

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB.

THE ANNUAL MEETING.

THE Forty-third Annual General Meeting of the Club was held in the Imperial Hotel, Aberdeen, on the evening of Saturday, November 28, 1931, the President, Mr. James McCoss, in the chair. Those present were Miss Nesta Bruce, Mrs. Garden, Messrs. W. M. Alexander, Bothwell, Conner, Dugan, Garden, Hadden, Hay, D. P. Levack, J. R. Levack, McPherson, Malcolm, Middleton, J. A. Nicol, Parker, Ritson, Robertson, Simpson, Symmers, Taylor, and E. W. Watt.

Mr. J. A. Nicol, advocate, Hon. Treasurer, submitted the Accounts, which showed that the credit balance is £94 19s. 9d. The membership is 270, an increase of seven over the previous year. The Accounts were unanimously approved of.

Office-Bearers were elected as follows:—

Hon. President—Professor J. Norman Collie.

President—Mr. James McCoss.

Vice-Presidents—Mr. William M. Alexander and Mr. William Malcolm.

Hon. Editor—Mr. Edward W. Watt.

Hon. Secretary and Treasurer—Mr. John A. Nicol, advocate.

Committee—Miss A. E. D. Bruce, Messrs. F. A. Ritson, H. Alexander, G. P. Geddes, E. Birnie Reid, A. Leslie Hay, W. A. Ewen, Dr. J. R. Levack, and Mr. J. A. Parker, the last three taking the places of the retiring members, Messrs. Garden, Taylor, and Bothwell.

It was decided that the New Year Meet should be at Braemar, the Easter Meet at Fort William, and the New Year's Day excursion to Mount Keen. On the Spring Holiday there will be (1) an ascent of Ben Avon, and (2) a walk to Carn Liath and Creag an Dail Bheag from Invercauld House. Two snow excursions to Lochnagar take place on February 14 and 28, 1932, and there are to be three rock-climbing practice excursions to Souter Head on Saturdays, March 5, 12, and 19, 1932 (meeting at Balnagask car terminus at 2.30 p.m.).

The question of forming a Junior Section of the Club was discussed. It was suggested this might be open to members of such institutions as the Grammar School, Gordon's College, the Boys' Brigade, and the Scouts, and the Girls' High School.

On the motion of Mr. A. Leslie Hay, seconded by Mr. W. Garden, it was unanimously agreed to proceed with the scheme, and a sub-

committee was appointed to go into the question, draw up suggested rules, and report to a Special General Meeting of the Club. The members of the sub-committee are Messrs. McCoss, chairman; Garden, Bothwell, Ritson, Hay, Dr. D. P. Levack, and Miss Nesta Bruce, the chairman to have a casting vote.

Mr. Ritson stated that a mountaineering club had just been started in Elgin, with about 30 members.

THE ANNUAL DINNER.

The Annual Dinner of the Club was held in the Imperial Hotel after the Annual Meeting.

The company, which numbered about eighty, was presided over by Mr. James McCoss, the President of the Club, who piped the party down to the dining-room.

Accompanying him at the top table were Mrs. McCoss, Mr. J. H. B. Bell, Scottish Mountaineering Club, who gave an address; Mr. George Chalmers, the Grampian Club; Mr. and Mrs. William Garden, Baillie and Mrs. Watt, Dr. J. R. Levack, Mr. J. A. Parker, and Mr. William M. Alexander.

The company present comprised:—

Mr. and Mrs. G. J. Allan, Mr. and Mrs. John Angus, Mr. G. D. Allan, Miss A. Bruce, Miss P. Bruce, Mr. Ian F. Booth, Mr. A. Booth, Mr. E. Bothwell, Mr. James Blair, Miss Helen Cran, Mr. and Mrs. J. Cook, Mr. T. Carr, Mr. G. Clark, Mr. James Conner, Mr. G. Duncan and Miss H. M. E. Duncan, Mr. H. C. Dugan, Mr. J. L. Ducat, Mr. G. S. Fraser (Town Clerk), Mr. T. Gray, Dr. and Mrs. A. W. Hendry, Mr. James Hadden, Mr. T. F. Henderson (City Engineer), Mr. A. L. Hay, Miss L. Innes, Miss R. K. Jackson, Miss M. W. Johnston, Dr. D. P. Levack, Miss Laing, Miss Moncur, Miss J. A. M. Mackie, Mr. R. W. Mackie, Mr. J. Middleton, Mr. L. MacGregor, Mr. W. M. McPherson, Mr. W. Malcolm, Mr. J. A. Nicol (Secretary and Treasurer), Mr. Wm. Nicol, Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Robertson, Mr. and Mrs. E. B. Reid, Mr. and Mrs. F. A. Ritson, Mrs. Rust, Mr. and Mrs. S. C. H. Smith, Mr. and Mrs. Malcolm Smith, Miss M. Skakle, Mr. Simpson, Miss A. Stephen, Mr. A. C. Simpson, Mr. G. R. Symmers, Mr. A. Taylor, Mr. and Mrs. R. M. Williamson, Mr. R. B. Williamson, Mr. N. Wilson, Mr. G. Wilson, and Miss M. Yeaman.

The President, after giving the toast of "The King," proposed "The Cairngorm Club." He said: I am very proud of the honour you have conferred upon me by electing me president of the Cairngorm Club. I am trying to follow the high standard set by the three previous presidents—Dr. Levack, Mr. William Garden, and Mr. Parker. There is a qualification that is necessary in a president. It is a great and permanent love for the hills, and I have that quali-

fication. We are gathered together here to-night as representatives of the finest and highest sport in the world. There seems to be something about great rock cliffs and snow peaks that attracts only those whom we may term the faithful. I think you will agree with me that there is always something grand about the true mountaineer. Tell me a man's sport and I will tell you his character. At the Annual General Meeting to-night the Club has fixed the New Year Meet at Braemar, and the Easter Meet at Fort William. As the cliffs of Ben Nevis are most attractive to a great many of the members there is bound to be a very large turn-out, and climbers will have the unique experience of staying a night in an Alpine hut without going to Switzerland. This year's Easter Meet, held at Fortingall, was the most successful in the history of the Club. Thirty-three members attended, and they all enjoyed themselves and did a lot of climbing. In the Club we have now a great many young members, and that is what a climbing club requires. It is most encouraging to note the climbing capabilities of these young members. The standard of climbing is as high to-day as ever it was, and possibly higher. The most notable achievement this year amongst Club members is the ascent of the Tough-Brown Ridge by Ewen and Symmers. The Tough-Brown Ridge is situated, as you know, on the cliffs of Lochnagar, and it is one of the most difficult climbs in the British Isles. There is still another prominent gully on these cliffs which has to be conquered. It is the Douglas-Gibson Gully, but like Mount Everest, it *will* be ascended yet, and I hope it will be accomplished by members of the Cairngorm Club. Our membership now stands at 270, and we have added 36 new members this year, exactly double as many as last year. A great many of the new members are young people. I hope they will remember that, to store up those wonderful memories of the hills, they must have enthusiasm and keep going, as there is a time when the stage of the sere and yellow leaf comes along, and the climber has then to be content to do his climbing by the fireside in the thoughts of the past. This, however, will be a long time yet, because

Old climbers never die,

They only climb away,

and they do not need the doctor, as they keep their weight down and remain fit. The following verses, written by a member of the Alpine Club, may be taken as a warning :—

There was a time when I could feel
 All Alpine hopes and fears ;
 When I was light of toe and heel,
 Like other mountaineers.
 Those days are done ; no more, no more,
 The cruel fates allow ;
 I weighed last winter sixteen stone—
 I'm not a climber now.

The rocks that roughly handle us,
 The peaks that will not "go,"
 The uniformly scandalous
 Condition of the snow,
 All these have quenched my ancient flame,
 And climbing is, I vow,
 A vastly over-rated game—
 I'm not a climber now.

On August 1 this year the North Face of the Matterhorn, which has an angle of from 50 to 60 degrees, was ascended by two German brothers. If you look at the photograph on the menu card you will see a ridge running down the centre; that is the Zermatt or Hornli Ridge. On the right is the Z'mutt Ridge. The North Face is between those two ridges. The two brothers passed the night on a small ledge at a height of 13,600 feet. Valtournanche, on the Italian side, could not resign itself to being beaten by Zermatt, so, during a spell of fine weather on October 15, an Italian, with two guides, ascended the naked rock wall on the south side. It took them 13 hours to cover the 4,900 feet to the top. It is interesting to note that it is now 66 years since the Matterhorn was first ascended by Whymper, by the Hornli Ridge. To come back, however, to our Cairngorms. The attractions of this group of hills are well known to you. There is no other place in the British Isles just like it, except Ben Nevis. One can wander on the great plateau over 4,000 feet, which is like a dried-up sea, with its boulders, rough gravel and lack of vegetation. Every yard of the track over the Cairngorms is beloved by all of us, from Maggie Gruer's scones to the Thieves' Den, and from the Tailor's Stone to Parker's Bridge, amongst the pines of Rothiemurchus. In winter-time, after a storm, on a quiet, frosty morning, there is great beauty and purity; even the vertical rocks are plastered with snow, and the fantastically-shaped snow cornices glitter in the sunshine. The streams are all silent, the only sound being the hoarse croak of the ptarmigan. The white porcelain-gleaming summits at sunset have the appearance of being withdrawn from some titanic blast furnace. It is 25 years since I first crossed the Cairngorms, and I have loved them ever since. Some of you have memories of days spent on the Teallachs, Liathach, Eithe, The Coolin, Nevis, Buchaille Etive, Cruachan, and the rest—the hills of our glorious Scotland. We have also got female hills in Scotland for our women to climb, such as Creag Meaghaidh, Stack Polly, and the Sisters of Kintail. And for the wicked male climbers, if there are any in the Club (which I doubt very much), there are the Devil's Point and the Ben Iutharns, at the head of Glen Ey, which, when translated, means the Mountains of Hell. If these people behave themselves, however, they may be allowed to climb the Angel's Peak and feel their feet on safer ground again. I think it is very fitting

as a Club that we should voice our thanks to the Commissioners in charge of Deer Forests for their kindness to the Club in giving permission to ascend the hills in their territory. Fellow-members of Scotland's Senior Climbing Club, instituted 42 years ago, I give you the toast, "The Cairngorm Club"—(applause).

A fascinating lecture on "Climbs in the Pennine Alps, and the Arolla and Zermatt Valleys" was delivered by Mr. J. H. B. Bell, who showed a series of lantern slides depicting majestic scenes of snowclad rugged peaks.

Mr. Bell described ascents he had made of Pin d'Arolla, L'Évêque, Dent Blanche, Mont Blanche, and the Matterhorn, and other peaks. He related several thrilling experiences. One exciting adventure that befell him was when he allowed the rope to get too loose, and he slipped into a crevasse. He swung like a pendulum fifteen feet below, but fortunately the leader managed to pull him up again, but it was a lesson to keep the rope taut. Humorous incidents, however, are to be found in the dangerous task of scaling these dizzy heights. Mr. Bell and his companions were attacking a particularly difficult ascent and left one of the party on the ledge at the foot of the last stage to look after the supplies. This was the innocent cause of striking panic into the hearts of a clergyman and his party, who jumped to the conclusion that they were smugglers running contraband across the frontier. Mr. Bell conveyed to the company the thrills of climbing the Matterhorn when he described how he and two other mountaineers climbed to the top of the peak in eleven hours.

Mr. W. Malcolm proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. Bell, and said that it was impossible, even with the help of these fine pictures, to imagine the great mass of rock of the Matterhorn, and how fierce the top rocks looked. It was an immense peak. He noticed that Mr. Bell said that he did the climb in eleven hours from the hut. A strong party took twelve hours to that same climb, so that gave them a good idea of the difficulty of the ascent. In fact it was about two miles on the map, and it took them twelve hours to reach the top. Mr. Bell had beaten their time by one hour.

Mr. G. S. Fraser, Town Clerk, in a witty speech, gave the toast of "The Guests." He said they were very glad to have members of the Scottish Mountaineering Club and of the Dundee Club as their guests, especially the Scottish Mountaineering Club, because they were the real high peak of mountaineering in Scotland. He hoped they would come back again, as the first essential of mountaineering was comradeship, and the first essential of comradeship was hospitality.

Mr. George Chalmers, of the Grampian Club, responding, said it was particularly pleasant to come to Aberdeen, as he was a native of the county. It was a double pleasure to come as the guest of the

Cairngorm Club, and he could assure them that the Grampian Club realised the honour conferred on them by the Cairngorm Club, the oldest mountaineering club in Scotland. They were not quite so fortunately situated in Dundee as they were in Aberdeen. Although the distance to the magic area of the Cairngorms was slightly less by mileage, they had not the same facilities as they had in Aberdeen of slipping up the Dee Valley for a day or a week-end. This kindness of the Cairngorm Club was typical of the kindness of the Club. Its members had been very helpful indeed. The Dundee Club had received great assistance from the president of the Cairngorm Club and from Mr. Walker. They had received assistance in various other ways. He thought that the finest thing about mountaineering was the splendid comradeship it brought about. There was nothing finer in any sport. There was nothing so good in any other sport. They experienced dangers together, climbed together on one rope, and one might have the power of endangering the whole party. It was in circumstances like these that real friendship was formed.

The chairman said that they were most fortunate in the editor of the *Journal*, Baillie Watt, and in their secretary and treasurer, Mr. J. A. Nicol, and he called upon them to speak. He also mentioned that Club members were asked to use the Club Library. Mr. Bothwell would issue books at any time. The library ought to be used more than it was, as it contained interesting mountaineering literature.

Baillie Watt said that under the reign of the last president, his instructions were not to spare money in producing the magazine. He did not know if they thought they had got value for that money, but it was about one of the best investments the Club could make of its funds. They had considerably increased the number of pictures in the *Journal*, and he thought that was all to the good, but, compared with *The Alpine Journal*, they had a long way to go. They had reached a standard, however, which was no disgrace to the Cairngorm Club. He wanted to say how indebted he was to the new president, Mr. McCoss. He was quite sure that the numbers would not come out with the comparative regularity they did if it were not for the help he got from Mr. McCoss. He hoped that the members of the Club would do what they could to supply anything of interest in regard to mountaineering. The more he received the more interesting the *Journal* would be.

Mr. Nicol said that all he had to say, as secretary and treasurer of the Club, was that they wanted as many members as possible. He was glad to see Dr. Harry Rae, the Medical Officer of Health, and Mr. Henderson, the City Engineer, present, and as the Medical Officer was keenly interested in fresh air, he thought they might rope him in. He thought they might also do the same with the City Engineer. The Club seemed to be flourishing and would go on doing so if old and young supported it. That night, at their Annual

General Meeting, they heard a suggestion that there should be a Junior Section. He thought it would be a very good thing if they could get the fellows and girls who were just leaving school. It would form the nucleus of what would be a very successful Club later on, and there was plenty of room for them. There was a lot of talk just now of winter sports on Upper Deeside. Those of them who knew the mountains at Christmas and New Year time might have their doubts about that, but there could be no doubt about the charm of the Scottish mountains in the early spring, when the snow was set, and, whatever the day was like, they could always get hard going. The mountains round Braemar, for example, were absolutely perfect. Even if one had to wait for a few days, it was worth while. He did not altogether agree with his senior who replied before him in regard to the magazine—(laughter). They could not just let the magazine run to any amount of money, because, after all, he was treasurer, and there were limits to his pocket, but he did agree that the magazine was a good thing. The magazine stimulated interest in a wider sphere than the membership, and in that respect was all to the good, and the members could help with pictures and by writing their climbing experiences.

Dr. J. R. Levack proposed a vote of thanks to the chairman, which was cordially given.

An enjoyable musical programme was contributed to by Mr. A. C. Simpson and Mr. G. Alexander, who gave a spirited rendering of the Club Song.

THE MITRE RIDGE—BEINN A' BHUIRD.

AN unsuccessful attempt was made on August 2, 1931, by Brockie, Yunnie, Gordon, Gove, Steven, and Mackenzie. The conditions were ideal for rock work—the rocks being warm and dry. There was an unusual absence of mist and wind. The first pitch of some 40–50 feet was overcome after some difficulty, caused by the absence of holds on the smooth face. The leader had to start from the shoulders of the second man. A good ledge is above this first pitch, however, and from this point the next 150 feet presented little difficulty until a distinct overhang stopped further progress. An attempt to surmount this difficulty failed, and a traverse to the left to a broad ledge had to be made. From the ledge a crack runs up for a distance of 30–40 feet and seemed to give access to a ledge at the top. An attempt to reach the ledge was foiled by the bad condition of the rock and, after a determined effort, had to be abandoned. The descent had to be made with great care, but was accomplished by one man lowering the others to a convenient ledge, following down himself and repeating the process. There are no safe belays to allow of double roping down.

Given good conditions, progress beyond the point reached by this party—about 250 feet from the foot of the first pitch—should be possible, but the whole climb will be very exposed. "Pitons" may come in very useful in places.

Our failure may be attributed to the following causes:—1. The exposed condition of the climb. 2. The smoothness of the rock and the absence of good, firm holds in parts. 3. An insufficient length of rope.—R. PARK YUNNIE.

CHOKESTONE GULLY OF SGOR AN LOCHAIN UAINE.

On August 17, 1931, Peter Stevenson, Edinburgh, and myself, ascended this Gully. Since the last ascent by McCoss and Merchant, in September, 1911 (*C.C.J.*, Vol. VII, p. 125), the Gully seems to have completely changed its character. At that time there was only the final large chokestone; now there are four of them, so that a description of existing conditions is necessary.

The Gully lies in the Gharbh Choire on the face of Sgor an Lochain Uaine, and is the first break in the rock-face west of Lochain Uaine. It faces the stream coming from the Wells of Dee and is well marked, having vertical walls. It issues about 250 yards below the summit of Sgor an Lochain Uaine. On both sides of the entrance, immediately below the commencement of the cliffs, the bed of the Gully starts between high heaps of debris. The surface here is steep and composed of solid rock, covered by treacherous green moss. Holds are difficult to find on account of the moss and must be searched for.

The Gully is divided by a series of four chokestones, and the first is rapidly reached. It presents tricky climbing, but not of unusual severity, and may be easily overcome by a doubled rope.

Chokestone 2 is less difficult, and a good ascent is possible via the left wall. The next pitch is more severe, and the right side seems preferable. The hand-holds are almost good, but they are not numerous, and the inclination is steep.

Chokestone 3 may be climbed in a straightforward manner on the right side, but here again the doubled rope may be used with advantage. Comparatively easy scrambling brings one to the pitch below the final chokestone. The pitch itself is a high one, and seems impossible. It is almost perpendicular, and no help can be had from the walls, as they are set too far apart to be of use for back and foot work. There seems to be no way of overcoming the chokestone itself, judging from the appearance of the adjacent walls. It was found possible, however, to escape by a series of ascending shelves on the right wall, but care should be taken to begin the wall ascent by making in the direction away from the head of the Gully and commencing on a shelf lying horizontally. A direct ascent on the wall has been found impossible. The climber emerges on to a ridge

running parallel with the Gully, and overlooking it. Above the chokestone the Gully becomes a simple scramble on loose stones. The height is approximately 650 feet, and the time taken was $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours.—J. D. CHEYNE.

An uncompleted ascent of this Gully was made on September 27, 1931, by Yunnie, Gove, and Brockie.

The Gully consists of a series of pitches, topped by chokestones. There are many loose boulders, and great care must be exercised by the leader to minimise danger to those following. The conditions were not good, a cold wind—almost a gale—being prevalent during the entire climb. No difficulty was experienced till the last chokestone was reached. A pitch of some 30 feet of smooth wet rock prevents the ascent of the chokestone, and an exit by the right hand wall must be made. This traverse involves an exposed climb near the top, and owing to the gale blowing at the time and to the bitterly cold conditions, which rendered fingers quite numb, the climb was abandoned. The use of the double rope was found advantageous in the descent, good belays being found here and there. Some of the lower pitches, although easy to ascend, are not easy to descend without the double rope.

The Gully provides a fair climb under ordinary conditions, but is by no means difficult. Green moss covers many of the pitches and renders the rock very slippery. Some parts of the rock are not too firm. The Gully is about 650 feet in height.—R. PARK YUNNIE.

A SUNDAY OUTING.

LEAVING Thistle Cottage, Inverey, at 7.45 a.m. on Sunday morning, October 24, my friend and I followed the path, so far as it was discernible under a six-inch coating of snow, to the old house of Altanour. Our time to this point was just a few minutes under two hours, and after a fifteen minutes' stop we continued on our way. Up to this time we had no definite plans and, moreover, were without a map of this locality. On leaving Altanour we proceeded to climb Ben Lutharn, the top of which was reached at 11.35 a.m. Seeking a little shelter on the lea side of the hill from the exceptionally sharp frosty wind, we demolished a thermos of tea and a goodly package of sandwiches. While enjoying our rather cold repast, it gradually dawned on us that it would be a fine thing to make for the Cairnwell Road. If we could make the Cairnwell Road, why not the Spital of Glenshee Hotel, where we could have a good tuck-in and most likely a chance of a run to Braemar in some Good Samaritan's car? No sooner were our minds made up than we made our start. Leaving Ben Lutharn we crossed to Ben Lutharn Bheag, where we got our first view

of Loch nan Eun. Determined still to keep to the high ridges as far as possible, we descended to the highest point connecting Mam nan Carn. Leaving Loch nan Eun on our left, we carried on over the top of Glas Thulachan and kept to the top ridge until within a short distance of Glenlochsie, where we dropped down to the valley floor and went through the policies of Glenlochsie to the Spital Hotel. Anyone looking at the map would naturally ask why we deviated from the direct path so often. Neither of us had ever been in this part of the hills before and, as already stated, we were without a map. Our bearings all the time were reckoned on Glas Maol, which stood out all day particularly clear. This was one of our main reasons for trying to keep as high as possible all day. And, moreover, if any path does exist, at no time was it visible to us, as we were trudging in snow which lay on an average eight inches deep. We arrived at the Spital Hotel at 4.10 p.m., having been eight hours 25 minutes on the way. No sooner had we arrived than we were told that the Cairnwell Road was blocked, so we had the pleasant prospect of a twenty miles' walk to Inverey in front of us. In no way put about, we sat down to a really superb high tea, which stood us in good stead on our return journey. At 6 p.m. we said good-bye to our host, and set off on our twenty-mile walk home. From the Spital Hotel to within a quarter of a mile of Braemar we encountered not a single person. We walked through Braemar at 10.25 p.m. and arrived at Thistle Cottage, Inverey, just as the clock was striking 12 midnight. There we found the worthy Miss Gruer waiting anxiously for us with a nice warm fire and our supper, which had been ordered for 6 p.m. The weather throughout was glorious, being very clear, although bitterly cold. The outing, which we reckoned covered 43 miles, will be looked back on by the two parties concerned as one of the best of many similar adventures on the Cairngorms.—W.D.H.