

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

The W. H. Murray Literary Prize.

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

The Rules:

1. There shall be a competition for the best entry on Scottish Mountaineering published in the *Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal*. The competition shall be called the 'W. H. Murray Literary Prize', hereafter called the 'Prize.'
2. The judging panel shall consist of, in the first instance, the following: The current Editor of the *SMC Journal*; The current President of the SMC; and two or three lay members, who may be drawn from the membership of the SMC. The lay members of the panel will sit for three years after which they will be replaced.
3. If, in the view of the panel, there is in any year no entries suitable for the Prize, then there shall be no award that year.
4. Entries shall be writing on the general theme of 'Scottish Mountaineering', and may be prose articles of up to approximately 5000 words in length, or shorter verse. Entries may be fictional.
5. Panel members may not enter for the competition during the period of their membership.
6. Entries must be of original, previously unpublished material. Entries should be submitted to the Editor of the *SMC Journal* before the end of January for consideration that year. Lengthy contributions are preferably word-processed and submitted either on 3.5" PC disk or sent via e-mail. (See Office Bearers page at end of this Journal for address etc.) Any contributor to the *SMC Journal* is entitled to exclude their material from consideration of the Prize and should so notify the Editor of this wish in advance.
7. The prize will be a cheque for the amount £250.
8. Contributors may make different submissions in different years.
9. The decision of the panel is final.
10. Any winning entry will be announced in the *SMC Journal* and will be published in the *SMC Journal* and on the SMC Web site. Thereafter, authors retain copyright.

The W. H. Murray Prize (2007)

THE winner of this year's W. H. Murray prize for his article *Bouldering With Ghosts* is first-time contributor John Watson.

Last year's winner, Guy Robertson, had this to say about the winning article: "This was quality mountaineering literature for the bouldering generation – beautifully crafted, vivid and inspirational. For me this piece, like all the best climbing writing, breaks down and even transcends ethical barriers, reminding us all, very neatly, why the people and the places are as vital as the rock itself."

President Paul Brian said: "Fantastic stuff, funny, stimulating and profound. The writer takes us through a wide range of emotional experiences in a very short article. The final passages are thought-provoking and poignant. Altogether a comprehensive, balanced and satisfying piece of writing."

John is clearly a writer out of the top drawer as evidenced by some of the reflective writing in what I would hesitate to call simply a guidebook *Stone Country – Bouldering in Scotland* which he published in 2005. There is a follow-up due out in October, *Stone Play – The Art of Bouldering* which I am sure will be of the same excellent standard.

John was run very close by Gavin Anderson with his tale of a fatal accident in the Northern Corries in the far off days of Jean's Hut. This, I feel, is probably of the 'Faction' genre in that the basis of it is undoubtedly true but the tale has been cleverly crafted to present much more than a simple prosaic account of events.

Ian Hamilton said: "A well-crafted and moving essay which any climber could relate to, the action taking place against a totally monochromatic background due to the combination of menace that is the Northern Corries in adverse conditions and the dank squalor of that least-loved of mountain bothies, Jean's Hut. Elation, sorrow and guilt are well balanced in this piece."

Paul Brian said: "Gripping and exciting writing with a serious purpose. Anyone who has been involved in a mountain tragedy will recognise the feelings experienced by the writer, though few of us have the skills to express them so clearly and with such sensitivity."

Other pieces which drew comment from the judges were Dennis Gray's excellent essay on Patey, *Last Of The Grand Old Masters* which only he could have written and which I feel is a welcome and insightful addition to the archives of the Club.

Past winner of this prize Peter Biggar, in his own inimitable style, gave us an excellent piece, *Untrodden Ways*, exploring what Ian Hamilton described as being "the age-old theme of the master/pupil relationship".

I'm afraid space precludes me from mentioning all the other fine entries that were considered. Congratulations again to John Watson and all who took part, and for all you other budding writers out there – there's always next year.

The winning article, as well as appearing in the Journal, will be published on the club website.

Charlie Orr.

SCOTTISH WINTER NOTES 2006-2007

By Simon Richardson

Northern Highlands:

A HIGH pressure over Scandinavia sucking cold winds in from the North, is every winter climber's dream and when it happens in the second week of February after a major snowfall, you know you're in for something special. The Northern Highlands is the place to be in such weather, and this year, as the temperature dropped and conditions came good, several teams raced up to the North-west to put some long, sought-after projects into action.

In the flurry of routes climbed during a frantic week, the standout climb was perhaps the easiest. A winter ascent of *Marathon Ridge* on Beinn Lair had been in many climbers' sights for years, but the 18km. approach had put off all suitors to date. The 3km. long North Face rises up to 400m. in height, and is said to be the largest cliff of schist in Britain. Scattered along its length are a mere 20 summer climbs and the massive approach has kept the number of winter visits to a handful. It's not just remoteness that keeps the crowds away however, because the determining factor is that good winter conditions are rare. The crag is seamed with wet gullies and covered in vegetation, but with a cliff base at only 400m. and lying close to the sea, it is rarely in winter condition.

Dave McGimpsey, Dave Bell, Andy Nisbet and Mark Edwards got the conditions spot on when they walked into the mountain and picked the plum objective of *Marathon Ridge*, which is one of the longest, and most pronounced features on the face: "The line and location are amazing", Dave McGimpsey told me afterwards. "There were some good pitches, especially the wee fissure pitch on the top tower, but there was quite a lot of standard turf bashing too. We thought it was about III,4 – a small number perhaps, but for all of us it was one of our most memorable winter days."

There is enough new route potential on Beinn Lair to keep future generations happy for a long time to come. Unaware of the *Marathon Ridge* ascent, Iain Small and I battled in against a fierce easterly wind the next day, and found *Monster Munch*, a sustained six-pitch VI,6 up the well-defined chimney-groove on the right side of Molar Buttress.

A little farther north, An Teallach saw some attention. Gareth Hughes and Viv Scott were first on the scene and climbed the obvious line of *Crashed Out* (VII,7) up the curving ramp and chimney on the upper part of the wall overlooking *Hayfork Gully* in Glas Tholl. A couple of days later, Nisbet and Farmer went into Toll an Lochain and filled in an obvious blank by climbing the face left of *Opposition Couloir*. The *Upper House* (VI,6) involved some bold climbing leading to a well-protected technical crux.

Nearby, James Edwards, Ollie Metherell and Roger Webb made an exploratory visit to the south peak of Beinn Dearg Mor. This large cliff, which was probably last climbed by Sang and Morrison in summer 1899, is cut by a prominent gully line that leads up to a huge square cave: "The cave was huge," Roger said. "It was big enough to hide a house, but we managed to find an escape on the right that led into a continuation gully. We called it *Filly's Cave Route*, and it's an excellent V,6 that is surprisingly more than 400m." Beinn Dearg Mor is a difficult mountain to approach, with several awkward river crossings, and the 15-hour day was

comparable to the Beinn Lair outings. This was particularly impressive as Edwards and Metherell had made the first ascent of *Finlay's Buttress* (V,7) on the Gleann Sqaib cliffs on Beinn Dearg the day before.

Ian Parnell had an energetic visit up north and came away with two technically demanding routes. He teamed up with Guy Robertson intending to climb the icy line up the wall left of *Die Riesenwand* on Beinn Bhan. After two very difficult and devious pitches up steep mixed ground and thin ice, they reached the point where the original route traverses back left. The wall above was very steep and poorly protected, so they finished up the original route. Their Direct Start weighs in at a hefty VIII,9 and could possibly be completed to the top in exceptionally icy conditions. Most climbers would be content to rest on their laurels after a route like that, but next day Parnell visited Sgurr an Lochain in Glen Shiel with local guru Martin Moran who pointed him up the series of very steep off-width cracks right of *Flying Gully*. The result was the two-pitch long *The Beast and The Beast* (VIII,8), which was described as unremittingly hard and strenuous, and requires a double rack of monster cams.

Apart from this superb week, North-west activity was relatively quiet. Other notable ascents include the true left edge of *Skyscraper Buttress* at VI,7 by Guy Robertson and Pete Benson, and *Once Bitten, Twice Shy* (VI,6) a right-hand line up the buttress left of *Flying Gully* on Sgurr an Lochain in Glen Shiel by Martin Moran and Andy Nisbet. Otherwise it was the quartzite cliffs of Beinn Eighe that provided most of the action with the Nisbet/McGimpsey team prominent with three new routes, although pride of place went to the first winter ascent of *Olympus* (VII,8) on the Eastern Ramparts by Blair Fyffe and Martin Moran.

BMC International Winter Meet:

The winter season stepped into top gear during the International Winter Meet in February. These bi-annual meets have become established dates in the world mountaineering calendar. This year, 45 international guests from 22 countries teamed up with 30 UK hosts for six days of winter climbing based at Glenmore Lodge. Unfortunately, a major thaw set in a few days before the event began, and winter climbing conditions for the first two days were close to non-existent. Apologetic hosts led bewildered guests up wet rock in the Northern Corries and soggy ice on Ben Nevis, but fortunately, and against all the odds, the weather cooled down at the end of the second day and winter climbing was back on the agenda.

Most teams went to Ben Nevis on Day 3 and experienced crisp snow and ice on the classic routes and frosted rock on the mixed routes in Coire na Ciste. Es Tressider and Rok Zalokar from Slovenia made the second ascent of *Hobgoblin* (VI,7) on Number Three Gully Buttress, and added the more direct Rok Finish (VII,7) up the right edge of the upper wall. Just around the corner, Ian Parnell and Kristoffer Szilas from Denmark made the third ascent of *Babylon* (VII,8), swiftly followed by Freddie Wilkinson and Jon Varco from the US. Canadian mixed climbing ace, Sean Isaac, and I visited Braeriach, another sure-fire venue in lean conditions, where we found a good V,6 mixed route up the buttress between *The Waster* and *The Wanderer* in Corrie of the Chokestone Gully. The route was christened *Slovenian Death Water* after the potent brew that was being passed around the bar later that night.

It snowed heavily overnight, and next morning an Avalanche Category 5 warning

was in place. Most people were happy to have an easier day nursing tired legs and hangovers, although a couple of teams succeeded on routes in Coire an t-Sneachda. The weather was kinder the following day, and many parties climbed in the Northern Corries, but the stage was set for a superb final day with a good weather forecast and plunging temperatures.

Again Ben Nevis was the venue of choice, and Coire na Ciste saw one of the most impressive displays of mixed climbing ever seen in Scotland. The pace was breathtaking. Steve Ashworth and Nils Nielsen from Norway climbed the 1990s test-piece *Darth Vader* (VII,8), followed by *The Sorcerer* (VII,8), a new line up the front face of the Lost The Place Buttress, before racing up *Thompson's Route* (IV,4) to warm down! Fellow Norwegian Bjorn Artun and Tim Blakemore had a similarly impressive day with *Albatross* (VI,5), one of the most prized routes on Indicator Wall, followed by *Darth Vader*. Nearby, Stu McAleese and Tomaz Jakofcic from Slovenia climbed *Cornucopia* (VII,9), and Es Tressider and Paul Sab from Germany made an ascent of *Stringfellow* (VI,6).

Two big ascents took place on Number Three Gully Buttress. Ian Parnell and Sean Isaac climbed a line based on the summer HVS *Last Stand*, which takes the blunt arête between *Knuckleduster* and *Sioux Wall*. Parnell has made this part of Nevis his own after the second ascent of *Arthur* a couple of seasons ago and the first winter ascent of *Sioux Wall* last year. This knowledge proved vital in putting together the intricate line of *Curly's Arête* (VIII,8). Just to the right, Freddie Wilkinson and Rok Zalokar made the third ascent of *Sioux Wall* (VIII,8) taking in the final difficult pitch added by Andy Turner on the second ascent, last January.

Next door, Viv Scott and Domagoj Bojko from Croatia climbed the hanging chimney just left of the icicle of *South Sea Bubble*. The route starts up the lower ramp of *South Sea Bubble* and continues up a hidden slot to reach the upper snow funnel: "It's the hardest thing I've ever led," Viv said. "The protection was really poor and holds kept snapping under my feet but the position was really exciting!" *Salva Mea* (VIII,8) is a worthy addition to the half-dozen mixed test-pieces that lie at the left end of Creag Coire na Ciste.

Across on The Comb, Dave MacLeod and Hiroyoshi Manome and Katsutaka Yokoyama from Japan climbed *Isami* (VIII,8), the conspicuous hanging groove to the left of *The Good Groove*. This had been stared at longingly by several teams over the years waiting for the requisite amount of ice, but MacLeod solved this problem by climbing it as a thin mixed climb. Also on The Comb, Toby Keep and Kristoffer Szilas made the second ascent of *Lost Souls* (VI,6) and added a new Direct Finish (VII,7), which takes the prominent slot avoided by the original route.

Three new Scottish Grade VIIIs climbed the same day in the same corrie unprecedented, and says everything for the immaculate mixed climbing conditions that day, and the enthusiasm and skill of the guests and hosts. It was especially pleasing that the Scottish mountains put on such a good show on the final day of the meet, and everyone went home with huge smiles: "Mixed conditions on the Ben were outstanding," Ian Parnell enthused afterwards. "They were perhaps the best I've seen. The BMC winter meet was a superb advert for the chase, both frustrating and rewarding, for the fickle and elusive proper Scottish conditions."

Cairngorms:

The most difficult ascent of the season took place in early March when Guy Robertson and Rich Cross made the first winter ascent of *The Scent* (IX,9) on

Beinn a' Bhuid. The pair had tried this summer HVS two weeks previously but failed at the base of the 'awkward ramp' mentioned in the guidebook, and gingerly abseiled off a number of poorly equalised pieces.

Robertson said: "On the second attempt I sorted my rope work out a bit better. I simply clipped the poor belay as a runner. As predicted, the ramp was indeed hard – very precarious, blind and rounded seams – and it didn't yield any pro at all for maybe 20ft. or so, when I placed a hook in some turf. I'm not really one for big grades, but this is certainly among the most committing bits of climbing I've done. In retrospect it was pretty difficult to justify, so it's well protected crack lines for me from now on! It's a bit of a shame about the boldness in some ways as it's genuinely a really nice, cunning line up an impressive buttress in a wonderful setting."

The most impressive new addition in the Northern Cairngorms was *Rumpeltstiltskin* (VII,8) by Iain Small and Andy Turner. This sustained three-pitch outing cuts across *Poison Dwarf* on Carn Etchachan, and has a spectacular and difficult middle pitch. Next door on the Shelter Stone, James Edwards and Paul Warnock found *Lectern* (VII,8), the steep corner on the left side of *Pinnacle Gully*.

Some good pioneering activity took place deeper in the Cairngorms. Guy Robertson and Es Tressider made a fruitful trip into Coire na Ciche on Beinn a' Bhuid where they made a winter ascent of *Hot Toddy*. Guy had previously climbed the lower part of the route with Jason Currie before finding an easier finish, but this time he returned to make a complete ascent of the summer line at VII,8. Pete Benson and Ross Hewitt were also in the corrie that day making the second ascent of *The Watchtower* (VI,6), the imposing buttress above *Twisting Gully*.

The remote Coire Sputan Dearg on Ben Macdui saw a number of visits and several new routes were climbed. Roger Webb and I probably got the pick of the bunch with first ascents of *Rough Diamond* (V,7) the line of steep strenuous cracks on the left end of Grey Man's Crag, and *Little Gem* (V,6), the well-defined V-shaped buttress nestling between the branches of Y Gully. In late February, Andy Nisbet and Mark Edwards took advantage of icy conditions on the high cliffs, with the first ascent of *East of Eden* (VI,5) in Coire Bhrochain on Braeriach. This takes a groove-line midway between *West Wall Route* and the obvious chimney line taken by *The Lampie*. Nisbet also climbed *Big Foot* (V,5) with Dave McGimpsey, which takes the rib right of *The White Hotel* in Corrie of the Chokestone Gully.

Lochnagar also saw some good, early-season activity, although the mountain failed to catch much snow through the season, and conditions were generally lean. Es Tressider and Viv Scott had a great find on the headwall of Eagle Buttress.

Es said: "We went to repeat *Where Eagles Dare*, but we ended up doing the right arête of the wall instead, as it looked superb. It was great climbing, quite funky and hard to figure out at first, with a burly torque flake farther up"

State of Independence (VII,8) is an excellent addition to this exposed part of the mountain that comes into condition rapidly after a north-westerly blast. In the Southern Sector, James Edwards and I climbed *Ghost Dance* (V,6), the pillar at the left end of *The Cathedral* and *Starlight and Storm* (V,5) up right edge of *The Sentinel*.

Central Highlands:

There were three superb additions to the Central Highlands. High up on Bidean's Church Door Buttress, Iain Small and Blair Fyffe found the superb *Knight's Templar* (VII,8), which takes the left side of the prow of *Dark Mass* and finishes directly up the headwall.

Iain said: "Conditions were excellent. The cracks were very icy and there were a couple of really steep sections. My arms were still aching three days afterwards." Across on Stob Coire an Laoigh, Ed Edwards, Dave McGimpsey and Andy Nisbet climbed the sensationally steep *Some Like it Hot* (VII,7). This takes the right-facing corner in the steep wall between *Jammy Dodger* and *Serve Chilled* and is similar in standard and quality to *Central Grooves* in Stob Coire nan Lochain. A few weeks later, Nisbet and Edwards returned to add *White Heat* (VI,7) which takes the corner right of *Some Like it Hot* before being forced onto the exposed right arête.

A winter ascent of *Stalking Horse* on Raw Egg Buttress on Aonach Beag has been on climbers' lists for some time. I tried the line 15 years ago with Roger Everett, but we made little progress, and were completely baffled by the off-width entry crack and fazed by the overhangs looming above. Rich Cross climbed the off-width pitch several years ago but finished up *Salmonella*, and the complete ascent fell in January to Andy Turner and Dave Hollinger who graded it a modest VI,7. Dave said: "The wide crack proved to be the crux, but those adept in successive can-opener moves should not find it too taxing."

Ben Nevis:

The continuous run of storms in early January was good news for Ben Nevis. As soon as the temperatures dropped, the Ben started oozing ice and many of the mountain's great climbs came into outstanding condition. On the Little Brenva Face, Iain Small and I climbed the broad rib between *Slalom* and *Frostbite* and then continued up the very steep headwall to the right of the icefall of *Super G*. We were expecting difficult mixed climbing, but instead we found the wall was covered in a layer of squeaky plastic ice. The next day it thawed, and *Wall of the Winds* (VI,5) collapsed as quickly as it had appeared.

Big news on the Ben was the first winter ascent of *The Knuckleduster* on the front face of Number Three Gully Buttress. This summer HVS was first climbed by Jimmy Marshall and his brother, Ronnie, in 1966, and had been admired by climbers for several years as a futuristic winter possibility. It came a step nearer to reality when Ian Parnell and Ollie Metherell made the first winter ascent of the nearby *Sioux Wall* (VIII,8) last season. The *Knuckleduster* was clearly going to be a harder proposition, so it was no surprise when it was snapped up by Steve Ashworth and Blair Fyffe. Ashworth is well known for his series of very difficult Lake District routes and Fyffe has had an excellent season with a string of good new routes from Glen Coe to the North-west. They graded the route VIII,9 and Ashworth said it was harder than *Unicorn* in Glen Coe. A few weeks later, Dave MacLeod and visiting US climber, Alicia Hudelson, made the first winter ascent of *Steam Train* at VI,7, a steep HVS on North-East Buttress that has seen very few summer ascents.

In late March, a high-pressure system centred over Scandinavia sucking in cool easterly winds. This is the weather scenario that ice climbers drool over, because the clear skies and frosty nights coupled with warm daytime temperatures are

perfect for building ice on the higher Ben Nevis routes. Teams were quick to take advantage of the superb conditions with ascents of *Sickle*, *Orion Direct* and *Astral Highway*. It was quickly realised that the ice conditions were very special indeed, and some of the Ben's most highly prized thin face routes such as *Riders on the Storm* on Indicator Wall and *The Great Glen* on Gardyloo Buttress saw ascents. The quality of the soft plastic ice was fantastic, with first time placements that gripped axe picks and front points like glue.

Andy Nisbet and Ed Edwards were first on the spot to take advantage of the new route potential with the first ascent of *Unleashed* (VII,6), the steep undercut ice smear to the left of *Vulture* on Number Three Gully Buttress. A little to the right, Roger Webb and I climbed *Wall Street* (VII,7), the ramp and steep mixed groove right of *South Sea Bubble* leading to a hanging ice tongue.

The next day the action centred on Indicator Wall when Iain Small and Blair Fyffe made a very early repeat of the much-prized *Stormy Petrel* (VII,6), taking a more direct variation up a thinly iced groove in the centre of the route. Before setting off, Fyffe tipped off Ian Parnell and Viv Scott that there was a direct start to his route *The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner* still waiting to be done. Parnell quickly despatched this difficult VII,7 variation that avoided the cunning detour on the original line, and then continued up the original line to make the second ascent. Next day, Andy Benson, Rich Cross and Dave Hollinger repeated Parnell and Scott's direct line and confirmed its superb quality. With three difficult pitches straight up the centre of the wall this is one of the great modern mixed climbs on the mountain. The following day, fresh from his success on *Stormy Petrell*, Iain Small teamed up with me to climb the left rib of *Albatross. Arctic Tern* (VII,5) starts just left of *Albatross*, passes the smooth slab of *Fascist Groove* before climbing a spectacular tiered ramp system and finishing up the upper rib. Small compared it in difficulty to *Stormy Petrell* but said it was not as sustained. It was repeated two days later by Graeme Ettle, Pete MacPherson and Jonathan Preston.

Iain and I visited Indicator Wall again on Sunday, April 1, where we climbed *Ship of Fools* (VIII,7), the pillar between *Riders on the Storm* and *Albatross*. After the introductory rib, this takes the very narrow sinuous groove right of *Riders* to bypass the huge roof in the lower section of the pillar. It then continues up the crest of the pillar via difficult mixed to finish up the vertical ice arête left of the exit gully of *Le Nid d'Aigle*. Iain's lead of the second pitch pulling through overlapping slabs on discontinuous hollow one centimetre-thick ice was one of the finest leads I have witnessed. The pitch collapsed behind me as I climbed it, so this one will have to wait for another season with exceptional ice conditions high on the Ben to see a repeat.

SUMMER NOTES – 2006

By Dave Cuthbertson

LOOKING back over the rock climbing year, and given the generally good weather, there's not a great deal to report where the mountains are concerned. This neglect of the higher crags has been much talked about in recent years (a common tale elsewhere in the UK), and to some extent does concern my prickly little mind.

The consequences are clear to see, dirty climbs being a most common complaint, though, I personally feel this is a reflection of a softer, cleaner society. And there's also a general feeling of quietude in areas where one might have queued to climb in the 1970s and 1980s. Much more worrying is a shift in attitude. A – why bother, when you can go to the wall, go bouldering, or take a cheap flight to sun-scorched venues abroad – approach. Diminishing dirt thresholds aside, my worry is that attitudes without soul or passion will evolve, which may affect climbing in different ways. There have already been attempts to control adventure in the outdoors, the consequences of which could be disastrous, indiscriminate bolting being just one example. I might have been a cog in a wheel that set this whole thing in motion, but at least I care about our heritage. Time will tell. I do feel it's a shame because it never ceases to amaze me just how good, how utterly unique and how rich an experience, climbing on many of the Scottish mountain crags can be.

In a recent conversation with the well-known Lakes activist, Dave Birkett (who incidentally has been visiting the Scottish crags for some years), Dave said that he was completely gob-smacked by a recent trip to Creag an Dubh Loch. This was his first visit. He climbed *The Ascent of Man* (E5) and although it was a little bit dirty, he thought it was brilliant and added that with all the recent developments taking place in the Scottish Highlands there's nearly always somewhere to go if the weather is unsettled.

Anyway enough ranting for now. Rather than detail every event that's taken place over the year, this report more or less highlights a selection of the best and most interesting climbs and achievements. As ever, more details of these and other Scottish climbs can be found in the *New Climbs* section of this Journal. My apologies if I've omitted your finest hour.

THE CAIRNGORMS:

In typically Pateyesque fashion, Julian Lines has contributed a cluster of new routes on the remote crags of Ben MacDui's Coire Sputan Dearg. Julian couldn't have found a more remote venue to court some death-defying experiences, but one has to praise his individualistic sense of adventure – something of a novelty amid today's fashion-conscious trends. To the left of *Sundance* there is a green east-facing slab. This provided a triptych of single pitches, all of which were climbed on-sight and described as worthwhile solos! *Rooibos* (E5 6b) takes a line of blind runnels up the left edge and is said to be bold and absorbing. *Echinacea* (E4 6a/b) challenges the centre of the slab with some 'thin' moves and a bold upper section, while the right-hand line, *Ginseng* (E4 6c) required 'heinous scratching' to reach the sanctuary of a diagonal crease and thus completing an unfinished project from 10 years ago. Julian's unquestionable slab-climbing ability would suggest that these climbs come complete with a government health warning. The centre of the lower tier is dominated by an impressive arête which presented something of a dilemma for Jules who was determined to climb the line on-sight. After two previous attempts, he even considered returning in winter when the evil

landing would at least be buried under snow. But in the end he was resigned to a brief inspection on abseil. *Ataraxia* (E6 6a/b) was the outcome and described by Jules as, “Bold but technically straight-forward”. On Terminal Buttress (appropriately named on this occasion) *Romontado* (E6 6a) accepts the ‘stunning’ challenge of the blind crack in the wall left of *Chute*. Climbed on-sight and solo the ascent is described as, “ultra serious and only for those with a death wish”. Readers will be pleased to know that Jules has not been sectioned, is alive and well and was last seen enjoying a solitary existence on a North Sea oil rig. On the summit tor of Beinn Mheadhoin *Silkworm* (E3 5c) follows an obvious quartz seam on the West Face while *Classic Crack* (HVS 5a) takes the superb and obvious crackline. Both routes were soloed by Julian.

Every now and then a new kid on the block enters into the Scottish climbing arena. While we generally want to be supportive and err on the side of giving benefit of the doubt, Malcolm Kent’s achievements for this year, not just in Scotland but globally, are almost beyond belief. One of his more moderate claims is an ascent of *Origin of The Species* on the Dubh Loch’s superb Central Gully Wall. This would make the third known ascent, Julian Lines having made the second a few years ago.

Shelter Stone Crag:

Defenders of the Faith – Ian Small and Tess Fryer, climbed an interesting new line running the full height of *The Bastion*. The route weaves around *The Needle*, sourcing some new pitches on the way but savours its best for the final headwall, which climbs thin cracks and the characteristic pink streak right of *The Needle*. Ian had attempted the line previously but the bold nature of the climbing and dirty rock got the better of him on that occasion. Climbing on-sight Ian returned and armed with an array of small cams, he successfully completed the exposed and intricate top wall to give *The Camel* (E5 6a).

Braeriach:

The unseasonably warm autumn found Andy Nisbet and Jonathan Preston high up on Garbh Choire Dhaidh where they made the first ascent of *Wombat* (VS). The same team also climbed *Koala* (an existing VS) which they thought to be excellent.

Coire an t’Sneachda:

On the Mess of Potage, Nisbet with Keith Haldane added *Crackpot* (S), which is said to be a fine route thanks to the cleansing process of numerous winter ascents. On Aladdin’s Buttress, Nisbet and Preston discovered *Witchcraft* (E2 5b), the result of having inadvertently abseiled the line while descending from *Magic Crack*. Not untypical for these parts, they very narrowly beat Ian Peter and Alan Fyffe who also had designs on the same route.

Coire an Lochain:

Cardiac Arête (HVS) is a worthy addition to Number 1 Buttress. Having spotted the line some years ago, Nisbet remembered that it wasn’t until he received a route description for the new winter climb, *Open Heart*, that he realised that there was a way round a line of baffling overhangs guarding the exit to the arête.

NORTHERN HIGHLANDS NORTH:

Most activity has been in the development of the coastal fringes rather than in the mountains. In the far north at Whiten Head, Ross Jones and Rob Reginski added

a companion to the Original Route on Stac Thormaid with *Run-Diomhair* (HVS 4c). This starts up a chimney to the left of the seaward face and involves some bold climbing. Jones reports that despite the original route remaining unreported, it is a fine stack deserving more ascents given its easy access, situation and climbing. Apparently, Mick Tighe and party climbed it in 1993 which is thought to have been the second ascent. Sounds like a must-do for anyone embarking on a Scottish sea stack quest.

At Melvich, Lady Bighthouse Rock, Jones this time with Matt Dent climbed a fine 25m. precariously perched stack with *When the Big Lady Sings* (HVS 4c). This starts at a corner on the east face before gaining the landward (south) face to access the top. An abseil followed by a 15m. swim is required on the approach. Jones this time alternating company with John Sanders and Dent accounts for a cluster of new routes at Red Point (reference SMC Northern Highlands North guidebook, p.345), with grades ranging between VDiff and E1.

Tarbert Sea Cliffs:

Steve Kennedy and Bob Hamilton (occasionally joined by Dave McGimpsey and Andy MacDonald) have revisited the gneiss sea cliffs near Scourie. At the Balmy Slabs area – *Violator* (E1 5b) provides a sustained route on the steep wall left of *The Boardmaster* (a steep and well protected E2 (from 2005) which is said to be superb. *Captain Hook* (HVS 4c) – the slab forming the left wall of the deep chimney of *Black Tidings*. Dolphin Crag – *Inshallah* (E1 5b) takes a line up the slabs directly below a ‘suicidal downward pointing flake’, stepping gingerly onto it before the finish (attempts to remove the flake on abseil were unsuccessful and it is perhaps more solid than was initially thought). *Last Train to Somerville* (E1 5b) takes the slab mid-way between *Meal for a Seal* and *Central Crack*, while *Sneak Preview* (E1 5b) climbs through the jagged overlap left of the former with a thin slab to finish and finally *Solitary Man* (E1 5b) takes a thin crack through a bulge to slab left of *Sneak Preview*.

Rhue:

Having recently entered into the realms of becoming one of the ‘older guard’, Ian Taylor would appear to have rediscovered hard (or should it be harder, as Ian is no slouch on the rock), with the advent of head-pointing, and why not? Adopting this approach Ian dispensed with a fine new E6 called *Kanga Rhue* (E6 6b) and competing with Rab Anderson for the most cringe worthy route names. This takes the wall and crack to the left of *Rhue Mania*. The latter was climbed with Tess Fryer at E4 6a and follows the steep sculpted wall round to the left of *Cats Whisker*.

Julian Lines added a little gem of a deep water solo by climbing a direct on Tim Rankin’s, *How Now Brown Prow* (E2), with spectacular moves through the jutting prow to give *Gung Ho* at E4 5c/6a.

Ardmair:

On Monster Buttress, Ian and Tess dispensed with *Soor Plums* (E5 6a) which follows the thin crack and technical right arête of *Summer Isles City*. Another aspiring oldie, Andy Cunningham has also embraced modern trends to complete a long-term project left of Big Foot at E5 6a.

Reiff:**Stone Pig Cliff**

Ian Small and Tess Fyer have added a new line to the left end of this steep wall. Unnamed as yet, the route is E5 6a and more than 20m. long which is pretty big by Reiff standards. The upper wall provides the crux and is described by Ian as a bit 'goey' and run-out but safe.

Rockers Cliff

Ian Small and Ian Taylor have repeated two of Gary Latter's routes here. *Cullach* and *Headlong* (both graded E4 in the guidebook but one was supposedly E5). Small remarked that the E4 (which ever one that is) was 'pokey and worrying', while Taylor who climbed the E5 thought it to be good with better protection. Both of these are thought to be second ascents.

In his quest to find a DWS nirvana, Julian Lines has been putting his recently acquired inflatable dingy to good use, exploring the Rubha Coigeach peninsula. The discovery of the Baby Tiapan Wall has yielded more than a dozen lines – half of which are current projects. The remainder are in the French 6b to 6c category and should be within the grasp of many, assuming you can cope with the long and rough approach. This superb wall (which has been known about for some time) is 15m. high and overhangs by 20°. Aspiring deep water soloists will be pleased to learn that the main difficulties of the routes centre round the lower portion. All the climbs have been nicely documented for Mike Robertson's forth coming DWS guide to the UK (due out later this year). To provide a flavour, here are a couple of descriptions.

Land of Milk and Honey (6b, 30m) – the perfect traverse is tackled with a sequence of jams and stamina. Can be reversed... amazing. *Cyber Pimp*, (6c, 15m.) The fine crackline runs out of a shield, forge past this with vigour, take a rest under the roof and a choice of finishes which includes jumping if it tickles your fancy.

NORTHERN HIGHLANDS CENTRAL:**Beinn Eighe – Far East Buttress**

Body Swerve (90m, E4 4c,6a,5b), starts up *Body Heat* before taking to the wall on the right with some bold climbing and was the work of Ian Taylor and Tess Fryer.

Rubha Reidh

Ross Jones and Matt Dent climbed A'Staca Beag with *Silent Wisdom* (HVS 5a) – a short route on the arch of the landward face, while the south face of A'Staca Eilean an Air, yielded a 15m. Hard Severe 4a requiring a simultaneous abseil for descent.

Caithness

Despite nearing maturity the superb cliffs of Latheronwheel and Mid Clyth continue to yield routes of surprising quality at a reasonable grade (Hard Severe to E2), courtesy of Ross Jones and John Sanders. And as ever, locals, Raymond Wallace and Rob Christie have been busy exploring previously untouched stretches of coastline in this area. These two venues together with Occumster and Sarclet offer some of the best low-to-mid grade one pitch climbs, as good as any in Scotland. Each has its own distinct character and style with Latheronwheel being a popular VS venue. For those interested there is also potential for quality, hard new routes

in this area. In the Latheronwheel area, Cleit Mor (40m, HVS) is the largest of three stacks and was climbed by Jones via its south face in two pitches of 4c. No evidence was found of a previous ascent though the local farmer had witnessed repeats of Cleit Beag and Cleit Ruadh which were previously climbed by Mick Fowler and party in 1989.

Glen Nevis

On Whale Rock, Dave MacLeod's super crimpfest, *Hold Fast* has been repeated by Dave Birkett, though only after side runners were placed in adjacent routes. The grade of E9 7a reflects the more or less protectionless lead required. But on Birkett's ascent a hold broke and he subsequently fell onto the runners which cushioned his fall, preventing a deck-out. While this is a great effort on Birkett's behalf, the question of side runners used in outcrop climbing has always been a contentious issue. It will be interesting to know a projected grade that includes the 'baby bounce'.

Dumbarton Rock

Alan Cassidy reports of a sport-style ascent of *Requiem*, which brings the known total to six (the second, third, fourth and fifth ascents going to John Dunne, Paul Laughlan, Dave MacLeod and Spider MacKenzie). Alan returned to lead the route placing the gear and is probably the first climber to do so.

Quad Rocks

Kevin Shields has been on a mission here adding another two technical problems with *Point Proven* (E3 6b) and *The Calling* (E2 6b). Both of these were worked then soloed.

SKYE:

The Cullin

On The Bhastair Tooth, Es Tresidder and Blair Fyffe have climbed a logical direct start and finish to *Rainbow Warrior* to produce a much-improved superb pitch at E4 6a. Julian Lines confirms his on-sight solo link-up on the East Buttress of Coire Laggan at E3 5c,5b. The route named *Diura* is said to offer a combination of the best climbing on the crag.

Marsco: South West Buttress

Bob Hamilton and Steve Kennedy have climbed a fine and well protected prominent crackline to give *The Yellow Jersey* (E1 5a) – but aren't all Bob and Steve's routes E1.

LEWIS:

In recent years it would be fair to say that rock climbing on Lewis and Harris has been overshadowed by the Pabbay and Mingulay boom. But for me the former has always been my preferred choice. While there's no doubting the quality and grandeur of climbing in these islands, the beauty of Lewis and Harris is the combination of both mountain and sea cliff. When the weather is bad there's usually somewhere to go, and without the additional Robinson Crusoe syndrome of being marooned on a small island.

A new Skye and Hebrides guidebook in the pipeline has rekindled a pulse of activity among some Lewis aficionados with a number of different groups contributing to the sea cliffs of the west coast. Sadly, it would appear that the

magnificent Sron Ulladale and Creag Dubh Dibadale remain virtually neglected. The Sron is remarkable and undoubtedly one of the UK's finest crags. An area transformed by Crispin Waddy and friends in the 1990s. Though Crispin climbed many of the best remaining lines, there is still potential for high quality, challenging new routes.

Uig Sea Cliffs

Visitors, but no strangers to the Scottish scene, Paul Donnithorne and Emma Alsford have been developing an area north of The Painted Wall called Torasgeo. Half-a-dozen routes (up to three pitches in length) between HVS and E3 have been climbed. These include a four and three star E1 and a three star E3. An Aberdonian team also got in on the action repeating routes and adding a few of their own. Rob Durren and party repeated Garthwaite and Anderson's *Puffing Crack* (E4 6a) confirming its grade and superb quality. Rab and Chris Anderson as usual spent their annual holiday on Lewis and despite mixed weather, still managed to come away with a respectable quarry of 20 first ascents. With the new guidebook in the making however, Rab – surprise, surprise is reluctant to disclose the whereabouts of his new venues until all the deeds are done. Meanwhile, Mick Tighe continues to explore stretches of untouched coastline, some of it apparently of high quality but remains as elusive as ever.

Beannan a Deas

Inland from the Uig area on the south side of this hill, Kevin Neil and Adam Van Lon Lopik have discovered a small, quick drying venue of quality gneiss. The pair climbed half-a-dozen lines ranging between VS and E3 with *Commitment* at E3 5c getting four stars. Though missing out on the discovery of this crag, Rab Anderson was quick in with a second ascent of *Commitment* (suggesting E2) and adding a couple of routes of his own.

THE BARRA ISLES:

Mingulay and Pabbay have potentially received more attention than just about any other crag in Scotland (especially in areas at E2 and above). While the majority of visitors are content to repeat existing climbs, new route activists are on the whole very guarded and secretive regarding their projects. Keeping abreast of new developments therefore is no easy task. Kevin Howett, for example, accounts for 350 new routes on these islands out of a possible 800. Annoyingly, these haven't been officially written up outwith Kev's little black book. So don't be too disappointed if your prized first ascent has already been climbed. But I have my spies Mr Howett. Two Pabbay fishermen just happen to enjoy the occasional climbing holiday with guides in the Alps – it's a small world. But fisherman certainly know these cliff-girt islands. They have to because they drop lobster pots next to them and occasionally they see climbers, such as those noted on the cliffs of Barra – all food for thought.

Pabbay

On The Banded Wall (formerly Banded Geo) Gary Latter and Andy Lole have discovered around eight climbs between VS and E2. The majority of these are located farther south beyond a broken sector where a prominent wide ledge situated at half-height divides a fine, smooth lower wall. Of those that stand out, *Posture Jedi* (E2 5c) and *Run Dafti Run* are said to be excellent. On the South Face, Carl Pulley and Mike Mortimer added three new routes between HVS and E2, and

another by Gary Latter. I'll refrain from highlighting all the various route names which were inspired by a certain young Edinburgh lady, also on Pabbay on a climbing holiday. *Off Wid Emily's Bikini* (E2 5b) sets the scene and is obviously a reference to an off-width chimney up which the climb finishes.

MINGULAY:

Guersay Mor – Cobweb Wall

Situated towards the south east end of the Undercut Wall, Latter and Lole unravelled *Bikini Dreams* (E3 5c,5c,4a). This is a fine addition and follows a line of flakes and grooves via a pegmatite ramp before tackling the upper wall directly.

SANDRAY:

There has been a number of hush-hush trips to this island that date back to the late 1990s. The usual suspects, Grahame Little and Kev Howett were at the forefront of those early developments, and a then young up-and-coming Gordon Lennox. Last year, Lennox and Craig Adam added several fine routes to Creag Mhor – a long cliff of 30m. in height and located on the west side of the south west tip of the island. Climbs range between E1 and E6, but this is really a place for those operating at E3 and above. The most outstanding venture by this pair in 2005 is a four star, wildly steep and aptly named route called *Orang-utan* (E6 5b,6b,5c). But another 10 or so routes were added and at least four of these are three star E4s and 5s. This year saw two teams comprising Ian Small and Tess Fyer, and Alastair Robertson and Johnny Clark who added several routes to La Louvre. La Louvre is one of three small cliffs known as The Galleries, the others are fittingly named The Burrell and Tate. A feature of the climbing here is their quality which has been described as perfect.

La Louvre

Pointillist (E3 5c) takes the line of a discontinuous crack to the left of *First Impressions* while *Art for Arts Sake* (E4 6a) follows a thin crack right of *Dot to Dot*. *Crazy Horse* (E5 6a) – the arête left of *Tormented Textures* via some highly sculpted rock. *Line of Beauty* (E4 6a) is a rising traverse starting at the base of Pointillist and climbing via a quartz blotch, crossing *Tormented Textures* and described as gorgeous.

The Burrell

Life Begins... (E5 6a,6a) is a counter diagonal to *Pastiche*, starting on a sea level ledge below the leftmost black groove and finishing up a hanging corner of right edge. The route has been described as a magnificent line with committing hard moves on the first pitch.

A contender for one of the best routes of the season in the Hebrides goes to Steve Crow and Karin Magog's *K&S Special* (formerly Firewall) on Creag Dearg Mingulay. The renaming of the climb is a reflection of their shared experiences which started with *The Scream* (E7 6b) back in 2000. But Steve always had designs on a new line in this area and promised himself that he would return to the fray. After a brief inspection on abseil, Steve found himself powering out some 30m. up the line. In a last ditch attempt to keep things clean he started reversing to the sanctuary of the belay but unfortunately failed to make it by one move. Exhausted he handed over the lead to Karin who, climbing on Steve's beta alone, was able to top out. It was a great effort. However, there was a nagging formality to address

and, of course, Steve wanted to lead the route placing all the gear. Two days later he did just that and the climb was done. A monster 58m. pitch with a 5c mantle to top it all off. The climb is E6 6a and well protected, although a bit of scouring to find placements is required. Steve regards the climb as one that he is most proud of.

ORKNEY:

Yesnaby

Tim Rankin and Neil Morrison have picked up the pieces from last year and added yet another cluster of high-quality climbs to this small, but attractive venue. It's worth noting that not all the climbs in this area are in the upper echelons and grades vary between E1 and E6, with some even easier climbs nearby. *The Orkney Session* (E5 6b) takes the fine wall between *Ebb Tide* and *Gardylloo Gold* and was climbed on-sight with Tim in the lead. *Dragonhead* (E6 6b) has been described by Tim as 'stunning' and among the very best of its type and grade in the country. The climb links cracks in the wall left of *Skullsplitter Groove* and required a wee bit of practise before it was lead. *Lost in the Desert* (E1 5b) is the result of a failed attempt on the fine crack in the pillar of *One Winter's Day*, up which this route finishes. *Peedi Breeks* (E4 6b) is a short but tough excursion with fiddly pro on the wall between *Up Tae High Doh* and *The Cog*.

For those of you unfamiliar to this part of Orkney, Yesnaby is home to a very fine sea stack graded E1 (by the normal route), and also features a Fowler creation (E3 6a) which follows a fine crack on the seaward face. This is a lovely stretch of coastline with potential for some interesting new climbs and well worth a visit, either in its own right or in combination with a trip to The Old Man of Hoy or Rora Head.

SHETLAND:

Rock climbing in the Shetlands is rapidly becoming a must-do alternative to the Barra Isles and is easier to get to (by air at least). There is a good-grade spread and the climbs of Esha Ness are considered to be of truly outstanding quality, ranking with the best anywhere in the UK according to Gary Latter. Gary said that climbing on Esha Ness and Da Grind o' Da Navir alone is enough to justify the considerable expense in getting there. There are also numerous outlying islands that offer plenty of alternative sea cliff and stack adventure. The island of Fowla for example with its huge red sandstone walls which are as high as any in Britain.

In late May, early June, Ross Jones enjoyed a productive fortnight completing 40 new routes. Of adventurous slant, Ross covered a lot of ground, exploring a variety of different venues. On Saint Ninian's Isle and climbing with Simon Calvin, he christened Loose Head Stack with *The Cheesegrater* (VS 4b). On the Prophecy Wall of the Faither headland he climbed *The Oracle* with John Sanders. This takes the left arête by some bold initial moves. *The Faither Prophecy* (E1 5b) is said to be outstanding and follows a slanting line of weakness through hanging roofs up the wall. Ross and friends account for several more routes in the immediate area. The climbs of Lunning Head located at Lunnastin have been described as a venue best reserved for a day when the west coast is subjected to high seas, being short, sheltered and on good quality gneiss. Jones, climbing at times with Peter Sawford and Paul Whitworth, climbed all in all approximately ten routes ranging in difficulty between V. Diff and E1.

On Ronas Voe, Hollinders Crag (low crag in the SMCI) is a granite outcrop set back from the sea. As with the majority of crags already described in this area,

most of the development is attributed to a small number of both local and visiting climbers. Sanders and Whitworth together with Ross Jones added fourteen routes varying between V. Diff and E1.

Ronas Hill Crags

These granite outcrops are located a few miles north of Ronas Hill in the area of Hevdale Water. Currently, there are somewhere in the region of 40 routes. The climbs are short, up to 10m. and range in difficulty between V. Diff and E2, most of which are the work of Paul and Al Whitworth with Sawford and Jones contributing half a dozen routes between Severe and E1.

So there you have it – get yourself up there!

SPORT CLIMBING:

In the Gairloch area, Paul Tattersall has been developing a small, but pleasant, sport climbing venue named Grass Crag. Not the most inspiring name but apparently worthwhile, with an all important sunny aspect. Climbs range in difficulty between 5+ and 7a, with the best around 6a-6b+. Creag Nan Luch has proved to be a great success, with the lower tier especially receiving traffic. There are a dozen or so climbs on this sector, up to 20m. long and between 6a+ and 7b+. The Upper Tier is a bit more hardcore with several climbs at around 7c'ish. Work is still in progress here so I'm sure we'll be hearing more about their development soon. As a winter playground, Am Fasgadh is definitely one to earmark. The Central Wall remains permadry and, coupled with a sheltered southerly aspect, climbing just about all year round is possible. The best routes here are between 7a+ and 7c+ though a newly developed sector has yielded a crop of easier routes. These venues are worth bearing in mind when in the north-west and are between 45 and 65 minutes drive south of Ullapool. For more information, visit 'Wild West Topos' website.

On a different note, a recent conversation with Paul revealed that he was saddened by the clinical response of some climbers who it would seem have a sweet disregard for the creator of sport climbing venues. I can empathise with Paul. But we have to bare in mind that climbers as a generalisation can be notoriously selfish. I don't think it's always in our nature to stop and spare a thought for the visionary or creative mind responsible for these venues, not to mention the sheer hard work involved. That goes for trad. too. And don't expect a pat on the back either. The only feedback you're likely to receive is that the bolts are too far apart!

So how important is the creator of a venue versus the first ascensionist. Elitist that I am, ground-breaking first ascents obviously deserve recognition. (But then again one person's 5+ is another person's 8c). I suspect all that Paul is looking for is a wee thanks and a bit of respect.

Moving on, and this time much closer to the Central Belt, where there is a new venue in the pipeline. Initially, paranoia lingered in the air and I was sworn to secrecy but its whereabouts is now out in the open (I hope!). I'll pass on the heated differences between the two main activists, but the crag is known as Robs Reed and although it's not quite Ceuse this will be a welcome addition to Scotland's esoteric sport climbing scene. Scott Muir was the man responsible for the crag's initial development, and established around 10 routes before work commitments at 'Extreme Dream'. Neil Shepherd then took over the driver's seat as its main protagonist. Neil (and others) had visited the crag before but wrote it off. But for some reason Neil changed his mind, adding 20 new routes. The crag comprises a long barrier type wall, 12–15m. high and, in the main, vertical and gently

overhanging. Grades vary between 5+ and 7b+. The rock is sandstone and split by a band of conglomerate in its lower half which makes for some interesting climbing.

In the Arrochar area (Lochgoilhead), The Anvil is receiving positive feedback. But other than a couple of routes graded 6c+ and 7a, this is a hardcore crag. I use the term 'crag' loosely but really it's a huge block of mica schist that appears to have been dropped from outer space. For those of you who haven't been there before, essentially it is divided into three facets – a short south face of impending, quality rock, providing half-a-dozen routes. Of these *Spitfire* (solid 8a) and *Crossfire* (7c+) – both Dave Redpath creations – get rave reviews. The west face features a fine 7a, and is the only reasonably graded climb on the crag. In the angle between the west and north-facing facets, a fine prow yielded what is perhaps the route of the crag with *Shadowlands* (7b+), courtesy of Mike Tweedley. The undercut sector is reserved for the bionic, being bouldery, power–endurance terrain (and has even inspired Malcolm Smith to take note). The only two routes to date are needless to say, the work of Dave MacLeod, *Body Blow* (8b+) was climbed earlier last year, while *Body Swerve* at 8c (climbed in October) is currently Scotland's hardest offering.

While on the subject of Dave MacLeod, I have to say that I've enjoyed watching his recent success (and his rise to fame over the preceding decade), and wondered where he would take his climbing next. Is *Rhapsody* the pinnacle of his career or just the beginning?

Once the high (following a great climb such as *Rhapsody*) has run its course and the little gnawing rat has had its fill, euphoria is so often replaced by an emptiness or vacuum. A sense of where do I go from here. In Dave's case he returned to sport climbing (after big plans to climb in the Alps fell through) and who can blame him after the huge physiological strain imposed by a route such as *Rhapsody*.

I concluded that Dave is quite unique and yet the result, or a product if you like, so endearingly Scottish. His European counterparts are red-pointing 9a or 9a+ and on-sighting 8b+, and achieving great things in the Alps and Greater Ranges. Are Dave's achievements in Scotland every bit an equal? His success in Scotland is attributed to an ability that builds upon and draws from a homeland apprenticeship, and modern influences with roots in England and other parts of Europe and America. Achievements that are quite remarkable when we consider how disadvantaged climbers are in Scotland, especially sport climbing resources and a balmy climate. But perhaps that's precisely why we are so motivated.

Dave's climbs on the Anvil are certainly impressive and yet in the wider scheme of sport climbing developments elsewhere, one would have to say pretty average. Sport climbing has not been Dave's greatest strength but he has achieved some huge personal advances in this area. I do believe however, that he has the ability and above all, the motivation and tenacity to succeed on 9a and harder. Achieving this level can only further support his greatest attribute which is head-pointing. Finding projects of this calibre close to home is problematic, and *Rhapsody* in this respect worked very much in Dave's favour. Trips abroad are an option but they are so often fraught with cost and time implications that prey heavily on the psyche of most climbers attempting a hard route. There are however projects at this level in Scotland and a good starting place for Dave would undoubtedly be *Ring of*

Steall, an open project in Glen Nevis that has recently been labelled a contender for 9a.

So is *Rhapsody* the pinnacle of Dave's climbing? I believe this to be a sort of mid-way point in his career. If he can succeed on 9a then E12 is not beyond the realms of possibility, but ultimately a human being can only endure climbing at this level with all its inherent risks for a very limited period. Good luck Dave.

Tighnabruach

Andromeda (8a+) a MacLeod creation from 2004 received its second ascent from an on-form Alan Cassidy, who also went on to make a rapid ascent of *Shield of Perseus* (formerly 8a but now 7c+ by general consensus). This received another ascent by Robin Sutton who flashed the route. MacLeod reinforced his dominance with the crags hardest yet – *Apollo* (8a+), another super roof problem that involves all sorts of trickery and cunning knee bars. And finally, Tweedley succeeded on his 15m. roof project with *Elysium* (8a), a pre-dawn start being a key factor in his success (an alpinist at heart!). Its second ascent came only minutes later from MacLeod (who held his ropes). Dave confirmed the grade as solid and a contender for Scotland's best route at that grade. Not that there are that many routes of 8a to compete with.

Dunkeld

At Cave crag I was saddened by the appearance of an eliminate (graded 8a) squeezed in between *Silk Purse* and *Marlina*. While I understand one's quest for a route of this grade, my gripe is purely from an aesthetic standpoint. The wall is already peppered with bolts and with this new addition it has become a real eyesore. No doubt I'm in a minority but I'm hopeful that such a blinkered approach will not spread like an unwanted rash to other quality crags such as The Tunnel Wall.

Glen Ogle

Niall McNair sends in details of two worthy second ascents – *Solitaire* was completed after a swift couple of hours work. Originally graded as soft touch 8b by MacLeod, Niall found a completely new sequence (lurking beneath some dollops of moss) reducing the grade to 8a+. Niall confirmed the climbs high quality. Niall also accounts for the second ascent of *Ceasefire* (8a+) on The Diamond and said it was the first time he spent more than a day working a route. I apologise for sticking my nose in here but Niall's comment did bring a smile to my face. *Ceasefire* is an abandoned project which was equipped by Duncan Macallum back in the early 1990s. It's projected grade at that time was 8b. In between shifts I had a play and after two attempts top roped the route after about an hour's work and guessed 8a+. So Niall, if it's the first time you've spent more than a day working a route, it's about time you put your talent to good use.

Dumbuck

Voodoo Magic has been repeated by McNair who settled for 8a+. This climb has something of a chequered history. It was originally climbed by Andy Gallagher in the early 1980s and graded 8b. MacLeod repeated the route after a large percentage of the climb's holds had been pulled off. Dave confirmed the grade but was of the opinion that in its original state it was overgraded. The climb continues to receive attention with a corresponding loss of holds, and the most recent ascent by Niall only came after another hold was pulled off and glued back in place by someone else working the route.

Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland Incident Report 2006

Summary of mountain incidents and accidents in Scotland:

Table 1

Year	Incidents	Fatalities	Injured	No Trace	Persons assisted
2006	306	25	138	1	430
2005	313	25	167	7	435
2004	310	18	161	1	424
2003	259	17	142	3	347
2002	273	19	140		433

This report is only an interim one as there are a few outstanding incidents still to be completed by teams.

Summary of non-mountaineering incidents:

Table 2

Year	Incidents	Fatalities	Injured	No Trace	Persons assisted
2006	100	16	21	3	102
2005	105	15	28	10	110
2004	84	17	14	3	80
2003	86	14	20	13	83
2002	81	14	14		77

THIS report has been compiled with the assistance of Dr Bob Sharp who is in the process of publishing an academic paper on Mountain Accidents and who has been invaluable to me for advice and professional comment. In addition Mike Walker, who is our Systems Manager/IT specialist, keeps the system running despite my best efforts as a 'computer dinosaur'. The following are trends that seem to be prominent:

1. Since 1990, there continues to be a downward trend in mountaineering incidents. This trend mirrors a rise in participation in mountaineering over the same period. It would be safe to say that the incident rate is falling. Very few instances of poor equipment/clothing are now noted, the common problem, historically proven, is that poor navigation is, and continues to be, a key factor in accidents. The idea that GPS is the absolute answer to navigation is a fallacy and several accidents/incidents have been attributed to GPS failures.
2. The number of people injured or who have suffered fatal injuries also follows an overall downward trend. It should be noted that, over the past 10 years, some 25% of all fatal accidents are the results of males suffering heart attacks.
3. As in previous years, the vast bulk of incident callouts are to search for people who are lost/overdue (33%) or to rescue people who have slipped or fallen (38%). Also, in previous years, lower leg injuries are the most common (43%) with 34% of all resulting in fractures.

4. The number of non-mountaineering incidents is slightly down on 2005 but still much higher than previous years. This may reflect the growing use of teams by the emergency services. This shows that the diverse ability of MRTs is now widely recognised. A small number of teams are used extensively for local incidents and non-mountain searches.

5. More than one-third of incidents are initiated by mobile phone, although this is less than reported by English MRTs. Many involve team leaders/team members talking to casualties who are 'lost'. These 'lost souls' are invariably talked down safely by teams. I would like to thank all teams for their continued support.

6. Helicopters are involved in nearly 40% of our evacuations, not just the Military and Coastguard SAR Helicopters, but also Air Ambulance and Police Helicopter involvement is increasing. This will involve a change in practices in certain situations and will need careful liaison between all agencies to ensure that the right asset is sent to the correct situation.

Note: As you are aware Mountain Rescue information has been absent from these pages for some years and there has been a lot catching up to do. This is now nearly completed and it is hoped that by next year I will be able to report all mountaineering incidents in narrative form and in areas as per SMC District Guides.

D. (Heavy) Whalley.

Ruminations of a 20-Watt man.

I AM TOLD that a physically fit adult is capable of working at the rate of 70 Watts all day long. I came upon this piece of information while pedalling an exercise bicycle at St. John's Hospital sports injuries clinic. The bicycle recorded my output in watts. I was at the time 75 years of age and quickly discovered that I was no longer a 70-Watt man. In fact I was now a 30-Watt man. This merely quantified an impression I had already arrived at, and which showed up in my rather slow progress up hill. I was tempted to find what my short-term maximum output was and, to my agreeable surprise, I topped out at 250 Watts, then sank back exhausted and breathless.

Three years later, I was leading the final pitch on *Agag's Groove*, which members will recall has a vertical section, which, though full of holds, does require clinging on. My heart beat, not through nervousness, but through effort rose sharply, suggesting that my short-term maximum had also diminished. I was forced to pause at the top of this section to get my wind back and let my heart-beat subside.

Thinking back to earlier, fitter times, I wondered just how high an output of effort is needed to, say, climb an overhang. Much would depend on how sustained was the move. I learned that one rower in the Cambridge team in a recent boat race against Oxford was recorded as having an instantaneous output of 700 Watts! Do our young hard men have that sort of fitness and ability?

Being now a 30-Watt, or possibly even a 20-Watt mountaineer, adds an hour or two to bagging a Munro. The analogy is using a 10hp engine to drive a heavy truck. In low gear it's possible, but it all takes longer. The trick for we geriatrics is not to stop climbing, not to stop hill-walking, but to pace ourselves, and avoid ever getting into a position where survival means an output of 250 Watts. I suspect Bill Wallace's untimely end was just such a reason.

Malcolm Slessor.

THOSE JMCS BUS MEETS

THESE gatherings have received occasional mention in the *Journal* since their efflorescence over the early post-war years. We now reprint an impressionistic account of them, (style much impressed by the relentless 'Tiger's Prose' just then issuing from the chewed pencil of Robin Smith, whose 'Bat and The Wicked' came out in the same issue.) it is a reprint from SMCJ XXV11 pp 153-156 (1961), featured here again in memory of James Russell (obituarised in this issue, a great upholder of such gatherings and who contributed much to their quiet and continuous success.)

Sir, – When they began it was a long time ago in times not credible, when the Old Men were men and the new men were new, when Russell carried an ice axe and Smith a sewn-on waterproof, Slessor, they say organised the first one; that is likely. They were needed then for the war had just gone and the petrol not come and everyone wanted to get back to the hills and eat and sleep and whoop and fry amongst them. Day trips were no good, just picnics, and trains had their own rules; buses were the answer and soon every club had buses and they would race and glower at each other all the way North, fighting for the single chip stop. But it's the JMCS buses we must think of, for things are different now, there are birds and birdwatchers and meccano-men. In those days it was pure. There'd be a lot of people sitting on the kerb at Waterloo Place, rucksacks and axes and boots on the pavement and maybe a couple of groundsheets hung up where Cairns was changing his breeks and old *Daily Mirrors* lying about with pieces of Wally's piece in them. This Wally was a character; he even got put in the SMC but didn't pay, he went to New Zealand and got hitched instead, a real smasher. He had one adjective and two or three nouns and a great beaming face and spectacles and a superb stammer that got him many victims: he had a great wit and used to quote Moses in the dark. Others that turned up would be G., he'd no other name but two of everything else, two watches, two axes, clinkers and trikes just to make sure; and Russell tightly packaged, though the other half Donaldson wouldn't get on till his own house: he lived on the Monadhliath side of Saughtonhall and never seemed to be there anyway until just before it was too late, probably because he was sideways on and not easily seen; these two had a famous tent, the Slum, Slum 1, it was eaten into and out of again by various animals in hard winters but served these two until well before they stopped climbing. MacLennan was not there at first, he was not readily thought of but probably existed, they always do. About that place, too, Hewitt got on, packed with cans and kettles and knives and hatchets and bundles of twigs, travelling light being fond of tea and striking matches; he drummed up on his sticks and bark, paper, straw, sheep dung and braziers on Gargantuan variety but never on a primus. He had a favourite expression as he tripped up over the step coming in, dear and familiar to us all as the white tops above Callender and as eagerly awaited.

In Callender there was a cafe, the Rex, that had a good place upstairs where they put people from buses, in Strathyre on the way back was a wonderful pub where everyone was happy and the barman roared at Hampton's jokes and they sold crisps. All gone now. And there was a good place in Perth open all night with sausages, peas, egg and chips at tables at 2 in the morning after waiting for some

fool to get lost in the Gorms, but any stop was good at night, the smoke and smell and noise came different. Our own smoke, we had Grieve who burnt herbs, he burnt rosewood, wormwood, dogsgrass and shrubberies, we pitched them out of the window one time stove and all, and there was Hampton, he had asthma, he used to smoke black Egyptians, coughing up their mummy dust and going blue; he breathed in a cat one night at Lazarus', so thick the fug, that raked his tubes a bit. Lazarus' is gone too, in a blaze of fire, the jewel of Kinlochleven, a Far-West doss-house crossed with a Naffi: cheap and teeming at all levels of life. Youth Hostels we never liked much, they were like trains but slower and wanted their wardens sweeping out. Ritchie's loud genealogical salute to the four-eyed one at Crianlarich who liked dancing stills warms up all Old Men. This Ritchie was just the same then but stopped talking once when a ski hit him on the neck over a bump from the roof rack; he sat nearer the window next time so that he could yell at the polis and throw streamers. Marshall was there, a wee laddie and polite, Hague, Hood, Cole, Rodgie, Scott, Millar, Tait, Bulbous and more, sundry musicians on mouth organs, combs, jugs and alimentary tracts, a varied horde, and when all these were emptied onto a stricken landscape together they drained into the night at once, like swill down a gutter, tentless ones trotting helpful and effusive and friendly, gloomy grubhunters like Dutton, furtive behind, undeterred by stones; these parasites clutching dogsbowls for alms, wandered from tent to tent till suitably undernourished, then crawled into dubious heaps of their own for the night. And all this time the driver was backing his 32 seats alone in the dark down a 10ft. Highland waterway with no lights no help and 32 dead lemonade bottles clanking behind him.

The nights were good, real nature communions, earth and soup and stones and paraffin and pine needles and no pricklers, tents fuzzing in the dark, green or orange or grey, or khaki number 2, and inside boots and mud and smoke and sleeping bags and outside tin plates, rinds, spoons and scrapings, and those great black beasts sitting all round humphed up to God's cloud and snow that all the fuss was supposed to be about. And you put on jerseys and balaclavas and extra socks and pulled the string and died in your bag and forgot the feet and the snores and the drystone dike beneath. And in the morning it was raining. And people went off and did things.

"We push attack and foray, over ridge and peak and corrie."

And when they came back it was dark and raining and there was no time to cook anyway and the tents had to come down and the guys were twisted, so they must have been, but they all came down together, even Donaldson's who had lost his milk into his rucksack. MacLennan's weekend sarcophagus, and the immaculate villas of Ferrier and Watt who always camped tidily, dovetailed tentpegs and levelled spirits, serene beyond the bacon gobs and skewed single-enders of the immature.

All bundled into the bus and the driver'd had a bad night so we helped him reverse and the usual fools were late, sweating blood and blisters, look, so hard had they run. And we moved off somehow and squeezed our feet and tried to get warm and the songs started up. Grieve was tenor and Brown about bass and the rest filled the gaps. And the songs roared all the way from Kirriemuir to Gleann a' Chaolais, there and back, smut and slop from all tongues, great lungfuls that steamed

up the air and rivered down the windows, so thick they choked out the diesel and the tyres. It was great. But it was a black distance and there were hours and hours and miles and miles and we stopped and drank and had to stop again and the step was narrow. But it was a black distance and when we got back after all the stops there were more stops because people had to get off, they lived near here. That was alright as usual for Slesser who lived first, but what did it matter anyway, for every rucksack got rucked up, frames with straps with boots with tents together and well wedged down between the seats and up to the roof at no angle of rest. And the dawn got nearer. When they were all out they jolted and rattled away under the lamps with boots and rucksacks into streets of bare disbelief. And the buses went home last, with an axe or two and somebody's wallet.

And of all this lot some went abroad, some really died, some joined the SMC and a few forgot. SMC, we had some of them but they didn't look it and before them the first SMC we'd ever found it was George Elliot, and he was walking in a daft-shaped hat under the Pap of Glencoe shaped just like his hat, and there was snow on the Pap down to 1800ft.; and there was snow on George's hat down to 1800ft.; and if you'd squinted you couldn't tell the difference except that the Pap stayed still and George's hat went up and down and up and down and up and down, and that was the SMC.

Yours etc.
ANON ANON

The present success of the Club in weathering the post-war social changes is in great measure due to the activities, deliberate or involuntary, of those mentioned in this extract.

G. J. F. Dutton.

Slesser's 80th – Porters and all!

A LONG straggle of walkers buffeted by the wind and drenched by the rain forged upwards towards the CIC hut. October 28, wet and wild.

Here came 16 panting figures, spanning every age from three to 83, to celebrate Malcolm Slesser's 80th birthday. The burn before the hut was swollen and the crowd milled around looking for a dry way to cross, then Malcolm hoisted Rosie, his grand-daughter, onto his shoulders and strode through the torrent. Lesser mortals followed.

A master of expedition organisation, his skills honed in Greenland, the Pamirs and the Himalayas, Malcolm had bribed some climbers from the Fort to act as porters and the table groaned with leg of lamb, salmon mousse, trifle, birthday cake and enough wine for a wedding. It had the makings of a great weekend and so it proved. Songs and stories, some old and some new. Of course, even the old stories acquire new threads and if they don't, the decline of memory with age makes them fresh. Tales of epic proportions – of climbs and voyages, of rescues and near calamities, of old friends departed, of expeditions so long ago and others being planned. Bothy ballads, Gaelic songs and even one composed for the occasion followed the feast, competing against the banshee wind generator.

Gradually, the copious wine took its toll and the bunks began to fill, and peace descended on the hut, apart from the obligatory snoring.

To the regret of some, but not of course Slesser, nor Smart, nor the Simpsons,

the Sunday dawned bright and clear and off we slouched with no excuse, to gain the summit by the Arête. To those who had never gone up or down this way without the benefit of snow, it proved a trial but the reward was glorious views down into Glen Nevis and a huge respect for the energy of the octagenarians. The descent was eased by champagne and pate which dulled the pain of the slog back to the hut by Lochan Meall an t-Suidhe. Gear gathered, the party made its way down to the Aonach car park.

A wonderful weekend, a remarkable man and a privilege to have celebrated his 80th. Lang may his lum reek and his ice-axe bite.

Robin Shaw.

The Professor's last ice climb

THE arrangement to rock climb with Malcolm Slessor as he approached his 80th birthday was thwarted by the copious amount of rain that descended on the Langdale meet last September. As an appeasement I suggested that we might manage to arrange an ice climb together during the 2007 winter as I had heard tales of Malcolm's 'Last Ice Climb' intentions.

At the Dinner in Fort William it was decided that an attempt on *The Vent* in Coire an Lochain would be a suitable objective.

Winter had failed to materialise by the time Malcolm was heading off to France for a skiing holiday in January and the situation had not improved on my return in mid-February from thawing Austrian ice curtains.

Malcolm's 'Last Ice Climb' was in serious doubt until a heavy snowfall on March 17-18 prompted a series of phone calls which resulted in me arriving late in the evening of Friday, March 23 at Malcolm's accommodation at Rothiemurchus.

The forecast had been stating overnight temperatures down to -5° and this was confirmed as the path to Coire an Lochain on the morning of Saturday, March 24 was frozen solid with blue skies overhead and any remaining snow underfoot took our weight. Our six o'clock rise had paid dividends, as it was only when we stopped for an adjustment to one of Malcolm's crampons as we approached the climb that we were overtaken by a party heading for the same route.

As we waited for our overtakers to vacate the initial pitch we could see that the walls of the route were sheathed in verglas and that rock belays would be at a premium. Their second second man was obviously having difficulty, even with the most modern of ice axes, and asked if I could remove one of the runners that his leader had placed.

Once I was tackling the impending pitch, I could see that it was not in straight-forward Grade II,III condition. A mushroom shape had formed above and below it and a shell of ice gave way to soft snow where there should have been good left foot support. I hacked out what turned out to be a bulldog ice anchor from deep under this mushroom then placed my own ice screw in the remaining good ice that was about a foot wide and adhering to the right wall. This ice was virtually vertical and I found climbing this short pitch very strenuous. The ice was like concrete, picks barely penetrating and I was panting heavily as I emerged above the mushroom.

An old peg on the right wall suggested a belay as it went through my mind that

Malcolm might not manage to ascend the ice as he had stated earlier that he "...probably should not be here"! Once clipped onto the old peg and a dodgy block, I summoned Malcolm to start climbing and with a good tight rope and a few 'offs', a smiling Slessor was at the stance, remarking that he had heard my heavy breathing from his belay. An amazing effort for a man in his 81st year.

Establishing himself at the stance Malcolm dropped a glove and, looking down to see where it had gone, I could see a chap in a yellow gacoule about to ascend the nasty wee pitch. I asked if he had seen the falling glove and remarked that the pitch was at least Grade IV, adding that the two of us, being pensioners, would be some time on what remained of the ice above. Fortunately, Malcolm had a spare glove in his rucksack and I was able to set off up the ice and placed another screw, still amazed at the hardness of the ice itself.

Once up at a belay I placed two good nuts and shouted for Malcolm to ascend. I couldn't see him on this pitch and, once climbing, I heard the command: "Keep a good tight rope." I duly obliged until a grinning Malcolm appeared, explaining that his picks were bouncing off the ice and that the saving grace had been a hole in the ice at the point when he had to make a straddle move. As Malcolm moved up and round to a better stance we witnessed a yellow vision waving to us from the plateau with Malcolm's glove in hand.

All that remained of *The Vent* was a full run-out on good snow to a belay, then Malcolm completed his 'Last Ice Climb' with a short ascent to a sun drenched rocky plateau. Handshakes, photographs, off with the gear and crampons, some lunch in the warm sun, then down to the Goat Track descent where crampons were required again until under the bare cliffs of Coire An T-Sneachda.

As we headed down to the carpark I remarked to Malcolm what a wonderful day we had enjoyed, while also thinking to myself, would I still be able to climb ice in 15 years!

Douglas Lang.

No Snow Survives

NO SNOW in Scotland survived 2006. Despite a snowy March 2006, less snow than usual fell during the winter as a whole, and the number and size of patches in summer was well below the long-run average. Mick Tighe found none left at Ben Nevis on September 13 and the last snow seen was observed by Davie Duncan at the foot of Sphinx Ridge in Garbh Choire Mor of Braeriach on September 26, when it was down to less than 3m. long and melting rapidly. We judge that it finally vanished before September 30, and visits in early October revealed none. A detailed account with photographs has been published (A. Watson, D. Duncan and J. Pottie, 2007, *No Scottish snow survives until winter 2006/07*, Weather 62, 71-73).

Adam Watson

Arthur W. Russell's Walking Diaries

ARTHUR RUSSELL joined the Club in 1896. He had climbed since 1890, and was a prodigious walker, whose only rival in this sphere was Frank Goggs. Last year, thanks to the generosity of his grandson George R. Russell, we received – together with other interesting material – his diaries covering the period 1891 to 1912. Russell's *annus mirabilis* was 1897, in which he recorded what may be the first continuous traverse of the four Cairngorm 4,000ft. peaks, and the first traverse of the Aonach Eagach ridge. A sampler of the highlights of the diaries, and a brief account of Russell's life and career, will be prepared for next year's Journal. In the meantime, I give below a brief description of the objects received. These have all been added to the Club deposit in the National Library of Scotland. They are held under a separate Accession code – Acc.12690 – in the Manuscript Department of the Library, and may be consulted there.

Six photograph albums, as follows:

1. 10.5ins. x 13.5ins., containing photographs from the 1890s and 1900s, inscribed 'The Cairngorms and Skye/Arthur W. Russell/15 Strathearn Place/Edinburgh'.
2. 9ins. x 12ins., containing family photographs from 1929 onwards (first part), and mountain photographs from the 1890s and 1900s (last part)
3. 8ins. x 5.5ins., containing undated and unannotated small photographs of various subjects.
4. 9.5ins. x 6.5ins., inscribed 'To Arthur from Madeline and Robert/6th July 1893', and containing photographs of various subjects from the 1890s.
5. 5ins. x 6.5ins., inscribed 'Glencoe/A.W.R. 1895'.
6. 5ins. x 7ins., inscribed 'Scotch Mountain Views/A.W.R.'.

Eleven diaries describing walking and climbing expeditions, each approximately 5ins. x 3.25ins., as follows:

1. Inscribed 'Walking Tour in the Summer of 189/David Reid, Robert and Myself/ from Dunkeld to Stronlachar via Blair Athole, Dalwhinnie, Loch Laggan, Fort William, Ballachulish, Glencoe, Kingshouse Inn, Tyndrum, Crianlarich, Tyndrum, Inversnaid', followed by a 'List of Ascents' from 1890 to 1907. Recently numbered '1' on front cover.
2. Inscribed 'Journal/of the/First Visit paid to Alassio/in 1892/as well as of/A fortnight's trip to Rome/April 9th – June'. Recently numbered '2' on front cover.
3. Inscribed 'Walking Tour in/the Summer of 1893/David Reid, Robert and Myself/ from July 26th – Aug 2nd/Dunkeld to Kirriemuir via Tummel Bridge, Rannoch, Loch Garry, Dalwhinnie, Lynwilg Inn, Braemar, Clova'. Recently numbered '3' on front cover.
4. Inscribed 'Walking Tour/in the/Spring of 1894/by A. R. Wilson & A. W. Russell/ Expense for 9 days £4 : 2 : 10/Route: Comrie, Strathyre, Tyndrum, Dalmally, Taynuilt, Glen Creran, Glen Coe, Inveroran, Dalmally'. Two photographs enclosed.
5. Inscribed 'Ascents of 1895/The Cobbler ... Ben Dothaidh ... Ben Doireann ... Aonach Dubh ... Aonach Eagach ... Bidean nam Bian/A. W. Russell/76 Thirlestane Rd.' Two photographs enclosed. Recently numbered '4' on front cover.
6. Inscribed 'Ascents of 1896/Stob Garbh Cruach Ardran Creag MacRanaich Ben More Meall ant Seallaidh Stuc a Chroin Ben Tulachan Creag na Leacainn Cairn an Lochain... Braerlach Ben Macdhuil Cairngorm/Arthur W. Russell'. One photograph enclosed. Recently numbered '5' on front cover.
7. Inscribed 'Arthur W. Russell/76 Thirlestane Rd./Edinburgh/1897'. Containing accounts of visits to 'Aberfoyle, Cairngorm, Ben More, Cairngorms, Aviemore,

Glencoe, Pentlands and Arthur's Seat'. Four photographs enclosed. Recently numbered '6' on front cover.

8. Inscribed 'Arthur W. Russell/76 Thirlestane Rd./Edinburgh/1898'. Contains a 'List of Ascents' for 1898 and 1899, and accounts of (1898) 'Lomond Hills, Salisbury Crags, Pentland Hills, February Trip with Robert, Good Friday excursion, Spring Holiday, Cairngorms in June, Skye, Speyside, South' and (1899) 'Guislich at Spring Holiday, Braeriach at Queen's Birthday, Autumn Holiday at Ft. Wm.' Recently numbered '7' on front cover.

9. Inscribed 'Arthur W. Russell/76 Thirlestane Rd./Edinburgh/1900 – 1902'. Contains a 'List of Ascents' for 1900, 1901 and 1902, and accounts of (1900) 'New Years trip at Loch Awe, Inveroran in March, Good Friday on Ben Bynac, Sunrise on Sgoran Dubh, Skye in August and ride there, Speyside in August and ride there', (1901) New Year at Loch Awe, Braeriach on Good Friday, Spreyside at Spring Holiday, Sunrise on Ben Muich Dhui, and (1902) New Year at Tarbet, Aviemore and Dalwhinnie with R., Glencoe in June, Ben haluim from Camp, Arrochar in October'. Recently numbered '8' on front cover.

10. Inscribed 'Arthur W. Russell/18 Learmonth Gdns./Edinburgh/1903 –1906'. Contains a 'List of Ascents' for each of 1903 to 1906, and accounts of (1903) 'New Year at Killin, Braeriach in September', (1904) 'Spring Meet at Aviemore, Easter at Strathyre with Ara., Cruachan in September, Arrochar in September', (1905) 'New Year Meet at Loch Awe, Strathyre in March, Easter at Tyndrum, Ben Lawers in June, Norway in July, Rannoch Moor in September', and (1906) 'New Year Meet at Tyndrum, Killin March, Aviemore in June, Arrochar in September, Arrochar in October, Ben Lawers in July'. Recently numbered '9' on front cover.

11. Ring-bound loose-leaf notebook, some pages misplaced. Short descriptions of visits to Cairngorms (mostly) in 1906–1912. Recently numbered '10' on front cover.

A letter of four-and-a-half pages, dated August 21st, 1890, addressed to 'My Dear Madeline', and headed Portree Hotel, Portree. The letter describes a journey to Skye with Robert, with a visit to the Quiriang planned, and then an excursion to Staffa and Iona from Oban. Signed off 'With much love to Papa/ & yourself from your loving brother'. The signature is clipped, but it seems to have been signed with full name (!) 'Arthur Russell'.

Robin N. Campbell.

The First Ascent of the Great Tower

LAST year I was hornswoggled by Ken Wilson into writing something about Tower Ridge for a new version of *Classic Rock*. This led me into reading accounts of early visits to the Ridge.

The first account is the note by John Hopkinson in Volume 17 of the *Alpine Journal*, pp. 520–1, a third-person narrative giving minimal details. The Hopkinson party visited the ridge in September 1892, and their first effort was to ascend "...as far as the point where the ridge is broken by a well-defined perpendicular face, which they endeavoured to turn by traversing slightly on to the western face, and ascending a narrow chimney, but were stopped by a high pitch", whereupon they presumably made their way back down the ridge. On the following day they climbed to the summit, then "...descended the same ridge from the summit past the cairn, well seen from near the Observatory, marking the farthest point previously reached in descent, as far as the chimney on the west face of the ridge. Descending

this to the pitch before mentioned, and then by a short but difficult traverse, they reached a small rock platform, from which they regained the ridge below the rock face, and completed the descent."

Clearly, the cairn referred to pre-dated their visit, and it is a reasonable inference that they must have been told about this earlier exploration of the upper part of the ridge by the Observers or some other local source. It is also a reasonable inference (made by our guidebook writers) that they were stopped on the first day on the western side of the Great Tower.

The second account is Norman Collie's Bunyanesque *Divine Mysteries of the Oromaniacal Quest* (SMCJ, vol. 3, pp.151-7), describing the first ascent of the ridge in March 1894. When the party eventually "...climb sagaciously upwards to the summit of the great tower" they find "...a heaped-up accumulation of stones, a mystic pyramid, set there doubtless by a former seeker in the work, to the end that true searchers might not despair, but continue the matter of the work with fresh hope and industry". When I read this passage many years ago, I assumed that this cairn must have been left by the Hopkinsons in 1892, but John Hopkinson's account makes no mention of building any cairn, and again it is a reasonable inference that this is the previously-built cairn mentioned by Hopkinson.

The third account is by William Naismith (SMCJ, vol. 3, pp.231-3), who climbed the ridge with Gilbert Thomson in September 1894. Describing the Tower Gap, Naismith mentions a 'curious anecdote': "It seems that the builder of the first cairn on the Tower conceived the brilliant idea of making the peak inaccessible; and accordingly, on his way back from the Tower, which he had approached from above, he either manufactured the cleft, or at least deepened it considerably, by throwing down a lot of loose blocks."

So all three accounts are consistent, and together they imply clearly that before the explorations of the Hopkinsons in 1892, the Great Tower was reached from the summit plateau, and a cairn built there. In confirmation, there is a postcard view of the Tower by Valentine's of Dundee, which is dated 1885, and shows a cairn on top of the Tower. A digital image of the card, identified as JV-5391[A], may be viewed in the St. Andrews University Library Photographic Collection. As to who made this enterprising climb, I have no idea.

Robin N. Campbell.

100 Years Ago: The Club in 1907

THE 18th Annual Meeting and Dinner took place on Friday, December 7, 1906 in the North British Station Hotel, Edinburgh, with John Rennie presiding. Treasurer Napier announced a balance of £208-19s., which, together with the Life Membership Fund, brought the Club's total funds to £437-8s.-5d. Secretary Clark announced seven new members, and Librarian Goggs reported the addition of 60 books (mostly now vanished, like the members). William Garden proposed the production of Library and Slide Catalogues, and the first was agreed to. New Club Rules (much as we know them today) were adopted.

The New Year Meet was held at the Corrie Hotel on Arran, and attended by 18 members and three guests. Conditions were wintry throughout, with deep new snow, and heavy snowstorms. The only climbs achieved were Pinnacle Ridge of Cir Mhor (Goodeve, McIntyre, Ednie), the A'Chir Traverse (Goggs, Ling, E. B. Robertson, Unna), and numerous descents of the Witch's Step. Raeburn injured his knee badly on his only outing, walking to the Saddle.

In early March Goggs and Euan Robertson walked from the Bridge of Lochay

Inn to Fearnan, traversing all the peaks of Ben Lawers en route. Goggs complained that "...the only peak on the whole range requiring an ice-axe" – An Stuc – was "not considered worthy of a place in the immortal list". On the following day, they walked back to Bridge of Lochay, passing over all the peaks of the Carn Maigr range, and crossing the Lairig Breislich. A prodigious walk, but nothing to Goggs, as events later in the year showed.

The Easter Meet of 17 members and one guest was held at Inchnadamph, with a subsidiary Meet of six members 'joining the classic pursuits of a Glasgow holiday throng' at Arrochar, and a well-attended unauthorised Meet of 13 members and four guests led by Gilbert Thomson, discomposed by the prospect of the 3a.m. start for Inchnadamph, gathered at the Alexandra in Fort William. Inchnadamph saw the reappearance of Sandy Mackay after his terrible leg injuries on Arran in January 1903. On Friday, along with Gillon and Euan Robertson, he climbed Suilven by Pilkington's Gully and traversed it, getting there and back directly from the hotel over the north-west shoulder of Canisp (what a day!). On Saturday he traversed Stac Polly, and on Easter Monday he took part in the famous ascent of the Barrel Buttress of Quinag along with Raeburn and Ling. Mackay's leg function seems to have been adequately restored.

On the Cobbler, Naismith explored the north side of the South Peak unsuccessfully. The Fort William Meet was distinguished by brutal walking expeditions, notably Goggs' and Russell's journey to the Meet from Corrour via Binneins Mor and Beag. Edred Corner had an Easter Meet all of his own, along with medical colleagues Drs. Johns and Pinches. They explored parts of the Western Highlands and Cairngorms, and – equipped with several aneroids and a scientific approach – made a careful survey of the peaks and passes of Ben Wyvis. "It is... obvious that the range... can be divided... into two mountains... [and that] the composite ranges of Liathach, Beinn Eighe and An Teallach can be subdivided in a similar manner". This has happened to the latter three, but not, alas, to Ben Wyvis.

In early April, James Greig's party encountered an electric storm on Beinn a' Ghlo before discovering his useful eponymous Ledge on Crowberry Ridge, and the Walkers and 'a friend' made a winter ascent of Rose Ridge on Sgoran Dubh. In May, Glover and Ling made the first climbs on An Teallach and Beinn Dearg Mor. In early June, Gibbs, Mounsey and Edward Backhouse climbed the Eastern Buttress of Coire Mhic Fhearchair. However, the second famous expedition of the year fell to Goggs and Raeburn, who explored the Shelter Stone Crag in mid-June. At 7 p.m. on the 15th. they left Kingussie on bicycles and used these to a bothy on the north side of the Lairig Ghru, arriving at 8.40pm. After a few hours 'rest', they rose at 1.30a.m. and left after an hour for Creag an Leth-Choin. They then rounded the head of Loch Avon to reach the top of the crag at 6a.m., descended the crag by the ridge on its left (Castle Wall, 600ft. Difficult) to the Shelter Stone, completing their lunch there by 7.30a.m. They were back at the foot of the crag by 9.15a.m. and climbed the prominent buttress on the left-hand side (Raeburn's Buttress, 650ft. Severe), arriving at the top just before 1am. Taking the shortest route to their bicycles, they were back at Kingussie by 4.30p.m., allowing Raeburn "ample time for a bath and a meal before catching the 5.16 for Edinburgh". It is one of many disgraces that only a vague trace of this ferocious day remains in our current climbers' guidebook. I doubt whether there is any party in the present Club capable of repeating it.

In the summer, members struggled with bad weather in Norway and the Alps. Robert P. Hope managed Finsteraarhorn, Schreckhorn and Grand Dru despite encountering storms on all three peaks. His legendary Alpine exploits along with W. T. Kirkpatrick (guideless, with featherlight equipment – even the handles of toothbrushes were sawn off to save weight) were collected by Kirkpatrick in *Alpine Days and Nights*, published in 1932. Ling and Raeburn were twice repulsed by storms on La Meije, then moved to Isère where they made long traverses of peaks in the Vanoise and on the frontier ridge before proceeding to the Gran Paradiso, where they were both struck by lightning on the summit. Their holiday ended with a traverse of Mont Blanc from the Sella Hut to Chamonix. Despite a severe storm at the summit, they found their way down the ordinary route ‘in dense mist and driving snow’. Tom Longstaff spent three months in the Garwhal Himalaya with Major Bruce and A. L. Mumm and three Alpine guides, climbing Trisul (23,406 ft.; Longstaff and Borochel) on June 12, the first 7000m. peak to succumb.

The Journal for the year contained many fine things, some – such as Raeburn’s account of Green Gully, Edred Corner’s disorderly wanderings in the misty hills of Ey, and Douglas’s confession of navigational incompetence on Beinn a’ Bheithir – relating to 1906. The anonymous ‘Knees of the Gods’ is a well-turned dream of the future by John Buchan (see his obituary by Stair Gillon in J. 22, 200-5 for evidence of authorship). The climber dreams of a Sligachan in which smoking is banned (confirmed 2006), and also alcohol (next year). The Alps are festooned with railways and summit elevators (not for a while, perhaps), and a standard expedition on Skye is the night traverse of the Ridge in winter (well, why not?). The whole of the September issue (not even a scrap of small print) is taken up by Douglas’s wonderful guidebook to Skye, the basis of all subsequent Skye guidebooks and a model for guidebook writers everywhere, supplemented by a Three and a Half Inch version of the Six-Inch map with red-inked paths and approaches marked – a far better map than the ugly Priestman map hawked by the Club for so many years subsequently. This heroic effort by Douglas was quickly complemented by the publication of Ashley Abraham’s racy alternative guide – *Rock-Climbing in Skye*. Even though no new climbs had been recorded there, 1907 was a good year for Skye.

Robin N. Campbell.

Metric Mountains **By Michael Götz**

BRITAIN ‘went metric’ in the early 1970s. I vividly remember, during family holidays, bill boards, public announcements and a sense of excitement about the imminent connection of Britain to the rest of Europe: a virtual bridge well before the tunnel. The excitement was short-lived: teenagers today continue to weigh themselves in stones, ham goes by the ounce, milk is sold in pints, and radio announcers translate temperatures into Fahrenheit.

Friends and colleagues have been subjected to long monologues about units of measurement for many years now. There is nothing inferior (or superior) about single units of imperial or other measurement systems when you consider them on their own – the inch is a convenient way of measuring the thickness of a plank of wood; the pint makes sense in a pub; the ounce goes well at the butcher’s; the metre is a stride. The imperial system, however, is disadvantaged when we want to relate one unit to another: knowing that one litre of water weighs one kilogram,

that one gram of water has a volume of one cubic centimetre, that one square kilometre contains one million square metres is a thing of beauty. How much does a gallon of water weigh? And the concept of a $\frac{3}{8}$ th fraction of whatever unit of measurement is frankly bizarre to anybody not born in Winton-on-the-Ouze: a bit more than a quarter? How much more?

You know where we are heading for: the hills and tops of Scotland. Munros are Munros and shall remain Munros. We will not touch their tradition and integrity. There are, however, about 150 tops in Scotland which are higher than 1000m. What a splendidly round figure; one kilometre. A neat number of hills which can be bagged, just like the Munros and the Corbetts.

I propose all hills and tops in Scotland above the height of 1000m. to be called Götzes. One could be fanatical and demand that only those who head for the hills specifically to climb the Götzes deserve the title Gotzist; having collected them by serendipity as part of a Munro bagging venture, one could argue, shouldn't count. I suggest to be less rigid: anybody who climbed all the hills and tops in Scotland above 1000m., who declares a lifelong allegiance to the metric system and who from henceforth promises to pour scorn on miles, pounds and gallons deserves the title Götztist.

SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING TRUST – 2006-2007

THE Trustees met on February 3, June 10 and October 13 2006.

During the course of these meetings support was given to the Jacobites Mountaineering Club for Hut Renovations; the Jonathon Conville Memorial Trust; the Junior Mountaineering Club of Scotland for Renovations to a Hut called 'The Cabin'; the Scottish Council for National Parks; Lorraine Nicholson for a Course for the Visually Impaired and for Training for the Visually Impaired (Alpine Skills Training); to the SMC for the scanning of W.N. Ling's Mountaineering Diaries; to the SMC Journal Editor for a new computer; to the British Trust for Ornithology for a Ptarmigan Survey; to the Nevis Partnership – Mick Tighe Collection; to the Mountaineering Council of Scotland – access and conservation; to the Dundee Mountain Film Festival; to the Oban Mountain Rescue Team; to Douglas Scott for an Exhibition entitled *A Life of Photography*; to the Bill Wallace – 'Go and Do it' fund to be administered by the John Muir Trust; to A. H. C. Chalmers for the Borders Forest Trust – native tree planting.

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

The present Directors of the Publications Company are R. K. Bott (Chairman), K. V. Crockett, C. M. Huntley, W. C. Runciman, M. G. D. Shaw and T. Prentice (Publications Manager). C. M. Huntley is both a Trustee and a Director of the Company. R. Anderson is the Convenor of the Publications Company and attends Company Board meetings. Both provide valuable liaison between the Company and the Trust.

Peter MacDonald retired by rotation as Chairman of the Trust in December 2006. His contribution as Chairman of the Trust was very much appreciated and the Trustees wish to take this opportunity of recording their gratitude to him for his services to the Trust.

The Trustees also wish to record their appreciation for the contribution made by Andy Tibbs who has now retired by rotation.

The following grants have been committed by the Trustees:

Scottish Mountaineering Club – Scanning of W. N. Ling’s Mountaineering Diaries	£500
Scottish Mountaineering Club – Journal Editor – computer	£500
British Trust for Ornithology – Ptarmigan Survey	£2500
Nevis Partnership – Mick Tighe Collection	£2000
Mountaineering Council of Scotland – Access and Conservation	£12,000
Dundee Mountain Film Festival	£1000
Oban Mountain Rescue Team	£5000
Jacobites Mountaineering Club – Hut Renovation (as grant)	£5000
(as loan)	£3000
Jonathon Conville Memorial Trust	£1222
Junior Mountaineering Club of Scotland – renovations to the Cabin (as grant)	£6000
(as a loan)	£4000
Scottish Council for National Parks	£5000
Lorraine Nicholson – Course for the Visually Impaired	£3000
Lorraine Nicholson – Training for the Visually Impaired (Alpine Skills)	£305
Douglas Scott – A Life of Photography	£1030
Bill Wallace – ‘Go and Do It’ Fund	£10000
A. H. C. Chalmers – Borders Forest Trust	£1600

James D. Hotchkiss, Trust Secretary.

Dibden Bequest

WE WOULD like to take this opportunity of recording our grateful thanks to Brian G. Dibden, who lives in Stirlingshire, for his very generous donation of £5000 that he wishes to be used towards the work of maintaining footpaths in the Scottish mountains.

The Trustees, Scottish Mountaineering Trust.

MUNRO MATTERS

By David Kirk (Clerk of the List))

ANOTHER good year of hill stomping has taken place and I thank everyone who has written to me to register a Completion, or to amend their original entry. I continue to be amused and touched by the anecdotes your letters contain. The total new Completers for the last year is 227 (who registered between April 1, 2006 and April 1 2007).

The Munro Society continues to flourish and, as usual, I have appended a report to the end of Munro Matters by their president, Iain Robertson. I was lucky enough to be invited as a guest to their Dinner in Fort William in the autumn, celebrating the 150th anniversary of Sir Hugh's birth, and enjoyed good food and wine, and excellent company.

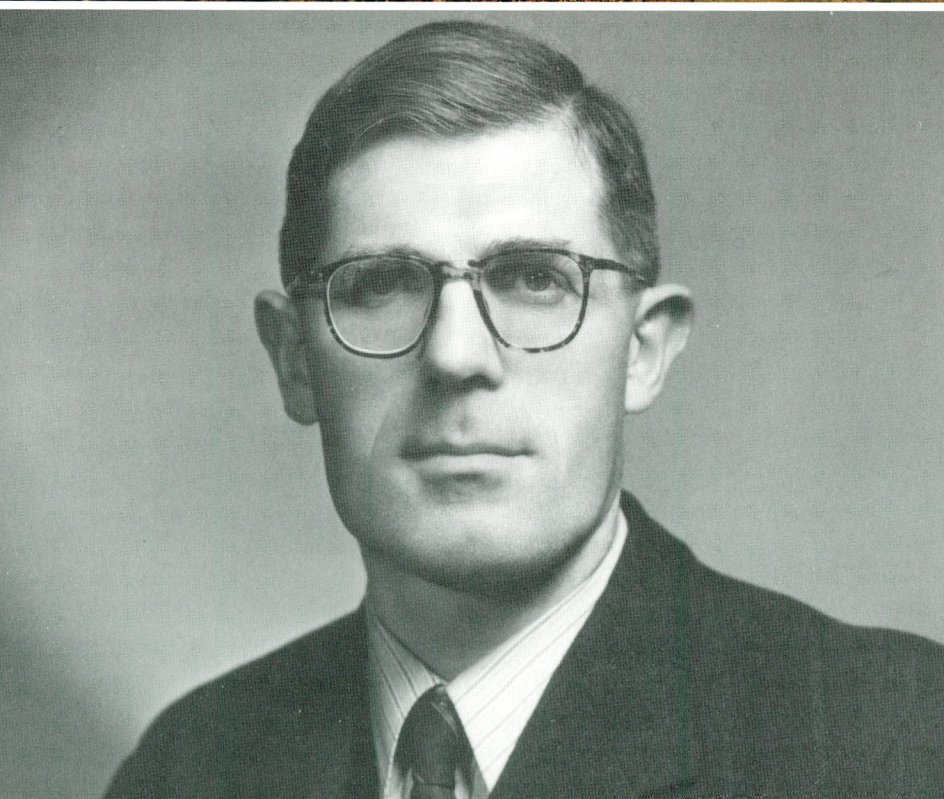
I would like to mention again the SMC Website. I would urge everyone on the List who hasn't yet done it, to dig out that old final summit photograph of yourself, and send a copy or the original along with a SAE to Ken Crocket. Your summit picture can then become part of the SMC Website Munroist section and be recorded for posterity. Website enthusiasts may point out that I myself have still to do this! – this is a personal aim for 2007.

As before, the five columns are number, name, then Munro, Top and Furth Completion years.

3543	William A Macleod	2006	3575	Graham J. Foster	2006
3544	Gordon A McDonald	2006	3576	Gavin Clarke	2006
3545	Andy Sutton	2006	3577	Michael Alexander	2006
3546	John Frame	2006	3578	Gordon Fearn	2006
3547	Barbara Frame	2006	3579	Derek Banks	2006
3548	David Bowden	2006	3580	Paul C. Gulliver	2006
3549	Ewen D McKinnon	2006	3581	Kevin Hesketh	2006
2550	Ken Keith	2006	3582	Marian Hesketh	2006
3551	Alan Gilkison	2006	3583	Chris Budd	2006
3552	Martin Richardson	2006	3584	Stuart Smith	2006
3553	Bob Calvert	2006	3585	Anthony Harper	2006
3554	Lindsay Butler	2006	3586	Tony Welsh	2006
3555	Max Munday	2006	3587	Ian D. Pascall	2006
3556	Chris Dodd	2006	3588	Albert Duthie	2006
3557	Peter Clifford	2006	3589	Bruce Cockburn	2006
3558	Ernie Hailwood	2006	3590	Bruce Bricknell	2006
3559	Anthony Rigby	2006	3591	Joseph Scott	2006
3560	June A. Chappell	2006	3592	Ian Johnston	2006
3561	Nigel E. Simmonds	2006	3593	Ambrose Gillham	2006
3562	Andrew Johnstone	2006	3594	Leslie D. Nuttall	2006
3563	Gordon Gair	2006	3595	David Long	2006
3564	Malcolm Simmonds	2006	3596	John M Tweedle	2006 2006
3565	Douglas Herdman	2006	3597	Billy Urquhart	2006
3566	Roger J. Stevenson	2006	3598	Sandy Anderson	2006
3567	Russel Wills	2006	3599	Ian Cameron	2006
3568	Clare Aldridge	2006	3600	Ian J. Hawkes	2006 2006
3569	David George White	2006	3601	David Laddiman	2006
3570	Julian Foot	2006	3602	Jan Campbell	2006
3571	Anne Marie Foot	2006	3603	David J. Brown	2006
3572	Richard Butterworth	2006	3604	Lindsay Harrod	2006
3573	Stephen G. Lee	2006	3605	Conan Harrod	2000
3574	Karen Lowde	2006	3606	Neville Fernley	2006

Tom Weir. Photo: Carl Schaschke.

Douglas Campbell. Photo: Duncan Campbell.





3607	Tom Sutherland	2006	3664	David A. Gilchrist	2006
3608	Alice Sutherland	2006	3665	David S. Gilchrist	2006
3609	Darryl Campling	2006	3666	David Burns	2006
3610	Albert Mackenzie	2006	3667	David McGill	2006
3611	Anna Mackenzie	2006	3668	Mike Neale	2006
3612	Brian Slater	2006	3669	Matthew Rendle	2006
3613	Dave Snodgrass	2006	3670	Jim Shanks	2006
3614	Graham Thompson	2006	3671	G. Urwin Woodman	2006
3615	Brian Milne	2006	3672	Dawn Griesbach	2006
3616	John Downie	2006	3673	John Bulloch	2006
3617	Craig Saddler	2006	3674	John P.F. Saunders	2006
3618	Iris Cheshire	2006	3675	Willie Matheson	2006
3619	Phil Rees	2006	3676	Alan D. Barlow	2006
3620	John D. Peel	2006	3677	Bob Ainsworth	2006
3621	Margaret Elphinstone	2006	3678	Robert Murray	2006
3622	Stewart Orr	2006	3679	Christopher J. Cooke	2006
3623	Andrew Thompson	2006	3680	Peter John Herman	2006
3624	David Parkinson	2006	3681	Lesley A. Bryce	2006
3625	Victor Marrone	2006	3682	Malcolm Clark	2006
3626	Elaine Marrone	2006	3683	David Bradshaw	2006
3627	Colin Donald Walter	2006	3684	David S. Cargill	2006
3628	David I. Barlow	2006	3685	Hein Hogenhuis	2000
3629	Karl Proctor	2006	3686	Ken Murray	2006
3630	Thomas Kaald Olsen	2006	3687	Dave Coustick	2006
3631	Gordon Roberts	2006	3688	Alan Watt	2006
3632	Tom Gameson	2006	3689	John Watt	2006
3633	Maureen Lang	2006	3690	Brian Delaney	2006
3634	Paul Harrison	2006	3691	Morag Macgregor	2006
3635	David J. Lappin	2006	3692	Garry Walker	2006
3636	Margaret Cameron	2006	3693	Kenneth Allan	2006
3637	Douglas Cameron	2006	3694	Paula Drollet	2006
3638	Mike Duncan	2006	3695	Richard Adlington	2006
3639	Derek Mitchell	2006	3696	Roger H. Barr	2006
3640	William Mather	2006	3697	Arthur Finlay	2006
3641	Jim Coyle	2006	3698	Ruth McWilliam	2006
3642	Greig Whitton	2006	3699	Jean S. McAndrew	2006
3643	Ann Walder	2006	3700	John McAndrew	2006
3644	Peter Branney	2006	3701	Kenneth M. Fallas	2006
3645	W. Alan Johnston	2006	3702	John Hands	2006
3646	Susanne L. Johnston	2006	3703	Simon Birch	2006
3647	Julie Cameron	2006	3704	Judith Campbell	2006
3648	Diane G. Morgan	2006	3705	David Mitchell	2006
3649	Jon Meeten	2006	3706	J. Brian Harrison	2006
3650	Jim Linnell	2006	3707	Mark Tulley	2006
3651	Jack Addison	2006	3708	Douglas Fordyce	2006
3652	Mike Levy	2006	3709	David F. Bird	2006
3653	Robert Allan	2006	3710	Iain D. Brown	2006
3654	Nan Hargreaves	2006	3711	Norman Smith	2006
3655	Jill Turner	2006	3712	Geoffrey Hill	2006
3656	Rob Soutar	2006	3713	William Thomson	2006
3657	Michael J. Morrison	2006	3714	John Ambrose	2006
3658	Michael Hartley	2006	3715	Len Trim	2006
3659	Brian Purves	2006	3716	Annette Hood	2006
3660	Michael Williamson	2006	3717	Colin Johnson	2006
3661	Jacqueline McCulloch	2006	3718	Stephen M Marlow	2006
3662	Diane S. Beveridge	2006	3719	Stephen Lunt	2006
3663	John A. Greig	2006	3720	Fraser Hardie	2006

Dunmore Hotchkiss. Photo: James Hotchkiss.

George Bruce. Photo: D. Whalley.

3721 Philip Tinning	2006	3746 Adrian O'dell	2006
3722 Debbie Cockburn	2006	3747 James Cockburn	2006
3723 Neil Cockburn	2006	3748 Catherine Pearce	2006
3724 Graham Williams	2006	3749 Charles Harmer	2006
3725 Yvonne Cuneo	2006	3750 Val Belton	2006
3726 John Willioner	2006	3751 Mark Elder	2006
3727 Douglas Johnston	2006	3752 Eric Derwin	2006
3728 Zefiryn Kazmierczak	2006	3753 *Robert McMurray	2006
3729 Gordon Anderson	2006	3754 Paul Todd	1993
3730 Peter Jackson	2006	3755 James Tweedie	2006
3731 Andrew Thow	2006	3756 Toby Green	2006
3732 Colin McPherson	2006	3757 Douglas Brown	2006
3733 David Hand	2006	3758 Derrick Smith	2006
3734 Barbara Hand	2006	3759 Ian Sutherland	2006
3735 Anne M.M. Ross	2006	3760 Dr P. McCue	2006
3736 Patricia R. Cook	2006	3761 John A. Parks	2006
3737 Hans van Dijk	2006	3762 Robin Stevenson	2004
3738 John Mitchell	2006	3763 Alan H. Hughes	2003
3739 Brian Cook	2006	3764 Moira McPartlin	2006
3740 Mary E. Haddow	2006	3765 Hank Harrison	2006 2006 2006
3741 Jim Cochrane	2006	3766 Seth Armitage	2006
3742 Donald Macleod	2006	3767 Alan Hinchcliffe	2006
3743 Kevin Mallett	2006	3768 Alan King	2006
3744 Gill Martin	2006	3769 Jacob A. Roell	2007
3745 Jean Ramsey Smith	2006		

As ever, the tales of the various triumphs and antics of this year's Compleaters make interesting reading. Final summits are usually happy occasions, but it was the smell of fear, which was in the air when David Bowden (3548) summited on Sgurr Mhic Choinnich. As his companion raised himself from a table-sized block, the whole thing slid away and crashed down the hill.

It was at 1.23pm. on 4–5–6, that the imaginative Martin Richardson (3552) topped out on Ben More on Mull (he had thought of knocking off his final 'beastly' hill on 6–6–6). He had previously completed the English and Welsh 3000ers. as a night hike, which spanned two centuries!

After Ian Pascall's (3585) son had been injured on Ben Lui, Ian decided to do that hill himself. He did it, but got back down to find further bad news – his car had been vandalised. Although this wasn't his first Munro, it was what got him started. Russel Wills (3567) achieved his first Munro during a school trip from Surrey. Travelling by coach, train, Mallaig lifeboat and dingy, he finally climbed a snowed-up Great Stone Shoot in ex-army boots to reach Sgurr Alasdair.

Malcolm Simmonds (3564) was glad to find that Stob Coire Rainach had a 'noble' cairn, but even happier when he found under the top- most stone, a playing card picturing a naked woman!

Compleating all hills together were Kevin and Marian Hesketh (3581 and 3582). They started as 19 year-old students, and finished 33 years later. On Slioch, walking down into a thunderstorm, an unknown walker took a photo of them. They later found the picture as a full page spread in *Classic Walks*. Jean and John McAndrew (3699 and 3700) also compleated all their summits together, and raised money for the Ayrshire hospice. Starting and finishing together were Billy Urquhart (3597) and Sandy Anderson (3598). They started with the four 4000ers, and finished exactly fifteen years later with Seana Braigh. Graham Foster (3575) also started

with the Cairngorm 4000ers., aged sixteen. On the subject of the 4000ers., Chris Dodds (3556) reported his hardest day was when he did the first traverse of all the Scottish 4000' Munros (i.e. both the Lochaber and Cairngorm areas), in 23 hours in July 1980. He compleated on Slioch.

Seana Braigh is becoming the new Beinn na Lap as far as compleations is concerned. Malcolm Clark (3682) compleated on it via the An Sgurr scramble. At 25, Malcolm is one of the youngest people to record with me, but Derrick Smith (3758) who completed on Seana Braigh via Strath Mulzie complimented this nicely, as he was 70 at the time. Only one year older, at 71, James Harrison (3706) completed on Schiehallion. He had suffered from asbestosis, but felt that his hillwalking had expanded his lungs.

Conan Harrod (3605) spent two hours on the summit of Ben More at Crianlarich with 65 people and barbecues. He'd done Everest only a month earlier after breaking his leg on a previous attempt at 8550m. His wife Lindsay (3604) had met Conan during a trip to Skye, whilst he was using the pseudonym 'Survivor'. At the Munro Society Dinner, which I mentioned earlier, I met David and Barbara Hand (3733 and 3734). The day after the Dinner, they gathered 37 people and completed on Geal Charn at Drumochter. Gathering a good group can be one of the most special things about that final summit, indeed Gavin Clarke (3576) got his local Ceilidh band up Schiehallion! Gary Walker (3692) got 24 on Wyvis, where he made the announcement that he was planning to get married. One of his summit group was an 81-year-old who lost his walking poles on the way down, and had to retrace his steps quite a way to get them.

I must give special congratulations to Mike Duncan (3638) and his companion Derek Mitchell (3639), who compleated on Beinn a Bhuid and Ben Avon respectively during the same outing. Mike is our local Postie in Banchory-Devenick, and has been delivering all the compleation letters for numerous years now. He was able to hand deliver his own one!

Torstein Kaald Olsen feels he's probably the first Norwegian to compleat. I'm sure he's also the first person based in Banchory to compleat all the hills in welly boots! Also this year, we've had Jacob Roell (3769) who managed to compleat on January 2 on Luinne Bheinn, with a group of nine from the Netherlands; and his countryman Hein Hogenhuis (3685), who completed within a four-year period. Also finishing was Australian, Yvonne Cuneo (3725), who is part of the Findhorn Community. Her celebrations took place simultaneously in Scotland and Sydney.

Andrew Thompson (3623) from Surrey was taken up Cairngorm by his parents in 1956 aged 14. He begged to go on to Macdui. His parents let him go, but declined to go themselves. As they didn't want him to go alone, they told him to take along and look after his younger brother – changed days indeed. Andrew's other favourite memory from his round was watching his 61-year-old wife's first attempt at abseiling, off the Inn Pinn.

On Nan Hargreaves (3654) final summit, she was presented with gifts from both the Forfar and Friockheim Hillwalking Clubs. These bore the clubs mottos – 'Far i wi noo?' from Forfar and 'Abune then a' from Friockheim.

David A. Gilchrist (3664) offered his son, also David (3665) £5 for every Munro climbed as an incentive when he was aged 10. His son is now £1420 better off.

Peter Herman (3680) finished his last 10 in a bit of a campaign during the last two weeks of August 2006. He packed in such hills as Lurg Mhor and Mullach na Dheiragain, and achieved two visits to Knoydart (by both boat and foot), and had

a night at Carnmore stable. He had epics including a friend breaking an ankle and being helicoptered out. He eventually got to Mull for his final hill.

I had one continuous round reported in 2006. This was by Graham Williams (3724) going from Ben Hope to Mount Keen. He had weekend support from his girlfriend, and some food parcels along the way. He also managed to squeeze in two weddings during his Round! Arthur Finlay (3697) on the other hand was more into reps. He had notched up 384 ascents of the Cobbler and 216 of Ben Narnain at the time he completed on Beinn Sgulaire.

To finish off, its always interesting to hear about the embarrassing things done to Munroists, or near Munroists. Alan Hughes (3763) and Nigel Hewlett compleated one week apart. In both cases, their friends tried to assist by lightening their sacks to which they tied large heart shaped helium balloons.

And so moving onto the Amendments, these are as follows. As before, the columns are number, name, then Munro, Top, Furth and Corbett Completion years:

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.

3061	Nigel G Thackrah	2003	2006
2084	Elspeth A Smith	1999	1998 2006
		2006	
		1996	
455	Laurence A. Rudkin	1986 1991	1989 1995
1623	Mike Dales	1996	2006
		2006	
		2004	
		2000	
		1998	
		1996	
1040	James Gordon	1992 1994	2006 1998
3282	Ray Thompson	2004	2006
3283	Paul Conroy	2004	2006
2075	Martin G Hinnigan	1999 2001	2006
		2004	
494	Terry Butterworth	1987 2004	2006
		2005	
		1995	
		1988	
279	Jim Wyllie	1982	
1050	Frank A. Mellor	1992 1992	2006
1051	Jennifer Mellor	1992 1992	2006
		2000	2006
		1994	1998
2494	**Rhona B.I. Fraser	1984 1995 1997	1990
345	John Burdin	1984	1993
		2006	
1225	Jeff J. Burgum	1993 1993 1993	
		2006	

602	Irvin John Cushnie	1988 1988 1991 1994
		2006
2096	Jerry Ubysz	1999
2351	Brian Maguire	2000 2006
1635	Eric Young	1996 2006 2001
1821	Phil Eccles	1997 2006
		2006
466	James Byers	1986 1989
2795	Maria R. Hybszer	2002 2006
1711	Stewart Newman	1997 1998 1998 2006
1056	Simon Bolam	1992 2006 2006
671	Mike Paterson	1989 1989 1989
1143	Stephen P. Evans	1993 1997 2006
587	Harry Robinson	1988 1990 2006
2397	Edith Anne Ross	2000 2006
		2000
		1992
364	Brian Dick	1984 2006
2432	Brian Kerslake	2000 2006
		1997
258	Iain R. W. Park	1981
		1993
		1986
112	Peter Roberts	1973 1975 2003
		2002
1059	Alexander R. B. Taylor	1992 2006 2006
2750	Peter Goodwin	1995 2006 2005
2620	Gerald Davison	2001 2006
3614	Graham Thompson	2006
		2006
118	Diane Standring	1973 2006 2004
3630	Thomas Kaald Olsen	2006
1625	Thomas Paton	1996 2006
3194	Gail Crawford	2004 2006
846	Arthur C. Custance	1988 1999
2606	Colin Crawford	2001 2006 2001 2006
2004	Chris Wright	1998 2006
		2006
256	Hugh F. Barron	1981 1997 1988 2002
1558	Andy Heald	1996 2006
2172	Ian Clark	1999 2002 2006
2173	Alan Clark	1999 2002 2006
2506	Walter C. McArthur	2000 2006
2003	Bob MacDonald	1998 2006 2006
		2006
1911	M. J. Almond	1997 1997
796	David Stallard	1990 2005
904	Martin J. B. Lowe	1991 2006
989	W. A. Simpson	1988 1993

After six years in the job as Clerk of the List, I have decided to put away my quill, drain my ink-well and pass the Great Dusty Book (well disguised as an Excel spreadsheet) onto Dave Broadhead. People who wish to register a Completion or an Amendment and who would like to receive a certificate for either Munro or Corbett Completion should send a letter with an s.a.e. (A4 size) to the new Clerk. (David J. Broadhead, Culmor, Drynie Park North, Muir of Ord, Ross-shire, IV6 7RP.)

I've very much enjoyed being the Clerk of the List and will miss all your interesting anecdotes.

Have a Great Day on the Hill.

David Kirk

Clerk of the List (retired)

The Munro Society

Now in its fifth year, the *Society* has become an established feature of the British mountain scene. The most important event in the current year was the celebration of the 150th Anniversary of the birth of Sir Hugh T. Munro. The Society took the view that this was an event which should involve as many climbers of Munros as possible and anyone wishing to pay tribute to Sir Hugh was invited to climb a Munro over the anniversary weekend, October 14-16, 2006. More than 450 names have been recorded and these, along with the many complimentary comments about Sir Hugh and the joys of climbing Munros, are now held in the Society's Archive.

It was decided that Driesh, being the nearest Munro to Sir Hugh's home at Lindertis, should be given special prominence and Society members maintained a presence there over the three days. During that time they welcomed more than 250 well-wishers who 'signed in' at the top. Apart from Driesh many other mainland Munros were climbed and the tributes were recorded with the Society by mail and e-mail. The oldest participant was aged 80 and the two youngest were aged five, one of whom was Sir Hugh's great-great-grandson.

The weekend following was that of the Society's annual dinner and, in memory of Sir Hugh, the event was more formal than usual with SMC President, Colin Stead and Clerk of the List, David Kirk, as official guests. The guest speaker was Dick Balharry of the John Muir Trust. We foresee no further celebrations of this nature until the centenary of Sir Hugh's death in 2019.

Forthcoming during 2007 will be publication of the first number of *The Munro Society Journal*. An eclectic selection of articles has been assembled from both members and non-members, dealing with various aspects of the mountain scene. Depending on how well the first effort is received, it is hoped that further numbers will follow, though not at this stage at regular intervals.

The Society's DVD, *In the Beginning*, has proved very popular. Produced by award-winning director, Jim Closs, it involves interviews with five of the earlier Munroists recalling their experiences on the Scottish hills during the middle years of the 20th century. The narrative is interspersed with some fine shots of the mountains being discussed and the whole is most entertaining. Copies are available from the Society at a cost of £11 including post and packing (cheques should be made out to The Munro Society).

Membership of the Society has now reached the 200 mark, but we are always keen to recruit new members, not least those who completed sometime in the past. One of the Society's principal objects is to 'Give something back to the mountains' and we continue to seek ways in which this may be done.

Communications should be directed to: Secretary, 12 Randolph Court, Stirling, FK8 2AL or e-mail themunrosociety@usa.net

Iain A. Robertson.

IN MEMORIAM

THOMAS WEIR j.1945

I FIRST met Tom on an expedition to Greenland in 1960 when we shared a couple of weeks studying an Arctic tern colony on a small island of red basalt below the seaward end of the Stauning Alps. The weather was mixed. I remember Tom describing Greenland as “a land of soot and whitewash!” It can’t have been that bad because he brought home a fine collection of photographs.

In Scotland we used to meet for a week each year around Easter and carry a camp in to some remote area, usually around Loch Maree, the Fionn Loch or the Fannichs from their north side. From him I learned much about Scotland and the people he had met. He had a wide and growing knowledge of so many things and he had talked to many interesting people in all walks of life. A few days with Tom and you came away more educated about people and places. He broadened my mind.

He was a talented lecturer; he had the gift of turning a slide of a landscape projected onto a flat screen into vivid three dimensions, if not four, because there was usually a piece of history as a highlight. I remember he told me he gave slide shows to the Blind Institute. Tom said that the sea of attentive faces brought out the best in his wit and descriptive powers. He enabled the blind, if not to see, at least to realise something of the vast world we live in.

Tom was an uncontrived enthusiast for the world in all its variety. He had the knack of bringing people out of themselves. I have watched him make the doourest people forget themselves and crack a smile. He was not always sunny. He enjoyed being provocative and when the mood was on him he could be irascible.

During the war he was stationed on the south coast of England, gun-laying against the expected Invasion. As a surveyor his task was to work out the ranging of his batteries for bombardment of the likely landing sites so that fire could be directed on these vulnerable spots without delay and, if necessary, at night. He had the presence of mind to give his home address to the army authorities as ‘Glen Brittle House, Isle of Skye.’ In this way he gained two extra days leave and a travel warrant to this desirable location. Skye was a restricted area during the war and Tom must have been one of the few people who had the freedom of the Cuillin during those years.

His greatest exploits were the post-war expeditions to the Himalayas with Douglas Scott, Bill Murray and Tom MacKinnon. They were bold men in three senses. First an expedition organised from Scotland was a rarity. We were very much a province in those days; everything was supposed to be done through London; it was bad form for anything to originate in the provinces. Secondly, with the exception of Tom MacKinnon they had to burn their economic boats. When Tom asked for three months unpaid leave of absence from the Ordnance Survey, they said: “No deal – you must resign.” Remember, in those days social security was minimal and grudgingly given. Also, leaving your job was a sign of unreliability: it gave you a bad reputation. Times were hard and Tom had to work

at his journalism round the clock to make a bare living for fees at first were miserably small. I remember his first car – a ramshackle old Morris van – passengers sat in the back on a spare tyre. (Vans, even small ones, in those days were restricted to an upper limit of 40mph; in return for this restriction less Purchase Tax was exacted – the rebate was recouped later when you were fined for speeding.)

The third boldness was the actual mountaineering when the party finally got to the Himalayas after a three-week sea voyage.

Tom climbed a lot of hard stuff with Len Lovat. It was great to sit and listen to them after a climb. Len was a Procurator Fiscal in Glasgow and a raconteur of legendary skill and Tom had his own fund of stories from his own roots in real life. Their conversation was for me (an unworldly academic) a window into how the world actually works. Tom also climbed with Tom Patey. I wish I could remember his stories of some of the extraordinary outings and conversations he had with the great Patey.

Tom was dedicated to Scotland and like so many of us he hoped that Scotland would grow strongly from her own roots into an independent, self-respecting country with its own individuality. None of us suspected that in the end we would founder in the morass of a global sub-culture in which the chief end of man is to maximise profit.

Tom's greatest achievement on behalf of Scotland was leading the opposition to the proposed hydro dam at Glen Nevis. It was a close-run thing. It was Tom's ability to galvanise public opinion that tipped the balance. He has no successor of comparable clout to provide similar leadership against the present subsidy scam being perpetrated on our countryside by the international windmill industry.

Tom also climbed a lot with younger generations, notably Roger Robb and Ken Crocket. With them he did some memorable climbs when well into his 70s, if not 80s. He also had a number of seaborne expeditions with the Great Tiso – to North Rona, the Flannans, the Monach Isles and other remote locations. I could go on reminiscing about Tom for pages and pages. There was a second trip to the Himalayas... and one to Kurdistan with Douglas Scott...and the time he was smuggled off Stob Gabhar after the party was avalanched out of the Central Couloir...and his remarkable complete recovery from a fractured pelvis after a fall on Ben A'an in the Trossachs.

My favourite memory of Tom is of a time we were climbing something steep on Carnmore crag under a full March moon. He was leading. I can see him now silhouetted against the sky and hear him saying: "This is great! You're really going to enjoy this." The other night in the small hours I woke up and couldn't get back to sleep, so I switched on the radio and Tom's voice came over describing the view from the top of Duncryne. His voice was young and enthusiastic and his descriptive gift brought the scene into sharp focus. I rose up from my bed and walked (metaphorically, of course). I was with him there on Duncryne looking north over the woods to the blue waters of the long loch of islands that divides mighty Ben Lomond from the green Luss hills. It was, of course, a recording of the young Tom in his prime. So much of Tom remains on audio and video tape that he has gained immortality in this world as well as the next.

Iain H.M. Smart.

I THINK it must have been the Campsies that set Tom off on a life of climbing and discovery. Perhaps the shock of seeing for the first time those snow-capped crags was what did it. For in the late 1920s there was little sign of the great popular movement that was yet to come and no adventure schools to take you to the hills. You just went and inevitably met someone doing the same thing. I first met Tom in the early 1930s on the Campsies. He had already found someone, Mat Forrester, also a natural climber and an expert birdman. They had just done a climb on Slack Dubh and Tom was bursting with enthusiasm. He had been inspired early by a delight and interest in bird-watching and had learned a lot from Mat. Tom introduced me to Posil Loch in Glasgow, a fine place for birds and the little woods he had made his own.

Photography was an early interest for Tom. I remember admiring his shot of a tree creeper at its nest and was most impressed to hear it had been used with an article he had written. That was about the start of a great and life long commitment to photo-journalism.

With limited holidays and short weekends time was precious – and so was cash. But climbing was extended with buses and special train fares. The best times were rewarded with his ultimate praise: “That was a day of days.”

By 1930 Tom must have explored most of the mountains in Scotland and climbed half the routes then in the guide books; that was also the year that he gave up his job with the Ordnance Survey – a bold thing to do in the hungry 1930s – to allow more time for his flare for writing.

In the post-war years he went on many expeditions and recorded his adventures in books. *The Ultimate Mountains*, the story of one of the first Scots and British expeditions, *Camps and Climbs in Arctic Norway* and *East of Katmandu* are all sought-after classics. An interesting trip we shared was in the remote mountains of Eastern Kurdistan. Those were the early days, later many great things were done by Tom – one of them was getting married to Rhona

Douglas Scott.

IT WAS on a JMCS Novice Meet in February, 1957 that I first met Tom, and although on that occasion I didn't climb with him he soon had my address and where I worked. Tom lived at that time in Springburn on the north side of Glasgow, the centre of the Scottish railway locomotive construction and maintenance industry. Serving my apprenticeship in that industry in Springburn, Tom would look out for me at the end of the working day or hear on the radio that industrial strife was to occur, enabling him to make plans for us to go into the hills. From these small beginnings a lifelong friendship developed. Initially, I was very much the novice; Tom had the great gift of putting one at ease and also passing on his knowledge of climbing and his passionate enthusiasm for the Scottish hills and for Scotland.

In those days, Tom had a wee fawn-coloured Morris van, a great asset when the ownership of a private vehicle was rare, but necessary for Tom to gather material to build his career as a writer and photographer and to travel the country giving talks. That same wee van took Tom and I on many a venture, the camp kit packed in the back. More often than not, we headed up the Lomondside road to Glen Coe or the Arrochar Alps.

Rock and winter climbing equipment was very basic in these days, just a rope and a few slings, but that didn't stop Tom taking on climbs in difficult conditions. He was always concerned for the safety of others in the party if conditions proved

particularly difficult. It wasn't unusual when conditions were marginal, the rocks wet and greasy, for Tom, determined to finish a climb, to get the spare socks out of the sack, fit them over his boots and continue up the climb.

Tom loved to talk to the people he met, especially hill and rock enthusiasts and when ever the opportunity arose, he would strike up a conversation, finding out what climbs and hills they were doing, what was new to the hill scene and the crags that were being explored. This was the Tom who loved to be immersed in climbing and countryside issues and valued what people had to say about what was happening in the Highlands, especially if it was new.

When the weather was particularly poor for climbing, Tom always came up with something and always managed not to be stuck indoors. An example of this was a mid morning in Torridon, the clouds well down in the glen, the rain hammering on the hut windows: "Not a day for the high hill today," says he "but I know of a chasm up on Sgurr Dubh that would give us an interesting scramble in this sort of weather." After a short walk we arrived at the foot of the sharply defined chasm, water cascading down its sidewalls into an already swollen burn. Very soon, we had forgotten how poor the day had started out as we scrambled up the chasm, water pouring down on us from its walls, navigating round some of the heavier falls or traversing the walls to avoid some of the larger pools in its bed. We emerged from the top of the route several hundred feet above the start quite soaked but satisfied that we had got out despite the weather.

A favourite pastime of Tom's was birdwatching, and I and many others, owe much to him for his knowledge and enthusiasm for 'birding'. Many a day on the hill, be it wet or dry, the field glasses would come into play to identify a bird – maybe just a quick call from a secluded perch – and Tom would announce the bird's identity without breaking step or conversation.

Tom loved nothing better than being among hills and hill people. There was a day we had in the Arrochar Alps when Glasgow and most of the Central Belt were covered by a thick sulphurous fog. We only broke through it on the highest tops, emerging into clear skies and warm sun and were met a solitary climber, Joe Griffin emerging out of the fog as if through an opening door.

Roger Robb.

W. ARNOT W. RUSSELL j.1948

WHEN Arnot Russell joined the Club in 1948 he was already a mountaineer of some distinction. From his native Monifieth, his first sorties into the Angus glens had led him on to greater things and as a student at St. Andrews he climbed extensively in Lochaber, Glencoe and other parts of Scotland. After only a year at University he received his call-up papers and was posted to India where he served with the Black Watch for the latter part of the war. In 1946, rather than coming straight home he went on an expedition to the Western Himalaya where his most important ascent was the South Face of Kolahoi (17,799ft.), the 'Matterhorn of Kashmir', by a new route. He returned to St. Andrews to complete his Chemistry degree, becoming President of the Mountaineering Club there and a golf blue. He was also a member of the Himalayan Club, but an invitation to re-visit the big hills had to be turned down because it coincided with his final exams.

It was on Ben Nevis, though, that he left his most important mark. In the summer of 1943 he took part in the first ascent of *Route II* on Carn Dearg Buttress, the first climb to breach the frontal slabs of that tremendous cliff and now a well-trodden classic. He had been at the CIC Hut with a party from St. Andrews when the legendary Brian Kellet arrived, looking for a climbing companion and Arnot joined him for the ascent. Although Kellet led the climb he needed a strong companion because of the long traverses which the route entails and its intimidating exposure. He could not have picked a better man, for Arnot was steady as a rock in all situations. They probably found the climbing easier than they had expected, but the exposure no less impressive especially as light rain began to fall and they had to climb in socks for better friction. From the top, they descended *Route I* and then climbed the Direct Start to North Trident Buttress to round off a good day's work.

Other climbs followed during that summer including an ascent of *The Long Climb*, also with Kellet.

The CIC became a regular haunt of Arnot's in the late 1940s and early 1950s, especially at Easter and many of the classic routes received his attention, in both summer and winter conditions. In July 1949, with J. H. Swallow, he made the second ascent of *Left-Hand Route* on Minus Two Buttress – a grade harder than *Route II* and another climb of superb quality. Although technical standards have moved on since then, there were not many people climbing routes like this during those early post-war years. He had several Alpine seasons and there is a splendid photograph of him in Bell's *Progress in Mountaineering*, standing with J. D. B. Wilson in front of the Obergabelhorn.

In 1950 he was appointed to the staff of Trinity College, Glenalmond, where he was to remain until his retirement. He continued to climb for a few years and he served on the Club Committee from 1953 to 1956, but he began to concentrate more on skiing and golf, both of which he pursued with the same, boundless enthusiasm.

He took school parties on skiing trips to Glen Shee, in the days when winters were winters and just getting up the Devil's Elbow was a challenge. Uplift facilities were minimal, there were no piste grooming machines and these outings were more in the nature of ski-mountaineering – or as he would say: "Proper skiing." Another regular destination was Ben Lawers where the only form of uplift was Arnot's own drive and leadership and countless pupils followed his tracks up and down the slopes. He was a housemaster at the school for 14 years and he was also in charge of the Combined Cadet Force, for which his army experience naturally qualified him, with arduous training in the Cairngorms an indispensable part of their activities.

In 1958 he married Virginia Kemp, who also worked at Glenalmond. They retired to Crieff where Arnot continued to enjoy his golf and he achieved the satisfaction of 'playing his age' in seven consecutive years.

He died in April, 2005 and will be remembered for his great zest for life, his encouragement of the young and his big, infectious smile. He is survived by Ginny and their three children, to all of whom we offer our sincere sympathy.

Peter F. Macdonald.

JAMES RUSSELL j. 1950

JAMES RUSSELL died in late 2006 aged 86. Active on the hill until his last year or so, he epitomized those members joining the JMCS immediately after war service and then climbing on from 'Those JMCS Bus Meets' (cf. article in this issue).

Russell was on the Scottish hills climbing most of their popular, less demanding, routes in winter and summer, and almost every weekend for many years, mostly at first with Charlie Donaldson. These two invariably camped in a small experienced tent, referred to by them most unkindly as 'The Slum', though boulders and caves could be utilised at times; it was a familiar part of the climbing scene.

He was a remarkably neat, calm and collected climber (and camper) blessed with many self-preservative skills learned earlier in the Scouts and in the combined operations of H. M. Forces. He never scrambled but seemed to drift up without effort on the grades he favoured. I climbed and camped with him myself after Donaldson moved to the Borders and marriage, and benefited greatly from his imperturbable good humour. Pretty well every weekend we assaulted the Scottish hills in all weathers. We took on skiing, Russell effortlessly, and enjoyed descents that (especially now) make me shudder: heather, replaced by scree and icy crust on many evenings, down to a celebratory cider; he and I tailored ascents to the weather, utilising outstretched anoraks and a strong following wind for many of the tilted summit plateaux.

He was outstandingly generous, and when I was forced to move from the usual cramped Edinburgh digs by the need for overnight research, he offered me a bed and the room he was brought up in, an act of courage much admired by all. My habit of unwittingly introducing mice from previous dosses was regarded benevolently. Ever practical, he oversaw the brushing out of old cheese pieces from my disorderly baggage. I hung on, as long as was decent, to his hospitality but moved out at my marriage; an event he skillfully recorded at my request on camera.

His camping was equally neat but was not an obsession *per se*; it served whatever he intended to do: fish remote burns, begin a climb right on the first pitch, or just to be among the hills without housewifely fuss. In this course his procedure was not ranked highly by the conventional campers from the original Scouting fraternity, who shook communal heads when Donaldson and he were on the hill one day and returned to find their tent and its contents eaten into and out again by some entrepreneurial fox.

More serious, and attracting great sympathy, was the remarkable Baking of his Flat, occasioned by a cracked chimney flue and unwisely active stoking the previous night. It was too hot to burn anything, and the firemen, alerted by the unusual fumes, discovered next day that every stitch of their clothes and boots were brown and brittle; jackets, and breeks fell from their hangers in heaps. His splendid collection of slides and photographs, extending over years, was of course ruined. Like the fox through his tent, all this was taken philosophically.

Our joint ploys grew rarer when I moved north but he and his flat were always available for refreshment after Edinburgh meetings, and we lost touch very gradually.

About that time, I did notice evidence of other interests; living in the stony centre of Causewayside, he had a yen for the trees he camped among, and a weird collection of bottles, bowls and old pans accumulated in the window recess at his

flat, which enjoyed a passing glance from whatever Edinburgh sun briefly escaped from clouds and the overweening shadows of Craighleith masonry. He loved watching the seasons progress across his micro-forests and groves; spring and autumn were always celebrated with appropriate malts. His skill at bonsai resulted in him being elected secretary of a Scottish bonsai society; he was amused by a photograph showing him in deep conversation with the cloud-piercing office-bearers of some Scandanavian bonsai group: his 5ft. 3ins. or 4ins. clearly impressed the tiresomely – 6ft. Swedes: “He is a Real secretary of a bonsai club.”

His friendships were wide, and included many of the opposite sex. One companion of many climbs, a highly-competent LSCC member, was drowned by a Cairngorm burn in spate, trapped by a rucksack on the way across. With a later companion, Frances, he shared a house and a happy ‘evening of his days’ just outside Edinburgh. They shared also many weekends on the Scottish hills, and holidays in the Alps – where he skied, walked and was hoisted to the summits into his eighth decade, dispatching many fresh peaks; and postcards illustrating his success.

G.J.F.D.

DUNMORE HOTCHKIS j.1930

DUNMORE HOTCHKIS was born in Paisley on December, 19, 1909. After school he went to Oxford University where in 1931 he graduated Bachelor of Arts. Thereafter he joined a law firm in Leith and did a legal apprenticeship with that firm attending Scots Law evening classes at Edinburgh University, graduating LLB in 1933. He joined the Writer to the Signet Society in 1934.

While at University, during the holidays and while working in Leith, he went to the hills in Scotland with members of the SMC. He kept a most interesting diary during a period of about 10 years prior to the outbreak of war in 1939. One first ascent on Ben Nevis is recorded, namely a route in summer to the right of *Slingsby's Chimney* leading to the North-east Buttress somewhat above the First Platform. He was particularly keen on rock climbing in Skye and did many of the long scrambles and climbs.

He volunteered for His Majesty's Forces before the outbreak of war in 1939 and he served with the Cameronians for six years spending three of those years abroad. He took part in the invasion of Sicily and Italy and later in the final push into Germany.

After the war in 1946 he returned to the legal profession and took over the law firm of his uncle James Napier Hotchkiss in St. Andrews. He continued to walk and climb in the Scottish Hills. He married Betsy Dishington Scott in 1953 and had three sons. He imparted to his sons his love of the hills, wild places and his abiding interest in the environment, birds, wild flowers, geology, astronomy and history. He was an elder at Holy Trinity Church, St. Andrews and became the session clerk to fill in on a temporary basis and remained the session clerk for more than 20 years. He was widely read and remained mentally extremely alert into old age.

He enjoyed going to the hills and particularly the Cuillin with his sons and did short sections of the Cuillin Ridge into his early 80s. He dealt stoically and bravely with failing sight in later years. Dunmore is survived by his wife, Betsy, and sons James, Robert and Michael.

James Hotchkiss.

NEIL MATHER j. 1983

NEIL MATHER died peacefully, aged 78, in his beloved Strathspey, after a long illness.

His part in the resurgence of British Alpinism in the 1950s earned him a place on the 1955 Kanchenjunga expedition. There it was characteristic of Neil to establish and man the top camp (26,900ft.) with Charles Evans, the leader, and to maintain it while George Band and Joe Brown, then Norman Hardie and Tony Streater, reached the summit on successive days. It was equally characteristic for Neil to agree, modestly, with Charles that success had been achieved and support for everyone's safe descent was more important than a third summit bid.

Neil started his long and varied climbing career from Bury Grammar School and his village Scout troop. His old friend and climbing companion, Les Radcliffe, describes it as "very *Scouting for Boys* – style", camping and exploring the Pennine Moors. Their first climbing experience was on Coniston Old Man when their Rover Scout crew camped at Coniston under Fell and Rock Club leaders.

Neil and Les went on to become regular visitors to Widdup gritstone outcrop – sometimes working through the routes in winter and "disappearing back into the darkness and the moor".

After school, Neil entered the still vibrant Lancashire cotton industry studying for his textile manufacturing qualifications, and later lecturing at Bolton Technical College and the Shirley Institute.

There was little time off but Les and Neil frequently climbed in the Lakes and occasionally North Wales. With K. Hargreaves visits were made to Glencoe and Skye for old classics. There Neil acquired his taste for our Munros.

Neil joined the Rucksack Club in 1949 and it was mainly with club members that he went to the Alps. His alpine record done in short holidays included: 1949 – Strahlhorn, Allalinhorn, Zmutt Ridge of the Matterhorn. 1950 – Les Droites, Geant, East Face of the Grepon., Requin. 1951 – Zinal Rothorn, Obergabelhorn traverse, Lyskamn traverse, Weisshorn by Schalligrat and East Ridge. 1952 – Dent Blanche, Charmoz-Grepon traverse, Pain de Sucre, first British guideless of the Peuterey Ridge of Mont Blanc with Ian McNaught-Davis. 1953 – East Ridge of the Plan, frontier Ridge of Mont Maudit, Rochfort-Mont Mallet (solo), Forbes Arête of the Chardonnet. 1956 – Mayer-Dibona on the Requin, Aiguilles du Diable, Mont Blanc de Tacul, South Ridge of the Aiguille Noire du Peuterey with Albert Ashworth. 1957 – Punta Gamba, Cima de Brenta.

In the 1980s he went to the Oberland with Donald Bennet, climbing the Monch, Jungfrau, Finsteraarhorn and the Gross Grunhorn. On another occasion, with Donald, he climbed the main summits of Monte Rosa and Pollux. He climbed the Biancograt of Piz Bernina with Camillo Kind and then traversed Piz Palu with his wife, Gill, Camillo and his wife. In 1993, aged 66, Neil and John Allen climbed the Aletschorn from the Mittel-Aletsch hut in superb conditions, after a stormy retreat the previous day. Then they went to the remote Aar bivouac hut to climb the Lauteraarhorn – a wonderful expedition. Then it was off to the Britannia Hut and the Strahlhorn where Gill joined them for John's last Swiss 4000m. peak.

In 1957, Neil married Gill and, looking for a mountain activity they could share at the same level, learned to ski which led to more than 40 years of ski-touring and downhill in the Alps and Scotland. Then living in Yorkshire, Neil changed from

the Rucksack Club's propensity for immense hill-walking challenges to long-distance fell-racing. He regularly entered the Three Peaks race and more than a dozen Lake District Mountain Trials. His best result in the Karrimor two-day event was fourth. What pleased him most some years later was to come second, with Gill, to 'two young men' in the Veterans' class.

Neil and Gill, in 1971, moved to Cork where in two years they introduced orienteering to a mixed non-denominational group which was regarded as a considerable social as well as sporting achievement. Whilst there he completed his Furth Munros and wrote the chapter on Macgillicuddy's Reeks for *The Big Walks*.

He came to Fife in 1971 to work and joined the Scottish mountain scene. As vice-president of the Scottish Ski Club he met John Wilson, Douglas Scott, Donald Bennet among others. He became a regular guest at the 'Aberdeen' table at SMC dinners.

Neil speedily completed his Munros in 1980 (including the Cuillin Ridge, the 11 Mamores and the A'mhaighean round in fast, single-day outings). He continued his hill-running with Scottish enthusiasts. Besides many long Scottish winter days, his Alpine ski-tours included: 1967 – The Haute Route, 1971 – Otztal Rundtour. 1972 – Stubai Rundtour. 1980 – Vanoise tour with SMC members and, later, several tours with Alpine guide, Claude Rey.

In 1983, he joined the SMC. With the further withering of the British textile industry, Neil moved to Edinburgh to exercise his management skills with Lothian Council.

At this time Neil and Gill acquired David Grieve's secluded 'bivouac' caravan, near Aviemore, which became a meeting place for many hill friends. A notable occasion was entertaining a group of mature Swiss ski mountaineers after a hard day, who voted fish suppers and malt whisky the best hut food ever. This meeting led to many reciprocal visits including Neil and Gill completing the 20th Engadine Ski Marathon.

Neil retired in 1991 and moved to Kincaig from where he completed his second Munro round and accompanied Gill on her completion; Alpine and Scottish ski tours were pursued, and he experienced modern climbing gear with young Club members to his great satisfaction.

Neil experienced a remarkable range of mountain activities and adventures about which he kept pretty quiet. Difficult and brave moves were played down in favour of gentle, funny reminiscences about his companions. Among these were excitements with spicy cars and motor-bikes. He told a great tale of stormy crossings of the Alps on the back of Mac Davis's smooth-tyred bike in order to climb the Peuterey. Less happy was the losing of the 1953 season by being knocked down by a van in Kent, his AJS being wrecked and Ted Dance, his climbing companion riding pillion, badly injured.

In 1995, along with Gill, he joined the trek to Kanchenjunga base camp to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the ascent. This was very enjoyable, but to those of us whom Neil joined immediately afterwards for a late season Alpine ski-tour, it appeared he had suffered some illness which curtailed that trip for him and from which never regained his old high level of health and fitness.

In the last few years of his life, Neil enjoyed the social life of Kincaig and Kingussie with many new friends and old climbing comrades from far and near, as well as gentler climbs and walks in the Highlands, Tuscany and lower Alpine

valleys. He continued moderate skiing well into his 70s.

In the summer of 2005, Neil had a last adventure when Gill arranged a light aircraft flight from Inverness to North Wales for the 50th Kanchenjunga anniversary, in the place where the team had done their preliminary training. He enjoyed that immensely.

Chamonix 1953: Tom Patey and I were going up to the Envers des Aiguilles hut when we met two finely-equipped English alpinists coming down – Neil Mather with Geoff Piggot. Neil chatted with friendly enthusiasm with two scruffy Aberdeen students. Tom had received Cambridge comments about pre-dawn porridge making on hut terraces, remarked as we parted: “That’s the nicest guy we have met here.”

Fifty-two years later Neil’s friends, overflowing Inch Kirk, would have understood.

J.M.T.

GEORGE BRUCE j.1974

I FIRST met George Bruce as a very young 18-year-old lad when I was trying to join the RAF Kinloss Mountain Rescue Team, the RAF premier team. George was on leave when I arrived at the Mountain Rescue Team Headquarters, I was told to go away – I was too small and skinny. George found out and took me under his wing and gave me my start. George was the RAF Kinloss Team Leader, a God. He was a small, stocky man with a face full of character; he spoke and told tales in the same broad accent as the famous Bill Shankly, stories and tales flowed from him. He was without doubt my hero.

George had outstanding people skills, not learned from any management course, but from life. A Physical Training Instructor by trade, he was also a parachute-jumping instructor, with more than 1000 jumps to his credit. Few people know this because he rarely mentioned it. He had a unique personality and charisma which made him one of the best man managers I have ever met. Unusually, for someone in the RAF, George was never intimidated by rank. He was also teetotal, but seemed to get high on a few cans of coke.

Such were his powers of persuasion that a 10-minute discussion with George could change your opinion on any subject. He could convince you black was white. I have never known him to lose an argument.

George was not a crack climber compared with modern day standards, but he had an aura and tremendous area knowledge. He was the thinker and could walk into a call-out anywhere in Scotland, and hold his own on any incident. Due to his ‘people skills’ he could talk to survivors of an accident and get the full story of what happened, and deploy the troops with maximum efficiency. George was forthright in what he saw as the correct course of action and many owe their lives to his good decisions.

The Kinloss team was heavily involved in the Cairngorm Disaster in November, 1971, when six Edinburgh schoolchildren and two instructors went missing on the Cairngorm Plateau in atrocious weather. Kinloss and a Glenmore party found two survivors barely alive, who needed immediate recovery to survive. George jumped on to a Royal Navy Sea King Helicopter and after a short brief the pilot agreed to fly the recovery mission provided George was with him. George guided the chopper from Glenmore, up Strathnethy and over Loch Avon in desperate weather, and on moving onto the plateau the pilot lost his ground reference and

Neil Mather. Photo: Niall Ritchie.

James Russell. Photo: Frances Craigie.





landed in a white out. George got out and waded the last mile through the snow to the casualties with the chopper hopping along behind him. The casualties were evacuated and made a full recovery. Throughout this tragic operation his leadership was inspirational and George was awarded 'The Queen's Commendation for Brave Conduct'.

George loved Scotland; the Kinloss area of responsibility is huge and the Team travel all over Scotland every weekend. He had a love for the hills and hill people, making so many contacts among the landowners, keepers and gillies on whose land we trained. This allowed access into remote areas way before 'freedom to roam' was granted. A day with George on the hill would involve a leisurely start, a visit to the keeper or the estate house, usually with tea and a good chat on what was going on. He rarely used a map: "a sign of no confidence" in your mountain knowledge and had such knowledge of wildlife, especially bird's, flowers and the wild land we trained in. The day would end with us doing a wee job for the estate and maybe getting some venison or fish and of course a wee dram to end the day. This was priceless local knowledge, invaluable in callouts, allowing us – as a MRT – access to climbs and crags by private tracks accessible only to a few.

In my first winter with the team, 1972, we set off from Ben Alder Lodge where we were staying in the garages next to the great house. The plan was to climb Lancet Edge on Sgor Lutheran, near Ben Alder, a classic winter ridge, very remote. It was full winter conditions and as we broke up on to the ridge George was in full story-telling mode. I was breaking the snow when we were avalanched 600ft. over a buttress. All I remember was George dragging me out of the snow where I was buried. He lit a fag and said that I should be privileged, to be avalanched with him so early in my career as a mountaineer. He said he was testing my route finding, which he said could improve. We then ran away!

When we remember George we must not dwell on the many difficult and sad mountain rescues that he led. But must remember him for his zest for life and the many amusing stories that he told.

Shortly after the Cairngorm tragedy George participated in an expedition to Elephant Island in the Antarctic. On his return he showed me some photos of eight guys pulling a loaded sledge and George standing in front. He said that as the only NCO he had to be the leader as they were all officers and could not be expected to make sensible decisions, so they pulled the sledge. Once again throughout this difficult expedition he showed outstanding leadership and was awarded the British Empire Medal.

When George arrived at Kinloss in 1968 the team was a wild bunch of hard men who took some handling. Trophy pinching was the game for some. However, on most occasions the item was returned and there was no problem. But on one occasion it all went wrong. Two of the troops lifted a cannon from Onich but before it could be returned it appeared on 'Police Five' on the TV. Unfortunately, it was found by those in authority and a witch-hunt started. The local police were involved, but the culprits would not own up. Although the police were threatening to charge the whole team with theft, the troops decided to call their bluff.

The Station Commander was demented. Anyway, after three weeks of a stand-off things were getting heated. George at this time was the team leader in waiting. The Officer i/c gave a 15-minute talk promising the culprits that if they owned up he would find them the finest lawyer in Forres, equally as good as Perry Mason. With that George asked to speak. Don, the officer, eagerly thinking he was going

Arnot Russell. Photo: Geoff Dutton.

Ian Campbell. Photo: Niall G. Campbell.

to get George's full support, invited him to take the floor: "Don't own up because they will hang you," says George and the saga went on for another three weeks.

In 1973, George was posted to the RAF Outdoor Activities Centre at Grantown as Chief Instructor. Many and varied are the courses run at this unit. One of the courses is for senior officers, really a bit of a jolly for two days. George spent the morning instructing these officers on kit and how to pack their hill sacks and how important all this equipment was. They were instructed to be on the bus with their kit at 1300hrs. for a walk round the Northern Corries of Cairngorm. They were duly boarding the bus when George noticed that the most senior officer had no hill bag: "Where is your hill bag, Sir?" says George. "Do I really need one?" says the officer. The retort from George was: "God and the mountains have no respect for rank." With that the officer scuttled away for his bag.

George left the RAF and became Ranger of the Pentlands National Park, a new career and he loved the job and its people. He called it "his estate". He came regularly to the RAF Kinloss team reunions. He was a natural speaker and could give the most entertaining speeches at the drop of a hat. Here he was in his element as a speaker, without doubt one of the finest, he never used notes and spoke from the heart. He could make any subject interesting and his sense of humour was infectious. He became a stalwart member of the British Legion in Prestonpans serving as treasurer for 14 years and more recently as President for six years. He was a great fisherman and loved the crack at the harbour with the locals.

George was an ardent Glasgow Rangers fan, a season ticket holder following them through thick and thin, whenever possible taking his grand-children to the games. When George was told he had cancer he asked the specialist how long he had left to live: "Will I have time to see Rangers win the European Cup?" Unfortunately, you will not the specialist said. George replied: "I would have worried if you had said yes." Rangers were appalling at the time. What a sense of humour.

George touched so many of us, taught us so much about life, people, the wild land, the animals and its mountains. It was a privilege to be a part of your team and the world will be a sadder place without you, but your memories, stories and jokes will live on.

David 'Heavy' Whalley

IAN MACLEOD CAMPBELL j.1927

THE FIRST chapter of Hamish MacInnes' book on mountain rescues, *Call-Out* describes one of the earliest rescues in Glencoe. It was in 1934. The Elliots, stalkers in Glencoe, and others, had brought in a badly injured climber, having carried him down on a door after a difficult rescue at the foot of the Church Door Buttress of Bidean nam Bian. The Factor went into the room where the seriously injured climber lay. He then came into the living room where Mrs. Elliot was handing out bowls of soup to the exhausted rescuers: "There's no need for your camp bed," said the Factor. "I'm afraid he's gone." However, thanks to the courage of his rescuers and the skill of the surgeon Sir Norman Dott, Ian Campbell was not gone and was to live another 72 years, dying, months short of his 100th. birthday, on April 21, 2006.

In 1979, at the age of 72, he returned to Bidean nam Bian and looked at the scene of his accident: "Looking up at the Buttress," he wrote in the *Scottish*

Mountaineering Club Journal, "I was amazed, humbled and very grateful to all those good people who combined to rescue me in 1934."

Ian MacLeod Campbell was born in Edinburgh in 1907, the son of a lawyer, and went into the family legal firm of Archibald Campbell and Harley. He lived all his life in Edinburgh. His fascination for mountaineering was encouraged by his adventurous and independent Aunt Florence (Macleod), who took him climbing in the Alps when he was a 16-year-old. She was one of the founding members of the Ladies' Scottish Climbing Club and worked as a nurse with Dr. Elsie Inglis in Serbia and Russia during the First World War.

His enduring love of the hills led to his joining the SMC in 1927 at the age of 20. In his application form, he provides a list of Scottish hills, climbs on Ben Nevis and in the Cuillins, as well as some Alpine excursions, such as the traverse of the Petits Charmoz. He was a founder member of the Junior Mountaineering Club of Scotland and he was still hill-walking in his eighties. In a note about his climbing, he records that the SMC *Central Highlands Guide* attributes a climb in the North West Gully of Stob Coire nam Beith to him and Alan Horne but states that he remembers nothing about the climb, other than they were asked to see if it could be done.

He did little substantial climbing after his accident on the Church Door Buttress, when, having broken the length of Beale's Alpine rope connecting him to his climbing partner, he fell 200ft. and fractured his skull and much else besides. However, he got great and continuing pleasure from the Scottish hills and the companionship of his generation of friends in the SMC, particularly Sandy Harrison, Maurice Cooke, Evershed Thomson, Duncan MacPherson and Bertie Martin. He was a regular attender at meets.

A member of the Territorial Army in the thirties, Ian joined the army at the start of the Second World War. He served, first, in the Royal Scots and, then, in the newly formed Special Air Service (SAS) with whom he finished the war as a Major. He was part of the team that had the task of deceiving the Germans with misinformation over the D-Day landings and was in Norway for the surrender of German forces.

Ian's other great interest was Scottish and family history. He wrote a book about his branch of the Campbells, the Campbells of Inverawe. This interest also led to his purchase, in 1960, of Fraoch Eilean, a small island in Loch Awe below Ben Cruachan, and revealing a little known Campbell castle through many visits and much clearance of trees and undergrowth. This interest in family history also led to his involvement, as secretary, in the founding of the Standing Council of Scottish Chiefs, to ensure that armorial bearings were properly used and protected.

In December 1939, he married Jean Gordon Sanderson, who predeceased him. He is survived by a daughter and two sons.

Niall G. Campbell.

IAN Campbell was a man of fine character who had a way of looking you directly in the eye and engaging your attention. There was always a warm welcome at the family home in Inverleith Place and it was there that I first heard of the SMC and devoured the contents of its Journals. Fraoch Eilean was also the scene of many a happy visit, with its little hut where we would spend the night, the old ruined castle and the view of Cruachan from the middle of Loch Awe – a magical place. Ian's last appearance at an SMC function was probably at the 99th. AGM and Dinner on Corstorphine Hill in 1987, at which time he had been a member of the

Club for 60 years. Although his membership lapsed after that he had certainly been one of our longest-standing members and he had given service to the Club as a Committee member from 1933 to 1936 and then as Meets Secretary. He wrote an entertaining account of the 1934 Braemar Easter Meet in the Journal of that year as well as an interesting article on climbing at Fast Castle (near St Abb's Head) in the previous year's edition. We are indebted to his son Niall for providing the main Obituary and extend our sympathies to all the family.

Peter F. Macdonald.

DOUGLAS CAMPBELL j.1949

DOUGLAS CAMPBELL was one of life's fortunate people, blessed with excellent health and a sharp enquiring mind. Born in Dumbarton in 1912, he was raised in Coventry. Overcoming limited educational opportunities, he made a career in electrical and mechanical engineering, later forming his own business.

From an early age, Douglas's enthusiasm for the outdoors led him to the hills and his climbs were extensive both at home and abroad. When wartime came, Douglas and his wife Kathleen spent several years in the Vale of Lorton in the Lake District, later moving to North Lanarkshire. Then, as his children grew, his focus changed to weekend hillwalking as well as caravanning trips in Britain, Western Europe and Scandinavia even travelling as far afield as South Africa and the United States.

After Kathleen's death in 1983, Douglas was undaunted. He remarried the following year, emigrating to USA aged 72 years. Unflagging travellers, he and his wife Jane crisscrossed the lower 48 States, visiting most National Parks as well as countless State parks, nature reserves and historical sites. They also travelled to Portugal, the Galapagos Islands, Costa Rica and Chile. Although Antarctica remained an unfulfilled dream, he did make a road trip to the Andes of southern Patagonia aged 90 years.

Douglas's travel reflected his love for the natural world and concern for its preservation. An ever present camera was the means to share these interests with his family and the wider community. His mountain years were an excellent foundation to a fulfilling life.

DSC.

TAM McAULAY

Creagh Dhu Mountaineering Club (1946-2006)

TAM McAULAY died on Wednesday, September 20, 2006 while on a walking holiday on Rhum. During a river crossing with a companion from Arrochar Mountain Rescue Team, Tam was swept over a waterfall. Members of Arrochar Mountain Rescue Team and Ian Nicolson, a fellow Creagh Dhu Mountaineering Club member, recovered his body on Sunday, October 1, 2006.

Tam started climbing in 1976 at the age of 30 years. Dumbarton Rock was where he became a regular feature in and around the Castle's boulders. Dressed *de-rigueur* in his blue cotton workman's trousers, steel toe-capped boots and black T-shirt, Tam would 'levitate' to the crux, pause, pluck the cigarette from his lips and pronounce: "This must be the hard bit."

Without the aid of chalk, he would deftly dispatch a boulder problem. Then,

sounding like a dentist calling his next patient to the chair, he would hail down to the gawking crowd: "Next?"

At weekends Tam regularly ventured to either Glencoe or to his beloved Cobbler, where he excelled on the hardest test-pieces of the day. In May, 1980, Tam was admitted to the Creagh Dhu Mountaineering Club, after his faultless ascent of *Club Crack* on the Cobbler. Tam's background of working class Clydeside Engineer fitted well with the club's ethos. As club secretary, treasurer and librarian, Tam loyally defended the working class values, leftward leaning politics and anarchistic attitude towards the establishment that the club was founded on. He never missed a club AGM in his 26 years of membership. During the final two weeks of his life, Tam was reviewing the club archives. Also, in his final two weeks he contributed his time-served skills and physical effort to digging out and relaying the floor to Jacksonville, the club's hut located below Buachaille Etive Mor in Glencoe.

Tam's passions and interests went beyond climbing. He devoted his time to photography, poetry, playing the accordion, literature, and local history. He was often called upon to contribute to radio programmes about the Cobbler or the Creagh Dhu. Typical of Tam, few people knew that in his younger days he had represented Scotland in cycling time trials.

The most unique aspect of Tam was his ability to maintain the great weekenders' tradition of telling jokes and stories. Anyone who happened to be in Tam's company, very quickly realised they were in the presence of a massively talented individual. He could take the corniest joke and with his perfect timing and immaculate gesturing deliver a side-splitting punch line.

With his traditional values and attitudes, Tam gave modern trends and fads, such as 'management speak' and 'political correctness' a run for their money. One dark evening, returning from a late shift at the Esso Oil Terminal at Bowling where he worked as a maintenance fitter, he noticed a gang of youths messing about with his neighbour's Christmas lights. In one effortless movement Tam vaulted the hedge and grasped the ringleader by the throat with his left hand. The youth just managed to croak out: "Mister, yeh cannae hit me. A've goat rights."

"Aye, well son, here's another right," as Tam delivered an eye watering right jab onto the delinquent's nose.

While snowed-in at Jacksonville in 1984 with Arthur Paul, Dave 'Cubby' Cuthbertson and Davie Paraffin, Tam provided the heat and light from his Tilley lamp. After two days, the talk eventually got round to feats of physical strength and the inevitable pull-ups: "Well Cubby, see if you can do this?" Tam leapt up, pinch gripped the roof joists and with biceps bulging and little puffs of breath, hauled his chin up level to his straining fingers. "Now try this," Tam dropped one arm to his side and with an effortless rhythm, pumped his body up and down in one-arm pull-ups. "...nine, ten! And now the other arm."

Holding his torso up to the beam in a one-arm lock, Tam let go of the joist and seemed to float in mid-air before deftly catching the beam with his other hand. "...nine, ten! Your turn Cubby!"

Cubby tried and tried, but failed to even complete a single pull-up.

"Now look, now look, son." Tam shifted the Tilley lamp so his feet were no longer in the shadow. He then performed the whole feat again, but this time revealing that his own feet had never left the floor.

On one dreich Saturday morning, Tam and a couple of the boys decided to go for a wander on the Bridge of Orchy hills. At the first fag break a bottle of 'travelling sherry' was produced. By the time the bottle was finished, the dreichness had degenerated so much, that it became impossible to even roll a fag. By some magical

consensus, it was agreed to get off the hill and go to the Inveroran Hotel for a midday session.

As they left the bar at afternoon closing time, a flock of chickens were clucking around Tam's car. With a bit of careful herding by the Team, a prize rooster was successfully enticed into the back seat of the car. Doors firmly slammed shut and windows wound up, the team plus a newly-acquired avian hostage set off north.

At the Kingshouse Hotel, Colin the chef was busy preparing the dinners for the guests. During one of Colin's frequent fag breaks from the heat of the kitchen, Tam ventured to Colin: "Could you do us a favour? We don't have an oven in Jacksonville, could you cook a chicken for us?"

"Aye, nay bother, just bring it in to the kitchen."

"Well, that's not possible, it's not exactly your Marshall's Chunky Chicken variety. You need to come to the car."

Colin wandered up to Tam's car to be greeted by a very distraught rooster clucking and ruffling its feathers while perched on the back seat.

"No bother, I'll deal with it. Just come back and pick it up tonight," said Colin.

As the team departed for the Ville, they glanced back to see a rather large chef dressed in whites, surrounded by a cloud of chicken feathers.

That evening, after closing time, Colin brought the chicken through to the Public Bar in a roasting tin, accompanied by an Asda carrier bag full of chips. Aye, the Chicken Rustlers had a good feed.

Tam had many rock climbing trips with the Creagh Dhu to the US, the Alps, Sport Climbing 8a+ in France, often in the company of John Maclean and Graham Harrison. In the 1990s Tam took early retirement from work due to a heart condition. He bought and settled in a house in Arrochar, which has a stunning view across Loch Long to the Cobbler. Tam involved himself with the Arrochar Mountain Rescue Team. He provided rescue support to the Lowe Alpine Mountain Marathon. He regularly went weekendening, holding forth in the Kingshouse Hotel, Glencoe with his unique patter and wit.

Many people in the climbing and weekendening scene have encountered Tam, few will forget his charm and wit.

Members of the Creagh Dhu.

Notice has also reached us of the death of Malcolm Slesser.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB

The following new members were admitted and welcomed to the Club in 2006–2007.

MARK BOYD, (41), Management Engineer, Dundee.

MICHAEL T. COCKER, (52), Physiotherapist, Wilmslow, Cheshire.

GRAEME GATHERER, (30), General Practitioner, Abernethy, Perthshire.

EMILY B. HOLL, (40), Engineer, Blair Drummond, Perthshire.

ROSS A. HUNT, (21), Student, Kingussie.

PATRICK INGRAM, (40), Rope Access Technician, Inverness.

SUSAN L. JENSEN, (39), Statistician, Inverkeithing, Fife.

JEREMY P. L. MORRIS, (30), Structural Engineer, Glasgow.

DAVID MOY, (63), Rope Access Technician, Inverness.

JOHN T. ORR, (40), Production Manager, Elgin.

HEIKE PUCHAN, (27), University Lecturer, Dunblane.

BRIAN ROBERTSON, (64), Climbing Instructor, Boulder, Co., US.

ANDREW N. D. SPINK, (40), Outdoor Pursuits Instructor, Oban.

DAVID STONE, (65), Architect, Edinburgh.

DUNCAN P. TUNSTALL, (44), retired, Aboyne.

PAUL WARNOCK, (33), Outdoor Pursuits Instructor, Glasgow.

BRIAN M. WHITWORTH, (32), Business Analyst, Dunblane.

The One-Hundreth-and-Eighteenth AGM and Dinner

THE AGM and Dinner was once again back at the Ben Nevis Hotel in Fort William and again there was no sign of winter snows. Many members took the opportunity to have a walk in the morning and be back at the hotel for the afternoon entertainment provided firstly by Robin Campbell, who showed a short film made by Tom Weir of Marshall and Moriarty making a second ascent of *Yo-Yo* in 1960.

This was followed by Simon Richardson racing though a range of slides of winter climbs from all over the Highlands. Both were very well received by the audience and made a good start to the evening.

Then it was on to the AGM where, among other things, the secretary informed us that we should expect to move with the times and receive our newsletters by email. Of most concern to the members was the CIC hut and the plans for an significant rebuild of the extension. The final conclusion, reached after a vote was that the Huts Sub-Committee was authorised to proceed. Finally, the meeting approved the nomination of Paul Brian as new President.

The Dinner was very well supported with 158 diners, who were well fed and watered by the hotel. Dave Broadhead gave the Toast to the Guests and our principal Guest, Mike Tighe, replied on their behalf. For the first Dinner that I can remember, he even had a 'support act' who were parading a range of historic outdoor clothing and climbing equipment that he has collected over the last 40 years. These he has kept in storage until now when he hopes to get the majority of it permanently displayed in Fort William.

Our out-going President, Colin Stead, finished the evening by thanking all the speakers and we were then free to retire to the bars to continue the craik.

Sunday was wet but this didn't stop a merry band from making their way up to Steal Hut to enjoy tea and cake provided by our new president Paul Brian.

Next year the Committee are likely to take us farther north and east to Strathpeffer. I look forward to it.

Chris Huntley.

Easter Meet 2007 - Inchnadamph

THE meet was held at Inchnadamph Hotel. Members had elected to hold this year's meet on the weekend following the Easter holiday. In spite of, or maybe because of, this change of date the meet was well attended. There had been a couple of weeks of good weather and we enjoyed warm hazy days with only mild winds. There was almost no snow on the hills. Conditions were so good that several members, after they had climbed their chosen hills, adopted Iain Smart's custom of having a relaxing sleep in the heather beside a singing burn. John Hay and Bill McKerrow walked to the meet from the head of Glen Casseley and Mike Fleming cycled back from Seana Bhraigh while Des Rubens and Dave Broadhead climbed four new routes at Flurain.

Members explored new areas and climbing including Slabs of Breabag, Tarsuinn Breabag, Stac Pollaidh, Quinag, Canisp, Braebag, Conival, Ben More Asynt, Meallan Liath Coire Mhic Dughaill, Cranstackie and Beinn Spionnaidh, Strone Crag, Eididh nan Clach Geala, Ben Hope, Ben Klibreck, Meall a Chrasgaidh, Sgurr nan Clach Geala, Sgurr Each and Glas Bheinn.

Those present: President Paul Brian, Robin Campbell, Brian Fleming, Douglas Lang, Peter MacDonald and guest Calum Anton, Bob Richardson, Iain Smart, Colin Stead, Dick Allen, Peter Biggar, Dave Broadhead, Robin Chalmers, Quentin Crichton, Mike Fleming, John Fowler and guest Helen Forde, Phil Gribbon, John Hay, Bill McKerrow, John Mitchell, Roger Robb, Des Rubens, David Stone, Nigel Suess and guest Maureen Suess.

Dick Allen.

Ski Mountaineering Meet 2007

Members present: Chris Ravey, Anthony Walker, Donald Balance, Ewan Clark, Graham Dudley, Bob Barton, Bob Reid and David Eaton, accompanied by guests Gordon Clark, Dave Howard, Ian Crofton and Dave Coustick.

The ski mountaineering meet returned to Base Camp at Mar Lodge over the weekend of February 24-25, 2007. This is at least the third time that the meet has been held here, which reflects the standard of the accommodation and suitability for this sociable event.

Keen to set the pace for the weekend, Reid and Crofton arrived early on Friday and made an ascent of Carn a'Mhaim. Unfortunately, the snow was noticeable only by its absence.

Later on Friday evening the rest of the party arrived. The Internet is a wonderful thing and, by the number of mountain bikes attached to members cars, it appeared that everybody had been researching the recent snow reports and forming their own opinions, namely that the white stuff would be very hard to find.

Following a sociable breakfast, numerous parties set out for the hills on Saturday morning. Needless to say that skis were left behind in all cases. Ravey and Walker opted for a day without mechanical advantage and walked up Carn Damhaireach, making a circular route back by taking in Carn Bhac and Carn Creagach. A few patches of snow were noted but the conditions were generally spring like, although the summits were in the cloud. The mountain hares were extremely conspicuous, their white coats standing out on the green hillsides. Eleven were counted at one time.

Ballance and Eaton made an ascent of Carn a Mhaim. Again, very little snow was seen – just as well since skis had been left in Glasgow. Mountain bikes were the chosen mechanical aid and were used to gain access to the hills. The pair obviously had too much time on their hands in the afternoon as it is reported that snooker was enjoyed in the main section of Mar Lodge upon their return.

Clark, Clark, Howard and Dudley ascended Bheinn Bhrotain and Monadh Mor, fully assisted by bikes, with no snow encountered until 950m. Barton, Crofton and Reid (the elder statesmen of the group), covered 26 miles on bikes plus a misty wet ascent on foot of Carn Ealer and An Sgarsoch.

Reports on Sunday's activities have been hard to come by, although it is reported that Dudley, Clark and Howard made an ascent of Beinn Bhreac, partially assisted by bikes and with virtually no snow seen. The ascent was followed by an exciting mountain bike traverse of the Clais Fhearnaig

Following retail therapy and Sunday lunchtime indulgence, Ravey began to feel the full burden of his status as acting meet convener and set out after lunch to find the white stuff. A very brief break in the cloud revealed linked snow patches high on Carn an Tuirc and Cairn of Claise. In optimistic mood he set off with skis, which were donned at 700m., giving 300m. of skinning up to the summit of Carn an Tuirc. Compass work aided in locating the col between Carn an Tuirc and Cairn of Claise (by foot down snowless slopes). Skis were again used to gain the summit of Cairn of Claise. From which a 1000ft. descent of uninterrupted spring snow was made down Garbh-choire. An unexpected day!

In summary, a fine mountain weekend was enjoyed by all. However, it is rumoured that there is much talk about holding next years ski meet in Norway. Alternatively, we may just accept our fate and re-name the meet as the Mountain Bike weekend.

Chris Ravey.

JMCS REPORTS

Edinburgh Section: Membership is currently 81 and new members continue to join regularly. Rock and winter climbing remain the most popular activities, but members are also active on the hillwalking, skiing and mountain biking fronts.

Regular midweek meets are held every Wednesday. During the winter, these are normally at Heriot-Watt University climbing wall, and in summer the club visits many of the local outdoor venues; sometimes venturing farther afield to Dunkeld or Northumberland. There is also a regular contingent of members at Alien Rock on Mondays.

Popular summer meet destinations included Glen Feshie, Glenbrittle, Buttermere and our own Smiddy hut in Dundonnel, with the weather being mostly benign. Routes climbed included *King Bee* on Creag Dubh, *Triple Buttress* on Beinn Eighe, The Old Man of Stoer, and the round of Corrie Lagan incorporating The Cioch, King's Chimney, An Stac and the Inaccessible Pinnacle.

Winter meets were not blessed with such good fortune, with a combination of bad weather and poor conditions meaning that at least one meet finished with not a single climb having been completed. The March meet to the CIC hut, however, had excellent weather and superb ice conditions. Routes included *Wendigo*, *Comb Gully*, *Thompson's Route*, *Two step Corner*, *North Gully (left fork)* and *Green Gully*.

The annual dinner was held at Mar Lodge and was a great success. A good meal was followed by an entertaining speech from Charlie Orr of the SMC. The evening was finished with a game of 'Killer Pool' in the billiard room, surrounded by stags heads and other sporting trophies on the walls.

The club's Smiddy Hut at Dundonnell continues to be popular with clubs from all over the UK and booking well in advance is advisable. The club has also taken a lease on a new building, 'The Cabin', near Newtonmore. Work is currently under way to convert this into a second hut to replace Jock Spot's.

The joint slide nights held with the JMCS and the SMC Eastern Section were well attended by members from both clubs. These are held monthly throughout the winter on Tuesday nights at the South Side Community Centre, 117 Nicholson Street. Talks this year included *Toothpaste in the Arctic*, by Colwyn Jones on his trips to Greenland, Dave Macleod on some of his recent cutting-edge first ascents, as well as subjects as diverse as paragliding and mountain footpaths.

Officials elected: *Hon. President*, John Fowler; *Hon. Vice-President*, Euan Scott; *President*, Patrick Winter; *Vice-President* and *Smiddy Custodian*, Helen Forde (30 Reid Terrace, Edinburgh, EH3 5JH, 0131 332 0071); *Secretary*, Robert Fox (10/3 South Gyle Loan, Edinburgh, 0131-334-5582 e-mail secretary@edinburghjmcs.org.uk); *Treasurer*, Bryan Rynne; *Meets Secretary*, Sue Marvell; *The Cabin Custodian*, Ali Borthwick.

Robert Fox.

Perth Mountaineering Club (JMCS Perth Section): The club seemed to have ditched the 2005 bad weather jinx, starting with a successful meet at Glen Etive in January when Brenda Clough ascended her final Munro, Stob Coire Sgreamhach and champagne was enjoyed at the summit.

More sunshine was enjoyed on the Glen Brittle meet with Skye basking while heavy showers could be seen on the mainland.

The June meet to the remote Garbh Choire of Beinn a' Bhuird was well supported and whetted the appetite for similar trips in the future; after a high camp in the corrie many enjoyed climbing *Squareface* while Graham Nicoll and partner climbed *Slochd Wall* on Mitre Ridge. The atmosphere and the quality of the climbing made this an excellent meet.

The Aonach Eagach provided an excellent venue for the July meet which was very well attended. The weather was dry and warm and luckily the predicted rain did not materialise. For some it was their first experience of a ridge and proved to be an exhilarating day.

A small group attempted a Cross-Mounth Walk in July. The day started off with thick mist but this soon cleared by the time the summit of Glas Maol was reached. A spectacular sight of several hundred deer in one of the coires was enjoyed. The weather improved steadily over the day giving wonderful views and culminated in a stunning evening as the group descended Lochnagar.

Good weather failed us during the Northumberland meet which saw our members getting a thorough soaking and even attempting a climb with an umbrella!

The September day meet to Buachaille Etive Mor was again well attended. The weather started off looking ominous and ended in very heavy rain. However, the day was enjoyed by all with several climbing routes attempted including *Curved*

Ridge, Lagangarbh Buttress and D Gully Buttress. The rain did not inspire anyone to hang around on the summit so everyone decamped to the Kingshouse for tea.

The Annual Dinner was held at the Ceilidh Place, Ullapool and was attended by a select bunch. The weekend forecast was horrendous but miraculously we managed to avoid the bad weather and instead enjoyed some great views from various summits. A slight altercation over access rights added to the excitement of the weekend.

Wednesday evening climbing meets were well attended with superb weather in the main and only one evening being called off. Some old favourites such as Polney and Cave Crag were enjoyed as well as some interesting new ones such as Farm Crag. The air ambulance was only called out the once!

PSNS/PMC Joint Lecture was an inspiring and informative talk presented by a team of four Scout Leaders with excellent slides. An overview of expeditions to Elbrus, McKinley, Cerro, Aconcagua and Kilimanjaro was given and the project is to culminate with Mount Everest being climbed in April 2007 which is the worldwide centenary of scouting.

Officials elected: *President*, Donald Barrie; *Vice-President*, Trish Reed; *Secretary*, Lucy Garthwaite, St Ann's Cottage, North Street, Burrelton, PH13 9PB – 01828 670447; *Meets Secretary*: Claire Aldridge; *Newsletter Editor*: Des Bassett; *Treasurer*, Pam Dutton; *Committee Members*, Chris Hine, Phil Taylor, Ray Lee, Irene Macgregor.

Lucy Garthwaite.

Glasgow Section: The 2006 winter season was variable, and as usual it was a matter of being in the right place at the right time. Pre-Christmas 2006, cold weather in November and December allowed some mixed climbing at the higher venues. A JMCS team in Cairngorm's Coire an Lochain had a lucky escape when a large block was pulled off by the leader, destroying the second's rucksack on his back but leaving him otherwise unscathed. Those able to take time off work mid-week found excellent rimed-up crags on the Bridge of Orchy hills.

January and the start of February were generally lacking in snow, but club members took advantage of the odd cold period to climb water-ice and mixed routes. The small amounts of snow meant that the Northern Corries proved popular, with members climbing *The Genie*, *Pot of Gold*, *Savage Slit* and *Central Crack Route*, among others, as well as some 'un-starred classics' such as *Vent Rib Direct* and *Inventive*. The paucity of snow in early February is indicated by the story of one experienced club member ascending the same two routes (Ben Nevis' No. 2 and Gardyloo Gullies) on consecutive weekends because there was no other snow to be found on the mountain! Heavy snow in mid-February followed by a period of cold gave the mountains a wintery appearance but in most places did not consolidate well, so that time consuming deep wading and snow clearing were required on routes. The first heavy snowfall coincided with a club meet in Glen Coe, and members made use of this to climb *Flake Route*, *West Chimney*, *Sphinx* (much longer than the guidebook's 135m.) and for a mass ascent of *D Gully Buttress*. The CIC hut meet in March coincided with disappointing ice conditions, but the attendees made good use of the mixed climbing opportunities, ascending *Observatory Ridge* and *Route I*, among others. An accident in which a member broke his leg falling on *North East Buttress* led to a helicopter rescue, and stopped

his climbing activities for most of the summer, but at least kept him off the hills so he could spend more time with his new family.

Finally, towards the end of March good ice conditions started to appear, with several members visiting a busy Creag Meaghaidh for *The Wand*, *Diadem*, *Centre Post Direct*, *South Post*, *Missed the Post*, and *Smith's* on a weekend which provided the best ice conditions of the year for many. The same weekend saw a mass JMCS ski to, and ascent of, *Deep-cut Chimney* in the Cairngorms. A thaw was followed by another cold snowy period which enabled a last few winter routes to be done in April by JMCS parties on Shelter Stone Crag and Eagle Ridge. So the winter at least provided club members with some climbing in six months of the year, even if not much ice or névé was to be found anywhere.

Two members went ski touring in the Pennine Alps accompanied by two SMC members. Three 4000m. peaks (Weissmeis, Breithorn and Castor) and two 4500m. peaks (Zumsteinspitze and Signalkuppe) were ticked over 10 splendid days. In contrast to Scotland the weather was excellent and fresh powder snow on three mornings added to the experience.

The spring started promisingly with good weather, apart from the Easter weekend when those loyal to Scotland were rained and winded off the hills and crags. The first May bank holiday weekend in contrast was gloriously sunny, with JMCS parties climbing on Aonach Dubh, Caithness sea cliffs, and elsewhere. The Coruisk work meet at the end of May had the traditional wind and rain to wash all the paint off before it could dry.

The cool spring kept the midges at bay for a while, so that midweek evening cragging around Glasgow in May and June was very pleasant. (Two keen club members with a fast car and fit legs included Ben Dorain as a midweek evening climbing venue). Of particular note was a meet at the Whangie with 20 attendees (two of whom were eight months' pregnant), barbeques, beers, and a long walk back in the dark.

The hot dry summer allowed members to tick many seldom-dry routes in Scotland, the Lakes and Wales, including the first ascent of a new two-star route on Grey Butress, Newlands, Lake District – *El Scorchio* (E1). Shelter Stone's *Steeple*, *Needle* and the *Pin*, proved popular, one team enjoyed *Torro* on the Ben, and several members were pleased to find the routes on Creagan a' Choire Etchachan dry.

As usual, many JMCS were to be found climbing abroad, mostly in Europe in the summer, but some farther afield. One party visited the desert around Moab in Utah climbing several classics including the *Kor-Ingels* on Castleton Tower, *Ancient Art* on Fisher Towers and *Supercrack* at the jamming mecca of Indian Creek. They report landscape and rock formations "out of this world" and that both climbing and hiking in the region are exceptional. They give two particular pieces of advice for would-be visiting climbers – take three sets of cams and, if you think you can jam well then think again!

The usual suspects' raid on the Alps yielded a number of ticks; In the Dolomites, *Comici* (classic north face) and *Yellow Edge* on the Tre Cime, and *Big Michelluzzi* at Sella Pass; *Luna Nascente* in Val di Mello; *Motorhead*, *Graue Wand* and *Kingspitze NE face* in the Grimsel area; and *Cengalo NW Pillar* and *South Ridge* (Bregaglia).

Later in the year, two groups visited Kalymnos and returned with tired arms but much enthusiasm for the steep rock and pleasant location.

The AGM and Dinner were held in November at the Bridge of Orchy Hotel, and the Christmas meet at Lagangarbh featured the usual eclectic mix of slides and photos of the year's activities.

Club members are not just active climbing. Several members are getting close to the end of their Munros, and the Corbett-baggers are also making good progress. Scottish ski-mountaineering this winter was restricted to just six JMCS-member-days, but would prove more popular with more snow. Mountain bikes are seen on many club meets, helped by the access legislation to allow us to explore hitherto out-of-bounds Highland estate tracks.

The club has welcomed a number of new members this year, and membership now stands at 99. Weekend meets are held fortnightly and are often over-subscribed unless the weather forecast is really poor. Members meet regularly midweek at the climbing wall or crags near Glasgow, and the fortnightly Thursday night pub meet in the Three Judges is ever popular.

Jeremy Morris.

London Section: Like the year before, 2006 was characterised by a wide range of activity – climbing, walking, mountain biking and sailing at home and abroad. The year began with the traditional President's meet at our hut, Glenafon in Bethesda, when the mild weather forced a change of plan from the CIC hut. In February, however, the section returned to Scotland and from the Raeburn Hut there was climbing on Creag Meagaidh and Munro-bagging in the Drumochter hills but the highlight was an overnight stay by seven members in Culra Bothy and a sunny ascent and descent of Ben Alder by the Leachas ridges in good compact snow.

Spring meets took place in the Lake District, North Wales and Northumberland, mainly rock climbing in between showers. Late May Bank Holiday on Skye was, however, a washout. Some went motor biking and others retreated eastwards, eventually finding dry weather in Perthshire. The now annual sailing trip to the Hebrides took place in June with visits to the Shiant Islands, Soay, Canna, Rona and Skye and there was a delightful meet in the Yorkshire Dales in June care of Chris Comerie and a great weekend in Edale in July, with a three-year old seconding one member up a route (prospective members get younger even if the section is ageing).

In early August, several members were active in the Dolomites. In the autumn it was back to North Wales for meets near the Rhinogs and at the club hut – mainly mountain biking and walking and then an enjoyable club dinner at Plas y Nant (thanks again Nigel).

Work is under way to make Glenafon 'fire safety approved' and paid up membership now stands at 35. We have a new President, Steve Senior, and a new Secretary, John Firmin. Thanks to Chris Bashforth for several years' service in this capacity. 2007 holds plenty in store with a group undertaking the Annapurna circuit and Chula East, and an Alpine meet in the Ecrins alongside the more traditional UK venues.

John Firmin.

SMC AND JMCS ABROAD

Western Canada

SIMON RICHARDSON REPORTS: During May, I made a quick visit to the Coast Mountains of British Columbia on the back of a business trip to Vancouver. During several previous visits I had struck up a strong friendship with Coast Range guru, Don Serl. Don is the author of the guidebook to the Waddington Range, so I was very excited by the opportunity to climb with him on his home ground.

The Coast Mountains are infamous for their poor weather, but most years there are good weather windows in May and August. The rise in temperatures during May transforms the bottomless powder of winter into more consolidated snow, making it an ideal time to attempt snow and ice routes. Don was keen to explore some of the mountains in the Remote Group, but as we flew in by helicopter on May 14, it was clear that the weather window had arrived a little later than usual and the mountains were still heavy with their winter coat.

We landed below Mount Remote (3015m.), and next day made the first ascent of the 400m.-high East Face via the striking central couloir that cuts through the wall. The climbing was about Scottish Grade IV, and comprised a mix of snow, ice and mixed. We arrived on the tiny summit early in the afternoon. The mountain had only been climbed twice before, and we were the first people to visit the summit for nearly 40 years. The descent down the original route kept us guessing all the way, with a mixture of down climbing and the odd judicious abseil, but eventually we arrived back at the tent early in the evening after a very rewarding alpine day.

The next stage of our trip was to transfer glacier systems and descend to the Remote Glacier from where we planned to attempt Mount Bell (3248m.). Don's proposed descent was down a steep 1000m. south-facing slope which had been pummelled by avalanches, but this was far beyond my rudimentary skiing skills. After a day recceing an alternative we skied along a ridge and descended to the Upper Remote Glacier. The 800m. ski descent wearing climbing boots and carrying a large pack was one of the most exhausting things I have ever done in the mountains, and I felt much happier once we were skinning uphill again. We camped below the unclimbed north face of Broad Peak, a fine fluted ice face in the classical mode. It was a beautiful evening and Don remarked that we were probably the second party ever to visit the glacier. Next day we skinned over a col to the Remote Glacier and descended to make camp.

Two days later, our attempt on Bell floundered in soft snow and unstable cornices so we flew out next day. The Coast Mountains, pristine, untravelled and still little explored, will keep future exploratory climbers and mountaineers happy for generations to come.

Norway

PAUL BRIAN REPORTS: Last year everyone seemed to be talking about Norwegian ice, so when the Rescue Team announced a week of subsidised training in Norway with the opportunity for some climbing thrown in, I applied right away. I was dismayed to be the oldest by about 20 years but greatly relieved when Noel Williams also signed up, thereby elevating the average age (and average IQ he would claim) to a more respectable level.

Twenty-two of us flew to just outside Oslo, hired cars and drove about four

hours to Ryuken. The first couple of days were spent in fairly intensive activity and dialogue with the local team. Understandably, they specialise in technical rescues down steep icefalls and inevitably the discussion turned to lowering devices, clumpy things and various other gizmos. Some of our guys work on rope access so the conversation gets pretty complicated and, frankly, catatonically boring. Apart from that it was all good stuff. When access to casualties is difficult, Norwegian rescuers are expected to be able to solo Grade IV. This criterion, if applied to the Lochaber Team would, we reckoned, reduce our numbers to about four people.

Next day involved a master class with three local hard men who demonstrated to us the correct way to climb fragile icicles and overhanging chandelles – (Yeah right – very likely!) At this point Noel took off with one of the locals to tackle a ferocious looking Grade IV. Unfortunately, within minutes his mentor had dislodged a fairly large portion of Norway, which proceeded downwards directly on to Noel's head. One very smashed helmet and minor blackout later, the editor of *Skye Scrambles* found himself inspecting the inside of the local casualty unit. Grogginess disappeared fairly quickly and by the end of the week he was back to normal – leading vertical ice, leaping half-frozen rivers and, on the final day, leading a new route for us all to follow.

The routes come as a bit of a culture shock to your average Scottish climber. For a start, perfect ice is virtually guaranteed from November till the end of April. Most of the climbs are in gorges so one actually walks down to the start – average approach time about 10 minutes. Typically, the routes are one or two pitches long and end up on tree belays or, even better, on the road above. The ice is bomb proof so you get to play with all those whizzo ice screws that you gave yourself for Christmas. There are also some excellent multi-pitch routes higher up the hillsides but they can be avalanche prone after heavy snow. In fact, the day before we arrived, the local team had been called out to rescue a party on such a route. The party had abseiled from ice screws but had run out of hardware after 10 pitches then called for help. Brits of course. There was an unseemly rush to inspect the route next morning.

As a holiday resort Ryuken is pretty dismal. The sun doesn't penetrate to the valley floor mid-winter and the temperature didn't rise above zero throughout the entire week. As it snowed more or less constantly it makes for a fairly gloomy atmosphere, and frankly, I would get pretty depressed after a while. It's largely an industrial town about the size of Fort William and originally the lift up to the plateau was built to enable workers to get some sun and to fight off the winter blues. The history of the town is interesting because this was the site of the heavy water plant which was sabotaged, then bombed, in the Second World War – there is a museum dedicated to these events in the old Hydro factory.

Costs of the expedition were not as horrendous as we had feared. A week, all-inclusive, cost about £500 – less if you can get really cheap flights – but check the baggage allowance. We met some climbers from Newcastle there for a long weekend.

My impressions were favourable overall. It's not like the real thing but it's good safe fun and it certainly helps fitness and confidence. We came back to an excellent spell on the Ben and many of us knocked off things we had long fancied. Even your correspondent knocked off a couple of Grade 5s (Norwegian Grade 3) and actually enjoyed them for once.

If anyone wants details of accommodation, guidebooks etc. please get in touch and I'll do my best to help.

Lofoten Islands

ALAN HUNT REPORTS: I'm sure you will remember that piece I wrote after a circumnavigation in the s/y *Blue Biscay* 10 years ago, (SMCJ 2000) No! Ah well, since then the awful climbing rat has reared its consuming head and land-based activities have once more assumed a priority, in particular rock climbing. Sailing has become marginalised to trips to Brittany, the isles of the north and West Coast and a murky trip to St. Kilda. However, the urge to sail and climb lurked in the back of my mind, but I couldn't rise to Bill Tilman's efforts, or afford a paid crew. Pabay was out because the anchorage is lousy but the word came round that Lofoten might be a possibility. The *Rockfax* web site had some worthwhile information including one of their ubiquitous mini-guides, a visit sounded worth while and that was that. The travel part of most climbing trips is usually by assured means, a choice of planes, ferries, trains, buses and hire cars. Any excuse to bring a sailing boat into the mix has to add an interest to the trip, especially when it involves crossing the Arctic Circle.

So, it was that a club cooperative of three, one each from the SMC, FRCC, and CC, left Inverness with a fair breeze in mid-May making Shetland in good time. We decided that if possible we would head directly up the North Sea with the option of sneaking into the Norwegian Fjords in the event of severe weather. Twenty four hours later we were rushing toward the impressively rock strewn Norwegian coast to avoid a rapidly increasing northerly gale and four days later we were still there.

Eventually, the wind dropped and we carried on up north in very wet and cold conditions dodging the weather by using the 'inside route' amid spectacular scenery. So much unclimbed rock.

We arrived in Lofoten and the sun came out then along came the fog and we had an anxious time locating the entrance to the fishing harbour of Hennigsvaer, our nearest jump off for cragging. The crags were a medium walk or very short bus ride away with much to do on the quick drying close-grained granite and we managed several classics in the few days before the rain came back with a vengeance. *Gandalph*, a four pitch VS 4c was excellent and *Guns 'n' Roses* at HVS 5a, equally fine. It was surprising how many other climbing teams were camped under the crags, among them some Edinburgh students: "Are you the guys who sailed here?"

"Yes."

"How are you getting back?"

The obvious rude reply came from another student:

"How do you think you s...p..."

So we did, reaching Inverness at the end of June. Wish we could have spent more time up there and I wish the beer hadn't been so expensive.

Europe

BRYAN RYNNE REPORTS: Having visited the Cote du Rhone Villages area for two successive spring holidays, I felt that a select group of us ought to step up the grade. The obvious destination for this was Burgundy (there is even some good climbing there, which clinched matters).

An excellent week was had, extensively sampling a carefully selected range of premium cru wines (well, I walked along the aisle with the trolley, grabbing the most expensive wines in the shop). These were all excellent. To go with this, we also found some tremendous local mouldy cheeses. What more could you ask for? Well, climbing I suppose...

Pinnochio IV6+ Mont Blanc du Tacul. Photo: John Baird.





We managed some very good climbing, although several days were curtailed by late afternoon thunderstorms. We also lost one day to rain. Apart from that, the weather was good for climbing – sunny, but not too hot.

The climbing was all bolted sports routes, ranging from steep, technical slabs at Remigny, to long (35m.) vertical corners at Cormot. We were doing French Grade 5-6, but there is lots of harder grade stuff available to anyone that wants it. Remigny had a tremendous looking wall, overhanging at about 15°, full of 7b routes – a thunderstorm drove us off before we got onto this wall.

CHARLIE ORR REPORTS: There are increasing references in this Journal to mountain-biking: in JMCS reports; in Brian Davison's hut-to-hut epics and, in this issue we have Chris Ravey raising the spectre of the club ski-mountaineering meet facing the challenge of global warming in one of two ways – either decamping to Norway or changing the name to the mountain-bike meet.

In September last year I undertook a five-day journey by mountain bike around the base of the Mont Blanc Massif accompanied by members Tom and George Denholm and a friend Wullie Sloan. The ride covers 180km., mostly off road and takes in 7000m. of climbing over six mountain passes. The route starts in Chamonix, proceeds over the Col du Balme (2191m.) into Switzerland, then into Italy by way of the Grand Col du Ferret (2537m.) finally returning into France by way of the Col de la Seigne (2516m.). We organised this trip (dare I say it) through the company MBMB in Chamonix and were picked up at Geneva airport and ferried to our chalet in Les Bossons just outside the town.

The first inklings that there may be some organisational glitches along the way came when there was a prolonged argument between our guide, Nick, who met us at the chalet, and the Spanish driver, as to who was going to pay for the taxi from Geneva. I immediately put on my 'bugger all to do with me look' and started to load my gear into the chalet. The dispute was eventually settled when Manuel grudgingly accepted Nick's exhortations that "Phil will pay". Phil being, as we later learned, the boss of the company, who didn't exactly endear himself to me at the first night briefing by referring to us as 'Scotties'.

At 10am the following morning we gathered in the courtyard of the chalet ready for the off. At which point Phil, here-in-after referred to as Boycie – bearing an uncanny likeness, we thought, to the 'Fools and Horses' character, with his wide-boy London accent and braying laugh – appeared and asked who was going to join his 'elite' group (there were two groups of 11) All the 'Scotties' managed to resist this siren call without too much difficulty and each succeeding day only served to confirm us in what proved to be a very fortuitous choice.

A gentle road ride of two miles or so brought us into the main street in Chamonix where some of the group stocked up on spare tubes and more than a few energy gels. The first off-road riding trended up through the woods by the River Arve to Argentiere and as we entered the village we passed a number of very spaced out (not just distance-wise) competitors in the Mont Blanc Ultra endurance running race, which basically followed our route but in the opposite direction. We later found out that the winner completed the course in about 21 hours, but the guys we saw on their last legs were on the last leg of the race into Chamonix and would narrowly avoid the 48-hour cut-off point.

We continued uphill to the village of Le Tour, the scene of a devastating avalanche some years back which all but wiped out the village. Here we took the only cable

Lofoten Islands. Photo: Alan Hunt.

Skiing on the Hardanger Plateau above the Rjukan Valley, Norway. Photo: Noel Williams.

car of the trip up to the Col du Balme which at 2191m. forms the border with Switzerland. Lunch was taken here before some great twisting single-track across the col where we encountered the one and only snow field crossing of the trip. Once we reached the tree line on the Swiss side we had to negotiate some very muddy, rooty and steep single-track which, after the torrential rain of the preceding days, had been churned up well and proper by the passage of the hundreds of endurance race competitors. One of our number came to grief on this descent sustaining quite nasty facial injuries which necessitated hospital treatment and sadly, he took no further part in the proceedings.

This technical descent took us onto a fire road and then on to tarmac and after a couple of miles of steep climbing, a mixture of trail and road, we reached the Col du Forclaz and our hotel. I omitted to explain that the deal with MBMB included our luggage being ferried between each overnight stop. It is possible to do this tour unsupported and we did see a couple of people doing just that. However, George has a saying that he applies in situations like this involving the words 'nuts' and 'mangle' and in this particular case I would have to agree with him. The freedom of being able to ride unencumbered by a hefty rucksack was well worth the extra cost.

From now on it was nine o'clock starts and when we went off-road the next morning onto grassy single-track there was still a heavy dew about and when I locked up on a steep section the tumble that followed was inevitable. No damage done, we continued down winding track to the main road leading to the Grand St. Bernard Pass. After a mile or so we turned uphill and there followed a steep road climb to the village of Champex where we stopped for lunch. This was the regular pattern to the day and despite taking on board huge amounts of pasta over the week I registered a net weight loss at the end of the trip, it was simply burned off as necessary fuel. Calories in/Calories out is the simple equation here and no matter what winky-wanky diet is followed by people trying to lose weight it is this universal truth that lies behind it. I digress, enough of that particular hobbyhorse. I took the climbing prize by a fair margin – competitive, who me? I'm a 'roadie' at heart and I had the polka dot Tour de France climbers' jersey in my bag but I was making sure of my position before I put it on the following day – sad really isn't it (rhetorical).

The day finished with an ascent of the Val Ferret beneath the famous Amonée Slab which features in Rebuffat's *100 Finest Routes*, after which we overnighted in the tiny village of Ferret. All accommodation was in mountain gîtes, mostly with shared rooms. Only once were we in dormitories, an emergency measure after an administrative cock-up by Boycie.

The next two days saw the hardest climbing of the trip over the Grand col de Ferret at 2537m. overnighting in Courmayeur and over the Col de la Seigne 2516m. – where we experienced falling snow at the summit – and the Col de Roseland the following day, overnighting on the shore of very picturesque Lac du Roseland. The final day was, yes you've guessed it, climbing again up to Montjoie with a final descent to Les Contamines and St. Gervais.

Even with the pampering of no luggage and with hotel accommodation overnight this trip is pretty demanding and, if you're tempted, make sure both you and your bike are up to it before you go. I'm not even going to tell you about the travelling maseuse – I can sense enough grumblings of derision as it is!

REVIEWS

Hostile Habitats – Scotland's Mountain Environment. (The Scottish Mountaineering Trust, 2006, hardback, 256pp. ISBN 978-0907521938, £15.00.)

This is an excellent, vacuum-filling new title from the SMT stable that sets out to give walkers and climbers a greater understanding and appreciation of the landscape and species that constitutes the Scottish mountain environment.

The 12 contributors, including the joint editors, Nick Kempe and Mark Wrightham, have well-founded academic, scientific and/or conservation backgrounds and are all regular hill-users. (It is worth reading their CVs before starting out on the book).

Seven of the nine chapters cover geology, shaping of the landscape, vegetation, invertebrate life, birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians and fish and finally, human traces. Each of them also includes an identification section illustrating the more common features and species to be encountered in the hills. However, these sections are by no means exhaustive, therefore the work should not be regarded as a full field guide, but rather an excellent primer and catalyst for the more curious and inspired to further invest in proper field guides and monographs, as required.

A major criticism of the book must be the presentation of the index, which is less than user-friendly, especially for the novice. Broad subject groupings, from 'Birds' to 'Vegetation' are listed alphabetically, but this means that if you want to source information on, say, Adders and Ticks, you have to find your way to the 'Mammals Reptiles and Amphibians' then to 'Invertebrates' (but not 'Invertebrate, general') sections. Also the page numbers for the photographs and illustrations really should be highlighted in bold typeface – standard practice in publishing. These points will, I am sure, be rectified in future editions of which there are likely to be a number for, by Christmas 2006, most retailers had run out of supplies, with Tiso reporting sales as 'phenomenal'. Interestingly, the book is selling well to those who work, as opposed to play, in the hills – foresters, rangers and instructors.

Hostile Habitats is an ideal companion volume to *The Munros* and *The Corbetts* and the area guides, and is good value for money. The photography is superb, including a nice retrospective of the late Bob Scott of The Derry gralloching a stag on Beinn a' Bhuid.

The concluding chapter, 'The future of Our Mountains' by Nick Kempe, is a concise and thought-provoking account of the status of attitudes towards our mountains and current activity to protect them. Kempe does not preach nor exhort, but asks us to: "...consider the wider questions of what the natural environment, including mountains, is for and what roles humans should play in them". And, not for the first or last time, W. H. Murray's words are borrowed to close the book and to define our responsibilities towards the mountain environment we love: "Land and wildlife have their own being in their own right. Our recreation is an incidental gain, not an end in itself to be profitably pursued by exploiting land where that means degrading it. The human privilege is to take decisions for more than our own good; our reward that it turns out to be best for us too."

Ian Hamilton.

A Measure of Munros: Graham Wilson, with illustrations by Gerry Dale (Millrace, hardback, 181pp., ISBN 1-902173-18-X. £13.95.)

The OED gives no fewer than 23 different definitions of the noun ‘measure’ and this book incorporates a number of these in dealing with the Munros. There is something on the history of Sir Hugh’s action in preparing his tables, leading to comment on the quantity ascertained. Further discussion of the tables and their revision involves forming an opinion and also involves ‘Munro’ as a unit of denomination and whether or not it is a standard denomination. How various Munroists have approached their odyssey gives rise to a plan or course of action – and so on.

As a consequence, the broad-brush approach does not fit easily into the normal categories of books about Munros. It is neither a guide book nor a detailed account of the author’s peregrinations among the Scottish hills, though these are touched on. Rather it is a *tour d’horizon*, laced with reminiscences, which acknowledges many of the matters which are of concern and interest to the ever-growing cohort of those who climb Munros. While there are no strikingly novel topics or insights, the text bounces along in a slightly jokey way which entertains without being demanding. Such an oversight of the Munro scene is useful, particularly so as the author is concerned with a Scotland-based activity but from an England-based perspective. Wilson’s acquaintanceship with Scotland clearly goes back some time with a first introduction during a wet sojourn in Glen Brittle. It is implicit in the text that his mountain experience is in no way confined to the Highlands, but clearly his regard for them has been enduring and he makes a pleasant companion during his tour.

The book though hardback is smaller than a normal paperback and at 181 pages is not long. The small format detracts from Gerry Dale’s drawings which are all less than a page in size and at times difficult to identify with the given title. There are also some minor errors – the ‘Whitbread Wilderness’ was not in Knoydart – but these tend to keep one alert rather than annoy. As a succinct and readable review of ‘Munro Matters’ Wilson’s book has much to recommend it.

Iain A. Robertson.

Millican Dalton – A search for Romance and Freedom (The Life and Times of a Borrowdale Caveman) M. D. Entwistle (Mountainmere Research, 2004, Paperback, £8.99.

Anyone who has ever visited a pub in Keswick will have likely noticed an old monochrome photo on the wall of a strange lanky bearded figure in shorts and a ‘Robin Hood’ hat piloting an even stranger looking craft, a raft made of sticks and old junk equipped with a tattered sail, close to the shore of a lake (it matters not which pub, there is one in nearly all of them). Inquiry with the barman will reveal that the subject of the photo was Millican Dalton and that, “before the War”, he lived in a cave and gave climbing lessons to tourists. And that, quite probably is the extent of the barman’s, and indeed most other Keswickian’s knowledge, but now Mathew Entwistle has gathered together what flesh he can to pad out those bare bones and produce this small biography of Borrowdale’s self-styled ‘Professor of Adventure’.

Dalton was born in Nenthead, near Alston, Cumbria in 1867, where his father worked at a lead mine. However, with the early death of his father, and the decline

of the lead industry, the family moved to London when he was 13 years old. From his early days he had an adventurous spirit, and by his late teens was visiting the Lake District and North Wales for walking holidays accompanied by his brothers and other friends. He was by now working in an office but felt “stifled” and in 1901, quit his job to live on a plot of land he had bought in rural Essex, and pursue his dreams of “romance freedom and escapism” and of becoming a mountain-guide. In fact, Dalton soon became what would now be called a multi-activity instructor, offering the chance not only to walk and climb, but also, as he advertised, ‘Camping Holidays, Mountain Rapid Shooting, Rafting, Hairbreadth Escapes’, and he operated in the Alps, as well as in Snowdonia, the Scottish Highlands, and the Lake District. It was the latter that became his main centre, and he was soon pitching camp all summer at High Lodore Farm (at the foot of Shepherd’s Crag), from where he ran his courses.

He continued to run them for almost half-a-century, though quickly adopted a cave on Castle Crag in the Jaws of Borrowdale as a more weather-proof summer residence. He died, at the age of 79, in the hard winter of 1947, and had been still active guiding in the summer before his death. Sadly, his ongoing and unfinished work *Philosophy of Life* has vanished, but can probably best be summed up with his quote: “The simplest life is the happiest.” It is safe to say that Dalton was neither a great, nor a notorious man (the more usual subjects of biographies), but he was one of the most picturesque characters that climbing has produced.

In addition to his guiding activities, he was a notable expert on the manufacture of lightweight camping equipment and clothes (he used to make all his own), and despite his lack of hygiene (it was apparently wise to stay downwind of him!) he was popular with the ladies and became a good friend of the noted Lakeland climber Mabel Barker. He was too old to fight in the Great War, but as a dedicated pacifist, he would almost certainly have refused anyway. His greatest achievement though, is that he did what so many of us long to do but dare not, he quit his job and lived a life of freedom. That old monochrome photo on the pub wall hangs today, a monument and a niggling reminder to us all that it can be done.

Entwistle has done the climbing community a great service in researching and gathering together what he can about a man who left no written records – never the easiest of tasks, and taking the gamble of publishing it himself. His account is workmanlike, rather than a masterpiece of modern literature, but it is readable enough, and is enlivened by many of the photographs of Dalton that have survived. Further information is available at his website www.professor-of-adventure.com.

Stephen Reid.

Breaking Trail: Arlene Blum (Simon and Schuster, 2005, Hardback, 336pp., ISBN 978– 0743258463, £18.99.)

Arlene Blum writes a gripping autobiography of her life among the enchantingly beautiful, but dangerous high-altitude peaks. She tells a short poignant or humorous story of an aspect of her difficult childhood at the start of each chapter and we learn how this fuelled her determination to succeed in life. This is the determination she displays in her climbing and it enables her to be a successful leader of world-class expeditions, the first American ascent of Annapurna and the first all women ascent of Mount McKinley to name but two. It also results in a highly-successful career in bio-chemical research and in parenting.

A book as well suited for the climber as non-climber for its powerful and

interesting insight into this amazingly accomplished and fascinating life. It is intensely personal at times. We are given a humorous insight into the characters of the climbers she spends time with on her expeditions. She shares both the good and bad times, including the loss of life as a result of the vagaries of avalanche, an ever-present threat on the high mountains she conquers. She also covers extremely well the sex discrimination of the 1970s, when men would not allow women to achieve the same successes on the hill as themselves, nor recognise female achievements, as equals in climbing, when they occurred.

I endorse the foreword by no less a mountaineer than Chris Bonnington: "The book is a compelling narrative on many levels – it is a warm and intimate memoir, an important account of the development of women's mountaineering and a dramatic adventure story."

Ann Macdonald.

Todhra: Dennis Gray, (The Flux Gallery Press, Leeds, 2005, 179pp., ISBN 0-9550158-1-2).

Works of fiction are rare in the world of climbing literature. Invented adventures are simply not as vivid or believable as real life, and fiction best deals with relationships and feelings, things with which climbers are not always comfortable. Dennis Gray's 'coming out' novel of how a climber and his circle of friends come to terms with his being gay proves both points.

The subject matter is in part autobiographical, but would have been too raw and painful to deal with in this form. The settings are all very familiar, Ben Nevis, the Alps, well known cliffs and climbs. A remarkable fictional climbing career is portrayed, with the protagonist achieving new routes on the Orion Face, the Grandes Jorasses and Nanga Parbat in quick succession, with the odd climbing competition win thrown in for good measure. None of this comes over as very credible, and contrasts with the intense and even traumatic personal experiences the main character has to deal with alongside his climbing triumphs. These are described candidly and much more convincingly than the clichéd and prosaic climbing action.

The title, *Todhra*, is taken from a desert gorge in Morocco, but the front cover features an icy Karakoram spire. This confusion of images reflects a similar contradiction between the dry action sequences on the climbs and the uncomfortable but powerful emotions described in the intervening pages. The main character is real and vulnerable enough, at least when not on the rocks, though secondary characterisation is rather more limited. Gray's style (despite the efforts of an editor) is perhaps more suited to a magazine article, and the plot stretches credibility farther than a nylon rope, but none of this should detract from an honest attempt to tackle a difficult and largely unspoken subject.

Adam Kassyk.

The Lowland Outcrops, Edited by Tom Prentice (SMT, 460pp., ISBN 978-0907521846, £20).

The Cinderella of Scottish climbing goes to the ball. This, the latest in the SMC's gorgeously revamped series of guides, showcases that most neglected hinterland of Scotland's climbing empire – the Southern Lowlands and the Galloway hills. Often by-passed by Anglos intent on the lure of the Highlands, and only sporadically visited by north-centric Scots, vast areas of rock remain to be discovered by a

mass audience. History suggests this traditional indifference is likely to continue, but this magnificently detailed and presented guidebook now means that ignorance is no excuse.

Its 460 pages encompass markedly contrasting and varied climbing terrain, from vast tracts of beautiful and peaceful terrain in Galloway and the Borders to the semi-industrial venues of the Central Belt quarries. The explosion of new routes all over this area, many of them of considerable quality, is a testament to the energy of a small band of exploratory enthusiasts over the last decade.

The 'modernisation' of Dumbarton Rock is comparatively well known (a climbing shot of the chief protagonist, Dave MacLeod, naturally takes pride of place on the front cover). But arguably, the most important function of the new guide for punters is in highlighting the development of places like the Galloway sea cliffs and exquisite roadside venues like Clifton in Dumfriesshire, as well as in detailing the thorough exploration of the: "least frequented climbing area in Britain", the Galloway Hills. (*The Lowland Outcrops* is a useful shorthand, but rather a misleading title in this regard.)

Even more surprising is the perhaps unlikely development of winter climbing in this part of the world, with neo-classic low and middle grade water ice routes such as *Dow Spout* and the wonderfully named *Spout of the Clints* which, climate change permitting, will surely join the ticklist of esoterica sought by cold climb aficionados.

The production standards are what we've come to expect from the SMC; quality binding, laminated cover, clean layout and a selection of often beautiful and well-reproduced colour photographs. Even the plethora of painfully punned route names on the theme of Goats in the Galloway section can't detract from the generally pleasing aesthetics of the guide.

For keen climbers based in northern England and southern Scotland, *The Lowland Outcrops* therefore represents a somewhat urgent addition to the library. For everyone else, it's an ideal source book of ideas for a trip away to somewhere different and often quite magical.

Colin Wells

Scottish Rock Climbs: Andy Nisbet, (SMT, 456pp., ISBN 978-0907521860, £21.)

Considering the sheer scale of mountainous and rocky terrain in Scotland, it is perhaps surprising there have been so few attempts to produce selective rock climbing guides. In the distant past this was due partly to a *de facto* embargo by the SMC on packaging detailed information in guidebook form; in order to write such a thing one had to be a well-informed insider, unconcerned by the pressure of peers, who desired to maintain the aura of mystery surrounding Scottish mountains.

Into the breach stepped brave Hamish McInnes with his two-volume *Scottish Climbs* (1971) which also covered winter climbs. Although it opened up Caledonia to the great unwashed and ruled the selected guide roost north of the Border for nearly two decades, MacInnes's work was only a partial success. Its eccentric descriptions, dependence on photo-topos and bizarrely unique grading system ensured it probably alienated as many visitors as it encouraged; hence its widely applied derisive moniker: "The MacInnes Bumper Book of

Lies.” (As a consequence, there are still many who continue to regard rock-climbing north of the Border as a miasma of horrendous approach marches across midge-infested bogs, streaming cliffs in obscure corries, and cold mossy rock – an image which is only partly true).

It wasn't until the late 1980s that others felt confident enough to improve on this state of affairs. Ken Crockett and Steve Ashton's *100 Classic Climbs: Central and Southern Scotland* (1988) again felt the need to incorporate winter climbs and, excellent though it was, was comparatively limited in its compass and only covered the southern part of the Highlands (a projected northern companion volume sadly never materialised). The first attempt at a modern style rock-only greatest-hits compilation came in 1990 with Kevin Howett's *Rock Climbing in Scotland*. This, however, suffered from the inclusion of a disproportionate number of technically hard routes, with 30% being E3 or 6a or above. Given that the main purchasers of selective guides tend to be less-than-obsessed recreational climbers, the inclusion of routes at E7 6c was probably regarded by the majority of users as aspirational fantasy decoration only (Crockett and Ashton's guide, for example, consciously rejected any climbs above E2).

So by the 21st century the world was still waiting for a modern, balanced guide to Scottish rock climbs that showcased the best routes at grades that most on-sighting visitors could cope with. And at last, here it is; ironically produced by the venerable club that did so much to keep the country's rocky jewels hidden through much of the previous century. But these days the SMC is a very different beast, a reformed character with respect to data protection and keen to show off its formidable knowledge. And as a major pioneer of routes in his own right, and a gifted communicator, there are few better people qualified to compile such a guidebook than Andy Nisbet.

His selection of climbs is grand, sampling the best rock from Orkney to Galloway, and from the Outer Hebrides to the Cairngorms. The mix of styles is equally eclectic, from 11-pitch Alpine scale climbs on Ben Nevis to eight-metre high outcrop routes by the road. Selective crag photo topos and diagrams are clear and crisp, while copious photographs illustrate the nature of many of the climbs. Packaged in the SMC's now established 'long thin' style, the guide remains relatively compact despite being packed with an astonishing 1200 routes – there's enough here to fill a lifetime of visits. The book is designed to last for this length of time too – sealed with a robust plastic-backed cover, this is also a guide which is likely to survive many outings in the dreichest of Scottish weather.

Best of all is Nisbet's concisely informative and occasionally lyrical text which exudes authority and wise advice about a boggling array of climbs using little textual *hors d'oeuvres* prior to clear pitch descriptions. It makes this more than a guidebook to take to the crag, but one to dip into at home for inspiration and to relive old adventures, something to lose yourself in over a dram or two by a roaring fire. Its spirit is best summed up by Nisbet's wise words: “Don't let the pace of modern life dominate; make time for your climbing.”

Colin Wells

On Thin Ice: Mick Fowler, (Baton Wicks, hardback, 224pp., ISBN 978-1898573586, £18.99).

The beauty of climbing really is that there is so much freedom to find your own wee 'brand' of experience within a broad sport, free of rules and, for some at least, a rebel of fashion. Just say the word 'Fowler' to any outdoor climber and they will smile and know exactly what kind of climbing is coming up next in the conversation. Mick Fowler's name is utterly synonymous with adventure – British style.

In his previous writing, Fowler (he likes to refer to himself and climbing peers by second name only, so I'll do the same) has gradually perfected the art of convincing us that he is nothing more than a keen bumbly just like you and me, tumbling on their remarkable adventure almost by chance. The image works well; it seems like anyone could get into these situations, and if Fowler can get into all these scrapes, and get out again, then maybe you or I could as well? Fowler talks to us on our level once again in *On Thin Ice*, relating the stories of more great Himalayan first ascents and other unusual adventures, from one adventurous soul to an adventurous audience who will believe that they could pull this sort of stuff off too.

The accessible (and therefore all the more inspiring) image is sealed by two more aspects of the Fowler demeanour; his easy writing style and constant reminders that he is a nine-to-five man just like the rest of us. There is no doubt it is quite fascinating to read how he has constructed this life of holding down a responsible job as a taxman, living a family life and getting his house featured in *Period Homes* magazine. Yet on the 'other side' he's planning audacious first ascents in little known corners of the world over a real ale down the local and then getting out there and making them happen with exceptional consistency. Real life versus climbing life is a constant battle back and forth, running round the heads of mountaineers trying to have their cake and eat it in life. Fowler not only seems to have found the secret to climbing–life plate spinning, but practises what he preaches with seemingly effortless ease. And now he has written the definitive book on it.

On Thin Ice can be either of two things for you; an entertaining, at times funny and captivating read about one man's adventures in beautiful places and an insight into his motivation and appreciation of the art of climbing, or it can be a one stop guide to being a world class mountaineer yet somehow never doing any training and doing it all within the bounds of the meagre yearly holiday allowance.

The highpoint of the first ascent stories is the dramatic and ultimately tragic ascent of Changabang in 1997 with Steve Sustad, Andy Cave and Brendan Murphy. Murphy was killed on the descent. After a few chapters of the familiar formula of sticky situations somehow turning out for the good, this epic cuts starkly back to the fact that the mountains have the last word, always. The Changabang story comes fairly early in the book and it takes several more chapters before its influence on you wears off and you begin to enjoy the new and positive climbing experiences Fowler gets up to. I guess that is a measure of the strength of this, the most powerful part of the book. Occasionally, I found the self-deprecating style a little overdone. We all know, including Fowler himself, that in truth he isn't really a bumbly at all, but this is his style of humour and it does entertain.

The lasting feeling I had from this work was that far away places and far flung adventures aren't really so far away – you just have to go forth and have them. You may find yourself questioning the logic of going to the Alps next summer – after all China is just another few hours away.

Dave MacLeod.

The Climbing Essays: Jim Perrin, (In Pinn, 2006, 336pp., ISBN 978-1903238479, £18.00).

I have to confess to a somewhat hypocritical dubiety. I've produced one (or two, if you include an accidental alias) book reviews for the SMCJ in the past and I'm still not sure what they are meant to achieve. They provide free publicity for the publishers, of course, but I doubt that anything I have to say will really influence your decision to read and/or buy this or any other book. In this sense, I suppose, it bears comparison with a rock or ice-climb.

I can tell you where it goes, give you a more-or-less objective appraisal of its features, but I can't tell you how it will make you feel. Only afterwards, when we've both done it, can we compare our exalted reflections, relive with animated air-gymnastics this or that move and, for a fleeting moment, possibly experience a resonant correlation. So, instead of using this as a guide, it might be better for you to read the book first, ruminate upon its impact on you and then, of secondary consequence, we can exchange our subjective views about the quality of its pitches.

Before I even opened the book, I was struck by the significance of the cover-design, which features powdery finger-ends tenuously gripping a rocky wrinkle, fixed in a Stygian night-sky. That's all you get – no snowy landscape or rocky spires to sell a fantasy – and it's all you need; just a climber's hand reaching out towards you. It's a simple image but a succinct visual metaphor, for this is also a writer's hand chalking its poignant messages of thought, observation, joy, loss and grief upon the slate. Whether the crafting of those words has any meaning, whether they echo around your mind, is as much about you as their composer. For me, they do, most of the time.

The better mountaineering writers can bring this unique reflection, an almost musical resonance, to their score but I know of few who can do it as consistently as Jim Perrin, other than our own master-wordsmith, Iain Smart, with his cardinal ability to capture your own memories and paste them to a page. Jim Perrin is a professional writer who makes his living from his craft, although this isn't to denigrate his motivation. However, there is, albeit rarely and perhaps quite naturally, a sense of superfluous and irritating and, dare I say, self-indulgent gobbledygook journalism about some of the work and this is where he loses my sympathy, although not necessarily my concord.

At its simplest, this book is a collection of Perrin's best climbing articles, written from 1967 to 2005 and most of them previously published, with a section of candid, often moving, autobiographical sketches by way of introduction. It is a kaleidoscopic and pensive look at climbers and climbing over nearly four decades of crucial changes in the sport, if such a word can accurately encompass this most enigmatic of activities. You might expect that a motley assemblage of 60 essays, such as this, would lack continuity, but form and harmony are provided by the way that they are grouped together in three sections – the Climbs, the Climbers, and Climbing itself.

Three themes and, within, a triple story of Jim's journey from Manchester's post-war, wasted streets, the promise of spaciousness offered by the Pennine horizon, then rock-climbing and its world, and his intelligent, penetrating probing of the hypocrisies and rewards of that world through his prose, a style which has evolved, like a vital hold on a classic climb, from the raw to the rounded. However, you might want to have a specialist dictionary to hand, for Jim often uses literary references and the full variety of vocabulary; this is no bad thing but it can be a

distraction while you stop to delve. *Cathy Powell: A Character Rewritten*, for example, although superficially describing an atmospheric account of a solo ascent of Tryfan's *Grooved Arête*, only has a fuller, more-significant meaning if you've read Elizabeth Coxhead's novel, *One Green Bottle*. Nevertheless, this has its advantages, acting as a window or gateway, even, should you decide to follow these side-roads, and I now have a mental list of further reading to pursue, from Roberts' *A Ragged Schooling* to Shipton's *That Untravelled World*.

What is the significance of the choice of 60, I wonder? Although that number recurs several times – we have 60ft. of perfect gritstone climbing at Laddow in *The Way and The Outcrop* (2002), for example – I think the answer lies, more significantly, in a 'revelation' experienced on a wintry Beinn a' Chaorainn, and described, Murray-like, in a *Vision of Glory* (1993). Jim asks: "how many of us could count even 60 such?" Each essay, then, is perhaps chosen to reflect a beat of the tattoo, imprinted that day upon his consciousness as part of his essential 'heart-life', a tick of time as the hand goes full circle. I can feel for that pulse, can tell you that it's powerfully there and tap out a bit of the rhythm on my keyboard in a limited sort of way but, repeating myself, I cannot tell you if it will resonate with your own.

Last February snow fell, apparently a newsworthy event, in Birmingham and elsewhere in England, and schools were closed by a Health and Safety-conscious official, worried that children might slip and hurt themselves. In my bit of Scotland it was a miserable day, dusk came early by mid-afternoon, so I started to dip – the literary equivalent of snacking into the book with *Adventuring On The Llyn*, (1991). On just such a day, at much the same time, Jim and his companion were tip-toeing on creaky, "scrotumtightening" sea-cliffs... "this may have been a mistake... but you carry on because to commit yourself to it brings into play a primal reliance on your own resources that's close to the essence of why we climb". I finished the page, the football results were in and I half-listened but, for *Captivity v Release*, there was no contest

Such is the attraction of the 'collection' format, you don't have to start at the beginning and my earlier analogy to a climb, I realise, isn't quite right, for that suggests a progression on the same cliff while, in reality, each piece stands alone as a single quality pitch on differing strata. Choose a topic to suit your mood, take your time, rest on a heathery ledge and contemplate... for you can't rush this book, there's just too much to think about – and isn't that what you want?

The "how" as well as an enduring 'why' attached to our going into themountains..." are themes which appear, with constant questioning and probing, sometimes with light-hearted mockery, often with justified derision at the laughable vanity of it all. You might expect that there isn't much more to be thought, said or written about the mountaineering world that hasn't already been expressed in one way or another, but the one shining virtue of Perrin's work is its originality of thought and expression. In the distant past I used to travel to school by train and the route involved a long tunnel. Occasionally, light from the preceding carriage would illuminate the vague outline of a sentry-box set into the brickwork where rail-workers took shelter, inches from annihilation. I am not aware of ever having dredged this particular memory from its dusty niche but, after the death of his friend Al Harris, just the power of a few words in Jim's tribute – as "we crouch in our retreats and know your passing" – suddenly brought it back in all the dirty reality of smuts of soot and that unique reek of smoky steam-powered engines. He

picks the right, rapier words at the right time, like the boxer that he aspired to be, that he would have been, not bludgeoning but striking where it scores, re-awakening distant memories and feelings.

You may remember a television series where ‘celebrities’ from the outdoor world were filmed as they walked and talked in remote places. I was disappointed that Perrin had boarded this particular gravy-train with McNappy, telescopic-poles all adangle in Dingle, but not surprised when, halfway through the coastal walk, he disappeared, to the consternation of the film-crew. Although the public excuse was that he had fallen asleep on a grassy shelf, it seemed pretty obvious that he had grown tired of the trite questions and absented himself, sensing their irrelevant intrusion on the grandeur of the scenery. He re-appeared at the end and recited a piece of poetry that he had just written, the only speck of gold in the verbal dross – his writing a mirror to the man.

Like W. H. Murray, who inspired him, Jim doesn’t hide behind his words; he is not ashamed of honesty, to write what he feels, to point out hypocrisy and to let us see beyond his shield. This has left him, over the years, vulnerable to sniping but he has weathered the storm with dignity and there is no sense of rancour in his compositions. His life in pieces, he soloed *Coronation Street*, high on cocaine, and was vilified by the Establishment, but who would disagree with the basic principle “...that if you want to climb, this is the core experience?” He has moved through the rock-climbing world at the highest level and known some of its greatest protagonists – Tilman, Longland, Joe Brown, Steve Haston and more, and writes about them with great generosity of spirit. In *The Only Genuine Joe: A Tribute* (1998) the most significant sentence, for me, is: “The mark of a person is the way they are to those who have nothing to offer.” Forget the climbs and hero-worship – this is a nugget for both its possession and recognition. It draws back to a more honourable time when “...images of joyful achievement and aspiring, of innocent mountain ambition” were our *raison d’etre*, before the day when an inconveniently dying man could be ignored and stepped around on an Everest summit bid.

Although I am reluctant to draw attention to the irrelevancies of boundaries, there is no doubt that Scottish climbing has a unique tradition and ethos, where the mountains still have the edge on mankind’s reductive processes, something that Jim recognises in *The Ice Climbers* (1985) and their “...richly diverse and excellent” writings. “The simple common bond lies in their subject matter – Scottish winter-climbing – a sphere of action every bit as evocative, resonant, heroic and eventful as Arctic exploration, the Alpine Golden Age, Himalayan first ascents, or any of the other great sagas of adventure and elemental hardship. In this last is the key. It is easy enough to write gilded contemplations of sunny days on rock. But in the strange sub-Arctic of the Scottish mountains in winter, the climbers probing up in the half-light, sketchily belayed, uncertain as to route, conditions, or even possibility, the narrative takes on an intense thrust and urgency”.

Although composed more than 20 years ago, the sentiment that it is for qualities beyond the mundane descriptions of events that we remember great mountain writers is still very apt, perhaps more-so as the twin-edged sword of ‘development’, while making climbing more comfortable, both physically and mentally, also lowers the risk, down-grades the adventure, and reduces the challenge – all topics which he takes to heart. We may curse the midges, the bogs, the rain, the long access – but we need them to help keep our particular shibboleth unassailable. In *Bogles and Bog-trots* (2004) there is a tribute to the “best and most esoteric long-walk

crag of them all – the Meadow Face of Beinn Tarsuinn” and praise for its three long crack-lines, including “*The Bender*, a big corner groove... about which superlatives fail me”. This is all written in praise of “one of the most sweeping and beautifully architectonic cliffs you’ve ever seen” and in recognition of one of the pioneers, Bill Skidmore, a typically noble gesture. Perrin is clearly a man who gets far more pleasure from the act of giving than receiving accolades, so that when he writes “... and I haven’t yet been to Creag an Dubh Loch or Carnmore...” it is because he is content to admit to a default and not through any boastfulness.

The twin threads of mountaineering literature and history weave their ways through the text and, in conversation with *The Essential Jack Longland* (1988), we have a real connection as far back as the 19th century, where it all started, through Geoffrey Winthrop Young and Cecil Slingsby. You can sense, too, that unique ‘Golden Era’ vortex of climbing development in North Wales in the 1920-30s, in *John Hoyland – The Missing Dates* (1985) and I may even be able to add a little to the history. The Professor Turnbull who fell on Cloggy was none other than SMC ex-president Herbert Turnbull (and, for those who remember him, uncle of Oliver Turnbull). Herbert was often an external examiner at Bangor University and perhaps, imprudently, was tempted onto a climb that was beyond him. All of this isn’t to say that I don’t find some semi-pretentious molehills turned into mountains as, for example, in *That Old Thing About Grace* (2001) but you might like it.

So it goes. I wouldn’t dare argue with Jim’s assertion that Menlove Edwards was “climbing’s greatest-ever prose-writer with the wry intelligence and visceral clarity he brings to recording the climbing experience” but it is only fair to say that Perrin carries on that tradition in very similar vein. This is mountain literature of the highest order – evocative, interesting, and thought-provoking.

Mike Jacob.

Mountain Rescue – Chamonix-Mont Blanc: Anne Sauvy. (Baton Wicks – London; 368pp.; illus; £14.99; ISBS1-898573-52-2).

I generally try to steer clear of anything to do with mountain rescue. I know rescuers do a great job, but reading about unfortunate climbers being carted off the hill is not for me. However, this book is about mountain rescue in Chamonix and anything to do with the Mont Blanc area grabs my interest.

Anne Sauvy spent the summer of 1997 at the Les Bois headquarters of the Peloton de Gendarmerie de Haute Montagne. (PGHM) observing the rescue activities of these skilled mountaineers.

After a month she nearly gave up the assignment – so disturbed she was by some of the events. Members of the PGHM, however, persuaded her to carry on so she could present their story accurately and counteract the sometimes ill-informed and stupid media reports.

Anne Sauvy gives a very moving account of the trials and tribulations experienced by the rescuers on the mountain and in the valley.

I know that these days the Chamonix area is a crazy place to go climbing, but I had not realised the extent of the insanity. Some of the stories in this book beggar belief. I’m glad Anne Sauvy didn’t quit and carried on regardless to produce this excellent chronicle of life at the sharp end of mountain rescue.

Essential reading for our own rescue teams.

D.P.

OFFICE BEARERS 2006-2007**Honorary President:** William. D. Brooker**Honorary Vice-Presidents:** Douglas Scott, Gerry S. Peet**President:** Paul V. Brian**Vice-Presidents:** Brian R. Shackelton, Brian Findlay

Honorary Secretary: John R. R. Fowler, 4 Doune Terrace, Edinburgh, EH3 6DY.
Honorary Treasurer: John A. Wood, Spout Close, Millbeck, Underskiddaw, Keswick, Cumbria CA12 4PS. **Honorary Editor:** Charles J. Orr, 28 Chesters View, Bonnyrigg, Midlothian EH19 3PU. **Convener of the Publications Sub-Committee:** Rab Anderson, 24 Paties Road, Edinburgh, EH141EE. **Honorary Librarian:** John Hunter, 2 Lorraine Road, Dowanhill, Glasgow, G12 9NZ. **Honorary Custodian of Slides:** David Stone, 30 Summerside Street, Edinburgh, EH 6 4NU. **Honorary Archivist:** Robin N. Campbell, Glynside, by Fintry, Stirlingshire, G63 0LW. **Convener of the Huts Sub-Committee:** William H. Duncan, Kirkcubbin, East End, Lochwinnoch, Renfrewshire, PA12 4ER. **Custodian of the CIC Hut:** Robin Clothier, 35 Broompark Drive, Newton Mearns, Glasgow, G77 5DZ. **Custodian of Lagangarbh Hut:** Bernard M. Swan, 16 Knowes View, Faifley, Clydebank, Dunbartonshire, G81 5AT. **Custodian of the Ling Hut:** William Skidmore, 1 Kirkton Drive, Lochcarron, Wester Ross, IV54 8UD. **Custodian of the Raeburn Hut:** Heather Morning, Duach Mills, Nethybridge, Inverness-shire, PH253DH. **Custodian of the Naismith Hut:** William S. McKerron, Scotsburn House, Drummond Road, Inverness, IV2 4NA. **Committee:** Ann Macdonald, David M. Nichols, Chris R. Ravey, Campbell Forrest, Gillian E. Irvine, Clifford D. Smith, James Beaton, Peter J. Biggar, Andrew M. James.

SMC Internet Address – <http://www.smc.org.uk> SMC e-mail: smc@smc.org.uk

Journal Information

Editor: Charles J. Orr, 28 Chesters View, Bonnyrigg, Midlothian EH193PU. (e-mail: charliejorr@hotmail.com).
New Routes Editor: A. D. Nisbet, 20 Craigie Avenue, Boat of Garten, Inverness-shire PH24 3BL. (e-mail: anisbe@globalnet.co.uk).
Photos Editor: A. Tibbs, Crown Cottage, 4 Crown Circus, Inverness, IV2 3NQ. (e-mail: teamtibbs@hotmail.com)
Distribution: D. F. Lang, Hillfoot Hey, 580 Perth Road, Dundee, DD2 1PZ.

INSTRUCTIONS TO CONTRIBUTORS

Articles for the Journal should be submitted before the end of January for consideration for the following issue. Lengthy contributions are preferably typed, double-spaced, on one side only, and with ample margins (minimum 30mm). Articles may be accepted on floppy disk, IBM compatible (contact Editor beforehand), or by e-mail. The Editor welcomes material from both members and non-members, with priority being given to articles of Scottish Mountaineering content. Photographs are also welcome, and should be good quality colour slides. All textual material should be sent to the Editor, address and e-mail as above. Photographic material should be sent direct to the Editor of Photographs, address as above. Copyright. Textual matter appearing in the Miscellaneous section of the Journal, including New Climbs, is copyright of the publishers. Copyright of articles in the main section of the Journal is retained by individual authors.

JARVIS BOOKS

Specialists in Mountaineering (Established 1979)

WE HAVE VERY LARGE STOCKS OF SECOND-HAND AND NEW
MOUNTAINEERING BOOKS.

When in the Peak District why not call in and see us?
But, as it is a private house, please ring first to
arrange a visit.

Catalogues issued – books bought

Valleyside, Malthouse Lane, Froggatt, Hope Valley,
Derbyshire, S32 3ZA.

Telephone/fax: (01433) 631 951

e-mail: jarvis@mountainbooks.co.uk
www.mountainbooks.co.uk

Isle of Skye
Croft Bunkhouse & Bothies
Five fully-equipped hostels
20 minutes from Glenbrittle

**Bunkhouse – 14. Bothy – 6. Bothy
Beag – 4. Cabin – 2. But & Ben – 4.**

Dave Thomas Tel/Fax 01478 640 254.

7 Portnalong, Isle of Skye, IV47 8SL

e-mail – skyehostel@lineone.net

www.skyehostels.com

Alltonside Guest House

Achintore Road, Fort William, Inverness-shire, Scotland, PH33
6RW.

Contact name: Mrs E. Allton. Tel: 01397 703542.

e-mail: enquiries@alltonside.co.uk

Alltonside is a modern 3-star guest house situated just over a mile from Fort William. It commands a fabulous view over Loch Linnhe and the hills beyond. Each room is kept to a high standard and has en-suite facilities, television and full central heating. We also have a drying room available for guests' use and private parking. We have six en-suite rooms and can take a maximum of 15 people. Full Scottish breakfast is included in the price and guests can enjoy the superb loch view from the dining room. Special diets can also be catered for. Collection from the bus/train station is usually available by prior arrangement.

Prices range from £15 to £25.

Rooms can be secured by either a deposit of £20 or a credit card number.

SCOTPACKERS ULLAPOOL TOURIST HOSTEL WEST HOUSE



Hostel Facilities • Full central heating • Open fire in lounge • Free hot showers • Private double and twin rooms available • Free sleep sheets • Fully equipped kitchen • Fully-equipped laundry

Friendly staff, no curfew. Open all year.

Bunks £13.50 per PPN – May-October £12

Private Rooms £17.50 per PPN (Breakfast not included)

Self-catering cottage – Sleeps 7. £20 PPN

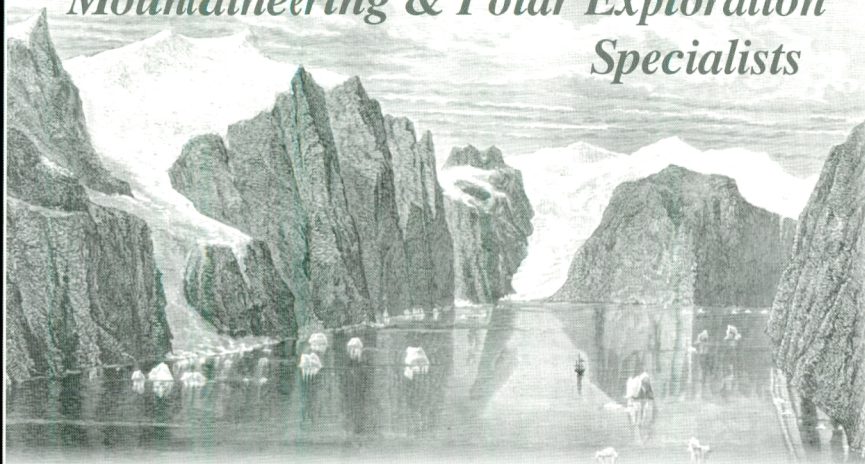
West House, West Argyle Street, Ullapool,
Ross-shire IV26 2TY Fax/Tel: 01854 613126

www.scotpackers-hostels.co.uk

GLACIER BOOKS

Incorporating  Himalayan Books

*Mountaineering & Polar Exploration
Specialists*



**Please Stop By On Your Way Back From The Hills!
Browsers Welcome With A Prior Phone Call.**

**- Free Catalogues - Free Booksearch -
Probably The Largest Stock In Scotland !**

BOOKS WANTED URGENTLY


**We Like To Be Known As The Bookseller Who Offers
The Highest Price**

Chris Bartle

Mountaineering and Polar Travel Specialist

Ard-Darach, Strathview Terrace, Pitlochry, Scotland, PH16 5AT

Tel / Fax : +44 (0)1796 470056 email: chris@glacierbooks.com



We've got mountains and mountains of gear

At Tiso we know you'll need the right gear whether you're climbing the Inaccessible Pinnacle or going for a stroll in the Lakes. That's why we're geared up for you. Because we like to test the gear that we sell in the only way we know. Out there. We know what it's like to bag your first Munro and we've fallen in more streams than you could imagine. So when you leave the store you'll have the best advice and the right gear.

Tiso are proud to be a partner of Glenmore Lodge.

Geared up
for you

tiso.com



The Outdoor Specialist

Visit your local Tiso store or tiso.com

Love climbing? Hate shopping? www.nevisport.com

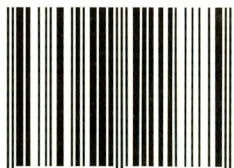


nevisport
GET OUT MORE™



£13.95

ISBN 0-907521-78-9



9 780907 521785 >