

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB.

THE Fiftieth Annual General Meeting was held in the Secretary's office on November 23, 1938, Dr D. P. Levack, President, in the Chair.

Accounts for the year were read and approved. Office-bearers were elected for the ensuing year and the usual Meets arranged. The Hon. Librarian presented his annual statement on the Library, Slide Collection, and other Club property, mentioning his intention of making a thorough examination of the Allt na Beinne bridge.

The matter of replenishing the stock of Club Rules, now exhausted, was brought up, and it was unanimously agreed to revise the Rules preparatory to reprinting, the revised draft to be presented to a Special General Meeting of the Club, to be called in due course.

The President raised the matter of the proposed Club Hut, and after explanation as to the present position, by the Chairman and by Mr J. E. Bothwell, was again left in abeyance.

To encourage Junior Members to attend Meets and Excursions undertaken by hired transport, it was agreed that they should be charged only half the hire charge.

The Annual Dinner was held in the Palace Hotel, Aberdeen, on November 26, 1938, the retiring President, Dr D. P. Levack, presiding over a company of 130 members and guests.

The occasion was one of some note, for it marked, as it were, the Jubilee of the Club. To enhance the importance of the event the Honorary President, Dr J. N. Collie, had come from London to attend, and Miss A. S. Lippe, a daughter of one of the Founders, was also a guest of honour. Mr Eric Maxwell, President of the Grampian Club, represented that Club, and Capt. H. D. Ross, Factor for Balmoral, and Mr J. B. Hosie, Factor for the Fife Estates, were also present.

The Royal Toast honoured, the President-Elect, Mr Hugh D. Welsh, in proposing the toast of "The Founders," said it was the first time in the annals of the Club that the memory of the Founders had been brought officially before a Club gathering. He described the circumstances that led up to the formation of the Club on Maghan na Banaraich (The Dairymaid's Field) at the head of Loch Avon, below the Shelter Stone, on the early morning of June 23, 1887. The Club was greatly indebted to those who brought into being the oldest mountaineering club in Scotland, and the names of those who agreed to form such a club should be remembered.

Dr D. P. Levack proposed the toast of "The Cairngorm Club," and in doing so reviewed the activities of the Club during the past

fifty years. While there had been no radical change in the conduct of the Club there had certainly been a great advance and a widening in the scope of its activities. It was interesting to think in this age of rapid transport how the first members organized their expeditions. It was also intriguing to speculate on the future of the Club, and to see what may develop in the next fifty years. While the members come and go, the ideals of the Club must endure as long as there are mountains in Scotland and men and women to climb them. There is an ever-increasing desire for adventure and experience, and the hills always stimulate the urge to see what is beyond.

The toast of "The Guests" was proposed by Mr E. W. Watt, who paid a special tribute to Dr J. N. Collie who had journeyed specially from London to attend the Dinner. He also referred to the presence of Miss Lippe, a daughter of one of the Founders. She was a link with that far-off day when the Club came into existence. Mr Lindsay Stewart replied.

Dr Collie, who was persuaded to say a few words, thanked the Club for honouring him in electing him again Honorary President. "In the hills," he said, "we can best offer homage to the great earth mother from whom we came and to whom we return."

A musical entertainment arranged by Mr Simpson provided great enjoyment.

The table decorations of bracken and heather, arranged for by Miss W. Hay, were a feature greatly admired, and the menu, printed in the Club colours, carried a photograph of the Shelter Stone.

Following the Dinner there was an interesting show of lantern slides, many of them in colour, by Dr Levack and Mr Welsh.

Three Indoor Meets, or Social Evenings, were held during the early months of 1939 in the Caledonian Hotel. The first, on January 14, was very well attended. Mr W. Garden discoursed on an interesting collection of lantern slides of some of the mountain area of the West Highlands and Skye. Mr J. A. Parker and Mr W. Malcolm also had a number of slides on which they commented. Mr A. S. Middleton gave some violin selections and recitations, and Master V. Youngson accompanied by Miss McWilliam sang some delightful songs. The President was in the Chair.

The second Meet took the form of a Dance on February 2. A large company of members and friends was welcomed by the President, and to music supplied by G. F. Davie's Band a varied programme was gone through until an early morning hour.

The third Meet, on March 6, was an exceptionally interesting one. J. B. Macdonald, with the assistance of R. O. Mackay, exhibited some of his ciné (colour) films to a large gathering. The scenes depicted covered familiar areas on and round Lochnagar and the Cairngorms, in spring, summer, autumn, and winter. The photography was

excellent, the reproduction of colour very true. It gave one a great thrill to see these places under apparently natural conditions—without the exertion and discomforts; and specially good were the close-ups of deer. Mr Macdonald is to be congratulated on producing such an excellent record of days among the great hills.

#### MEETS AND EXCURSIONS.

WHAT has come to be known as the Midnight Excursion of the Club has become a popular event among the members, the attendance, including guests, being an indication of the interest taken. On Midsummer Night, fairies, spooks, and such like things as go bump in the night, are supposed to be abroad and hold high revel, and an unknowing wanderer on Ben Avon on the night of Saturday, June 25, 1938, would have been excused if he had thought the figures he saw, ghostlike in the mist among the summit rocks, were a belated company recovering from the revels of the previous night, which happened to be Midsummer Night. The conditions then were anything but conducive to revelry, but the company were, in spite of it, cheery and good natured. The President, Dr D. P. Levack, was responsible for a party of thirty-three, which, after a rather noisy meal at Allargue Hotel on Donside, set off in the evening for Ben Avon by way of Delnadamp and Inchrory. There was a high wind from the north-west, with an angry sky, and the prospects for a pleasant night were by no means rosy. The sheltered bend of the River Avon at Inchrory was a pleasing picture in the evening light, but above, Ben Avon had a peculiar ghastly look against a leaden sky touched here and there with patches of reddish-gold from the setting sun. The ascent was made by Càrn Fiaclach and over Meall Gaineimh, and as height was made the full force of the wind was soon encountered. To the west and north the hill masses were outlined dark blue-purple against an angry gold blaze of the rapidly setting sun, and rain came on in gusts. Mist began to drive over, and the great rock outcrops which are such an interesting feature of Ben Avon, loomed grotesquely through the thick damp mist, emphasizing their fantastic shapes and outlines. The company was scattered, but eventually, somewhere about 11 o'clock, all gathered at the summit outcrop, Leabaidh an Daimh Bhuidhe, 3843 feet, and prepared to spend the dark hours in as comfortable a way as possible in crevices and in meagre sheltered nooks in the rocks. Everything and everybody was wet and clammy, the wind whistled eerily among the rocks, and grey vapour obscured everything a few yards away. To those warm and comfortable and able to sleep the night hours passed swiftly, but to those others who were not so fortunate time crawled. Lying huddled together, wet and cold, shifting stiffly to another spot to escape a water drip from the rock above, these unfortunates perhaps realized the funny side of the

expedition. Now and again some restless being would come seeking a drier and warmer corner, to be sent away with words of sage advice; others led community singing that sounded muffled and unreal in the grey obscurity, and somebody rather spoiled the harmony of the gathering by starting the hymn "Nearer, my God, to Thee."

At length, in a lightening of the greyness, a move was made about 3 o'clock, and proud possessors of "Silva" compasses showed their skill in the use of these "fool-proof" instruments. The intention was to make an ascent of Beinn a' Bhùird; a course was set for The Sneck, and a ghostly company trudged along in rapidly increasing daylight. Fortunately rain ceased, and by the time The Sneck was sighted, about 200 yards north of the course, clothing was almost dry. Milder conditions now prevailed, so a meal was partaken of by the stream coming down from The Sneck, the headwaters of the Quoich. Heavy clouds pressed down on the heights above, and rain began to fall heavily, so Beinn a' Bhùird was abandoned. Little time was lost in getting down the Quoich under Càrn Eas and up over the watershed into Gleann an t-Slugain. Over the watershed the conditions changed, the sun came out strongly, the clouds rose and dispersed, and it became oppressively warm. The footbridge over the Dee at Braemar Castle was a welcome short cut to Braemar, where a luxurious hot bath and an enormous breakfast in the Invercauld Hotel completed another interesting outing.

The last official excursion for the summer, to An Sgarsoch and Càrn an Fhìdhleir, on June 10, 1938, was marred by dismal weather conditions during the greater part of the day, but nevertheless the party of fourteen had an interesting day. Cars conveyed the party to the White Bridge above the Linn of Dee, and the well-defined track up Glen Geldie was followed to the bridge leading to the derelict Geldie Lodge on Allt Coire an t-Seilich, where Malcolm and Miss Gauld broke off to climb An Sgarsoch. The rest continued up the uninteresting glen to where the Allt a' Chaorruinn, coming off the east side of Càrn an Fhìdhleir, joins the Geldie. The water was crossed here, and, after a laborious trudge through extensive sodden peat hags, the long slope of Càrn an Fhìdhleir was surmounted, thick mist and drizzle being entered when about half-way up. At the cairn a lesson on map reading and compass work was given to one or two inexperienced in these very necessary qualifications, and practical route finding in the dense mist was indulged in by these so that the 900-foot dip before An Sgarsoch could be located. They proved apt pupils. The col between the two hills was mist-free, and views were obtained into Glen Geldie and Glen Tarf. The summit ridge of An Sgarsoch was cloud buried, and in due course, after a tiring confusion of peat hags on the long slope to Cnapan Garbh the descent to Lower Geldie was made in a bright evening, the river crossed by the bridge there, and the rough road to the conveyances at the White Bridge followed. The Invercauld Arms in Braemar was as usual the scene of a very welcome change of clothing and a substantial

repast. Outstanding features of the day were the monotony of Glen Geldie and the extensiveness and convolutions of the sodden peat hags.

The New Year Meet was as usual held at Braemar at the Invercauld Arms under the new President, H. D. Welsh. During the week-end the company numbered thirty, most of them arriving on the Friday evening. Wintry conditions were experienced during the four days of the Meet, the snow lying in Braemar to a depth of 8 to 10 inches, but in spite of the severity the days out were greatly enjoyed. Not the least enjoyable feature of the Meet was the way in which the nights were spent, and it says much for the physical well-being of those taking part that they were able to do a stiff day in the deep snow after indulging in activities lasting till 3 o'clock in the morning!

On the way up to Braemar on the Friday evening the President and two others were victims of a nasty accident in which the car they were in crashed in a skid on the icy road, demolished a drystone dyke, and rolled over two or three times. They were severely bruised and shaken but continued the journey in other cars.

At dinner on Friday night the factor of Invercauld Estates, Mr G. D. Menzies, and Mrs Menzies, were welcome guests.

Saturday, December 31, was a glorious sunshine-filled day, with dry powdery snow on the hills. Malcolm, Sellar, and others spent the day on the hills above Clunie Lodge; Smith, Bothwell, and Mitchell covered An Socach and the Beinn Iutharns from Glen Ey, while Butchart and E. B. Reid went ski-ing above Glen Callater, finding the desired conditions rather patchy. The main company motored to Alltdourie and ascended Beinn a' Bhuird by way of Gleann an t-Slugain and the usual route on the west side of the spur Carn Fiaclach to the south top. The conditions throughout the day were excellent, but distant views were unfortunately not very clear.

After dinner the usual social enjoyments were heartily engaged in, and just on midnight the whole company gathered in the drawing-room with Mrs Gregor and her three daughters. There the New Year was heralded in the time-honoured way. The President, in proposing the health of Mrs Gregor, regretted that this would be the last New Year Meet the Club would have at Invercauld under her motherly care. She was giving up the tenancy after a long period of usefulness, and her departure was a great loss to the Club. Mrs Gregor thanked the company for the expression of their regard, and hoped they would still favour the Invercauld Arms even in her absence. She also wished for the Club's continued prosperity.

Sunday, January 1, was ushered in by gently falling snow, and when parties were made up after early breakfast for climbs, the fall was thick and heavy and several inches lay in Braemar. Bothwell, Mitchell, Whitehouse, and others motored up to Loch Callater and crossed Lochnagar in blinding conditions over soft snow, returning to Braemar by Ballochbuie Forest. Later in the evening they returned

by car with Hutcheon to bring down their own vehicle after some difficulty. Hutcheon, the Dyers, and Lyra Murray had a wild day on An Sòcach, and Malcolm and Mackay succeeded in a careful ascent of Staic Buttress on Lochnagar in disagreeable heavy snow. The President, Ella Dey, and Mrs Hendry attended church in the forenoon.

On account of the bad conditions during the whole day a little apprehension was caused by the non-appearance in the late evening of Rose, who had gone off alone to Càrn Bhac at the head of Glen Connie. The position was discussed at some length, and it was a great relief when the truant arrived at the hotel about 10 o'clock. He had picked up a stranger in Inverey, had bagged their hill in thick conditions, and, making some error in compass reading, had found themselves in Glen Tilt! By that time the snow had ceased falling, and doubt was cast on their direction when they discovered the moon was on their left instead of on their right! There was nothing else to do but to cross the watershed into the Geldie and so down to the White Bridge and Linn of Dee. Adding to their enjoyment was the fact that the footbridge over the Geldie was washed away, and they broke through the ice into deep water in crossing the stream. A telephone at Linn of Dee or Inverey is long overdue.

Late that night news came through that E. B. Reid had, for some obscure reason, been awarded the O.B.E. The event was celebrated in proper fashion, and then it was discovered that Rose carried with him during hill-climbing expeditions a number of signal rockets for emergency purposes. Reid and Butchart seized upon this fact with great avidity, and to amplify the O.B.E. celebrations hilariously liberated these messengers in front of the hotel about 1 A.M., enthusiastically encouraged by those of the company who had not retired to bed.

Monday, January 2, was another good day with abundant sunshine. Bothwell and others had a great day on the Cairnwell, Sgòr Mòr and Càrn Aosda, the snow unfortunately being rather soft and wet. Reid and Butchart, with ladies, amused themselves on ski on the slopes at the top of the Cairnwell. Others penetrated into Gleann an t-Slugain and the Quoich. Smith and two or three of the more energetic did Ben Macdhuì, getting into mist and snow above Loch Etchachan, but having a very excellent day. The President kept to low ground, paid a round of visits in Inverey and went up to the Linn of Dee which was a magnificent spectacle with icicles hanging from the ledges. Most of the company returned to Aberdeen that evening. It was one of the most enjoyable New Year Meets of the Club, and it is to be hoped a larger attendance is secured in future.

The three snow-climbing excursions on Lochnagar, giving opportunity to those with little or no climbing experience of this kind to sample winter conditions, were, as usual, well attended. The first, on February 12, had an attendance of thirty-six members and guests.

Lochnagar has been done so often by members under varied conditions that to give a description of what route was followed, and so on, would be a case of repetition of what has been said in previous accounts. Various parties spread themselves on climbs from the main corrie—the Black Spout, Left-hand Branch, Central Buttress, and so on—while others contented themselves with ascending by the more prosaic route of the edge of the corrie above the Ladder. Snow was plentiful and in good condition, but a high, piercingly cold wind with battering hail and fine snow caused some discomfort. The outstanding event of the day was a very fine plucky ascent of Raeburn's Gully under difficult conditions by Lorimer, Reid, and Lawson.

The second winter visit to Lochnagar was made on February 26 in severe weather. Driving dry snow was encountered at Alltnagiubhsaich, the going was very heavy in the deep soft powdery covering, and two only, Malcolm and guest, succeeded in reaching the Indicator. The high cold wind carried the dry snow in clouds, progress in the deep drifts was very slow, and most of the party contented themselves with going as far as the col above the main corrie.

The third excursion, on March 12, was favoured by excellent weather. Snow was still plentiful and in good condition, and the party divided up, some ascending by various routes from the corrie, others by the corrie edge, and one or two going on Broad Cairn and round by the White Mounth. Distant views were extensive and very impressive. A very fine attempt on the Douglas-Gibson Gully by Lorimer, Reid, and Macdonald was unsuccessful. Continuous step-cutting on exceptionally severe snow and ice for two or three hours tried the leader sorely, and, owing to bad conditions above and shortness of time, they gave up when about 60 feet from the top. A nasty cornice blocked their exit, but the leader was assisted down to those below by a rope lowered from above.

Whether it is that Easter is an unsuitable time for members from Aberdeen to get away for a week-end, or that the rendezvous, Fortingall, was unattractive or too far away, it is difficult to say, but the attendance at this Meet was very disappointing, seven only being present. Another disappointing feature was that no office-bearers or members of committee were present, and the feeling was that while good days were had on the hills in the district the Meet could hardly be described as successful. But the hotel was very comfortable for those able to get in! Those attending deserve mention—Misses Duncan, Pittendrigh, Mearns, Mr and Mrs Angus, Rose, Whitehouse.

On Good Friday the snow conditions were ideal, and good views were obtained in every direction. It was a day of brilliant sunshine and warmth. Duncan and Pittendrigh had an excellent day on Ben

Lawers, the Anguses and Whitehouse revelled in their climb of Schiehallion.

On Saturday the Anguses and Mearns walked over the Lairig Chalbath from Glen Lyon to Loch Rannoch. Rose and Whitehouse motored eight miles up Glen Lyon with the intention of doing Ben Lawers via Meal Corranaich and Beinn Ghlas. They went up Glen Da Eig to Meal a Choire Leith, and found thick mist on the tops. The summit ridge was followed to Meal Corranaich, but the connecting ridge to Beinn Ghlas eluded them. They spent a considerable time on this extensive hill, abandoned the rest of their programme and descended by Allt a' Chobhain. Rose had with him a supply of emergency rockets, but the sticks did not survive the journey!

Five motored on Sunday to Invervar and spent a short day on Càrn Gorm, Whitehouse breaking away on the summit and returning to Fortingall over Meall Garbh, Càrn Mairg, and Creag Mhòr. He was fortunate in seeing a pair of dottrell on Creag Mhòr. Mearns and Rose spent the day on Schiehallion.

The May Holiday Meet at Braemar, from Friday, April 28, to Tuesday, May 2, was a Meet in name only. The sole representative of the Club was the President! Other members of the Club preferred to expend their energies at other centres like Glencoe and Glen Affric, and their numbers would have made quite a respectable company at Braemar. In spite of the lack of company, Welsh had three thoroughly perfect days in every way. Weather was ideal, snow was abundant and in excellent condition above 3,000 feet, and visibility was astonishingly good and extensive.

Saturday morning was bright and bracing with a sprinkling of fresh snow, and soon after 9 o'clock the "Meet" was swinging along the Linn of Dee road. Passing through Inverey on his way to Glen Ey, he saw with regret the preparations being made at Thistle Cottage for the roup of Maggie Gruer's effects that afternoon. From the lower end of Glen Ey the slope of Tom Anthon on the east side of the glen was climbed at a slant and Càrn Mòr topped. From there a dip led to the slope of Càrn na Drochaide which was followed round to Creag a' Mhadaidh, and an easy walk took him to Sgòr Mòr to the south-west of Glen Clunie Lodge. Retracing his steps over Càrn Ghriogair and Creag a' Mhadaidh, a long ridge of short heather was followed over Càrn na Drochaide and then to Morrone, and so down to Braemar, reaching there about 7 o'clock.

Sunday was the best of the three days. A visitor in the hotel motored the climber to Derry Lodge, where a large herd of deer, very tame, engaged attention for a little time. Leaving there about 10 o'clock our member followed the familiar path through the old Derry forest, oppressively warm, and was soon in the open glen above the upper bridge. The hills were well covered with snow and the spectacle was entrancing. Ice was thick over the water on the path, and though the

air was warm the wind was cold, and rapid progress was made. Near the Glas Allt a herd of deer was disturbed which lined along the slope of Craig Derry. So still did they keep that it was easy to find their number to be 117. Deep snow was encountered at the foot of Coire Etchachan, but the surface was hard and the ascent to the loch was not so tiring as it usually is. The scene at Loch Etchachan at 12.10 was astonishingly beautiful—the loch frozen over, and here and there on the cliffs above a buttress of rock rosy against the snow in the strong sun. Overhead was a cloudless sky of intense blue, soft delicate tints of lavender, mauve, and rose washed the snowy waste, but the wind was bitter and strong from the north and did not permit of loitering. In due course the summit plateau was reached, on crisp snow, and an indescribable panorama was spread around on all sides. The Braeriach-Cairn Toul picture presented was magnificent, but here also the cold was too arctic to allow lingering, and besides there was no shelter at the cairn, it being well covered by drifts. A worrying thought exercised the mind of the lonely figure. Clad in kilt as he was, in this bitter cold, in the event of an accident like a fall or a sprained ankle, would his spare garments—a sweater, thin raincoat, and muffler—be sufficient protection against the long night hours? Not much!

In order to get out of the bitter high wind so that lunch could be taken in comfort a descent was made across the Tailors' Burn to the col at the foot of Càrn a' Mhaim. Here was shelter and warmth; a hole was hand-scraped in the snow, lunch eaten, and a sleep lasting twenty minutes indulged in. Up and along the long ridge of Càrn a' Mhaim and down to the Luibeg path was a steady effort. It was midsummer in the Luibeg and Derry, and a waiting car was reached at 6 o'clock.

Monday was another excellent day. A return visit was made to Inverey on a round of visits. The remnants of Maggie's effects were being disposed of, and it was depressing to think that no more would the kindly figure welcome her "laddies" off the hill. Round by the Linn, across to Glen Lui and the Black Bridge and an ascent of Creag Bhalg above Mar Lodge was the next stage, the reward being an unusual panorama of Beinn a' Bhùird and the Western Cairngorms. A scramble down over rock and long heather, and then through the ancient pines led into Glen Quoich, past the Linn of Quoich and the Punch Bowl, and so back to the Braemar road by way of Mar Lodge grounds. As the evening was still young and fine, an ascent of Morrone by way of Coire Allt a' Chlair rounded off a long day, and a full week-end.

The first of the Saturday afternoon excursions took place on May 20 to Buck of the Cabrach. A conveyance carried a party of twenty up Donside to Lumsden and then by Craig Castle and Burn of Craig to where the Aberdeen-Banff county boundary crosses the road east of Meikle Cairn Hill. It was a dull, oppressive day without sunshine. The party divided into small groups. Longish heather and dry peat

hags retarded progress from the start and were a lesson to wearers of tight skirts. The county march fence was followed, for a large part across eroded peat, to Mount Meddin, one group continuing over Glenlaff Hill and Peat Hill to the upper reaches of the Kindie Burn. Another group dropped down into the beginning of Glen Laff, followed an old road to the east of Broom Hill and eventually emerged at Chapelton on the Kindie Burn. From there it was a mile or two to the Glenkindie Hotel, where a substantial tea was enjoyed.

Derry Lodge was the rendezvous of a company of about forty on May 28, with a varied selection of objectives to please all tastes. Climatic conditions were not too promising at the start, but by the time Ballater was reached the prospect was ideal. Cloudless sky, rather high temperature, and amazingly clear distant views were features of the day.

Four members went by Clais Fhearnaig into Glen Quoich and up into Dubh Gleann. Ben Macdhuì claimed a large number, several going by the usual Etchachan route, the Shelter Stone, and ascending by the Féith Buidhe. A small party attempted an ascent of Hell's Lum in the cliff between Coire Domhain and Féith Buidhe at the head of the Loch Avon corrie, but abandoned it on account of the great heat and the fact that considerable water was coming down from snow above. From the heat alone they decided the chimney was well named! A party of eight were energetic enough to do Càrn a' Mhaim and Ben Macdhuì, descending by Coire Etchachan and Glen Derry. Whitehouse, a member in Manchester, wrote that he was to be in Aviemore during the week-end and asked what the programme was for the day so that he could meet some of the party somewhere within the several square miles covered by the Cairngorms. A note of the possible routes had been sent him, and it would be pure chance were he able to get in touch with anyone in that great expanse as everything would depend on the weather. However, one party of three came upon him at the Sappers Hut on Ben Macdhuì, and they all returned to Derry by way of the Féith Buidhe, Shelter Stone, and Etchachan. He put up at Linn of Dee that night and returned to Aviemore the next day. Cairn Toul attracted a number, one party ascending by the stream coming from Lochan Uaine and then up by the Angel's Peak. Others favoured the usual route from Corrou. The Devil's Point was surmounted by the slimy wet rocks from Glen Geusachan. There was little breeze, the rocks were hot and reflected the heat, and by the time the company gathered again at Derry, all were well burned. Seldom has such a clear, extensive view from the summits been obtained. From Ben Macdhuì, with the exception of the eastwards view which was obscured by haze, practically everything marked on the Indicator was clearly visible. It was an experience to be long remembered.

A meal had been arranged for at Loirston Hotel in Ballater, and it was about 9 o'clock when the company invaded the place. With

never-failing efficiency, the staff cheerfully catered for the wants even at that late hour.

An afternoon excursion to Coyles of Muick on June 3 was another enjoyable affair. A conveyance carried a gathering of seventeen to Linn of Muick near where a footbridge enabled a crossing of the stream to be made. The weather was all that could be desired, but visibility was somewhat restricted owing to haze. The ridge of the Coyles was followed northwards, and one party descended into Glen Girnoc, coming out on the south road at Littlemill to the waiting conveyance at Strathgirnoc school. Another small party, deluded by Griffith into a search for the Holy Grail, followed a track through fir woods and came out on the road near Loch Ullachie, reputed to be haunted. Though the Grail was not located as hopes had been entertained, comfort and satiation were secured at Ballater, and Griffith's flagging spirits revived.

And with this the Club's activities in the open were brought to a close, to be recommenced with the Midnight Excursion on June 24, when the Cairngorms will be crossed by several routes from Aviemore. On the whole the Excursions and Meets have been successful in that new members have been enabled to visit parts new to them and thus acquire useful knowledge. Even members of long standing have trod for the first time places they have seen from afar. A bond of comradeship has been forged that will bind the members closer not only to one another but to all those who go to the Hills for what they have to offer. New places have been visited, new ideas formulated; old familiar scenes have taken on new aspects.

H. D. W.

#### MAY HOLIDAY WEEK-END.

[A reviewer has taken us to task because we in Scotland do not distinguish between climbing and hill-walking.]

Messrs Dyer, Hutcheon, Mitchell, Malcolm, and Smith spent the week-end in Glencoe. On Sunday, April 30, the first three had an interesting day in the westernmost gully on the north face of Stob Coire nan Beith. A short patch of snow led to a large chokestone which, from the bottom, appeared to be the only obstacle in the gully. The whole gully was, however, steeper than they expected and consisted of a series of short pitches, more or less vegetated, covered with thin, frozen snow and occasionally glazed. About half-way up there was 200 feet of good, steep snow, above which the only secure stance was got by the second and third men astride a narrow nose of rock in the middle of the gully, while the leader tackled the next section. Once out of the gully, difficulties were not over, as soft wet snow lay on the frozen grassy slopes leading to the summit and, with hold for foot,

hand, or axe at a premium, this portion was very treacherous. The gully took four hours to negotiate. Smith and Malcolm spent the time exploring the summit of Bidean nam Bian. The following day the party visited Sgòr nam Fiannaidh.

Misses Johnston, Hoggarth, and Jackson motored to Glencoe on Friday evening and spent the next day basking in the sunshine on Aonach Eagach, which was reached via the shoulder from the forester's cottage opposite the Meeting of Three Waters. The following day they had a stiffer pull up the shoulder which meets the Old Road slightly east of Clachaig Hotel. This shoulder leads to a nameless top and then on to Sgòr nam Fiannaidh, the highest peak on the ridge. They continued to the next top, Stob Coire Lèith, and again basked in the sunshine for an hour or two. The views of Ben Nevis, Ben More (in Mull), Ben Cruachan, and Bidean nam Bian were superb. On the third day they went up Stob Dubh, the highest top of Buachaille Etive Beag, from a point about a mile up the Lairig Eilde, and slid down a scree slope to a grassy brae in the Dalness direction, returning by the Lairig Eilde, which has the usual path habit of disappearing occasionally.

The Editor has also to record that he, with W. J. Middleton and L. W. Ewen, hill-walked up Meall nan Tarmachan and Beinn nan Eachan (the Perthshire Matterhorn!) on the Saturday, traversed Meall na Dige and Stobinian on the Sunday, and ascended Beinn Laoigh on the Monday.

#### CAIRNGORM CLUB MEMBERS ABROAD.

Messrs Hutcheon, Malcolm, Mitchell, and Smith spent a combined motoring and climbing holiday in Switzerland at the beginning of September 1938. On the first day at Engelberg, a day of mist down to the roof-tops, a training walk to the Ruckhubel Hut (7,520 feet) was taken. Friday, September 2, turned out a perfect day of sunshine, and the Titlis (10,627 feet) was ascended from Trubsee Hotel (5,870 feet). The next stop was at Fiesch, in the Rhone valley, and the hillside was climbed to the Jungfrau Hotel, Eggishorn (9,626 feet). On Monday, September 5, the party took the track past the Margelen See and so up the Aletsch Glacier to the Pavillon Cathrein at Concordia Platz (9,416 feet), Mitchell and Smith taking in the Eggishorn summit on the way. Three nights were spent at this admirable hostelry at the base of the Faulberg, overlooking the great ice-fields which go to make up the Aletsch Glacier. Although fresh snow prevented any major ascents, an enjoyable day was spent on the Grunhornli (11,812 feet), and wonderful views got of the Jungfrau, Dreieckhorn, and all the other giants of the Oberland. Hutcheon spent one day on the Joch, whilst the others had an off day. Smith and Malcolm were then taken to Zurich, whence they returned home by air, while Hutcheon and

Mitchell carried the search for better climbing conditions to Arosa, where excellent sport was had on the 9,000-foot tops in the neighbourhood. One day was spent on the Rothorn and Erzhorn, and another on the Furkahorn and the ridge joining it to the Thiejerfluh, excellent scrambling being obtained, although the rock is nowhere dependable. The homeward journey was commenced the following day and the afternoon was spent in an ascent of another Furkahorn, above the Furka Pass. The last day's outing was back again to snow and ice and bad conditions, with an attempt on the Galenstock. Too much fresh snow was encountered after the Rhone Glacier was left, and rather than cross the snow-covered firn the ridge of the Galengrat was ascended as far as the "window." The firn, from above, appeared free from crevasses and was crossed on the return journey, although one or two bridged crevasses were unintentionally discovered.

The season in Switzerland had not been good as far as climbing was concerned, and most hotels at this late time were almost empty—so that service everywhere was of the best. For serious climbing, of course, four to six weeks earlier is the best time in a normal season. In 1938 very few climbers had stayed at the Pavillon Concordia during August, so bad was the weather.

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"Loch Avon is like a fragment of the Alps imported and set down in Scotland."—JOHN HILL BURTON in "The Cairngorm Mountains," 1864.

Hill Burton had a standing feud with James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, about the length of Loch Avon. "In his sombre moments he appeared to doubt if he were quite correct in insisting that the length was 20 miles; when he was in high spirits he would not abate an inch of 30."