

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB.

THE Fifty-first Annual General Meeting of the Club was held in the Palace Hotel, Aberdeen, on November 25, 1939, Mr Hugh D. Welsh, President, in the Chair.

Accounts for the year were read and approved. Office-bearers were re-elected *en bloc* for the duration of war. It was arranged to hold the New Year Meet at Braemar as usual, and the Committee was instructed to arrange such other Meets and Excursions as circumstances permitted.

Mr Parker reported on Club property, all of which is in good order, the Allt-na-Beinne bridge having been repainted on May 16, 1939.

Some seventy-four members met after the Business Meeting to enjoy a programme of music and dancing, the former provided by Miss Mitchell and Messrs Train and Middleton.

MEETS AND EXCURSIONS.

AS the date of the Club's Midnight Excursion drew near, members who had decided to take part fervently hoped that weather conditions would be more favourable than those experienced during the last two or three "midnights." After all, the date of departure, Saturday, June 24, 1939, was Midsummer Day, and surely wishful thinking would have some effect. It had, but perhaps there had been too much of it, or the technique was wrong.

The party of nineteen, nine of whom were ladies, had anything but midsummer conditions, being favoured with rain in the glens and corries, and on the summit plateaux with sleet and snow borne on a high wind, and heavy mist; it was also very dark, and there were two or three inches of wet snow underfoot on the summits. The party travelled during the afternoon to Aviemore, where an enormous high tea was disposed of at the "Pot Luck." Entering Rothiemurchus at Coylum Bridge, the company shed Cardno and Mackenzie, who made for the Lairig Ghru track and eventually ascended Creag an Leth-choin, traversed the plateau to the summit of Ben Macdhui, and came down to Glen Dee by the Allt Clach nan Taillear. At the Lower Bothy in Gleann Einich, Smith, Mitchell, and Train, with Misses Hoggarth, Jackson, and Murray, struck off on to the Sgòran Dubh ridge and sheltered for a time on Càrn Ban Mòr. Hoggarth and Jackson set off from there southwards and came down the Eidart, crossed into Glen Geldie, and so down to the White Bridge. The other four crossed eastwards to Cairn Toul, coming down into Glen Dee by Corroul. The remainder of the party, led by Mackay and Welsh, continued up Gleann Einich,

ascended to the Braeriach plateau by Coire Dhondail, and, in filthy conditions, came down An Garbh Choire to Glen Dee. All reached Derry Lodge an hour or two before the conveyances were due, so many were able to get themselves partially dried at a welcome fire at a camp there. In due course all gathered at Invercauld Arms Hotel, Braemar, where hot baths and breakfasts awaited. There was at least one consolation—if there was not midsummer weather there was ample scope for map and compass work!

The Excursion on Sunday, July 9, 1939, with Glen Clunie Lodge, Braemar, as base, was a very successful one in spite of somewhat adverse weather conditions. The party, consisting of seventeen members and guests, broke up into four groups, all of which encountered a good deal of mist and slight rain on the higher levels. A group of four ascended Glas Maol and descended by the Monega Right of Way to Clunie Lodge. From there they crossed to Lochcallater Lodge by way of the glen between Creag an t-Sean-ruigh and Creag nan Gabhar, and walked down to Auchallater. Three, intent on bagging two Munroes, climbed Càrn Aosda and The Cairnwell, and returned to Glen Clunie Lodge by Baddoch Burn. Other three crossed to Coire Kander and explored the rocks above the loch, returning to Glen Clunie over Càrn an Tuirc. The remainder, seven in number, had an interesting day on Sgòr Mòr and An Sòcach, returning by the Baddoch Burn.

On the occasion of a practically non-existent Easter Meet at Glencoe, Robert, the editorial imp, insisted that information on the activities of the party was not necessary for the writing of the report of the proceedings. We are in a practically identical predicament, as having been begged to produce this report eleven months after the event, it is now rather difficult to disentangle events of New Year 1940 from those of 1939—or any other year.

One does remember that Mrs Gregor and Priscilla were no longer at the "Invercauld" to welcome the party, which was rather smaller than usual. Various other members of the Club were distributed throughout Braemar and at Corroul. There is one respect in which a reporter who followed Robert's advice would almost certainly go wrong. Lochnagar was not one of the objectives on New Year's Day, for probably the first time since 1920.

On Saturday, December 31, the early arrivals did the round from Glen Ey by Creag an Lochain and Càrn Bhac and down Allt Cristie Beag. Sunday found the parties scattered over Ben Avon and Beinn a' Bhùird, the Ben Avon cars having some difficulty in getting to the Bealach Dearg on account of snow and in getting back because of the lighting restrictions.

A few members set out for Ben Macdhui on the following morning. Robert could, no doubt, give a satisfying account of what the others did, but I have quite forgotten. Nor did the Ben Macdhui party reach

their objective. Difficulties due to the necessity of having coupons before petrol could be obtained and to frozen cylinder blocks (such was the weather) delayed the start, and Càrn a' Mhaim was all that could be achieved.

Other memories of the Meet include the temporary failure of the lighting, perhaps excusable or at least explainable at Hogmanay; the melodious strains of the Etchachan choir at Piedmont and Colonel Butchart's search for snow to ski on. But now that the names of those present are cropping up memory begins to be too sorely taxed.

The absence of members on war service and the difficulties of transport also had an adverse effect on attendances, and two of the excursions—one to Burn of Vat and Culblean on June 1, and Clochnaben on July 7—had to be cancelled.

The three snow-climbing excursions were well attended, the first two, on February 11 and 25, being again to Lochnagar, the ascent on the former date being made from Allnagiubhsaich, and on the latter from Ballochbuie Forest. The third, on March 10, was to Beinn a' Bhùird.

The visit on February 11 was a very successful and enjoyable one, the conditions being excellent in every way. A partial thaw had preceded a renewed hard frost and the snow surface was firm and icy; only in a few places was the crust broken through. Snowdrifts on the Glen Muick road prevented the conveyance being taken much above the sawmill, and that involved a few miles extra tramp each way. The company of twenty broke up into small parties, some ascending by the Black Spout, others attempting some of the buttresses and gullies, and the remainder being content with the Ladder route.

On the second visit snow-covered roads made the Glen Muick route impossible, so a start was made from the Deeside Road at the Danzig Bridge. One party went ski-ing, but were not very successful in finding runs. A large party made for the Stuic, and reached the summit in mist, but returned early to the Sandy Loch, enjoying some glissading practice on the lower slopes. Another party followed the Black Shiel Burn and eventually reached the summit in mist. An early return to the shelter of the woods was made to allow of a belated lunch.

The adventures of the remaining party are told in another report. The waiting and the worry made a dreary finish to what would otherwise have been a good day. It was a very subdued bus-load that reached Aberdeen in the early hours of Monday morning.

On Sunday, March 10, the first halt was again at Danzig Bridge, to allow our Editor and two other members to return to the scene of the adventures of the Sunday before last, and if possible retrieve a missing ice-axe. They were not successful in the quest, but turned up at Braemar at tea-time, having had a very good day.

The other members of the party continued up to Invercauld House,



New Year's Day, 1940

CÀRN BHAC

H. D. Whitehouse

where a start was made for Beinn a' Bhùird. One party made for the North Top direct by the Sneck. They had fine visibility during the morning. The other party, which eventually split into two, made for the South Top, and very early in the day encountered mist. The leading members missed the South Top and descended by the Corrie. The slower party were more fortunate and made the South Top and continued on to the North Top, where they met Mr McDonald's party. From there on the visibility was excellent and the descent was made by the Sneck in conditions very nearly perfect.

Ballater was the headquarters of the Easter Meet, where Whitehouse was first and enjoyed an afternoon of brilliant sunshine on the Coyles of Muick before the Bothwells and Mitchell arrived on Thursday evening. Malcolm, McLay, and Misses Davidson and Mearns arrived later. Bothwell, Mitchell, and Whitehouse covered Lochnagar thoroughly on Friday, ascending from Spittal of Muick by way of the Black Spout, over snow which was very soft in the corrie but which improved in the gully. Then they glissaded the snow slopes into the west corrie, crossed Loch nan Eun, and reached the plateau again by the Stuic Buttress, returned to Cac Càrn Mòr cairn, dropped down the Glas Allt, turned the head of Loch Muick, and reached the Spittal by the path on the south side of the loch. On the same day Lawson and Reid (camping) climbed the gully immediately to the east of the Stuic.

The six members who crossed the Mounth Road from Ballater to Glentanar and Mount Keen the following day were inclined to consider the attractions of Mount Keen somewhat overstated, and found it difficult to support the members who suggested a Club excursion to that grinding eminence. In any case, any who desired to visit it should have patronised the Easter Meet, as it was one of the obvious objectives from Ballater.

Malcolm, McLay, Mearns, and Davidson spent Sunday on the Coyles of Muick, whilst Miss Bothwell, Mitchell, and Whitehouse traversed Lochnagar from Alltnagiubsaich to Ballochbuie, ascending the Red Spout, as, when they reached the corrie, conditions were so bad with thick mist, snow, and wind that none of the gullies could be faced. Later in the day conditions became better and, at the summit, presented a great contrast to those of two days previously, with considerable fresh snow covering the plateau.

The fourth day found the remnants of the Meet on the lower tops around Ballater, Pannanich, Crannach, and Craig Coilleach, all providing excuses for a further day out of town.

On May 4 a full bus-load travelled to Aviemore on the occasion of the joint Meet with the Etchachan Club, returning on May 6—with some extra passengers apparently left over from a previous excursion. (At all events, no other explanation has been vouchsafed!) Many of those taking part belonged to both Clubs, and I abandoned an attempt to discover how many there were of each, particularly as one lady member

of the Cairngorm Club insisted that she attended in her capacity of member of the Etchachan Club. Say thirty all told.

Lawson and the majority of the Etchachan members went to Cairngorm, camping in the forest, or, in some cases, near the summit. Snow fell during the night. Presumably the high campers descended something and the others, or some of them, certainly went up. Cairngorm was most popular. Two went to Sgòran Dubh and both the war and the mountain seemed far, far away. All enjoyed a very fine week-end, although there was too little snow for the number of ice-axes out!

The Day Excursion on Monday, May 6, to Bennachie had a very meagre attendance, only five members taking part, but one brought along a company of fifteen Girl Guides! Two of the party visited two or three of the tops and descended to Kemnay, and other two returned to Oyne after a little time spent on the Mither Tap. The remainder, including the Girl Guides, crossed the hill to Monymusk, returning to Aberdeen by bus. Excellent weather and wide views added to the enjoyment of a delightful day.

On Saturday, May 18, nine members and two guests climbed the Hill o' Noth from Gartly and the Glen o' Noth. Sellar met the party on the summit and, in perfect conditions, was able to point out the chief features of interest in an extensive view. The descent was made via Rhynie, where tea was taken.

Ben Avon was visited on Sunday, May 26, a conveyance carrying a company of fourteen up Glen Gairn as far as Daldownie. The ascent was made over Càrn Dearg and Càrn Drochard and so on to the tor-studded ridge of this interesting mountain, where several of the rock outcrops were visited. On Leabaidh an Daimh Bhuidhe, the rock outcrop on the highest point, the more energetic tested their skill as rock climbers. Though excellent weather was experienced, a cold high wind swept over the summit and visibility was restricted by a dark haze.

The Midnight Excursion of 1940 took the form of a traverse of Lochnagar, from Ballater to Braemar, on the night of Saturday-Sunday, June 22-23. A party of sixteen travelled to Ballater by bus on the Saturday afternoon, and after tea at Loirston Hotel were conveyed to Spittal of Muick, and set off from there about 8 o'clock in very bad conditions. Mist was thick and low down, and rain was frequent and cold. Although it was the day following the longest day, two days after full moon, and two days before Midsummer Day, darkness came down very early, and it was pitch dark when the summit rocks were reached and the party settled down wet and cold in what shelter they could find out of a northerly wind laden with rain. Alternative routes had been suggested in the Club circular, but under the conditions pre-

vailing there was no inducement to deviate from the usual routes. Seven made the ascent by way of the Black Spout, while the remainder kept to the easy Ladder route. All gathered at the summit rocks about 11.30 P.M. Soon after 1 o'clock conditions became worse, and eight decided to make for Braemar, followed by the remainder about half an hour later. Rain and mist were heavy, and a bitter north wind added to the discomfort. Map and compass work, aided by electric torches, took the party off the hill, one group going down into Ballochbuie by the Feindallacher Burn, the other carrying on to Loch Callater over Càrn an t-Sagairt Mòr. All gathered at Invercauld Arms Hotel, Braemar, about 6.30 A.M. for a very welcome hot bath, and returned to Aberdeen by bus.

Our grateful thanks are due to Captain H. D. Ross, Factor of the Balmoral Estates, Mr G. D. Menzies, Factor of Invercauld Estates, and Mr J. B. Hosie, Factor of the Mar Estates, for their ready permission to go over ground under their supervision, and for the facilities given to us in many ways. Their interest in our activities is cordial, and we are fortunate in our relations with them.

Indoor Meets were held in the Caledonian Hotel on January 11, February 2, and March 5, 1940. At the first William Malcolm showed how to use the Silva Compass, after which useful exposition several members succeeded in making a cautious journey from corner to corner of the room. (Perhaps the Committee will encourage further talks on new items of equipment?) A show of slides included some by H. D. Welsh of the Cairngorms and the Cuillin, and a number of Agfacolor slides made by W. J. Middleton on a visit to the Perthshire hills.

February 2 was the occasion of the Club Dance, a feature of the proceedings which becomes increasingly popular.

The third venture took the form of an Exhibition of Photographs, Paintings, and Sketches. There were just under one hundred pictures on show and the standard was high. William Garden described, with slides, a journey to the Canadian Rockies, and J. B. Macdonald stayed nearer home with a coloured cine-film of the Cairngorms and Lochnagar. The show was very well attended and will, we hope, become an annual event when normal times return.

ACCIDENTS IN THE CAIRNGORMS.

About 5 P.M. on February 25, 1940, two members of the Club, Miss Ray Fyfe and Mr Garth Lorimer, were descending westwards from Lochnagar into the corrie of Loch nan Eun. They were the last of several parties to leave the summit plateau, having reached it by way of the Left Branch of the Black Spout. Visibility was poor, but being reasonably sure of their position they started to glissade. A few moments later the leading climber called for a halt, as the slope became steeper and an occasional boulder appeared. The second braked almost to a

standstill, but on reaching an icy patch failed to retain her grasp of the axe, her hands being numb from having had her gloves off previous to the glissade. An unfortunate combination of circumstances led to an uncontrolled descent of three or four hundred feet, involving injury and benightment.

In mist and gathering darkness her companion failed to find her, after searching an hour or more. He decided to make for Spittal of Glenmuick rather than risk losing time in the Ballochbuie Forest, where the path would have been difficult to find in the dark. At 9.30 P.M. he arrived at Spittal, and Mr John Robertson, stalker, carried his message to Inchnabobart, the President receiving it by telephone at 10.30 P.M.

The President was given to understand that the accident had occurred 200 yards west of the summit and was due to the breaking of a cornice. West of the summit, of course, the presence of cornices is highly unlikely, and the impression was given that the fall had occurred on the much steeper, eastern slopes. Actually, the party had not been to the main summit but had crossed the saddle between the tops from the vicinity of Raeburn's Gully, 200 yards west of which the accident occurred. Had more accurate information been available the Club search party could have proceeded to the precise location. Within a few minutes of the receipt of the message a repetition was called for, but by that time Mr Robertson had left Inchnabobart.

The Club search party (Dr Thomson, Mitchel Train, Beck Slynn, Lawson, R. Reid, and Mr J. Reid, of Ballater) set out at 11.45 P.M. and reached the summit, for the second time within twenty-four hours, at 4.30 A.M., again by the Danzig and Blackshiel route. (Glenmuick was snow blocked.) Mist, wind, and snow made their task difficult, and they failed to locate the ice-axe left to mark the scene of the fall. (It has not yet been found.) They therefore proceeded to search the north and north-east slopes until noon. Other parties of police, keepers, and Club members joined in the search after daybreak, and one of these parties found the injured climber about 2 P.M.

Although injured by the fall she had been able to don more clothes, of which, fortunately, she had an adequate supply. Thanks to magnificent stamina she was able to come down on her feet. Danzig Shiel was reached about 3 P.M. Members will be pleased to know that the climber suffered no lasting injury.

This account pales in comparison with the press reports of the day; I have been handicapped by having had to stick to the facts!

On August 21, 1940, a Dr Hamilton, of Edinburgh, left Aviemore for a walk, intending to return for dinner. It was a bad day, with hail and sleet on the tops. It was not, however, Dr Hamilton's intention to climb, nor was he equipped for a long expedition in bad weather. When he failed to return the matter was reported to the police who organised search parties on the following days without result.

On Sunday, September 22, 1940, Mr Henry Iain Ogilvy and Miss Lucy Scott Robson suffered fatal injuries as a result of an accident on the cliffs of Sgòran Dubh. Mr Ogilvy was a member of the Cambridge University Mountaineering Club and a very capable climber. It is unlikely that the cause of the accident will be established.

NOTES.

Members' subscriptions are due and payable on January 1, and resignations must reach the Honorary Secretary *before* that date. Members are requested to send payment of subscription promptly on the first reminder to avoid incurring unnecessary work and expense.

Assistance in compiling a roll of members on military service will be appreciated. Any member who can assist in making the roll as complete and as accurate as possible should send details to the Honorary Editor.

HIS FIRST THOUSAND.

Mr J. A. Parker ascended his one thousandth hill over 1,000 feet in height in July 1939. The hill is the Wishach Hill, 1,375 feet, in the Foudlands. When he climbed it Mr Parker believed that it was No. 999, but a subsequent and very careful check-up of his list of ascents proved that it was actually No. 1,000. This was unfortunate for some of us, as a more important hill had been reserved for No. 1,000, to be climbed later with suitable ceremonies! Wishach Hill is of a somewhat retiring nature, but it may be seen from the railway near Wardhouse. In addition to the thousand hills over 1,000 feet, Mr Parker has climbed many under that height and has repeated many ascents. His most frequently climbed hills are Lochnagar and Ben Macdhui, with fifty-four and thirty-one ascents respectively.

Members will be interested to know how it all started. In his father's house in Glasgow hung a picture of the mountains at the head of Loch Long, and during his last year at school he was allowed to decide where the summer holiday would be spent. Pointing to the picture he had sat opposite for many years he said, "There." And there he climbed his first thousander.

W. A. E.

AN OLD-TIME GLENGAIRN SHEPHERD.

The Gaelic monthly *An Gaidheal* has published some recollections of conversations with an old-time Glengairn shepherd, John Michie. The writer is Rev. Cyril Dieckhoff, of Fort Augustus Abbey, a Russian, who writes his account in excellent Gaelic.

Michie, who died some thirty years ago, sought refuge at Fort Augustus in his old age. He was born at Ardoch in Glengairn, and after a long life's work he set off one day across the hills on foot for Fort Augustus. When he reached Strath Faragaig, says the account, he asked his way to Cill Chumein. (To all Gaelic speakers Fort Augustus

is Cill Chumein, *i.e.*, Cumin's Church.) They directed him down to the lochside at Foyers to take the boat, at which he was much annoyed, for he had always made all his journeys on his own legs. "Michie had a withered hand, but the other was the biggest hand I have ever seen." Once, when sleeping in a barn at Braemar he was wakened by something on his chest. He put out his hand and seized it; it was a rat, which he killed with a squeeze of his fist. He had frequently driven sheep from Braemar to Edinburgh before there were any railways. Glengairn got its chief sporting interest in those times out of the contests of wits between the whisky makers and the gaugers. Michie had known men who had been soldiers in the American War of Independence. At the Lonach Gathering he had once seen Jerome Bonaparte, Napoleon's brother, and he described him as being very noticeable for the extreme whiteness of his hair and beard. He knew Ewan MacEchan, the priest at Braemar who compiled one of the early Gælic dictionaries, and he described him as always going about with a Spanish cloak upon him.

W. M. A.

ADDITIONS TO THE LIBRARY.

- "A Guide to Chamonix and Mont Blanc," by Edward Whymper, 1896. Purchased.
- "A Guide to Zermatt and the Matterhorn," by Edward Whymper, 1897. Purchased.
- "Always a Little Further," by Alastair Borthwick. (1939. Faber & Faber. 7s. 6d.)
- "Narrative of an Ascent to the Summit of Mont Blanc," by John Auldjo, 2nd edition, 1830. Purchased.
- "Braemar Octotoddle," Anon., 1939. Presented by Dr W. A. Reid.
- "British Hills and Mountains," by J. H. B. Bell, E. F. Bozman, and J. Fairfax Blakeborough. (1940. Batsford Press. 8s. 6d.)
- "English Lakeland," by Doreen Wallace. (1940. Batsford Press. 8s. 6d.)
- "Guide to Aberdeen and Eastern Scotland." Presented by Ward, Lock & Co.
- "Guide to Inverness and the North of Scotland." Presented by Ward, Lock & Co.
- Revue du Club Alpin Suisse*, Vols. I.-XV., 1925-39. Presented by Mrs R. M. Williamson.
- "Rock Climbs on the Cobbler," by J. B. Nimlin, B. H. Humble, and G. C. Williams. (Reprint from *S.M.C.J.*, 1940.)
- "Songs for Climbers," by B. H. Humble.
- The Alpine Journal*, Vols. LI. and LII., May 1939 to November 1940.
- "The Cairngorms," by Sir Henry Alexander. *S.M.C. Guide*, 2nd. edition, 1938.
- The Rucksack Club Journal*, Vol. IX., No. 3, 1940.
- The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, Vol. LV., and Index; Vol. LVI., Nos. 1, 2, and 3.

The Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal :—

Index to Vols. XI.-XX., by R. M. Gall Inglis and others. N.D., 1939. Purchased.

Vol. XX., Nos. 128-130, November 1939 to November 1940.

The Mountaineer, Vol. XXXII, No. 1, 1939. (The Mountaineers, Inc., Seattle.)

“Unclimbed New Zealand,” by J. Pascoe, 1939. Presented by E. B. Davies.

“Visitors’ Book from Thistle Cottage, Inverey,” 3 vols., April 1897 to February 1939. Presented by Miss Gruer’s heirs.

LANTERN SLIDES.

Ten excellent slides of the Cairngorms, many of historic interest. Presented by Mr George McIntyre.

FIFTY-SECOND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

The Fifty-second Annual General Meeting of the Club was held in the Palace Hotel, Aberdeen, on November 23, 1940, Mr Hugh D. Welsh, President, in the Chair.

Accounts for the year were read and approved. Mr J. A. Parker’s resignation from the post of Librarian and Custodian of Lantern Slides was received with much regret.

Payment of subscriptions by members serving with H.M. Forces is to be optional.

A Sub-committee (E. W. Smith, W. Lawson, E. Davidson, and R. Jackson) was appointed to arrange other excursions as and when possible. Members interested should hand their names to the Honorary Secretary so that they may be notified of any arrangements made.

At the conclusion of the Business Meeting some fifty members met in the Palace Hotel, musical entertainment being provided by Mrs Garden, Misses McRonald and Thomson, and by Messrs D. Wilson and A. S. Middleton.