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 Entries must be of original, previously unpublished material.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 2004

The winner of this year's W. H. Murray literary Prize is Robin Campbell for his essay, *Climbing And Writing The Victorian Way*. It is usual form in the judging of this competition to remove the author's name from the article in order to minimise the possibility of personal bias creeping in to the judgment but, given Robin's well known penchant for things Victorian, the judges would have been hard-pushed to fail to ascribe authorship in this case. What I find amazing is, that even with this weighty handicap, Robin managed to win through.

Right from the opening lines: "Since my taste in literature is irredeemably lowbrow, I address my chosen topic as an imposter," one realises that satire is on the menu. However, this is a humorous, but at the same time, serious look at Scottish mountaineering writing. Robin introduces a number of historical vignettes from the pages of the Journal, ranging from Norman Collie's *Divine Mysteries of the Oromaniacal Quest* to an article by one Fraser Campbell "about bouldering. It proposed the formation of a 'Boulder Society' and was illustrated by minutely tedious drawings of boulders". One can't help but wonder if Binor Pellcambus has the recent plethora of bouldering guides in his sights here. The merits of this essay was summed up concisely by our President in his capacity as one of the judges: "An erudite and interesting analysis of writing styles – should be compulsory reading for all Journal contributors."

Other articles which came in for favourable comment from the judges – Peter Biggar, last year's winner was co-opted onto the panel and nailed his colours firmly to the mast with this comment on Julian Lines's *Skye Is The Limit*. "This has a freshness I like. In places almost a Robin Smith-like quality – a well unified

piece." Praise indeed.

In spite of Campbell's adage, given in his winning essay, that: "The poetic impulse is the product of a debilitating condition, in its effects resembling malaria, which seizes hold of its victims at moments of weakness and reduces them to gibbering wrecks." There was praise also for Hamish Brown's poem *Life's Day* as "having some wonderfully evocative lines". I very much liked the piece with its wonderful imagery as in "Gear rucksacked in a robber's rush" to mention but one. I have often thought that dissecting a poem line for line is a rather questionable pursuit so I will only ask that you cast aside any pre-conceived ideas you may have of the genre and read it – more than once – I'm sure you won't be disappointed, this particular poet is no Rodney Spelvin!

I would also like to make mention of Mike Jacob for his excellent short story *A Hard Rain*. This is a well structured piece that attempts to examine the motivations behind his protagonist's climbing and where it fits, or indeed fails to fit, into the lives of those around him.

Congratulations again to Robin Campbell, and to the other contributors and all the other 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.

Naismith's Rule Overhauled

By Dr W. G. Rees.

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Introduction:

For more than 100 years, estimates of the time taken to walk in hilly terrain have mostly been essentially based on Naismith's Rule (Naismith 1892). This, in its metricated form, states that the time is 12 minutes per horizontal kilometre, plus one minute for each six metres of height ascended, descents being ignored. (Naismith's original formulation, to which this is virtually identical, was three miles per hour, plus one hour per 2000ft. of ascent.) Various refinements have subsequently been proposed, as discussed by Carver and Fritz (2000), including allowances for fitness, fatigue, altitude, weather and ground conditions and so on.

However, most of these refinements have ignored the common experience that steep downhill slopes are *not* covered as quickly as the corresponding distance over level terrain. Thus Naismith's rule, and simple variants on it, tend to be more optimistic for steep downhill slopes relative to uphill slopes.

Langmuir (1984) adapted Naismith's rule by introducing a slope-dependent correction to recognise that while gentle downhill slopes can be covered more rapidly than the same distance over level ground, steeper downslopes will be slower. Langmuir's approach offers an improvement over the standard Naismith rule, although it can still be criticised on the grounds that it does not 'penalise' steep uphill slopes sufficiently. For example, consider an ascent of 200m. over a distance of one kilometre. The Langmuir formula, like Naismith's original rule, gives a time of 32 minutes regardless of whether the climb is a steady one at a slope of about 11°, or a short, steep pitch at 45° over a horizontal distance of 200m., followed by a level walk of 800m. This is certainly contrary to the author's experience, and probably to that of most other walkers.

A much more complicated procedure has been adopted by the Schweizer Wanderwege SAW (1999), in which the walking speed is calculated from the slope using an equation with 16 coefficients. This can certainly provide more realistic estimates of walking times, as indeed can the Langmuir formula, but neither of them is easy to use in practice. (The Swiss formula is, in fact, made available as a computer spreadsheet, which is convenient if one has a computer handy.) The aim of this paper is to introduce a simple but realistic formula.

Basis of the new method:

It is assumed that the walking speed v (measured with respect to the horizontal) is some function of the slope m, where the slope is defined as the height gain per unit horizontal distance. (For example, if one descends a height of 15m. over a horizontal distance of 100m., m = -0.15). It is, in fact, more convenient to model the *reciprocal* of the speed. What is needed is a simple function that recognises the fact that speed on both steep uphill slopes and steep downhill slopes will tend to be lower than on level ground, with an increasing time penalty for increasingly steep slopes. The simplest candidate is a quadratic function, in which $1/v = a + bm + cm^2$. In this equation, the term a just determines the (reciprocal of the) speed over level ground, while the term c represents the extent to which very

steep slopes are 'penalised'. If the slope m exceeds some critical value that is determined by c, the formula implies that it will be quicker to proceed by making zig-zags rather than along a direct route. This seems realistic. The term b introduces a difference between uphill and downhill slopes of the same steepness.

Testing the new method:

Data to test the new formula were collected by the author, usually accompanied by wife and dogs, over five walks in the English Lake District and five walks in Snowdonia. The author and his wife are moderately fit and in their early Forties (the dogs are fitter and younger), so the times ought to be roughly typical of average walkers. The walks ranged in length from five to 20km, and involved total height gains (defined in Naismith's sense, i.e. ignoring descents) from about 300m. to 1000m. All the walks were on reasonably well-defined paths, reasonably familiar to the walkers, although route-finding was occasionally an issue. The terrain ranged from tarmac roads to occasional straightforward scrambling (Jack's Rake on Pavey Ark, Striding Edge, and the Crib Goch ridge), although most was on typical unimproved mountain footpaths.

Data from the walks were collected using a GPS receiver, in a manner similar to that employed by Carver and Fritz (2000). The GPS receiver was set to record the walker's horizontal location (i.e. the Eastings and Northings values in the Ordnance Survey grid system) at one-minute intervals. The data were subsequently downloaded to a computer, and compared with a digital map of the area to determine the height. Analysis of these data then allowed the actual distances and times of ascent and descent to be calculated (stops for such purposes as refreshment, photography and so on were subtracted from the times).

The data were analysed mathematically to find the most suitable values of the coefficients a, b and c, and to test whether the formula did, in fact, represent an improvement compared with Naismith's rule and variations on it. Two interesting facts emerged from this analysis. Firstly, the new method was clearly *much* superior to Naismith-type rules for estimating the time. Secondly, the coefficient b could be ignored without any significant loss of accuracy in the method. The implication of this second fact is that it is simply the *steepness* of a slope, and not whether it is an ascent or descent, that is the major factor in determining how slowly it will be traversed.

Practical application of the new method:

The most accurate way to apply the new method involves measuring distances and heights from a map. It is only slightly more complicated than the procedure needed to implement the Naismith rule. The route of the walk is first divided into segments, in each of which the slope is (more or less) constant. (This can easily be established by looking at the spacing between the contours.) Thus, adjacent segments are separated by significant changes in slope. For each segment, the distance d and height gain h (which may be positive or negative) are measured from the map. If d and h are both measured in metres, the time for the segment is estimated as $(0.75d + 14.6h^2/d)$ seconds. By adding the results of this calculation for all the segments of the walk, the total time can be estimated.

There is a simpler, but less accurate, way of applying the new method. This only works if the start and end points of the walk are at the same height (for example, in the case of any walk that returns to its starting point), but it requires

only knowledge of the total distance D and the total ascent H defined in the Naismith sense, i.e. ignoring descents. It is based on some statistical assumptions about the manner in which the slope varies along the walk, which appear to be valid unless there is an exceptionally long walk in. If D is measured in kilometres and H in metres, the formula for the total time T (in minutes) becomes $T = 12.5D + 0.00153H^2/D$.

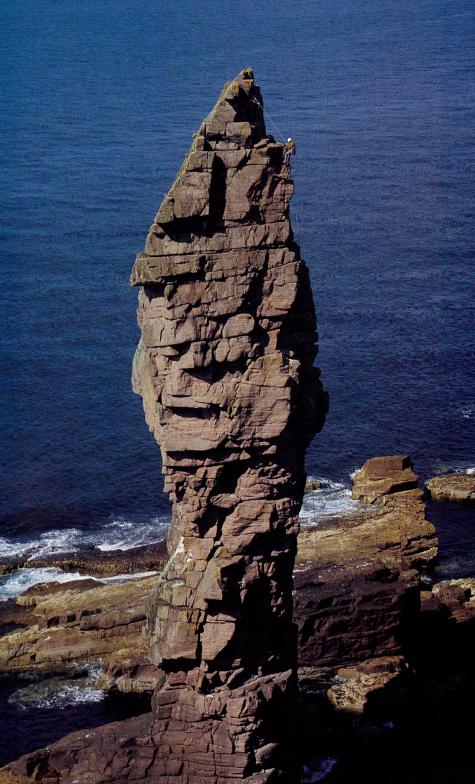
Examples:

First, I will give two examples of the calculation for single segments of a walk. The first is the descent from the summit of Glyder Fawr to the pass between it and Glyder Fach, in Snowdonia. The horizontal distance d is almost exactly one km and the height gain h is -72m. Naismith's rule would predict a time of 12 minutes for this walk. The calculation using the new formula is $0.75 \pm 1000 + 14.6 \pm (-72) \pm (-72)/1000$ seconds = 826 seconds or about 14 minutes. My own actual time for this walk is about 14 minutes. The second example is a steep section on the ascent of Glyder Fawr. This section has a horizontal distance d of about 400m. and a height gain h of 190m. Naismith's rule predicts a walking time of 36 minutes while the new formula predicts a time of 27 minutes. My own actual time is about 20 minutes, which is closer to the prediction of the new rule than to Naismith's rule, though perhaps not by much.

Secondly, I give examples of calculations for entire walks. The times are in minutes.

	Actual	Naismith	New	New (round trip rule)
Scafell ascent	148	228	132	
Scafell descent	133	89	129	
Scafell round trip	281	317	261	263
Grasmoor ascent	104	187	102	
Grasmoor descent	127	112	150	
Grasmoor round trip	231	299	252	243
Helvellyn ascent	128	209	125	
Helvellyn descent	161	141	169	
Helvellyn round trip	289	350	294	289
Langdale Pikes acsent	97	151	112	
Langdale Pikes descent	229	187	205	
Langdale round trip	326	338	317	276
Glyders ascent	106	168	168	
Glyders descent	99	63	112	
Glyders round trip	205	231	233	211
Cadair Idris ascent	123	179	118	
Cadair Idris descent	81	53	90	
Cadair Idris round trip	204	232	208	206
Tryfan ascent	134	144	121	
Tryfan descent	77	30	71	
Tryfan round trip	211	174	192	202
Snowdon ascent	134	205	135	
Snowdon descent	156	107	160	
Snowdon round trip	290	312	295	281

The Old Man of Stoer. Photo: Niall Ritchie.





The results show that Naismith's rule generally over-estimates the time of ascent by around 50%, and understimates the time of descent by about 30%. These errors partially cancel each other for round trips, so that Naismith's rule over-estimates by only about 10% in these cases. The new formula, on the other hand, seems to give much more realistic estimates of the times of both ascent and descent. For round trips, the simpler version of the new formula generally works well too. It only failed in the case of the Langdale Pikes walk, which had an unusually long walk in by comparison with the others.

Conclusions:

To summarise, the results of this analysis of a rather limited set of personal data suggest that Naismith's rule is fundamentally mistaken, and that it should be replaced by a rule such as the one proposed here that recognises the increasing importance of steeper slopes. Naismith's rule tends to over-estimate the time of ascent and underestimate the time of descent. The reason that Naismith's rule works as well as it does in practice is probably because it is mostly applied to walks in which the heights of the starting and ending points are not very different, but even so it can under-estimate the total time by up to about 50%. The new rule, proposed in this article, focuses on steepness rather than height gain *per se*, and, interestingly, does not differentiate between steep uphill and steep downhill slopes.

It should be emphasised that this proposed rule has been calibrated using my personal data, and only for a limited number of short-to-middling length walks. It may well be that the author is significantly more or (probably) less fit than the 'average' mountain walker, so the coefficients may need to be adjusted slightly. Also, the usual restrictions to the Naismith rule apply – it assumes that the walk includes no serious and sustained scrambling, and ignores possible effects from weather, fatigue, altitude, ground cover (e.g. snow or boot-grabbing heather) and so on. It also makes no allowance for halts. My own personal estimate is to add between 15% and 20% to the total time to take these into account.

References:

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SCOTTISH WINTER NOTES

Opinions differ on the 2004 winter season. For some it was a good winter with long settled spells in the West. The air was clear and the sky blue for many days through February and March, and if you wanted to front-point classic gullies on squeaky neve this was the season for you. On the other hand, lack of any significant snowfalls until late March (when it was too late), meant that there was never enough build up for the likes of Orion Face to form on the Ben. Few of the classic Grade V climbs were in condition, and many Grade III climbers became unwitting grade IV leaders as routes were typically at least one notch harder than their advertised grade. For the technical mixed climber it was a frustrating time too, for the infrequent snowfalls were swiftly followed by deep thaws that stripped even the highest crags.

Despite this, the 2004 winter saw some outstanding achievements. Arguably the finest example was the first winter ascent of Marathon Corner Direct (VIII,8) on Ben Loyal by Guy Robertson and Pete Benson. With a summit elevation of only 764m, Ben Loyal is not an obvious winter climbing venue, especially in a lean season, but when bitterly cold strong North-West winds swept southwards across the country in late January, the Aberdeen based pair took the gamble and made the long journey north up to Sutherland to visit the little known 300m-high cliff on Sgor a'Chleirich, Ben Loyal's westerly top. Marathon Corner is an E1 summer climb that was first climbed by Les Brown and A. Turnbull in 1969. The guidebook description of the cliff is particularly enticing for a winter climber, mentioning that several summer parties have been repulsed by extraordinarily steep vegetation, loose rock and a distinct lack of protection. All this made for a superb seven-pitch winter route climbed on a mixture of turf, snowed-up rock and icy smears. For many climbers, climbing a new route of this length and quality on a cliff that was previously untouched in winter is close to the ultimate, and Marathon Corner joins the likes of Magic Bow Wall and The Godfather as one of the most significant ascents in the Northern Highlands in recent years.

By contrast, the other major new route of the season was made three days earlier at the other end of the Highlands. Over the last couple of seasons Dave MacLeod has been pushing the winter envelope with a series of difficult ascents such as his on sight repeat of *The Demon Direct* in the Northern Corries. During the cold snap near the end of January, Dave pushed the technical limit yet further when he succeeded on his long-standing roof project on the Cobbler. *The Cathedral* (X,11) climbs up to a tight niche at the back of the cave on the front face of the Centre Peak, and then traverses a six metre horizontal roof crack across the middle of the cave to gain turf at the lip and easy ground above. The 30m-long line is not taken by a summer route and is an ideal winter only line as it features wet, dirty rock with lots of turf.

The Cathedral is the largest continuous roof ever climbed in Scottish winter and was climbed ground up at the second attempt. Dave had tried to on sight the route in January 2003 but had failed due to lack of physical endurance. This time he was full of confidence having just returned from a very successful visit to Uschinen in Switzerland where he had climbed several of continental Europe's hardest mixed routes including the M12 test piece Vertical Limit. One only has to imagine a route that combines the technical difficulty of The Cathedral with the stature of a route like Marathon Corner to see that the long-hoped for quantum leap in traditional mixed climbing standards is not far away.

Big news on Ben Nevis was the first winter ascent of *Arthur* (VIII,8) by Bruce Poll and Tony Shepherd. This steep four-pitch HVS runs up the centre of the front face of Number Three Gully Buttress and was first climbed by Klaus Schwartz and Gordon Webster in 1971. They used a point of aid on the third pitch and it is possible their route has never been repeated. Lying high on the mountain *Arthur* was a likely candidate for a winter ascent, but recent mild winters have thwarted several hopefuls as the line has failed to carry much snow or hoar frost. Bruce and Tony timed their climb to perfection and nipped in to make a very smooth ascent just after New Year when the cliff was white with frost and the cracks free of ice. *Arthur* is only the third Grade VIII to be climbed on Ben Nevis, and along with *Marathon Corner*, joins a very small number of Grade VIIIs that have had on sight first winter ascents.

The Ben also saw some new additions to the Douglas Boulder. Gareth Hughes and James Edwards climbed *Turf War* (V,6) based on the summer line *Militant Chimney* and also climbed an alternative start to *Left-Hand Chimney*. Further right Jonny Baird and Andy Turner made a winter ascent of *Jacknife* (IV,6). A new winter route on the Ben always feels extra special, and it was particularly fitting that Nevis regular Jonny should at long last have a Nevis climb to his name. Iain Small and I took advantage of a heavy early April snowfall to climb *Central Rib Direct* (VI,7) on Creag Coire na Ciste. The original line climbed by Jimmy Marshall and Robin Campbell avoided the steep central section by taking a line close to *Central Gully Right-Hand*, but an improbable line of holds led up the outside edge of the impending right arête to give a spectacular and unique pitch.

Aonach Mor saw heavy traffic and many climbers enjoyed the easier gullies that held good ice and neve throughout much of the season. Steve Kennedy and Bob Hamilton showed that Coire an Lochain still has new routes to yield with a handful of good new lines including *Pro Libertate* (V,6), a sustained mixed route on the buttress between *The Guardian* and *Stirling Bridge*. Further north, Andy Nisbet and Dave McGimpsey visited their old haunt of Stob Coire an Laoigh in the Grey Corries and added a clutch of new routes including *Socialist* (V,7) which climbs the centre of the left wall of Centrepoint buttress. Further east Kevin Neal and Iain Rudkin made a productive visit to Geal Charn above Loch Ericht near Drumochter. Their first addition was called *Map and Compass* (III,4) and implies that they were a little unsure of their location on the mountain but they capitalised on this with the fine steep ice line of *Flight of the Navigator* (VI,6) when they returned with Kirk Watson the following day.

The high crags in Glen Coe saw some action in the cold snowy snaps in late December and January. Of note was the first ascent of the short but good *Tuberculosis* (VI,6) in Stob Coire nan Lochan by Dave Hollinger and Guy Willett. This takes the impending groove right of *Crest Route* and gave excellent climbing, although well-frozen conditions are recommenced to cement everything in place. Bishops' Buttress on the West Top of Bidean saw a couple of technical additions on the same day in late December. Donald King and Andy Nelson made a winter ascent of *The Crook* (VI,7) and Gareth Hughes and James Edwards found *Under The Weather* (VII,7) a difficult climb on the upper tier of the buttress.

James Edwards had a very good season with new routes across the Highlands. If you're serious about seeking out unclimbed lines, you have to be prepared to

put in the groundwork and James made a productive visit to Coire nam Fhamhair on Beinn Bhan last summer. The intention was to scope out the wall right of *Die Riesenwand* for a possible repeat of *The Godfather*, but James noticed a couple of lines left of *Genesis* on the left side of the crag. He returned at the end of December with Sam Barron and climbed *Revelations* (VI,6), a superb natural line of weakness near the left end of the cliff. Three weeks later James was back with Gareth Hughes to climb *Biblical Knowledge* (VI,5), the second line he had spotted, which takes the left edge of the fault-line taken by *Genesis*.

The other major addition on Beinn Bhan was the steep buttress between Mad Hatter's and March Hare's gullies by Malcolm Bass and Simon Yearsley. This was a well-known objective and is mentioned in Cold Climbs as a new route objective, but nobody had stepped up to the challenge of a direct ascent of the wall. Malcolm and Simon were concerned about how much weaving around they would have to do to find a way through the succession of rock tiers, but they managed to find a logical direct line. Conditions were good with a thin covering of good neve, hard frozen turf and bits of ice but not enough to choke the cracks. The seven-pitch *Realisation* (VI,6) is a major addition to the mountain and deserves further repeats as it has good belays and protection.

Other notable new route activity in the North West included the first ascent of *Aquila* (VI,7) on Ben Damph by Andy Nisbet and Jonathan Preston, *Expanding Universe* (VI,5), on Sail Mhor by Guy Robertson and Es Tressider, *Avalanche Goose* (VI,7) on Slioch by Iain Small and Neil Wilson, and the excellent sounding *Underground Resistance* (V,6) on Stac Pollaidh by Erik Brunskill and Daffyd Morris. All these climbs show that even on relatively well known cliffs there are

still good new routes to discover.

Farther west, John Mackenzie continued to develop the Stratchconon and Ben Wyvis crags with an astonishing 11 new routes. With the increased focus on climbing new winter lines across Scotland, it is difficult to believe that John will retain a monopoly on his home turf for much longer, but his unrivalled knowledge of the these crags gives him a head start over the competition. The finest additions this season were *Oh Dearie Me* (III,4) that takes thin discontinuous turf streaks on the 250m-high East Buttress of Creag Ghlas, and the superb *Temptress* (V,5) in Coire Mor on Ben Wyvis. Both routes were climbed with Alan Dennis.

The Cairngorms were particularly quiet this winter. Beinn a'Bhuird held snow well and saw the most activity with a handful of new routes. Chris Cartwright and I were particularly pleased with the first ascent of *Archtempter* (VII,8) in Coire na Ciche, a good winter line based on the prominent arch in the unclimbed section of crag right of *Jason's Chimney*. This one had been on the list a long time but went without a struggle at the first attempt. *Nipped in the Bud* (V,6) in Coire nan Clach was a different story and only succumbed on the fifth visit with all previous attempts being stymied by horrific weather or lack of conditions. Persistence pays in the Scottish winter game! The Nisbet-McGimpsey team joined forces with James Edwards for a good weekend in February when they made the first winter ascent of the all-too obvious *Ribbon Ridge* (IV,4) on Stacan Dubha and *Dreadlock* (V,6) a new addition on the Upper Tier of Carn Etchachan. Those that thought the Northern Corries are worked out will be surprised by the addition of *Lagopus* (V,6), a direct start to *Snow Bunting* in Coire an Lochain by Ian Taylor and Neil Carnegie.

The finest winter climb in the Cairngorms however was Guy Robertson and Jason Currie's ascent of *The Winter Needle* (VIII,8) on the Shelter Stone. The route was first climbed by Andy Nisbet and Colin MacLean in February 1985. They used a point of aid and spent two days on the route with a bivouac, but the route was so far ahead of its time that it took thirteen years before it was repeated by Alan Mullin and Steve Paget in October 1998 with a major variation in the lower section. The second ascent created a storm of controversy, because many climbers believed it was climbed too early in the season to be a valid winter climb. This was rectified by Alasdair Coull and Sam Chinnery who made a free ascent of the Nisbet-MacLean line over two days in February 2000. The next logical step was a one-day free ascent and this was achieved by Guy and Jason on a perfect day at the end of February in a swift eleven hours to give a powerful demonstration of the continual progression of Scottish winter standards.

For many, the exploratory nature of Scottish winter climbing is the big attraction, and this year revealed a number of new venues. I was particularly intrigued by the climbing on Creag an Lochan Ulbha on Meall Horn and the fine crop of routes that Andy Nisbet, Dave McGimpsey and Dave Allan pioneered one superb day at the end of February. Two days later Dave Allan was out again with Davie Moy to add *Eas a' Chual Allan* (IV,5) on Glas Bhein. Tongue firmly in cheek, Dave notes that unlike its illustrious neighbour, this is one of the shorter waterfalls in Britain!

I am surely biased, but in my view some of the finest exploratory winter climbing this season was high up on the north side of Ben Cruachan. The superbly steep granite cliff above Coire Chat is seamed by cracks and grooves. It was first climbed by Dave Ritchie and Mark Shaw in February 2002 when they added *Noe Buttress* (IV,4) and the Grade II gully to its left. Chris Cartwright and Iain Small visited the cliff last winter and were immediately struck by the climbing potential of the unclimbed wall to the left of Noe Gully. They left their mark with the first ascent of *In the Knoe*, a fine VI,6 that cleaves a central line up the wall.

The cliff proved to be an ideal location in the variable weather early this season for it faces north, lies above the 1000m contour and comes into condition very quickly. Although the routes are relatively short, typically between 80 and 100m high, they are continuously sustained from the first move to the very top of the crag. Chris methodically set about developing the cliff adding a dozen routes along with Iain Small, Andy Hume, Roger Webb and myself. The finest additions were *Goldfinger* (VII,7), the impressive central line that takes the impending crack splitting the clean wall high on the buttress, and *Dr Noe* (VI,6), the stepped ramp-line running left to right up to a point overlooking Noe Gully.

New winter crags are developed every winter in Scotland, but what is remarkable about this discovery is that the quality of the climbing is so good and it lies on a relatively accessible mountain. One of my abiding memories of this winter will be climbing the superb corner line of *Tainted Elixir* (V,6). As I pulled through bulge after bulge on good solid hooks and torques, the cloud cleared behind us to reveal a magnificent view down Loch Etive across to Glen Coe with Ben Nevis standing regally behind. It was the very essence of Scottish winter climbing, and it makes me wonder just how many other great winter crags are out there still waiting to be discovered.

Simon Richardson.

100 YEARS AGO ...

The year began with the Annual Meeting and Dinner in St Enoch's Hotel, Glasgow on Friday 4, December, 1903. President William C. Smith was in the Chair; Treasurer Robert Napier reported a balance of £185 2s. $2^1 l_2 d$.; Secretary Inglis Clark announced 10 new members, two deaths and four resignations – a balance of 152 members; and Librarian Goggs (300) and Slide Custodian Robertson (900) enumerated their treasures. A motion, proposed by James Maclay – useful if chaos is to be prevented at AGM and Dinner – was passed: "The election of the President shall not take effect till the day after the General Meeting at which he has been elected." Finally, a motion put by Alexander Frazer, that Volumes I and II of the Journal be reprinted was ungenerously vetoed by Hugh Munro, who claimed copyright in *Munro's Tables*. Forty-two members and 26 guests then enjoyed a French menu of oysters, soup, sole, sweetbreads, haggis, roast meats, pheasant, dessert and cheese – only nine courses, a belt-tightening deficiency of four from the previous year.

New Year was celebrated at the Alexandra Hotel, Fort William, and a muster of 30 enjoyed fine weather for four days. There was little snow below 3000ft. *Tower Ridge* was climbed by Maclay, Parr, Unna and MacHarg; Bell, Napier, Raeburn and Rennie made a frosty ascent of the *South Ridge* of Garbh Bheinn; and new routes were made by Maclay, Raeburn and the Walkers (North Trident Buttress), and Maclay and Parr (North Face of Stob Ban). Maclay's Stob Ban route, *Gendarme Ridge*, enjoys a current grade of IV, and although he pointed out various other possible lines on the crags, 44 years would pass before these were explored.

On March 5, Willie Douglas, the entire Inglis Clark family, and Raeburn climbed Ben Lui's *Central Gully* – an unremarkable feat, except that Raeburn and the younger Clarks did it as a Day Excursion, catching the 4.30am train from Edinburgh

to Tyndrum, and returning by the 5.22pm train.

Forty-two members and guests gathered for the Easter Meet at the Aviemore Hotel (March 31–April 4). This was the Club's second visit to the Cairngorms. Just as in the first Meet in 1902, severe weather in the form of blizzards affected the Meet, but high winds blew most of the snow away and better conditions for climbing were available. Two parties visited Coire an t'Sneachda (carriages to Old Glenmore) on Good Friday and made the first climbs there: William Garden, Raeburn, George Almond and Roth climbed what is now called *Pygmy Ridge*, and Goodeve, Arthur Russell and Archie Robertson climbed Central Gully then descended somehow to visit Aladdin's Seat. Raeburn then fled the Meet – perhaps the Temperance Hotel did not agree with him - to climb his Buttress on Sgorr Ruadh along with Ewen Robertson. In Glen Einich a large party, equipped with two crowbars and a five-foot length of pipe, removed a three-ton boulder from the road just below the Lower Bothy. This facilitated an attack on the Sgoran Dubh cliffs on Saturday. Bad weather prevented any interesting ascents, but Inglis Clark, Parker and Robertson explored the Fan Corrie. On Tuesday, however, Robertson returned to Sgoran Dubh along with Solly, James Rose and Sandy Moncrieff. Solly led the party up a fine ridge forming part of No. 2 Buttress – Rose Ridge – but had to give up, due to the late hour, below the last pitch. Robertson returned at the end of the month with Wm. Morrison and Wm. Newbigging to complete the climb. Following the Meet, the Clarks and Raeburn moved to Fort William to join the rest of the Clark family and various others 'enjoying' ski instruction under the tutelage of Willy Rickmers. Raeburn, and Charles and Jane Clark took time off to climb *Central Buttress* of the Trident by a devious route, beginning in *Central Gully*.

This ascent was described by Jane Clark in the *Journal* – the first article contributed by a lady. Describing her approach to the mountain, she wrote: "The rock scenery from this point [the Lunching Boulder] is at all times unspeakably grand, but, seen by the writer for the first time in regal winter garb, it made an impression never to be forgotten. Those wondrous cliffs, plastered and moulded with snow and ice, every crevice filled with glistening white, soared upwards cornice-crowned to the sky. To such a noble and sublime scene the following words of Ruskin are especially applicable: 'The feeding of the rivers and the purifying of the winds are the least of the services appointed to the hills. To fill the thirst of the human heart for the beauty of God's working – to startle its lethargy with the deep and pure agitation of astonishment – are their higher missions.' I claim for this view-point a very high place in Alpine scenery, and maintain that with winter's snowy mantle Ben Nevis from the centre of the Allt a' Mhuilinn Glen can proudly hold its own." Perhaps it was this epiphany which was responsible, 25 years later, for the endowment of the Clark Hut.

In June, the Dundee Walker cousins, Charles and Harry, climbed their eponymous buttress on Carn Dearg.

In the Alps, numerous parties of members enjoyed successful seasons. Douglas explored the eastern peaks, climbing the Disgrazia and Ortler. Goggs and C. W. Nettleton climbed the Finsteraarhorn and traversed the Aletschorn (finding a better variant of the Hasler route) to Bel Alp, before moving to Saas Fee to climb the usual peaks there, finishing their holiday with the Weisshorn. Goodeve packed Zinal Rothorn, Matterhorn, Obergabelhorn and Weisshorn plus two training climbs into an 11-day holiday in Zermatt (guided). Raeburn, lacking his usual partner, Ling, due to a year-long illness, visited the Dauphiné with Charles Walker. They were caught in an electric storm below the Grand Muraille on the Meije, "the iceaxes singing le chanson du Piolet, while every rocky spike on the steep narrow arête buzzed and crackled, and even Walker's rucksack had something to say for itself", but returned later to make a successful ascent. Moving to Pralognan in the Vanoise, they climbed the North Face of the Grande Casse. On Mont Blanc, they climbed the Aiguille Noire, presumably by the newly-discovered East Ridge route. Parker and Gilbert Thomson spent two weeks in the Eastern Graians, based at Cogne, and enjoyed several good climbs, including the taxing East Face of the Paradiso from the Tribulazione glacier.

Farther afield, Stair Gillon climbed the Romsdalhorn, and John H. Wigner and Thomas S. Muir made a month-long traverse of the Vatna Jökull in Iceland, from north-east to south-west, on ski and pulling sledges. This 80-mile traverse was only the second crossing of the Jökull, the first crossing in 1875 being a much shorter south-north route of 30 miles. They also climbed four peaks along the way.

On home ground, Maclay and MacHarg visited Arran in August and found a direct route from Upper Glen Sannox to Cir Mhor, climbing the ridge between *Shelf Gully* and *Maclay's Chimney*, then a trap-dyke to reach *Pinnacle Ridge* and the summit – an expedition that seems to have escaped the notice of Arran editors. Also in August, Ben Nevis was visited by a strong party comprising James Burns, Wm. Morrison, Wm. Newbigging and Archie Robertson. They found the easiest

way up the Douglas Boulder (South-West Ridge) before climbing *Tower Ridge* by the *Recess Route*. On the following day, the lower tier of the South Trident Buttress was prospected in vain, then *Pinnacle Arête* was climbed. Burns then left, and the remaining three climbed the *Staircase Route* and descended *Observatory Ridge*, an undertaking aptly described by Robertson as "difficult and tedious...it is really a thing to ascend, not to descend". Finally, in a thin year for new ascents, in September Francis Greig, A. E. Mackenzie and A. N. Other climbed *North Castle Gully* of Carn Dearg, probably "a thing to avoid, not to ascend".

The *Journals* for the year published guidebook articles for Arran (by Goggs), the Eastern Cairngorms (Hinxman and Garden), the Lochnagar Group (George Duncan), the Braes of Angus and Glenshee to Gaick (mostly Munro). Several pieces about the new craze of ski-ing also featured: John Wigner's traverse of Ben Chonzie, and Willy Rickmers' well-known witty piece *Aquatic Sport on Ben Nevis*. Rickmers, who had organised the successful German expedition to Ushba in 1903, joined the Club in 1904 and maintained his membership from Germany, despite an interruption of five years caused by the Great War, until the Second War, when he finally gave it up. A note on p.121 by the Librarian thanks him for the donation "of six pairs of ski, to be lent free of charge to any SMC.men who desire to make themselves acquainted with the art of ski-ing". Where are they now, I wonder?

Finally, the Journal recorded on p.121 and again on p.137 the gift, by Mrs Sharp on leaving Sligachan Inn of the Climbers' Book. A type-written copy was made by the Club, with the inclusion of all pertinent Journal articles, a map, and photographs, this "to be lent to the present manager of the Hotel for the use of all mountaineers".

Robin N. Campbell.

The International Festival Of Mountaineering Literature 2004

Andy Kirkpatrick admitted to being nervous before he read a piece commissioned especially for the Festival which was held at Bretton Hall. He had a slide show running alongside, a changing sequence of snow runnels, winter buttresses and swathed climbers in snowstorms, interleaved with Andy's children, random public signs and interminable valley doses waiting for the right weather. His writing is quirky, direct yet thoughtful.

He says: "Alpine climbing is like having your heart broken repeatedly."

He had an extended metaphor about climbing being like getting off with Madonna, but the key issue was the dilemma of balancing being an obsessive climber with being a father. He was honest, self-questioning, scary and funny.

Katherine Bridge came from British Columbia to tell how she had pieced together the story of Phyliss Munday, Canadian mountain woman extraordinaire. As an archivist in Vancouver, Kathryn had come across 30 boxes of uncaptioned pictures. Unassuming about the part she had played in subsequently working out the story these pictures told, she related an absorbing tale of a woman driven to make a life in the outdoors in the early 20th century, stopped neither by the expectations of the day nor by the arrival of her baby, Edith. The decade -long obsession Phyll Munday shared with her husband, Don, to climb the elusive Mount Waddington was only part of the story. The black-and-white pictures were beautifully evocative and a heartfelt request was added: "If you are a mountaineer and a photographer, caption your pictures before you forget where they were taken."

To mark the publication of his *Collected Short Stories*, Dermot Somers read *Patrick And The Freney Pillar* confidently and strongly, direct to the audience. His writing is assured and real, it's believable fiction grounded in real lives. If you know his work, it's worth seeking out.

By now it was apparent that the International Festival Of Mountaineering Literature had come home. For 15 years the Festival was held in November then, due to building work at its normal venue, it was relocated, not entirely successfully to Leeds. Festival Director Terry Gifford decided to move it to a spring date so that, after 28 months, it was back, successfully at Bretton.

The day had begun with Royal Robbins who considered Brad Washburn and David Bower in his overview of American climbing writing before 1950, but had excluded them from his top three. James Ramsay Ullman was in third place on the basis of his history of climbing *High Conquest*. Clarence King he placed second despite "his tendency to hyperbole", for his *Mountaineering In The Sierra Nevada*. Top Dog was John Muir, not known primarily as a climber but as a "Prophet of Preservation". Muir, says Robbins, was "gifted and eloquent", he "spoke to climbers about how to think about mountains and how to treat them".

After Robbins, Joe Fitschen pursued the theme, pondering on post-1950 American climbing writers. He had clearly researched widely and thought hard but he was not always easy to hear and his delivery was, at times, pedestrian. On his long list were Jon Krakauer, Dave Roberts, Rick Ridgeway, Lito Tejada-Flores, Steve Roper, Yvon Chouinard and the man who had been on stage a few minutes earlier, Royal Robbins. Fitschen's short list, which turned out to be anything but short, featured Jeff Long, mentioned particularly for *Angels of Light*, John Sherman, Doug Robinson, Pete Sinclair for *We Aspired*, Mark Jenkins, Joe Kelsey and Chuck Pratt. There were brief quotes but no real explanation as to why these writers made the higher echelons. Put on the spot by a questioner at the end of his talk as to why he had mentioned no woman, Fitschen seemed momentarily nonplussed until others contributed the names of Alison Osius, Miriam Underhill and Lynn Hill as possible contenders.

Jamie Andrew's *Life And Limb* (see Reviews Ed.) will no doubt be a strong contender for the 2004 Boardman Tasker Award. He set the scene for three extracts from his book which describes his survival, albeit at the cost of his hands and feet, and his rehabilitation, after being pinned down in the Alps for five days by a terrible storm which took the life of his climbing partner Jamie Fisher. And what a tale – Jamie Andrew has climbed again, been snowboarding and paragliding, is a better skier than he was before the accident and has even completed the London Marathon.

David Hopkin, chair of the 2003 Boardman Tasker judges gave a readjudication speech from October last year. Something of a historical item by now, it was nevertheless interesting to hear why the judges had chosen Simon Mawer's novel, *The Fall*, as the winner.

Lindsay Griffin announced the winner of this year's High/Festival writing competition. Stephen Venables had been his fellow judge, assessing entries on the theme of people extricating themselves from tricky situations. The winner, Tom Sinclair's story, *The Great Escape* was read with characteristic verve by Ian Smith.

Ken 'Daffodils' Wilson and Geoffrey Chaucer, cunningly disguised as Gordon Stainforth, made unscheduled appearances on stage, reading effective spoofs from the previously undiscovered and newly-published classic *The Owl And The Cragrat*.

Matching her careful delivery to an astonishing sequence of pictures, white and hand coloured, from the archive of her father Captain John Noel, Sandra Noel gave a fascinating presentation linked to her new book *Everest Pioneer (See Reviews Ed.)*

The finale of the Festival saw the reappearance of Royal Robbins talking on A Golden Age In The Range Of Light this, of course, was Yosemite in the 1950s and 1960s. Robbins was on home territory, his talk sprinkled with insight and humour. For example, John Salathe was his role model regarding style. The first reason that put Robbins off climbing the face of Half Dome for some years was awe, the second was dread. His tale was peppered with legendary names, Chuck Pratt, Tom Frost, Yvon Chouinard and Warren Harding, with whom he had differences of opinion regarding climbing style.

"Mountains are an anvil on which a climber forges his character," he said, musing on his 10-day solo of the *John Muir Route* on El Capitan when, after seven days out and with 1000ft. still to go, he felt finished. The "five feet at a time" method got him near enough the top in the next days that he knew he would make it. "I was reaching into the rucsack of my soul."

Legendary climbers, stunning scenery, well known stories brought alive again, it was a fitting climax to an excellent day.

Kevin Borman.

Sex Changes on Ben Nevis

THE intrepid Jane Inglis Clark, whose husband was William Inglis Clark, took part in many interesting ascents on Ben Nevis in the early years of the Club, some new and some old. For example, in 1902 she took part in the ascent of Tower Gap West Chimney, now known as *Glover's Chimney*, accompanied by Glover, of course, and her husband William. Again, in 1904, she climbed the *Central Buttress of the Trident*, accompanied by Raeburn and her 16-year-old son, Charles.

Her part in these bold ascents was recorded accurately in the Journal, and in our guidebooks from MacRobert's (1920) through Marshall's (1969). One might complain about the fact that she was described there as Mrs W. Inglis Clark rather than as Jane, but that was the custom of those times. However, since 1969, she has been grossly mistreated. My copy of Simon Richardson's guide (1994) gives Glover's Chimney to Glover, C. Inglis Clark and W. Inglis Clark, substituting son for mother, and the Central Buttress of the Trident is credited to Raeburn, C. Inglis Clark and W. Inglis Clark, substituting husband for wife. It is surely deplorable that the modern SMC member, having striven to admit women to membership, should then proceed to eradicate them from our guidebooks!

I suspect, however, that these errors – and the very many others like them, arose because of the recent practice of separating details of first ascent from the description of climbs, which inevitably damages the historical record. I tried to change this practice on two occasions during, and just after, my service as President, failing narrowly in each attempt. Indeed, on the second occasion, I failed only because of the casting vote of the Chairman – the aforementioned Simon Richardson...

Robin N Campbell.

Mama Mia – (The latest edition of this most painful of diversions the Huts Run – in the footsteps of Richardson and Keith. Ed.)

It must have been in a moment of boredom that I first thought of running between the SMC huts. The idea came from reading Alec Keith's article in the SMCJ, so I must have been bored. He'd started at the Raeburn and ended at the Ling stopping a night in each hut as well as spending a more comfortable night in the Cluanie Inn. A very impressive achievement, but I did wonder if the hotel stop-over could be eliminated. It would require a very long day to get to the Ling hut. However, all this was mere conjecture. It would be worth seeing if I could manage such distances first.

As training I built up to running round the five FRCC huts in the Lake District. I stashed some food in each and, despite having some of my clearly-marked food scavenged by club members and receiving a reprimand for turning up late at my final hut, I completed the 50 miles in about 20 hours.

The following year was the Bob Graham Round, a circular 72-mile tour of the Lake District taking in 42 of its summits. Having had two years of watching my toe nails turn black and fall off I was fed up with fell running but the Bob Graham had been a serious test and close to the kind of effort I thought would be required to complete an SMC Huts Run. I would also have to keep up that kind of effort for several days and I wasn't sure I could manage that. The final nail in the coffin was hammered home when the Huts Committee bought another hut at Elphin, thus increasing the distance even more!

A few years later while gazing at a map of Fort Augustus, a bridleway running from Cannich to Laggan caught my eye, a good 40 miles and in exactly the direction I would want to take if travelling between the Ling and the Raeburn huts. It followed the line of a road constructed by General Wade and my thinking was, that if I couldn't run between the huts, then maybe I could do them on a mountain bike. I'd just got one, well I'd pulled it out of a skip actually, but it had those knobbly tires, so to me it was a mountain bike.

I poured over the maps and chose my route. I'd start at Elphin heading for the Ling and onto the Raeburn the second day, that would get the two longest days out of the way. Then past Ben Alder Lodge and over to Glencoe and finally to the CIC. As this wasn't going to be a circular route I decided to leave my car at the Raeburn, it being a convenient place to drive to. It would also mean I could restock with food after two days.

After attending a guidebook committee meeting in October I continued north to start my Huts Cycle. The first part of the route was on the road as I'd not been able to find any suitable off road route between Elphin and Ullapool that was fairly direct and I was too anxious about what lay ahead to waste too much energy tramping over peat bogs. The rain started as I left the road to head along the shores of Loch a' Bhraoin and the run down bothy at Lochivraon offered a welcome rest before I pushed the bike over Bealach Gorm. Somehow it all seemed worth it when I reached a good track and shot down to Kinlochewe just in time to miss the shop! Never mind I was carrying sufficient supplies with me, anything bought on the route was simply an added bonus.

The next morning I left the Ling at 6am in the dark as predicted and in the rain as expected. Progress over the Coulin Pass was slower than I'd anticipated and slowed even further once I left the road after Glenuaig Lodge and headed through Gleann Fhiodhaig. I'd intended to cross over to the shores of Loch Monar but my off-road

cycling, or rather pushing, meant time was slipping by. A brief glance at the road map I was navigating by made me decide to continue on down the glen I was in. This would get me onto a road sooner and would, I hoped, facilitate quicker progress to Fort Augustus – even if it did lengthen the journey considerably. After several hours of bum numbing cycling I was heading up to join another Wade road above Fort Augustus, racing against time to find the track before the onset of darkness. Climbing over deer fences with a mountain bike on your back makes you really appreciate how cumbersome they are.

In the last rays of the sun, I thanked General Wade for his road and cycled on. By now it was dark and I was tired so, cycling uphill was completely out. After nearly 18 hours in the saddle and more than 140 miles of cycling and pushing (half off road, half on) I eventually reached the Raeburn hut. When I went to bed, my right hand was numb from the vibration of the handlebars and I still had no feeling in the fingers next morning. Somewhat worried by this, I decided that I'd have to give up on the off-road cycling if I was to finish the route round the huts. Cycling along the A86 wasn't really a satisfactory end to the journey, but it did get me to Glencoe.

It was to take an operation and over eight months recovery before I regained the feeling in my fingers but, looking on the bright side, you wouldn't suffer from hot aches in winter!

Convalescing and unable to use my hand after the operation I started to run again. Someone had told me that fell running was virtually as quick as mountain biking. So, now that I knew at least some of the route, I decided I may as well try it while I couldn't climb. At the end of May I was dropped off at the Naismith hut. I first ran the uninteresting road section in the dark so that I swapped the road for the shores of Loch a' Bhraoin just after dawn. Having pushed a bike up Bealach Gorm I decided to try Bealach na h-Imrich to the east. The undulating peat hags were far worse, but at least I wasn't dragging a bike over them and so I made the Ling around mid-morning. This gave me all day to eat and rest. A midnight departure saw me heading across the hillside south of Glenuaig Lodge just after daybreak. As I headed down Glen Strathfarrar I had a blister blow-out. A few miles farther down the road I suffered further blow-outs. The delays and pain slowed me down and cost me several hours as I struggled on to the forests above Cannich. As I came to the end of my chosen path through the forest I realised that the roads had changed somewhat since the map had been printed. Pushing through the forest to open moorland I gave thanks to Scottish Power as I glanced round to locate the electricity pylons that followed Wade's road along this section. A call to my partner from Dundreggan assured her I was OK and we arranged a rendezvous at Fort Augustus. Running downhill through the forest to Fort Augustus I realised things were wrong as I passed under the pylons yet again, I was lost. After several extra miles and demoralised by this latest navigational error, I finally made the car. That, and the opportunity to stopping running after 110 miles in two days were too strong. Charlie Orr was resident in the Raeburn hut when we arrived and as I recounted what I'd been doing and that I wouldn't be having another go, I knew deep down I would. (And so did I! Ed.) My legs were still strong, my feet were blistered but that could be sorted and now I knew the OS maps errors.

With padded road shoes rather than fell running shoes and a month of recovery my feet were ready to try again. Andy Nisbet dropped me off on the A9 as I started my hitch to Elphin. On arrival I got out of the car and thanked my lift before promptly turning round and running back to Ullapool along the road I'd just been

driven along. The rain returned as I passed over Bealach Gorm but didn't last long and there was a spring in my step as I called into the shop at Kinlochewe. I had the supplies I needed until my re-supply at the Raeburn hut, but it was nice to get some fresh milk and bread.

A few hours rest at the Ling hut then it was a 10pm start. The route over the Coulin Pass to Craig went well but I was feeling tired as I left the bright lights of Craig behind me. Suddenly I came to a stop. "Mamma Mia, here I go again," I don't know how long I'd been humming the tune. My brain was obviously trying to stay awake and active but there are limits you can't sink to. I tried to keep myself mentally alert calculating the distance I'd come and still had to travel, anything other than Abba.

Spurred on, I was soon crossing Maoile Lunndaidh and running along Loch Monar and, with my route sorted out through the forest, I was in Fort Augustus by mid-afternoon. My first stop in 65 miles. Sitting on a bench with a cup of tea and some soup from a local shop, I started tending to my blisters as the tourists wandered by and stared. The more-padded running shoes and new socks had kept blistering to a minimum. In the afternoon sun I walked along the banks of the River Tarff keeping in the shade and enjoying the soft grass under my feet, knowing I would eventually have to exchange them for the harsh sunshine and stony path of Wade's Road over the Corrievairack Pass. At Melgarve I popped into the bothy to top up my Elastoplasts and then ran on, ticking off the waymarkers, happy as I realised I was keeping up 6mph. Not too bad after over 70 miles. However, It wasn't to last long and I ground to a halt as a blister popped and I stopped for roadside repairs. I decided to walk to the hut and save my feet for the next day, so after 24 hours on the move I finally got to the Raeburn and my sleeping bag. With only 40 miles to the CIC, I decided I could have a lie in as it was a short day. By lunchtime I was ambling along past Ben Alder Lodge. I'd opted to save my feet so resisted the urge to start running until I could get onto soft grass.

The track was generally good but time was ticking by as I passed Corrour and by the time I reached the old ruin of the Steall the sun had been set for over an hour. In fading light I wandered along the side of the stream into Allt Coire Eoghainn and, forsaking the boggy glen floor, headed west onto a drier ridge. I was too tired to refill my drinks bottle and wandered on with the CIC the only thing in my mind. I looked down in surprise when I reached the top of Meall Cumhann and on consulting my map discovered that this hummock stood to the south of Ben Nevis. I was too tired to be annoyed and just plodded on wishing I could find some water.

Wandering through the cloud on the summit I reached the top of the abseil posts. In winter I've often wondered why people abseil down the posts into Coire Leis, if there'd been ropes there that night I'd certainly have been using them, as I scrambled down into the rocky basin. Stubbing my bruised toes I let out a scream, something I'd been used to doing for the last few days without any worry of being heard. As I listened to its echo returning from the walls of the Ben and considered its popularity I knew I'd have to curb my cursing. As I picked myself up I came across a stick which was to prove useful as a staff as I teetered across the boulders. The cloud lifted as I reached the hut to reveal several tents and open shutters. As I crept into the main hut a female voice cried out in surprise but was silenced by a male friend. Not wanting to wake the residents with cooking I settled myself with several cups of tea and after a fruitless search for blankets I curled up with my feet in my rucsac and shivered the remainder of the night away.

By 7am I felt it was a respectable hour to get up and the residents didn't mind. They turned out to be Andy Fraser and his wife. Over breakfast, my uneaten meal from the night before, Andy gave me some pointers about the way over the Mamores and also informed me that Robin (the hut custodian) had burned the hut blankets which had become somewhat fetid. After gaffer-taping my feet - I'd run out of plasters, I set off. There was no attempt at running on the final stage to Lagangarbh, I had a leisurely stroll staff in hand across An Garbhanach to Kinlochleven where I rejoined another of General Wade's roads to take me to Glencoe and the end of my Huts Run. Over four days I'd travelled approximately 200 miles.

I stopped at Lagangarbh long enough for a brew then headed out, thumb in the air, to start my hitch back to the Raeburn. I sat on the crash barrier by the road to give my legs some welcome relief and woke up as I hit the bank but wasn't quick enough to avoid the fall into the burn. I was obviously tired! Invigorated from my dip I climbed back up to the road, thumb aloft and smiled at every car as it drove

past, this could take some time.

I finally made my own bed in Lancaster at 7am the following morning an hour before my alarm went off reminding me that I had a meeting at work that morning.

"Mama Mia here I go again..."

Stages:

Naismith Hut to Ling Hut approximately 60 miles. Ling Hut to Raeburn Hut approximately 85 miles. Raeburn Hut to CIC approximately 40 miles. CIC to Lagangarbh approximately 15 miles.

Brian Davison.

SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING TRUST - 2003-2004

THE Trustees met on June 19 and October 3, 2003 and April 2, 2004. During the course of these meetings support was given to the JMCS for the Coruisk Hut; the Jonathan Conville Mountaineering Trust Scottish Winter Courses 2003-2004; Rev. B. Shepton, Greenland Challenge Expedition; A. L. Stewart, Dundee Mountain Film Festival 2004; Nevis Partnership for path work on the Allt A' Mhuillinn, and purchase of new Avalanche Transceivers for the Scottish Mountaineering Trust.

Gillian Irvine and Grahame Nicoll retired as Trustees by rotation having each served four years. Richard Bott retired as a Trustee by rotation in December 2003. and is the Chairman of the Publications Co. The contributions of Gillian Irvine, Grahame Nicoll and Richard Bott are much appreciated.

The Trust, through the Publications Co., is presently producing a leaflet on the

Trust's activities for the purpose of encouraging grant applications to the Trust from charitable organisations.

The present directors of the Publications Co. 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, M. G. D. Shaw, W. C. Runciman, A. Tibbs, R. J. Archbold, D. A. Bearhop and D. J. Broadhead, W. C. Runciman and M. G. D. Shaw are Trustees/ Directors and provide liaison between the Publications Co. and the Trust. J. Morton Shaw is the Trust Treasurer.

The following grants have been committed by the Trustees:

General Grant Fund:	
	£1535
JMCS Couisk Hut	
Jonathan Conville Winter Courses 2003/2004	£1000
Reverend B Shepton Greenland Challenge Expedition	£1500
Purchase of new Avalanche Transceivers	£1800
Dundee Mountain Film Festival 2004	£1000
Nevis Partnership Allt A' Mhuillinn	£20,000

James D. Hotchkis. Trust Secretary.

MUNRO MATTERS

By David Kirk (Clerk of the List)

ONCE again, I have very much enjoyed receiving Compleation and Amendment letters this year and I thank everyone who has written to me to register. This year's new Compleat Munroist total is 235, up a bit on last year's lowly 192. The main statistical highlight of the year was reaching the 3000th recorded Munroist mark – more of this anon.

Last year, the Munro Society was at the embryonic stage and has now begun to consolidate. Rather than describe its progress myself, Iain Robertson, the Society Secretary has again produced a report, which I've appended here.

Please remember the photograph section in the SMC Website, I would urge everyone on the List to dig out an old final summit photograph of yourself and send a copy (or the original along with a SAE) to Ken Crocket.

This year's Compleatists follow. As before, columns are number, name, then Munro, Top and Furth Compleation years.

1410	inio, Top and Furth C	ompica	mon year				
288	5 Sheila Jefferies	2003		2922	Colin Baird	1999	
288	66 Elspeth M. Graham	2003		2923	Ronnie Robertson	2003	
288	7 Michael O'Hara	2003		2924	Keith R. Jeffrey	2003	
288	8 Steve Marsh	2003		2925	Michael P. Ryan	2003	
288	9 Leslie J. Anderson	2003			Graham A. Fielding	2003	
289	O John Wright	2003		2927	Irene Leckie	2003	
	1 Jim Sime	2002		2928	Val Machin	2003	
289	2 Brian Shanks	2003		2929	Alexander G. Thow	2000	
289	3 Tommy Hunter	2003		2930	Paul Harradine	2003	
	4 Ken Slater	2003		2931	Polly Harrison	2003	
289	5 Tom Fox	2003			Colin Robert Semple	2003	
289	6 Trevor John Williams	2003			Tony Roberts	2003	
289	7 Barry Parker	2003	1995		Kim Ciaran Collis	2003	
289	8 Howard Taylor	2003		2935	Martin Dand	2003	
289	9 Gillian Taylor	2003		2936	Nigel Hewlett	2003	
290	0 Richard Baker	2003			Ian McIntosh	2003	
290	1 Nicholas A. Hunt	2003		2938	Sarah Trueman	2003	
290	2 Dianne Mary Williams	2003		2939	Scott Wigglesworth	2003	
290	3 Michael J. Gibbons	2003		2940	Neil Fullwood	2003	
290	4 Jonathon M. Smith	2003	2003	2941	Jerzy Czyzewski	2003	
290	5 Miriam Dodd	2003		2942	Mr R. N. Redwood	2003	
290	6 Phillip Dodd	2003		2943	Donald R. Sutherland	2003	
290	7 Angus M. Buchanan	2000		2944	Timothy P. Johnson	1993	
290	8 Dugald B. MacNeill	2002		2945	Jane Logan	2003	
290	9 John Penny	2003		2946	David Logan	2003	
291	0 Anthony Loftus	2003		2947	John Rhodes	2003	
291	1 Howard Marsden	2003		2948	Liz Rhodes	2003	
291	2 Fraser Smith	2003		2949	Peter Burgess	2003	
291	3 Ewan G. McDonald	2003		2950	Liz Hayhurst	2003	
291	4 James Bryson	2003		2951	Dave Hayhurst	2003	
291	5 Arnold Foster	2003		2952	Sandy Farmer	2003	
291	6 Nick Bowyer	2003		2953	Joan Finnie	2003	
291	7 Iain Morrice	2003		2954	Peter Wightman	2003	
291	8 Martin D. Knott	2003		2955	Paul Brooks	2003	
291	9 Alison Sangster	2003		2956	Roger Reeves	1993	2003
292	0 Jonathan C. C. Pyman	2003			John G Harvey	2003	
292	1 Kenneth E. Pirie	2003		2958	Charlie Muir	2003	

2959 Roger Squires	2003	3016 James Fuller	2003
2960 Allison Johnston	2003	3017 Gill Eatough	2003
2961 Joyce Whitton	1996	3018 Matthew Linning	2003
2962 Jim Whitton	1996	3019 John Standaloft	2003
2963 David Joynes	2003	3020 Robert Anthony Lees	2003
2		3021 Rohan Beyts	2003
2964 Simon Maltby	2003		2003
2965 Donald McLean	2003	3022 Alan J. Murray	
2966 Edith Moran	2003	3023 *Alan J. Scott	2003
2967 Geoff Smith	2003	3024 Paul Phillips	2003
2968 David Paterson	2003	3025 Martin Holt	2003
2969 Patricia Elsdon Redhead		3026 Janet Price	2003
2970 Kenneth Redhead	2003	3027 John Bush	2003
2971 Elizabeth Maitland	2003	3028 Jill Scott	2003
2972 Geoff Walker	1992	3029 Alex Phillips	2003
2973 Peter Clegg	2003	3030 Fiona Phillips	2003
2974 Carolyn Clegg	2003	3031 Bill McCartney	2003
2975 Donald A. R. Gordon	2003	3032 Gary Clare	2003 2003
2976 Fiona C. S. Gordon	2003	3033 Malcolm William Blake	
2977 David Wallace Young	2003	3034 Patrick Green	2002
2978 Andy Gray	2003	3035 Bill Howie	2003
2979 Ken Adamson	2003	3036 Norman Smithers	2003
2980 Jon Barnes	2003	3037 Gordon C. Stalker	2003
2981 Tony Gribben	2003	3038 Selwyn C. A. Fernandes	
2982 George Gallacher	2003	3039 Michael Venables	2003
2983 John J. Knight	2003	3040 Leslie Watt	2003
2984 Rosemary I. Knight	2003	3041 Rebecca Trengove	2003
2985 Ewen David Lamont	2003	3042 Alan Needham	2003
2986 Patrick Lonergan	2003	3043 Malcolm Proctor	2003
2987 Jacqui Turnbull	2003	3044 Brian McWilliam	2003
2988 William Douglas Murra	y2003	3045 Roger Broad	2003
2989 George Smart	2003	3046 Peter Ellwood	2003
2990 Stewart Gardiner	2003	3047 Susan Primrose	2003
2991 Ewan James Lyons	2003	3048 Dan Parker	2003
2992 Winifred Thomson	2003	3049 Sheila West	2003
2993 Iain Wilson	2003	3050 Fiona Borland	2003
2994 Iain Walton	2003	3051 Helen Johnson	2003
2995 Colin Mumford	2003	3052 Alan McQuiston	2003
2996 John D. Fowler	1998	3053 Christopher H. Henshall	1 2003
2997 Peter J. Kerry	2003	3054 Geoff Sutton	2003
2998 Iain MacDonald	2003	3055 Isabel Wilson	2003
2999 Arthur McKenzie	2003	3056 Tom Noon	2003
3000 Michael Urquhart	2003	3057 David Tyler	2003
3001 David J. Webster	2003	3058 Chris Low	2003
3002 Don Silversides	2003	3059 Alex MacKenzie	2003
3003 David Anderson	2003	3060 Alan K. Robertson	1995
3004 James D. Upton	2003	3061 Nigel G. Thackray	2003
3005 Alan Palin	2003	3062 Manoj Patel	2003
3006 Tom McKay	2003	3063 Martin Davidson	2003
3007 Chris Low	2003	3064 Ian McAdam	2003
3008 Roger J. Killick	2003	3065 David Jinks	2003
3009 Keith Gordon	2003	3066 Roger D. Hodgson	1999
3010 Isabel C. Munro	2003	3067 Owain Pedgley	2003
3010 Isabel C. Mullio 3011 Nigel Sutton	2003	3068 Andrew Pedgley	2003
3012 Tony Hendry	2003	3069 Jane Allan	2003
3012 Tony Hendry 3013 Danus Skene	2003	3070 David Young	2003
3014 Peter J. Kerry	2003	2	2002 2002
3014 Peter J. Kerry 3015 John R. Dawson	2003	3071 George Cairns 3072 Ritchie M. McCrae	2003
JOIN JOHN K. Dawson	2003	3072 Kilchie M. McCrae	2003

3073	Ian G. McCrae	2003	3097	Michael Shuttleworth	2003
3074	Ros Adams	2003	3098	Simon D. Templeman	2003
3075	Phil Hardy	2003	3099	David Reading	2003
3076	Nick Barr	2003	3100	Collette Coll	2003
3077	Elizabeth Steel	2003	3101	Charlie McCartney	1986
3078	Rodger Neilson	2003	3102	Charles McCartney	1988
3079	Alison Neilson	2003	3103	Michael McCartney	2003
3080	Martin Gillespie	2003	3104	Peter Ramage	2003
3081	Charles W. K. Morrison	2003 2003	3105	Fiona Elizabeth Kean	2003
3082	R John Reavy	2003	3106	Morag Anderson	2003
3083	Patricia A. O. Sinclair	2003	3107	Steve Kew	2003
3084	Kenneth S. Jeffrey	2003	3108	Steven Petrie	2003
3085	David Neil Sandilands	2003	3109	Carolann Petrie	2003
3086	David W. Wilkie	2003	3110	Michael Saint	2003
3087	Graham Thomson	2003	3111	Morag Mitchell	2003
3088	Graham Brown	2003	3112	Bert Barnett	2001 2002 2002
3089	Sarah Wingrove	2003	3113	Andrew Lazenby	1994
3090	John A. Smith	2003	3114	Stephen Perry	2003
3091	*John M. Shaw	2003	3115	Hamish McBride	2004
3092	Tony Stoddart	2003	3116	Charlie Burgess	2002
3093	Leslie Shore	2003	3117	Norman McNab	2003
3094	Chris Wood	2003	3118	Dan Carroll	2001
3095	Ally Anderson	2003	3119	David Brown	2001
3096	Rab Cunningham	2003			

In the letters I have received this year, Munro bagging for charity has been mentioned quite often. Stephen Perry (3114) did an epic Lands End to John O'Groats walk between February and September 2003, taking in the major Welsh and English 3000ers and all the Munros. He was the first person to complete such a walk, and raised money for Cancer Research.

Martin Knott (2918) only began his round after taking part in a charity event, The Great Scottish Hill Climb, for Cancer Awareness. David Wilkie (3086) also raised money for Cancer Research. His personal challenge was to compleat in a single calendar year, while continuing his day job at RAF Lossiemouth. Based just along the road at RAF Kinloss, Dan Carroll (3118) utilised the RAF Rescue Team inflatable boat to reach Barrisdale for his last two Munros. Having summited on Mount Everest during an RAF expedition only a month earlier, Dan says that his final summit, Ladhar Bheinn, still meant more to him.

Compleating from abroad is not uncommon, however Kenneth Pirie (2921) did well to compleat while based throughout in British Columbia. Peter Burgess (2949) managed nearly two-thirds of his round while living in New Zealand. He currently doesn't plan to do the Corbetts!

Last year, I received a lot of anecdotes about Ben More – one of the most common final summits. Again, a few stand out, including this year's largest multiple compleation. It was by Jane and David Logan (2945/2946) and John and Liz Rhodes (2947/2948). David had had a triple by-pass only a year earlier. Also on Ben More, friends of Iain Wilson (2993) organised a 'Black Tie' champagne reception for him. Typically, he'd picked the only misty, windy day for weeks.

Elizabeth Maitland (2971) managed to arrange for five separate groups to converge from different directions on her final summit, Carn nan Gobhar (Loch Mullardoch). This also involved organising a boat and various 'car ferries'. The assembled group gave her the classic Ice Axe 'Guard of Honour' on the summit.

Re-taking the island in the middle of Loch Quoich 'in the name of England'

was a major event during Colin Mumford's (2995) round. The island also provided Colin and his three friends with an ideal starting point for Sgurr Mor and Gairich, giving them canoe access to the infrequently visited, but more impressive north sides of these hills.

Ben Lomond seems to have been a more popular finishing hill than usual this year (it's usually more of a starting hill). Val Machin (2928) managed to merge her finishing celebrations on May 25, with a summit wedding they came upon, and someone else's compleation too.

David Joynes and Simon Maltby (2963/2964) escaped by the seats of their pants on Seana Bhraigh. Having noted with some distaste, a pair of discarded underpants during their ascent, they were mighty glad to see them again during poor visibility on the descent. More underpants were revealed when Tom Noon (3056) was bitten on the bum by a dog on the summit of his 200th Munro, Beinn A' Choarainn. He had to 'drop them' to prove to the dog's owners what had happened!

Hearing again from old friends and acquaintances I've met over the years is a definite plus point to my job as Clerk. It was good to hear from Colin Baird (2922) who completed in a large party of Ochil MC members. It must have been some

party – it took him four years to remember to register.

The Cuillin Ridge has always provided some of the most memorable days of any round. Paul and Polly Harrison (2930/2931) were guided along it in the worst weather their guide, Martin Moran (383), had guided on it. Taking 28 hours, this was also his slowest traverse. Donald Sutherland (2943) got round the common problem of the Inn Pinn looming large, as one approaches the end of one's round. He did it within his first handful: "Just to make sure he could do them all." Phil Hardy (3075) tried to do the ridge in one trip with an overnight bivvy in the middle. Although he and his companion bedded down in fine weather, they were awakened by cold and driving rain. At 3.30am they abandoned the ridge and set off down.

Michael Urquhart (3000) from Bo'ness knew nothing of what awaited him when he completed on An Socach (Glen Cannich). He was, however, delighted to be our No. 3000. Since then, he's been an honoured guest at a Munro Society dinner and presented with a plaque. Allegedly, the paparazzi have been after him too.

A current general policy with entries into the List is the avoidance of titles and letters. Were it not for this, we may have seen a whole host of various things. In the last three years alone we could have had MP, MSP, several military titles, and more academic/professional letters than I can remember. This year, Clan Chief Danus Skene of Skene (3013) compleated. Although I couldn't put his full title on the List, I did of course enter it onto his certificate as requested.

Most hillwalkers reading this article will have heard of Naismith's Rule, and many will have heard of Philip Tranter's (45) modifications to this. Norman Smither (3036) helped him compile them and was with him on his most memorable Munro – The Saddle, in winter conditions, at night, by moonlight. That was February 1966, six months before Philip's death.

We've heard of people hitting golf balls up their last Munro, or even of climbing in fancy dress, however Sarah Wingrove (3089) had to pull a concrete ball and chain up Beinn Sgritheal to compleat. Fortunately, a friend had hidden a sledgehammer in the summit cairn to smash it up – what a way to celebrate what was also her final day in her Twenties.

Most people who register with myself will record a single compleation of the

Munros. A few may also have included the Tops. Bert Barnett (3112) however registered a full compliment of Munros, Tops, Furths and Corbetts, plus a second Munro round. His first Munro round was completed only in 2001, but he had a 17-year gap between his penultimate and his final. Bert has also completed the Grahams and Scottish mainland Marilyns for good measure.

The esoteric pastime of camping in full winter conditions, on or near Munro summits is what Norman McNab (3117) has, for the last 40 years, engaged in. An undoubtedly serious hobby, but one with many rewards, which the substantial article and photographs he supplied me showed. Sunsets have never looked so good.

Finally, I can't finish without using some 'Bad Latin'. Peter Kerry (2997) compleated this year, on Aonach Mor, and his brother, Bob (1152), informed me that the brothers were now *Munrosis Fraternalis* (sic). His other brother, John, is No. 1740.

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.

332	Stephen Bateson	1983 1994 1983 1996
		1995
2871	Peter Hamilton	1992 2002 1997
		2000
1074	M. J. Poznanski	1992 2003 1995
924	Alan Fyfe	1991 2003
2330	Tony Tideswell	2000 2003
1939	James Leslie	1998 2003
		2003
1045	Steve Fallon	1992 1993
		1994
		1995
		1996
		1997
		1998
		1999
		2000
		2001
		2002
		2003
2929	Alexander G. Thow	2000 2002
480	Andrew Finnimore	1986 1086 1986 2003
1178	Christine E. Tulloch	1993 2003 2003
		2003
1179	David I. Hill	1993
		2003
635	Maggi Miller	1987 2003
2727	Colin H. Campbell	2002 2002 2003
460	Chris Pringle	1986
		2003
809	David Jones	1990 2000 2003
1162	Sandra Stead	1993 2003
1164	Brian D. Panton	1993 2003
358	Michael B. Slater	1984 1987 1987
550	Timeline D. Sidtel	170.1707 1707

		1988	
		1990	
		1993	
		1996	
		1999	
		2003	
592	David F. Geddes	1988 1989 1	991 1996
1125	John Hendry	1992 2003	
	•	2003	
1126	Margaret Hendry	1992 2003	
		2003	
1137	Mike Weedon	1989 2003	
1203	Jean M. Gayton	1993 1993	2003
1204	Robert J. Tait	1993 1993	2003
2161	Donald Brown	1999	
		2003	
2019	Norman Veitch	1998 2000 2	003
1397	Douglas R. MacLeod	1995 1997 1	988
		2000 2002 2	003
1793	Davie Hamill	1997	2003
262	*Roger J. C. Robb	1981 2003	
		2000	
1746	James King	1997	2003
2897	Barry Parker	2003	995
2346	David Allison	2000 2003 2	002

As ever, people who wish to register a Compleation or an Amendment, or make any necessary correction to the List, should send a letter with a stamped addressed envelope to me at:

Greenhowe Farmhouse,

Banchory Devenick,

Aberdeenshire.

AB12 5YJ.

If you wish a certificate (for either a Munro or Corbett compleation), please make sure you enclose an A4 SAE. If a certificate is not 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 address is: dave.kirk@greenhowefarm.fsnet.co.uk.

Have a great day on the hill.

David Kirk, Clerkius Listius.

Iain Robertson reports: The Munro Society is about to enter its third year of existence in good heart. Subscription renewals by the majority of members suggest that the endeavours of the executive committee are consistent with the expectations of members. In addition, there continues to be a steady trickle of new members made up of recent, and not-so-recent, compleaters.

Among the past year's events, the arrival of the 3000th recorded Munroist, Michael Urquhart, was acknowledged by the Society which presented him with a wooden plaque – part of Sir Hugh T. Munro's mansion at Lindertis. The presentation took place during the Annual Dinner held in Grasmere this year, in deference to the large number of Society members living south of the Border.

The speaker was Maggie Body, former editor with Hodder and Stoughton, who specialised in editing climbing publications. The gently humorous description of the literary and other foibles of some of our most famous mountaineers made a most entertaining talk.

An innovation this year has been Munro Re-visits, an additional excuse for members to come together and enjoy a day on the hills. The first of these, based in Glen Etive, was to Beinn Dorain, and further re-visits during 2004 are planned for the Loch Earn hills and Torridon.

The *Society* has sponsored a video, *Mountain Paths*, produced by Jim Closs. In view of the ever-increasing number of walkers of all descriptions going to the hills, the video sets out the case for hill paths and their maintenance being essential to conservation of the mountain environment. The Society has donated copies of the video to the Mountaineering Council of Scotland and the British Mountaineering Council. Member clubs may borrow a copy with only the cost of postage.

Perhaps the Society's most ambitious project to date is the concept of the Mountain Quality Indicator (MQI). This is an ongoing project which reflects one of the Society's principle concerns – the extent to which Munros, and other Scottish mountains, are being degraded by various forms of human activity. What degradation amounts to is, however, too often a subjective matter, dependent upon the viewpoint of the commentator. The Society takes the view that it would be in everyone's interests if objective criteria setting out the 'quality' of a mountain could be established. Clearly, if this were the case, then it would be much easier for a critical but, nonetheless, more comprehensive view of mountain developments to emerge. This would be to the benefit of all mountain-users and, more importantly, to the benefit of the mountains themselves. To this end, the Society has drawn on the considerable experience of its members to develop the MQIs. Work over the last year has now reached the stage at which the comments of other interested parties are being sought. To this end, it is the intention to launch the MQIs as one of the events subsequent to the Annual Meeting in April.

Other events held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting will be talks by Ian R. Mitchell, on the Rev. A. E. Robertson, and Dave Hewitt, on the first 100 Munroists. This year's Munro Lecture will be given by Jim Curran.

The Society's archivist is being kept busy with additional deposits, but he is always happy to receive more. Anything concerning Munros or Munroists will be welcome and not just from members of Society. A considerable addition to the archive this year has been all the material gathered by Irvine Butterfield for his exhaustive, six-year study of Scotland's mountain bothies. This is a monumental piece of work involving maps, locations, photographs and plans of more than 600 buildings in wild places in Scotland. The contents of the archive are available for inspection by the public, and it is housed in the A. K. Bell Library in Perth.

All communications should addressed to: Iain Robertson, 8 King's Place, Perth, PH2 8AA.

IN MEMORIAM

BILL YOUNG j.1953

BILL and I climbed together from the early Sixties and had many memorable climbs. However, there is one which stands out above all – a moonlight winter traverse of the Aonach Eagach in 1966.

Bill Murray in *Undiscovered Scotland* describes the traverse, and cautions: "The root of the problem is to combine leisure with a full moon, a hard frost and a clear

sky. Success needs patience."

He could also have added the necessity to react quickly to suitable conditions. I was returning home from Glasgow on a Saturday evening train and as it left the city behind, I realised I was looking at a full moon in a clear sky and it was cold. The penny dropped. As soon as I got home, I phoned Bill, and about an hour later he picked me up. First stop was Glencoe police station to let them know what we were doing in case any lights were seen on the ridge.

We set off from near Alt-na-reigh at 10.30pm. and were on the summit of Am Bodach at 1am. Conditions were perfect, not a sound, not a breath of wind, perfect visibility and Nevis gleaming. We continued unroped and were on top of the pinnacles by 2am. At no time did we need a torch, even in the moon shadow on the north side of the ridge there was always enough reflected light to see.

As we started on the last lap, we could see high cloud approaching from the south and, as we reached the end of the ridge at 3.20am. the cloud began to move across the face of the moon. Light levels dropped a little but we could still see well enough to descend the steep snow slopes towards the glen. The snow line was at about 1000ft. and we now had to use torches. A solitary car came down the glen and stopped beneath us. A voice called up: "Are you alright?" We shouted back that we were and he continued on his way. A memorable night, as clear in my memory now as it was then.

Bill was Huts Convener from 1972 to 1976 and during these four years he was responsible for a quite remarkable programme of renovation at all three huts.

Lagangarbh, CIC and Ling.

These changes were to have far reaching effects not apparent at the time.

Lagangarbh was first, in 1973. The hut was gutted internally down to the bare walls and redesigned with a proper stairway in place of the old 80° ladder access to the upper floor. The old wooden toilet annexe was replaced by a harled concrete block structure. All work, with the exception of the shell of the toilet block, being done with volunteer labour

1974 saw Bill's most difficult project, the CIC extension. The weekend that work started Bill and I had the Friday off and drove up from Glasgow with a load

of timber. The hut book records this:

21.6.74. W. B. Young and G. S. Peet spent a long day transporting 50x200lb. gas bottles, several tons of timber in and out of lorries and vans up to the dam.

Retired for the night at the dam absolutely knackered.

Plenty of support arrived overnight and early, (am) Helicopter arrived 8am. By 4pm we had finished uplifting 25-30 tons of sand, gravel, cement, building blocks, timber gas etc. (another group was digging out the foundations.) By 8pm work had ceased and memories of penal labour conditions dissipated in a haze of alcoholic euphoria.

Bill was a hard worker as well as a good organiser.

The final project, at Ling, was comparatively simple. The now standard sleep-shelf replaced the old squeaky uncomfortable two-tired iron bunks.

The much-improved facilities and better equipment allowed hut fees to be raised. The resulting increased use began to generate sizeable surpluses which enabled the club to give its members free beds at all three huts, and eventually, gave the club its first new purpose-designed hut – Raeburn.

The club owes this quiet man a considerable debt of gratitude. For me, everything I did with Bill, climbing, camping, huts, journeys, was always fun.

G. S. Peet.

COLIN M. STEVEN j.1938

Colin Steven died in Newton Stewart Hospital on February 20, 2003. He was a member of the Scottish Mountaineering Club for 67 years and with his elder brother, Campbell, who predeceased him by less than a year, was an enthusiastic climber and walker in the pre-war years.

After initial hikes in the Cairngorms while on family holidays in Speyside, the brothers started exploring the hills and crags around Arrochar from the family home in Helensburgh. They later tackled some of the Perthshire Munros before discovering rock and winter climbing in Glencoe and Skye. Weekends and holidays would find them regularly heading north by Loch Lomond in the company of a small group of enthusiasts. The adventures often began immediately, as a variety of vehicles either broke down or succumbed to punctures *en route*. Undaunted the party would press on and pitch camp no matter the weather or the delay, before exploring ever more adventurous routes.

Although walking and climbing widely in Scotland and later in Wales, Skye remained a firm favourite and the campsite at Glen Brittle features often in a comprehensive diary and photographic record of climbs, routes and companions. The weather was often inclement and local cattle regularly raided the campsite and tents but Mrs Chisholm at Glen Brittle Post Office often provided sanctuary and fodder if spirits were ever low.

Campbell and Colin joined the JMCS in the early Thirties and climbed regularly at meets in Glencoe and Skye before graduating to the SMC in 1938. Colin climbed mostly in twos or threes with Campbell, his elder brother often taking the lead. Other notables included Ian Jack, Wilf Coates, George Arthur and their cousin, Freer Rodger. Colin was on Ben Nevis in 1934 when Kirkus and Linnell were avalanched. Linnell died but amazingly Kirkus survived to be avalanched a second time in 1936. By a quirk of fate Colin was again on the mountain that day and assisted with the rescue from the CIC hut the following day of Kirkus's injured companion, using a pony from Achintee for transport.

He continued climbing while a student at Glasgow University Medical School, mainly with colleagues and friends from the SMC covering a variety of Munros in Perthshire, Skye and Sutherland and a number of rock climbs and winter routes. A detailed stores list for a three-day stay for five at the CIC hut at Ben Nevis was costed at 35 shillings!

Colin participated in a number of adventurous routes including, in April 1936, the second ascent of Zero Gully on the Ben, with Graham Macphee and George Hemmings. They followed the initial pitches of Slav Route and the week-old

footsteps of Bell and Allan. Colin made trips to North Wales in 1934 and 1935 and tackled a variety of routes with different groups, including a couple of ladies who were impressed with their skills by leading on a number of tricky pitches. They fitted in a stopover in the Lake District on the way home and tackled a number of standards including Amen Corner.

With Tom Mackinnon, Graham Macphee, and John Brown the brothers formed an SMC contingent on a trip to the Swiss Alps in 1938, whither they travelled, not by jet but with third-class tickets on wooden railway benches, providing a lifelong memory and the additional difficulties and hardships cemented their achievements. Their exploits are documented in Campbell's recently published autobiography *Eye to the Hills*.

Colin's last recorded climb was in 1940 while a resident at the Western Infirmary, Glasgow. The party of four climbed the Spearhead Arête and Jam Block Chimney on Ben Narnain. Shortly thereafter, war service broke up the group and while Campbell's skills were put to good use in the Commandos, where he taught colleagues the skills of cliff climbing in Iceland and Cornwall, with a view to the forthcoming invasion of Europe, Colin's posting in the RAMC and subsequent career effectively ended his climbing days. Although he honeymooned with Grace at the Sligachan Hotel in June 1945 and took his new wife up a couple of adjacent Munros, Colin's subsequent move to a single-handed general practice in Wigtown in 1947 and burgeoning family, left little time for the hills and he pursued other outdoor activities – fly fishing and shooting. Apart from occasional days in the Galloway hills with his family, Colin was content to retire from climbing but retained his lifelong love of the Scottish hills and countryside and enjoyed reading of the ever more adventurous climbs and routes by the new generation of postwar climbers.

Bill McKerrow.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB

The following new members have been admitted and welcomed to the Club in 2003-2004.

VICTORIA CHELTON (26), Outdoor Activities Instructor, Aviemore.

ERIC CHRISTISON (45), Design Engineer, Edinburgh.

HOWARD CRUMPTON (48), Engineer, Arbroath.

James Edwards (27), Teacher, Edinburgh.

ALAN Fox (45), Maintenance Engineer, Dundee.

EDWARD GILLESPIE (57), Retired bank official, Edinburgh.

MARK J. HUDSON (41), Commercial Artist, London.

GARETH W. HUGHES (24), Research Assistant, Glasgow.

ALLAN C. PETTIT (58), Dentist, Bridge of Allan.

EWEN M. RIDDELL (37), Outdoor Activities Instructor, Ballater.

Mungo Ross (52), Teacher, Law, Lanarkshire.

The One-Hundreth-and-Fourteenth AGM and Dinner

AND we returned to Pitlochry and the Atholl Palace – your Committee could do no better and the price was right. The afternoon sessions become ever better attended, and this year comprised Simon Richardson talking about Scottish winter developments and Hamish Irvine describing the latest Club outing to Greenland.

The AGM by contrast was a domestic affair. The Treasurer's decision to change the Club's bankers and the consequent need for everyone to complete a new Standing Order mandate seemed beyond the comprehension of many, and remains so to date. Dick Allen led a spirited discussion on the ban of skis in the huts as stipulated in the recently revised Hut Rules, but CIC devotees seemed pleased at the proposal for warm slippers being available to greet them on arrival off the hill. The vexed issue of toilets at the CIC again came up, but Robin Campbell was advised that matters were at a very early stage and no action would be taken without formal approval of the Club.

We repaired to the vast spaces of the dining room where 150 members and guests attended table, and a meal very much more filling than past occasions, following which our President, Peter Macdonald, gave a graceful address and Alec Keith toasted the guests with wit and not a little politics.

Our principal guest was Dick Balharry of the John Muir Trust and we also entertained Andrew Thin of the Cairngorm Partnership, Peter Biggar as winner of the W. H. Murray Prize, Sarah McKay of the Ladies Scottish Climbing Club, our own Quintin Crichton representing the Grampian Club, Alan Rowland of the Fell & Rock, Rupert Hoare of the Alpine Club and representing the JMCS, Helen Forde, whose father W. E. Forde, a former member, made the first Greater Traverse with Ian Charleson.

Dick Balharry offered a wonderful reply, as Malcolm Slesser noted, speaking without notes or hesitation for more than 20 minutes.

The problems over musical accompaniment appear at last to have been solved with the President hiring a cathedral quality organ for the occasion. Gordon Ross was in great voice with the Club song and *Dark Lochnagar*, with further socialising continuing, for some, well into the small hours. In a return to tradition, the President managed to lead a small party to the top of Ben Vrackie on the Sunday.

There has been much debate over the timing of the Dinner and by popular request, this year will see a return to our traditional date of December 4, in the refurbished Ben Wyvis Hotel at Strathpeffer.

J.R.R.F.

Easter Meet 2003 - Loch Maree

The meet was held at the Loch Maree Hotel with clear but windy and cool days. The interest was enhanced by the generosity of Paul van Vlissingen, the owner of the Letterewe Estate, who arranged transport for the members across the Loch on the Saturday. With this additional attraction there was a very good attendance.

Notable achievements were the numerous climbs on Ben Lair – David Jenkins, Colin Stead, Dougie Lang and Quentin Crichton on *Wisdom Buttress*; Malcolm Slesser and Bill Wallace on *The Tooth* and two ropes on *Bat's Gash* (Peter Macdonald, Roger Robb), (Paul Brian, David Stone and John Fowler). The Buttress and the Tooth were fine but various curses and crashes of falling rock indicated that Bat's Gash, which has two stars in the Northern Highlands guide, was more challenging.

There were mutters about those people who write guidebooks and allocate the stars! Everyone managed to get back to the pier before the appointed hour with several members running to catch the boat. Noel Williams and Robin Chalmers did a route on the north face of Martha's Peak on Beinn Airigh Charr originally climbed by Bell, Burt and Matheson in 1928 (on the Easter meet at Kinlochewe). Hills ascended included: An Teallach, Liathach, Slioch, Beinn Eighe and Beinn Alligin. Several members climbed in Stone Valley on Sunday before going home.

Those present: President Peter Macdonald, Robin Campbell, Brian Fleming, Malcolm Slesser, Iain Smart, Bill Wallace, Dick Allen, Peter Biggar, Paul Brian and guest David Stone, Robin Chalmers, Quintin Crichton, Mike Fleming, John Fowler and guest Helen Forde, Phil Gribbon, John Hay, David Jenkins, Dougie Lang, Rob Milne and guest Bill Taylor, Roger Robb, Nigel Suess, Douglas and Audrey Scott, Colin Stead, Noel Williams.

Dick Allen.

Easter Meet 2004 - Kintail

THE meet was held at Kintail Lodge Hotel with mixed weather, rain showers and low cloud. The highlight was the enforced candlelight meal served during a power failure on the Saturday night.

The poor weather did not deter members. John Hay came with Bill McKerrow from his 'stalking lodge' by boat up Loch Mullardoch and then walked via the Falls of Glomach to Dorusduain returning to his boat the next day along Glen Elchaig. Rob Milne and Yvonne Thomson climbed Ben Nevis on their way to the meet and then went on to climb Glamaig on their way home. Nigel Suess cycled to Iron Lodge then went on to climb Mullach na Dheiragain. Other hills ascended included: A' Ghlas Bheinn, Ciste Dubh, Aonach Meadhoin, Am Bathach, Mullach Fraoch-choire, A' Chralaig, Carn Ghluasaid, Sgurr nan Conbhairean, Sail Chaorainn, Meall Dubh, Creag a' Mhaim ,Druim Shionnach, Aonach air Chrith, Maol Chinn-dearg, Sgurr an Doire Leathain, Sgurr an Lochain, Sgurr Mhic Bharraich, Beinn a' Chapuill and The Quirang.

Members attending included the President Peter Macdonald, Robin Campbell, Brian Fleming, Malcolm Slesser, Iain Smart, Bill Wallace, John Fowler and guest Helen Forde, Dick Allen, Paul Brian and guest David Stone, Robin Chalmers, Mike Fleming, Phil Gribbon, John Hay, Bill McKerrow, Rob Milne and guest Yvonne Thomson, Roger Robb and Nigel Suess.

Dick Allen.

Ski Mountaineering Meet 2004

Those present: Members – Donald Ballance, James Hotchkis, Colwyn Jones, Ann MacDonald, Peter Macdonald, Chris Ravey and Brian Shackleton. Guests: Paul Hammond, John Porter, Bill Shaw and Nick Walmsley.

The meet was held at Milehouse, Feshiebridge – the excellent Ladies Scottish Climbing Club hut on the weekend of March 12-13.

On Friday evening the hut gradually filled up and we all enjoyed the glow from the stove, and from the wine. In short, the hut became less vacant while the opposite effect was evident among the occupants!

Saturday saw the club President lead from the front, accompanied by Donald, Brian, Paul and James. The group ascended Carn Ban Mor on ski (after carrying gear to a point well above the second deer fence). They then descended in poor visibility towards Tom Dubh and eventually, Monadh Mor. Difficult visibility restricted the speed of ascent and descent such that the sole pedestrian among the party, John Porter, was able to maintain contact throughout the day despite the many large, unintended detours enjoyed on the plateau.

The descent back to Glen Feshie was less eventful, excepting the final section along a narrowing icy bank of snow, which was a bit too exciting for some of the party. GPS, altimeters, maps and compasses kept the party on track all day, and eventually, deposited them back at the cars after 1270m of ascent and 9.5 hours of effort.

Nick and Chris started with the main body of the meet, again skinning up the final 200m to the Feshie plateau. However, they then turned left, apparently by design, and followed their compass to Sgor Gaoith. They endured a pleasant lunch in the cloud and then set off to Mullach Clach a Bhlar via a few dog legs and much pacing/timing. Skis remained on for the whole day (on the feet we mean) – a rarity for an SMC ski meet. On contouring back onto the top of Allt Fhearnagan their timing was immaculate (or not depending on ones point of view) in that they met the Presidential party descending back to the cars.

Ann (SMC stalwart and currently the first non-male President of the Glasgow Section of the JMCS) accompanied by Bill and Colwyn skied from the busy Cairngorm carpark up to the deserted rime iced summit of Ben Macdui. Eschewing the psychological comfort of a GPS, they navigated with altimeter, map and compass the whole day. It was windy and very claggy. On many occasions the visibility deteriorated to a state where it was impossible to know whether you were up, down, or somewhere in between, as they often proved to be. Late in the day, on the final descent, when the empty piste was reached, they pondered why people pay for the experience of skiing thin ribbons of rutted ice and prominent boulders.

Other members of the Glasgow Section of the JMCS who were sharing the hut had a splendid day climbing *Raeburn's Gully* and *Centre Post Direct* on Creag Mheagaidh.

After a good night of chat, haute cuisine and wine etc. in front of a not so glowing stove (a result of confusing domestic coal with anthracite) Sunday dawned, but they slept on.

Blustery, wet weather meant that there wasn't the same enthusiasm as the previous morning. Many chose that well known classic route, Home superdirect. Without skis, some ventured up Corbetts (Geal Carn Mor, the highest point in the Kinveachy Forest and Ben Rinnes farther east), some up a unidentified Monadhliath Graham. Others drove up to the carpark at Cairngorm but didn't leave the car.

All were agreed that the LSCC hut at Milehouse was an excellent venue.

Colwyn Jones.

JMCS REPORTS

Edinburgh Section: Membership is currently 79, including one aspirant and seven associate members. Rock climbing, winter climbing and hill walking are the main activities, with ski-mountaineering and mountain biking also popular.

The section holds mid-week meets at the Heriot-Watt climbing wall during winter and various crags around Edinburgh in summer. Traprain and Aberdour are the most popular outdoor venues, but there are also visits to crags farther afield such as Dunkeld, Kyloe and Bowden Doors. This year, the wet weather alternative is the Ratho Adventure Centre.

Members gather at Alien Rock on a Monday night, and there is also a pub meet on the first Thursday of the month at Kay's Bar in Jamaica Street from 9pm onwards.

The highpoint of the summer 2003 weekend meets was the annual visit to the Shelter Stone in August. Teams were out on Shelterstone crag, Coire Sputan Dearg and Creagan A'Choire Etchachan, climbing *The Steeple, Djibangi* and *Dagger* among others. Other well-attended meets were held at Caer Fran Hut in North Wales and Salving House in Borrowdale.

The winter meets began with hill walking at Inbhirfhaolain in Glen Etive in December. January's meet at Muir of Inverey cottage was affected by bad weather and turnout was poor. The weather brightened up by the end of the month with eight members spending a memorable weekend at the Ling Hut.

The Blackrock Cottage meet in Glen Coe proved popular with a settled high pressure system meaning steady wind from the north. Climbing conditions were good if a little thin. Teams were out on Ben Nevis and Aonach Mor, enjoying *Tower Scoop, Hesperides Ledge* and *Jet Stream*.

Ben Nevis was the venue for the last meet of the winter season, our annual trip to the CIC Hut at the end of March. Climbing conditions were poor due to a thaw, but teams made the best of it with ascents of *North East Buttress*, *Glover's Chimney* and *Tower Ridge*. The Sunday was windy and wet, so a number of members paid a visit to the Ice Factor in Kinlochleven to sample some of the climbing there. The ice climbing was reported as being "highly enjoyable if somewhat sanitised".

Abroad, club members visited a number of different destinations. Hot rock continues to be popular, with visits to Sardinia and Mallorca. Members continue to visit the Alps in winter for ice climbing and skiing, taking advantage of the new direct flights from Edinburgh to Geneva. Members were active in the regular alpine venues of Chamonix, Zermatt and the Dolomites during the summer. Outside of Europe, New Zealand saw a number of visits for skiing and climbing.

The Annual Dinner once again took place at the Atholl Arms Hotel in Blair Atholl. An excellent meal was followed by an entertaining and amusing speech from Paul Brian of the SMC. Paul regaled those present with many anecdotes from his long climbing career including his involvement with Lochaber Mountain Rescue in the TV show *Rock Face*. There was much laughter and warm applause at the end of his contribution to the evening.

The section's huts continue to be popular with both members and other clubs. The traditional Hogmanay at the Smiddy was well-attended this year. Committee members have been kept busy with discussions regarding the continuation of the lease at Jock Spot's cottage, but it is hoped this will be resolved in the not too distant future.

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 mountaineering. The slide nights take place at 7:30pm on the second Tuesday of the month from October to March at Pollock Halls, Edinburgh.

George McEwan started the slide nights off with an interesting lecture on life an as instructor at Glenmore Lodge. Other speakers have included Robin Campbell, Malcolm Slesser and Dave MacLeod. In February Mike Dales of the MC of S gave an update on current access and conservation issues.

These gatherings have a social aspect as well, with dinner beforehand at the New Bell Inn Restaurant. Thanks go to Des Rubens for all his efforts in organising these evenings.

Next year marks the 80th anniversary of the founding of the JMCS and plans are afoot to mark this occasion with an event later in the year. Former members interested in taking part should contact the Secretary.

Officials elected: *Hon. President*, John Fowler; *Hon. Vice-President*, Euan Scott; *President*, Helen Forde; *Vice-President*, Sally Dipple; *Treasurer*, Bryan Rynne; *Secretary*, Neil Cuthbert, 25 Plewlands Gardens, Edinburgh (secretary@edinburghjmcs.org.uk); *Web Master*, Davy Virdee; *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

Perth Mountaineering Club (JMCS Perth Section)

The Perth Mountaineering Club has had another busy year with 13 weekend meets and seven day meets. The Club is looking forward to celebrating its 75th anniversary in 2004.

Attendance at meets has been inexplicably variable. The July meet to the CIC hut had no takers and was dropped from the programme. Other meets have, however, been well attended. Seventeen people braved less-than-perfect weather conditions for a weekend camping meet at Glen Brittle. The now annual family meet in June was also very well supported. This year it was based at the camp site at Scourie where 16 adults and seven children made the most of the Sutherland beaches, as well as a more energetic traverse of Foinaven.

The traditional Milehouse meet in November was also very well attended with 21 members taking part.

A new venue was ventured in December – Clashgour Hut by Loch Tulla. A select group of seven members attended and found the accommodation rather more basic than the Club has become accustomed to. This did not prevent them from having an enjoyable weekend's hill walking and comradeship.

Other highlights of the year included: a night and day of hard frost at Blackrock Cottage in January; a weekend spent at scenic Strawberry Cottage in April, with many hills climbed; a traverse of Liathach from the Ling Hut at the end of May; an August weekend on Arran where several members tackled the A'Chir ridge; and a round of the Ring of Steel from Steall Hut in October.

The Wednesday evening rock climbing fared much better than the previous year with lots of dry sunny evenings. The Club has now transferred from Falkirk to the new Dundee climbing wall for its winter sessions.

Three Club members completed their Munros during the course of the year. Tom Barnard finished on Fionn Bheinn in May, and then husband-and-wife team,

Carolann and Steve Petrie, had a joint celebration on the Loch Lomondside Ben Vorlich in October.

Several members furthered their mountaineering exploits overseas. A group of five visited the Ordessa area of the Pyrenees and two others the Dolomites. Grahame Nicoll took a week's break in Norway for some seriously cold ice climbing, and Willie Jeffrey took a warmer option, climbing in Colorado.

The Club also proved its worth as a useful way of meeting prospective partners. Donald Barrie and Sue Adams met through the Club and celebrated their marriage in March. A number of Club members attended the wedding in the Lake District.

The Club provides a speaker for an annual joint meeting with the Perth Society of Natural Science. This January Pete Hemmings gave a most enjoyable presentation on his climbing expedition to Greenland during the summer of 2002.

Another social event took place in March when the Club, as recompense for winning last year, hosted the 2003 Mountainmind Quiz at the Dewar Centre, Perth.

The 2002 Annual Dinner was held at the Cultoquhey Hotel at Gilmerton in November.

Officials elected: *President:* Karen Campbell; *Vice-President:* Mike Aldridge; *Secretary:* Sue Barrie; Glensaugh Lodge, Laurencekirk, Aberdeenshire, AB30 1HB. Tel: 01561 340673; *Treasurer:* Pam Dutton; *Newsletter Editor:* Des Bassett; *Meets Convener:* Beverly Robertson; *Committee Members:* Julia Banks, Carolann Petrie, Willie Jeffrey and Chris Hine.

Sue Barrie.

London Section: Our new year resolution for 2003 was to improve the cottage and try to gain some new members from the 'introductory' weekend events we ran in 2002 – no change there then.

Formal membership remains in the mid-40s though the secretary's distribution list of has-beens and hangers on seems to be about double this!

We continue to slowly improve the fabric of our cottage in Bethesda as funds permit. This year, we have embarked upon providing an additional shower room which should make the place much more usable for mixed groups — work is still in progress. The improvements from last year mean that the cottage is structurally sound, with a new roof and repairs to the exterior which generally contribute to keeping it clean and tidy.

As for new members, we have had a clutch of keen young tigers join us and they have helped bring the climbing standard back up to where it has traditionally been (before middle-age spread set in) and provide a 'core' of enthusiasm for proper climbing weekends.

Interestingly, we have had very little (i.e. none) take-up of membership from the introductory weekend events we ran last year. Enjoyable though the events were, and successful in attracting interest, they did not translate into membership – perhaps it says something about us!

With well-attended meets (monthly) across the UK and a keen core of climbers, the club is returning to its traditional style of camping and climbing. Meets are mostly well attended (subject to the weather forecast) and a broad range of activities takes place including mountain biking, walking/scrambling, skiing and of course climbing at various standards up to about E2.

Particularly successful, for the number of routes completed, was Pembroke at Easter. We also have a Munroist – John Steele compleated this year –

congratulations to him. Other extra-curricular highlights included a two-week sailing/walking trip to the Outer Hebrides and St Kilda by an intrepid party of seven chartering a yacht. They had mixed weather but all the more spectacular sailing for that. As usual, members organised some skiing trips to France taking on the traditional downhill style as well as ski-mountaineering and cross-country. Overall, reflecting our broad interests in all activities mountain and wilderness and a healthy appetite for adventure.

The finale to the year is the AGM and dinner, and this year we moved back to a favourite haunt – the Tyn-y-Coed in Capel Curig.

Apart from the usual proceedings we also hosted Jerry Gore who was kind enough to entertain us after dinner with an illustrated lecture on the climatic changes to the Alps and his recommendations on how to make the most of the new conditions to be encountered there. Again a return to an old format that has served us well.

Officials elected: President, Marcus Harvey; Treasurer, Dave Hughes; Hut Custodian, Rod Kleckham; Secretary, Chris Bashforth; Vice-president, John Firmin, and Geoff Deady. Meets responsibility is shared among the committee.

Club contacts and details can be found at our web-site www.jmcs.freewire.co.uk

Chris Bashforth.

SMC AND JMCS ABROAD

Europe

Colwyn M. Jones reports: Four club members, Colwyn Jones, Mark Litterick, Ann MacDonald and Brian Shackleton spent a week in April ski-mountaineering in the Italian Gran Paradiso National Park and the adjacent area of Switzerland north of the Grand Combin. The group had an international flavour with German and Swiss friends Anja Von Werden and Hans-Jakob Schuhmacher (Kobi).

The Scottish contingent travelled by a scheduled Ryanair flight from Prestwick (not very near Glasgow) to Bergamo (not very near Milan) on April 17. The party met Mark at Bergamo airport and we then drove up the Aosta Valley turning left up the Val Saverenche to spend the evening at the roadhead in the comfortable Gran Paradiso Hotel in the village of Pont. This is in a fabulous National Park with chamois and ibex in abundance. As planned there was snow down to the road and next day all six of us skied up through the trees to the comfortable Rifugio Vittorio Emanuele at 2732m.

After a relaxing afternoon in the warm sunshine, but with the barometric pressure falling, some cloud came over and the morning of April 19 was a white out with falling snow and poor visibility. The light snow continued to fall until lunchtime. Thereafter it slowly cleared allowing an escape from contagious cabin fever at about 3pm to slowly reinstate the ski trail up to the 3200m contour. The late afternoon descent back down to the hut in superb powder snow was ample reward for the arduous trail breaking.

Breakfasting at 5am next day, the team left the hut in excellent weather and achieved the summit of the Gran Paradiso by late morning. There were two guided parties who broke trail from 3200m to the summit at 4061m. The view was superb in all directions but the now gathering cloud precluded a long stay and the descent was again excellent in untracked powder snow.

After a beer at the hut the descent to the valley floor in very soft snow was

Bill Young on The Cobbler in 1956. Photo: A. McKenzie.

Colin Steven climbing Zero Gully/Slav Route, April 1936. Photo: Colin Steven collection.









tiresome. There, the four Scots departed from Anja and Kobi, who had to get back to work, and drove across the Aosta Valley, through the Grand St Bernard tunnel to Bourg St. Pierre. As Mark had a significant birthday, it was necessary to book into a hotel for an excellent meal with accompanying wine and liqueurs. An appropriate celebration which may well influence the future date of these

Spring ski-mountaineering trips!

The news from the hut wardens in the area was that the "Le Grand Combin n'est pas bon." Therefore we drove to Fionnay to ascend to the Panossiere Hut which might allow an attempt on the main peak if conditions improved. The hut is now confusingly named the Francois Xavier-Bagnoud hut (2671m) in memory of a helicopter pilot. The late start, relentless sunshine and long approach did not help to concentrate attention on the technical difficulties of the climb to the hut. Nor did the large numbers of young heliskiers skiing recklessly down the narrow track of icy moguls. The final danger was the crumbling slushy filthy moraine which had to be crossed to finally reach this excellent, modern hut. The wardens have been working there for 36 years and their welcome and care was super. We particularly commend the drying facilities and excellent food, unless you are vegetarian.

Next morning on April 22, the weather was again excellent and we elected to ski up the Tournelon Blanc (3707m). The ascent started at dawn (6am) up the main Glacier de Corbassiere. Heading west there was then the steep ascent up to the ridge, which was excellent, and the final narrow arête to the summit giving a super little peak with an excellent view across the Alps. It also confirmed

the poor condition of the corridor route on the Grand Combin.

The regular freeze-thaw cycle of the last couple of days had resulted in a deep crust over the wide snow cover. This dictated either energetic jump turns on the descent or more sedate step turns and terminal traverses. Hence, it was an exhausted but triumphant team who arrived back at the hut just after midday for an excellent lunch. There were only two other guests in the hut that night and the resulting portion control at another excellent dinner was rather poor!

Next day, we set out to scale both the Combin de Corbassiere and the Petit Combin. It was a long approach and the late morning sun proved to be a testing companion. However, leaving skis a bare 100m below the top and climbing the final steep mixed slopes, we finally achieved the first summit at just after 11am (Combin de Corbassiere, 3715m). The short descent between the two peaks was in excellent powder but again the sun-drenched, south-facing climb to the summit of the Petit Combin (3672m) baked us alive. For those favouring the long approach and the peace of the mountains, the Petit Combin has a designated helicopter landing site on the summit and a large flat adjacent glacier for ski planes to land. Nevertheless, the view is excellent. That morning only Mont Blanc and Monte Rosa had a veil of cloud. The descent back down the glacier, passing teetering seracs was exciting enough and we were soon safely back at the hut for some afternoon sunbathing and another excellent evening meal.

We descended from the Panossiere Hut early on Saturday, April 24, experiencing variable conditions as we lost height. There was a small avalanche which carried one member down off the path. A tree, which he managed to grab en passant, proved to be his salvation. Thereafter, we skied with exaggerated gaps between us while, on the sunlit side of the valley, the avalanches crashed down with monotonous regularity.

Fiftieth anniversary of the first routes on the Trilleachan Slabs by Eric Langmuir, Mike O'Hara and John Mallinson. Bob Downes, Langmuir and Mallinson display equipment – June 13, 1964 (Sickle). Photo: John Mallinson.

That afternoon, we drove back to Lake Como in Northern Italy for an excellent evening by the waterside and, returning to Bergamo airport early next day, we flew home after an excellent trip.

We had skins on our skis on seven successive days and recorded a total ascent of 6,500 metres (21,300 ft). The most ascent in any one day was 1380m (4,500ft) on the Friday during ascents of the Petit Combin and Combin de Corbassiere. The least ascent was 120m on the last day when leaving the lower Corbassiere Glacier basin during the descent to Fionnay.

Apart from snow late Monday lasting through into the Tuesday, during our visit to the Rifugio Vittorio Emanuele, the weather was generally sunny and clear although some afternoon cloud also occurred. On the final Saturday, the party started their day in still mountain air well below freezing and finished it in sultry warm air around 28 degrees Centigrade in Lecco on the shores of Lake Como!

ADAM KASSYK REPORTS: In early June 2003 I had a very short ski touring trip with Matthew Priestman (Alpine Club) on Monte Rosa in the Pennine Alps. We enjoyed perfect weather and snow conditions. From the Monte Rosa Hut we climbed the Grenz Glacier to the Lisjoch (4256m) on our second day, and descended to the Rifugio Gnifetti in Italy to recover.

After a day's rest we spent the night in the Balmenhorn bivouac hut, and from there we traversed Ludwigshohe (4341m), Parrotspitze (4432m) and Zumsteinspitze (4563m) on our fourth day. My partner went on to the main summit (Dufourspitze 4634m), having also managed to collect nearly all the other minor summits on the Italian side. All that remained was a serious, but exhilarating, ski down the Grenz Glacier the following morning – carefully avoiding the crevasses. At this time of the year we had the mountain virtually to ourselves.

In June of the previous year (2002) I went to Chamonix with Keith Anderson for a week. Unfortunately, the weather was poor. We climbed most of the SE Spur of the Minaret (TD) on the one good day, followed by an ascent of the Aiguille d'Argentiere by the South-east (Fleche Rousse) Ridge (AD) in very mixed conditions, piles of powder snow and rock pitches well iced – somewhat reminiscent of Lochnagar in winter. After that a metre of snow fell so we gave up any hope of ice climbing and descended from the Argentiere Refuge. The Cosmiques Arête on the Midi was just about the only route possible in the massif in these conditions, so we ploughed a deep trench up this to complete a week with a rather uniquely Scottish feel to it.

The previous autumn I had a very successful alpine week in October with Matthew Priestman. After heavy snowfall we climbed the Obergabelhorn by the Arbengrat (AD) in wintry conditions, and this classic ridge gave entertaining rock climbing in crampons, followed by the traverse over the Wellenkuppe and a night-time descent in deep snow – another typically Scottish experience. We then decamped to the Oberland for the classic South Ridge of the Stockhorn (TD), this time on dry and sun warmed rock, followed by the South Rib of the Aletschorn (PD) to round off the trip. On all three trips we were almost always the only people on the mountain, and we generally had the refuges to ourselves as well – luxury.

Greenland

Stephen Reid reports: Two excellent alpine ridges received first ascents from the SMC East Greenland Expedition 2003 – Stephen Reid (Leader), Colwyn Jones (Medical Officer), Jonathan Preston, and Hamish Irvine.

They visited the Staunings Alps – a large range of mainly granite and gneiss glaciated peaks in the North-East Greenland National Park, from mid-July to mid-August. The objectives of the expedition were the first ascents of the South and South-West Ridges of Dansketinde (2930m), the highest peak in the range.

Having been helicoptered in to a base on Col Major (2010m), the team acclimatised by ascending Dansketinde via the Original Route and climbing a lower more or less independent part of the South Ridge. An attempt was then made by all four climbers on the main part of the South Ridge, but, after some 18 hours of increasingly difficult climbing (long sections of sustained VS in places) on mainly excellent rock, this petered out under a steep verglas and snow covered wall. A long abseil retreat was organised.

After several days of bad weather and a brief reconnaissance, the team had more success on its secondary objective, the unclimbed South-West Ridge of Dansketinde. This gave a great natural line of sustained difficulty with numerous pitches of Scottish Grade IV and V ice and mixed climbing. In all, 19 pitches (including one moving together for 150m) were climbed to reach the Western Summit. A snow arête joins this to the Main Summit from where the Original Route was descended to base camp. The overall grade was felt to be TD+.

At the end of the expedition, two days of good weather allowed Reid, Preston and Irvine a second attempt on the South Ridge. Conditions were perfect and, climbing through the night, rapid progress was made to reach the foot of the 'Impossible Wall' which was now free of verglas and the party were astounded to find it went at only Hard Severe. Higher up an interesting chimney through-route at Scottish V provided a gateway through the headwall to the summit, which was reached at 5pm, but a particularly unpleasant descent meant it was 10.30pm by the time base camp was reached – a round trip of 30 hours. Twenty-eight pitches (1545m) were climbed in total (not including the preliminary section of 500m) with one moving together pitch of 300m, and several more of 100m. With pitches of VS and Scottish V, and the difficulties high on the route, it was felt a grade of TD+ was appropriate.

The team was airlifted out by pre-arranged helicopter 12 hours later. The expedition was supported by the BMC, the Gino Watkins Trust and the MEF.

Africa

Jamie Andrew reports: In January 2004, I was part of an all-disabled expedition to Kilimanjaro in Tanzania. The other team members were David Lim from Singapore who has partial paralysis of the lower legs after suffering the rare nervous disorder Guillain-Barre Syndrome; Pete Steane from Tasmania who also has partial lower leg paralysis due to a spinal injury, and Paul Pritchard – well known British climber who sustained a serious head injury on the Totem Pole and has severe paralysis of the whole right side of his body.

The objective of the 'Voltaren Kilimanjaro Challenge' was to make a rare ascent of one of Kili's Northern Glaciers, either the Little Penck or the Credner, unsupported from the Shira Plateau. However, on reaching Lava Tower camp

(4600m) it became apparent that the Little Penck Glacier is now little more than a patch of dangerous looking seracs, sitting perched over a band of cliffs and moraine.

The team turned its efforts to the Credner Glacier, also considerably receded, but promising a climb of gentler angle. Further setbacks occurred when Paul began to develop pulmonary oedema, forcing a retreat back to Shira Camp at 3800m, then three days of bad weather dumped over a foot of snow on the mountain. Two attempted recess during the bad weather failed to find a route to the start of the Credner and then, to cap it all, two of our Tanzanian guides became snow blind and were forced to descend.

Faced with these setbacks, and running out of time, the team decided to focus their efforts on the much more well-known Western Breach, or Arrow Glacier Route. They also made a further compromise by taking two Tanzanian guides along on the final climb.

A start was made at 1am on January 18. The Western Breach Route gave a superb climb of about Scottish II under snow and the team reached the crater rim at about 11am. At 3pm the team reached Uhuru Peak (5895m) which basked in glorious sunshine while the whole of the rest of Africa was hidden beneath cloud. The descent to Barranco (3900m) took until midnight, giving an exhausting 23-hour day.

'The Voltaren Kilimanjaro Challenge' was in aid of the Upendo Leprosy Centre, a Rotary Club project on the slopes of Kilimanjaro, and more than £5000 was raised for this worthwhile cause.

SOUTH RIDGE DIRECT

Finger ends curl like a cat's cold claws Chasing mouse-grey granite's crystal flaws But miss...to trace the spikeful scrapes That a cruel and clumsy crampon drapes Upon the rock.

The quartzy cast eludes my reach, Slips silently away, unlike the screech Of pecking picks and their whacking ring Slamming in the crack. They call it torqueing To the rock.

Be reassured, the first fiddles play, We lead – and this is The Way. The scars will heal and our star will shine. We wait. All we need is a frosty line Up the rock.

"Don't do this," the Code of Conduct says, but it's just a guide, And rule seven states that discretion should be exercised "Classic climbs often have little vegetation or even snow," So it's up to you. Now, who'll be the first to crow To have raped the rock?

Mike Jacob.

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REVIEWS

With Friends in High Places: Malcolm Slesser. Mainstream Publishing, 2004. 256pp. £15.99.

SOME would say that to be a Friend of Malcolm Slesser is a heavy burden, and In High Places heavier still. You would have to guard your spoon and other goods such as whisky, prepare the morning porridge to his rigid (but vague) specification (see Appendix 4), eat semolina (Appendix 3), endure his detailed (but inconclusive) opinions about energy, environment, and risk (Chapters 10, 15, Appendix 1), and praise his piping – unless you are Geoff Dutton "What's a finger or two to a piper like you?" (p. 81). Your name would also be either mispronounced, forgotten or mis-spelled. Bonington, for example, is always 'Bonnington' here, but perhaps this an understandable reaction to Slesser so often becoming 'Slessor', or 'Sleazer' as Carlos Ziebell preferred to call him (p. 166). The number of Malcolm Slesser's friends was easily counted in Loch Scresort in 1997 on the occasion of the Club's Yachting Meet. Although it was common knowledge among the flotilla gathered there that the Slesser boat was anchored in shallow water, and would lie on her beam ends at the coming low water in the dead of night, all were so anxious that he should enjoy this experience that no-one passed on this information until substantial seas began to roll into the loch - surely an excellent example of 'the camaraderie' of the SMC celebrated on p. 7!

Like Bill Murray's autobiography The Evidence of Things Not Seen, Slesser's autobiography applies the wisdom of long years to retrospection of achievements already described in detail in previous works (Red Peak, The Andes are Prickly – see parts of Chapter 5 and all of Chapters 6 through 9). Perhaps new insights are available now to justify covering old ground, but the earlier accounts had the benefit of the freshness of experience and the security of recent memory. For example, the tussle with Robin Smith in the Lake of Communist Youth at Dushanbe is recalled as a grievous assault here, instead of as 'a horse-fight' in Red Peak. A new story about Smith appears here, in which he stands at the door of Slesser's (occupied) tent, 'penis hanging out' (p. 84) and urinates into it. Of course, one would not say that Slesser has invented this story, since (unlike Smith) he is still alive, and able to sue. So it must be true, or true-ish. But I knew Smith pretty well. He was polite, shy, and sexually inexperienced. He was not the sort to expose himself, still less to urinate into a tent. If he did so, then the provocation must have been extreme. The climbing side of the Russian visit to Scotland in 1960 was largely taken care of by Smith and his Edinburgh friends, whose advantageous position was then supplanted (or perceived to be) by Slesser 'sheathed in smiles' (J. 1961, 174). Smith surely resented Slesser's leadership of the Scottish group in the Pamirs, and the exclusion of his friends. At the very least, there is more to these stories about Smith than we are told here. Certainly, Slesser has succeeded in leaving a stain on the reputation of this peerless and beloved climber more durable than any left by him on the floor of that

The section assessing the character of Robin Smith is one of a series of interesting vignettes in the book. Dougal Haston and Tom Patey are described in the same chapter. Chapter 12 – 'Two Sides of a Coin' – deals with Ernest Henley (the familiar Dedo de Deus story), Norman Tennent and Iain Smart. A recurring theme of the book is Slesser's view of safety: that safe climbing depends not on avoidance of danger but on awareness of risk and the adoption of a calculated approach to the

management of it. So those who perish have failed to attend to risk, or have calculated wrongly. Thus the deaths of Haston, Patey and Smith, are attributed (p. 76) to 'trivial errors of judgment'. I think we need to know a great deal more about these accidents to justify such a sweeping and comfortable diagnosis. If Malcolm Slesser (inattentive to risk, and miscalculating it) had moved an inch or two on his stance of the Bonnaidh Donn (p. 25) he would have been obliterated by a falling stone. 'Bad luck', we would have said, and so should we say for Haston, Patey and Smith. I prefer the theory of Iain Smart, in which mountaineering is represented as an addictive and dangerous drug, which kills a good proportion of those hooked by it.

Other chapters are concerned with exploratory trips to Greenland. Our Club's involvement with Greenland has been constant, and considerable, since the 1950s, and Slesser has been a prime mover in advocacy of that once pristine land, and in organising (or persuading others to organise) expeditions there. For a reader like me, who has never been there, the accounts are hard to follow in the absence of illustrations and adequate maps, but there is a serious attempt made to describe the beauty of land and sea, and the predicaments faced by those who travel there.

Safety gets a chapter, as do expedition food, ski-mountaineering and use of mountain land. Although Slesser is keen on his analysis of safety, I don't feel that he is as comfortable with this topic as the others. The measurement of risk is a technically tricky business – much trickier than the ridiculous Scale of Risk (Appendix 1) would suggest. When considering all forms of mountaineering, a rate of death per annum may make some sense, since approximately the same collective risks are taken each year, but when considering climbing K2, the rate of death by altitude attained curve is a better indicator: choosing bases for risk calculation is never straightforward, and is hotly debated even in well-trodden areas like transport risk. And whereas the costs of taking a risk are perhaps sometimes calculable, the benefits seldom are. On the other hand, Slesser's comments about food, ski-mountaineering and the use of mountains seem perspicacious and wise. I found the latter chapter 'The Mountaineer's Footprint' particularly engrossing, insightful and witty: 'If you want to save energy the best way is to be poor' (p. 224); 'Nuclear energy [is] the match [which] will always be there when we get tired of rubbing two sticks together' (p. 225). His expertise in this area of energy/environmental costs and benefits is evident, and reading his views made me thirst for more. And there is more: the endpapers list six other books on this topic.

Considered merely as a book *With Friends* is a reasonable cheapish job by the publisher: illustrations are only the author's (free), the excellent poetry is cadged, the sparse footnotes are not located where they should be at the bottom of the page, and – despite the 'meticulous editing' of Deborah Warner – there are several mistakes. But there is an Index, and the book is attractively laid out. Considered as an autobiography, despite its miscellaneous contents, it hangs together well and is well-written in a breezy and humorous manner. I was left with the impression of a life lived most vigorously, the hook of mountaineering firmly set, with no opportunity for adventure spurned, and with little account taken of personal hardship. This is most evident on the Peak of Communism (now the Peak of Ismail Samani), which Slesser and Graeme Nicol struggled up despite severe illness, but it is plainly a necessary virtue for every Arctic mountaineer too. The mark of toughness is borne by many distinguished Scottish mountaineers: Raeburn, Bell, MacInnes, Ritchie, Haston, and Patey come to mind, and it is evident too in the hawk-nosed gimleteyed Slesser.

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Everest Pioneer – The Photographs of Captain John Noel: Sandra Noel, (Sutton Publishing, 2003, hardback, 176pp. ISBN 0-7509-3278-3, £25).

In 1919, Captain John Noel, a 29-year-old Army Officer, suggested, during a presentation of his expeditions to Tibet, that an attempt should be made to climb Mount Everest. The mountain lay in a country rarely seen by westerners and had never before been climbed. Hidden behind the barrier of the Himalayas, it had retained an almost medieval character.

Taking up his suggestion, the Mount Everest Committee was formed under the leadership of Francis Younghusband. Due to Army commitments, Noel was unable to accompany the first Reconnaissance Expedition in 1921 but, on the two pioneering expeditions of 1922 and 1924, Noel was the official photographer.

Watching the climbers' brave attempts in hazardous conditions to achieve the summit of the mountain the Tibetans knew as Chomolungma – Goddess Mother of the World, he was also witness to Mallory and Irvine's doomed ascent along the northern precipice and captured the last haunting images of the two men.

Battling against extreme weather conditions, the complex technical demands of high altitudes, cold and fatigue – and sending his photographs to the other side of the world via packhorse and local runner – Noel made a unique collection of still images and film. This book draws together his work for the first time. Stunning images capture the drama and tragedy of the expeditions – the first to venture upon the highest mountain on earth – the landscape's extraordinary beauty and the life of the people who inhabited one of the remotest regions on earth. Mothers coat their children in butter to protect them from the cold; men are shown in traditional dress, their pendant earrings defining their rank; nomad shepherds stand beside their yak-hair encampment. On the world's highest mountain climbers are seen edging along a dangerous precipice, relaxing at camp, sitting triumphant on their way to the roof of the world and searching in vain for lost companions.

Written and compiled by Noel's daughter and including the first pictures of mountaineering expeditions by westerners, many previously unpublished, *Everest Pioneer* will appeal to anyone intrigued by exploration, history or mountaineering.

Charles J. Orr.

Yosemite – Half a Century of Dynamic Rock Climbing:- Alexander Huber and Heinz Zak (Baton Wicks, 2003, hardback 176pp. ISBN 1898573573). £30.

The publication of this splendid book covering the history of modern climbing in Yosemite Valley could hardly be more timely. 'The Valley' is undoubtedly the most spectacular arena for rock climbers to pursue their dreams and ambitions. As such, it has always been the forcing ground of some of climbing's greatest adventurers and athletes. Over the last decade Alex Huber has placed himself among this band of legendary figures with his free ascents of *Salathe Wall* and other climbs on Yosemite's massive granite walls. Together with the world class climbing photographer Heinz Zak, Huber has attempted to capture the spirit of Yosemite climbing by combining stunning images of the valley and its landmark climbs, and historical accounts by the climbers who pioneered them.

This is a large format coffee-table book which is very well produced, providing a chronicle of key stages in the progressive development of climbing in the valley. This concise history has been compiled by Huber, interspersed with some brilliant articles by a good selection of leading climbers in these periods, such as Warren

Harding, Royal Robbins, Jerry Moffatt, Lynn Hill and Leo Houlding. I was also pleased to see the opening pieces describing the early history of the valley; its native Ahwahneechee, the 'discovery' of the valley by white explorers and, later, the role of John Muir in the establishment of the national park in 1890.

In general, Huber provides a well-constructed, but brief history, and gets straight down to business with John Salathe and his influential development of modern steel pitons which opened the door for climbers to take on Yosemite's main challenges, the big walls. Although virtually all of the images come from modern day photo shoots by Heinz Zak, some of which are staged, the book also features several truly inspiring historical shots. Of these, first ascent shots of Royal Robbins advancing into a sea of overhanging granite on the headwall cracks of Salathe Wall and hanging out in hammocks 2000ft. up North America Wall in the early Sixties say more about the great courage and adventurous spirit of these pioneers than the writing manages on its own. This publication is so timely because the progress of styles and approaches to tackling these immense walls has come full circle over the last decade with the freeing of the most famous and grandest of challenges; The Nose by Lynn Hill and Salathe Wall by the Huber brothers.

Throughout, Huber grapples with the ethical twists and turns which went on from the early days of aid and the long expedition style sieges, through to the state of the art ascents such as *The Nose* free in 23 hours by Lynn Hill (with two pitches of 5.14a after 2000ft. of difficult climbing) or Leo Houlding's near-on-sight repeat of *El Nino* (5.13c). It is this logical and open-minded critique of the ethical statements of the pioneers through the ages and the way Huber tells the story of how circumstances, personalities and coincidences shaped them, that I feel is the sparkling highlight of the book. It is a remarkable insight into the mechanics of the evolution of the climbs as they are today and how the ambitions of the climbers of the day were balanced carefully with respect for the rock, the abilities of future generations and for the spirit of adventure.

The account by Jerry Moffatt of the equally-famous, though rather smaller, routes on the immaculate boulders in the Camp 4 campground in the valley basin was a welcome contrast to the endless exposure shots of El Capitan's headwall. An extended version of this published in *High* magazine in 1994 was partly what inspired me to become a climber. The shot of Jerry looking relaxed as he dynos across a roof on *The Dominator* (who would believe it is a British 7c move?). The book would also not be complete without the gut-wrenching accounts and images of Wolfgang Gullich's legendary free solo of *Separate Reality* in 1986 and Peter Croft's free solo on *Astroman*.

A large chunk of the section of free climbing is devoted inevitably to the Huber brother's ascents, with yet more jaw-dropping images which justify the exhaustive accounts of all four of their big routes on El Cap. However, the concluding article by Leo Houlding, rather fittingly, describes the early efforts towards a further progression in the direction of the purest and most demanding form of climbing yet undertaken on the big walls, onsight free first ascents of the 'new wave' lines which venture away from the security of Yosemite's famous cracks.

I found my concentration wandering throughout, however, this was only to ponder ways and means of making a pilgrimage to the valley myself, and which of the great climbs described I could muster the courage to attempt. Before picking up this book for the first time it was a matter of 'if' I might ever climb the great El Capitan. Now it's simply a matter of 'when'.

Dave MacLeod

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Loose Scree: This is a small A5 booklet which, in the editor Barry Imeson's own words: "Is for, and intended to be by, seasoned climbers of all ages.

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An altruistic endeavour indeed and there is much good writing here from new as well as respected climbing authors. The next issue can be obtained from the above address by sending a suitable SAE (currently 34p).

The editor can be contacted by e-mail at barry@imeson6017.freeserve.co.uk

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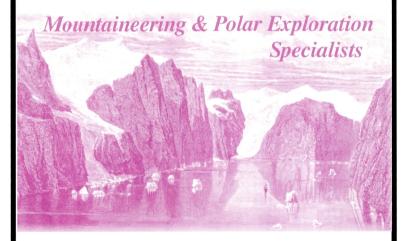
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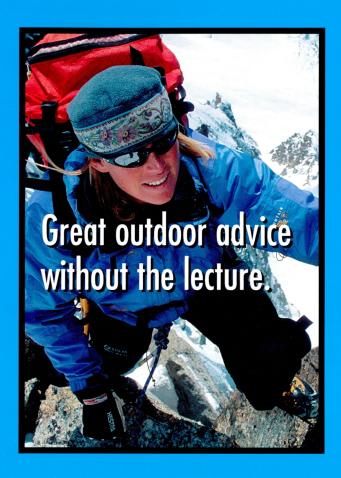
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