has tended to focus on the Alps and the Himalayas and it is refreshing to be reminded that exciting things happened elsewhere in the world. Climbing and exploring the mountain ranges of the Far North of America presented its own unique problems and solutions. Developments in bush flying enabled climbers and their gear to be deposited on the glaciers at the foot of the mountains, doing away with very long and arduous approaches. Washburn also

Ross Hewitt climbing On Some Faraway Beach, Quantum Field, New Zealand. NZ 16 (F5+). Photo: Diana Ross.

Alastair Robertson on pitch 5 of Grand Wall, Squamish, Canada. Photo: (A. Robertson collection).









made use of reconnaissance flights to take aerial photographs which proved invaluable in the absence of accurate maps.

David Roberts's previous foray into mountaineering history, *True Summit: What Really Happened on the Legendary Ascent of Annapurna* (2000), was an unconvincing debunking of Maurice Herzog's seminal *Annapurna,* with more than a hint of sour grapes. In contrast, *Escape from Lucania* is a celebration of the people concerned and their achievements, and makes a much more uplifting read. The only hint of a cloud concerns bush pilot Bob Reeve. After one lucky escape he was clearly not prepared to risk his plane or his neck again, and made no attempt either to fly the other half of the team in, or bring Washburn and Bates back out.

Fortunately, neither climber seems to have expected anything different, and they went on to tackle the various difficulties that came their way with remarkable fortitude. Cutting gear down to an absolute minimum meant sharing just one sleeping bag, and inevitably supplies started to run out. Luckily, they kept hold of their revolver and a handful of ammunition and were able to bag a few squirrels and a rabbit for the pot. Swollen with summer meltwater, the rivers in the Far North become formidable barriers, but once again Lady Luck stayed on their side, enabling them to make the crucial crossing of the Donjek River.

Exciting right up to its nail-biting finish, the story of this adventure and the exploration of North America's highest mountains combined with a celebration of the long and remarkable lives of two of the continent's most active mountaineers makes for a great read.

David Broadhead.

The Classic Landforms of Skye:– D. Benn and C. Ballantyne, (The Geographic Association). £8.95.

As a mountaineer I have long been frustrated at being unable to obtain an account of the underlying geology of mountain areas which I could understand! Most geology books, even if they claimed to be written in a popular style, are to me like computer manuals – only accessible if you already understand what they are trying to teach you. I was very pleased therefore to come across the volume in the Geographical Society's series Classic Landforms (published in association with the British Geomorphological Research Group) of their book on the Misty Isle, which dispelled many of the clouds surrounding my knowledge of its staggering physical features.

This book has enthusiasm for its subject, an island which they say contains "some of the most spectacular scenery and varied geology in the British Isles". The Cuillin "form a mountain landscape unequalled anywhere in Britain" and "the buttresses and pinnacles of the Storr make an unforgettable impact."

This is not a general geology of Skye, instead it looks at specific landforms, among which are the most dramatic and gives a succinct and accessible account of the formation of each. In order to encourage the layman to get out and into this landscape a series of brief walks are attached to the end of each account of a specific landform. The Quirang and the Storr to the south are part of the most extensive landslide in Britain, which stretches 23km along the escarpment of

Ramtang in a sea of cloud from the North Col of Kanchenjunga with Makalu, Lhotse and Everest in the distance. Photo: Chris Comerie.

Louise Trave-Massuyes between the penitentes on the way to Camp 1, Aconcagua (6869m), Argentina. The Polish Glacier is visible in the upper left of the photograph. Photo: Rob Milne.

the Trotternish peninsula. After the retreat of the ice successive landslides, possibly triggered by earthquakes and the last some 6500 years ago, formed the present dramatic landscape. The Cuillin was formed by the retreat and re-advance of a glacier which stretched far beyond the present range, and resulted in the ice-polished slabs and smooth rocks of the Cuillin corries. But what of the shattered summits of the Cuillin? As the maximum height of the glacier was 800m, the summits remained proud of the ice, nunataks such as you can see presently on Iceland's glaciers. Repeated freezing and warming led to these shattering as we see them today.

As well as explaining things that had puzzled me, this book pointed out things I had never noticed before. The raised beaches at Braes, the huge moraine fields around Sligachan, the aolian (wind born) deposits at Storr causing a lush green meadow. It also dispelled some illusions. Like many, including those who reported that it was erupting in 1934, I thought Dun Caan on Raasay was an extinct volcano; apparently not. Despite that, this book shows that the geology of Skye is dramatic enough nevertheless. This is a book which will gladden the heart of all Skye folk with its praise for the island and delight all mountaineers with its explanation of the physical structure beneath the magic of Skye. My only reservation is that, even for such a well illustrated book, £8.95 is a tad pricey for 50-plus pages.

It can be obtained from The Geographic Association, 160 Solly Street, Sheffield S1 4BF.

Ian R. Mitchell.

Tigers of the Snow:– Jonathan Neale. (Little Brown, 338pp, £18.99, ISBN 0 316 85409 5).

Jonathan Neale is not a mountaineer. He has a Ph.D. in social history, spent part of his boyhood in India and speaks Nepali and a little Sherpa. Accordingly, his history of the progression of the (principally Sherpa) hill people of the Himalaya from 'coolies' to respected guide and entrepreneur status is not your average account of Himalayan epics. Nor does it make for comfortable reading – many reputations end up with a dent or two.

The author conducted interviews with surviving high-altitude Sherpas (including Ang Tensing who was on Everest in 1924 and Nanga Parbat in 1934) and with the relatives of dead Sherpas. This book gives the story of Himalayan 'conquest' from the point of view of the bearers of the White Man's burden; the men who, even in 1953, were expected to carry 65lb loads to Everest south col.

The main focus of the book is on the various German attempts on Nanga Parbat with their accompanying heavy loss of life. One of Neale's main themes is that Europeans in general and the Germans on Nanga Parbat in particular, did not understand two things – the psychology of their porters and high-altitude physiology. European attitudes to the indigenous people of the mountains were based on a mixture of paternalism and imperialism.

Those who went on expeditions as porters did so mainly for financial reasons. The pay was better than pulling a rickshaw in Darjeeling or carrying heavy loads over the passes to and from Tibet. A high-altitude porter allowed to keep his clothing and equipment at the end of an expedition could sell it for enough

money to buy a house. Their attitude to danger was accordingly somewhat different to those of their prestige-driven employers. One telling statistic is that between 1953 and 1983, 116 men from Solu and Khumbu died working in the mountains. Little wonder that Sherpas were unhappy at using campsites or routes previously swept by avalanche or stonefall.

Neale's account of the gradual development of Sherpa self-confidence and their increasing role in the organisation and management of expeditions is interesting. A critical role was played by the post-war French and Swiss expeditions which included professional Alpine guides. They treated the high-altitude Sherpas as fellow professionals who might need to learn a technique or two but were perfectly acceptable tent companions. The influence of Raymond Lambert on Tensing was particularly strong.

This is a complex and thought-provoking book, if not particularly very well written. Don't bother if you are looking for tales of conquest and glory, but as a study of men on mountains it is highly recommended. At £18.99 most libraries could be persuaded to buy it if you tell them it's a sociological study.

R. T. Richardson.

The Fall:– Simon Mawer. (Little Brown, London, 2003, ISBN 0-316-72524-2. £12.99).

"Climb if you will but remember that courage and strength are naught without prudence, and that a momentary negligence may destroy the happiness of a lifetime. Do nothing in haste; look well to each step; and from the beginning think what may be the end."

These words of Whymper quoted as part of the funeral of Jamie Matthewson by Rob Dewar speak, as this novel does, about life as much as climbing. And the characters of this sensitive and complex book find the advice as difficult to follow on the mountains as in their lives.

The intricate plot weaves the lives of Rob and Jamie, Jamie's father (a famous climber) their mothers and lovers into a satisfying tale of climbing adventure and sexual intrigue.

The story opens with Rob, now an art dealer hearing about Jamie's death in a fall from Great Wall on Cloggy while climbing solo. An E4 at over 50; was it accident or suicide? Childhood friends and then climbing partners, they had become estranged but Rob heads for Wales to be with Jamie's wife and his mother. Through flashbacks both in their lives and in the lives of their partners of Guy, Jamie's father and of their mothers, the reasons for the loss of contact are explored.

Mawer handles the intricacies of the relationships with skill. None of the characters is wholly likeable, each in his or her own way is selfish and the reader finds none with which to identify easily. The women apart from Jamie's mother, Meg are the more sympathetic and seem to have more grip on their lives than the climbers. The latter are driven by forces almost outside their control. Life is fatalistic and self centred. Climbing as a death wish and "a substitute for feeling" is a resonant theme, though when Rob abandons the sport he seems no more sensitive.

There are many falls in the book, both metaphoric and real. The title, of

course, invites one to think of the exit from Eden and perhaps there is a sense of a paradise lost in the wrong turns taken, the misery of the War, and the crippled relationships.

The climbing scenes are excellent and the evocation both of early days in Llanberis, Snowdon, and Gogarth, of Scottish ice climbs and the ascent of the Eiger ring true. What is absent is any exploration of the motivation of the protagonists. Sure, Jamie's father has been missing on Kanchengunga until, towards the end of the book, his body is found with consequences for the somewhat predictable denoument. But the characters seem to find little joy in the pursuit except perhaps during the exploration of a new sea cliff in Wales. Maybe that's where Mawer had his happiest experiences. The Eiger climb is well handled and dramatic, though I got the impression that the author was recycling others' accounts rather than drawing on personal experience. Another lack is any strong feeling of a climbing community. Jamie and Rob seem to be the only ones on the cliff or the mountain and there are few minor characters. Still, this is a work of fiction and there are no false steps in the climbing descriptions to distract from the story.

Mawer is already an accomplished novelist who explores serious themes.

So this is a good read and has a depth to it that much fiction set around mountaineering lacks, burying some big questions to lurk beneath the surface of this very readable novel.

Robin Shaw.

Scotland's Wild Land – what future?:– Edited by John Digney (Scottish Wild Land Group).

This slim publication celebrates the 20th anniversary of the founding of the Scottish Wild Land Group, whose aim is to raise public awareness of the threats posed to the wild character of Scotland's natural heritage. With brief essays, 10 contributors with diverse interests give their thoughts on some of the issues.

Martin Price, director of the Centre for Mountain Studies at Perth College, gives a highly personal view, based on his upbringing in London and his experiences in mountains around the world.

Nigel Hawkins, director of the John Muir Trust, explains how that organisation tries to apply the vision of John Muir, and its involvement in restoring damaged landscapes.

Alistair McIntosh, a Fellow of Edinburgh's Centre for Human Ecology, has something to say about the role of 'the fairies and all that', while Paul Johnson, head of Countryside Management with the National Trust for Scotland, outlines a more practical approach to the 75,000 hectares under his care. After setting out some objective indicators of wild land quality, he explains how the NTS, trying to learn from past mistakes, has developed the Unna Principles.

Nick Kempe, former president of the Mountaineering Council of Scotland, argues for the need to re-establish natural processes and Mark Wrightham, a National Strategy Officer with Scottish Natural Heritage, explains SNH policy.

With both feet firmly on the ground, *Angry Corrie* editor, Dave Hewitt, suggests leaving the guidebooks at home occasionally, and Alpine Club president, Alan Blackshaw, takes an international perspective on human rights and access freedoms.

An interview with John Love, SNH area officer for the Uists, Barra and St Kilda brings out some of the highlights of more than 30 years involvement in conservation, with some interesting comments on rock climbing on remote cliffs.

Finally, Alistair Cant, SWLG Steering Team Co-ordinator, examines progress on land reform in Scotland.

With all this packed into 34 pages of A4, along with a number of excellent colour photographs, this useful and interesting booklet stands out as one of the highlights of the International Year of The Mountain 2002.

Buy a copy by sending £5 (including p+p) to John Digney, SWLG, Creagmhor Lodge, Lochard Road, Aberfoyle, Stirling, FK8 3TD, or even better send £10 for the booklet plus membership of the Scottish Wild Land Group until December 2003. Highly recommended.

David Broadhead.

My Life – Eiger North Face, The Grandes Jorasses and Other Adventures:– Anderl Heckmair, Translated by Tim Carruthers, Foreword by Reinhold Messner, (Baton Wicks, hardback, 269pp. £17.99. ISBN 1-898-57355-7).

It was in the book *The White Spider* by Heinrich Harrer that I first became familiar with the name Anderl Heckmair. As one of the famous four that scaled the massive Eiger North Face in 1938, his name becoming thereafter immortalised in the annals of outstanding world mountaineering achievements, successes that go down in history as awe inspiring. Yet, although I acknowledged his role as the one person that led the way in the final hours of the first ascent through some desperate and dangerous ground to emerge alive on the summit, his presence seemed overshadowed by the powerful writing of the author.

It was not until we made the film documentary *Climbing for the Fatherland* on Channel Four and after having climbed the North Face of the Eiger for the film, that I realised just how fantastic Anderl's skills as a mountaineer, a technical climber on snow, rock and ice, his judgment and unbelievable route-finding skills really were. It was awe inspiring that he and his companions had such commitment and belief in their abilities, obviously built from years of prior training and experience. I knew he was coming for an interview for the documentary, which made me more nervous than the thought of climbing the route.

At the end of the Hinterstoiser traverse on his route on the North Face of the Eiger, I spoke with him by radio through Trudel his wife, who translated for us. He had arrived at Scheidegg as we had started climbing. I wasn't quite sure what to say and blurted an embarrassing: "That was an awesome and scary bit of route finding and climbing" or something to that effect, an awkward silence followed the translation, I felt a strong sense of calculation in his coming reply, yet a reserved silence as though he wished he was back in this magical place, where I now stood. "Get on with it young man, there are plenty of big holds up there!" came back. I knew what he had said before Trudel translated to English. His dry sense of humour was reassuring, I'm sure I'd heard someone else say that before! (like every time you're out with a Grand Old Master).

At Kleine Scheidegg, he sat straight, puffing on a small crème cigar, powerful looking and strong in presence, every wrinkle, of which there were few, on his

face was wrought deep and hard, undoubtedly still a handsome and attractive man. Trudel again sat beside him translating, but I could swear he understood and could speak more than he cared to. He relived parts of his life that were fascinating for the privileged few at that table. Unbelievably, he was still guiding mountains at 87 and now sitting in front of us in his 90s, he appeared calmly excited and at home once more beneath the North Face.

His relationship with the famous German actress, Leni Riefenstahl, led him to meet with the Fuhrer, Adolf Hitler. A man who would eventually use them all as German propaganda 'supermen' in his quest to win the war. His membership of the 'SS' (Germany's Elite) has been a cross to bear for his whole life, in some ways surpassing and hiding his achievements. We tend to think less of those that were associated with some of the most horrific acts on humanity, yet his book, *My Life,* gives an insight into this side of his life and tells a story of a man who like all of us, couldn't quell his desire to climb more and more. *My Life* translated by Tim Carruthers goes down in my library along side *The Great Days* by Walter Bonatti and *Total Alpinism* by Rene Desmaison as inspirational and an essential read in appreciating the talent and achievements that shaped mountaineering world-wide. For me another chapter had closed, another ambition fulfilled. I had climbed one of my childhood dreams and met and spoke with the man who had led the way so confidently so many years ago. The route is still no push over and it will never get any less serious or scary, my hat is forever off.

Scott Muir.

Himalayan Vignettes:– Kekoo Naoroji. (The Himalayan Club, 2003, 234pp, ISBN 81-88204-23-4. £35. UK Distributors, Art Books International. Tel: 02079 538290.

This book arrived from India with a healthy thump and with goodness knows how many stamps attached.

It also came with a penned inscription on the flyleaf: "For Charlie Orr, Ed. Scottish Mountaineering," so I guess that means it's mine! But I'll tell you about it anyway.

This is essentially a large format photo book for the coffee table. It is the photographic record of the author's early explorations in the Garhwal and Sikkim areas in the 1950s.

The visual content is backed up by a narrative summary of the Garhwal trek and the author's diaries kept during the Sikkim expedition, as well as a number of maps.

These ground breaking treks were made in the days before such exploration became the mass participation 'pay your money and we'll take you' game it is today, when now, you are more likely to meet somebody from Milngavie than you are a local.

Anyway, enough of this drum beating. Being the Fifties, the majority of the photographs are black and white, although there are also some colour plates of the Sikkim trip which was the later of the two, being undertaken in 1958.

This is a book which I'm sure would be appreciated by any Himalayan aficionado, although the price might be a bit off-putting for some. You could always get a look at mine I suppose.

Charlie Orr.

Ben Nevis:– Simon Richardson. (Scottish Mountaineering Trust, 2002, ISBN 0-907521738, £19.95).

This guidebook is quite clearly a labour of love. Having climbed on the Ben over a period of 34 years, I thought I knew the place pretty well, but to leaf through the pages of Simon Richardson's book is to see the mountain in a new light. Every obscure nook and cranny is drawn, described and graded with loving precision, (a number of unclimbed lines are revealed in the process). The diagrams, drawn by Mark Hudson, deserve special mention for their clarity and differentiation between winter and summer conditions. Although Ben Nevis takes up the bulk of the guide, a variety of venues are included, from neighbours Aonach Mor and Aonach Beag to more distant winter climbing venues like Creag Meaghaidh and Ben Alder.

Although it's traditional for guidebook reviewers to find fault in route gradings or star ratings, the very nature of winter climbing ensures a degree of natural variability where grade, and to a lesser degree, quality, are at the whim of the weather. It is apparent that winter grades have been reviewed and a number of earlier anomalies resolved. I, therefore, have no real quibble. The rock grades also seem to have stabilised although a number of enigmatic 'Scottish VS' routes lurk throughout the guide, providing the more adventurous climber with extra value. Although I understand the logic of introducing a 'four star' rating, this will further exacerbate the queuing with all the associated hazards that currently plagues the premiere routes. In contrast, some star-less routes do provide excellent climbing and will repay those who stray from the beaten path.

The historical sections and first ascent lists will make good reading on storm-lashed days in the CIC Hut. The illustrations are a mixed bag, ranging from the inspirational to the uninteresting (including a classic 'bum shot'). The format of the Guidebook is a welcome departure from the small, ever more chunky, traditional style but needs a fairly generous pocket to slip into. Only serious field use will test the rather thin pages' resilience to Scottish weather.

In conclusion, this is the best guide ever to Ben Nevis and Central Highlands. At £20 it sounds expensive, but with 250 new routes since the last edition it's worth every penny. It should, global warming permitting, become the bible for international pilgrims and an inspiration to a new generation of local activists. I may even be tempted to brave the queues and falling bodies and return to the crucible of Scottish winter climbing.

Graham E. Little.

North East Outcrops:– Neil Morrison, (Scottish Mountaineering Trust, 2003, ISBN 0-907-52174-6. £19.95).

This is the latest in the new SMC Guidebook series and follows hot on the heels of Simon Richardson's widely-acclaimed Ben Nevis guide. Not having explored the territory covered by this guide I was impressed to learn that in the area covering Aberdeen, the Moray and Banff sea cliffs, Deeside, Clova and the Angus quarries and sea cliffs, that there are more than 100 separate major venues with minor outcrops on top of that.

The quality of the maps and diagrams and the 16 colour plates in this

production is very high indeed, as I am sure is the detail and accuracy of the route descriptions it contains, compiled by a team of activists, all of whom could be considered specialists in their own given area. This is an excellent guide, both for those exploring the area for the first time and for the converted.

Everest – 50 Years On Top Of The World:– Mount Everest Foundation/George Band (Collins, 2003, 256pp, 300 colour/black and white plates, £20. ISBN 0-007-14748-1).

Published in association with the Royal Geographic Society, Alpine Club and the Everest Foundation, this is the official publication celebrating the 50th anniversary of the first ascent of Everest in 1953.

It puts the first successful ascent into context – detailing the adventures and deaths on the north face pre-World War II and the planning after the war that was nearly curtailed by a Swiss expedition in 1952.

Written by a member of the original Hunt team – George Band, who went on to climb the lower but much harder peak Kangchenjunga – the book contains details, photographs and material donated by team members and the RGS, much of which is previously unpublished.

The Villain – The Life of Don Whillans:– Jim Perrin, (Hutchison, January, 2004, hardback, 320pp, ISBN 0-0917-9438-2. £18.99).

This book hasn't even been published yet and nor has the Journal received a pre-publication copy for review. But hey – Don Whillans/Jim Perrin, I would be hard pushed to think up a more tantalising subject/author combination.

Anyone familiar with Perrin's writing will know that he will tell the proper story, cut through the layers of apocrypha and myth that build up around any iconic figure, and as importantly, tell it in a prose style that has placed him firmly at the forefront of mountaineering literature. You'll have to order yours; I'm just waiting for my review copy!

The Corbetts & Other Scottish Hills (Second Edition):– Rob Milne/Hamish Brown (Scottish Mountaineering Trust, 2002, hardback, 280pp and more than 200 colour plates. ISBN 0-907-52171-1. £18.95).

First published in 1990 as a companion volume to *The Munros*.

This new edition has been fully updated by both previous and new authors and is complemented throughout by new mapping and a large number of new photographs. The guidebook details routes up all 219 Corbetts and many other popular lower hills. Other hills include popular classics such as Criffel, Tinto, The Pentlands, The Eildons, Ochils, Ben Venue, Mount Blair, Bennachie, Stac Pollaidh and Suilven as well as a wide range of hills throughout the islands, from Lewis to Arran. An interactive PC CD-ROM to the Corbetts & Other Hills complements the book. Price £30.

Charlie Orr.

Also received

CICERONE continue apace with their guides and various manuals, all of which are of their usual high standard and excellently produced in full glossy technicolour. Among the titles received this year are:
Vanoise Ski Touring, by Paul Henderson.
Snowshoeing Mont Blanc and the Western Alps, by Hilary Sharp.
Alpine Ski Mountaineering, by Bill O'Connor.
The Isle Of Skye (A Walkers Guide), by Terry Marsh.
Via Ferratas of The Italian Dolomites, by John Smith and Graham Fletcher.

THE WEST HIGHLAND WAY

After overnighting at Achintee
I made speedy progress
taking long, powerful strides
along Glen Nevis
over the hill
and away from you.

From the top of the Devil's Staircase
I examined the long cleft of Glen Coe
all misty and wet, deep and mysterious
and for some reason thought of you.
The mobile didn't work.

Between Kingshouse and Inveroran
I heard my first geese of the year
this being late September
but couldn't see them.
Those lonely, poignant calls
reminded me of you again.

At Ba Bridge I heard a stag
roaring from high up on Clachlet.
The rut was coming on.
His hormones would be churning
his focus gathering.
I knew how he felt.

Looking through the trees
from the path south of Inverarnan
I saw Loch Lomond so beautiful
deep and reflective
so very dangerous to swim in
and thought: "How like her."

In Milngavie I had my picture taken
beside the sleek monolith
that marks the Way's end
a blond, granitic pillar
vertical, deep rooted, permanent
and wished I was home.

Hamish M. Brown.

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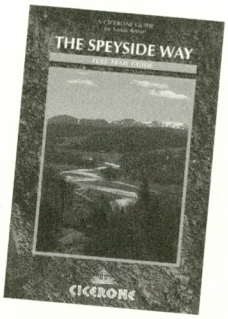

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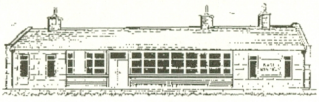

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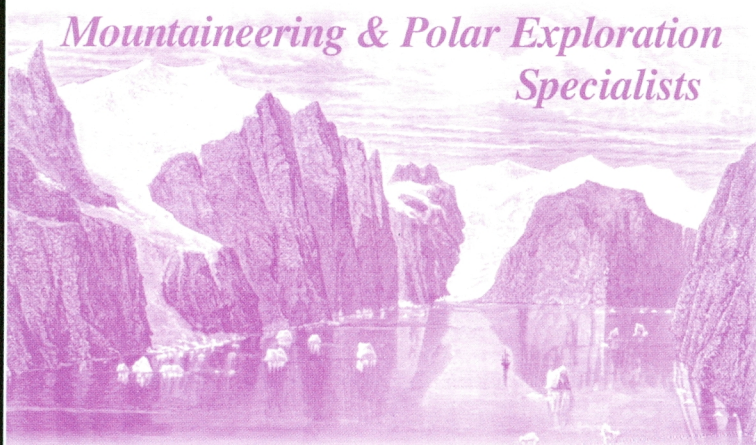

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