

Glen Nevis, near Youth Hostel	8.50 P.M.
Left Glen Nevis by car	10.05 ,,
Arrived Glen More Lodge	12.20 A.M.
Left car	1.55 ,,
Cairngorm summit	3.55 ,,
Ben Macdhui (4,244)	5.35 ,,
Ben Macdhui summit	5.45 ,,
Stob Coire Sputan Dearg	6.05 ,,
Crossed River Dee	6.40 ,,
Cairn Toul summit	8.15 ,,
Braeriach (4,149)	9.20 ,,
(4,061)	9.40 ,,
(4,036)	9.55 ,,
(4,248)	10.43 ,,
Cairngorm Club Footbridge	1.00 P.M.

Cairngorm Club accused of sabotage in *Gardylloo* (Edinburgh Students' Charities Newspaper), from which the following is taken:—

“Early this morning the inhabitants of Fort William were awakened by the roar of a mighty explosion. . . . From the direction of Ben Nevis the roar of a great avalanche could be heard and a pall of black smoke hung over the hills. . . . It was thought at first that the mountain had become volcanic and had suddenly erupted, but closer inspection revealed evidence which caused the police to suspect sabotage. . . .”

The paper goes on to accuse the Cairngorm Club. “Now that Ben Nevis is reduced to half its height, Ben Macdhui is the highest mountain in Scotland. It is well known that the Cairngorm Club have long wished to have the highest mountain, and plans to build a large tower on the top of Macdhui were only stopped last year by the refusal of a building licence.”

Does this explain why Taylor has not been seen around Derry Lodge recently?

NEW CLIMBS.

LOCHNAGAR.

Central Buttress, Direct Start.—(H.S.). T. W. Patey and C. Morrison, August 13, 1952. This route runs up the centre of the 300-foot slabby lower face not far to the left of Shallow Gully. Route follows prominent fault cleaving centre of buttress and slanting left. Start on its immediate left (cairn), cross fault 30 feet up and continue up its right edge towards a wide chimney formed by the fault at a height of about 100 feet. Continuously hard climbing up to a short slab topped

by an overhang (crux) leads to the foot of the chimney. Above the chimney a terrace winds up the buttress for 100 feet to beneath a pile of overhanging blocks. Here traverse right for 20 feet and then continue straight up to join the crest of the ridge in 120 feet. Rock sound, but holds masked in moss at many points.

Shadow Buttress "A," Alternative Route.—(D.). T. W. Patey and J. M. Taylor, August 31, 1952. A slabby rib separates Shallow Gully and the initial gully of the normal route; higher up it merges into the main buttress. The route diverged left on to this rib where the normal route turns right to the spiral terrace. There followed 200 to 300 feet of interesting climbing, including a difficult chimney up to a point where the buttress steepens in a giant wall whose apex forms the proximal end of the upper crest of the buttress. It is easy to slant left by a grassy ledge and skirt the wall on the Shallow Gully side. It may also be possible to pass the wall by slabby ledges on the right. The route selected lay roughly in the middle of the wall by a definite fault leading on directly to the easy upper crest. This pitch was continuously severe throughout its length of 90 feet.

Shadow Chimney.—M. D. Coutts and T. W. Patey, August 30, 1951. Loose rock in the lower part is avoided by climbing the rib to the right of the chimney. First difficulty was an awkward chokestone which was surmounted by holds on its right edge. Above, a pile of jammed boulders leads up to a large chokestone about 100 feet from the bottom which completely blocks the chimney, apparently barring further progress. However, a through route permits of access to a large cave above, the roof of which is formed by another huge chokestone. The latter is turned on the right by a series of grass ledges leading in 30 feet to easy ground. The standard up to this point is difficult and from here escape is possible on to Shadow "A" Route. The chimney continues, however, as a good pitch, 25 feet in height; this was climbed by back and knee methods, strenuous and severe. The climb finishes at a platform on the Shadow "A" Route about 250 feet from the screes.

Polyphemus Gully.—K. A. Grassick and H. M. Bates, January 24, 1953 (6 hours). The direct summer route followed. The wall (summer crux) was climbed close into the curving crack and was partly iced. In the upper part the initial chokestones were passed on the left up steep ice to a deep cave below a 25-foot overhanging pitch, climbed by a very hard groove on the left (crux). The remaining 100 feet included a small ice-pitch.

Eagle Ridge.—A first winter ascent is reported by T. W. Patey, W. D. Brooker, and J. M. Taylor on January 25, 1953. A good deal of old iron-hard snow on the ledges, with some ice in the cracks. Mainly step-cutting up to the tower pitch. This was the winter crux, due to brittle ice in the groove above the piton. From the summer crux to the top the climbing was again on good hard snow throughout. Time $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours. It is doubtful if the route would go under a heavy coating of new snow.

Parallel Gullies "B"—Upper section, above Tough-Brown Traverse, was climbed by Ian Brooker and A. D. Lyall on May 26, 1952. On June 8 a whole congregation of climbers mustered to attempt the formidable lower section, the last great problem on Lochnagar. The parties were: T. W. Patey and J. M. Taylor; W. D. Brooker and C. M. Dixon; D. A. Aitken and M. C. S. Philip; J. Henderson and C. Morrison. The gully was exceptionally dry, but nails were used throughout.

The initial slimy 50-foot crack was not climbed, but clean, steep pitches on the left wall, one of them quite awkward, were followed to a substantial platform. From here an outward dipping catwalk (20 feet) crosses the top of the crack to a ledge and block belay on the other side (H.S.). The wall above is climbed to a steep grassy depression, at the top of which there is a small dark cave with a hitch at the back. A very severe 20-foot pitch leads to the main chimney section. Launching off a foothold on the left wall it is necessary to swing up on to the narrow coping-slab above the cave and jam up its two retaining cracks to a good stance with a small concealed hitch.

The next 15-foot pitch is tackled by backing up and straddling between the two slightly diverging walls of the main chimney. Soon another stance is reached at the foot of a deceptively intimidating pitch. For those who are long of leg the chimney is again narrow enough to back up; for the less fortunate the dark cleft at the back offers an alternative. Progress is thus made for 60 feet to a platform on top of a huge jammed block below the final 25-foot wall; a thread belay was used to safeguard the leader. From below, this pitch appears to be overhanging, but it is, in fact, only vertical. The chimney walls diverge until 6 feet below the top it is no longer possible to span the gap, and the back wall must be scaled by several small holds (H.S.). Go 20 feet up to the right for a good belay.

Above the platform (Terrace) on the Tough-Brown Traverse the second pitch culminates in a chimney blocked by a huge chokestone with a holdless slab above. The route did not follow the chimney but deviated towards some grass ledges high up on the right, whence a horizontal traverse led back to the top of the pitch. Broken rocks led in 100 feet to a piton belay at the foot of a steep holdless groove. After 12 feet of strenuous contortion the groove was abandoned for a sloping ledge on the left. A sensational traverse followed to the top of the pitch. 80-foot run-out (V.S.).

The party now unroped and followed easy terraces slanting up to the crest of the Tough-Brown Ridge. Ian Brooker's account of the first ascent of the upper section follows:—

The climb started (from the Terrace) with three small 20-foot pitches all about V.D. heading towards a very obvious 30-foot crack. The crack proved to be severe and quite holdless. It was climbed with much effort by jamming the foot and wriggling up towards a horizontal break on the left wall. This proved to be a rather exposed nose and a piton

belay was used before the next move, which was rather delicate, and over fine grass-covered ledges upwards to the left towards a large rectangular block above which is an obvious cave (V.S.).

It was not found possible to climb over the rectangular block and Lyall worked out to the left again (at a level with the top of the choke-stone) to go under the block, over good rock containing a few fine cracks. On the other side of the block progress was barred by a small overhang with a good hold at the top, and by dint of much effort this was climbed directly (V.S.).

This took us to the couloir between the centre block of pitches and the 200-foot summit rocks which seemed climbable by three or four different routes, the lower half very rotten but of no outstanding difficulty. We chose a shallow gully and buttress leading to the top of the Tough-Brown Ridge and overlooking Raeburn's Gully.

(Patey adds that, while the rock on the final section is rotten, the gully is otherwise unique on Lochnagar for the soundness and clean condition of its rock and for the exciting variety of its pitches.)

Parallel Gullies Buttress was climbed by J. Bruce and W. Stewart (wearing Vibrams) in May 1953, without the use of pitons.

Tough-Brown Traverse.—Aitken and Patey followed the normal summer route on January 20, 1952, on hard snow and ice in 5 hours. Main difficulty to surmount the iced rocks immediately above the Terrace, but the slab above was entirely snow covered. The last steep rocks were passed on the Raeburn's Gully side.

Scarface Buttress.—(V.D.). T. W. Patey, G. B. Leslie, and J. M. Taylor, December 15, 1951. This is the imposing mass of rock which forms the right wall of Raeburn's Gully, constituting in its upper part a fairly well-defined rib bounded on the right by a large grassy amphitheatre and in its lower part a series of steep slabs dipping into Raeburn's Gully and ending in a line of short overhangs. Normally a start could be made up a short, shallow chimney in the corner at the bend of the gully. This was streaming with water at the time, however, and abandoned for a more feasible route 60 feet farther up the gully, where the depth of snow in the gully had obscured the initial overhang. A difficult move to the right on holdless rock led to easier ground, whence further progress was possible up steep grass ledges to the left. After 60 feet a short nose of rock on the right was surmounted by combined tactics. At the apex of the smooth slab above, an excellent belay was discovered at the foot of a dark chimney. The chimney, which was steep and upwards of 20 feet in height, was furnished with good sound holds to start with, but its upper few feet were more difficult and required the insertion of a piton into a crack on the left wall of the chimney to act as a running belay for the leader. A miniature waterfall added to the difficulty and under normal conditions a piton would be unnecessary.

Steep scrambling for 50 feet led to a shallow groove of no great difficulty, whence a short chimney on the right led to the large grassy

amphitheatre above and completed the lower section (250 feet). The upper rib provided enjoyable climbing for 200 to 300 feet, and although numerous variations were possible the crest could be followed throughout without much added difficulty. From the foot of the amphitheatre the rib was gained immediately by a short traverse to the left, followed by several interesting short pitches. Thence the route is fairly evident to the plateau.

The rib and the upper 100 feet of the lower section was climbed previously on October 21, 1951, by T. W. Patey and R. H. Hardie, who traversed on to the lower slabs at the level of the first cave on Pinnacle Gully No. 1 Route.

Twin Chimneys Route, Black Spout Pinnacle.—300 feet (D.). T. W. Patey and J. M. Taylor, August 31, 1952. This route follows a straight course from the fork in the Black Spout to the top of the Pinnacle. From the extensive grassy slope at the foot, a steep rocky gully rises almost to the top of the Pinnacle. Starting up easy ledges in the gully two definite chimneys are soon reached biting into the rib on the right. The first is straightforward, but the upper and better defined chimney gives 30 feet of difficult climbing to its exit on the rib. Steep rocks inviting ascent lead straight to the top. (This was the route selected by Raeburn in the first reconnaissance of the Pinnacle in 1902, the ledge below the upper chimney being the highest point reached.)

Black Spout Pinnacle, Route II.—(H.S.). T. W. Patey and J. M. Taylor, February 28, 1953. Rock-climbing conditions excellent despite time of year. At the entrance to the left-hand branch it is possible to move left on to a large grassy slope. Immediately above is the open depression up which the Twin Chimneys Route ascends. At the extreme left end, however, it gives access to a long, narrow chimney between an expanse of smooth, steep slab on the left and a vertical wall on the right. This gives an enjoyable 100-foot pitch and ends on a little ridge projecting out from the vertical upper cliff and overlooking the Black Spout. The crack above appears unclimbable. We descended beyond the ridge for 20 feet at the top of a long fault leading down to the Springboard, 300 feet below. From this point the only way out seemed to be a horizontal traverse towards a steep groove seen 50 feet away on the open face of the Pinnacle. The exposure is severe and the traverse becomes harder as one proceeds. Half-way across, a running belay can be fixed, and at this point a difficult move is made on to the end of a smooth, sloping edge. Crossing this ledge, using a few barely adequate holds on the wall above, was very delicate, especially as there was here an ice-glaze on the rock; but once the groove is entered a short ascent leads to a commodious grassy platform. A large amphitheatre, 60 feet above, is reached where Route I (Brooker-Sutherland) comes in on the left. Interesting climbing to the Pinnacle top.

As the nomenclature suggests this is the second major route on the main face of the Pinnacle. Dry conditions are recommended; socks

used on the traverse. An attractive route on good rock, somewhat harder than Route I.

The Stack.—350 feet (V.D.). T. W. Patey, W. D. Brooker, and J. M. Taylor, October 7, 1952. This is the buttress between the Black Spout and its left-hand branch. The first objective is to gain a considerable grassy platform 120 feet up, whence a series of dark chimneys slant up the left side of the buttress, overlooking the left-hand branch and ascending to the top of the Crumbling Cranny. Start 20 feet below the chokestone in the left-hand branch (cairn). An attractive curving crack up a slab forms the first segment of a Z-crack ending below a short wall 60 feet up on the right. The ascent of this wall may require combined tactics (crux) and, complicated by verglas on the first ascent, was mild severe in standard. From the platform above it is best to launch off a block on the right and keep passing right along a thin ledge overlooking the Spout until the edge of a large grassy platform is reached. Cross over now to the left side of the buttress below the cracks and chimneys. The first of these is blocked by a pile of jammed boulders; mount to 12 feet below the impasse and move left along narrow ledge. Hence we traversed left and slightly downwards for 30 feet by a ledge provided with a continuous handrail. Then upwards to the right by two short chimneys to an alcove 30 feet above the impasse. It might also be possible to climb straight up at the start of the traverse, but the latter should not be missed. Now follow the chimneys for a further 40 feet to a prominent block. The final chimney above proving too hard, the party mounted from the top of the block on to a sloping shelf on the right at the end of which a short wall was climbed to a grassy platform. From the left end of the platform a 15-foot slab is followed to easier ground. Below the terminal wall an easy terrace winds round to the left until an obvious slanting crack can be climbed to the plateau. Sound, clean rock and sustained difficulty; the crux alone exceeds difficult in standard.

The first winter ascent was made on November 29, 1952, by J. M. Taylor, G. B. Leslie, and T. L. Fallowfield in 6 hours. Difficult powder snow and ice conditions.

Causeway Rib, West Buttress.—400 feet (V.D.). J. C. Stewart and W. D. Brooker, June 10, 1951. This is the rib bounding Gargoyle Chimney on the left. Start a little to the left of the chimney and climb right and then traverse left to a grassy rut which leads up to the left to a belay at 60 feet. Here a grass patch leads off to the left, but regain the rib by a very awkward mantleshelf leading to a block belay in a recess. Climb down to the right for 15 feet and round a corner into a grassy gully which cuts back into the buttress. Twenty feet up, this gully terminates against a rock wall. In each of the corners of the wall is a crack. Climb the right-hand crack into a wide V-cleft at the top of which the crest of the buttress is gained. Ten feet farther up, traverse right across to the head of a chimney and follow slabs, grooves, and walls for 100 feet to a sharp little pinnacle. Some slabs above lead to

great shattered blocks on the crest overlooking Gargoyle Chimney. At 90 feet the rib swings left to gain the level Causeway above. One crosses the upper lip of the great smooth wall above the Gargoyle Chimney. An avoidable final tower of 60 feet makes a pleasant finish.

Gargoyle Chimney.—Winter ascent. W. D. Brooker and J. M. Taylor, January 20, 1952. Normal summer route. Chimney itself an 80-foot ice-pitch; main difficulty, the final 15 feet up to and over the chokestone. Six hours.

West Rib, Variation.—(V.D.). M. D. Coutts and T. W. Patey, August 31, 1951. From the platform below the steep tower in the upper section of the climb the preliminary slab (but not the steep chimney) was climbed. Thence a traverse round to the left led to a large platform overlooking West Gully. The vertical wall above (30 feet) is climbed on excellent holds to a platform. In 60 feet one joins the original route. Magnificent exposure.

West Rib.—Guide description may be erroneous in so far as the majority now obviously follow a route on the right of the open gully referred to, *i.e.*, 60 feet to a horizontal traverse leftwards to the pointed belay.

Coffin Chimney, Broad Cairn.—(D.). J. M. Taylor and T. W. Patey, May 1952. About half a mile below the Dubh Loch there can be seen from the path a well-defined 200-foot chimney cleaving the left wall of an open gully on the side of Broad Cairn. This gave a sporting route under dry conditions, which permitted each pitch to be taken direct. The first pitch is normally a shower bath. In wet weather the narrow rib on the right of the chimney is a pleasant alternative.

Labyrinth Edge, Creag an Dubh Loch.—Eight hundred feet (V.D.) W. D. Brooker and G. B. Leslie, September 8, 1951. Start at the rib of rock on the right edge of Labyrinth. Forty feet up, traverse right and then up and across a recessed corner. Sixty feet up is a large groove with a block belay. Climb up this groove and then traverse left and up an awkward slab to a ledge. Just above here it is possible to cross into the Labyrinth Groove. Scrambling leads to a green recess with huge ferns. This is left by a short steep wall on the left, from where the route goes up and to the right a little. Still slanting to the right the next pitch ends in a series of shallow cracks and slabs with a poor belay. An exit to the left leads to a large groove above and slightly to the left of which is a corner with a block belay. Continuing up and to the right, one emerges on a sea of polished slabs up which the only possible route seems to be a thin grassy crack over 100 feet long. This almost peters out at the top, but one can gain the sanctuary of a great spike jammed in a cleft in a line of overhangs dominating the slabs. After climbing over the spike a jump is made down to a ledge on the left from where it is easy to reach a platform on the edge above Labyrinth.

The edge rises in three huge steps and the first of these offers a tower which is the crux of the climb. The second step is simple, as is the



BEINN A' BHÙIRD FROM INVERCAULD

G. A. Roberts

third, a great overhanging fang of rock, if taken on the left on the wall above the Labyrinth Groove. A steep wall about 100 feet in height still barred the way to easy ground and this is tackled by working round to the right and up a chimney. Then out of the chimney by the right wall and over a few overhanging blocks. Easy to the plateau. Magnificent route on only possible line through the great central belt of slabs; never more than 100 feet from the Edge, much of the climb is vegetated, the only possible lines of ascent being by grass cracks in smooth, unclimbable slabs.

Sabre Edge, Creag an Dubh Loch.—(M.S.) T. W. Patey and C. Morrison, August 12, 1952. The terrific 600-foot belt of slabs which stretches from False Gully at the far end up to, and forming the right wall of Central Gully appears completely unassailable. However, at a little over half height in the gully the right wall falls back to form a steep, mossy gully. Immediately beyond is a prominent, sharp, and exceedingly steep arête, upwards of 250 feet in height; this is the Sabre Edge. It is the first of a series of such arêtes, the rest of which seem, however, to present insuperable difficulties.

The climb, although short, is continuously hard and, on the first ascent, occupied three hours. The lower part of the climb is bounded on the left by a 70-foot slab. Steep rocks complicated by several loose blocks provide a hard opening 90-foot pitch, the last 20 feet of which slant up to the left to a stance close to the edge of the slab. Thirty feet higher the base of a 20-foot needle of rock is reached. This abuts against a bulge in the cliff, which is surmounted by combined tactics from the top of the needle (crux). Above the bulge is a small grass shelf passing round to the left. Thence a steep 200-foot groove leads to easier, more broken ground. Soon a substantial platform is gained below the final vertical wall; a delicate 20-foot traverse over a slab on the right ends at a notch on the arête. The final short overhang above is turned, not without difficulty, on the right.

N.W. Gully.—A first winter ascent is reported by T. W. Patey, J. M. Taylor, W. D. Brooker, and J. Morgan (two ropes) in January 1953. Steep powder snow obliterated all pitches except the first, which alone offered any difficulty. The party was able to finish the climb close in to the terminal overhang, where the large slab was covered with hard snow. One and a quarter hours.

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Birihday Route (Crow Step Route Variation).—K. A. Grassick, J. G. Lillie, and R. Preshaw, June 7, 1952. The climb is on the third parallel chimney to the right of the Crow Step Route, reached by climbing the first moderate section of that route. The first pitch is climbed on the right wall to avoid an overhang and the chimney is gained again by an awkward movement left. A series of ledges lead

to a stance and belay (40 feet). The next pitch is taken on the left to avoid an overhang. By an easy traverse right, a stance above a rock mass is gained (50 feet). The chimney now narrows and the next pitch is climbed with difficulty up to a straddling rock stance (60 feet). The chimney now merges into the face and the last 60 feet is climbed to the left by a narrow crack between two walls. An awkward move round a small chokestone leads to the final 10-foot wall. The plateau was gained by an out-of-balance movement on the left of the wall and a strenuous pull up (60 feet).

Mitre Ridge.—A first winter ascent was made by W. D. Brooker and T. W. Patey on April 12, 1953. Climbed under a fairly complete plastering of recent snow, varying in depth from a few inches to several feet. The snow was just capable of bearing weight, but much clearing was necessary on the steepest pitches. There was some ice and the conditions excellent despite the late time of the season. Initial slab passed on the right due to lack of time although a fair bank up and covering with adequate snow should have made ascent possible. The prominent chimney leading up to the crest was heavily iced and the leader turned it by an obvious crack on the right with a return traverse above. The first 10-foot wall on the crest provided as much trouble as anything else on the climb and required combined tactics. At the base of the first tower the route selected crossed a slab on the left to reach a 20-foot open chimney. The ascent of this was very critical, as the holds were obscured with snow and ice. The next pitch up to the neck behind the first tower was of less but sustained difficulty. A 30-foot traverse over slabs on the left was the key to the ascent of the second tower. The final arête, with its continuous snow mantle, was an impressive sight. Time, four and a half hours.

Laminated Crag (V.D., 250 feet) and *Back Bay Gully* (D., 350 feet), *Garbh Choire.*—The magnificent Squareface Buttress near the Sneek forms the left wall of a high bay cut off from the floor of the corrie by the bar of rock holding Consolation Gully. At the back of the bay, under the huge rectangular wall of Squareface, is the long, narrow Back Bay Gully, with one prominent chokestone. Laminated Crag forms the right wall of the gully.

Laminated Crag presents a broad front. Near the centre of the wall a small pitch led to a long transverse level shelf. At the left end of the shelf a huge flake slants upwards to the right. This was climbed *à cheval* and proved very awkward. Before entering the level floored crevasse at the top of the flake a groove with few handholds (above a short vertical step) was followed to a resting-place. A traverse back left up a series of mantelshelves led to a block belay. From here two more upward steps were made to the right to a pointed flake, the negotiation of which was tricky because the crest behind was loose. Above the flake there was a short vertical wall, following which some easy-angled iced rock and a short snow slope led to the plateau. K. Winram and M. Smith, March 8, 1953.

The gully provided easy to moderate climbing for 100 feet on water-worn rock leading to a cave below the chokestone. There is a belay high up in the back of the cave. The boulder was turned on the left wall by a very difficult move—small holds on a steep slab. Above, the gully narrowed and further difficult climbing, again on water-worn rock, led to a block belay at a point where the gully branches. The route went up the left-hand groove to loose blocks, which were turned by an awkward wall on the right. Loose rock to the plateau. G. R. Greig, M. Smith, and K. Winram, August 24, 1952.

Tantalus Gully, C. an Dubh Lochan.—250 feet (S.). G. R. Greig, M. Smith, and K. Winram, March 15, 1953. From the small upper lochan a large scree shoot, the Main Rake, separates Glaucous from another imposing buttress on which, midway up the Rake, will be found Tantalus Gully. There is little evidence of gully form in the first two pitches, but higher up it cuts deep into the mountain and is contained by high walls. Thirty feet to stance below first and only severe pitch—an overhang and bulge on the right wall which may require a shoulder. The key handhold is tucked away between the overhang and a slab on the right. Easier going up a water-worn groove to a belay set low under the second pitch. This was very difficult, a steep slabby corner with small jammed stones in a crack hard in to the right wall. The angle eases to the third pitch, water-worn slabs with a crack in the right corner (20 feet). The bed again falls back to the fourth pitch, which rises in three steps. The blocks at the top proved sound (D., 25 feet). A huge scree funnel at the top.

Hourglass Buttress, C. na Ciche.—A. Thom and F. R. Malcolm, May 10, 1953. Start in well-defined groove (200 feet) at left corner of buttress. This led to the neck, above which the rock steepens 70 feet to piton belay, whence traverse right to crack sloping right. Climb crack to small rock shelf (piton belay). Combined tactics enabled leader to reach hold high up on left (crux). Twenty feet to first substantial platform above the neck. A slightly overhanging crack is then climbed (piton). A short traverse to the left, followed by a scramble up a wide crack leads to the top. Very exposed, but rock clean and sound. Vibrams worn.

BEN MACDHUI.

Median Route, Coire Sputan Dearg.—300 feet. A. Thom and F. R. Malcolm, June 27, 1952. The route starts on a slab between Pilgrims' Groove and Hanging Dyke. The slab is climbed until a rock ledge is located. Thence, moving left, a crack topped by a 20-foot slab is climbed to a large groove, split by a rib of rock. The route follows the groove on the right of the rib to the top. Two hours.

Black Tower, C. Sputan Dearg.—(S.) T. W. Patey, G. B. Leslie, and J. M. Taylor, April 21, 1952. Part of No. 5 Buttress between

Cherubs and Flake. Starting 50 feet below the lowest rocks, follow a prominent groove on the left flank, leading in 80 feet to easier ground. Climb broken slabs on the left to a platform 30 feet above and at the foot of a steep 20-foot groove close to the true crest of the tower. The groove, entered from the right by a severe movement, gives access to a platform and block. The steep slab round the corner on the left is climbed by a 20-foot crack to a short arête. Thence a delicate traverse across a slab on right until possible to regain crest and summit of tower by way of a short crack. Tower is linked to plateau by shattered arête.

April Wall, C. Sputan Dearg.—180 feet (S.). G. B. Leslie, T. W. Patey, and J. M. Taylor, April 21, 1952. This is the steep wall rising on the left of the upper rocks of Terminal Buttress and gives an exhilarating finish to this climb. The route follows the line of least resistance; starting at the nearest rocks the climber eventually is forced well to the left on to the main section of the wall. After 90 feet a small ledge and belay are reached in an exposed situation. A sensational move on good holds on the left follows and, still slanting left, a severe mantelshelf movement, followed by an airy corner, lead to a shallow gully in 60 feet; it is topped by a short and easy chimney.

Scorpion, North Face, Cairn Etchachan.—700 feet. T. W. Patey, J. M. Taylor, K. A. Grassick, A. G. Nicol, December 6, 1952. The imposing pointed buttress to the left of Castle Gates, and separated by it from the Shelter Stone Crag, has a reputation for loose rock. Under snow and ice conditions, however, with the rocks well frozen, it provided a magnificent climb of seven hours' duration, the difficulty sustained and no escapes evident. A prominent rock sentinel overhangs the entrance to Castle Gates. From its roof an indefinite rib slants up for 300 feet. A short distance above the point where the rib merges into the face, a steep twisting gully continues the line of ascent on the right of the steep rocks forming the apex of the upper cliff. Below, the climb followed the rib approximately; and above, followed the gully. Start mid-way between the Sentinel and an obvious chokestone gully 100 feet below the former by a steep mossy shelf to the left of a shallow chimney. After 60 feet continue up left for 30 feet along the foot of a steep wall. Here a slanting crack cleaves the wall and 10 feet up it becomes possible to enter it. For 20 feet the route is subterranean. Above the exit is an overhanging wall which is climbed immediately on the right (S.). Pass round a corner to the right and continue straight up, bearing somewhat leftwards. Continuously hard climbing; complicated at the time by a snow covering, ensues for 250 feet by a variety of slabs and corners to easier slopes below the upper rocks.

From this point snow conditions would prove an important factor. As it was, easy slopes led into the upper gully, which had five pitches in its 300 feet. At the start a steep shelf climbs away up to the left, but its destination is uncertain. Above the first pitch the gully bent sharply into the buttress on the left. At the bend there is no right wall, *i.e.*, the

gully becomes a shelf for a few feet. Amid remarkable rock scenery the gully rose in two abrupt steps to the summit. The first was a 25-foot ice-pitch, almost vertical, of extreme severity, above which a 65 degree snow slope ran up to below the final overhang, where a very hard exit on the right wall, following a tiny foot-wide ledge, led to a small rock tower and easy ground. Ideal conditions might occur in early spring with a combination of bare rock on the rib and an adequate deposit of snow in the gully. Under the existing conditions, in the absence of a snow take-off at the ice-pitch, the climb was rated very severe.

The same.—H. S. M. Bates and T. Shaw, May 10, 1953. As winter route, but rib from the Sentinel climbed until it merged with the curving gully. Previous route just to the left. Sentinel climbed by an open chimney with two very difficult pitches. After a 20-foot traverse left, 120 feet of easy scrambling to a 70-foot pitch (D.) by which the rib was regained. Then 120 feet of open chimney (V.D.) with a severe move on to a sloping mossy ledge (belay). Eighty feet of scrambling in shallow chimney twisting right led to a difficult pitch of 60 feet to the shelf and the gully was entered by a 30-foot pitch (V.D.). Forty feet (D.) led to a 15-foot overhang (S.) with a good stance and belay above. The final pitch of 60 feet, an exposed traverse to the right, and ascent of 20 feet is less difficult. Two and a half hours. Rock fairly sound.

Castle Gully.—450 feet (V.D.). H. S. M. Bates, K. A. Grassick, and A. G. Nicol, 24th May 1953. 250 feet up Castle Gates Gully from the Sentinel an open gully is reached just above a red cave on the left wall. The lower part of the gully is open and slabby (D.); but higher up, a steep, narrow 30-foot chimney with a strenuous 12-foot overhanging crack (M.S.) above leads to a rib about 400 feet from the top.

Sticil Face, Shelter Stone Crag.—600 feet (H.S.). J. M. Taylor and T. W. Patey, 14th May 1953. Start immediately below and to the right of Raeburn's Buttress. Here access is possible to a series of grass ledges which slant across to the right above the lower belt of slabs on the north face of the Crag. Above these ledges the middle tier of slabs rises sheer and unbroken. At first we followed the ledges well across to the right till they petered out high on the face, with farther upward progress extremely problematical. Accordingly, we returned to the point where a steep slabby gully ascends between the middle tier of slabs and Raeburn's Buttress.

Details.—160 feet up awkward grass ledges on the immediate left of the slabby gully to platform with large flake belay. The actual bed of the gully, a watercourse in wet weather, appears too smooth and holdless. Fifty feet up the steep edge directly above the flake (crux). 30-foot V-groove above. Thence easy ledges return to the gully. Gully continues as a steep chimney. Easy above.

Here, for the only time, there was a choice of routes. The upper 200 feet of Raeburn's Buttress could have been reached, but it was now

equally easy to diverge well to the right by a long slanting ledge above the middle slabs. This leads to an intriguing, deep-cut 100-foot chimney which cleaves the final wall. Two hours.

Climbed after a dry spell; the climbing was often unpleasant due to much vegetation. In wet conditions it should be avoided.

Quartz Vein Edge, Creagan a' Choire Etchachan.—400 feet (M.). K. Winram, M. Smith, and K. Greig, June 15, 1952. The buttress harbouring the Bastion is bounded on its left by a deep scree gully. The climb lies up its edge. The start is a little way up the gully from a detached block (cairn). A steep 10-foot slab with a large flake hold and a curious piece of quartz inset was followed by rib and open corner pitches to a belay at out 100 feet from the start. Easy climbing led to a gravel patch hidden from below. A groove slanting to the crest was climbed by lay-back methods until the crack in the corner petered out. Slabs then followed to a belay. Thirty feet higher up cracked slabs, an upper shelf below a false tower met a lower shelf overhanging the gully. The upward traverse from the lower to the higher shelf was made at a point where a layer of quartz wended its way across the buttress as a thin white line. Easier climbing then led to a chimney set into the false tower and ending at a jumble of blocks poised over the lower shelf. A scree funnel led to the top of the cliffs.

Bastion Wall, Creagan a' Choire Etchachan.—450 feet (D.). W. Kelly and P. Leys, May 31, 1953. The route started below a prominent quartz vein and about 200 feet below a gully which separates the buttress from the broken rocks on the left (cairn). The first pitch goes up a wall of slabs on small holds for 90 feet to a stance. Thence a traverse right led to an arête which was climbed direct for 50 feet to a small ledge. A traverse left to a larger ledge followed (piton belay). From here a fairly steep wall was climbed, veering to the right. This led to a good stance but doubtful belay. About 40 feet of slabs were climbed direct to the foot of a vertical wall. This wall was climbed by a groove on the right, after which some steep slabs led to the final pitch—a vertical wall which eases off about 15 feet from the top. This was climbed direct on good rock and adequate holds. Three hours.

Sunday Crack, Beinn Mheadhoin.—220 feet (V.D.). H. S. M. Bates, T. Shaw, W. W. Hutchison, and A. G. Gardiner. Situated at extreme left end of rock outcrops overlooking C. Etchachan and visible from upper part of the path, this well-defined crack lies to the left of a steep rib. After 25 feet of moderate climbing a grassy shelf (belay) is reached. The crack above begins with an overhang. Traverse left over steep slabs to below 10-foot overhang (piton). Traverse back to crack and climb 70 feet to top. Good rock. One hour.

Bellflower Buttress, B. Mheadhoin.—300 feet (D.). K. Winram, G. R. Greig, and M. Smith, August 10, 1952. The biggest and best of the rocks on the Etchachan face. Artificial route with many escapes. Start by a heathery chimney with overhanging exit. A series of slabs and walls follow.

COIRE CATH NAM FIONN.

Tiered Cracks, Fingal's Buttress.—300 feet (V.D.). K. Winram, R. Grieg, and M. Smith, June 8, 1952. Fingal's Buttress is the finest expanse of rock on Beinn Bhrotain. It lies at the entrance to the corrie and is composed of very steep slabs on its left and centre, and on the right throws down ribs of granite into a slabby, scree-filled amphitheatre. From the corrie floor a crack can be seen rising in three sections where the central slabs and the ribs meet. This is the climb.

Broken rocks lead to a level grass platform. A small slab and a damp groove trending left lead to a little wall and another platform. The first tier of the crack lies hard in the corner. It was climbed after much gardening and is difficult. The second tier looked impossible, so the ledge was followed to the right, where a difficult move was made from a scooped slab up round a projecting nose to a mantelshelf. What might have been a difficult cat-crawl was made easier by there being a finger-wide crevice at the junction of the wall and slab. The crawl leads to the third tier and crux. It was not high, but the take-off was from a dubious moss patch and there was a dearth of holds after the first move. Strenuous, no belay. A grass basin was reached where a long chimney, ending in a rock crevasse, led out on the left to the crest of the buttress. The outer edge of the crevasse is climbed to a steep pitch with grand holds where a good view down the steep section was enjoyed. After a broad arête the climb finishes on easy ground, but scrambling on slabs straight ahead led to a difficult chimney overlooking the amphitheatre. This was climbed for good measure.

BRAERIACH.

Sphinx Buttress, Garbh Choire Mòr.—350 feet (D.). K. Winram, G. Dey, M. Smith, and W. Kelly, May 25, 1952. Sphinx Buttress is very individualistic and is the most defined piece of rock in the corrie. It is in no way connected with the other buttresses. Ridge-like in form it stands alone. The start was made to the left of the vertical, curiously incised frontal slab and to the right of a fault ending in an overhang. The *rimaye* was about 20 feet in depth and quite wide, but there was a convenient snow-bridge at the start. The first section up the chamfered edge of the frontal slab to a fine position on the ridge crest was a delightful pitch, 90 feet high on a very steep slab, with fine side-pull holds at the start. The crest comes unexpectedly and it was surprising to look down the other side, which was undercut. A short strenuous pull-up over a nose followed to an airy cramped stance with a belay low down. The next pitch was awkward and led through a gap formed by a tooth of rock leaning over space to a pull-up from a ledge to a belay below the Sphinx nose. The Sphinx looked like a miniature Cioch from here. The slab leading to the top of the Sphinx looked holdless, so the way led round a corner to the left of a mossy crack and awkward slabs

set into the Sphinx pedestal. These led to a ridge above a sneck. Across the sneck the narrow ridge was crossed from right to left and a mossy wall climbed to a stance below a long groove with an overhang in the left corner. The groove was climbed on small holds on a slab to a gap above the overhang. There was a good belay just above, where easier rock led to the top of the upper pinnacle. The short descent to another sneck and rise to the plateau was over loose rock.

Pisa, Garbh Choire Dhàidh.—500 feet (D.). J. Tewnton and M. Smith, August 5, 1951. The Chimney Pot lies between Helicon Rib on the left (see Guide, C.C.J. XV, 233) and, on the right, a buttress having a decided lean. The climb lies on this buttress and goes up its left edge. Low angled ribs lead to a grass terrace in line with the bottom of Helicon Rib. A crack (cairn) on the left of a prominent overhanging block was climbed until a wall was reached. This was climbed by an open corner to a ledge. A movement to the left was made to a mossy triangular recess (cairn). An inset corner was followed, leading to a very small ledge on the brink of the Chimney Pot. A short wall above with awkward holds led to further slabs and corner pitches trending right to a shattered ledge. A short step up a narrow groove led to a mossy scoop. A doubtful belay (a sliver of rock) protrudes from a slab on the left. The slab is climbed on the corner. Here serious climbing ended, and for 150 feet to the plateau the buttress tapers to an arête of piled blocks giving grand scrambling almost on the edge overlooking the Chimney Pot.

Domed Ridge, Coire Bhrochain.—600 feet (M.). W. D. Brooker and J. W. Morgan, July 26, 1951. This is the prominent buttress or ridge between the West Gully and the West Buttress. It is divided from the main mass of West Buttress by a forked gully, the left branch of which is a vertical, black chimney. The start is up easy, pink slabs, seamed with cracks. The route goes right by a series of shelves to avoid a steep tower. The crest is regained and here consists of broken boulders and screes. A nick in the ridge lies below the final dome, which overhangs directly in front. A low traverse to the right round a corner leads to a wonderful climb of 120 feet of red granite walls and slabs of exhilarating steepness. Easy rocks lead to the plateau.

Babylon Rib, C. Bhrochain.—400 feet (M.). G. R. Greig, M. Smith, and K. Winram, March 1, 1953. A narrow wedge-shaped buttress on left of Pyramus and cut off from East Gully Buttress by a narrow chimney. Steep snow led to the foot of the buttress (cairn). Very steep but moderate rock up to a narrow ledge and belay at an open corner in about 60 feet. Thirty feet to an interesting slab with a thin crack. A move left was made almost into the bounding chimney, and then the rib was crossed and a groove entered overlooking Pyramus. Easier up the groove to the crest and then a large platform. One hundred and eighty feet of good, interesting rock. Above, the buttress tapered to a narrow ridge and turned almost at right angles at the head of the left bounding chimney to finish at a cornice at the plateau.

Ninus, C. Bhrochain.—450 feet (D.). (1) R. Greig and J. Tewnton; (2) K. Winram, G. Dey, and M. Smith, June 29, 1952. Ninus is the very steep buttress on the extreme right of the corrie. Its left wall drops into Thisbe. A white rock scar at mid-height is visible from the Lairig. Two routes meeting at less than mid-height were made. The first started on a prominent rib low to the right of the buttress and gave pleasant scrambling to an inset corner pitch formed by a slab and a large block (belay). This was followed by a similar pitch, but more difficult. A depression was entered and loose rocks led to a thread belay in a groove against a flying ridge. Here the routes met.

The second commenced on the extreme left immediately in line with the bottom pitch of Thisbe. From a white ledge quite hard climbing led up a very steep wall, then up a groove with a loose flake hold to a steep nose and, in 90 feet, to a good belay where the steep section eased off. About 10 feet higher an awkward step out to the right led to a long traverse again to the right across a glacis below the overhanging centre section of the buttress. At the end of the traverse an upward move round a nose led to the depression and the jammed stone belay of the first route. Immediately above, on the left, a steep chimney groove was started on the right and finished on the left outer edge over rock split and broken by a rock-fall from above. Easier climbing led to the rock scar and a belay round a large block. Another chimney groove led out to the crest on the left and ended at a small undercut platform on the brink of Thisbe. (Belay on the nose above.) The next airy pitch up a rib on the edge of Thisbe was a delightful 50 or 60 feet on vertical rough rock with good holds. A further short pitch led to easy ground.

COIRE AN LOCHAIN.

Y-Gully, Left-hand Branch.—Possibly previous ascents of this left branch have been made, though unrecorded. When climbed by T. W. Patey, A. G. Nicol, and A. Wedderburn on November 16, 1952, it was a snow ascent and carried a 20-foot ice-pitch which presented some difficulty.

BEINN LAIR.

Marathon Ridge.—1,300 feet (D.). W. D. Brooker and S. McPherson; J. W. Morgan and J. C. Stewart, July 19, 1951. Seven hours. This ridge is the first of two very prominent buttresses to the south-east of the spur forming the highest part of the cliff. It aligns with the summits of Beinn Lair and Beinn Tarsuinn Chaol. The route follows a long thin ridge which curves slightly to join the main buttress on the left at about 850 feet. Start at the foot of a 200-foot nose very low down. For almost 800 feet the climbing is by steep walls averaging 100 feet in height and separated by grassy ledges. The ridge

then steepens before its junction with the left-hand ridge, from which it is divided by a steep narrow, chimney. Climb 40 feet up the chimney to a small stance and large flake belay out on the right. This point may also be reached by a zigzag movement on the face to the right. The short overhang above is the crux (D. to V.D.) 200 feet above the grassy neck on the main buttress and below the final tower is reached. For 160 feet the climbing face is broad, but then it narrows and the finish of serious climbing is by a steep, narrow fissure on the crest. Scrambling leads to a grassy pinnacle at the summit of the buttress. In most places the rock is sound and clean, with belays at intervals of about 100 feet. The standard is mostly moderate to difficult.

BEINN AIRIDH CHARR.

Square Buttress.—400 feet (D.). W. D. Brooker and J. Morgan; J. C. Stewart and S. McPherson, July 18, 1951. To the south-east of left of the main crag is a smaller face, the principal feature of which is the buttress flanking it on the left. The buttress is steep and well-defined at the start but then falls back in easy slabs and short walls. The start is up a gangway slanting left from the bottom right-hand corner. This leads to a ledge, which is followed to the right for 20 feet. The wall above is steep at first and then the route is up slabs. One more 60-foot pitch marks the end of the lower 200-foot section. The upper 200 feet is easy but interesting. The rock is sound throughout.

Farther right, or north-west of this buttress, is a prominent black crack about 160 feet long. It gave a steep climb of two pitches, the former of which was very difficult to mild severe. Between the buttress and the crack lie a narrow broken ridge and two narrow chimneys. They were descended and were nowhere harder than moderate.

NEW CLIMBING BOOKS.

- "The Central Highlands." S.M.C. Guide; 1952; 15s.
- "The Islands of Scotland." S.M.C. Guide; 1952; 15s.
- "Highlands of Scotland," by Seton Gordon. (Robert Hale, 1951; 18s.)
- "The Cuillin of Skye," by B. H. Humble. (Robert Hale, 1952; 30s.)
- "Walking in the Alps," by J. H. Walker. (Oliver & Boyd, 1951; 25s.)
- "The Australian Snow Pictorial," by S. Flattely. (Phoenix House, 1952; 25s.)

Two more of the S.M.C. Guides are once again available in revised edition. The Central Highlands Guide covers the mountainous block of country which includes Glencoe, Cruachan, the Mamores, the Grey Corries, and the Ben Alder area, and in fact includes seventy times as many Munro summits as does the Islands Guide, which, being deprived