

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB.

THE ANNUAL MEETING.

THE 37th annual meeting took place on Saturday, November 28th. Mr. William Garden, President, in the chair. The Honorary Secretary and Treasurer, Mr. John A. Nicol, advocate, in his report stated that the membership now stood at 216, a considerable increase over last year, and that the finances were in a much better position, a debit balance of £6 15s. 9d. at the beginning of the year having been converted into a credit balance of £28 16s. 5d. The report was adopted. It was stated that there was a sum of £55 on deposit receipt to the credit of the Ben Macdhuil indicator fund.

The cordial thanks of the club were given to Mr. James A. Parker for the great trouble taken by him in planning and erecting the indicator on Ben Macdhuil. In this thanks were associated with Mr. Parker, his two workmen, Messrs. Fowlie and Fleming.

The following office-bearers were elected: Hon. President, Prof. J. Norman Collie, LL.D., F.R.S., of the Chair of Organic Chemistry in the University of London; President, Mr. William Garden; Vice-presidents, Messrs. T. R. Gillies, advocate, and Walter A. Reid, C.A. To replace the three retiring members of Committee (Messrs. Conner, Drummond, and Parker). Messrs. David S. P. Douglas, Alexander Simpson, and James M'Coss were appointed. Mr. Henry Alexander was re-appointed editor of the *Club Journal*, and Mr. John A. Nicol was re-elected Hon. Secretary and Treasurer.

Some discussion took place regarding the steps that might be taken to attract juvenile or associate members to the Club. It was pointed out by the Secretary that as a matter of fact there was probably more young people in the Club at the present than ever before, and they could pick quite a good Rugby fifteen from them. The matter was remitted to the Committee.

THE ANNUAL DINNER.

THE annual dinner, which followed, was attended by a company of over 100 members and friends. Mr. William Garden, the President, was in the chair and, in giving the toast of "The Club," observed that, though he was the thirteenth President, he was not

superstitious. The Club was the fourth in size among British mountaineering clubs, having been founded in 1889. Referring to the attractions of mountaineering he said that it had been statistically proved that mountaineers lived long, and that they were able to indulge in their sport, at anyrate to a moderate extent, longer than most other sportsmen. Mr. Naismith had showed that men who joined the Alpine Club probably added from four and a half to five years to their lives.

No better antidote existed for busy men and women than the freedom of the hills, where they came up against Nature and were always expectant of some unknown difficulty to be surmounted. Who was there among them who had not at some time or another desired to discover something of the unknown, and, like Ulysses, "to sail beyond the sunset and the baths of all the western stars?" Mountaineering was a sport which helped them to throw off their cares just as Christain threw off the burden of sin in Bunyan's famous allegory.

Speaking of those critics who asked why he climbed hills, getting soaked and tired and obtaining no view owing to mist and clouds, he said the only thing to do was to be sorry for these people and for what they missed in life, and to endeavour to try to persuade them to try mountaineering themselves. In Murray's Handbook of Switzerland (1854) it was stated to be "a somewhat remarkable fact that, while the ascent of Mount Blanc was attempted by few, a large proportion of those who have made the ascent are persons of unsound mind." What a change had taken place since then!

Professor Collie, the Honorary President, in replying, said that the Cairngorm Club was not only extremely virile and active, but was most fortunate in having practically at its door some of the finest mountains in Scotland. The Cairngorms were unlike other Scottish mountains, having characteristics all their own. They did not find peaked tops there, as in the western hills, but great, magnificent masses of flat tops cutting down into beautiful corries, and in these corries they would find beautiful lochs. The mountains sloped into lovely valleys, with pine woods that could not be equalled elsewhere in Scotland. Professor Collie proceeded to describe his experience on Ben Macdhui when he encountered the Ferla Mhor (see p.).

Mr. James A. Parker, giving "The Guests," appealed to climbers to help in the campaign against litter on the hills and suggested that there might be adopted as the refrain of a club song these lines (with apologies to Longfellow):

Leave no litter lying on the hills ;
For empty tins and tangled strings
And paper bags are not the things
To scatter where the bunting sings.

During the evening Dr. J. R. Levack exhibited a number of lantern slides, illustrating the building of the Ben Macdhuì indicator and the President showed a series of Norwegian slides. The musical programme was contributed by Mr. Alec Nicol and Mrs. A. Nicol and the Misses Skakle, while Mr. Robert Clarke recited W. A. Mackenzie's poem on Aberdeen.

NEW YEAR MEET, 1926—BRAEMAR.

THE New Year Meet of 1926 is memorable particularly for the Lochnagar climb on the second day of the year. Conditions were simply excellent. The heavy snowfall of November and December did not leave so much snow in the corries as might be expected. Besides, the snow did not pack which it usually does prior to the month of February. As a result this spring will show a distinct shortage of snow and the wells and springs of the valleys may not be sufficiently fed to provide for the demands throughout the ensuing summer. On this occasion there was generally a complete snow covering from the forest upwards, with considerable snow fields, sometimes of frozen snow which eased the effort of the climb. The times were—Dantzic Bridge (now Garrawalt Lodge) to the top $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours—descent by same route 1 hour 40 minutes, which allowed time for an excellent tea at the Lodge, when daylight had just gone, and the conveyance had just arrived to carry us to Braemar.

On the summit there was practically no wind and the sun shone through the clouds as the party reached the top. The indicator was stripped of its covering of frozen snow and a wonderful panorama lay in front of the party on all sides—including a peep of the Pentland Hills. The well near the top was completely hidden with a snowfield about 10 feet deep or more. The giant Cairngorms in the distance were magnificent as the atmosphere became perfectly clear. They were Braeriach with its majestic north-west corries in the sunlight, Ben Macdhuì in the shade, Cairn Toul, Beinn a' Bhuird and Ben Avon with finely chiselled edges. Benachie as usual on the other side showed up in solitary state. During the descent a snake-like mist appeared to occupy the whole length of Glen Slugan, right to Invercauld. This mist, however, had disappeared before the party reached the forest. The colours and tints were exceptionally fine—a prevalence of green rays in the rainbow to the north. On the descent one had seen frequently at the New Year time pink tints on the northern giants, but on this occasion green prevailed all over. The party felt as of one mind that the beauty and charm of the climb were unsurpassable. With eyes scarcely able to grasp the magnificence of the picture, one realised that a winter climb of Lochnagar in



W. Malcolm.

THE TOP OF THE BLACK SPOUT, JANUARY 2, 1926.



THE LOCHNAGAR INDICATOR, JANUARY 2, 1926. *E. V. Haigh.*

such conditions was indeed worth achieving. The party who did the climb were Major Charles Reid, E. V. Haigh (of the Rucksack Club), W. M. Alexander, R. Sellar, D. Douglas, W. Malcolm, G. P. Geddes and Walter A. Reid (Vice-President), Dr. McIntyre was also seen on the top.

On New Year's Day Sellar, Geddes, McIntyre, Haigh and C. Reid tramped by the Slugan to the Quoich en route for the north top of Beinn a' Bhuid. They were fortunate in finding a snow bridge over the Quoich, with a fine snow cornice on the steep banks of the river. Snow and thick mist made three of the party decide to turn back, but two of them reached an altitude of over 3,000 feet and finding the mist becoming more dense also turned back. All the party reached the hotel before dark.

On the 3rd January, Malcolm, Haigh, Geddes and Douglas made an early start for Ben Macdhuì, but unfortunately the weather broke down. They picked up Mr. Robert Clarke at Linn of Dee en route. It was then realised by the party, specially when it was found that the car could not get within three miles of Derry Lodge on account of the snowdrift, that a less ambitious plan would have to be followed. Cairn Mhaim (3,328) was selected. The snow was generally favourable though a few hundred steps had to be cut. In thick mist the top was reached at one o'clock and, of course, no view was obtained. The return journey was made by Lui-beg.

The rest of the party at the meet were Mrs. Godfrey Geddes, Miss Elma Milne and Mr. George Duncan. All were a merry crowd and the time passed quickly with an impromptu entertainment on Hogmanay, curling on the Braemar pond, and inspecting the excavations done by Dr. Douglas Simpson and his Scouts at Kindrochit Castle. The New Year was brought in with the usual ceremony and the health of Mr. and Mrs. Gregor of the Invercauld Hotel was heartily pledged. During the three days many stags were seen, also the solitary snow bunting, crows, ravens, ptarmigan, and grouse. Telegrams were exchanged with the Scottish Mountaineering Club at their meet at Tyndrum—Mr. J. A. Parker (President). As the party motored down the valley towards Ballater on Monday afternoon, the sun broke through the clouds and Lochnagar appeared in its full winter glory to bid us "au revoir."

The colours of the Club, in its tie of gold and dark brown are now popular and well in evidence. A tramp over Lochnagar is at best as interesting as a round of golf on one's favourite links. But the climber's eyes often look upward, while the golfer must "aye keep his eee on the ba'."

W. A. R.

EASTER MEET, 1926—CRIANLARICH.

THE Easter Meet was held at Crianlarich, Perthshire, and was a great success. This delightful mountaineering centre is a most convenient one for well over a dozen peaks of 3,000 feet and over, are close to and within easy range of the hotel.

Members present:—W. Garden (President), W. A. Reid (Vice-President), Mrs. Henderson, Mrs. Levack, Miss E. Stewart Warren, Miss Ruth Warren, Messrs. D. S. P. Douglas, W. W. King, Paisley (with guest C. S. Perry), J. R. Levack, J. W. Levack, J. L. McNaughton, and James Watt, Edinburgh.

By the evening of Thursday, April 1st, most of the members had arrived. On Friday the President, Miss E. Stewart Warren, Miss Ruth Warren, Messrs. Reid, Douglas, J. R. Levack, J. W. Levack and Watt climbed Ben More (3,843 feet) by its N.W. shoulder, a stiff, uncompromising grind up a grass and boulder strewn slope of 3,300 feet, the last 500 feet being in mist and rain. Very little snow was encountered. After a short stay at the cairn, four of the party, the Misses Warren, J. R. Levack and J. W. Levack, descended by the northern slope of the mountain to the road, steering by compass, as the mist had increased down to 1,500 feet from the summit. Below the mist, magnificent views were obtained, the weather in the valley being brilliant and sunny. The rest of the party—the President, Messrs. Reid (Vice-President), Douglas and Watt, went down the south side of Ben More to the col between it and Stobinian and then climbed this second peak, the twin of Ben More and only 16 feet lower than it. They then returned to the col and contoured round the west side of Ben More, and so down to the road at Ben More farm. Mr. McNaughton and his sister, Mrs. Henderson, followed the Ben More party about half way up the hill and then returned home.

Saturday morning was dull, and rain threatened, but it was much milder and soon cleared up, leaving a thick heat haze. Mr. McNaughton, Mr. Watt and Mrs. Henderson climbed Cruach Ardran (3,477 feet) from the corrie.

There was little mist, but the distant view was poor, owing to the haze. The President, and Vice-President had to leave for home for business reasons, and the rest of the Ben More party thought they should take a day off, after their strenuous exertions of the day before. So they motored to Loch Awe, lunched with friends at the hotel, and then visited the Falls of Cruachan and the Pass of Brander. A delightful day was spent and the party returned to Crianlarich in the evening.

Sunday morning was calm and misty, but the barometer had risen a point, and, as the morning wore on, it was evident that the day was going to be very fine. Consequently, a party of seven,

Mrs. Levack, the Misses Warren, Messrs. J. R. Levack, J. W. Levack, Douglas and Watt motored to Loch Awe Hotel, with the intention of climbing Ben Cruachan. Mrs. Levack remained with friends at the hotel, and the others set out from the hotel along the high-level path which skirts the mountain side for about three miles, and well above the loch, till it reaches the Cruachan burn, as this emerges from the main corrie of Cruachan.

The views from the path across and down the loch were superb. The writer has rarely seen a deeper blue on any Scottish loch than was seen that Easter morning. The route now followed was northwards along the floor of the corrie to the foot of the steep slope leading up to the main ridge of the mountain. By this time the day was gloriously fine, only the sun was becoming rather hot and the breeze had died away. A very stiff pull up the steep slope landed the party on the rather narrow main ridge, about a third of a mile east of the main top. A few minutes halt was made to take in some of the details of the amazing panorama now visible to the north. With the single exception of Ben Nevis, which was veiled in mist, all the high tops, near and distant, were visible. Down below in the foreground and running northwards from the foot of the mountain lay the whole length of Loch Etive, backed grandly by Ben Starav and the Buchailles, leading to Glencoe, all sunlit and gorgeous, while southwards the whole 23 miles of Loch Awe showed clearly from the ridge. Away to the west the sea sparkled and shone, and all the islands looked glorious.

But the party was still a little distance away from the main top, with a "bad step" intervening. This step is a gap on the ridge due to a fault in the rocks. One has to climb down some slabby rocks very carefully on the left to pass it. The difficulty was easily passed and the party hurried to the main top (3,689 feet), arriving there at 4.35. Faint wisps of mist were beginning to wreath themselves about the topmost rocks and the Taynuilt peak of the mountain, Stob Dearg, was almost hidden from view. The lateness of the hour prevented any halt and the party hurried down southwards to the col between Cruachan and Meall Cuanail. Here a good rest was taken and the party then made a rapid trek down into the Cruachan Corrie. Two of the party hurried on ahead and along by the high level path to the hotel, while the ladies, Levack, Sen., and Watt walked leisurely down the path by the Cruachan Falls to the road, where they were picked up by Mr. Douglas, who had come along from the hotel with his car. The party then motored back to Crianlarich and dined rather late. They were not the last to return to the hotel, however, for Mr. McNaughton and his sister had spent the day on Ben Lui and did not return till very late.

Mr. King and his guest, Mr. Perry, climbed Ben Chalum,

walking from the hotel and along the uninteresting ridge leading to the top, from which they had clear and expansive views.

On Monday Mr. King and Mr. Perry climbed Ben More by the N. W. ridge and corrie. They had some fine cloud effects on the summit. Mr. McNaughton and Mrs. Henderson also climbed Ben More on Monday and were prevented only by want of time from completing the ascent of Stobinian.

All the members enjoyed the Meet. Everybody was in good humour, the hotel was most comfortable, and the service left nothing to be desired. Last, and most important, the weather was almost perfect.

J. R. LEVACK.

MAY HOLIDAY—LOCHNAGAR.

ON Monday, 3rd May, the Aberdeen Spring Holiday, the Club had a very enjoyable excursion to Lochnagar. Although mist covered the plateau all day the weather was dry and very favourable. The party, numbering seventeen, under the care of the Secretary, Mr. J. A. Nicol, went by train to Ballater and motored to Allnaguibhsaich.

Nine of the party ascended by the Ladder and the edge of the cliffs, and descended by the Glasallt. The other eight crossed the Meikle Pap Col, and descended to the "loch." It was quite warm and clear of snow down in the corrie, but most impressive as one looked up to the snow-filled gullies disappearing into the mist. This party ascended to the foot of the Black Spout where it was found necessary to rope up at once, as the snow was found, unexpectedly, to be in quite an icy condition, and stretches had to be cut. On every bit of vegetation on the rocky ledges the most beautiful fog-crystals were forming. The Black Spout at this season of the year, when the snow is getting less, is not now quite so easy as it used to be, owing to a fall of rock about half way up on the left side, which is in a very loose condition, and there is now what may be called a "bad step" on the right side where the route has to be followed. At the head of the Spout the snow was quite vertical, but a way was found, as is usual, at the right side where the party got through without very much difficulty. At the summit the indicator was found to be in good condition, but of no use that day as the mist only rolled away sufficiently to give a view of the Lochan Eoin for a few moments.

The top of the Douglas-Gibson gully looked most magnificent with its cornices, icicles, and vertical slab. This gully has never yet been climbed. At the head of the Red Spout there were two very curious snow caves formed presumably by wind in the bergschrund.

The Black Spout party included three ladies, Mrs. Ross Mackenzie, member, Mrs. Alex. Booth, and Mrs. J. McCoss. After motoring back to Ballater, the company had tea, and returned to Aberdeen by the evening train.

J. M'COSS.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON EXCURSIONS.

IN June, the Club held two afternoon excursions, on the 12th to Clochnaben, and on the 26th to Bennachie. In each case the party motored from Aberdeen and in the case of the Bennachie excursion the hill was traversed from the Garioch side to Kemnay.

"ABER" IN PLACE NAMES.

GAELIC enters so largely into the place names of the Cairngorms, as of the Highlands generally, that anything relating to Gaelic language and philology is bound to be of some interest to hill-lovers, though they may not be exact students of this branch of learning. Attention may therefore be drawn to *Scottish Gaelic Studies*, the new publication of the Celtic Department of the University of Aberdeen. In the committee of management are two members of the Cairngorm Club, Mr. W. M. Alexander and Mr. George Duncan. The majority of the articles in the opening issue, which has just appeared, relate to linguistic and archaeological subjects, somewhat outside the scope of hill climbers, but the paper by Mr. F. C. Diack upon "Aber" and "Inver" in place names is of great interest to all roamers of the Highlands. Mr. Diack disputes the common theory that "Aber" means the mouth of a river, and suggests that it is an old Gaelic word meaning "marsh," now obsolete in Scottish Gaelic but still surviving in Irish Gaelic. This view is supported by a great body of material gathered by Mr. Diack in his long researches into the Gaelic place names of Deeside and other parts of the country, but we have space to mention only two points. Aberdeen is Abar-Dean "marsh of the Don," and Aberarder in Crathie is "marsh of the Ardar," descriptive of the flat, boggy tract in the upper part of the Fearder burn, the actual mouth of the stream being Inverardar, now Inver. Mr. Diack's paper opens up a most stimulating field of inquiry and discussion.