

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 Entries must be of original, previously unpublished material.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.

Dunmore Hotchkis wearing the old Club tie. Photo: James Hotchkis.

Sgurr Nan Gilleann. (see page 401).

The W. H. Murray Literary Prize (2006)

The winner of this year's W. H. Murray Literary Prize is first-time contributor, Guy Robertson, with his excellent piece *Final Destination*, which appropriately closes the Articles section of this edition of the Journal.

To say that this is an account of the first ascent of a Grade VI climb on Beinn Dearg adequately describes the subject matter, but gives no real hint of the style of writing to expect. Guy writes with a unique style which, with his clever use of imagery and metaphor, paints word pictures that surprise and delight. He has the ability as MacCaig so aptly put it: "To see the extraordinary in the ordinary."

"... the unthinkable arrests them, their jaws dropped slack like a pair of wooden puppets. A mighty Gulf Stream fist had driven unchallenged across the great stand of pines through which they toil. And now, up ahead, great wooden bastions lay slain and slaughtered across their way..." Which, left to a less artistic pen, might read: "Some trees had been blown over and blocked their way." – I rest my case.

This year's 'Prize' was one of the closest contested to date with Julian Lines's history of climbing on the Shelterstone, *The Shelterstone Saga* running Guy very close.

"... full of passion, crystal crimping pleasure and climbing characters – more metaphors and similes than holds!"

"An excellent piece documenting and recording the climbing history of The Shelterstone."

Julian somehow manages to describe these climbs, at times move after nerve-stretching move, without losing the reader's attention. His sense of the joy of climbing comes across clearly even while employing a commitment that most of us can't even imagine.

"If you can't do these climbs, this is as close as your going to get."

Another piece which came in for praise from the judges was David Adams *Hot Ice* a futuristic fiction pre-figuring what 'Ice-climbing' on The Ben might be like in 2075.

"An original piece of 'cli-fi', far enough removed from where we are to be plausible (just)."

"Well the Ice-Factor is just down the road and there is still 70 years to go!"

Finally, a mention must be made of the innovative two-handed narrative *Maneater* by Ken Crocket and John Mackenzie

"An excellently crafted tale of exploratory winter climbing in the North-west."

A personal favourite – but perhaps too innovative for some.

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

Charlie Orr.

SCOTTISH WINTER NOTES

By Simon Richardson

THE 2006 winter season was when Grade VIII finally came of age. There were more ascents of top-end climbs during 2006 than any winter before, and this was despite a very slow start to the season that only really got going with the first heavy snowfalls in early March. Before then, ascents were snatched as a result of brilliant timing, or by those fortunate enough to be in the right place at the right time and willing to take an opportunistic approach.

The first big route of the season fell to Jon Bracey, Rich Cross and Martin Moran when they made the first winter ascent of *Hydroponicum* on Beinn Eighe at the end of November. This takes a sensational line up a tapering undercut ramp in the centre of Far East Wall, creeps round the left edge of a big roof, then climbs a plumb vertical groove to the exit. Andy Nisbet climbed it in summer with John Allott in 1995 as a rather dirty E1, but it had already caught Moran's eye as a potential winter line. He tried it with Chris Dale in 1993, but had to make a fraught retreat from just below the crux section due to the onset of a massive thaw – so success more than 12 years later must have been very sweet.

"Jon made an outstanding on-sight lead of the crux pitch," Martin told me. "Protection and placements were hard to find, but having led *Daddy Longlegs* in the Northern Corries the previous weekend he was clearly in great form. From a hanging stance just above the roofs Rich led the difficult exit groove in the dark. We reckoned the overall grade to be VIII, 8 and another worthy addition to Scotland's mixed climbing Mecca."

The next big event was the first winter ascent of *Sioux Wall* on Number Three Gully Buttress on Ben Nevis. This was first climbed in the summer of 1972 by Ian Nicolson and George Grassam and is one of the finest HVS climbs on the mountain. High mountain rock climbs on the Ben are not in vogue nowadays, so it is rarely climbed, but *Sioux Wall* had entered the modern climber's consciousness as a futuristic winter climbing target. With winter standards rising year on year, it was only a matter of time before it was climbed, and sure enough on January 1, Ian Parnell and Olly Metherell brought in 2006 with a bang with the first winter ascent.

"On the evening of December 31, we walked up towards the Ben and camped about two-thirds of the way to the CIC Hut," Ian told me. "New Year's Day was warm and slushy so we walked up with little optimism into Coire na Ciste planning to have a go at *Archangel*. As we got higher we began to realise how white everything was, with soggy snow stuck to overhanging, as well as vertical aspects, so I persuaded Olly to switch to an attempt on *Sioux Wall*."

"We started pretty direct and I led the steep wall from the obvious belay niche to a ledge at the base of the 'obvious corner-groove'. This pitch was the crux. It was very well protected, but super steep, sustained and pumpy – like *The Vicar* on steroids! Olly led the corner-groove that had surprisingly good protection, and although there were more rests, it was still pumpy."

"Olly fell off, leaving his axes in the belay ledge – we both were climbing leashless – so he climbed up again to finish off this pitch. From here the summer pitch 3 continues with a great looking crack, but with half-an-hour of daylight left I chose a rightward line. I hoped it would be easier, but it proved fairly serious, particularly up high – with a foot of snow over very thin vertical ground lit by head torch." With two pitches of 7 and two of 8, *Sioux Wall* (VIII,8) is a welcome

addition to the growing clutch of Grade VIII routes on the Ben. Parnell and Metherell's ascent was met with general acclaim.

"I'm very impressed," said Andy Nisbet, New Routes Editor. "This sort of route is moving up a grade from the 1980s and 1990s. It's the sort of route we couldn't quite do, and there's a lot of scope in Scotland for this type of climb. Really it's the new routing future, although there's no danger of me running out of easier remote routes!"

New routes are often used as the gauge for progress in mountaineering, however sometimes second ascents are made in such outstanding style that they take on special significance. Guy Robertson and Pete Benson's repeat of *The Steeple* (IX,9) on the Shelter Stone Crag was such a climb, and illustrates how standards are also advancing on long and technically demanding routes. The first winter ascent of *The Steeple* fell to Alan Mullin and Steve Paget in a 24-hour push in November, 1999. It was an outstanding piece of mountaineering but the climb was marred by two points of aid and the early season nature of the ascent was severely criticised. A clean second ascent in full winter conditions therefore, stood out as one of the great prizes of Scottish winter climbing. After a series of blizzards in early March, the high Cairngorms crags were draped in fresh snow, which prompted Robertson and Benson to have a look.

"Conditions were generally superb," said Guy. "There was good snow-ice in places and the turf was like toffee. There was lots of snow, and every crack, niche and crevice was utterly bloated with the stuff. Overall it felt very wintry."

Robertson and Benson completed the route in an astonishing 12 hours and finished just as light was fading. They started up the gully and 'fine corner' of the original line of *Postern*, then went right to the Terrace and up the summer crux of *Needle*. They continued up *The Steeple* 'layback cracks', climbed the big Steeple Corner in a single pitch and finished up the '5a wall cracks'. The 250m.-long route had two pitches each of 7, 8 and 9 and the Steeple Corner was led in a single 45m. pitch by Benson. The 5a wall cracks provided the second crux and the only flaw to the ascent was when Robertson dangled momentarily from an axe leash round his neck when his right tool ripped while he was pulling onto the slab above the final crack. Fortunately, the left tool held.

"What a feeling," Guy enthused, "locked off in the final corner, the last gear out of sight, pummelling desperately at a foot-and-a-half of rime ice, the wind howling like a Banshee in my face and 1000ft. of air snapping at my feet! I was completely blown away by this route, and I doubt I'll experience the like again. The length, difficulty, variety and majesty of the big Shelter Stone routes are simply unparalleled."

Two days before *The Steeple* ascent, Dave MacLeod and Fiona Murray were gearing up below one of the last great problems in the Southern Highlands – the gently overhanging wall left of *Messiah* on Creag an Socach above Bridge or Orchy. MacLeod set off up a turfy ramp to gain a line of poorly protected overhanging thin corners. Hard moves through a roof led onto the headwall followed by a difficult traverse left to a hanging corner and an exquisite turfy fault that finished on the traverse line of *Golgotha*. This astonishing 60m.-long pitch was thought to be M8+ in standard and is one of the most impressive on sight leads ever made in Scottish winter. The second pitch was considerably easier and soon MacLeod and Murray were on the top celebrating *Defenders of the Faith* (IX,9) – the first time a Scottish winter route of this grade has been climbed completely free and on sight.

"It put up a good fight," said Dave. "It's a great line and is classic Southern Highlands climbing with some 'Thank God' bits of turf in some highly improbable spots."

Across on Ben Nevis, MacLeod and Emmett made a direct finish to *Italian Climb*. This well-known problem tackles the cave and overhang at the top of the initial gully where the original Grade III route goes right. The crux was a steep cracked wall with long reaches, followed by a serious groove-line leading onto the crest of *Tower Ridge*. The *Italian Job* (VIII,9) was climbed on sight and is currently the highest graded route on the mountain, although it is possible that the top groove will become easier when iced. Higher up in Coire na Ciste, Nick Bullock and Owen Samuels climbed a difficult route to the right of *Darth Vader*. *Avenging Angel* (VII,8) climbs the first three pitches of *Archangel* and then continues up a steep corner, offwidth and overhanging wall in the true line of the impending corner system. Bullock had a good run of routes with the second ascent of *Babylon* (VII,8) on Number Three Gully Buttress with Mat Helliker, and an early repeat of *Postman Pat* (VII,7) on Creag Meagaidh with Kevin Neal.

There are many new route possibilities in the Northern Highlands, but a winter ascent of *Pobble*, a summer VS on Lord Reay's Seat on Foinaven, was a clear target. The 160m. route takes a series of chimneys up the centre of the crag, and had been eyed up by several winter teams over the years. Foinaven does not hold winter conditions well, but it can be a very difficult mountain to reach when the roads are covered in snow. Malcolm Bass and Simon Yearsley tried the route in November, 2004, but had found mounds of graupel below the crag, with a totally black buttress above.

Simon said: "This time the forecast proved too much of a mid-week temptation. Conditions were predicted to be ideal with heavy snow fall, then continuous snow showers during the day to top up the snow cover on the crag which is east-facing and quickly stripped by the morning sun."

After an epic drive, involving blocked roads and disintegrating snow-chains, they left the car at 5.30am, cycled along the approach track and then used snow-shoes for the ascent to the crag. They started climbing by 10am, reached the summit at 9pm. and finally made it back to the road by 3.30am. after 22 hours on the move.

"The route packs a real punch," Simon said, "with a superb mix of strenuous, yet helpful chimneys, and technical delicate slabs, finishing on the summit of Lord Reay's Seat."

Overall the route came in at a sustained VII,7, with one pitch of technical 6 and five pitches of technical 7. In common with other Yearsley-Bass ascents, this route was the result of imaginative planning and dogged persistence, and the style of their ascent drew many favourable comments from a cross-section of Scottish winter activists. It just goes to show that it's not always cutting edge technical ascents that provide the greatest inspiration.

It stayed consistently cold through March and April and Ian Parnell took best advantage of the unusually good late season conditions by climbing two new Grade VIIIs in the Cairngorms with Guy Robertson, before returning a week later with Tim Emmett to solve a long-standing problem in the Northern Corries.

Parnell and Robertson's first objective was the natural line of weakness curving leftwards across the right wall of *Raeburn's Gully*, on Lochnagar. This very steep recessed buttress, to the left of the classic ice line of *Scarface*, is an awkward proposition as it is undercut at its base and needs a good build up in *Raeburn's*

Gully to allow a way through the initial overhangs. Three very steep mixed pitches led to a difficult finish up the final two pitches of *The Straight-Jacket* (VII,7), an unrepeated Nisbet-Spinks route from 1980.

"The route provided some tremendous and exacting climbing," Guy enthused. "The weather was wild and conditions were full on at times – yet another memorable adventure."

With three pitches of technical 8, *Scarface Wall* weighs in at a mighty VIII,8 and a worthy addition to a growing list of modern Lochnagar test-pieces.

After a day's rest, the pair went up to No.1 Buttress in Coire an Lochain in the Northern Corries and made the first ascent of *Open Heart* (VIII,9), a very strenuous route that links the first pitch of *Ventricle* to the crux of *Ventriloquist*.

"This route was very much Ian's baby," Guy said. "He'd been on it with Ben Wilkinson a few weeks previously. It was pretty buried on that occasion, and Ben fell off nearing the top of the crux overhanging groove, ripping all his gear and landing on Ian's head. Ian cruised it when we went back, and made a very impressive lead. I'd say it was roughly the same grade as *Daddy Longlegs*, but maybe just a touch thinner."

Two new Grade VIII routes in three days is an impressive haul by anyone's standards, but Parnell was back the following week for more.

Ian said: "I thought that weekend with Guy would be the end of the winter for me, but when I phoned up Tim Emmett to arrange a trip to Pembroke he was desperate to get back up North, so Easter weekend in Scotland it was. We opted for an attempt on *Never Mind* in the Northern Corries. Most of the hoar was stripped on anything steep, but that little corner of the Corries was thick with frost and under a fairly uniform coat of icy hoar 12ins. to 18ins. thick."

Never Mind, an HVS rock climb on the pillar between No. 3 and No. 4 Buttress in Coire an Lochain, has seen a number of determined winter attempts over the years and was regarded as one of the last great problems in the Northern Corries. On Easter Saturday Emmett set off up the narrow groove just left of the front of the pillar. This blanked out at a roof and crux moves led rightwards across a blank wall to a short wide crack leading up to a stance. Emmett took a 25ft. fall on the crux, lowered to a 'no hands' rest and then completed the pitch. Parnell followed and then swung round to an overhanging groove in the right arête of the pillar.

Ian said: "It was impossible to see any features beneath the hoar which looked like the mushrooms on Cerro Torre. This pitch was exceptionally hard work, continually digging while laybacking up the overhanging groove. I took a fall about 30ft. up when my feet popped off the typical Cairngorm rounded breaks. I lowered to the belay, pulled my ropes and had another go – digging for glory. This time I climbed about 60ft. of gently overhanging climbing with no rests, excavating my way diagonally right to a flake-groove on the right side wall. I trusted my axe to some poor ice that pulled and I took another sizeable fall. I made another 10ft. of progress and finally stalled at a blank slab that guarded the last six feet of climbing."

The following day, Parnell led the first pitch straight off, and Emmett made a clean lead of the top.

"One of Tim's axes pulled on the last move on the very crest of the tower and he almost fell," Ian recalled. "Both the cruxes, but especially the top one, felt very modern with no secure torques but very thin hooking and some trickery – the sort of things Tim has learned from his time on the competition circuit. Grading this sort of thing is difficult especially as it was under a massive amount of hoar and

it's so short, but we're guessing IX 9. Tim thought it comparable with *Happy Tyroleans* – not as pumpy, but with a more technical crux and bigger fall potential.”

Normally, ascents of new Grade VIIs make the headlines, but this season they were overshadowed somewhat by the harder achievements outlined above. On Lochnagar, Guy Robertson and I filled in an obvious gap by climbing the very steep headwall of Eagle Buttress to give *Where Eagles Dare* (VII,8). Robertson thought this one of the finest technical climbs on Lochnagar and its quality was confirmed by the second ascent team of Pete Benson and Ross Hewitt a few days afterwards. Over on the West, Chris Cartwright and I filled in one of the remaining gaps on Noe Buttress on Ben Cruachan with the first ascent of *In Cold Blood* (VII,7). This takes the obvious groove left of *In the Knoe*, and in common with the other routes on the crag it packs in very sustained climbing from the first move to the last.

Finally, Andy Nisbet showed his mettle when he visited the West Face of Druiem Shionnach with Dave McGimpsey in the Western Highlands and came away with *Bowling Alley* (VII,6), the turfy fault-line up the face to the right of *Bow Peep*. The climbing was bold and exposed, and Andy's lead of the 40m. crux pitch was protected by a meagre three knifeblades and a couple of hooks.

As well as Robertson and Benson's second ascent of *The Steeple*, there were several other noteworthy repeats. *Darth Vader* (VII,8) on Ben Nevis saw repeats from Iain Small and Viv Scott; Rich Cross and Nick Wallis; Nick Bullock and Blair Fyffe, and is approaching modern classic status. Ian Parnell and Ollie Metherell visited Garbh Choire Dhaidh on Braeriach and came away with a rare repeat of *Digeridoo* (VII,6), eliminating the rest point in the process.

On Ben Nevis, Andy Turner and Duncan Hodgson repeated *Sioux Wall*, (VIII,8), climbing straight up at the top where Parnell and Metherell went right, therefore chalking up the first winter ascent of the complete summer line. Another remarkable ascent in the Cairngorms was Tim Emmett's third ascent of *Happy Tyroleans* (IX,10) in Coire an Lochain with Dave MacLeod. Emmett took a couple of short falls, but the route was despatched in remarkably quick time after an extremely late 1pm. start from the car. Over in the West, *Unicorn* (VIII,8) on Stob Coire nan Lochan was climbed by Ian Parnell and Steve Ashworth, and the recent routes on Ben Cruachan saw their first repeats with ascents of *Tainted Elixir* (V,6) and *Goldfinger* (VII,7).

There were many fine additions throughout the season, but in my view, the most interesting have a strong exploration focus. John Lyall discovered a 100m. crag directly beneath the summit of Carn Dearg in the Monadhliath. The cliff has five pillars separated by faults and John climbed the major lines with the best being *Soul Survivor* (IV,4), the turfy fault between the first and second pillars from the left, and *Arctic Monkey* (IV,5), a line up the fourth pillar. Across in the Cairngorms, R. McMurray and C. McGregor had a good find with the excellent *Fifer's Fall* (IV,4), a steep 70m. icefall on the previously unclimbed Creag an t-Sluic in Glen Feshie. MacGregor also climbed the ice line of *Rambler's Ruin* (III) at the right end of the crag. Farther west, Donald King, Andy Turner, Mike Pescod and Mike Brownlow developed the easterly corrie of Mullach nan Corean in the Mamores by adding a series of 80m. routes with pride of place going to the excellent *Kindergarten Corner* (VII,8).

Andy Nisbet and Sandy Allan had a fine discovery on Creag Loch Tuill Bhearnach, the crag containing Lapland Buttress, to the north of Loch Mullardoch, where they climbed the excellent *Lap of Honour* (V,6) that takes a shallow

narrowing chimney on the right side of the crag. Andy returned later with John Lyall and added *Weary Wall* (III), an easier line up the south side of the buttress.

Finally, Brian Davison and I fulfilled a long-held dream in late April by making a girdle traverse of the Ben Nevis cliffs. We started at 5.30am. and climbed *North Castle Gully* to gain the top of *Castle Ridge*. We then headed over *The Castle*, down across mixed ground into *Castle Corrie*, up *Ledge Route*, crossed the *Trident Buttresses*, descended *Number Four Gully*, climbed *North Gully*, traversed across *Creag Coire na Ciste*, up *Thompson's Route*, down *Number Three Gully Buttress*, up *Green Gully*, down *Hesperides Ledge*, across *Comb Gully Buttress*, up *Raeburn's Easy Route* and left into *Glover's Chimney*. We dropped down from the *Gap* into *Observatory Gully* and had lunch at 12pm. We then headed off under *Indicator Wall* and across *Observatory Buttress* into *Point Five Gully*. Getting in and out of the *Point* was the hardest part of the day – poor snow and tricky route finding. We then, very carefully, made our way across *Hadrian's Wall*, *Observatory Ridge* and *Zero Gully* on spooky snow and thin slabs finishing up *Slav Route* to reach the crest of *North-East Buttress* at about 17.45pm. There was about 4000m. climbing in all and we graded the expedition V,4. Grades are, of course, irrelevant on a route like this, and the real crux was waiting several seasons for favourable snow conditions to allow fast travel over the easier sections. Who would have guessed that the 2006 winter, bare and dry until March, would finally come up trumps?

Mountaineering in South Georgia

MOUNTAINEERING on the sub-Antarctic island of South Georgia is reserved for a determined few. A trip there also requires one to trespass on one of nature's paradises; the island is home to millions of breeding birds and seals. Few expeditions visit the island's mountainous interior and most that do, follow Sir Ernest Shackleton's route. Yet the island has hundreds of previously unclimbed peaks and routes to be done, if the weather allows. Expeditions can find themselves pinned to their camps or snow-holes for days and weeks on end because of the island's ferocious weather. Stephen Venables famously spent most of one of his expeditions in a snow-hole unable to venture out. Weather windows that enable a mountaineer to climb to a summit can be fleeting, but the rewards can also be sensational.

Disused and rusting whaling stations are the only visible remains of what was, some 70 years ago, the southern whaling capital of the World. Today, the surrounding seas are a whale sanctuary and no longer red with the blood of whale carcasses. In the small whalers' and sealers' cemetery beside Grytviken's silent whaling station, the Antarctic explorer, Sir Ernest Shackleton, lies in peace. His grave is overlooked by the interior he crossed in 1916 to alert the world to the plight of his ill-fated expedition. It rises steeply to a snow-covered mountain chain that forms the backbone of the island. Huge snow-white glaciers split the mountain chain and flow down to carve great blue ice blocks, with a thunderous roar, into the surrounding ocean.

Inaccessible, hostile, rugged and remote, with no permanent human population, the crescent shaped island lies in the cold stormy seas of the southern oceans that are rich in marine life. The long snow and ice covered island is some 170km. long and 40km. at its widest point. It rises up to 2934m. at the summit of Mount Paget. Antarctica is 1500km. to the south and the Falklands are 1400km. to the west. It

lies South of the Antarctic Polar Front (Between 35° 47' to 38° 01' West and 53° 58' to 54° 53' South) about 2150km. from Tierra del Fuego and 1390km. south-east of the Falkland Islands. Two steep mountain ranges form two-thirds of the island's backbone and rise to 2960m. at the highest point (Mount Paget) with some 19 other peaks above 2000m. More than 50% of the island is under permanent ice cover from an altitude of around 460m. on the north coast and around 300m. on the colder southern coast. Steep sided valleys and indented bays cut deeply into the island and offer sheltered anchorages, particularly on the northern coast and in the Drygalski Fjord granite complex at the south-eastern end of the island.

The island is part of the UK Overseas Territory of South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands and is administered by the Government of South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands (GSGSSI) from the Falkland Islands. GSGSSI was formed in 1985 as a separate British territory under a Commissioner. It had previously been part of the Falkland Islands Dependencies. The Commissioner has vested in him, legal, financial and administrative authority and responsibility for the governance of the island. A Government Officer represents him on South Georgia.

A tourist industry brings about 4000 people and a dozen or so yachts to visit the island each year. The Government is responsible for the island's environment and natural resources. Strict regulations protect the wildlife and plants ashore. The island's commercial fishery, which includes Antarctic krill, Icefish and Patagonian Toothfish, is managed by the Government in close conjunction with the commission for the conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR). Scientists first based themselves on the island in 1882; today there are two permanent research stations manned by British Antarctic Survey staff.

Each year about three or four expeditions go to South Georgia to ski, climb or kayak during the island's austral summer. If any member of the club wishes to go on an expedition to South Georgia to climb or ski then the author would be very happy to help with advice. The island's website (www.sgisland.org) provides much background on the island and a web camera can be accessed that looks across the bay to Mount Paget and neighbouring peaks. A Government permit is needed to take an expedition there. An expeditions advisory panel, which the author chairs, has been established to provide expeditions with advice and help. The panel also processes expedition applications and advises the Government. But beware, as expeditions can have a large price tag! A support vessel, such as a yacht, is needed so that self-rescue could be achieved if necessary. This is because of the remoteness of the island and the lack of search and rescue facilities. There is no airfield or helicopter. It is some four to five days sailing back to the Falkland Islands.

In 2003-04 and 2005, the author led two British Schools Exploring Society expeditions to South Georgia. In 2003-4 the expedition was very fortunate to have settled periods of weather that enabled them to ski up into the island's interior and to climb four previously unclimbed peaks in the Wilckens Range. The peaks climbed were not difficult, as the young expedition members had limited mountaineering experience. In December 2005, a smaller second expedition was not so lucky and despite spending three weeks waiting for a weather window, none arrived and so their planned summits remain unclimbed. The 6000ft. peaks were in the Allardyce range. They did, however, gain valuable additional mountaineering and leadership experience. A visit to South Georgia is always a memorable experience not easily forgotten. The wildlife in the relatively unspoiled wilderness is stunning and the mountain scenery breathtaking.

David V. Nicholls

CAMPED OUT THERE IN THE COLD

The temperature was 50° below, near enough the same as when the man from the creeks stumbled into the din and the glare of the Malemute Saloon prior to the shooting of Dan McGrew. The two of us were 15° of latitude farther south in the rain shadow side of the Coast Range of British Columbia, somewhere between Lytton and Lillooet but on the other side of the Fraser River. On the east side of the mountains the valley bottoms are dry and covered with sage brush and cactus. The snow starts higher up where the peaks catch the weather systems coming in from the wild Pacific shore.

We left the car at the end of a long dirt road and started off through the sage brush. After a few hundred feet we entered an open forest of feral Ponderosa pine floored with a mere dusting of dry snow. About 1000ft. farther up the stately Ponderosa gave way to denser stands of spruce and deeper drifts of snow. After some hours of this difficult terrain we reached a mile-wide bowl on the upper mountain where the forest opened out into twinkling snowfields studded with dense clumps of stunted spruce. Once clear of the forest we could see our route, a long narrow ridge beginning at the end of the tree-line 1000ft. higher up on the right lip of the bowl. If we could reach the ridge bottom on the morrow we had a chance of a quick dash to the summit.

By now the sun was low over the western peaks and the plummeting temperature indicated that things were about to get serious. Under these conditions it is wise to bivouac early so you can see what you are doing. A temperature decades below zero is no friend of living things. We headed for a thick clump of dwarfed spruce to make a des. res. for the night. I remember the clump we happened on was particularly well-favoured; it had three taller trees at its centre and the space around them was protected by a dense hedge of smaller trees. The central space was snow-free and level. We settled down for the night in this protected micro-climate. Once we got our mats and sleeping bags out, a candle burning on a knife blade stuck into a tree trunk and the primus roaring we had a sheltered home and dined in comfort. Outside our nook the silence was deep and the stars glittered in a black, black sky. Something – hopefully a coyote or a wolf rather than something less tangible – howled from time to time from different locations in the surrounding forest primeval.

It was the first time we had tried out this type of bivouac. We were following the advice of a patient of mine, a Red Indian by the name of Murdo MacDonald, who had explained that this was standard practice among his people when out on a winter hunting expedition. He also gave me the helpful advice that if attacked by a bear you should get your back against a tree, hold your knife in your right hand point upwards and throw your left arm across your throat to protect your windpipe and great vessels. When the bear embraces you, its claws dig into the tree. Before its teeth can do too much damage to your left arm, you stab upwards under its rib cage into its heart. This is anatomically a plausible procedure and may even work. His camping advice was certainly sound but I never had the chance to test his technique for dealing with an uppity bear.

The next morning we started late. It was cold outside and a strong wind had got up. Our refuge fortunately remained sheltered. It was warm and filled with the

comforting aroma of coffee and pine resin. We lay in our bags listening to the wind in the branches until the sun was well up in the bright blue sky. When we eventually did get going the wind cut to the bone and travel through the spindrift and deep unconsolidated snow was slow and painful. We could see long plumes of silver snow dust streaming from our ridge all the way to the summit. It must surely be snow-free up there and we prepared for a battle along a windy corridor to an inhospitable summit. To gain shelter from the wind for as long as possible we returned to the trees and gained the lee side of the shoulder leading to our ridge. The price of the lee was deeper snow and denser forest as we were nearer the Pacific slope.

At one point I emerged from a dense thicket into a clearing. A few seconds later I was facing an Indian pointing a rifle at me. Then two other Indians materialised also with rifles. They seemed vastly relieved about something but not half as relieved as we were when we learned that they were on the point of shooting us as deer. However, something about our progress was un-deer-like and had made them pause. They spoke little English but the message was the same as you get for spoiling the sport of a stalking party anywhere in the world.

We pointed uphill and asked: "Okay?" They gestured us on and we continued the struggle. That incident had been a close call. A lot of people are shot by mistake in the hunting season. In some areas farmers put white smocks on their animals with 'COW' or 'HORSE', as appropriate, written on the side in large black letters. We were lucky to encounter experienced hunters on their native heath. Townie palefaces usually shoot anything that moves or even rustles. All this showed our double inexperience: the woods are dangerous in the hunting season and the new unconsolidated snow of November is best avoided.

We continued on to the foot of the ridge but after leaving the trees we were full-face into the teeth of a frost-biting wind; the ridge was longer than it looked from below and in a couple of hours darkness would be upon us again. We lost fortitude; old Auntie Prudence took over; we turned back. We had started later than we should have due to weakness of character. We wisely retreated from the land of wind-scoured rock and tearing silver spindrift to descend a couple of thousand feet through the spruce to the kindly belt of whispering Ponderosa pine. Here we found a sheltered spot, floored with pine needles instead of snow. We made a modest campfire and after our bacon and beans reclined beneath bright stars twinkling in the vast sky above. My companion was moved to quote from *The Shooting of Dan McGrew*:

*Were you ever out in the Great Alone, when the moon was awful clear;
And the icy mountains hemmed you in with a silence you most could hear;
With only the howl of a timber wolf as you camped there in the cold,...
While high overhead, green yellow and red, the North Lights swept in bars?—
Then you've a hunch what the music meant...hunger and night and the stars.*

Okay, so we weren't hungry, there was no music, no moon, no aurora and the wandering thing that howled in the darkness the night before seemed to be elsewhere, but the rest of the *mise-en-scene* was present: there was silence and a sense of immense darkness.

Iain Smart.

Friday Climbs

Following on from Adam Watson's article last year on Climate Change, Mick Tighe gives his perspective on what this has meant on the ground.

WE CALLED them Friday climbs, and a favourite was *No. 6 Gully* on the west side of Aonach Dubh in Glencoe. You could be on the first pitch within an hour of leaving the van and back down by mid-afternoon for a pint in the Clachaig. It was an ideal way to finish an ice-climbing week, and in those days you could almost guarantee that there would be ice at that level.

Other low-level favourites were *Great Gully* on the Buachaille and routes such as *Rev. Teds* and *Peregrine Gully* in the Lost Valley. Now, 20 years on, there's not a bit of ice to be seen in these gullies, rock, heather and waterfalls rule the roost and canyoning is the new activity, with water pouring down the neck instead of spindrift.

On several occasions in the late 1990s and the early 'naughties' there has been excellent ice-climbing in Scotland – some have said the best ever – unfortunately, this climbing has almost always been above 3500ft., confining it primarily to Ben Nevis, Aonach Mor and the Northern Corries of the Cairngorms. The down side of this is that when conditions are good, large numbers of climbers converge on the few 'in nick' areas, somewhat detracting from the ethos of the mountains' peace, tranquillity and solitude. The Rescue teams have an easy time of it though, as they can run along the bottom of the climber-infested crags and wait for folk to fall off, without having to go looking for them.

There's no doubt that the freezing level has gone up and that a climate that already changed quickly, changes even faster now. Why this is we can only let the boffins fathom out, but for the guide/instructor who has pottered around the Scottish Highlands for the last few decades in the snow, times are a changin'.

The ice falls of Norway, Chamonix, and Canada beckon. Ryanair, Easyjet and their cohorts have entered the arena at just the right time (maybe it's a ploy – their jets contributing to global warming.)

Everyone has chucked away Pterodactyls and straight-shafted tools, and bought curved-shafted masterpieces for the glistening ice-falls of Mecca, where eyes are protected from the glare by sunglasses, instead of from the wind by goggles.

Pints of heavy, wee drams and fish suppers are now Pernods, Acquavits and Croque-Monsieurs. Interestingly, things are getting warmer in these places too, but it was colder on average to start with, and there has always been more snow and ice in these foreign climbs anyway.

It's early February, and as I write, there's a dusting of snow on the Nevis Range, but precious little old snow underneath. I'm about to depart for a week in the North West Highlands (Poolewe), where I had a week at the same time last year. *Hayfork Gully* on An Teallach had some old névé, which provided a good day, and we followed that with three excellent days rock-climbing at Reiff as there was no snow anywhere else in the North West.

Huts – Round 2

HAVING run between each of the SMC huts on consecutive days and mountain biked round them all in three days, I thought it would be pleasant to cycle round them on the road. I had not consulted a map but was considering a leisurely day between each of the huts, maybe covering the CIC and Lagangarbh in one day.

I was discussing the idea of cycling between the huts with Charlie Orr and Tom Prentice when one of them said: “What in a day?”

I can’t recall who said it but I’m sure I managed to refrain from saying out loud: “Don’t be stupid.”

However they had sown a seed, and I got the road atlas out. Some quick calculations showed the distance was about 300 miles, and of course there was the CIC to visit.

A few years ago a friend had tried to break the Land’s End to John o’Groats cycle record. He’d failed after 600 miles, but I found it astounding that the record stood at around 40 hours for the 800-mile route. These top cyclists can sure move and their endurance is phenomenal. I looked up the 24-hour endurance record, and at 520 miles it showed that the huts cycle route was feasible for a top cyclist – but what about me?

I studied the maps more carefully, trying to decide on the best route. There was obviously going to have to be some back-tracking to visit either Lagangarbh or the Raeburn. The Raeburn proved the farther from Spean Bridge and so that had to be a start or finishing point and the Naismith Hut would be the other end. During discussions someone suggested getting the Mallaig ferry and travelling through Skye on the way to Torridon. The route through Skye was appealing and only a few miles longer, though the thought of missing a ferry and being stuck weighed heavily against it. To do the round in 24 hours required averaging 15mph to allow a few hours for food stops and to run to the CIC.

I started my training, a combination of running and cycling. It seems to get more difficult every year to get into some sort of semblance of fitness and find the necessary time to do training runs. So as June arrived I had not run more than 10 miles in one go. I set myself a few targets to try and stimulate some interest. First was the 40-mile run round the 'Derwent Water Shed' route in the Peak district. Being a fairly flat route it allowed me to increase my mileage without too many hills to kill me off. At the end of the month a cycling trip round all the Lake District FRCC huts proved to be just more than 100 miles, but at 7.5 hours I wasn’t keeping to my 15mph average. Still the passes were steeper in the Lakes than anything I’d encounter on the Scottish roads. A week later saw me slogging round the 15 Classic Rock Routes in the Lake District on a very hot day. Running between each route took just under 20 hours. The route felt harder than the 40 miles would have suggested and having to ease swollen feet into rock boots at each crag allowed a new level of discomfort to be reached. I’d considered the rock routes as a training run for the Bob Graham round but with blistered feet I wasn’t sure I’d manage to do one that summer. A few weeks later with my toughened feet recovered and with a forecast of total cloud cover above the tops I set out for a solo Bob Graham round. The 72 miles. and 30,000ft. of ascent felt a

lot easier than the Classic Rock Routes had a few weeks before. Without any stops, and blister free, I was round in 22 hours and feeling good. It was time to head to Scotland.

As the August days ticked by I kept watching the forecast and finally got what I wanted, gentle southerly winds, so I headed to the Raeburn. I usually try and get an early night before the long drive to Scotland but on this occasion I was up until 11pm. wall-papering the bedroom. I bet Lance Armstrong didn't have to finish the decorating before he was allowed to ride the Tour de France!

None the worse of wear for my DIY exploits I reached the Raeburn the next evening and got a few hours sleep before creeping out of the hut before dawn and cycling through the dark and low mist to Fort William and the golf course, my first stop. I'd managed my first 40 miles in two hours so averaging 20mph, one of the targets I had never managed during training, but which, with the gentle descent from the Raeburn Hut to the sea on the West Coast, I now achieved. With my bike hidden in some bushes and the first dawn light in the sky I headed up the Allt a' Mhuillinn past the path-building machinery. The shutters were open as I reached the hut at 6am and turned round to run back to my bike.

The rain poured as I cycled past Glencoe village but I'd dried off by the time I reached Lagangarbh. It felt good to turn round and head back down the valley into the rain and past the village again and I'd dried off once more as I reached Spean Bridge and stopped for breakfast at the Little Chef. I'd done 100 miles and run to the CIC, and my legs felt it. I'd done the section fast but at the expense of not eating or drinking enough. I felt better after the stop and started to time myself to take regular food and sips of carbohydrate drink from my bottles as I cycled along the A87. With August holiday traffic towing caravans to Skye I was glad to turn off onto the quieter road for Lochcarron.

A brief stop at the top of a hill allowed me to eat some rice pudding and refill my pockets with food then it was onward. I'd been making good time but now the road surface was poorer and the hills steeper but thankfully short, and my averages were slipping. I'd run out of drink as I approached Torridon so a brief stop at the toilets got me out of the midges and allowed me to refill my bottles and scoff the last of my rice puddings. I'd passed the 200-mile barrier.

This was all new territory for me, I'd never cycled this far before and had been unsure at the outset whether I could manage to do the route in 24 hours or indeed at all. By now my bum was sore but as long as I kept on taking in food I knew my legs could keep turning the pedals. As I passed Kinlochewe the re-surfaced road gave me a new lease of life and I increased my speed. The hill out of Ullapool felt steep but I was still able to cycle it. Less than 22 hours after starting out from the Raeburn I reached Elphin and the lights of the Naismith hut, I'd managed to average 15.5mph., something I'd never managed during my cycles round the Lake District.

Travelling north the previous day I'd phoned the hut custodian to check on a place in the hut, here was the spanner in the works, the hut was full. So after 288 miles. I did a U-turn in the road and cycled back to a welcome bed with friends in Ullapool. At least it was downhill, most of the time.

Brian Davison.

(‘Chapeau’ – as the French would say– Ed.)

The Club Tie

MEMBERS might be forgiven for thinking that the present design of Club Tie is as old as the Club. But in fact the design of the tie has seen a number of changes, the most recent being the addition of thistles. This was done, as far as I can recall, by Graham Tiso more or less on his own hook, sometime in the late 1970s. It is difficult to see what was amiss with the previous design of crossed ice-axes on navy silk, but office-bearers are always apt to meddle – with the good as well as the bad.

It came as an enormous surprise to me to learn last year that the axes-on-navy tie was not the first Club Tie, and that the earliest design bore absolutely no relation to it. My enlightenment came while trying to identify images in the A. E. Robertson Collection. Many of these around 1930 showed members wearing a striped tie, the stripes being broad, equal and horizontal, and alternately light and dark. At first I thought that perhaps this was an old version of the Alpine Club Tie, but inquiry disposed of that idea. So, I was left with the obvious possibility that this strange tie design was our own.

My next step was to consult Club records. The Club Tie and Button were devised by a sub-committee consisting of Alexander Harrison and George Sang in 1925, and approved at the AGM in December. However, the Club records gave no indication of the nature of the design except that the tie was made from knitted silk (a suggestion to switch to woven silk was rejected at the 1926 AGM) and that it retailed at a bracing 6/6d.

I turned then to the list of members, hoping to find someone who joined in the 1930s or early 1940s and might remember the early tie, or possess an example of it. I wrote to the few qualified members and was delighted to get a positive response from Dunmore Hotchkis (j. 1930), the father of James Hotchkis, Secretary of our Trust. He sent me his tie (in excellent condition) for examination and photography, and later permitted James to photograph him wearing it. (*See opposite page 385*).

Finally, he generously decided to donate his tie, very probably the sole surviving specimen, to the Archives. As may be seen the dark bands are an orange-brown and the light bands are a mixture of sky-blue and light gold. The retailer was R. W. Forsyth (a defunct Edinburgh business) but the manufacturer is unknown.

Sometime later, probably in the 1940s, this design was discarded in favour of the axes-on-navy design, perhaps because the old design had nothing Scottish about it, and conveyed no indication of mountaineering. However, I have not been able to discover any account of this change in Club records.

Curiously, the Alpine Club have just undergone a similar tie-revolution, discarding their original yellow diagonal stripe on green silk in favour of an iconic snowy peak on blue.

I would be very interested to hear from any member who recalls the circumstances of our change of tie, and would greatly welcome a decent example of the axes-on-navy tie for the Archives.

Robin N. Campbell.

100 Years Ago

THE 17th Annual Meeting and Dinner took place on Friday, December 1, 1905 in St Enoch's Hotel, Glasgow, with John Rennie presiding. Treasurer Napier announced a balance of £201-19s.-3d., which together with the new Life Membership Fund (introduced in 1904) brought the Club's total funds to £382-8s.-3d., £360 of which was immediately invested in South Australia Government 4% Stock! Secretary Clark announced eight new members, including Harry MacRobert and Percy Unna, two deaths, four resignations and the death of the Honorary President Cameron of Locheil. Librarian Goggs rejoiced in the increase of books from 430 to 600, and the grant of £22 -10s. to buy a complete run of the Alpine Journal. There was discussion of the Club's Rules and it was remitted to Committee to revise these for the next Annual Meeting.

The New Year Meet was held at the Royal Hotel, Tyndrum and attended by 29 members and six guests. Easterlies brought fine cold weather and 'set the fires of life aglow'. Members exploited the railway system (fully functional throughout the holiday period) to make various ingenious expeditions of which the most enterprising was that of Goggs, whose party was dropped off at Gorton to return to Tyndrum via Bens Creachan, Achallader, a' Chuirn, and Mhanach.

The Easter Meet was a grandiose and complicated affair, masterminded by the ingenious Secretary Clark. Thirty-eight members and 11 guests were scattered through the inadequate accommodations of Glen Coe, at Ballachulish, Clachaig and Kingshouse, all gathering at Clachaig on the Saturday morning for a famous Club photograph taken by Robertson. Although the weather had been wonderful before the Meet, it broke down on the Friday, and remained poor. Nevertheless, some worthy expeditions occurred. Raeburn and Ling made a snow-assisted ascent of *The Chasm* on the Thursday, making their escape below the Cauldron by the South Chimney, or a variant of it (see *J.* 9, 149-51). On the Saturday, a strong party consisting of Goggs, Ling, Raeburn and Ullen were defeated by the Church-Door Buttress. On the Tuesday, Glover and Worsdell "had a good climb in one of the gullies on Stob Coire nan Lochan. They found some of the pitches difficult and had five hours of step-cutting". The evenings seem to have passed in unruly fashion. Clark in 'Memories of the Kingshouse Meet, 1906' *J.* 9, 105-17, describes an obscure game of Frogs invented by Raeburn, and won by Goggs, and – following some indoor climbing games – observed that replicas of the china dogs on the Hotel mantelpiece "may perhaps be obtained in Glasgow".

In the week following the Meet, Raeburn went to meet Robertson at Fort William on April 22, but Robertson was unwell and recommended a Swiss climber Eberhard Phildius to Raeburn as a replacement. On the 23rd Raeburn and Phildius climbed what we now know as *Green Gully*, in full icy winter condition. This route was described by Raeburn in roundabout fashion, and was lost sight of during the commotions of the War, so that when Jim Bell climbed it – and named it – in April 1938 he believed he was making the first ascent. See my 'The First Scottish Ice Climbers' *J.* 30, 48-56 for this and similar forgotten *tours de force* of the pre-War era. It may seem surprising to us, but for Raeburn in 1906 *Green Gully* was a commonplace ascent.

In May P. R. Parkinson, seconded by George Hely-Hutchison Almond, made what was probably the third ascent of the direct route on Crowberry Ridge.

In June, Raeburn and Goggs visited Coire Ardair. Goggs described their

Julian Lines on First Ascent of Flawless (E7 6c), Achmelvich. Photo: Andy Nisbet.





expedition in *J.* 9, 118-25, beginning with a paragraph in praise of Raeburn: "The fresh post of Honorary Guide [should] be established, and Mr Raeburn should be elected thereto. His qualifications are numerous: – First and foremost he is a bachelor, and can therefore be at the beck and call of every member of the Club; secondly, he never seems to mind what kind of climber is at the other end of the rope, his one object in life being apparently 'helping lame dogs up cliffs'; thirdly and lastly, his climbing skill – but to refer to this is a work of supererogation."

So Goggs summoned the Honorary Guide to Kingussie, and they set off for Loch Laggan Hotel on bicycles. However, Laggan Hotel was entirely filled with Home Secretary Gladstone and his entourage. They wheeled along to Aberarder but met with no better luck from the shepherd's wife, who didn't like the look of them, so they spent the night equipped only with jam sandwiches, on the floor of a hayshed. They climbed what they called A Buttress, now South Buttress or South Pillar, and entirely suppressed in modern guidebooks, but from Goggs's description it sounds like a decent route.

Meanwhile, Hugh Munro was enjoying 'Hot Nights and Days in the Mountains' (*J.* 9, 126-31), passing from Strathcarron to Skye where, unable to secure the services of John Mackenzie because he was 'permanently engaged to Mr A. E. Robertson', he was obliged to make do with his own company or the 'the two Miss Protheros, nieces of Mr Phillip'.

Nevertheless, he had several good days and finished up his visit with an ascent of the Pinnacle Ridge along with Robertson, his faithful retainer and nephew Archie, and Mrs Urquhart. The price for Munro's inclusion in the party was that he had to wait on top of the Third Pinnacle with Mackenzie to allow Robertson to photograph them from the fourth – a famous image. There was a more interesting day in store for Mackenzie, however. When Norman Collie arrived for a summer stay with Colin Phillip at Glenbrittle Lodge in early July, he went immediately to explore a pinnacle at half-height on the vast unexplored crag on the south side of Lower Coire Lagain. Collie had deduced the existence of this pinnacle from a photograph. Although he couldn't reach it, he saw enough of it to figure out a route, and the following day he and Mackenzie followed this contorted route to reach the fantastic pinnacle, named A' Chioch by Mackenzie, and to begin a new era of Skye climbing – the exploration of Sron na Ciche.

The 1906 Alpine season was mixed, but many members enjoyed good climbing. Douglas climbed the Pelvoux, Pic Sans Nom, Barre des Ecrins and traversed La Meije. Unna spent three weeks at Arolla and climbed the Ruinette, Mont Collon by various routes, the Dent Blanche, and traversed l'Evêque with Goggs. But the major effort, as usual, was made by Ling and Raeburn, who visited three centres in three weeks: Val Ferret, Oberland and Zermatt. In the first, they made the first ascent of La Mouche, a pinnacle in the Aiguilles Rouges de Dolent, and of the NE face of the Argentière. In the Oberland, along with Eric Greenwood, they traversed the Finsteraarhorn and the Schreckhorn, using novel methods of traverse in both cases. At Zermatt, they made the first British guideless ascent of the Zmutt arête, descending by the Italian Ridge: "The ridge was in very bad condition, plastered with ice and snow, and almost every yard had to be won by the ice-axe. Starting at 4am, the top was not gained until 3 p.m."

William Inglis Clark remained at home, and enjoyed a tour of Sutherland in his 10h.p. Humber car, inspecting Inchnadamph Hotel in preparation for the 1907 Easter Meet, and accompanied as usual by members of his family. They explored

Ama Dablan and the Tenzing Memorial. Photo: Sandy Allen.

Kathy Grindrod climbing the Grey Tower, Ama Dablan. Photo: Sandy Allen.

Quinag, and climbed an interesting route on Sail Garbh to the east of the Barrel Buttress before descending Y Gully to climb Y Buttress. The party then moved to Stac Pollaidh where they met C. W. Walker, and made an ascent of the West Buttress by the easiest line. Clark's description of his explorations on Stac Pollaidh (*J.* 9, 175-91) included a diagram obtained from Norman Collie, of a route made earlier by him. This route followed a line on the right flank of the buttress. Although the Clarks' ascent of the Western Buttress is acknowledged in modern guidebooks, Collie's route and the Clarks' efforts on Sail Garbh are ignored and allocated to others.

Robin N. Campbell.

Logan Aikman and the Jubilee Dinner, 1938

THE obituary for J. Logan Aikman, Club Secretary 1935–46, which I wrote for the 2003 Journal, lacked a photograph. This was not entirely due to the incompetence of the obituarist, but it was a serious omission which should be remedied. Although there are many excellent photographs of Aikman in the collection donated to our Archives, I feel that the one chosen is most appropriate, since it pictures him at the dizzy heights of his office, celebrating the Club's Jubilee after the stunningly successful campaign to acquire the lands of Dalness for the nation. Beside him, at the magnificent dinner, attended by 154 members and guests, sits President Unna, and although it is not a wonderful image of him, we have so few that it merits publication.

The image (opposite page 384) is a small excerpt from one of the two official Dinner photographs. A copy of the Table Plan has survived, and together with 'landmarks' provided by those who are easily identified, this information makes reasonably confident identifications possible across the gulf of nearly 70 years. In the centre of the picture, beaming, is the organizer of the feast, Secretary Aikman. Behind him, and at the top table, is Percy Unna, with Founder Gilbert Thomson, guest S. Bryan Donkin (CC, and AC Secretary), and Godfrey Solly to his left. On the far side of Table 4, the only person visible is the dapper CIC Custodian Robert Elton, directly beneath the head of Solly. On the near side of Table 4 is Aikman, with J. Phemister (guest) to his right. On the far side of Table 3 are (left to right) part of Norman Hird, Sir Hugh Rose (guest) of the paint business Craig & Rose, and W. Whyte (guest). Finally at the bottom of the picture (left to the right) are Alex. Harrison, R. H. Gwilt (guest) and Alec-Guinness-lookalike James G. Kyd.

Robin N. Campbell

Glover and Worsdell's Gully, April 1906. Was it SC Gully or North-West Gully?

AT THE Club's Easter Meet in April, 1906 in Glen Coe, Glover and Worsdell "had a good climb in one of the gullies on Stob Coire nan Lochan. They found some of the pitches difficult and had five hours of step-cutting (*J.* 9, 81-2)". Now, on the face of it, this looks rather like an ascent of *SC Gully*. Indeed, their climb is indexed in the Volumes 1 to 10 Index as the 'Central Gully of Stob Coire nan Lochan'. What else has several pitches and would have detained these swift and nimble fellows for five hours of step cutting?

However, Glover and Worsdell's effort is identified in modern guidebooks as

the *North-West Gully* of Stob Coire nam Beith, a somewhat easier climb. In fact, the move to *North-West Gully* begins with Bill Murray's Glen Coe Guidebook in 1949. Murray's note suggests that the name of the mountain was misprinted in the 1906 Journal. It would be interesting to know how Murray came by this information, and where he got the idea that it was *North-West Gully*, rather than one of the several other possibilities on Stob Coire nam Beith.

There is only one earlier guidebook than Murray's – Harry MacRobert's *Central Highlands Guide*. MacRobert's guide was published in May 1934, before Pat Baird had written his account of the first ascent of *SC Gully* in the November 1934 Journal (he took five hours over it, oddly enough). But MacRobert mentions *SC Gully* on p. 80: "The gully between the South and Central Buttresses is steep, with most impressive rock scenery. The lower part requires some care. Under winter conditions the gully, which is about 600ft., gives a good climb."

So it is not at all clear whether Baird's ascent was the first. Perhaps he wrote to MacRobert following his ascent in March 1934, but if so, it is very odd that MacRobert doesn't mention Baird. The gully was investigated in September, 1931 by J. H. B. Bell (*J.* 19, 317), who descended it, and Bell's account seems to have been used by MacRobert in writing the guidebook entry. But Bell merely says that it "should make a magnificent ascent under snow conditions", and gives no indication of previous winter ascents. So far as the *North-West Gully* of Stob Coire nam Beith is concerned, MacRobert says nothing about it as a winter route, noting only that it was climbed September, 1931 by Campbell and Horne.

So this is another of the pesky mysteries of early Scottish climbing. Perhaps Murray was right, and had the information from a reliable source such as Glover himself. And it may be that when MacRobert remarked that "under winter conditions. [SC Gully] gives a good climb" he was merely carelessly converting Bell's speculation into fact. But Murray was not immune to error or bias: he overlooked Raeburn's ascents of *Crowberry Gully* in winter and discounted his ascent of *The Chasm*, "it has not been admitted as a first ascent..." and he buried MacRobert's all-but-the-last-move, 1910 winter attempt on the *Shelf Route* in a footnote. Glover and Worsdell were perfectly capable of climbing *SC Gully* in 1906, and might well have done so.

Robin N. Campbell.

ALLT NA MHUINIDH WATERFALL : WEST CLIMB

On the third day of the SMC Easter Meet at Kinlochewe in 1899 a new climb was made on a cliff within easy reach of the hotel.

In the report of the meet (SMCJ, 1899, V, 253-6) Hinxman wrote: "Inglis Clark reports enthusiastically of the cliffs of Beinn Mhuinidh, above the head of Loch Maree. He reached the top with Glover by a route a little to the west of the waterfall, and describes the climbing as excellent..."

In the same journal, under Excursions, Glover gave a more detailed account of the climb in which he made it clear that there were, in fact, three climbers in the party – two of whom were photographers.

The identity of the third climber has remained a mystery. In the current Northern Highlands climbing guide (1993, p.18) it is suggested that the unnamed climber was probably Ling.

However, in SMCJ, 2002, XXXVIII, 25-8, Robin Campbell correctly pointed out that Ling was on Slioch that day with Lawson. Campbell then went on to suggest that the mystery climber must be Douglas, dismissing all the other members present as non-climbers.

The definitive answer to this puzzle has been before our eyes for more than 50 years. In his obituary of Glover in SMCJ, 1954, XXV, 257-9, Ling wrote: "Together, we attended the Easter, 1899, Meet at Kinlochewe, in poor weather, but we had good climbs with H. G. S. Lawson on Liathach and Sail Mhor. Glover had a fine new climb by the Allt a' Mhuinidh waterfall with Inglis Clark and Gall Inglis."

So the unnamed climber on the West Climb was J. Gall Inglis – the same climber whom Campbell recently identified as being the photographer on the first winter traverse of the Northern Pinnacles of Liathach. A cursory flick through early journals also reveals that Gall Inglis did "A Climb on the Rocks of Corrie Sugach" with Inglis Clark (SMCJ, 1902, VII, 70-5).

There is surely a case for eventually making all our journals available in electronic form.

Noel Williams.

Where are the Summits?

Background:

THERE is a certain satisfaction in reaching the summit of a hill, touching the cairn and, weather permitting, taking in the view, recognising hills that have been visited before. For many hills, the approach to the summit is clear. You may pass a false summit or two, but perseverance pays off as you continue climbing with a narrowing horizon to a cairn when there is no more climbing to be done.

Some hills are not that simple. There isn't a well-defined peak, but rather a summit plateau or near-level ridge. Where is the true summit? For Ben Vorlich (Loch Earn), it is fairly simple: the path from Loch Earn leads to a triangulation column, but there is a cairn about 100m. away along a near-level ridge. It is easy to visit both (under normal weather conditions), but unusually the trig-point is higher than the summit cairn. A more intractable problem arises with Beinn a' Chroin (Loch Lomond to Strathyre). According to the current (1997) Munro Tables, the eastern top is the Munro, a well-defined conical summit on a north-south ridge. However, to the west of this summit there is an undulating plateau, a delightful area of knolls and lochans now established by the Ordnance Survey as having a 942m. peak, 2m. higher than the 1997 Munro. There are several knolls in the vicinity of the new 942m. spot height, so which is the true summit? This should be determined by walkers, ideally armed with a theodolite, visiting the summit plateau. However, if I go to check your observations, how do I identify the peak you are reporting as highest? As a walker, how do I identify the summit? The only cairns are between the knolls, the knolls themselves not suitable for retaining cairns. Elsewhere, Robin Campbell has reported difficulties in identifying which summit the cataloguer planned to list in "confusing places like the Saddle, the An Teallach ridge, or the awful Mullach na Dhearagain ridge with many small tops". The issues that this article addresses are identification of peaks and determination of a 'Best Estimate' list of summits. Additional information, including a picture showing the competing summits of Beinn a' Chroin and graphs depicting data in this article, is provided on the author's website¹ on which listings and the table of questioned summits are updated with new data.

History:

Munro's original tables (as quoted in the Variorum tables in Robin Campbell's *The Munroist's Companion* ²) gave a verbal description of the position of the summit, for example 4.25 miles. S by E of Crianlarich for the Munro Beinn a' Chroin. This helps to identify the summit, but is not precise. Indeed, the Variorum tables quote the same description for the West top. The 1974 edition of the Tables was the first to give 6-figure grid references, which define the position of the summit to the nearest 100m. or so, identifying a block of land containing the summit. However, there are several knolls within the relevant block in the vicinity of the 942m. spot height on Beinn a' Chroin.

In 1974, providing the 6-figure OS grid references corresponded to the precision to which a walker's position could reasonably be defined. Over the last few years, two significant developments have occurred that enable a more precise location of summits to be determined. Firstly, traditional visual surveying of OS maps has been replaced by photogrammetry allowing precise determination of contours and hence heights. With these more accurate maps, our problem is to interpret them, especially in rocky areas where contour lines are discontinuous. Secondly, the development of hand-held GPS (global positioning system) receivers means that we walkers can accurately determine our position to the map with a precision better than 5m. on the summit of a hill, with a clear view of the sky. "GPS technology allows any person to know his location on the planet with accuracy never imagined before." ³ GPS measurements of altitude have three times the uncertainty of lateral co-ordinates, i.e. a range of ± 15 m. and therefore the figure from the OS map is taken as the definitive height.

Grid Reference Problems:

The OS grid references given for the location of summits represents the latitude and longitude on the spherical earth using a flat (Transverse Mercator) projection overlaid with a grid based on kilometre squares. In principle, a 6-figure grid reference defines the location of a point to within 100m. in both the easterly and northerly direction. However, there can be ambiguity. In deriving the 6-figure grid reference of a location, for example a summit, from an OS map, the map has 1km. (1000m.) squares, but the grid reference has a precision of 100m. The instructions provided on OS maps say that the user should first quote the Eastings by locating the vertical grid line to the left of the point and reading the large figures labelling the line... and then estimate tenths from the grid line to the point. If, for example, the summit is at or close to the centre of the square, the temptation is to quote the position as the mid-point, or five tenths. However, one logical aspect of the grid system is that as the grid reference of a point is increased in precision, the part already identified remains intact. Thus, on a 1:50000 scale map where the kilometre squares are 20mm. wide, the easting should be quoted as five tenths if the point is between 10mm. and 12mm. east of the kilometre grid line. Visual estimation of the tenths is unlikely to be reliable and should be measured, for example with a Romer, essentially a ruler graduated with grid scales. The alternative interpretations are depicted graphically on the author's website.¹

Where does this leave the walker? Unless you know the criterion used by the particular editor of tables, a traditional 6-figure grid reference is uncertain by 150m. east-west and north-south, corresponding to the 100m. of the grid square plus 50m. depending on whether the 'nearest' or 'truncated' grid reference is used.

Along the diagonal of the square (using Pythagoras' Theorem), this corresponds to a range of 225m. for the location of a reported grid reference, even with a well-defined summit. For an ill-defined contour summit, the uncertainty can be even greater. For Tables compiled using the 'nearest' grid reference, the deviation for a number of summits determined more precisely would average zero metres, whereas if the (specified) 'truncated' grid reference is used, the average deviation would be 50m. The average deviation, using over 200 GPS determinations, has been found to be 17m. for the 1981 tables and 43m. for the 1997 tables, for example, the 1981 tables were generally a 'nearest' estimate whereas the 1997 tables generally followed the OS instructions.

With 8-figure grid references, the location of a point is defined within a 10m. square; a 10-figure grid reference provides a precision of 1m. On a 1:25 000 scale map, available from the OS through the free Get-a-Map service,⁴ estimating a grid reference to 10m. (0.4 mm. on the map) is possible with care. The walker on the ground with a commercially-available hand-held GPS unit can readily provide a 10-figure grid reference for a summit, reproducible to better than 5m. The inherent ambiguity is insignificant – the 1m. precision of a 10-figure grid reference corresponds to one side of the summit cairn or the other. Unfortunately, with this increased precision, other errors related to the map datum, or how the National Grid is defined, become significant.

Map Datums:

GPS units perform internal calculations using a spherical representation of the earth, the WGS84 (or World Geodetic System 1984) datum. The location of a point can be specified by quoting latitude and longitude expressed as degrees north and east on the WGS84 datum. However, this is not consistent with common UK practice, as the commonly used OS maps provide grid references that can be readily determined, whereas traditional latitude and longitude are more difficult to derive. There are, however, more fundamental reasons for preferring not to use latitude and longitude for a theoretical spherical earth. The following comments have been distilled from OS-supplied information on their website – The National GPS Network.⁶

One problem is that the location of a point as a latitude and longitude is not unique because the WGS84 map datum is dynamic. As continents move or earthquakes occur, WGS84 modifies its co-ordinates to maintain a net zero error at selected reference points. Partly because of these adjustments, the Greenwich observatory is now about 100m. from the zero meridian of WGS84.

A further problem arises from measurements of height. Britain is apparently in a trough. WGS84 would put the sea level about 50m. higher than present, so if adopted would, at a stroke, delete a hundred of the lower Munros. Climbs from the shore at Loch Brittle to the Cuillin would start from an altitude of 50m. below sea level.

As the WGS84 datum changes, the OS will modify their 'best' datum to take changes into account and generate a 'new' datum so that UK grid references remain essentially the same. With the OS datum, heights remain relative to local (i.e. Newlyn) sea level, albeit with some adjustments. Apparently, northern Scotland is still rising following the last ice age so our hills are still growing. Logically, the same map datum should be used for lateral co-ordinates and for altitude: the National Grid with associated OSGB map datum.

Deriving 8 and 10 figure grid references:

With care, it is possible to derive 8-figure grid references from maps if the summit is well defined, for example, by a trig point. However, the OS did not position trig points to mark the summit, but for map-making purposes. The trig point must be visible from the surrounding land and be accessible. Thus, for both Slioch and The Saddle the true summit is located on hidden but slightly higher ground behind the trig point. The location of the true summit on the map is ambiguous although it is readily identifiable on the ground. For Spidean Coire nan Clach on Beinn Eighe, the 972m. trig point is on accessible land below the knobbly 993m. summit of Spidean Coire nan Clach, a fact that may have denied Beinn Eighe a second Munro for some years. The trig point could not be the second Munro summit, being lower than Sail Mhor (981m.), but Sail Mhor could not prevail until it was established the land behind the trig point was at least 9m. higher than the trig point.

For summits with a trig point, OS listing tables⁶ provide accurate location data. Often the trig point is adjacent to the summit cairn, or has been incorporated into a summit shelter or cairn, so the grid reference is 'good'. For Slioch and The Saddle, the trig points are now Deleted Tops whereas Gulvain's S. Top with the trig point is sufficiently distinct to have retained Top status. For at least five other Munros, the trig point is known not to be at a summit. These are listed in a table of questionable summits.¹ Of the 594 Munros, Tops and Deleted Tops, 93 coincide with trig points.

If a summit does not have a trig point, the location has traditionally been determined as a grid reference from OS maps. An 8-figure grid reference can be derived from the map, provided the summit point can be identified. By visiting the site, a 10-figure grid reference can be determined using a GPS unit with the advantage that a judgement can be made as to the precise location of the summit. By recording the grid reference as determined using a GPS unit a 'second opinion' can be elicited from others and once tabulated the 'correct' summit can be identified for walkers. Accordingly the author proposes that 10-figure grid references from trig point listings or GPS readings should be listed wherever possible for all summits in future editions of the Tables.

Verification:

For the committed Munroist, it is expedient to climb not only the Munros but also summits deleted from the current tables that may be reinstated in future editions of the tables, depending on the whim (or even the considered opinion) of future editors. Even if the summits are never reinstated, they are (usually) well-defined points and therefore useful locations to store on a GPS device as additional navigation points. The project to collect 10-figure grid references from hand-held GPS measurements applies to all listed summits, viz the Munros, Tops, Deleted Tops, the Corbetts and Grahams (including the Donalds) and Other Hills. The remainder of this article concentrates on the Munros, Tops and Deleted Tops, illustrating principles that apply to the other sets of summits.

Before consolidating the data, checks were applied to establish how more precise data improved the accuracy compared with the tabulated 6-figure grid references. Four sets of data have been compared, three from maps, SMC tables of 1981, as revised in the 1990 revision (SMC 81/90), the SMC tables of 1997 (SMC 97), 389 8-figure grid references summit determined by Gerry Bye⁷ on routes he determined

to the 284 Munros, plus 105 Tops that were on the route to the Munro summit. The other data set comprised over 200 waypoints determined on the ground using GPS units (10-figure grid references).

Taking the data sets in pairs, the difference in the grid reference was determined for each summit in both the easterly and northerly directions. To simplify the assessment, the two difference figures were converted to a single number using the Pythagoras relationship for right angle triangles to calculate a Root Mean Square (RMS) deviation.

The SMC 81/90 and SMC 97 tables give the same grid reference for most summits. Most other cases show a reduction of one unit in either or both eastings and northings in the newer tables, consistent with the different adjustments of 17m. and 43m. previously described. More significant deviations arose with three Tops: (a) Aonach Mor - Tom na Sroine (probably a typographic error in the 1997 tables) (b) Cairn of Gowal, the 1997 tables identifying a 991m. summit between the 1981 summit labelled as Cairn of Gowal (983m.) on the OS map and the 1012m. Cairn Bannoch) and (c) the 924m. Top Meall Glas Choire on Beinn Eibhinn, which has a comma-shaped 920m. contour, so predicting the precise position of the summit from the map is impossible. The author's website¹ graphically shows this analysis plus similar assessments for other sets of map-derived data.

Comparing GPS and SMC 97 data, the RMS deviation was generally less than 70m. This corresponds to the diagonal from the centre to the corner of a 100m. square, the maximum deviation expected when upgrading from 6 to 10-figure grid references. Some improvement, especially with respect to outliers, was obtained by using the Best Estimate figures for map data as described in the next section. The ill-defined Beinn a' Bhuid – South Top provided the greatest deviation to date, the quoted grid reference corresponding to a 1179m. spot height, the maximum 9m. above the 1170m. contour. A GPS reading (by Rob Milne) was taken at what, in the absence of a cairn, he judged to be at the highest point, 60m. away from the spot height but in a different 100m.x100m. grid square. This exemplifies the desirability of locating the summit on the ground and relating it back to the map through a GPS measurement. If the map shows a spot height, it is not necessarily at the highest point. With a 10m. contour interval, the position of the summit may not be accurate if the terrain within the contour ring is in reality asymmetric. For all grid references determined from the map, there is uncertainty as to the position of the true summit if there is only a contour ring.

For both Sgor Gaoith – Meall Dubhag, where the mapped 998m. cairn is at the extreme SW end of the 990m. ring contour, and Beinn Teallach (deviation about 130m.), a double summit with rocky outcrops 150m. apart, two GPS positions were quoted by the reporting walker, who felt unable to identify which was the higher. In each case, one reading was close to the tabulated position and one at an alternative summit. Deviations of over 120m. were recorded at two tops on the complex An Teallach ridge, Lord Berkeley's Seat and Corrag Bhuidhe.

Comparison of two higher precision data sets of 176 summits, GPS values and Gerry Bye's data, 150 points showed a positional difference of less than 50m. This provides a clear advantage in reducing ambiguity, but there are nine significant deviations of more than 100m. These include the Munros Cruach Ardrain, for which The Tables give the location of the SW summit whereas the description in The Munros Guide led two independent GPS users to the NE Top, and Eididh nan Clach Geala for which the OS map shows a spot height to the SE end of the

summit ring contour whereas the Munros guide says the NW cairn is the summit.

For listings derived from maps, deviations inevitably arise where the map is ambiguous or confused. Often the presence of multiple summits has caused problems, when comparing GPS measurements and map data. A table showing these and other questionable summits is maintained on the author's website,¹ with comments about the source of the uncertainty. These summits should be revisited, preferably by several separate walkers charged with making a considered assessment, ideally using a theodolite and recording the location of the competing summits using a GPS. It would be useful if a permanent reference identification for each summit could be defined, agreed and included in future editions of the Tables.

'Best Estimate' Listing of Summits:

The process described in this section has been derived to provide the best available estimate of the location of summits expressed as 10-figure grid references. For each of the 594 Munros, Tops and Deleted Tops, the quoted grid reference is the first available in the following sequence :

(1) OS trig point grid reference (10-figure) where the trig point is believed to correspond to the summit (Munro, Top or Deleted Top), from Phil Newby and John Davis.⁶ 54 summits.

(2) GPS reading (if confident about authenticity) to 10-figures, for 215 distinct summits with some duplicates provided by different walkers or the same walker on a return visit. Data have been obtained from Bergleiter (11 summits), Nigel Cliffe (5), Ken Crocket (8), Graham Hartley (51), Henry Marston (83), Doug Meiklejohn (2), Rob Milne (63) and Alan Shepard (23).

(3) An average figure derived from OS maps for all summits in the 1981/90 and 1997 tables based on the following sources, as available. By averaging the available figures, the consequence of the grid reference ambiguity (for 6-figure data) is reduced (325 summits).

* Gerry Bye's 8-figure grid references,⁷ with zero as the last figure in the northings and eastings in the 10-figure grid references; both the original and updated versions were used to increase weighting.

* The SMC 1997 grid reference, expanded to 10 figures with a 43m. adjustment.

* The SMC 1981/90 grid reference, expanded to 10 figures with an 17m. adjustment.

* Grid references derived from maps by Alan Dawson and Brenda Lowndes⁸ expanded with a 40m. adjustment

(4) Robin Campbell's Variorum Table,² generally the grid reference in the 1974 Tables, expanded to 10 figures by appending 40m. to the Northings and Eastings (not calibrated to determine offset). 49 summits, all deleted in later Tables.

(5) 10-figure grid references derived from the description in Robin Campbell's Variorum Table for summits only listed in the first two editions of The Tables and interpreted by the author from the OS 1:25000 map (Get-a-Map service⁴); 15 summits. Some are now known to be less than 914m. high, others are small knolls at the end of the summit ridge, and one is apparently below a small rise.

Where the Best Estimate derived from maps is quoted,¹ the analysis starts at (3) above.

For (1) and (2), analysis of the reproducibility of 47 duplicate OS trig point data and GPS measurements to date (either a trig point and one or two GPS readings, or two GPS measurements) is summarised in the following table. In calculating

Units: metres	Eastings	Northings	RMS deviation
Average	8.3	8.9	13.8
Std. Dev.	18.1	8.6	19.0
Maximum	116.0	58.0	129.7

the average and standard deviation (Std. Dev.), the absolute discrepancy was calculated, i.e. ignoring the minus sign for negative differences.

The greatest discrepancies corresponded to the previously mentioned cases where a walker took duplicate measurements on Beinn Teallach, and Carn an t-Sagairt Mor, both with difficult-to-allocate summits. Knight's Peak has a double-topped rocky summit, with two peaks about 20m. apart – distinct, but which is the true Top? Duplicate readings at the same location were generally within 10m. and more than half were different by less than 5m. – including Cruach Ardrain, for which the on-the-ground readings differ from the Tables. The significant deviations are listed in the table of differences on the author's website.¹

In summary, my proposal is to list the location of each summit by on-the-ground measurements, using GPS measurements for Munros, Tops and Deleted Tops (as listed in Robin Campbell's *Variorum* in his *Munroist's Companion*), Corbetts, Grahams plus Donalds and Other hills included in SMC lists. Ideally, multiple readings taken by different walkers on different days should be combined, eliminating dubious readings and averaging the others. I am therefore appealing to fellow walkers to make a point of recording the location of summits that you visit, marking the location of each summit as a waypoint on a GPS unit and passing the relevant data on to me. The procedure required to acquire consistent data is summarised as follows:

At the summit, first look round to check that you are actually at the highest point. Then get a time averaged GPS reading of the summit location. Place the GPS on the summit cairn, allowing the unit to average the data for a few minutes (by pressing the Mark button and selecting Average) and press Enter. The waypoint identification code should be recorded as well as the name of the summit. Note if there is a trig point and its location. If there is a separate trig point, take an additional GPS reading at that for calibration purposes. When you are downloading the data to your PC (or alternatively recording it manually from the GPS unit) ensure that you have a consistent map datum and co-ordinate system, preferably the Ordnance Survey GB map datum and the British OS Grid as the Grid option. Other formats can be accommodated, e.g. latitude and longitude with the WGS84 datum, but the format should be specified.

Note: These instructions apply to the popular Garmin GPS12 model but the basic principles apply to other GPS units.

Please e-mail the author¹ with data files of your recorded waypoints with relevant information such as GPS unit model and download software package plus calibration points, especially trig points. I am also interested in routes with relevant information e.g. as described in SMC Munros Guide or otherwise.

The collected data will, of course, be available to the compilers of the next edition of the Munro Tables, for consideration as a reference source. Official publication of the lists is therefore seen as likely to be through the SMC. However, as an incentive to walkers to provide GPS data, it is planned to make data available to contributors through links from the author's web page.

References

1. Henry Marston: <http://www.hmarston.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk> or alternatively <http://www.hmarston.co.uk> Follow links to Munros and GPS for further information plus the photographs and graphs described, to contact the author from website for paper version of graphs and to submit data
 2. Robin N. Campbell: *The Munroist's Companion*, SMC, 1999
 3. Odilon Ferreira Jr, GPS TrackMaker, <http://www.gpstm.com/>
 4. Ordnance Survey: 'The Get-a-Map Service', <http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/getamap>
 5. Ordnance Survey: 'The National GPS Network' <http://www.gps.gov.uk/guide1.asp>
 6. Phil Newby: 'Phil's GPS Waypoint resource pages', <http://www.36haroldstreet.freemove.co.uk/waypoints.htm>
 7. Gerry Bye: GPS data from the SMC, from http://www.smc.org.uk/books/gps_data.htm
 8. Alan Dawson and Brenda Lowndes: *The Hills of Great Britain and Ireland*. <http://www.liv.ac.uk/SportsandRecreation/hillwalking/mountain.html>
 9. Alan Murphy: 'GPS Utility' software package, <http://www.gpsu.co.uk/>
- In this article, the term Summit is used as a generic term for the top of any hill, whether Munro, Top, Deleted Top (i.e. a Munro or Top that appeared in earlier tables but are now excluded), Corbett, Donald, Graham or Other hill.

Henry Marston.

Letters To The Editor

The Lizard, Creag Ghlas

The Lizard was the first route on this crag. It was climbed by me and Dave Bathgate in 1967. It followed the best line on the crag, the right-hand edge of the slabby south-west facing front, which forms a pronounced rib in its lower part.

Some years ago, I noticed gross disparities between the description of this route in John Mackenzie's *Northern Highlands Volume 2* (p. 63) and the original description, given by me in the 1968 Journal. Pitch lengths were very different and the crux pitch was referred to as a 5a 'mossy groove'. I thought at that time that Mackenzie had simply nabbed our crux pitch and described it as his own 'Loop Variation', but since no diagram or photograph was provided in NH2 and because of the confusion created by Mackenzie's aberrant pitch lengths, I did nothing about it. However, last year I picked up a copy of the new compendium *Scottish Rock Climbs* and found to my disgust that our route had been omitted from it, whereas many of Mackenzie's inferior routes had been included. This was too much dissing, so I began a long and unsatisfactory correspondence with Mackenzie and the SRC editor Andy Nisbet.

It is 40 years since I visited the crag. I have made no return visit, and we took only one unhelpful photograph. Furthermore, my description of the route (being an outstanding natural line) lacked detail. This is the disputed portion: "A prominent rib divides the buttress into smooth slabs on the left and steep walls and grassy corners on the right. The route follows this rib. Climb to broad rock terrace in two pitches, keeping to crest (130ft. and 70ft.)."

However, I remember that crux pitch (our pitch 2) well, because of its severity. Dave Bathgate embarked on a curving mossy groove leading up to the left, encountered difficulty and proposed to use a piton. I suggested that perhaps the pitch might go straight up the crest and he came back down so that I could try it. The climbing on the crest was very thin and exposed, but the difficult moves were

in the first 20ft. or so and after to-ing and fro-ing a bit I got up. In those days we had no numerical grades, in fact not even sub-divisions of the Very Severe grade, but Bathgate and I were “at the height of our powers” (his description, not mine) and the pitch was as hard as we could manage. Whatever it was, it was not a 5a mossy groove. Yet that is where Mackenzie and Nisbet have put us, and – so far as I know – that is where we remain! Our line (in their opinion) was too hard for us to climb, and therefore we must have climbed elsewhere. Perhaps our line was instead simply too hard for them to climb. However, I don’t think that is the case: they hadn’t looked properly – that’s all. The truth of this matter will not be resolved by correspondence between three decrepit old parties like Mackenzie, Nisbet and myself. It will be resolved by the sort of young, able, enthusiastic climber who ought to be editing our guidebooks.

Robin N. Campbell.

In regard to Robin's letter I find all this a little mystifying and obscure – Robin's many years of absence has added a patina of confusion, whereas I and others (including Andy) climb regularly on the crag.

The Lizard is far from the best line – it is a good line, but no better than several of the others done by various folk over the years. *The Lizard* does, I’m sure, follow the groove which today is mossy, but then may not have been; it is hard for the grade and Andy simply took his description from the SM CJ – so did I for the guide book. Andy and I have both done the 'Loop pitch' variant and it is simply that – a variant – and not the natural line, which is the groove, but (today) harder and cleaner.

However it is just possible that Robin and Dave had done the hardest route in Scotland in 1962 by several grades – not to be topped until Julian Lines came along. My feeling is that Robin's memory is somewhat displaced by the years and I think the fact that his route was left out of *Selected Climbs* really hurt Robin. I would have included it as it is quite up to the mark, and a bit of cleaning would soon restore it to the original pristine glory that it once was. With climate change, all routes on relatively low level crags on certain rock types moss over in time and unless they are climbed reasonably regularly then that is their ultimate fate, sad but true. Who knows what the truth is? We certainly never intended to do Robin down – or the route which I think is good – and remarkable for its time, but I do think if Robin would care to accompany me (and Andy) up it again he would see for himself that the line has changed somewhat after 40 years.

John Mackenzie.

Scottish Mountaineering Trust – 2005-2006

The Trustees met on March 11, June 10 and October 7, 2005.

During the course of these meetings support was given to the British Trust for Ornithology; NVA Organisation – Storr Footpath; the Jonathan Conville Mountaineering Trust; the New Routes Editor for a computer; the Dundee Mountain Film Festival; the Mountaineering Council of Scotland – Access and Conservation; Mr R A Lawes – postgraduate research into Scottish mountaineering; Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team – construction of new mountain rescue base; RSPB – field study evaluating the effects of wind farms on upland breeding birds.

The Trustees wished to express their great sadness and sorrow at the loss of one of the Trustees, Rob Milne. As Convenor of the Publications Sub-committee, Rob was a Trustee ex-officio. His contribution to the Trustee meetings were invaluable. His energy and enthusiasm will be sadly missed.

Bill Runciman retired as Trustee by rotation. His contributions were much appreciated. In particular, he was instrumental in the production and completion of the Scottish Mountaineering Trust leaflet (which has now been available for over one year).

The present Trustees are P. MacDonald (Chairman), C. J. Orr, A. Tibbs, R. J. Archbold, D. A. Bearhop, D. J. Broadhead, C. M. Huntley, P. V. Brian, A. C. Stead and R. Anderson. J. Morton Shaw is the Trust Treasurer.

The present directors of the Publications Company are R. K. Bott (Chairman), K. V. Crockett, W. C. Runciman, M. G. D. Shaw and T. Prentice (Publications Manager). R. Anderson attends Board Meetings as the new convenor of the Publications Sub Committee.

The following grants have been committed by the Trustees:

British Trust for Ornithology	£2500
Jonathon Conville Mountaineering Trust	£1222
New Routes Editor – computer	£300
Dundee Mountain Film Festival	£1000
Mountaineering Council of Scotland – access and conservation	£5000
NVA Organisation – Storr Footpath	£4000
R A Lawes post-graduate research	£4500
Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team – new base	£20,000
RSPB field study	£2500

MUNRO MATTERS

By David Kirk (Clerk of the List)

ANOTHER buoyant year of hill-going is compleat and I thank everyone who has written to me to register a Compleation, or Amend their original entry. I continue to enjoy and be touched by the anecdotes your letters contain. The total new Compleaters for the last year is 206, a fraction down on the last two years. The cut-off date by which letters had to be received for inclusion in this year's Journal was April 1.

With regards to the SMC Website, I would remind everyone of the Photo Gallery which Ken Crocket does so well to maintain. Please dig out that old final summit photograph, and send a copy (or the original along with a SAE) to Ken.

The List of this year's Compleatists are as follows. As before, the first five columns are number, name, then Munro, Top and Furth Compleation years.

3337	Eve Maguire	2005	3377	Dave Saddler	2005
3338	John R. Reay	2005	3378	Alicia Murray	2005
3339	Elizabeth McDonald	2005	3379	Charles Dingwall	2005
3340	Dave McGowan	2005	3380	Mike Killingley	2005
3341	Diane Ball	2005	2005 3381	Jason Brooke	2005
3342	Ron Ball	2005	2005 3382	Bruce Maltman	2005
3343	Jacqueline B. Wilson	2005	3383	M. Ian S. Hunter	2005
3344	Conor J. Pittman	2005	3384	Michael Cowan	2005
3345	David Cameron	2005	3385	Tony Hulme	2005
3346	Henning Wackerhage	2005	3386	Elke Braun	2005
3347	Elaine Milner	2005	3387	Freda Wyn	2005
3348	Philip Wilkinson	2005	3388	Paul Beverley	2005
3349	W. Allan Wylie	2005	3389	Graham Vaughan	2005
3350	James Paris	2005	3390	Raymond Quinn	2005
3351	Adam Gordon	2004	3391	Roderick Dingwall	2005
3352	Roy H. Smith	2005	3392	Andrew Summers	2005
3353	Ken J. Milson	2005	3393	Jeffery Quinn	2005
3354	John Rennie	2005	3394	Sheila M.C. Dall	2005
3355	Richard J. W. Tibbetts	2005	3395	George Clowes	2005
3356	Lynne Martin	2005	3396	Andrew V. Stachulski	2003
3357	Peter Dyson	2004	3397	Ian J. Jackson	2005
3358	Michael Willis	2005	3398	Graham Milton	2005
3359	Jon Baldwin	2003	3399	George Philip	2005
3360	Barry Baldwin	2003	3400	Sheila Boettcher	2005
3361	David Stevenson	2005	3401	Tony Richardson	2005
3362	David Hallam	2005	3402	Steve Turnbull	2005
3363	Mike Assenti	2005	3403	Patrick Hetherington	2005
3364	Barry Davies	2005	3404	Keith White	2005
3365	Andre Hawryliw	2005	3405	Janet Yates	2005
3366	Anne Butler	2005	3406	Neil Yates	2005
3367	Greg Lowde	2005	3407	Robin Hildrew	2005
3368	Roger N. Winterburn	2005	3408	Andrew K. Sparkes	2005
3369	Paul Armstrong	2005	3409	Willie Robertson	2005
3370	Alistair Orr MacSween	1997	3410	Stephen Young	2005
3371	Kenneth J. Radcliffe	2005	2411	Mairi Mackenzie	2005
3372	Dave Sanderson	2005	3412	Richard Kurzweil	2005
3373	Brian Richmond	2005	3413	Graham E. Bothwell	2005
3374	Alexander J. Bell	2005	3414	Paula Hudson	2005
3375	Derek J.B. Reid	2005	3415	Ivor Robert Brown	1996
3376	David W. Coia	2005	3416	Graham Johnston	2005

3417 Paul R.T. Newby	2005	3474 Gordon J. Liney	2005
3418 Albert Krawinkel	2005	3475 May Liney	2005
3419 John Linnell	2000	3476 Charlotte G. Turner	2005
3420 Richard B. Moore	2005	3477 Bob Mayow	2005
3421 Frances Moore	2005	3478 Peter Atkinson	2005
3422 Norman Easton	2005	3479 Roger Heckingbottom	2005
3423 Trefor Beese	2005	3480 Richard Bridges	2005
3424 Allan Gall	2005	3481 Rick Salter	2005
3425 Alan Best	2005	3482 D.R. Kerr Fraser	2005
3426 David Sneddon	2005	3483 Reamonn Lenkas	2005
3427 William Stevenson	2005	3484 Stephen Miles	2005
3428 Kenny Morris	2005	2005 3485 Janice Angwin	2005
3429 Glen Gordon Adcock	2005	3486 Nick Train	2005
3430 Jimmy Reid	1984	3487 Alban Hough	2005
3431 Graham Hunter	2005	3488 Sally Varian	2005
3432 Sheila Simpson	2005	3489 John D. Smith	2005
3433 Bill Simpson	2005	3490 Paul Corrigan	2005
3434 J. Michael Arrowsmith	2005	3491 Bruce McGorum	2005
3435 Duncan Boyd	2005	3492 Angus Plumb	2005
3436 Roy Manuel	2005	3493 Andrew Lawson	2005
3437 Mr K. McGregor	2004	3494 Andrew Morlin	2005
3438 Hazel Holmes	2005	3495 Tom Waugh	2005
3439 Donald Wooley	2005	3496 George D. Cruickshank	2005
3440 Thomas Campbell McGee	2005	3497 Richard Knight	2005
3441 Paula H. Carter	2005	3498 Sally Chaffey	2005
3442 Alasdair Kennedy	2005	3499 Rob Mackay	2005
3443 Tom Tracey	2005	3500 Les Meer	2005
3444 Graham Russell	2005	3501 Andrew Spink	2005
3445 Peter J. B. Aldous	2005	3502 Jim Hawkes	2005
3446 Janice Shepherd	2004	3503 Donald J. M. McIntosh	2005
3447 Cameron Kerray	2005	3504 Jean G. Urquhart	2005
3448 Christine Anderson	2005	3505 Joyce Beaton	2005
3449 Tom Webster	1996	3506 Alison Maddocks	2005
3450 Alexander J. Masson	2005	3507 Ken Maddocks	2005
3451 Michael Bird	2005	3508 Robert E. Wright	2005
3452 Mr L. Forster	2005	3509 Bruce Madden	2005
3453 Tony Smyth	2005	3510 Robert Fraser	2005
3454 John F. Davidson	2005	3511 Ina Jefferson	2005
3455 Keith S. Bryers	2005	3512 Irwin Jefferson	2005
3456 Ronnie Taylor	2005	3513 Lorna Kinloch	2005
3457 Susan McIntyre Taylor	2005	3514 Cath Close	2005
3458 Colin Waines	2005	3515 Catherine Jackson	2003
3459 David J. Downey	2005	3516 Andrew Watt	2005
3460 Bob Stewart	2005	3517 Charles Pinkstone	2005
3461 Tricia A. Chapman	2005	3518 Ron Bell	2005
3462 Adrian W. Chapman	2005	3519 Alan G. Courtney	2005
3463 Bill Taylor	2005	3520 Neil Campbell	2005
3464 Keith Gliddon	2005	3521 Philip Sydee	2005
3465 Colin F. Morsley	2005	3522 Robert Marshall	2005
3466 Douglas Barnes	2005	3523 Jenny Hatfield	2005
3467 Muriel Barnes	2005	3524 Euan Laing	2005
3468 John Henderson	2005	3525 Alasdair Baird	2005
3469 Steven R. Poore	2005	3526 Michael O'Donnel	2005
3470 Robert J. Hughes	2005	3527 David May	2005
3471 Graham Scott	1995	3528 Chris Hallows	2005
3472 Guy Froud	2005	3529 Mr R. Y. Potts	2005
3473 Stan J. Urbaniak	2005	3530 Malcolm Davidson	2005

3531 Derek McAdam	2005	3537 Stephen Mitchell	1999
3532 Rob Fuchs	2005	3538 Robert Craig	2006
3533 Tim Burns	2005	3539 Maggie Kitt	2005
3534 Karen McLeod	2005	3540 Michael Gray	2005
3535 David Jeffery	2005	3541 Joan Rennie	2005
3536 Steve Clayton	2005	3542 Rosemary Queen	2006

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

One of the longest rounds I can remember was by John R. Reay (3338). He started in 1957, completing in 2005. He completed on Meall Chuaich with 24 people present. He was presented with a poem by 'the re-incarnate W. McGonagall'.

*For John, father, uncle, friend – thanks are now due,
An introduction to the mountains was indeed down to you.
All toiled up the slopes with all their might and main,
But the top was always worth it except in cloud and rain.*

There are not many with more than a 48-year round, although Charles Dingwall (3379) comes close. He did his first Munro in 1959, it was Ben Avon while on a course at the new Glen More Lodge. He had Ben Humble as his instructor and can still remember his remarkable stories. Charles completed on Moruisg also in 2005. Just a fraction shorter – Peter Aldous (3445) took 45 years with the last 206 in three-and-a-half years. He only has seven 4000m. Alpine peaks to go (all in the Mont Blanc area).

Also with a long round duration was Mike Killingley from Winchester. He wanted to complete on Carn Mor Dearg then traverse the arête to the Ben, his first Munro, and to do it exactly 30 years on from his first ascent. Unfortunately, his three sons had tickets to REM in London, so he was forced to go eight days earlier.

The greatest number of folk recorded on a summit this year goes to Ron Bell (3518) with '60 people and a piper' plus champagne on the Cairnwell, all on his 60th birthday – hence the reason the piper wasn't included in the 'people'.

Ian Jackson deserves a mention for getting 40 people onto his final hill. Luckily, he'd picked a Geal Charn. Sheila (3432) and Bill (3433) Simpson got 39 people up Ben Lomond on 'the worst day of the summer', as they became Friockham HWC's first Munroists. Trefor Beese (3423) took 32 folk up Sgurr a Mhaoraich at the end of May. During his summit celebrations, he was informed by his daughter that she was three months pregnant, and that he was to be a grandad. He was presented with a cake decorated exactly like the Completion Certificate – right down to my predecessor Chris Huntley's signature!

Neil Campbell (3520) finished on Meall Buidhe in Glen Lyon, witnessed by 28 people, many from the Blantyre HWC. He feels he did his bit to bridge the Campbell/Macdonald feud, as he wore a Macdonald kilt for the day. Paul Armstrong (3369) took 29 people up Ben na Lap on June 4. On their way down, they met someone else, possibly Mike Assenti from Scone (3363), just about to complete. R. Potts (3529) decided to invite everyone he had ever been up a hill with over his 45-year completion period, giving them 15 months warning. He finished on Beinn Sgulaire with 25 friends.

As well as unusually-decorated cakes, other items have figured in gifts. Sheila Boettcher (3400) was given a glass engraving of A' Glas-Bheinn (her final summit) and a painting of An Teallach

John Baldwin (3359) and his dad Barry (3360) started and finished together,





but it was only when they got round to writing to record their compleation several months later did they realise that their start and finish dates had been 13 years exactly apart – lucky for them they chose to register otherwise they might never have known this.

On the subject of first Munros, Gordon (3474) and May (3475) Liney only began when they took part in Gordon's father Les's (1473) last Munro. Reamonn Lenkas (3483) sold his ZX Spectrum to get enough money for his first boots and rucksack. His recent compleation on Beinn na Lap saw his party getting back for the train with only seconds to spare. A wonderful finishing trinity was achieved by Derek Reid (3375) and David Coia (3376), in a 24-hour trip (noon–noon) to Knoydart. After an afternoon doing Luinne Bheinn and Meall Buidhe, they camped at Mam Barrisdale and did Ladhar Bheinn the following morning, leaving the tent at 4.20am. Donald Wooley (3439) also completed his last two during a Knoydart trip – Luinne Bheinn followed by Meall Buidhe. Somehow or other he organised two pipers to play for him in the mist as he reached his compleation. Kenny McGregor (3437) also had pipes on top, and numerous people in kilts, on Ben More on Mull, while Rob Mackay (3499) was piped up Ciste Dhubh in October.

The most relaxed idyllic sounding compleation I heard of this year was by Duncan Boyd (3435) who wandered up Seana Bhraigh in the late afternoon from Coire Mor bothy after fishing in the loch. He rounded off the day with Highland Park, and did a similar thing the following day, but his chosen hill was the nearby Corbett, Carn Ban. Speaking of idyllic, Alan Best (3425) and his wife have an idyllic sounding life-style. They spend nearly all their time in their motor home, travelling round Europe 'biking, walking, climbing, skiing and ski-touring'. A three-month period in the Highlands saw his compleation on Binnein Mor.

The effort and expense that a lot of Munroists go to can always be seen in the distances which they have had to travel. Ann Butler (3366) took seven years, travelling each time from Plymouth – she plans a second round. Roy Smith (3352) and David Jeffrey (3535) travelled from Southampton (David took 41 trips). Nick Train (3486) took 52 trips from London. Elke Braun began while holidaying from Germany but made a move to Stirling to ease things. An interesting item arrived in my mail from Andrew Stachulski (3396) from Newton-le-Willows. It was his copy of the original J. Wilson Parker Munro Map. He'd also noted the various changes from each revision. Andrew too plans a second round.

On the subject of unusual things in the mail, I must thank Sally Chaffey (3498) for sending me a copy of 'Munro Mania – The Game of the Scottish Munros'. It proved very enjoyable at New Year. If anyone is interested in obtaining a copy from Sally, give her a call on 01773 825418. I don't imagine anyone will be writing to John Hughes (3470) however to get a copy of the photo he sent in – a full moon on the top of Beinn na Lap. John has only managed five Munros in the nude and wonders when a full round will be done in the Full Monty!

Statistics are always useful, if only to compare with our own experiences. Some similar sets were received this year. Richard Kurzwell (3412) took 870 hours, in 137 days, covering 2615km. and ascending 161km. (100 miles). Michael Arrowsmith (3434) took 113 hours 'away from the car' in 166 walking days, covering 2846km. and ascending 184km. Michael always started from a car and returned before dark each day. Richard Knight (3497) walked on 130 days, and covered 2543km. Robert E. Wright (3508) sent me a 24-page report of his trips. What jumped out was the number of different climbing and scrambling trips he had managed to utilise in his round.

Munroists often have tales of the interesting souls they encounter. Paul Newby

Ian Angell. Photo: Iain Cumming.

Rob Milne. Photo: Dave Cuthbertson.

(3417) recalls an unusual encounter with a Dutch Theoretical Physicist who repaired a 6-inch bike tyre split on Paul's bike with nylon cord, after first analysing the problem from first principles. Elaine Milner (3347), from Pudsey, Yorkshire had such adventures that she used tales from her round as anecdotes in school assemblies. Alison (3506) and Ken (3507) Maddock from Wales report a couple of encounters which slightly marred their round. The first resulted in them losing all their equipment from outside the Kingshouse. The second was a run-in with 'a certain misanthropic hostel warden who shall remain nameless' – answers on a postcard. A certain amount of bad luck befell John Davidson (3454), who cracked five ribs on the Horns of Alligin and took a headfirst dive while descending the Chalamain Gap, which still gives him recurring nightmares. Alistair Baird (3525) had been forced to take a year-and-a-half off, during his round, after breaking his leg at the end of a day's walking – in the Car Park! He decided to finally compleat on his namesake Sgurr Alasdair. Les Meer also suffered a rather unusual painful experience. He took a high voltage thump when ball lightning hit the top of Gleouraich – close to him. The elements were kinder on his final hill – he saw a double glory from Ben Lui. Les was the first member of the Hereford Mountain Club to compleat, and managed his last seven during the same trip north.

Inn Pinn stories did not feature quite as often in this year's letters. Alasdair Kennedy (3442) only had it to do by the year 2000. He then failed on it several times because of rain, wind etc. He finally succeeded on the only dry day on a ten day trip to Skye from The Wirrall. Euan Laing only reached the top of Beinn Fhionnlaidh after five attempts. His available time to compleat was running short as his fiancé is planning for seven kids. With a double failure on his last hill prior to compleation, Derek McAdam (3531) was so relaxed when he finally did Beinn Teallach, he felt he had floated up. In a summit group of 16, he had 11 previous compleaters.

I have to apologise to Keith Gliddon. In error, I gave Keith a number which I had already allocated. To correct the error, Keith accepted a later number.

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.

1148	Colin Wilson	1993	2005
1266	Joan Wilson	1993	2005
2887	Michael O'Hara	2003	2005
3293	Paul Ormerod	2004	2004 2005
1747	Anthony Halhead	1997	2005 1999
1981	Bill M. Edgar	1998	1998 2005
		1987	1992
		1998	2005
634	Bill Miller	2004	1998 1991
		1997	
1722	John Newman	2005	1999 2000
		1980	
		1995	
216	Jeremy Fenton	2005	1984 1982
1636	James A. Bennett	1996	2005
660	Paul Gillies	1989	2005
622	Robert Wilson	1988	2005 1995
827	Pete Craven	1990	2005
1344	Pat Craven	1994	2005
2503	Grahame Downer	2000	2005

		1994	2005
1295	William Beattie	1999	
1351	Margaret Beattie	1994	2005
		2000	
3141	Peter D. Cottam	2004 2002	
		1990	
763	Brian D. Curle	2005 1991 1991	
		1984	
341	J.F. Fedo	1988	
		1994	1999
1292	Julian P. Ridal	2005	1995
2092	Steve Tompkins	1999 2001	2005
3428	Kenny Morris	2005 2005	
		1992	
1126	Margaret Hendry	2003 2003	
		1992	
1030	James G. Halkett	2005	
1933	Dave Irons	1998 2005	2005
2669	Brian Mucci	2001 2005	
2670	Alison Claxton	2001 2005	
		1998	
1942	Gordon J. McNally	2005	
		1997	
1780	Marion O'Connor	2005	
1660	John Kirkham	1996 1998 2000	2005
2641	Alan G. Duncan	2001	2005
		1988	2005
755	J. Stanley Roberts	1988	1990 2005
599	James Taylor	1994	
660	Paul Gillies	1989	2005
3463	Bill Taylor	2005	2005
2182	Anne Morrison	1999	2005
		1985	1996
		1996	2005
384	J.M. Gear	2005 1985	
		1999	
2124	Chris Freeman	2006	
660	Paul Gillies	1989	2006

As ever, people who wish to register a Completion or an Amendment and who would like to receive return confirmation should send a letter with a stamped addressed envelope (A4 size if you wish a certificate for Munro or Corbett Completion) to me. Please note, if you are asking for any more than one certificate, the 60gm. initial postage weight limit will be exceeded. I can be reached at:

Greenhowe Farmhouse,
Banchory Devenick,
Aberdeenshire,
AB12 5YJ.

Have a great day on the hill.

David Kirk
Clerk of the List

A Winter's Tale

Braemar before dawn cold bites,
fingers shaking and clumsy
there are tears in my eyes, it's the wind.
Walking in on iced tracks boots sliding
unyielding,
eyes widen as skies
become light, imperceptibly.
Apricot dawn warms cold shoulders of mountains
as we stumble through tussocks
spiky frozen Mohicans.
Dark deer, silent watchers dapple the hillsides
now still,
but tensing to flee.
Day is born, soundless and glorious
blue skies and look! Eagles, two eagles above us
guide our eyes to the ice climb, glistening alluringly.
All weariness fades as we gaze at the ice-fall
pure clean and clear, conditions are perfect.

Rhythm of movement, axe, crampon, pull upwards
ice water finds freedom through pick holes and ice-screws.
Armour-clad in its ice thrall
we can climb up its beauty,
frozen enchantment in motion suspended.
Axe, crampon pull upwards, axe, crampon
and onwards
last pitch
last belay
and hurrah, it's the top!

Dazzling white vistas unfold before us
but we shoulder our rucksacks,
it's a long journey back.
Descend, descend
endless tracks left by crampons
bear claws in the snow.
Terrain changing, its dark now
but the moon shines benignly.
Iced tracks snake enticingly, leading us homewards
boots heavy,
it's so far
to the car.
But it was great,
wasn't it?

Helen G. S. Forde.

IN MEMORIAM

ERIC DUNCAN GRANT LANGMUIR j. 1955

I FIRST met Eric when I arrived at the start of my first term at Fettes in early 1946. I was struggling to get a bulging suitcase up to my dormitory when Eric appeared and offered to help. So began a friendship that was to last just a few months short of 60 years.

We both left Fettes in 1950 and Eric went off to do his National Service in the Royal Artillery before going up to Cambridge to read Natural Sciences. His athletic potential became apparent when he won the army cross-country championship. I, in the meantime, had discovered a keen interest in hillwalking.

In 1950, having fallen victim to Munroitis, I set out from my home in Selkirk for the Cuillin on a three-speed Raleigh bicycle laden down with tins of food. I arrived several days later at Glenbrittle Youth Hostel feeling lucky to have survived the road from Carbost, which in those days was basically a boulder field interspersed with large and deep potholes. On the second day I was approached by a gent from Newcastle whose companion had to return home. He asked me if I could rock-climb, and if not, would I like to learn? I jumped at the chance, went to Portree that afternoon and had a cobbler knock clinkers and tricounis into my hillwalking boots and so I 'learned the ropes'.

Early in 1951 I was staying at Eric's parents' home in Glasgow when he asked me how I had spent the previous summer holidays. I told him that I had been rock-climbing on Skye. His face lit up. He said: "Toby (the nickname I acquired at school and which Eric used all the years that I knew him) I wish I'd known sooner. I'd love to rock-climb and I've been looking for someone to show me."

We agreed to go to Skye that summer. In the meantime, I had acquired a very powerful 650cc Triumph Thunderbird motorbike courtesy of my father for the then princely sum of £230. This was our transport for the Skye trip and later for many others. I would leave home in Selkirk after work on a Friday, head for Glasgow on the A8 (no M8 then), stop for a meal at Eric's then head off at top speed for Glencoe or wherever. Eric delighted in riding pillion urging me to go ever faster as we hurtled up Loch Lomondside. If you can imagine that road in the 1950s you will marvel, as I do now, that we survived these trips. But survive we did and that first summer we arrived in Glenbrittle complete with ex-WD carabiners, seven hemp slings, one hemp rope(!) and one new-fangled nylon rope.

By now I had acquired, in exchange for about two weeks' salary, a decent pair of nailed boots from Lawrie of London. We were ready! After a few introductory scrambles it was apparent that Eric had a natural ability and we set off for his first climb, which was *Cioch Direct*, graded severe. Three days later he was leading me up a very severe, the *Crack of Doom*. Apart from two very wet days we enjoyed perfect weather and were able to make full use of our three weeks to climb many routes. Eric never forgot that holiday and my getting him started on rock-climbing.

It was while we were in Skye that I first noticed Eric's amazing co-ordination of eye and body and his ability to cover rough terrain including scree and boulders at full speed. Had he misjudged he would have broken a leg, or worse, on many occasions. He must surely have broken the record for the descent of the Stone Shoot (in those days there were actually stones in it), including an apparently suicidal leap over a break at about the halfway point. I watched in amazement.

I also got a taste of Eric's mischievous sense of humour while staying at the

hostel. We had, on a number of occasions, exchanged uncomplimentary words with a group of loud-mouthed individuals who were hogging the communal stove. The loudmouths had a greasy, malodorous, brown stew boiling on the stove, in what appeared to be a small version of a witch's cauldron. Since it was at the end of two days of heavy rain and the hostel's drying facilities were overwhelmed somebody had fixed a length of string above the stove on which numerous small items were hanging to dry. I noticed in particular a heavy woollen sock which was giving off an odour even more vile than the stew above which it was loosely and strategically placed. Eric and I exchanged glances. The guardians of the cauldron were in a corner, their brew unattended, noisily and otherwise occupied. Eric had also noticed the sock and a gleam came into his eye.

He said: "What do you think, Toby?" I replied: "Go for it." Eric reached as if for something on the line and 'accidentally' knocked the sock into the cauldron. Panic! – the sock was floating on the mess but quick as a flash I used my spoon to push it under.

"You can chalk that one up," said Eric. We sat down to eat and to await the outcome. Ten minutes later we were treated to a volley of oaths and imprecations from the corner, where the group eventually dined on stale bread and jam, having dumped the contents of the cauldron into the burn. Half-an-hour later a spotty young man came round to ask if anyone had seen a black sock. We capped our evening by directing him to the unhappy group in the corner, who, we told him, had very likely seen a black sock. His fate at the hands of the group was not recorded.

Eric and I climbed some more in the Lakes and the Llanberis Pass and he introduced me to his friends in the CUMC, including Mike O'Hara and Bob Downes. In June 1954, Eric, Mike and I were at the head of Loch Etive to investigate a report that Eric's father had given of some rocks on Beinn Trilleachen that he had spotted when fishing on the loch and which might be of interest. They turned out to be much bigger than we had imagined. The angle looked deceptively easy but they were just about at the limit of friction. We were rather overawed since we did not have anything like today's rock shoes. Eric wore a pair of gym shoes while Mike and I wore vibrams. We decided to go for the easiest looking line and the result was *Sickle*, Very severe but vegetated and a disappointment. Next morning, Eric thought he spotted a promising line so we roped up and Mike started out in a determined manner. He led the first three pitches, including a short but brutish overhang. At this point he found himself on an expanse of slabs where holds were apparently non-existent. After several abortive attempts and some consultation, Eric took over the lead and eventually succeeded in climbing a difficult and exposed pitch and then led the rest of the route. Each time we thought an impasse had been reached Eric found the vital move to continue the climb. The route was far from obvious and it was a bold and brilliant lead for the time. We had discovered *Spartan Slab*.

Eric then continued to climb with winter routes on Ben Nevis and visits to the Alps and the Dauphine with other CUMC members. He spent time too at the Ecole Nationale de Montagne et de Ski in Chamonix with Geoff Sutton, Bob Downes (both CUMC) and Alan Blackshaw (OUMC) and in these summers he made several ascents. Notable among the climbs which he did was the first British ascent of the NE face of the Piz Badile along with Bob and Geoff. At that time it was regarded as one of the hardest routes in the Alps.

Although I did not accompany him on these Alpine trips we still found time for Scottish outings together and I am glad to say that his sense of humour remained undiminished. I by now was the proud owner of a small Standard convertible in which we were driving up Glen Ogle on one memorable occasion with the top

down. We were stuck behind a large lorry loaded with three outsize cylindrical steel tanks which were new and empty. A clear straight appeared but the driver made every effort to prevent me from overtaking. I floored the accelerator and Eric pulled out his piton hammer from the pile of equipment at his feet, stood up, and as we passed he gave each tank in turn a resounding clout. The resulting noise became a mighty echo which reverberated all around the glen. The lorry driver was totally mortified and we were laughing so much that it took me all my time to avoid an oncoming car.

After graduating from Cambridge, Eric spent time in Canada as a geologist and there he met Maureen Lyons whom he married in 1957. Shortly after this our paths diverged and I headed for New Zealand and a career abroad while Eric returned to London to teach for a short time before turning to his career in the education and practice of outdoor sport with his appointment at Whitehall Outdoor Centre in Derbyshire in 1959. He remained there until his appointment as Principal at Glenmore Lodge in 1963. He presided over the centre as *the* place in Britain for winter mountaineering and continued to improve his own skills. In skiing he gained the top qualification of the British Association of Ski Instructors and in later years became the honorary president of BASI. He was himself caught in an avalanche while out on a rescue and it inspired in him a lifelong interest in avalanche research. He was one of those who was active in setting up the avalanche reporting system in Scotland. Later he was appointed Chairman of the Snow and Avalanche Foundation of Scotland. It was for his work in this and in Mountain Rescue that Eric was appointed MBE in 1986 and was made a member of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. When at Glenmore Lodge he first published his book *Mountain Leadership*, later *Mountaineering and Leadership* which is the official handbook of the Mountain Leadership Training Board of Great Britain. It has become the 'Bible', widely known simply as 'Langmuir', for all who would go safely among the British mountains and especially for those who must be responsible for others.

His career then took him to Edinburgh in the interests of his children's education. First he was appointed senior lecturer at Moray House, setting up an Outdoor Education programme there. In 1976 he moved on to become an Assistant Director in the leisure and recreation services department of Lothian Region. In this post he had responsibility for all countryside matters which included Hillend Ski Centre and Port Edgar on the Forth. He was also involved in establishing the Pentland Hills country park. It was from this post that he retired in 1988.

I followed my career briefly back to London and then on to Santa Monica in California. We remained in touch over the years and when I retired in 1994 and returned to the UK I was welcomed as warmly as ever by Eric when I visited him in Avielochan and was able to admire the house designed by his son, Roddy. He still sought new and exciting experiences, and when I told him that my own house in LA had been trashed by an earthquake he claimed he was envious as he had always wanted to experience an earthquake.

It was now that we were in closer touch again that I was able to suggest that we should attend an SMC dinner as between us we had a total of 100 years of membership and only I had put in one appearance at such a function in all those years. To my surprise Eric agreed and he was surprised and delighted to be introduced for the first ascent of *Spartan Slab* in its 50th anniversary year. He held an ambition to attempt it once more in 2005 but sadly this was not to be.

On my way to the dinner we had time for a short outing and Eric, as ever, was full of vigour and good spirits and bounded over a seven-foot deer fence with no bother at all. I struggled a bit and when I complained and asked his advice on my

arthritic knees Eric's response reflected the philosophy of his life. "Toby, you just have to keep going." This he did to the end of his life. In July and August he competed in two separate orienteering events with runs on six days in each. In August he was fell walking in the Lake District, completing three days' walking across country with an impressive descent down the steep scree from Dore Head into Wasdale in the company of his old friend and colleague John Cook. It was therefore a real shock to hear that he had become very ill but he was able to summon up the strength to thank me for my friendship over the years and especially for having introduced him to rock-climbing. For my part I was able to tell him in all sincerity that I regarded his friendship as a privilege. It was only three days later that the phone call came to tell me that Eric had passed away with his partner, Marion, and his children at his side.

How can I summarise such a full life and such a personality? It is given to very few of us to spend our life doing what we love best. Eric not only managed this but in doing so introduced the pleasures and skills of the outdoor sporting life to so many others.

His list of achievements is formidable: Cambridge, Whitehall, Glenmore Lodge, senior administrator in Lothian Region, first and first British ascents, significant contribution to avalanche research and to Mountain Rescue, MBE and FRSE and of course the classic 'Langmuir' read by so many, the list could go on.

The two major setbacks in his life, the loss of his wife Mo in 1980 and of his sister Marjorie in 1998 who both shared his love of the outdoors, and both to cancer, were borne with a quiet resolve.

My own personal memory of Eric is not a fixed picture but a kaleidoscope of many mental snapshots from the past – the boundless and infectious enthusiasm for everything that he did: mad motorcycle rides at all hours, boulder-hopping and scree-running, his inspired lead on *Spartan Slab* and so many great climbing days with Eric and his friends and his ever cheerful sense of humour. Now that Eric is gone from among us I shall miss him deeply. One could not wish for a better companion in all seasons on rock and hill.

I extend my deepest sympathy to Marion and to Eric's wonderful family.

John Mallinson.

Eric Duncan Grant Langmuir FRSE was born in Glasgow May 3, 1931, the second son of Dr James Langmuir OBE. Twenty-odd years later his home at 30 Buckingham Terrace became a haven for a procession of passing climbers.

He died on September 18, 2005, aged 74 and richly fulfilled, at his unique and uniquely hospitable home with its wonderful views of the Cairngorms. He died peacefully, surrounded by family, and still able to join in an impromptu ceilidh in his bedroom on the final day. His funeral in Inverness on September 24 was attended by about 300 people, family, friends and colleagues gathered from throughout Britain, paying their respects and fulfilling Eric's own recipe for the best way to express one's support in a bereavement: "I really think if you can possibly manage it, the best thing is to be there." Well we were there, with many more there in spirit, but, of course, a lot more than mere physical presence is implied in Eric's remark.

Eric loved fireworks, despite getting a nasty injury once when discharging a rocket from a bottle held in hand. His family had put together a spectacular display for his entertainment that final weekend but events moved too fast. Instead, on the evening of the funeral, the inhabitants of Speyside were treated to a pyrotechnic celebration of a life well-lived.

Educated at Glasgow Academy (1936-1940), he was evacuated during the war,

first to Achiltibuie, then Callander where he attended McLaren High School (1940-1943) moving on to Fettes College, Edinburgh (1943-1950). He did national service in the Royal Artillery (1950-1952) and was commissioned in May 1951. He went up to Peterhouse, Cambridge in 1952 and in 1955 (MA 1959) he graduated with an honours degree in Natural Sciences (Geology, Zoology, Physiology). Subsequently, Eric was certificated by the General Teaching Council of Scotland.

Eric's interests lay in outdoor pursuits, covering cross-country running, potholing, canoeing, sailing, skiing, rock-climbing, hillwalking, mountaineering, conservation, adventure education, orienteering and above all the pursuit of safety while taking controlled risks - because the rewards justify those risks. Toby Mallinson, old Fettes friend and climbing companion of nearly 60 years, was witness to Eric's claim to have made a five minute run down the 550m. Stoneshoot on Sgurr Alasdair in the Cuillin (in the days before 1952 when it still had stones in it), and has commented on his phenomenal coordination of eye, limbs and balance. Bob Downes (Cambridge Mountaineering 1956, p.18) wrote: "To try and race Langmuir downhill is the surest lost cause in mountaineering." During his National Service he won the army cross-country championship.

We first met at the opening meeting of the Cambridge University Mountaineering Club in October 1952, finding that we were in the same college and beginning a friendship of 53 years duration. Eric in due course became president of the Cambridge University Mountaineering Club in its 49th year and he was present at the CUMC's centenary dinner in 2005. He was an active member of a substantial group of revolutionaries who wanted to see women admitted to full membership back in 1953 (Heavens, was life really that stuffy?). He was a member of the Alpine Climbing Group, the Climbers Club, the Scottish Mountaineering Club, and an honorary member of the Club de Montagne Canadien.

Eric and I were able to stay in college for all three years. We were both addicted to western films and rarely missed one at the cinemas in those days. These visits were frequently followed by 'shoot-outs' in our rooms, hands hovering, lips curled, bananas protruding from hip pockets, to determine who was the fastest banana east of Madingley.

Cambridge colleges in the 1950s operated a 10pm curfew policy, backed by the requirement to wear gowns after dark, and enforced by proctors, bulldogs, porters and high walls topped by rotating spikes. Our tutor (who was still addressing me as Langmuir two years after Eric graduated) drew our attention to the undesirable discrepancy between the small number of occasions on which we were signed in late and the large number of times when one or both of us were seen about town after 10pm.

This warning was soon followed by the setting of a trap. Eric, climbing in by the *voie normale* over the spikes at the rear of the college (2m., S., 4a. if not wet or pursued) about midnight was pounced upon by a posse of porters hidden in Gisborne Court and herded down into the narrow alley leading to the bicycle storage, which terminated in a 15ft. wall topped by spikes. "We've got you now, Sir." "May as well give up, Sir." floated respectfully but triumphantly up to me in our rooms, to be replaced by an alarmed "No, Sir. Don't do it, Sir." as Eric, in silhouette and with gown flapping like Batman, bridged quickly up between the walls of the alley and leapt over the spikes into the street. Eric appeared an hour or so later up a drainpipe, tapping for admission on our third floor window which overlooked the college gardens.

Eric had quick and intuitive reactions. At a camp in St. Moritz during the 1954 CUMC Alpine meet, I recall being woken by a shriek in the small hours, to find

Eric naked in the snow outside his tent (and sleeping bag) after an instant reaction to a vivid dream about an avalanche. Prophetic in hindsight.

One December night in 1954, Bob Downes, Eric and I were bivouacing under a large boulder near Steall in Glen Nevis. The roof slanted down and eventually met the thickly bracken covered floor. Eric drew the berth with least headroom. We were wakened in the night by a blood-curdling scream – and Eric had disappeared! – shades of Halloween. During the night he had wriggled and slid down an unsuspected and gently inclined slot between floor and roof, waking to find his arms pinned in his sleeping bag and the boulder pressing against his face.

His speed of reaction was certainly needed on the CUMC meet of 1955 in the French Alps. Carrying coils and moving fast on easier ground during an attempt on the *Sialouze Arete* on the Pic Sans Nom, his companion, Ted Maden, was swept away in a major rock fall behind him. Eric jammed himself into a crack, arrested the fall after some 30m. then marshalled his injured companion down to safety in a further 15hrs. of intense concentration.

After graduation, Eric was employed as a field exploration geologist with British Newfoundland Exploration (1956-1957) and in Northern Ontario, British Columbia and Alaska with the Mining Corporation of Canada (1957-1958). One product of this was a trio of bear stories.

He was awakened one morning by the thunder of a highly adjacent gunshot, to find a dead bear just outside his tent. A few days later while mapping in the bush he was approached by the sounds of yet another bear and took off at cross-country speed (Not adequate against bears and there was no companion to outrun.), eventually shedding rucksack, map-case and spare clothing in search of speed and made the shelter of the camp and the welcome presence of the rifle. He was joined soon after by a perspiring colleague bearing an urgent message, his rucksack, map-case, etc. Then there was the face-to-face meeting with a bear when both fled in opposite directions...

After his return from Canada he was employed as a science teacher at Wimbledon Independent Grammar School (1958-1959) before being requested by Sir Jack Longland, Everest mountaineer and Director of Education for Derbyshire, to take up the post as Principal at the Whitehall Centre for Open Country Pursuits run by Derbyshire Education Committee (1959-1963), where among others he employed as instructors Joe Brown and Bob Downes. After Whitehall he was appointed Principal at Glenmore Lodge National Outdoor Training Centre at Aviemore, (1964-1970), then on to the newly-created post of Lecturer, soon promoted to Senior Lecturer in charge of Outdoor Education at Moray House College of Education, Edinburgh (1970-1975) and finally the post of Assistant Director of the Recreation and Leisure Planning Department of the Lothian Regional Council which he held until his early retirement to enjoy life in 1988. In this latter post he was involved in setting up the Pentland Hills Country Park, developing the Port Edgar marina and sail training establishment on the Forth, and had responsibility for the Hillend Ski Centre, Britain's largest artificial ski centre and ski training establishment. Ever youthful, ever fit, Eric achieved a reputation in the Recreation and Leisure Planning Department for physical prowess, demonstrated by his ability to run up the stairs of the office from the ground to the sixth floor much faster than anyone else. Junior members of staff learned to jump to the side when he was trying to beat his own record.

Enjoying life after 1988 included being appointed to the Countryside Commission in 1990, serving a term on the NE board when that organisation became Scottish National Heritage and being a member of the Cairngorm Working Party 1991-93,

entering a minority report with John Hunt, reserves manager for the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, rejecting the voluntary partnership structure as a means of delivering good management, and playing an important role in the eventual foundation of the Cairngorms National Park, contrary to the initial inclination of the Government in Westminster.

From the earliest days his career was deeply involved with the improvement of instruction and technique with the particular aim that young people should be able to 'Adventure in Safety'. He was a member of the original Mountain Leadership working party in England 1962-1964 and launched a parallel scheme for Scotland in 1964. He gained extensive practical experience as leader of the Glenmore Mountain Rescue Team 1963-1969 and as rescue co-ordinator in the Northern Cairngorms during the same period. He was a member of the Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland from 1964 and its chairman from 1968.

There is nothing to beat holding a falling body to arouse an interest in such otherwise dry physical matters as acceleration, kinetic energy, momentum and the resolution of forces. But the truth stressed by Eric is that hazard in the mountains comes from many sources and the majority of incidents have nothing to do with spectacular falls. Good equipment, fitness, foresight, careful planning, awareness of risk, good map-reading and route-finding skills, a watchful eye on the weather and a hyper-charged imagination are all essential parts of the armoury.

He studied avalanche prognosis and avoidance both in the Cairngorms and in Switzerland with Andre Roch, later setting up Scotland's first avalanche warning programme and laying the foundation for the Scottish Avalanche Information Service. In the course of one search for an overdue party of schoolchildren he and his party were swept 600ft. in an avalanche, and were dug out only 'at the true blue stage' as he put it wryly.

How many lives have been saved through Eric's work and how much grief avoided? Impossible to estimate, but I have heard rumour of two expert estimates suggesting that the avalanche studies alone may be saving as many as 30 lives a season in these days of greatly increased access to the hills. How much exhilarating adventure has been enjoyed in safety by young people as a result of his work?

His book *Mountain Leadership*, later *Mountaineering and Leadership*, is the official handbook of the Mountain Leadership Training Board of Great Britain. It was first published in 1969, then extended and revised in 1973, rewritten and revised in 1984 and again in 2004. It has become 'the Bible', widely known simply as 'Langmuir', for all who would go safely among the British mountains and especially for those who must be responsible for the safety of others. The book has never been out of print and has sold over 150,000 copies – it was available in three shops in Aberystwyth when I checked last week.

The educational activities entailed the exercise of a high level of organisation and responsibility which he did not always extend into his leisure activities. One never, for example, entrusted him with carrying the party's supply of condensed milk or Kendal Mint Cake up to a hut – and there are rumours of weekly postal deliveries of succulent Chelsea buns from a Cambridge confectioner to Aviemore.

Once on a ski holiday with his wife and John Peacock he presented his passport, only to have it returned with the wry observation that it was usual for the passport to contain a photograph – he had prised it off the previous winter to meet the more immediate need for a photograph on his ski pass. Those were the days when one could still talk one's way through such minor embarrassments (I've gone through Orly with my passport still in Edinburgh) and the French were particularly understanding.

Eric relished slide shows with characteristic and uninhibited narcoleptic delight – if he was still awake after the third slide, the material was earth-shattering. During his years with Lothian Council, Eric achieved a reputation in the department for a propensity to fall asleep at inopportune moments, often at senior staff meetings when, from the ‘chair’ John Cook would see his head begin to roll forwards and do his best to keep him awake before his colleagues noticed. Eventually he gave up trying.

In 1957, he married Maureen Lyons, a Londoner whom he met in Canada when she was working for the Canadian Film Board and there are four children, Catriona (now a journalist), Roddy (an architect, who designed Eric’s retirement home), Moira (a geologist and now a DTI inspector) and Sean (now a ski coach in Canada).

Maureen died of cancer in 1980 and her ashes were scattered by the family in the mountains they all loved. It was a shattering blow but Eric enthusiastically took on the extra housekeeping and parenting roles in addition to all his other activities, and discharged them with distinction. The three younger children were brought up in a ski-rich environment and all became expert ski racers who represented Britain internationally. At the time of his death he was delighting in his eight grandchildren. His partner Marion MacCormick, an enthusiastic orienteer (of which more below) joined him in 1989.

Eric brought to his hill-walking the cross-country expertise and the map-reading and route-finding skills which were later to blossom in his orienteering career. He was a hard act to follow. I recall four outings in particular, the first two in the early summer of 1953 when a party of six, comprising Ted Wrangham, Roger Chorley (the two drivers on Ted’s Jaguar), Dave Fisher, Geoff Sutton, Eric and I departed the Climbers Club hut at Helyg, drove to Fort William and climbed Ben Nevis. Departing the summit in the small hours of the morning we hastened to the Lake District, climbed Scafell, and arrived in Lancaster with enough time in hand for dinner at a good hotel. Then on to Pen-y-Pass and up Snowdon to arrive at the summit also in the small hours of the morning but comfortably inside the 24 hours from departing Ben Nevis, the first party to achieve this. The same party had earlier crossed the Rhinogs from Maentwrog to Barmouth (it’s in *Big Walks* – just try it sometime).

The third was at New Year 1956, when a party which included Eric, sister Marjorie, Geoff Sutton, Bob Downes and myself climbed Suilven from a base on the Achiltibuie road in an all-day and part-night round trip, across the grain of the country and through a couple of rivers – guess who came first on all three occasions. The last was in 1999 when Eric and I walked into Carnmore for a three-night stay, only his second and probably my last visit to the barn. Returning from an ascent of A’Mhaighdean by way of Fuar Loch Mhor (during which Eric had run rings around me like an enthusiastic sheepdog) we were put in our places by an encounter with a silver-haired grandmother well into her Eighties – carrying a good sized rucksack and en-route from Poolewe to Sheneval in the day (19 miles, 500m. ascent and descent and two river crossings for the uninitiated). Self esteem was restored the following day by our meeting with a discerning young climber at Kernsary who elevated Eric to the status of living legend and made our day, week, year, whatever. Over a celebratory lobster dinner in Ullapool that night we agreed that the young climber had a great future in politics or public relations.

One of Eric’s most endearing characteristics was his modesty; he simply shunned pomposity. Well usually. John Cook and Eric had joined Chris Brasher for the evening at the Three Shires Inn in Little Langdale when a young man came across the crowded bar to them with an autograph book in his hand. It was assumed, of

course, that he was heading for Chris, always recognised and in demand for his autograph, when, to their surprise, he headed straight for Eric and very politely asked if he would oblige. Eric, looking a little puzzled but quite pleased, duly did as requested with a smile. The young man studied the signature and then blurted out: "Why, that's rubbish! You mean you're not Bobby Charlton." (the resemblance was quite marked).

Eric was a pioneering rock-climber in Britain until family responsibilities curtailed his activities – and responsibility was ever the name of Eric's game. 1954 saw the start of serious exploration of the climbing potential of the Trilleachan Slabs at the head of Loch Etive (although Robin Campbell tells me of an attempt made in the 1890s). Eric's attention had been drawn to the slabs by his father, an enthusiastic fisherman, mine had been aroused in the course of a camping trek along the south shore of Loch Etive in the spring of 1952. December 1953 saw the two of us washed out in a tent at the head of Loch Etive, but in the summer of 1954 we made multiple visits and attempted several of the obvious lines. Subsequently, the Etive Slabs have become a climber's playground. *Spartan Slab*, the 190m. VS route first ascended on June 13, 1954 by a party led by Eric Langmuir is in the four star category and ranks today as one of the most popular climbs in Britain.

Later that year found Eric at the base of the notorious Scoop on what is now the route *Hammer*, searching assiduously for a hold – any hold – while perched precariously on the shoulders of Bob Downes, who was equally precariously perched on my shoulders, I standing on the last positive hold some way above the piton belay. We had the wrong technique, it was a deceptively easy-angled slab but a steep learning curve; faith and friction or 'nutless guts for gutless nuts' (R. Campbell) are required.

Eric also had a hand in the early exploration in 1955 of Minus One Buttress on Ben Nevis (*North-Eastern Grooves*, VS. again, with Bob Downes and myself) which ultimately contributed to and resulted in the composite route of *Minus One Direct* (E1. 4 star quality, assessed in the latest guide as an outstanding climb and one of the finest of its grade in the country). In 1961 with Joe Brown he began the exploration of the wings of Dinas Mot in the Llanberis Pass, creating a highly regarded HVS. route, *The Mole*.

Eric's best season in the Alps was in 1955 when, after the club meet in La Berarde and the excitement already mentioned, Alan Blackshaw, Bob Downes, Geoff Sutton and he went on to the Ecole Nationale de Montagne et de Ski in Chamonix. Highlights were ascents of the South Face Direct (ED) of the Punta Gugliermina, and the first British ascent of the North Face of the Badile (ED), significant contributions to the post-war renaissance of British alpine climbing.

In October 1991, at the age of 60, he joined an expedition to the Bhutan Himalaya where he made several first ascents, including that of Wohney Gang, 5589m. with George Band.

Eric was a Grade 1 Ski Teacher with the British Association of Ski Instructors and a member of the British Ski Instruction Council, becoming its Honorary President in 1993. In 1964, together with John Disley, John Peacock, Peter Steele and a guide, he made one of the earliest traverses of the Haute Route by a party of British mountaineers.

With his partner Marion MacCormick he began a serious, and as ever fiercely competitive, interest in Orienteering following his retirement. Together they set up the local Spey Valley Orienteering Club. He was the main organiser of the Scottish Orienteering Championship in the Spey Valley in 2003. He was the winner in his age class of the Scottish six-day event in Lochaber 2001; was British National

Champion in his age class in Northern Ireland 2002 and competed in international events. In 1973 the Royal Society of Edinburgh sought to broaden its membership base in Scottish life beyond the dominantly academic. When Eric's name was suggested at Council it received instant recognition and support around the table. He was elected a Fellow in 1978 for his pioneer work on avalanche prognosis in Scotland and for his publications and personal contributions to outdoor education and safety in the mountains. He was awarded an MBE in 1986 for his contributions to safety in mountaineering and adventure training, but he had greater and far more highly valued rewards – the total respect and affection of the outdoor and mountaineering communities. His enduring monument, however, is the strength and cohesiveness of his family, a tribute to his parenthood and an indication also of just how sorely he will be missed. In 1999, Eric had the rare experience of reading notices of his death issued by post and via the web site of the Royal Society of Edinburgh and was able to assure friends that the reports were 'greatly exaggerated'. The error was understandable – his sister Marjorie Langmuir was a doctor practicing in Aviemore until her death the previous year, who also received literature from the Royal Society of Edinburgh. When her clinic wrote to the Society requesting that Dr Langmuir of Aviemore be removed from the mailing list, it was assumed that it referred to Eric.

The man had fantastic energy and drive, celebrating his arrival in the 70s in 2001 with an ascent of Mont Blanc in the company of friends. That same year he made a traverse of the Cuillin Ridge in the company of Andy Munro and his children Moira and Roddy. These are two expeditions which mountaineers 40 years his junior would have prized. Optimistic plans were afoot for a 50th anniversary ascent of *Spartan Slab* in 2004 by the original team, to be led by daughter Moira (I suspect that at least one of us could no longer have cocked his leg above his right ear as required on the third pitch). Only four weeks before his death he spent three days with John Cook walking vigorously over the roughest Lakeland fells, still impressing his companions with his downhill technique over screes.

We had a 20-minute telephone conversation the day before he died, marked by a deep appreciation of all the good times enjoyed, characteristic realism and a mutual absence of stiff upper lip.

Goodbye, Eric old friend. You did all things well and it is my privilege to have known you.

Mike J. O'Hara.

IAN R .ANGELL j. 1981

ON JANUARY 14, 2006, Ian Angell died from a head injury sustained after a fall while hillwalking on A' Chrois at Arrochar. He was 66 and his death stunned all those who knew him.

Mountaineer, alpinist, rock-climber, ice-climber, ski-mountaineer, skier and hillwalker, Ian was all of these because of his love and enjoyment of the great outdoors. Ian was excellent company while pursuing any of these activities.

He was born on the January 18, 1939, just a few tense months before the Second World War and was brought up in Sheringham in Norfolk, an area not renowned for its hills, although Ian claimed to have climbed Beacon Hill (105m.) the highest point in Norfolk. He never knew his father who was tragically killed in an industrial accident when he was two years old. His mother was a council clerk who later ran a tobacconist and confectionery shop in Sheringham High Street.

Ian was educated at King Edward VII Grammar School in Kings Lynn and seems to have started climbing when at school as, it is rumoured, his initials can

still be found at the top of the bell tower, reached at night from the dormitory and along the roof. His first recognised rock climb was in 1956 on the Idwal Slabs and the following year he attended a rock-climbing course run by Hamish McInnes.

On leaving school Ian went to Rugby College of Engineering, and while there worked as an apprentice electrical engineer at the AEI works in Rugby. He achieved a Diploma in Electrical Engineering in 1962 (aged 23) and was a Member of the Institute of Electrical Engineers. While a student in Rugby he was a founder member of the Rugby Mountaineering Club.

In 1961, as 'a slim 22-year-old student', Ian did a solo ascent of the Hornli ridge of the Matterhorn in 3 hours 25 minutes, a post-war record. As befitted his modesty he was astonished and possibly embarrassed that the event became national news on the front page of the *Daily Sketch*. In a dispatch from Zermatt the headline read: "Mad dog Ian climbs it solo!" The report quoted the Zermatt Chief Guide Godlieb Perren, "a splendid effort which only an Englishman would dare. He is a first-class mountaineer". His mother was also quoted: "He's climbed the Matterhorn? Oh my goodness that's quick! I feel terribly proud. He does a lot of climbing, but he's never done anything like this. At least not that I know of..."

However, trips were not without incident and while skiing from the Valsorey Hut, up the Plateau de Couloir on the High Level Route in the mid-1970s he was avalanched. Frantic digging by various parties, including a following German team, revealed a cyanosed, lifeless form, but swift, effective resuscitation restored him in what one companion described as, the nearest thing he had seen to the resurrection. Interestingly, Ian restarted the tour only 24 hours later, having recovered from both the trauma and hypothermia, and the group successfully finished in Zermatt.

Ian was devoted to his wife, Shirley, who was also a climber and a successful author who wrote the definitive history of the Pinnacle Club. On page 178 she relives the first time she set eyes on her husband to be, which was up a tree outside the Vaynol Arms in Snowdonia! "Later he danced the polka with me up and down the road. It was love at first sight."

He lived in Cumbria where he worked for the UK Atomic Energy Authority. He established many new rock routes in the area, publishing a guidebook to St. Bee's Head and a number of articles about the crags. As was typical, the articles he wrote not only listed the established climbs but also directed others to areas where new climbs might be found. Both Ian and Shirley were members of the Wyndham Mountaineering Club, based around a school in Egremont which had a climbing wall. He was also a member of Wasdale Mountain Rescue Team. In the late Seventies he moved to Ayrshire to work at Hunterston.

Ian qualified in 1978, at the age of 39, as a British Mountain Guide. However, it was not something he publicised, although he always took great delight in reminding climbing partners that he was entitled to a free pass when skiing or climbing in the Alps. He served as treasurer for the British Mountain Guides in the late Eighties and early Nineties.

Ian retired from the UKAEA in 1996 and more recently he successfully ran his own independent business working in various Nuclear Power stations. This gave him more time to head for the hills and in recent years he successfully climbed all of the VS rock routes on Buachaille Etive Mor and achieved his ambition of a winter ascent of *Orion Direct*.

Bell ringing was another activity Ian enjoyed. Starting in 1962 in Markfield, Leicestershire but mainly in Irton, West Cumbria, he was an enthusiast for nearly 25 years. Ringing was less frequent in Largs as there was no tower nearby, but

whenever he was back in Cumbria he would try to visit Irton and join in on practice nights; he enjoyed these visits and would comment that it was as if he had never been away. Despite the absence of bell towers in Largs he put his climbing skills to good use by carrying out maintenance work on many church towers, most recently at the Cathedral of the Isles on Cumbrae.

Ian always retained a boyish enthusiasm for the hills and continued to plot and plan his trips for the coming years with youthful vigour and anticipation. His easy going manner and quiet nature masked a steely determination when it came to getting up climbs. He kept himself very fit and was always a willing companion. He led generations safely up classic routes they would otherwise not have managed. However, he always remained modest and unpretentious with no airs and graces. His phone calls and his conversations were always short and to the point, not much time for small talk, and would go along the lines of: "Hey Ho are you coming out to play?" It was little wonder he had such a wide circle of climbing friends. In recognition of his contribution to UK mountaineering he was made an honorary member of both Rugby Mountaineering Club and Wasdale Mountain Rescue Team. He became a member of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club in 1972 and from 1976 until 1980 was assistant warden at Brackenclough, the club hut in Wasdale.

In 1981 Ian joined the Scottish Mountaineering Club and played a full and active part in Club activities. He first served on the committee from 1983 until 1988 and then as a Trustee of the Scottish Mountaineering Trust. In 1998 he became the Club librarian. With his fondness for mountaineering books and journals, this was a role he enjoyed. With it came a lot of hard work; however, he approached this role with characteristic vigour and the club benefited from the long hours he put in to catalogue and organise the library. Without doubt, he has left it in good condition and will be a hard act for anyone to follow. Ian was a willing contributor to work parties at huts and was one of the stalwarts during the construction of the Raeburn hut at Laggan. His name was always at the top of the list when volunteers were needed.

As a worthy and valued member of the SMC Ian had a lifetime of achievement in the mountains – extending from the local outcrops close to the many places he lived, to the debilitating heights of the Himalaya such as Mera Peak. He was generous with his time, taking people out and showing them the ropes whether it was on his local crag near Largs, the Quadrocks, or on the higher mountain ridges. Over the years he climbed with many in the SMC and most of the Glasgow JMCS, showing his youthful enthusiasm and sense of fun. Friends would regularly receive post cards from him detailing his exploits and those fortunate to receive these, will appreciate that they normally took some time to decipher.

Perhaps it was a skill developed working for UKAEA but he always impressed with his ability to organise. He loved adventure and in 1992 saw the first of his visits to the Staunings Alps in East Greenland, to enjoy ski-touring, climbing and living in Arctic surroundings. He returned in 1994 and again in 1996, achieving first ascents on each visit and naming one Shirley's Peak after his wife. He enjoyed these Arctic trips and in 1996 he also visited Spitzbergen, where he freely admitted that his characteristic calm was finally disrupted by the discovery of polar bear tracks all around his tent. But it did not put him off. He was busy planning his return to Greenland to go ski-touring this year.

Ian cared passionately about the mountain environment and was dismayed by the recent proliferation of radio masts and wind turbines. He objected to the wind turbine erected at the CIC hut and because of his high principles was not slow to

Elly Moriarty. Photo: Robin Campbell.

Karale Glacier, East Greenland, April 2005. Photo: Peter MacDonald.





tell the Club. He believed that the only responsible approach was to take only photographs, leave nothing but footprints and he took great care to ensure he left no trace of his visits to wilderness areas.

He enjoyed a good few laughs over the years both as the subject and perpetrator of many jokes. People were never slow to pull his leg about his fancy light-weight skis and bindings and the unique skiing style which he had perfected. It was called “a stem and a wheech”. This obviously touched a nerve and, of course, backfired. When in the Alps and trying to follow him down a steep descent in soft snow with a heavy sack on, Ian had adapted his technique for such conditions but others had not. Those that ended up in a heap were admonished with the comment: “Now, you’ve been spending too much time on the pistes young fella-me-lad, you must learn to stem and wheech.” This anecdote captures the essence of Ian and his interaction with the mountains. Ian was effective. Over the years he climbed to high standards both in summer and winter. There are few classic routes in Scotland he had not done. His enthusiasm amazed. Normally, if he was repulsed on a route he would be back up at the first opportunity, often with another partner for another crack at it. He didn’t like unfinished business.

When Ian moved into semi-retirement he decided the time was right to do the Munros. Previously, he had steadfastly refused to become a Munro Bagger. As was his style, once he decided to do it, the routes and outings were planned to maximum effect and in April of 2005, he was joined on Sgor Gaoith in Glen Feshie, his final Munro, by a group of more than 50 family and friends. Such was the man that nothing was left to chance. To ensure there were no surprises on the day, Ian reconnoitred the route to within a few metres of the top beforehand. For once, the weather behaved and he was cheered on to the summit as Golden Eagles flew below over Loch Einich. It was his day and a grand event, celebrated in style both on the mountain and also later in the evening down in Kinraig.

Ian was also very involved in the local community and church, though he rarely spoke about his Christian Faith. It did allow him to show his concern for those who were less well off. At his death he was chairman of an effective group which had successfully lobbied to make Largs a Fair Trade town and he was a member of Largs Churches Together. At the funeral on the January 25, seldom has a church been so overflowing as family, friends and colleagues paid their last respects. Ian is survived by his wife, Shirley, and sons, Timothy, Adrian and Stephen. He also took great delight in his grand-daughters, Bethany and Megan. He had a wide circle of friends who climbed with him over many years. They will all cherish memories of excellent days on the hill, with a fine man of the mountains.

Ian died from a simple fall while doing what he loved, in the hills. The inquest report suggested his injuries were such that he died instantly, a finding which may bring some comfort to those who knew him.

C. M. Jones.

I FIRST met Ian Angell in 1987 when we were building Raeburn on a very tight budget and we had to wire the hut ourselves. Bill Duncan as custodian elect, and also as an electrical engineer, organised things and his first choice was Ian followed by Dougie Niven as the architect and me as Convener of Huts.

We gathered in the chill of the hut in bitterly cold conditions one Saturday morning and laboured until about seven in the evening, when we retired to the Loch Ericht Hotel for a meal on the club. We dossed in the hut and, in the morning, continued pulling and labelling hundreds of metres of cable, finishing the job late that day. Having had my own house re-wired, and bearing in mind the complexity

Doug Lang (top figure) and Bob Richardson climbing the Lilies Icefall, Cogne, Italy. Photo: Des Rubens.

of the Raeburn, it is not unreasonable to suggest that we saved the club around £2000 – not bad value for four meals and petrol money.

I met Ian again at Raeburn during my custodianship when he turned up at a work-party and asked for a job. At that time, the Achilles heel of the hut had been the water supply, which usually froze in very cold weather and considerably reduced the amenity of the hut. The problem seemed to be a section of pipe which came out of the burn before going underground via the original pipeline. I explained to Ian that I wanted a trench dug and the pipe buried and, handing him a pick-axe, I left him to it. Ian was always a good work-party member as you could give him instructions, leave him to it and know that the job would be done properly. Not all work-party members can work without direction. Those who can are doubly valuable. Several hours later, Ian reported the job done and the water supply has not frozen over in the last three years – Thanks Ian.

Gerry Peet.

WILLIAM WALLACE j. 1958

FEW people can have been more determined to make the best of their lives and skills than Bill Wallace, our past president. In a progression from high standard rock-climbing, through expeditioning to club ski-racing and then ski-mountaineering he excelled in all of them. He was a true mountaineer. Bill died suddenly, abruptly, of heart failure on the February 25, 2006, descending from the Rotondo Hut towards Realp on the final leg of a week's ski-tour organised by his close friend, Dick Allen. It was the sort of finale he would have wished for; a little too soon for his friends and family.

Bill's mountaineering debut is lost in the mists of time. He was in the Edinburgh JMCS in the early 1950s, and a frequent figure on the week-end mountaineering bus. As one would expect of an essentially kindly individual, he guided lots of beginners to their early climbs. Indeed there was a didactic streak in him. He had phenomenal stamina. It is recorded that he and Hugh Simpson (then a member) and Bill Brown made all the 4000ft. peaks and tops in Scotland in one 44-hour excursion, still, as far as is known, the record. They made a particular point of never treading on a road, and crossed the A9 by walking under a bridge!

After qualifying as a chartered accountant he worked in London, climbing mostly with the London JMCS, with the usual harrowing drives to North Wales. He gave up his London job in 1958 to organise an expedition to Peru with Myrtle Emslie (of Edinburgh) and Hugh Simpson, then in the Antarctic. They obtained MEF funding and sailed for Lima, where all three met up. Without any support from donkeys or porters they climbed seven peaks, including the first British ascent of Huascaran, 6768m.

He found a job in Scotland and settled near Helensburgh. It was here that I met him and forged a climbing partnership that was to last the rest of his life. He took belaying the leader very seriously. I never felt safer than when with Bill. He was a bolder climber than me. He only fell off once. It was while exploring a virgin crag in Glen Lednock. He dusted himself down and returned to the fray and made the passage. In those days it never occurred to us to record a 40m. route.

Bill knew his Scotland backside forwards. To the end of his days he could recall

the height of every Munro, most Alpine peaks and many Himalayan ones. He had a remarkable feel for geography, which made for excellent route-finding. Though equipped with artificial hip joints sometime in the 1990s he continued to be a long distance, fast hill-walker. He may well have climbed all the Munros, but such tick-list climbing never appealed to him.

Bill took time off again to join Hugh and Myrtle Simpson and Roger Tuft on Hugh's stress analysis experiment. The party was to man-haul a sledge across the Greenland ice-cap, more or less on Nansen's route. Urine samples taken each day provided the data. It was a bold trip, and very arduous. The scientific conclusion was that people adapt to physical stress. Surprise, surprise.

After his first hip replacement the surgeon apparently had said that he should calm down, give up rock-climbing, skiing and squash. He temporised. He gave up squash and continued to ski like a demon. On an alpine down-hill ski holiday if he failed to descend 7000m. of down hill per day he felt he was wasting his money and time. He was looking forward eagerly to 2007 when he would be eligible for a free veteran ski-pass at the Trois Vallées.

In 1996 he retired from Tiso's where he had been financial director. With his time now his own, he stravaiged far and wide: Nepal, Spain, Majorca, the Alps, Greenland, Spitsbergen, US, Lyngen (Norway), and a long trip to South Africa, Botswana and Namibia with his wife, Maureen. He participated in two Himalayan treks, being one of only two who made the 5800m. summits.

More for social reasons than any other he now began to take golf rather too seriously for his friends' liking. Nonetheless, he kept climbing. Considering that he had difficulty bending to lace his boots, this makes his climbing all the more remarkable. High steps were out and delicate little movements were all he could manage. Yet he maintained his ability to do severe routes. In his Seventies he led *Agag's Groove*. I was with him when he made the 14-pitch south ridge of Cayre de Cougourde in the Maritime Alps. In 2005 he was exploring virgin rock in Glen Ceitlin. He was a true mountaineer with a fine eye for the route, and the boldness to overcome unexpected obstacles.

In the 1960s Bill joined the Glencoe Ski Club and was successful in club races, but the call of the tops became stronger and he took to ski-mountaineering, much of it with me. Often there were just the two of us. We were acutely tuned to the dangers involved. On one tour when it thawed from beginning to end, we came to the Scatta Minoia (col) and deliberately created an avalanche to make the descent safe to Vanina. That trip finished with an ascent of the Blinnenhorn via a soggy couloir first on skis then on foot and then we whistled down the Gries glacier leaping crevasses. The list of his ascents are too numerous to record here. The following give a flavour of his climbing taste: Mont Blanc on skis from the Grand Mulets (solo), Barrhorn (3610m.) on skis, the Corde Molla route on Monte Disgrazia, East ridge of the Zinal Rothorn, the North ridge of the Piz Badile. We both loved steep skiing, and perhaps one of the most exhilarating, which I shared with him, was the descent of Sron na Creise east face in spring snow.

We both got caught up in a Robin Chalmers project to make a film of crossing Scotland coast to coast. When asked how much he wished to be insured for in case he broke a leg, he said: "Nothing, but insure me for being in the helicopter."

David Bathgate, Ian Nicolson and Hamish McInnes were advisers and assistants

to the camera crew. David made a painting of the event that hung for ages in the Kingshouse bar and later in the White Corries tea room.

Bill made an immense contribution to our club. He represented us on the Glen Brittle hut committee for many years. He was treasurer from 1976 to 79, and he took over the arduous role of secretary from Donald Bennet, holding the reins of the Club for 10 years, 1979-88. He was elected President in 1988. It was in his time that the Club voted in women members. He chaired the Centenary Dinner. He was co-author of the SMT ski-mountaineering guide.

Bill's passion for mountains and wild places naturally drew him into the John Muir Trust. From 1988 to 2001 he was a trustee, and much of that time secretary and treasurer. It was typical of the man that though he held views often quite at variance with the Trust, such as the Slattadale hydro scheme and nuclear power, he let these issues slide over him, helping out in the Trust's affairs wherever he could. Nigel Hawkins, the director, said of Bill that he was always the quiet, assiduous worker behind the scenes, keeping the Trust on the rails.

I cannot be alone in feeling that it has been a privilege to be his friend and climbing companion.

The love where death has set its seal
Nor age can chill, nor rival steal

Malcolm Slessor.

KNOWING full well that others have greater claims and greater knowledge of Bill's undoubted character and considerable all-round mountaineering skills, I also wish to remember him, however briefly.

I think that I first met Bill at a JMCS meet on Gunpowder Green under the shadow of the Great Herdsman of Etive. We were callow youths, when a 120ft. of nylon laid rope, a dubious hemp sling, one rusty ex-WD carabiner and maybe a pair of vibrams made up the highly improbable equipment of the day.

Even then, Bill seemed to live in a rarer atmosphere than any of the others; that he was destined for greater things was soon to be demonstrated in the bigger mountains across the world. Annoyingly, he didn't seem to mind climbing in foul weather. Suffering to that degree always seemed to me exceptionally bad for the character – but then, what would Lord John have made of that. Doubtless he would have heartily approved of Bill's activities in those far off days.

Later on, in our Thirties and Forties, opportunities arose for us to climb together fairly regularly. By this time, Bill had mellowed some what; he seemed more relaxed and didn't seem to mind the indecision of a dithering companion – his patience seemed inexhaustible. I must say that I was pleasantly surprised by this, as I knew him to be highly competitive, as many who played against him in other sports knew to their cost. There were other frailties, but then, I like to think that he knew them better than anyone else.

Recounting any of our many exploits now seems inappropriate; sufficient to say that they are there in that mysterious and wonderful landscape of the mind.

I climbed with Bill more than any other member of the club or indeed, any other mountaineer. I shall remember his enthusiasm, his obvious enjoyment of the mountain scene and of course, his whole-hearted enjoyment of life itself. He was an excellent companion on the hill, a good friend, and I owe him a great deal.

Douglas Niven.

ROB MILNE j. 1988

ON JUNE 5, 2005, Rob Milne (48) suddenly collapsed and died of a heart attack on the way to the summit of Everest (8848m.), just below the Balcony at 8450m. There were three doctors on the summit team with him and Rob had shown no signs of any problem prior to this, so it was completely unexpected. Rob's ascent of Everest would have been the final peak in his quest to climb the Seven Summits.

The summits he had already climbed being: Denali, North America (1980); Carstenz Pyramid, Oceania (2001); Aconcagua, South America (2003); Mount Kosciuszko, Australasia (2003); Kilimanjaro, Africa (2003); Vinson, Antarctica (2004); Elbrus, Europe (2004). Those of you who are sharp may have spotted that there are seven names here. The reason being that there is some debate as to whether Carstenz Pyramid, on which he climbed a new route with Steve Sustad, is in Australasia, or not, so Rob being Rob, he climbed them both.

Rob was born in Montana in 1956. His parents moved to Colorado and that's where he started to climb. He soon found that the grander mountain environment was to his liking and he quickly progressed to the bigger ranges. In 1975 he made the first ascent of the North-East Ridge of Mount Vancouver in the Yukon and a few years later some fine ascents in the Kitchatna Spires in Alaska.

It was sometime around 1979, when Rob came to Edinburgh to complete a PhD. in Artificial Intelligence, that I first met him. There had been word of a young American who was quite a handy ice-climber after a string of good ascents on the Ben. Rob took to the Scottish Winter scene like a duck to water and somehow we ended up climbing together. Our first route in January 1980 was *White Elephant* (VII 6) on Creag an Dubh Loch. Since then we had climbed together every year and in March 2005, shortly before heading off to Everest he proudly announced that we had climbed 100 winter routes together. Among many significant ascents were the *West Buttress Direttissima* (VII, 8) on Beinn Eighe, *Inclination* (VII, 8) and *Ravens Edge* complete (VII, 7) in Glen Coe and the opening up of the Southern Highlands with *Deadman's Groove* (VII, 7) on the Cobbler. In the Cairngorms classics such as *Deep Throat* (V, 6) and *The Hoarmaster* (V, 6) were established. We also made a number of significant repeats here such as *The Migrant* (VI, 7) and *Postern* (VI, 6).

Rob was the stabilising influence in our climbing partnership, laid back is perhaps a better word. I was more focused about specific objectives. I don't think Rob would have minded if I said that I was the stronger climber, particularly since I trained more on indoor walls and spent all season rock-climbing. Rob was mountain fit though, and by that I mean his body was more suited to deep snow and long winter days out. Often I would bemoan my lack of hill fitness and a little extra from the Anderson hardware rack would be taken into the Milne rucksack.

To some extent Rob just wanted to go and climb and have a good time. I generally played my cards close to my chest and kept my objectives to myself. It's not that I didn't trust Rob, I just knew of his enthusiasm to share what he had been up to, and as a result it was easier for me to keep quiet. It's also easier to fail on something when no-one knows what you wanted to do in the first place. We would often end up going climbing somewhere 'For a look', without me really telling Rob what the objective was. There were times when we would arrive at a cliff and I could see him looking around at the unclimbed bits to see what he might find himself on. Needless to say, this meant there were a few occasions when he found himself standing at the foot of some hard-looking objective with little time to psych up for it. Rob took it all in his stride though, as usual.

Interestingly, my enthusiasm for the rigours of Scottish winter climbing was not quite of the same magnitude as Rob's, so I was not the only one with whom he climbed. As a result there are many others who enjoyed his company on the hill. He certainly had boundless energy and enthusiasm and when the conditions were not good for climbing he would go off hillwalking. Rob had compleated all the Munros and their Tops and was set to complete the Corbetts and the Donalds in the same year that he completed the Seven Summits.

In his early years in Scotland, Rob joined 'The Jacobites', no doubt in his quest for partners. He wrote two articles for their Club journal, both repeated in 2005 following his death. The first was *On Top of America* and described his ascent of Mount McKinley in Alaska with Brian Sprunt, who was subsequently killed on the North Face of The Matterhorn. The second was *Up and Down the Ben* and described his third ascent of *Galactic Hitchhiker* and his rapid descent of *Pointless* while attempting the second ascent with Pete Myles. This enforced descent came about when Pete's feet popped off on a bulge 30m. up the second pitch while he was leading.

Remember the experimentation with extra wide leashes for shoving your bent arm through to facilitate the placement of ice-screws in order to avoid hanging on aid? Well, what happened next was a good example of a learning process, for all of us at the time. Pete's wrists slipped through his leashes and despite an heroic effort to hang-on by two fingers he left both axes behind and hurtled groundwards, ripping out what gear he had, before pulling Rob and the belay off. Both were deposited onto the slopes at the base of the route down which they cartwheeled for some distance.

They came out of it remarkably unscathed and to quote Rob: "I believe I hit my head so was not harmed." Following this incident, and by way of illustrating Rob's determined nature, he went back in the Spring after the snows had melted to find the camera that he had lost during the fall. He painstakingly traversed back and forwards up the slopes beneath the route and actually found the camera, together with pieces of equipment that others had dropped. However, like the name of the climb he had been on it was pointless, for both the camera and the film had been ruined.

In 1980 he climbed Denali and the North Face of the Eiger. In return for his PhD. he then gave the US Military back the years they gave him. This reduced his climbing somewhat but while back in the US he was part of a top American team including Galen Rowel and Andy Embick, which opened everyone's eyes to the potential of Karakoram granite with the first ascent of the beautiful Lukpilla Brakk spire.

Rob became the Chief Artificial Intelligence Scientist at the Pentagon and when he returned to Scotland he used his skills to establish a new business, 'Intelligent Applications'. Dr Milne became one of the leaders in the AI and software engineering fields, gaining a string of recognitions and awards. He was a fellow of the British Computer Society, a Fellow (and past President) of the European Coordinating Committee for Artificial Intelligence and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. He also held some 14 professional posts, and as well as having more than 50 academic and scientific published documents to his name, he had made more than 50 conference presentations around the world, mainly by invitation.

Rob was not just a mountaineer. However, no matter where he was on his regular business and conference travels around the globe it figured in his plans and he would always manage to squeeze in some climbing. It was on such a trip that he

climbed Mount Kosciuszko in Australia. There were times when he did more climbing abroad on business trips than I did on climbing trips.

Rob was a member of both the American Alpine Club and the Alpine Club. More importantly though, he was a member of the Scottish Mountaineering Club. I am pretty sure that as with the Alpine Club, Rob attended every SMC dinner when he was in this country, which is actually quite a feat for I admit to having only attended a handful in a longer period of time.

Rob became involved in the Club's affairs, taking on the role of Convener of the Publications Sub Committee, as well as a Trustee of the Scottish Mountaineering Trust. He also became the Editor of the SMC's Hillwalkers' Guidebooks and was one of those behind the acclaimed 'District Guidebook', *The North-West Highlands*, as well as a CD Rom to *The Corbetts*, the Second Edition of *The Corbetts* book and the publishing of e-books through the SMC's website. His involvement in our publications ideally combined his business talents with his climbing skills and his in-depth knowledge of the Scottish Hills. It never seemed out of place that an American, albeit one with dual nationality, should be so involved in the affairs of a club such as the SMC, so steeped in history and tradition. Rob will be a hard act to follow and he will be missed by many.

Rab Anderson.

JAMES 'ELLY' MORIARTY j. 1959

BY NAME Big Elly, Big Jim or whatever, he was certainly larger than life. From the quiet unassuming presence of later life few would ever imagine the remarkable exploits of his dicing with death on roads and mountains at the extreme end of survival. He was one of the Currie lads with whom I was greatly taken, their composite skills in climbing, drinking and uninhibited style of life, quite novel at that time, but decidedly a foretaste of future generations.

Elly took up apprenticeship as an engineering fitter and, with this assumed mechanical know-how, bought his first motor bike, alias old heap. In the first week of ownership Dougal almost wrecked the machine and himself, so Elly inherited the mantle of driver and began an unenviable trail of destruction, with him regularly stepping out of wrecked cars like the Terminator of later sci-fi films. As he only earned an apprentice wage, most of these cars belonged to friends, but it says much for Elly's magnetism that they all remained life-long buddies. It seems his early days of faith in running down to chapel from the Cobbler corrie stood him in good stead, for he surely lived under a guardian angel in surviving these spectacular write-offs. One simple story illustrating this was when driving home ultra-late he fell asleep at the wheel of his mini, drifted across the main road and rammed a large concrete lamp standard. This, of course, woke him up. You or I would have the steering wheel embedded in our chest but he still had a firm hold of the wheel, now bent round the column like a calzone. Then, on getting out to assess the damage, the upper half of the concrete standard fell on top of his mini and completely destroyed the cabin. One other tale, to close this car destruction phase of youth, was his success in landing a sporty high speed buggy on top of a tree!

Whilst he had a hard-worked angel, he in turn was guardian to Haston and saved him during many vulgar pub brawls and altruistic escapades on the mountains. For example, to further their education we took them to the Alps in 1959, beginning in the Dolomites with successful ascents of a brace of north walls in Cortina, then down to Civetta where I gave the Currie lads a description of an

ED on the Valgrande, whilst we went of to do the Solledar (my interest in history). They managed to climb the wrong hill and spent much time achieving nothing, returned to camp frustrated and thumbed through the route notes to select one of the hardest climbs in the area. Their story is well recorded in climbing annals, not so well known is that on waking from a very unpleasant summit bivvy Elly thought he was hallucinating, instead, he was covered in snow. They were outrageously underclad but he had the benefit of greater body mass and pummelled Dougal back to life to start their epic return to safety.

In testimony to his strength, during his mountain-school days, with a client much of his own age, he went rock-climbing in the Lost Valley and enjoyed a day doing the face. The client pleaded to experience leading, which he accomplished well but came off, unfortunately breaking an ankle. Elly stabilised his injury and lowered him from the face, tied the lad onto his back and, in numerous knacker sessions, stumbled all the way down the Lost Valley gorge and up to the main road where he thumbed down a friend's van and delivered the casualty direct to the Belford. He thought his schooling days were done for and all sorts of legal doom about to fall, for the lad's father was a big-wheel in the Navy. However, instead, he was greatly impressed with his son's account of the prodigious effort of it all, to the point of embracing smelly Elly and calling him a hero, which of course he was – and a very relieved one at that.

I had gone by thumb to Glencoe, Ronnie and Elly were to follow later in an old Singer Le Mans hot-rod wreck to meet up on The Ben. Lifts were not forthcoming and I ended up just north of Kinlochleven, in darkness and contemplating a bivvy, when I heard the roar of the Singer growling across the loch and the lads singing – but no lights. All was revealed when they nearly ran over me – the wiring had gone, they had no lights but decided to don their head-torches and had driven like that all the way from Stirling. Mind you, it did improve with my third torch.

Elly had a wild sense of fun, not too funny if you were the butt of the humour. For example, on a late night in Lagangarbh he hard boiled all the eggs and blackened all the oranges from the food lockers and returned them to their containers. The confusion and puzzlement of the victims trying to crack eggs into the frying pans and solve the black oranges mystery was gratifying to say the least.

However, this fades into insignificance when compared with the time he enticed a group of fellow boozers to try and beat the record for the number of people in a phone box (a craze at the time). All eight of them, if I remember correctly, made it, then Elly whipped a sling and a krab round the box and walked away, leaving them severely contorted and gasping for air, to the point where the box moved off its base and some kind passer-by relieved their stress.

The name 'Elly' was given by his early peers, an abbreviation of elegant, for he was ever in balance on the rocks. That, in combination with his power, allowed him to enjoy most contemporary 'moderns' of the day and supplement them with a few fine examples of his own.

More than just a climber, he was 'all things to all men' with a vital interest in the wider aspects of life, and harvested many lasting friends across a wide spectrum of society. It seems impossible that our 'not so gentle giant' has gone, like a great oak felled in the wind, without so much as a word or the big spade of a handshake, his downfall a rapid worsening of a chest infection. Patently, his guardian angel had gone off duty, a serious dereliction of service, for Elly still had lots to surprise us all. We never know what's around the corner and can only be thankful to have shared his life and the stimulating adventures of bygone years.

Jimmy Marshall.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB

The following new members were admitted and welcomed to the Club in 2005-2006.

STEPHEN ASHWORTH, (27), NT Campsite Warden, Langdale, Cumbria.

NICK CARTER, (35), Mountaineering Instructor, Aberdeen.

JOHN C. HINE, (45), IT Consultant, Perth.

NIALL MCNAIR, (26), Occupational Therapist, Edinburgh.

DAVID V. NICHOLLS, (56), Royal Marines (Rtd.), Tayport, Fife.

VIVIAN SCOTT, (24), Research Student, Edinburgh.

A. G. SCOTT STEWART, (35), Account Manager, Stewarton, Ayrshire.

JAMES R. THACKER, (27), Mountaineering Instructor, Sheffield.

The One-Hundreth-and-Sixteenth AGM and Dinner

THE fickle snows of early winter were reduced to a few well-washed remnants as we gathered at Fort William for the 116th. AGM.

The early arrivals were able to watch Graham Little's excellent and intriguing slides of his recent trip to Pakistan – ironically idyllic in view of the recent devastation wrought on that part of the world. Donald Ballance also gave an interesting account of his traverse of Iceland. Other incidental entertainments available during the afternoon were a video-tape made at Ling on the occasion of the re-fuelling/ 50th.anniversary party and the outline plans for the proposed CIC extension.

There was a time when the AGM resembled a Blackcock lek with much display of opinions and flurries of motions and amendments. Nowadays we are more mature or civilised, or there is, thanks to our efficient Office-bearers, nothing much to get het up about. And so the AGM went smoothly with only the odd flicker of flame from ancient animosities. Financially, the Club seems to be in good health at the moment.

We have avoided having to pay retrospective tax but this liability will be incurred in future. The CIC extension proposals at last got under way with general agreement to seek outline planning permission for a 6m. x 6m. extension to replace the present porch and to include toilets, kitchen area and drying room. This particular saga still has a long way to run. One issue raised was the location of the printing of the Club's guidebooks. Charlie Orr's appeal for a Scottish printer was countered with the hard economics of printing abroad.

The campaign against the proposed high pylon transmission line was mentioned by Dave Broadhead and evoked general support.

The pre-Dinner piping was of a higher standard than we are accustomed to as the piper was not a Club member. The meal was of a high standard for these things. Colin Stead addressed the Club with due mention of the various adventures of Club Members during the year. Gordon Ross gave his usual rendition of the Club song, accompanied by Robin Campbell on surely the worst keyboard in the west. 'Dark Lochnagar' was also rousingly sung, continuing what has become a Club tradition.

The 'Toast to the Guests' was proposed by Gill Irvine – the first time this has been done by one of our lady members. (Gill is Andy Nisbet's GP - it has been said that that is a full-time job in itself.) She made a fine job of it with special

mention of our Guest of Honour, Sir John Crofton of Crofton-Cummings fame and some medical renown. (Sir John is a lively ninety-three.) Ian Mitchell responded for the Guests with a lively and humorous speech although he made the mistake made by many Guest speakers before him by introducing a smidgeon of lavatory humour. The SMC doesn't go in for that kind of thing, at least not at its Dinners. After the speeches had concluded the Members got on with what they are good at – conviviality and conversation.

R.T. Richardson.

Ski-mountaineering Meet 2006.

Members present: Calum Anton, Donald Ballance, Bob Barton, Robin Chalmers, Ewan Clark, Neil Craig, Graham Dudley, Dave Howard, Colwyn Jones, Ann MacDonald, Peter MacDonald, Ken Moore, Tim Pettifer, Chris Ravey, Bob Reid, Brian Shackleton, Malcolm Slessor, Iain Smart, Anthony Walker.

The SMC ski-mountaineering meet was held on February 16/17/18 2006. The venue was the well appointed Corrie Odhar House and The Chapel, both on the Corrour Estate which is on the eastern shores of Loch Ossian at an altitude of 390m.

The venue promised plenty of access to local Munros for skiing, and so it proved; Beinn na Lap, Sgor Gaibhre, Carn Dearg, Chno Dearg, Ben Alder and the ridge of Beinn Eibhinn, Aonach Beag and Carn Dearg – one excellent 5 star route from the SMC ski-mountaineering guidebook.

On the Thursday evening the advance party drove in through rain, then sleet as they reached the high point at 430m. on the land rover track which finally led to the estate buildings. Access to the meet was along a 12 mile land-rover track/estate road from the A86 Laggan road near Moy Lodge and people were advised to use a 4x4 vehicle in case of snow and potholes. Otherwise snow chains and a shovel might be needed. Helicopter access is possible, as this is how the estate owners arrive, or so I am told. But prior permission is required to land on the estate. Seaplanes have also landed on Loch Ossian. An alternative (if the road was blocked) was by train to Corrour station and a pleasant, flat walk or ski along the shore of Loch Ossian to the house, or more energetically taking in Beinn na Lap en route.

On the clear, sunny Friday morning there was a light frost at the lochside with the mountains pristine white above the 550m. contour. Carrying skis up to 500m. next to the Allt a Choire Chreagaich they continued on skis south over the bealach of Mam Ban then up the wide west ridge of Sgor Gaibhre (955m.) a new Munro for some. From there they headed south to the delightfully and unusually named Meall na Meoig (868m.) of Beinn Pharlagain, a new Corbett for everyone. There was excellent snow especially on the north face of Sgor Gaibhre and by the end of the day there were trails of carved turns all over the place. An excellent day out.

Friday night saw the remaining members arrive from across Scotland, and further afield. The Chapel has been converted in the style of a 1950's ski lodge and, as the more mature members were billeted there, it was an education to experience them in what must be their natural habitat. Overnight the temperature fell to -5 celsius.

Next morning the 19 members and their guests scattered from Corrour. Nine ascended the ridge of Beinn Eibhinn (1102m.) – living up to it's name of delightful hill – in superb conditions with diminishing numbers continuing along to Aonach Beag (1116m.), Geal Charn (1132m.), a descent to Bealach Dubh and a final ascent of Ben Alder (1148m.). There was great snow cover on the plateau and it felt like skiing in true Alpine conditions with virtually no wind and golden sun. Having the ski-tracks of another party to follow off the summit of Ben Alder gave a speedy

descent and a return to the cottages just after dusk. A total round of 22km. and 1400m. of ascent. Ben Alder and adjacent peaks saw a number of ski ascents while others drove to Corrou station and climbed Leum Uilleim(906m.). Five members walked directly east up the Uisge Labhair from Corrou then skinned up Ben Alder via the NW Shoulder from Beallach Cumhann. They also enjoyed the snow over the plateau and all agreed it was like skiing in the Alps, with virtually no wind, sunshine, fantastic views and great scenery!

The descent off Ben Alder was pleasant and variably challenging, depending on the skis being used. Snow quality ranged from light powder, packed powder through to wind crust. On returning to the Bealach Cumhann, three traversed the high ground over Beinn Chumhainn(901m.), Meall a Bhealaich(865m.), Sgor Choinnich(929m.) and Sgor Gaibhre. The best snow of the day was on the North slope of Sgor Gaibhre. A memorable descent on great snow with the orange sun slowly dipping below the horizon, before finishing on the patchy snow of the valley floor.

On Sunday morning the 19 members again left from Corrou. Carn Dearg (941m.) was quickly ticked by a party of two and they passed a group of five continuing on to Sgor Gaibhre. This group of five had headed up Carn Dearg via Coire Creagach. It was a windier day with more cloud, but surprisingly good visibility. However, the tops were not so pleasant for hanging around, much better to keep moving. They descended Carn Dearg via the North Slope into the Coire Creagach on great powdery snow tucked up in the corrie steep. Excellent skiing and the best of the trip. A long climbing traverse across the north slopes via Mam Ban led back to the summit of Sgor Gaibhre where once again they enjoyed another good ski down the north face and back across the patchy snow and hummocky lumps of Allt a Choire Chreagaich to Corrou lodge. It has to be said the conditions for skiing were pretty good. The powder on Sunday on the north slope of Carn Dearg was described as being as good as any in the Alps!

Beinn na Lap(937m.) saw a heroic mass ascent by the five experienced members of the group. The estimated combined age of the party was 350 years and they enjoyed magnificent views from the summit. Others drove up the road to go to Meall Garbh(977m.) and ChnoDearg(1047m.).

Colwyn Jones.

Easter Meet 2006 – Kyle

The meet was held at Kyle Hotel and a late Easter promised good clear days with fresh snow on the hills. With a wide range of temperature and a few sunny spells, the cold westerly wind brought rain and sleet higher up the mountains. Members still ventured onto the hills over a wide area, ranging from Skye to Affric and Torridon. On Sunday evening Malcolm Slessor and Jane King, who had sailed from Oban, joined members at the hotel and afterwards entertained on their boat.

Members explored new areas and climbs including Ben Sgritheall, Sgurr an Airgid, The Saddle via the Forcan Ridge, Moruisg, Beinn na Caillich, Beinn Dearg Mor, Beinn Dearg Bheag, Sgurr Gaorsaic, An Staonach, Garbh-bheinn and Belig. Other areas included the Quiraing, Coire Lagan and Glen Carron at Coullags through to Torridon via the Bealach na Lice.

Those present: President Colin Stead, Robin Campbell, Brian Fleming, Peter MacDonald and guest Calum Anton, Malcolm Slessor and guest Jane King, Iain Smart, Bob Aitken, Dick Allen, Paul Brian and guest David Stone, Dave Broadhead, Robin Chalmers, John Fowler and guest Helen Forde, John Hay, Bill McKerrow, and Roger Robb.

Dick Allen.

JMCS REPORTS

Glasgow Section: Although membership has reduced to 96, the newer members are taking an active part in the club, and meets are well attended. Weekend meets are held fortnightly on average, and the Ibrox climbing wall is visited weekly by a number of members. There are regular pub meets in the West End, which allow weekend plans to be made, and which serve to introduce new members to the club.

The club was blessed with some excellent winter conditions in 2005 and members reported a successful string of winter ascents.

The club meet at Easter to Elphin heralded the start of the rock-climbing season with four days of climbing at Reiff, Ardmail, and Camas Mor, a mass ascent of the Old Man of Stoer, and some memorable evenings. Summer saw some good dry conditions and equally good ascents - *Cougar*, *Vampire* and *Goliath* on the Dubh Loch and a highly productive trip over the border to Scafell - most notably *White Wizard*, *Ichabod*, *Hells Groove*, *Saxon*, *Dyad* and *Centaur*.

Officials elected: *President*, Claire Gilchrist; *Secretary*, Jeremy Morris; 38b Queen Square, Glasgow G41 2AZ. *Coruisk Hut Bookings*, John Fenemore; 7 Campsie Road, Lindsayfield, East Kilbride G75 9GE. www.jmcs.org.uk

Jeremy Morris.

Perth Mountaineering Club (JMCS Perth Section)

Wind, crawling and horizontal precipitation seem to have been recurring themes of the year's meets. It was not an unusually wet summer by any standards but it seemed that the gods were not smiling on the Perth Mountaineering Club. That said, club members showed great resolve in going out in all weathers. The April meet was a case in point when, despite severe conditions, 13 hardy members climbed nine Munros and several Corbetts between them during a weekend based at Strawberry Cottage in Glen Affric.

The summer backpacking meet to the Trotternish Ridge in Skye was similarly afflicted.

The disappointing conditions meant that little winter climbing was done during the club meets. However, one couple did manage an ascent of *Central Gully* on Ben Lui on a February day meet, and a group of three traversed the Five Sisters Ridge in icy conditions in March. Also worthy of note was the ascent of *Tower Ridge* on Ben Nevis by the Nicolls in August.

The meet based at the Ling Hut in late August was blessed with a rare clear day on the Saturday enabling those attending to reach some of the more remote hills by bike – hotly pursued by clouds of midges by all accounts!

With many of the active club members now having completed their Munros, some meets have been more geared to Corbetts, such as the successful meet to Resipole in Ardgour. A day meet to Glen Lyon in September also presented the opportunity to tackle the Ben Lawers hills from the north, thus avoiding the crowds, and providing a new perspective to these well known favourites.

The annual dinner meet in November, 2004 was held at the outstanding venue of Mar Lodge. Some sixty members attended to celebrate the Club's 75th Anniversary with, in particular, the welcome presence of some of the Club's more senior members. The weekend was generally very cold and bright so there were ample opportunities for working up an appetite before the festivities.

Officials elected: *President*, Irene MacGregor, *Vice President*, Donald Barrie, *Secretary*, Sue Barrie, Glensaugh Lodge, Laurencekirk, Aberdeenshire, AB30 1HB 01561 340673, *Treasurer*, Pam Dutton, *Newsletter Editor*, Des Bassett, *Meets Convenor*, Beverly Bain, *Committee Members*, Chris Hine, Phil Taylor, Ray Lee.

London Section: A varied meets list and a range of activities characterised a year in which several members were active abroad. The traditional January President's meet took place in a damp Bethesda with a sprinkling of snow on the tops and this was followed by a well-attended Scottish meet first at Jock Spot's and then at the Raeburn Hut, from where routes were climbed on Creag Meagaidh and in the Northern Corries in less than ideal winter conditions. The more sensible members headed south to the Ecrins, for short walk-ins and sun burned quality ice-climbing.

There were successful meets in Pembroke and at Stanage, which saw a large proportion of the club active on the rock, climbing a variety of classic routes, in between visits to the Lake District and North Wales.

Of special note was the five-week trek by John Steele, Barbara Gibbons, Trevor Burrows, Andy Hughes and Rod Kleckham in the Everest region that culminated in ascents of Mera and Island Peaks. A similar trip is planned to the Annapurna region in 2007. The year ended as it had started in North Wales, where 32 members enjoyed a very pleasant club dinner at Plas y Nant and unseasonably fine weather, with climbing on warm rock at Tremadoc, and scrambling on the ridges of Snowdon, taking in great views for this time of year.

Officials elected: *Secretary*, Chris Bashforth; *President*, John Firmin; *Hut Custodian*, Rod Kleckham; 01252 721 049; *Treasurer*, Dave Hughes; Meets secretary, Dan Calverley, 01457 856 826.

Chris Bashforth.

Edinburgh Section: Membership is currently 82 including a number of new and associate members. Rock climbing, winter climbing and hill walking are the most popular activities, with ski-mountaineering and mountain-biking also being pursued by members.

The section continues to hold Wednesday evening meets indoors during the winter months at the Heriot-Watt University climbing wall and outdoors during the summer at local crags around Edinburgh. Ratho Adventure Centre is now the wet weather alternative during the summer months and Alien Rock is also popular with members.

May 2005 brought good weather and a well attended meet on Arran, camping at the Glen Rosa site. Despite the time of year a few midges were present but this did not stop a number of classics being climbed including *South Ridge Direct*, *Souwester Slabs*, *Arctic Way*, *Pagoda Ridge*, *Mosque* and *Blank*. Successful meets were also held in the Lake District and North Wales.

Winter meets started in December with Inbhirfhaolain in Glen Etive and Muir of Inverey in January. Winter conditions had not really arrived but members made use of the time for some Munro-bagging.

Our Annual Dinner saw us back at the Atholl Arms Hotel in Blair Atholl. A good meal was followed by a memorable after-dinner speech by the SMC's Malcolm Slessor.

Our huts continue to be popular with the Smiddy in particular experiencing a rise in demand. The section's long association with Jock Spot's near Newtonmore came to an end on April, 30, 2006 with the termination of the lease.

The joint SMC Eastern section/JMCS slide nights continue to be well supported by both clubs. The venue is now the South Side Community Centre at 117 Nicolson Street, Edinburgh, at 7:30pm on the second Tuesday of the month, from October to March.

Officials elected: *Hon. President*, John Fowler; *Hon. Vice-President*, Euan Scott; *President*, Brian Finlayson; *Vice-President*, Patrick Winter (also Meets Secretary); *Treasurer*, Bryan Rynne; *Secretary*, Neil Cuthbert, 25 Plewlands Gardens, Edinburgh. E-mail – (secretary@edinburghjmcs.org.uk; *Webmaster*, Davy Virdee, *Smiddy Custodian*, Helen Forde, 30 Reid Terrace, Edinburgh; *Ordinary Members* – Susan Marvell, Stewart Bauchop.

SMC AND JMCS ABROAD

Europe

COLWYN JONES reports: Ann MacDonald, Brian Shackleton and myself spent a week ski-touring in Switzerland leaving the UK on April 16. Flying to Zurich, we met fellow SMC member Mark Litterick and spent the next day skiing in Andermatt in low visibility and high avalanche risk. Heavy rain next day dictated moving via Davos and St Moritz (both closed for the season) to the fine Diavolezza Hut (1973m.). The avalanche conditions restricted skiing to on, or close to the piste which was excellent powder. We snatched an ascent of Munt Pers (3207m.) as a consolation during a brief window in the weather, then had to return to the perfect powder on the quiet pistes again! With the main goal, the Piz Bernina too dangerous to attempt and an outbreak of cabin fever, we headed east, to the end of the railway line at Scuol in the Engadine. There we met Swiss locals Anya and Kobe who reported a good forecast which meant a late night trek up to the excellent Chamanna Tuoi hut. In glorious sunshine next morning we had a superb trip to the summit of Dreiländerspiz (3197m.) then an equally good ski down in super spring snow.

Next day, with faces liberally smeared with sun tan cream, Piz Buin (3312m.) was the summit reached with another fine ski descent back down to the hut. Then back to the valley floor ready for an early morning train journey back to Zurich. The result was a week of poor weather early on, excellent powder and with two excellent ski-touring days to finish.

BOB RICHARDSON reports: This year Beaton's Annual Ice Circus went to Italy in early February. Four SMC members (Jim Beaton, Doug Lang, Bob Richardson and Des Rubens) and four others (Bill MacMillan, Wendell Martin, John Orr and Duncan Walker) negotiated the labyrinth of Geneva Airport and went to the Scottish ice-climber's second home at Cogne.

Based at the excellent Hotel La Baume in Valnontey we spent a week enjoying the varied ice routes in the area. This year the conditions were thinner than usual with only a few of the routes at Lillaz being present but Valnontey provided enough ice to keep us occupied until the weather broke on the last two days.

This area is well known to the ambitious ice-climber but I can recommend it to the more mature as well. The scenery is pleasant, the woods abound in tame chamois, ibex and langlauf skiers. More importantly, the approaches are relatively flat and the routes well provided with rappel chains. A variety of routes were climbed with Des and Wendell searching out the more testing, e.g. *Parti Droite* while we less ambitious enjoyed a number of routes at around Scottish 5. The highlight of the trip was the atmospheric *Cascade de Lillaz*. If you haven't been, sharpen your picks, get some good ice-screws and go.

COLWYN JONES reports: Four SMC members enjoyed a fine spell of settled weather for ski- mountaineering in the Monta Rosa area. After an easy flight to Geneva, Ann MacDonald, Colwyn Jones and Mark Litterick met in Saas Grund on April, 13, 2006 to celebrate Easter by eating lots of pizza.

The Hohsaas lift was used early next morning to reach the 3200m. contour. The normal route up the Trift glacier on the NW face of the Weissmeis (4017m.) was heavily crevassed and the chosen ascent route was up a steep, broad gully at the right side of the glacier. They continued up the normal summit route after reaching the west ridge and eventually achieved the summit in windy conditions, with most enduring a background headache. The descent back to the Gletscherpiste was initially hard wind-blown snowpack, but there was a softer snow in the gully which allowed a splendid ski

descent before reaching the well groomed, patrolled runs. Next morning, the three attempted to ascend the Alphubel (4206m.) from Saas Fee. They reached Langflue on the first uplift and had skinned up to a height of 3900m. before the increasing cloud and wind strength forced a retreat through the crevasses in a whiteout. Increasing cloud in the afternoons was typically experienced each day of the trip.

Brian Shackleton arrived early that evening and next morning on the April, 16, all four attempted to climb the angular Fletschhorn (3996m.). In a light cover of fresh snow they branched off the Weissmiespiste, climbing through the moraine to reach a height of 3200m. before high winds caused them to abandon the ascent. On the positive side this allowed a prolonged, pleasant lunch in the Saas Grund ski area and an early arrival at Tasch later that evening.

On April, 17, they celebrated the end of Easter with a busy ascent of the Breithorn (4164m.) in splendid conditions and even better views. They then skied over the frontier to the excellent Ayas Hut (3420m.). Next morning they climbed Castor (4228m.) by the West flank and the superb airy North ridge. A guided party, attempting the ridge in what can only be described as traditional style, delayed the ascent. The ridge was so narrow they had mounted it à cheval and the guide was attempting to haul his two bestraddled clients up the ridge. Their use of alloy crampons and lightweight touring axes proved ineffective on the hard blue ice of the summit ridge, hence this traditional technique. However, it allowed Colwyn, who was leading, plenty of time to cut a line of buckets on the side of the ridge and place ice screws for solid protection. On finally reaching the summit there was no breeze and fantastic views in all directions.

After another comfortable night in the Ayas hut, the few centimetres of fresh snow which had fallen overnight provided a fantastic ski down to St. Jacques. After a short walk down through the pinewoods to the village, they caught the bus 2km. down the road to Frachay. There the ski uplift over the Col de Bettaforca to Stafel allowed them up to 3200m. for an awkward traverse over to the Rifugio Citta di Mantova (3400m.).

The Mantova hut provided another good base and on April, 20, they skied up to the Col de Lys from where they climbed both Zumstein (4563m.) and Signalkuppe (4554m.) with splendid views in all directions. There was a reasonable fall of new snow next day and the threatening cloud farther south dictated a frantic early morning dash over to the Monta Rosa hut (2795m.) via the Col de Lys (4248m.) as the weather closed in behind them.

Next morning they returned to Zermatt via the Gorner Glacier and home.

Paklenica – Croatia

HEIKE PUCHAN and BRIAN WHITWORTH report: The Stirling-based Anglo-German section of the Glasgow JMCS had been looking for a venue for the traditional early summer trip when the latest edition of *Klettern* popped through the letterbox.

Only a couple of pages in, after the adverts for the sauerkraut flavoured dehydrated meals, was a rather striking full page spread of a huge cliff – 1500ft. high, or rather 500m. to give it its full euro-measurement, and half-a-mile long. Might be worth a trip, we thought. All very inspiring but what the heck is it? Where is it? And, will it be full of Germans?

Turns out that the cliff was ‘Anica kuk’ in the Paklenica National Park. Turns out that it is in Croatia. And, yes, to the third one. A bit of web-surfing turned up flights from Edinburgh to Zagreb for £200, including a stop in Frankfurt. Perfect chance to pick up all one’s favourite German delicacies from the underground supermarket – Brezels and Bratwurst, mmm. A hire-car was also pre-arranged for a bit less than the standard euro rate, and so with our freshly ATM’d Kuna (beavers tails – the traditional Croatian barter currency), we were off. A couple of hours

down the new autobahn, with only Germans and Austrians for company, led us with great ease to Starigrad Paklenica, a strange little post-communism holiday resort on the coast, about 100km. North of Split. Some dodgy English on the websites had led us to believe there was camping in this place, along with bears, vultures and snakes. While we never saw the wildlife, a quick look around suggested that almost every back garden seemed to be a campsite, and so with great reluctance we checked ourselves into the garden closest to Dinko's, the local bar – a full 50ft. away.

An evening on the local pop was comfortably light on the wallet at one euro a pint, although less so on the ears, as the resident famous Slovene mountaineer demonstrated his horse-like burping impressions. I believe he has since been rescued off Nanga Parbat communicating solely in 'horsish'.

The following week made a pleasant change from the usual Scottish 'drive for two hours to climb for 30 minutes before it rains'. The main climbing area, Velika Paklenica, lies less than two miles from the village. So you drive up to the bottom of the gorge, hand over your 10 beavers for park entry (less than £10 for the week) and decide whether you can be bothered to walk more than five minutes to get beyond the heaving throng of Germans that beat you to the gorge sport climbs – anything from one to five pitches – or are you feeling brave enough to scale a route on the mighty 'Anica kuk'.

Being trad-heads at heart, we generally favoured the long walk in, all 45 minutes of it, to the big cliff. Climbs up there require gear. Ignore any comments about 'bolted'. All the big routes we did were bolted to Croatian standard rather than the efficient German standard, so if you like 5m. run-outs between 'haken' with the difficult bit always just before a bolt, this is the place for you.

We did two of the famous trilogy of routes on the cliff. *Mosoraski* was a pleasant ramble up several pitches before a slippery F5+ crux pitch pops you out near the 2500ft. summit. The other, *Velebitaski*, was a bit more full on with the F6a+ crux falling admirably to Scottish winter ethics (get up it, anything goes). This was definitely the best longer route we did, following the easiest line up some very steep terrain. The other long local classic of *Domzalski* on the elephants-bum-like Stup was also enjoyed, notably for its under-graded slippery, slabby crux.

As the week wore on the temperatures got hotter and hotter. Consequently, the starts got more and more Alpine to enable climbing in the cool of morning. Paklenica is a great location for most of the year as there is always a sunny side and a shady side

When the heat gets too much there is always swimming. The gorge itself has a picturesque burn flowing down it with some great swimming spots, ideally situated at the end of a tiring descent down the back of 'Anica kuk'. By the time you have dried out, you will be back in the village, which is only a short ice-cream away from the coast. Just bring some flip-flops for the pebble beaches.

The village has a couple of supermarkets selling everything you could need including sun-cream, flip-flops and cold drinks, mainly aimed at the visiting, beach-lining hordes from the Austro-Prussian empire. However, there is also a climbing shop for those forgotten essentials, like gear!

The walking looks lovely, although we never got around to it. There was just too much climbing to be done.

But whatever you do, if you go to Dinko's, avoid Humar. He burps like a horse.

Drygalskijord, South Georgia. Photo: David Nichols.

On the Neumayer Glacier, South Georgia. Photo: David Nichols.





Greece – Mount Olympus

DAVE BROADHEAD REPORTS: Mountaineering objectives and family holidays seldom overlap in our household, until last year (July 2005) when we decided to visit Greece. Friends of Moira's in the LSCC were very enthusiastic about their ascent of Mount Olympus (2917m.) earlier in the year, and with some careful persuasion our teenage offspring were gradually won over to the idea.

We arrived in Litohoro (305m.) on a Saturday evening, and were lucky to find a hotel room. Situated at the foot of the Enipeas River gorge with the Olympus massif towering behind, this pleasant little town is easily reached by car or public transport. Next morning we drove another 18km. to the end of the road at Prionia (1100m.), the start of the mountain trail. A steady three-hour climb up through pleasant shady woodland took us to Spilios Agapitos, Refuge A (2100m.). Perched on a ridge in the trees, this proved a perfect spot to spend the afternoon relaxing or exploring the neighbouring corries.

The Greek version of an alpine start proved very civilised, and we had no difficulty in starting the next stage of the climb at 7.30am. next morning, ahead of most other parties. Soon out of the trees, the scenery started to open out as we gained height, giving us a better appreciation of the geography of our surroundings. In the absence of a map we were simply following the sign-posted path, grateful for the excellent weather. Much of the massif is a Cairngorm-like plateau, cleft with deep corries. Our goal, Mytikas (2917m.), the highest summit was like a bit of the Cuillin grafted on, with a few hundred metres of easy but interesting scrambling leading to the top, which we reached at about 10.20am. Superb views all around, but cloud was already starting to build up, and we were happy to stay ahead of the guided parties that were appearing. Requiring no specialist equipment, (I did the whole climb in shorts and trainers, with a fleece and long trousers for the cool of the evening at the hut) I would recommend this short trip to any keen hill-goer on holiday in Greece.

JOHN STEELE REPORTS: In July 2005 four London JMCS members held a pre-trek training meet in Kandersteg. Peaks climbed were Stand, Frundenhorn, Blumisalp and the fine snow/ice face of Morgenhorn. Members: Steve Gladstone (Leader), John Steele, Barbara Gibbons and Trevor Burrows.

Greenland

COLWYN JONES REPORTS: Four SMC members – Ann MacDonald, Colwyn Jones, Chris Ravey and Jim Thomson, headed off to The Roscoe Mountains in Liverpool Land, North East Greenland. 'The Delectable Arctic Playground.' (Slessor, SM CJ, 2001).

"A Gruffalo, what's a Gruffalo?" I naively asked. Chris and Jim looked shocked.

"What's a Gruffalo? Don't you know? He has terrible tusks, and terrible claws and terrible teeth in his terrible jaws!"

"I think I can see some," said Ann looking at the three of us. Gruffalos featured heavily on the trip, being blamed for every mishap by the two fathers, Chris and Jim. Reading about Gruffalos in children's storybooks most evenings, doesn't mean they exist.

In our Global village, access to north-east Greenland is now fairly routine.

On Friday, July 23, 2004, Ann and Colwyn flew from Glasgow international airport on a routine Icelandair Boeing 757 flight to Keflavik. They caught the 'Flybus' to Reykjavik where the damp atmosphere seemed to presage conditions later in the trip, it was raining heavily and Colwyn had guaranteed Ann a fortnight on the Arctic Riviera. The hotel was full of young Icelanders who, it seems, gravitate to Reykjavik for weekends of binge drinking. Their noisy carousing allowed Ann and Colwyn to note that it stayed light all night.

Next morning, a Fokker 50 flew from Reykjavik domestic airport to Kulusuk,

Looking east to Vagakallen from the summit of Haveren, Lofoten Islands. Photo: David Ritchie.

NE Face of Middagstinden (Scottish V.5), Lofoten Islands, Climber Neil McGougan. Photo: David Ritchie.

the airport that serves Tasiilaq in the Ammassalik district of Greenland (formerly Angmagssalik). The flight took two hours, ending on an alarmingly short runway at Kulusuk. They disembarked, admired the skin of a polar bear which had been shot nearby and then walked around Kulusuk village for an hour glancing nervously behind them every few steps. They re-embarked and in less than two hours the Fokker landed at Constable Point at around 5pm. The helicopter was busy ferrying locals to the settlement at Ittoqqortoormiit (Scoresbysund) so they found their air-freight and got the tent pitched on the tundra just to the north-east of the airstrip. Collecting the hired gun from the airport manager was straightforward, he was too busy to instruct them on how to use it. However, the thought of employing it as a rudimentary club against an inquisitive polar bear is a strong motivator to develop one's amateur weaponry skills. The evening was spent introducing Ann to the flammable – or otherwise – combination of the MSR stove and Jet A1 fuel. The steady, but cool, breeze deterred mosquitoes as the party enjoyed the beautiful Arctic sun, which didn't quite set.

Overnight they heard three birds; the quacking of some unidentified duck, a Snipe humming and finally a Sandpiper. Some Ravens were also flying around enjoying a prolonged breakfast. Unable to afford to pay for the airport to open on the Sunday they spent the day walking along the sandy Fjord shore with its amazing profusion of timber and detritus. The plastic detritus was all Danish or Greenlandic from the writing, and the presumption was that it had floated round from Ittoqqortoormiit. Back at the tent the helicopter pilot was out practising his golf and supervised firearms training was later successfully undertaken. The forecast for Monday was poor and the golfing pilot mentioned flying was unlikely the next day, which was a pointless discussion as it turned out.

On Monday, it did rain for most of the day but it offered the chance to rest, unwind from the frenetic pace of civilisation and adjust to Arctic time. The mosquitoes had been out the night before and the first medical emergency arose. Ann had a very swollen left parotid gland, and the differential diagnosis included mumps, although comparison of serology during the acute and convalescent phases was not locally available. However, it was just some impressive, though superficial swelling, caused by a mosquito, or perhaps a Gruffalo bite. Tuesday, July 27, was wind and rain again. Hopeful signs of clearing weather arrived, then left, but a Fokker 50 arrived from Reykjavik later in the day as Constable point has a low visibility landing system.

Wednesday, July 28, and they were rudely awakened by early helicopter flights. Three came in from Ittoqqortoormiit. It was a beautiful morning. After breakfast and two days stuck in a tent they took two of the older resident husky dogs for a walk up a hill to the north-east of the airfield. It was a lovely Arctic summer's day with stunning views, but lingering too long over said views, they were still on the hill when Chris and Jim's flight arrived.

After hurried packing it was their turn and all four were flown due east over Hurry Fjord in the Bell Jet Ranger to the Roscoe mountains on the South Hans Glacier, some 15 minutes. away (readers should note the names are those suggested in Slessor's 2001 article). Landing initially on a very crevassed area which was flat (The low tail rotor on Jet Rangers apparently, means a nervous pilot) they tried a second time and disembarked, but had to rope up and carry all food and gear to a more benign area. Civilisation flew off and they got established but found their food supplies had been pilfered. Most of the cakes were missing, it might have been a dog with a sweet tooth, but there were more plausible two legged culprits.

Next morning was again a stunning day and they walked from basecamp, climbed over a problematic bergeschrund to a steep gully leading to West Col. (GPS 1195m. N. 70° 40'27.2" W. 021° 59'02.2"). Fine views to the coast dictated a lunch stop and they then headed south over jumbled rocks to the summit tower of Tvillingerne (The Twins). A short pitch of difficult climbing got them to the highest easterly point (1445m. aneroid, 1447m. GPS. N. 70° 40'15" W. 021° 58'52.1"). There were good views to the south and across Hurry Fjord. To the east the pack-ice still guarded the coast. Leaving the summit at 16.00hrs after finding an empty jar of marmite hidden under a cairn, the weather came in with heavy cloud in the evening and the rain started as they got to bed at 23.00hrs. They had bagged the first peak in this 'delectable Arctic playground,' 1000m. of scree and 30m. of rock!

Rain overnight, but it finally stopped at 14.00hrs. though it was still too windy to sit out. The rain continued intermittently for the remainder of the afternoon and evening with Gruffalos identified as the likely cause. Saturday July 31 and the sun was on the tent by 07.20hrs. They went to the head of the South Hans Glacier to the Col de Pisse then traversed to the moraine on the south side of the Grete Glacier to lay in a food dump for the planned return to the coast.

On Sunday, August 1, they were again awakened by the heat of the sun on the tent at about 07.30hrs – not a bad way to start the day. The wind was much lighter with a clear view down to the sparkling blue waters of Hurry Fjord. Camped on the ice they were using ice-screws to secure the tents. However, as they might need them for climbing they spent a short time making Abalakov anchors to hold the tents down. One person tried to screw a nice new sharp Black Diamond ice-screw through his ice-chilled finger. However, the cold didn't seem to reduce the impressive, profuse bleeding. Within a short time the ice was stained pink around the tents, raising speculation about the acute sense of smell of polar bears. However, keen to get up another peak, they set off with the reassurance that as his finger was still bleeding he was clearly not empty, yet.

They all returned to West Col and scrambled up the easy, but worryingly, loose peak to the north of the Col. They are not sure of the name of the peak but it was 1420m. aneroid, GPS 1412m. N. 70° 40'42.3" W. 021° 59'11.5". It had a large flat summit area with a vertical drop off the north-east face and the rock looked like it was better quality. Again the views were stunning in all directions. There is no doubt about the beauty of the Arctic. They returned to camp over the deteriorating bergeschrund to find the food had been raided. Was it a polar bear or a Gruffalo that had broken open the cardboard food boxes and helped themselves to the tastier morsels? They found only Raven footprints.

Next morning, the Ravens returned, no doubt spying for the Gruffalos. They were just getting the rifle ready when the birds flew off. Deciding to strike camp, abandon the blood stained ice and head over to the food dump, it was a late start with heavy packs via the Col de Pisse on a glacier walk to camp 2 at the head of the Grete Glacier (780m. N. 70° 30'24.2" W. 021° 56' 36.3").

Despite the appalling weather, blamed on the Gruffalos, the two highest peaks in the Roscoe Mountains were climbed. Farther south the peaks were poor for climbing, being largely composed of loose scree when approached as described. It might be an Arctic ski-mountaineering paradise in the Spring and if we can avoid the Gruffalos, it would be worth returning to check it out! All in all, an easy way to access Arctic mountaineering, and when the conditions allowed, the views were stunning.

Reference

Slessor M. 2001, A Mountaineer's Guide to the Roscoe Bjerre, SMCJ, vol.192, pp.731-735.

Greenland – Rytterknaegten

PETER MACDONALD reports: As reported in last year's Journal, Bill Wallace and five others were in the Karale Glacier region of East Greenland in April 2005. For some of the party it was their second attempt to reach this area: the first, fondly referred to as the SMC Kulusuk Airport Expedition 2002, had been thwarted by bad weather and logistical problems.

At first, it looked as though that experience was to be repeated, but this time we did reach our destination, and in the few days of good weather explored the great expanses of the Karale. This magnificent cirque is dominated by one peak, Rytterknaegten (2020m.), a superbly shaped spire reminiscent of the Matterhorn from certain angles, or of the fantasy mountain at the start of Paramount films. It was first climbed as long ago as 1938 by a Swiss party including, Andre Roch, which made many other first ascents including Mount Forel, the second highest peak in Greenland. The mountains here are generally less suitable for ski ascents than those of the Roscoe Bjerger, where our group had been in 2003, and the route out more strenuous as we discovered when the weather closed in again – but that's another story! We all felt immensely privileged to have witnessed such scenery and for those of us who are now left, it was also a privilege to have been with Bill on his last trip to Greenland.

Himalaya – Ama Dablam

SANDY ALLAN REPORTS: I led the 'Team Ascent' Ama Dablam Expedition during Autumn 2005.

The team comprised of six, Kathryn Grindrod (SMC member/Sport Scotland Avalanche information service observer), Dr Janis Tait, Dr Alistair Meikle, Chris Cookson and Rob Sturdy. We climbed the mountain by the South-West Ridge.

Departing the UK on October 16 we flew to Kathmandu, Nepal and then on to Lukla on October 20. Rather than going direct to Ama Dablam base camp we trekked towards Everest base camp and Kallipatar and then over the Kogma La (5535m.) in order to assist acclimatisation. We arrived at Ama Dablam base camp (4800m.) on October 30, with everyone in good spirits. After a rest day we carried equipment to Camp 1 and returned to Base Camp. On November 3, the team ascended to Camp 1, spent the night there and then ascended to the Yellow Tower, traditional site for Camp 2 and returned to Base Camp. Finally, on the 6th the team all set off for a summit attempt, staying at Camp 1 and then Camp 3 and attempting the summit on November 8.

All the team members got to Camp 3 (6400m.) Dr J. Tait and Rob Sturdy ran out of energy at about 6500m. and turned back to Camp 3 at around 8.30 am. Myself, Kathryn Grindrod, Chris Cookson, Alistair Meikle, Sonam Sherpa and De Nima Sherpa (Sirdar) all summited between 10am and 10.30am in cold and windy weather. All members returned back to Camp 1 that same evening, returning safely to Base Camp on November 9. We would like to thank, *Mountain Equipment, Patagonia and Rab Down Equipment* for their support.

This was Kathryn Grindrod's first ascent in the Himalaya, and my second ascent of Ama Dablam, having climbed the South-West ridge during a winter ascent in 1999.

JOHN STEELE REPORTS: In October 2005, five London JMCS members visited the Everest region of Nepal. Starting from the roadhead at Jiri, a two-week approach was made to Mera base camp and the peak climbed shortly thereafter.

Due to heavy snow a retreat was made into the Solu Khumbu and the tourist route followed to Dingboche. Several days later Island Peak was climbed from high camp. Members: John Steele (Leader), Barbara Gibbons, Rod Kleckham, Trevor Burrows and Andy Hughes.

This was a private expedition manned exclusively by people from the Nepalese village of Salle (whom we support). If you are planning a trip, contacts can be made at dantamang@yahoo.com and bluesky@mail.com.np.

Australasia

JOHN STEELE REPORTS: Barbara Gibbons and I spent most of March 2004 in Tasmania. Our main exploration was a 10-day trek across the Central Highland region.

We followed the Overland Track, starting at Cradle Valley and finishing at Derwent Bridge (Lake St. Clare). Peaks climbed along the way were: Cradle Mountain, Barn Bluff, Mt. Oakleigh, Mt. Ossa (the highest) and Acropolis.

Other forages were made to Mt. Anne in the South, the remote South-West Track and the Totem Pole sea-stacks on the rugged south-east coast. Tasmania is a truly beautiful, wild and remote island where conservation is paramount. A fantastic trip.

Africa

DEREK PYPER reports: In February, 2006 along with Hugh Spencer of the Etchachan Club, I visited the Ruwenzori Mountains in Uganda where we spent 10 days walking from hut to hut in the most appalling conditions either of us has experienced. It rained every day which turned a wet place – at the best of times – into an overall bog.

It proved quite exhausting walking, or teetering, for miles over deep bogs on ‘paths’ of slim, smooth and slippery branches where the penalty for a false move was unthinkable.

Mount Speke (4890m.) was climbed in mist, rain and later snow – no view.

We will never moan about Scottish bog-trotting again.

REVIEWS

High Endeavours – The Life and Legend of Robin Smith: Jimmy Cruikshank. (Canongate, 2005, hardback, 374pp. ISBN 1 84195 5589, £26.99).

Some can climb, some can write but only a very few can do both at the highest level. Robin Smith was one of that few. As one of the greatest mountaineers Scotland has ever produced, and especially in the context of its current political, literary and artistic renaissance, his biography is long overdue.

This is a many-sided and rich book written, or as he modestly says 'compiled' by Smith's school friend and companion on his early climbs, Jimmy Cruikshank. My profound impression is that this is a labour of love. Cruikshank, an amiably self-effacing biographer, has assembled a massive number of sources and has spoken to and corresponded with a huge variety of people who knew Smith. From this mass of testimony, painstakingly gathered over many years, there emerges a fascinating study of a unique young man.

High Endeavours is divided into three parts: the first, comparatively short, deals with his early life and influences and takes us through Smith's schooldays and on to university. The second and longest part covers what we might call Smith's mature period including all the famous Scottish climbs and his best documented ascents in the Alps. The third part deals with the expedition to the Pamirs on which he met his death.

The meat of the book is in Parts I and II. In these Cruikshank sensitively traces the birth and growth of a singular personality. His father, we learn, died when he was young. His mother was a remarkable woman: free thinker, English graduate. The deep bond between Robin and his mother runs like a motif through the book. Constantly, wherever he is travelling, we see Smith sending his mother a stream of letters and cards, (one can't help wondering if Haston and co. seeing Smith scribbling away in some remote mountain hut realised what he was writing; letters to mother one suspects, were not high on the agenda of the Currie Boys). But Robin was sent away to school, at first in Crieff.

Here he was taken under the wing of Bee MacNeill who thought him "...loveable..., sensitive, friendly but happy on his own or in the little dream world that he liked."¹

Apparently, he liked to walk by this kindly lady on nature walks. On one occasion when Robin had been clowning, Miss MacNeill "asked him if the other boys were not laughing at him and he said 'yes' but I could see from his grin that he couldn't care twopence".²

How perceptive she was. How well Cruikshank has done to quarry this out. How brilliantly MacNeill's observation suggests the showman and writer's love of an audience.

Then it was on to Edinburgh and that school of hard knocks George Watson's. Here he met Cruikshank who observed his early unhappiness at first hand: "...big-eyed twitchy glances swivelling nervously between teacher and floor." Robin, we are told, eventually "blended in with wary caution".⁴

Watson's, one supposes, fulfilled its primary function of crushing the crushable and forcing the spirited to rebel. Robin, of course, rebelled. The shy new-boy, towards the end of his school career, became the leader of the 'Scottish Chaoserians' (pronounced choss) and swept the polls in the school's mock general election. By

contrast, the account of his stay in the 'bughut' (boarding house) run by the infamous 'Butch' Fleming is much darker and Cruikshank has provided excellent sources both in terms of the testament of contemporary pupils and, notably, Donald Scott who represented the more enlightened brand of young teacher then starting to replace an authoritarian generation.

Part I of *High Endeavours* gives us a vital insight into the early influences which shaped his personality and this journey of discovery is continued in Part II which substantially tells the story of Smith: climber, writer, and student of Philosophy.

There is no need for me to detail Cruikshank's thorough treatment of Robin's climbing career, it's all there: the climbs with Haston, the wonderful week with Marshall, the *Walker Spur* with Gunn Clark, the epic on the Fiescherwand with Goofy, *Yo-Yo*, *Shibboleth*, *Big-Top*, *The Needle*... they're all there for the reader's admiration and enjoyment. In some cases Cruikshank has provided accounts of the climbs from Smith's and also from his partner's perspective and this works well, notably in the 'alternative' accounts of Jimmy Marshall and Goofy. Cruikshank makes a compelling case for Smith's inclusion in the highest rank of Scottish mountaineers, but this biography does so much more than that.

Striving and seeking seem to lie at the heart of Smith's mystery. He wanted success in so many fields: climbing, writing, Logic, Philosophy. He was seeking enlightenment, but I think Cruikshank's work suggests (no more than this) that there is a deep psychological longing for the approbation of the father-figures he found in his world; deep down he had a need to belong in their world and to be recognised as belonging.

There are perhaps four or five men who stand out from this biography as fulfilling, in different settings and at different times, the father-figure role: Archie Hendry (nicknamed 'Papa' at Watson's), Jimmy Marshall, Willie Stewart (one of Robin's lecturers in Philosophy at Edinburgh), Geoff Dutton and finally, John Hunt. Now, it would be quite crass to suggest that any of these men, in any sense, took over the role of Robin's deceased father – that is not suggested. At the same time it seems insensitive to deny that there is an element of fatherliness in these relationships, doubtless greater in some than in others, but present in all, and, crucially, sought by Smith.

Hendry it was, whose sharp tongue and sardonic manner hid a kindly streak, who gave Robin that vital early chance. (How many young lives have been shipwrecked for want of it?) How important it must have seemed that someone from the adult world beyond the family took him seriously. This is well attested in Smith's diary which Cruikshank uses to good effect.

The relationship with Marshall was somewhat different and undoubtedly a more equal one (indeed they got arrested together by the polis in Fort William!), but there still seems to be the fatherly echo. Marshall is constantly referred to as 'the Old Man' in Smith's famous article on that week on the Ben ⁵ and perhaps there is a deeper meaning in it than even he imagined. Marshall had a wild streak and perhaps acted as a half-way house between the untamed tiger-cubs of the Currie Boys – Haston et.al. – and the caustic fatherlikeness of Hendry, but again we have the independent voice of Robin Campbell which also bears witness to Marshall's quazi-paternal qualities in the contemporary climbing scene. ⁶

Geoff Dutton and Willie Stewart, in very different ways, also seem to have had a fatherly hand on Smith's shoulder. Dutton, as newly-appointed editor of this

Journal, had the task of encouraging Smith to contribute. In Cruikshank's book it is he who makes the most determined effort to appreciate Smith the writer: "...he calmly achieves his most cathartically black effects without a single oath. But these effects were built up by brains, imagination, wide reading and sheer hard work; he would sometimes write me several versions of a sentence, before its rhythm satisfied him." ⁷

Smith is revealed as a highly conscious artist who "forwarded meticulously crafted barbs and stings..." ⁸ Dutton modestly denies knowledge of Smith the man and Smith the climber, but, in his writing "... we moved together..." ⁹

Willie Stewart had the unenviable task of prizing Philosophy essays from Smith the undergraduate: "Dear Robin, All joking apart, I *want* your Leibniz essay – and in reasonable time..." But he didn't want it in order that Smith could scrape through the course, but rather to justify the awarding of "a class medal and the Hutchison Sterling Prize". ¹¹ Smith was not only a talented writer, but a promising young philosopher. There are revealing expressions of affection in Stewart's letters to Smith. "I was very glad to get your letter. I liked your egg shaped angels. (I like you too also)." ¹² This letter actually closes, "Love Willie." ¹³ Stewart notes "Robin's ability to attract Guardian Angels..." ¹⁴ In a letter to Cruikshank written much later, Stewart says: "Whether Robin regarded me as a father-figure is difficult to tell." ¹⁵ Of course what is going on at a deeper level in one's life is not obvious at the time, but Cruikshank's work helps us to appreciate that there was a pattern here.

I have claimed that the meat of this book is in Parts I and II. Here are the famous climbs, the notorious incidents, the rebelliousness, the bad behaviour, copying the Currie Boys and all that. Cruikshank ably guides us through a wealth of material while wisely leaving us to pass judgment. He certainly doesn't flinch from exploring the more controversial aspects of Smith's behaviour, and he reminds us that Smith was by no means universally popular during his lifetime.

The third part of *High Endeavours*, concerned almost exclusively with the expedition to the Pamirs, is a somewhat odd coda to the book. Increasingly, the biographer's voice fades out and we are left with a series of lengthy quotations from Cruikshank's sources. There are two ways of looking at this: one can, with some justification, say that Cruikshank is employing his habitual modesty and allowing his sources to tell the story themselves. On the other hand, this is, after all, Cruikshank's book, ought he not to tell the story? The reader must decide.

In any case, I wondered if the story of the expedition needed to be told at such length? What do the initial arguments about the aims of the expedition and who to include in it tell us about Robin Smith? Is a whole chapter on Wilfrid Noyce ¹⁶ really necessary?

However, the crucial act of character revelation in Part III for me is the insight we are given into Smith's relationship with John Hunt the expedition leader. To Smith, Sir John – the leader of the successful Everest Expedition, army officer – must have seemed the quintessential establishment man; a type against whom he had been prone to rebel. As the increasingly factious wranglings about who was to go on the expedition reached their climax, Smith, still let us remember, hardly more than a student, wrote a letter to Hunt in which youthful spiritedness bordered on sheer cheek. Hunt, wise and tolerant, chooses not to slap him down as perhaps he deserved, but writes him a carefully reasoned reply in a very man-to-man tone. It seems to me of the essence of Smith that he instantly appreciates Hunt's fairness

and courtesy and acknowledges that his own letter had been 'impetuous'.¹⁷ His reply reveals a subtle shift of feeling. Here is another of Smith's 'Guardian Angels' at work. There is a delightful vignette, recorded by Hunt, at the expedition training weekend at the CIC, in which Robin "... lay cosily in his sleeping bag" and watched "with what I took to be cynical appraisal, as I busied myself sweeping up the mess on the littered floor."¹⁸ But Hunt passes the test and later in Russia writes: "Derek, Robin and Wilf are wonders of selfless labour in the common weal."¹⁹ From Bee MacNeill to John Hunt, wisdom and kindness seem to have been qualities to which Smith always responded.

The sad conclusion to Smith's part in the expedition is recorded in detail through the eyes of those who were there. In order, however, to recapture the essential Smith, one should look back to the concluding chapter of Part II: a sparsely written, characterful account by Davie Agnew of Smith's last climb in Scotland – *The Needle* in the Cairngorms. This piece takes us back to where Smith has his being. As he and Agnew are waiting for a lift on their way from Clydeside to Rothiemurchus "across the road ... was a band of gypsies, camped in a field beside a wee burn."²⁰ The image powerfully suggests Borthwick's *Always A Little Further*²¹ and it is to the tradition of work like that and of men like Murray and Patey, that Robin Smith's life belongs.

Canongate have produced the book very pleasantly: the type is a good size, the 32 photographs are well chosen and the index is useful. The text seems free from serious errors but I noted a howler on p.8 (*Sir Hector* Munro indeed!) and is it really "*moster-wheel*" in line 7 of Smith's poem quoted at the start? With so much of Part III dependent on quotation, surely detailed references, particularly to published works, should have been given in chapter notes at the end.

I do not think that this will be the last biography of Smith, but Jimmy Cruikshank has set a high standard. All who come after will have to be thoroughly acquainted with this work. He has also discharged a debt of honour – and love – to a friend.

P. J. Biggar.

References

¹ *High Endeavours* p. 2.

² p. 3.

³ p. 4.

⁴ p. 4.

⁵ *The Old Man and the Mountain*, R. Smith SMCJ, 1960.

⁶ *Bringing Up Father* R. Campbell, EUMCJ, 1968-69.

⁷ *High Endeavours* p.145.

⁸ p.145.

⁹ p.145.

¹⁰ p. 72

¹¹ p. 72

¹² p. 74

¹³ p. 74

¹⁴ p. 73

¹⁵ p. 76

¹⁶ pp. 230-234

¹⁷ p. 268

¹⁸ p. 271

¹⁹ p. 271

²⁰ p. 227

²¹ *Always A Little Further*, Alistair Borthwick, Faber and Faber, London, 1939.

Seton Gordon's Scotland – An Anthology:- Compiled by Hamish Brown, (Whittles Publishing, 2005, hardback, 329 pages, 25.00. ISBN 1-904445-22-5).

This is a very special book; a real celebration of the writings of that most influential and kindly of Highland gentlemen, Seton Paul Gordon, CBE. FZS. MBOU.

The naturalist, photographer, hillwalker, historian, folklorist and piper was born 120 years ago, three years before the founding of the SMC, yet lived until three years after Hamish's celebrated mountain walk. Tempus fugit!

There was certainly plenty of candidate material for the anthology; 27 books totalling nearly 6000 pages and two million words, plus legion articles from many publications and the contents of the Seton Gordon archive at the National Library of Scotland.

Hamish has done Seton's works and memory proud, compiling 120 extracts on a wide range of topics into 14 themed sections, each with a short introduction. We get sections on, for example, The Cairngorms, The Outer Hebrides, Hill Days, and Ways That Are Gone; and topics as diverse as, The Collection of Cairngorm Stones, A Day At The Peats, Christ's Birds, and Berries Of The Hills. Some of the extracts are quite lengthy, others, no more than 100 words or so. All, however, contain that magic born of the writer's deep knowledge of, and passion for his chosen subjects. As Seton's biographer, Raymond Eagle pointed out: "The uniqueness of his writing lay in his ability to transport the reader so that they saw the world through his all-discovering eyes."

Hamish once described Seton as 'the grand-master writer on The Cairngorms', the area he wrote most about, therefore it is fitting that the preface is by Adam Watson, Seton's star pupil. Like Eagle, he marvels at "... the power and wonder of his written word." And that "... the reader easily imagines standing beside him when they look at the scene together."

Although Seton was no mountaineer, as in the purist's definition, he was a hill-walker of formidable ability, totally at home on the highest of bens or longest of glens – and in all weathers. Witness these words from the extract 'At The Pools Of Dee': "I had walked across from Aviemore to Braemar to assist in the judging of the piping at the Braemar Gathering and, as I was expected to do the same thing at the Kingussie Gathering the next day, it was necessary for me to return through the Lairig Ghru very early the next morning to reach Kingussie in time."

Throughout the anthology there are Seton's wonderfully simple, yet evocative descriptive phrases such as, 'the mutter of thunder', 'the faery light of the glowing sun' and the 'careless grace' (of an eagle over An Teallach).

As well as loving the flora, fauna and history of his native land Seton was also a great 'people person', with a keen sense of humour – never malicious, but slightly impish. This comes out in 'Those Sorts Of Situations' within the 'A Vanished World' section: "I chuckled to myself when an acquaintance rang me up one day to tell me he had seen three eagles perched on telegraph poles." Also, on the skills of the piper not rated too high locally: "... he had scarcely walked off the platform when one of the audience yelled at the top of his voice, 'Sit doon ye' At once the chairman was on his feet and called out in stern and disapproving tones, 'Who called the piper a?' Came the answer instantly, in the broadest Scots 'Fa caa'd the a piper?"

Adam Watson states, in his forward to the 1979 reprint of Seton's 'The Immortal Isles': "Others whom I know had a spark lit in them by Seton Gordon's writings and went on to become naturalists and writers themselves. And others unborn will have this magic in the future." Hamish lists in his foreword some of those influenced by Seton; Adam of course, Desmond Nethersole-Thomson, David Stephen, Tom Weir, Mike Tomkies, Don and Bridget Maccaskill and Jim Crumley. Modesty will have prevented him directly associating himself with this august gathering, but he should be up there for surely what Seton did for Adam and others, Hamish has done, in turn for

quite a few of his irreverent band at Braehead School and all of us who relish his mountain travel writings.

Seton Gordon would enjoy this book, recognising Hamish as a kindred spirit. He would also take quiet satisfaction from the following words – which he could have written himself – from *Hamish's Mountain Walk*, as proof that his spark will never be extinguished: "The hills are peopled with all these past memories, enriching, encouraging. How could I possibly be bored? Oh, can I plead for the taking of the heritage in full; do not be a specialist, the mountains are worth so much more. Read and look, and go to the very end. It is all joy." Just like this book!

Ian Hamilton.

The Mont Blanc Massif - The Hundred Finest Routes: Gaston Rebuffat, (Baton Wicks, hardback, 239pp, ISBN 1-898573-69-7, £25.00)

I can still remember the first time I opened a copy of Rebuffat's *Hundred Finest Routes in the Mont Blanc Massif*, well over 25 years ago. I was a first-year student smitten by climbing, with a notion to visit the Alps that summer. Turning the pages of Rebuffat's book I immediately knew that Chamonix was the place to go. The photographs showed a new world of fairy-tale peaks and Rebuffat's evocative prose added an intoxicating romanticism. The sequence of routes, from simple climbs in the Aiguilles Rouges to the *Central Pillar of Freney*, put in place an alpine apprenticeship that I, and hundreds of others, have subsequently followed.

Thirty years after its publication, Rebuffat's route selection stands the test of time. Climate change means that some of the ice routes are best climbed in spring, winter or autumn, and one or two routes such as the *Bonatti Pillar* have suffered devastating rockfall, but what aspiring climber does not want to climb the *Walker Spur*, the South Face of the Fou or the North Face of Les Droites?

For many years the English translation of *The Mont Blanc Massif* has been out of print, but it has now been republished by Baton Wicks. Inevitably, it carries the Ken Wilson stamp of authority. The picture reproduction is superb and considerably better than the original. Small portrait pictures of key first ascensionists have been added at appropriate places in the text and an appendix, at the end of the book on new developments, gives modern grades and updated guidebook notes on many of the climbs.

All in all it's a superbly handsome book and cannot fail to inspire both the accomplished alpinist and new hand alike. Now, when am I going to get around to climbing the Peuterey Ridge....?

Simon Richardson.

Scotland's Mountain Ridges: Dan Bailey. (Cicerone, 253pp., full colour, ISBN 1-85284-469-8, £17-95).

This is a first-class production from the Cicerone Press concentrating on the experience of Scrambling, Mountaineering and Climbing on the best ridges in the Scottish Mountains in both summer and winter.

"Surely every mountaineer loves a good ridge? Threading a bristling gendarmed spine; inching around an extravagantly fluted cornice; balancing along a stone tightrope in the clouds – these are some of the finest things a climber can get up to..."

Not many would disagree with these sentiments expressed in the introduction to this lavishly illustrated book which covers territory ranging from the walking and scrambling of An Teallach to the vertical challenge of Eagle Ridge on Lochnagar. Here we have extracts from OS maps, diagrams and inspiring photographs which simply invite fireside planning, assuming that is, that you've either – not yet reached, never desired to reach or, more than likely, past, the stage that you want to scare your self to death every week-end. Although, thinking back, Eagle Ridge was not exactly a dawdle was it?

Gair Swanson

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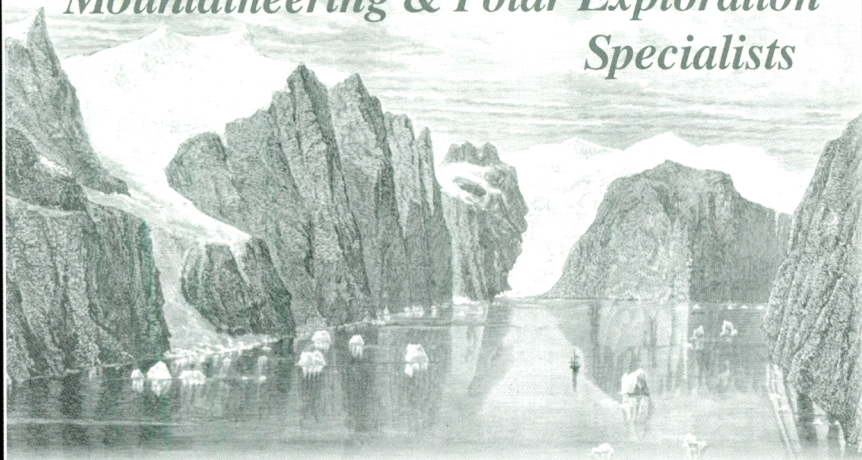
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