

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS.

1. *Fifty-fifth A.G.M. held in the Caledonian Oddfellows' Halls, Aberdeen, on Tuesday, November 30, 1943.*

MR H. D. WELSH presided over a good turn-out of members.

The President reviewed the Club's activities for the past year, which had been on a very restricted scale owing to war conditions.

Statement of the Club's Accounts for the year to October 31, 1943, submitted and approved, showing balances at credit of:—

1. Revenue	-	-	-	-	-	£18 10 6
2. Life Membership Funds	-	-	-	-	-	72 16 6
3. General Works' Fund	-	-	-	-	-	49 14 9

The Membership of the Club at October 31, 1943, was:—

1. Ordinary Members	-	-	-	-	-	221
2. Junior Members	-	-	-	-	-	5
3. Associate Members	-	-	-	-	-	1
4. Surviving Life Members	-	-	-	-	-	19
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Decided that, as far as war-time circumstances would permit, Meets and Excursions should be arranged during 1944.

Decided to communicate with the Military Authorities regarding empty tins, etc., left on the hills by Troops, and to ask that steps be taken to prevent this in future, and that the present accumulation in various areas of the Cairngorms be collected and removed.

Decided to approach the Duke of Fife's Trustees regarding the possibility of obtaining a Lease of Derry Lodge after the war. A Sub-Committee, consisting of the President, Mr Garden, and Col. H. J. Butchart, appointed to deal with this matter, and, if necessary, an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Club to be called to consider ways and means of financing the project if the Trustees' terms were not completely prohibitive.

Votes of thanks to President and Office-bearers for their services terminated the meeting.

*2. Fifty-sixth A.G.M. held in the Business Women's Club,
Aberdeen, on Friday, December 1, 1944.*

Mr H. D. Welsh presided over a good turn-out of members.

The President reviewed the Club's activities during the past year, and made sympathetic reference to the deaths of the following members of the Club :—

Dr Walter A. Reid (1895).
James Conner (1890).
Dr A. Graham Ritchie (1925).
D. Neilson Collie (1931).
James Pyper (1914).
J. D. W. Stewart (1902).
L. McQueen Douglas (1921).
W. McQueen Smith (1899).
A. M. M. Williamson (1920).
D. C. Thom, killed in action (1939).

Note.—Since the meeting, intimation of the death of Alexander Esslemont (1893) has been received.

Statement of the Club's Accounts for year to October 31, 1944, submitted and approved, showing balances at credit of :—

1. Revenue	-	-	-	-	-	£63	1	10
2. Life Membership Funds	-	-	-	-	-	73	8	3
3. General Works' Fund	-	-	-	-	-	50	19	2

The Membership of the Club at October 31, 1944, was :—

1. Ordinary Members	-	-	-	-	-	214
2. Junior Members	-	-	-	-	-	8
3. Associate Members	-	-	-	-	-	1
4. Life Members (surviving)	-	-	-	-	-	19

Decided that on account of hotel accommodation not being available, a New Year Meet would not be possible, but that, so far as war-time circumstances would permit, Meets and Excursions on the same lines as last year should be arranged.

Derry Lodge.—The correspondence with the Agents for the Duke of Fife's Trustees was submitted, which indicated that they might be willing to consider a Lease of the Lodge to the Club, but that nothing could be done until the premises had been de-requisitioned by the Military Authorities. The Meeting was again of opinion that, if a Lease could be arranged, it would be a great asset for the Club, and the Sub-Committee was continued, and instructed to pursue the matter whenever the Trustees were in a position to put forward their terms and conditions.

Litter Left by Troops.—The correspondence with the Military Authorities was submitted. Several members stated that, as a result of the Club's intervention in the matter, most of the empty tins, etc., had now been collected and removed from the various areas complained about.

Votes of thanks to the President and Office-bearers for their services terminated the Meeting.

The following have been admitted Members of the Club :—

1943—D. Allison, Dr Marjorie Bain, Miss Dorothy Bain, John Boyes, Wing-Commander Lord Malcolm A. Douglas Hamilton, D. J. R. McPherson, James McNair. Miss A. A. Adams and H. G. Alexander (Junior Members).

1944—Sir Frederick Whyte, K.C.S.I., Lieut. John Lunn. Miss Juliet Watson, Miss A. E. Esslemont, Ian A. M. Hustwick, and D. M. McLellan (Junior Members).

MEMBERS ON SERVICE.

Alexander E. Anton, Mrs M. McArthur, Ian A. M. Hustwick, Dr F. C. Garrow, A. Leslie Hay, Wing-Commander Lord Malcolm Douglas Hamilton, John Lunn, C. W. Williamson, R. B. Williamson.

This third list brings the total of members on whole-time service to fifty, of whom five have been killed in action or died on active service. To all on service the Club extends its sincere good wishes.

The Club notes with satisfaction that H.M. the King has been pleased to confer the C.B.E. on our ex-President, Col. David P. Levack, in recognition of gallant and distinguished service in the field. Colonel Levack was repatriated last year after four years' imprisonment in Germany. He was taken at St Valery when serving with the 51st Division, of which he was then A.D.M.S.

Lieut. R. P. Yunnie, who has been serving in the Mediterranean campaigns, has been awarded the M.C. for activities as a member of the 8th Army Special Service Squadron. Congratulations, Yunnie. The Club expects to hear, in due course, more about these activities.

MEETS AND EXCURSIONS, 1944.

Indoor Meets were held in the Oddfellows' Halls, Belmont Street, on January 7, February 9, and March 15, at all of which there were good attendances. At the first, Alan C. Browne, F.R.G.S., gave a talk on climbing on Mount Tasman, New Zealand, illustrated by slides beautifully hand-coloured. At the February gathering, H. G. Butchart showed films of ski-ing in Scotland, and gave a short history of the development of this sport. Deeside in the 1850's was the subject presented by the President at the last meeting. This was illustrated by slides of sketches appearing in an old book on the scenery of the Dee, and appropriate quotations were given from the text.

Four Saturday afternoon excursions were arranged to places within easy reach of Aberdeen. The first, on May 6, to the Blue Hill and vicinity, attracted over a dozen members, and was very profitable. Rock-climbing practice at Souter Head on May 20 and June 10 was poorly attended, especially in June, on which occasion the four members attending eschewed the rocks and tackled Tullos Hill and Blue Hill instead.

Beauty Hill, New Machar, was the goal on July 8, over a dozen members cycling from Bridge of Don, and returning by Scotston Moor and Old Aberdeen. Good weather added to the enjoyment of all these excursions.

The all-night excursion during June 24-25 from Ballater to Braemar was very popular, fourteen members and friends taking part. At Spittal of Muick the party divided; nine, led by E. B. Reid, traversed Broad Cairn, Cairn Bannock, Fafernle, and Càrn an t-Sagairt Mòr. The remaining five, led by the President, went by the Glas Allt to the summit rocks of Lochnagar, and thence by The Stuic to Càrn an t-Sagairt Mòr. Both parties descended by Glen Callater to Braemar for breakfast. Weather conditions deteriorated in the late evening, and the dark hours were anything but pleasant. The larger party had comparatively comfortable quarters in the shepherds' bothy * on Broad Cairn, but the Lochnagar contingent suffered from inadequacy of shelter from both rain and wind and mist. However, a clear sunrise and a bright warm morning revived the spirits of everyone.

H. D. W.

THE FIR MOUNTH ROAD.

Recently I visited this road for the first time, walking from Aboyne by Glen Tanar to the top of Craigmahandle and then over the Hill of Duchery and back to Aboyne by the Fungle.

A little difficulty was experienced in finding the track, where it branches from the well-marked path and crosses the Burn of Skinna, shown on the one-inch scale Ordnance Survey Map, Sheet No. 44.

A good look-out was kept for the branch track as soon as compass readings indicated that we were in its vicinity, but it appears to be overgrown at this point. However, an upright stone bearing numerals, on the left of the path, attracted attention. I think the numerals were 863. Is this a height? On the map the junction is shown practically on the 900 feet contour. There were signs that originally there may have been a "1" in front of the "8," making the number 1863 (possibly a date?).

Working on the assumption that the stone marked the junction of the tracks, the burn was crossed near here and the bank ascended on the south side. Craigmahandle, being hidden, a compass course was then followed, through long heather, towards the trees, but within about fifty yards a well-defined grass-covered track was found.

There was no difficulty in following the track from this point, though it is advisable to check by compass and map at one or two points in the trees, where there are signs of other possible routes.

* In the autumn of 1944 this bothy suffered from the elements and is no longer a haven.

We trust that, before using bothies on Glenmuick, Balmoral, Invercauld, and Mar, members will have the courtesy to apply for permission from the appropriate authority.

Maybe someone better acquainted with the ground can explain the numbered stone and say whether it is intended to mark the junction of the tracks, or whether the path should have been followed beyond this point before crossing the Skinna.

W. M.

KILNSEY TO SETTLE.

"Early March is not spring in England, but it is the end of winter," said a broadcaster recently.

It really seemed, however, as I put my head out of the window this morning, that spring had arrived. The still warm air felt full of life. I hastily dressed and went forth to meet my friend Gaston Bull, as had been arranged. Together we journeyed to Kilnsey, in upper Wharfedale, and arranged our sacks, preparatory to mounting the green track which skirts the famous Crag. This is known as Mastiles Lane and was made by the monks of Fountain's Abbey, whose estates were thus of enormous extent, to take sheep to Malham Fair.

We found it pleasant going on the soft turf enclosed by walls on either hand. What a labour of love this dry stone-walling must have been! Millions of stones skilfully and cunningly arranged.

At the highest point of the pass, Mastiles Gate (1384), we were on a breezy upland plateau, with extensive grassy fells around and about, limestone scars and clowders possessing names such as Proctor High Mark and Parson's Pulpit. In the valley below, the sun had been warm, but here were only glints of sunshine, though the clouds withheld their threat of rain.

This land is rich in bird life, and the curlew and plover were both heard and seen. By a marshy bit we put up what I think was a snipe.

At the right spot we diverged from the lane to reach the solitary farm of Lee Gate, where a metalled road descends abruptly to Gordale Bridge. From this point it is only a short walk along the meadows to the gloomy Gordale Scar. To-day, only a trickle of water came down between the overhanging walls of this roofless cavern.

The air was chill and we did not stay long; instead, we found shelter in a small wooded ravine under Cawden, the guardian hill of Malham. In this little village, so well described by W. Riley, the Yorkshire writer, an excellent tea was enjoyed at the "Buck," also a chat with the virile seventy-five-year-old landlord.

After tea, in lovely sunshine and in a white (limestone) world, we ascended the Cove road. In a mile or so we opened a gate and kept up a grassy track which reaches a height of 1,600 feet. Just previously a backward glance had revealed the blue waters of Malham Tarn. Now there was a glorious prospect westwards, worthy of the Lakes, or indeed Scotland.

The view was a revelation to me, as I had only come this way in storm and sleet twenty years previously. I now regard this pass as one of the finest hill crossings in Yorkshire.

The path goes down beside limestone crags, with the cairn of Ryeloaf (1794) conspicuous up on the left, and we soon arrived at the lonely and romantically placed Stockdale Farm. When the snows of winter fall, this solitary mansion must be isolated indeed. The Stockdale Beck is on a line of the Craven Fault, and in addition on the watershed of England. It drains into the Ribble and Irish Sea, while the streams to the east are carried into the North Sea.

As we paused at the farm, a faint pinkish light illumined the rocks behind. Then, resuming our descent, the bold and fantastic Attermire Scars stood up black and menacing against the setting sun.

Darkness began to fall, and the mists curled up around the hills as we made our way steeply down to Settle.

The day was not yet done; there was light refreshment and a smoke in the bar of the Golden Lion Hotel as we reviewed the day's proceedings. Finally, the Glasgow express conveyed us swiftly into Leeds, where the sirens were just sounding for an alert.

J. K. CRAWFORD.

ACCESS TO MOUNTAINS.

A member of Fort William Town Council has suggested a close time for Ben Nevis (during the winter months) and a fine of £5 for climbing the mountain on the Sabbath.

The series of tragic accidents on Ben Nevis explains the Council's present anxiety, but the situation seems scarcely so desperate as to call for a ban on climbing the mountain. It is not clear whether the tourist path would be included in the ban, but climbing was probably intended to include hill-walking. The path would normally present neither difficulty nor danger, even in winter, although in certain conditions some elementary knowledge of snow-craft would be desirable. Its general gradient, however, is such that motor vehicles have reached the summit by it, as also did a native of Fort William—pushing a wheelbarrow! Certain aspects of the mountain do present difficulties of a high order, and adequate allowance must be made here for Scottish climatic conditions, which play a very great part in determining the degree of difficulty. On Ben Nevis, in winter, the climbing may approach an Alpine standard and where length combines with difficulty reasonably good conditions are necessary for safety. This applies even in summer, at all events in the case of some of the harder rock climbs.

Perhaps the worst feature of the proposal was the attempt to discriminate between experienced climbers and "inexperienced strangers." Who would decide competence, who would define "inexperienced stranger"? It is an easy assumption to make, after an accident has occurred, that the victims were inexperienced or imprudent, or both, but there are other possible causes. The most expert are not entirely immune from accident, which, indeed, sometimes overtakes even the Olympians in unexpected ways and in unlikely places. If the Scottish mountains were to attract irresponsible incompetents, it is unlikely that legislation would

remedy matters, for those who are not restrained by the obvious danger of high places are not to be deterred by the lesser restrictions of the law. Nor, probably, would any consideration of the inconvenience and possible danger to which members of a rescue party might be put weigh very heavily with them. Generally such members are none too well equipped for the task, notably so in the case of the police, who have to be informed of accidents and who are required to take part in any search. Whether the knowledge that the victim of an accident was an experienced climber and not an inexperienced stranger would make any difference to the sentiments of the rescuers, may be doubted.

The Council turned down the suggestions since it did not lie in their power to introduce a by-law to the necessary effect. There are, of course, more effective ways of discouraging rash adventurers than by imposing a ban of this nature on their activities. Climbers, and especially young climbers, are warned in a recent issue of the *Journal of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club* that accidents are expensive things to have. A member of that Club, an expert, after an accident in the Lake district, was faced with a bill for £200. With this warning he forges a sharper weapon than the member of Fort William Town Council!

As for the Sabbath ban, there would appear to be a solution here also other than the imposition of a fine—a possible attraction to adventurous youth who might find amusement in dodging the guardians of the sanctuary. On May 9, 1889, the Rev. John M'Neill held a religious service on the roof of the old Observatory on Ben Nevis, which sermon on the Mount was attended by over forty people. Perhaps any development of this idea must await the establishment of the Ben Nevis Railway so ardently desired by a former Provost of Fort William.

THE BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL.

On February 5, 1944, there was held at the Alpine Club the Inaugural Conference of the B.M.C. (passing, at that date, under the more cumbrous title, The Standing Advisory Committee on Mountaineering). Mr G. W. Young addressed the meeting and explained the need for, and objects of, such a body. The B.M.C. hopes to speak in the name of all British climbers on power schemes, deforestation, and other matters affecting the appearance of mountain country, to give authoritative advice to newcomers, and to maintain contact with educational and other youth organisations. Scottish Clubs are not widely represented on the Council. The C.C. received from S.A.C.O.M. a communication headed Circular No. 2, which, without Circular No. 1, was unintelligible. No action was taken.

THE LAST OF THE BOTHIES.

Continued trespass on the estate, housebreaking, and theft has led the responsible authority to order the burning of Slugan Bothy, where some of the property stolen was found. The Slugan was a useful forward

base for the Beinn a' Bhùird-Ben Avon group, especially in the short days of winter, and its disappearance will be regretted by many. The writer remembers its discomforts, and, by contrast, comforts during three days of blizzard in December 1931, when climbing was impossible; nevertheless that sojourn at the bothy is as memorable as any more successful venture. Slugan has suffered the fate that, on more than one occasion, threatened the Corrou—*for similar reasons.*

In an article to *The Listener* of November 23, 1944, Miss Janet Adam Smith suggests that a hostel be built on the site of the Corrou, brushing aside the prognostics of the pessimists who foresee swarms of trippers, the ruin of the peace of the hills, and so forth. We view the idea with some misgiving. The jodelling tripper is a nuisance to all within earshot, the boulder-trundler something of a danger to climbers, but the hatchet-carrier is the real menace. The hatchet does away with the necessity of carrying firewood to such distant bases as the Corrou; there is always some part of door, wall, or floor that can be dispensed with and yet leave the structure standing. We have seen it used on the Corrou and we fear it would be so used again on any hostel that might be built there. Were there a resident warden, *and a charge made for the use of the place*, the structure might survive. But where should we look for one anchorite enough to solicit such a post?

CLUB LIBRARY.

NEW books in the Club Library at 18 Golden Square include Journals of kindred clubs, "Shelter Stone Visitors' Book, 1939-1944," Vol. VI, and Professor T. Graham Brown's "Brenva." Members who have read "Running Water" (A. E. W. Mason) will recall the references therein to the Brenva Route to Mont Blanc. Inspired by this account, Professor T. Graham Brown set himself the task and pleasure of exploring the south face of the mountain, on which he has now made three new routes—Route de la Sentinelle with F. S. Smythe in 1927, Route Major with F. S. Smythe in 1928, and the Via della Pera with Alexander Graven in 1933. The historical treatment, the wealth of detail, and the communication of the author's enthusiasm to the reader make this one of the best mountain books of recent times. There is a collection, at the end of the book, of excellent photographs illustrating the Brenva face.