

NEW CLIMBS

CAIRNGORM: COIRE AN T-SNEACHDA

The Runnel.—L. Lovat and T. Weir; T. W. Patey, J. Hall, and Miss N. Welsh, January 1, 1955. This winter route is on left-hand part of the large fluted buttress lying between Aladdin Buttress and the lowest part of the corrie rim. It is the best-defined gully to split the buttress, steep and narrow above a lochan on the corrie floor. Steep easy climbing on hard snow to fork, 120 feet below the top. Left fork used with a steep 60 foot chimney to final slope, and no cornice.

BEN MACDHUI: COIRE SPUTAN DEARG

Pilgrim's Groove.—J. Smith and H. F. W. Taylor, August 21, 1955. An alternative start to the grassy scrambling in the lower part of the groove was made by climbing a steep 35 foot wall about 30 feet left of the ordinary start. Climb the wall on small flakes and ledges; severe.

CARN ETCHACHAN: LOCH AVON FACE

Three routes on the upper belt of crags above the Main Terrace. Four ill-defined depressions are to left of the terminal gully of Scorpion. Along the Terrace from the Loch Etchachan end, the first route, a precipitous wide chimney or gully, Equinox, is seen. Skylined on the right is a great overhanging tower. In the shallow depression next on right is Boa, the final crack being seen on the right wall of the great square tower. A spur of pink rock separates this depression from the next, even less defined. Python is on this spur. The depression has no routes, but an obvious long crack with mossy overhangs cleaves the centre, inclining right. The next spur with some pink rock leads to a more broken fourth depression containing the moderate Battlements route. Then the Main Terrace merges into the face.

Equinox.—250 feet (V.S.). T. W. Patey and L. S. Lovat, October 2, 1954. Not so hard as Python, rocks greasy. Indefinite climbing for 100 feet from Terrace to huge block at foot of gully proper. Climb groove a few feet, step right, and continue up shelving slabs on right. This line is too steep at 60 feet so return upwards into gully to a block belay. Climb vertical corner on right, continuing directly up very steep rock for 70 feet (V.S.) to obvious dark chimney with constricted exit to comfortable platform above. Final 20 foot chimney on left.

Boa Crack.—250 feet (S.). T. W. Patey, F. R. Malcolm, and A. Thom, September 25, 1954. The final crack has a magnificent situation. Scramble up to wide chimney in right corner of recess and on immediate left of foot of spur of pink rock. Chimney uninviting. Slant up leftwards by ledges and corners towards easier ground in upper recess. Move left to foot of 100 foot crack on left wall, vertical with a hanging chockstone at 70 feet. Very exposed outward movement from jammed position is necessary to pass chockstone, but rock is excellent.

Python.—250 feet (V.S.). T. W. Patey and L. S. Lovat, October 2, 1954. Difficulty sustained and strenuous. Pass below spur and start on far side (to west), aiming for huge detached flake high on face of spur. A few feet up a 20 foot

slanting cleft cuts a wall of red rock, with a platform on the right at the start. Jam up this severe cleft to a mossy platform and jumble of blocks. Ascend on the right 50 feet to reach the huge flake. An initial very severe and strenuous layback and another very severe pull up over an overhang to the crack behind the flake which is climbed astride. Walk left below smooth wall to east side of spur, opposite Boa Crack. Climb first chimney on right to reach a large platform on spur at 80 feet. A great fang of rock above is the finish, climbed by a severe 60 foot central chimney.

BEINN A' BHUIRD: GARBH CHOIRE

Mitre Ridge, East Wall Direct.—600 feet (M.S.). T. W. Patey, August 29, 1954. Combining the ascent of the great lower sweep of slabs with that of the upper couloir, followed by the East Wall winter route. Almost a straight line from start to final tower. Start left of lowest rocks, midway between S.E. Gully and Direct start, below the most useful crack in lower slabs. Steep rock with good holds for 50 feet. Then angle eases and crack not difficult to follow up the slabs to a line of short overhangs. Gain lodgment in a deep crack splitting the overhangs above the lower crack by an awkward straddle from a minor crack on right, so avoiding a smooth slab. Ascend deep crack and follow line of grassy chimneys with good side holds. Straddle wider chimney above. (Here is an escape to right behind detached block to the midway shoulder of the normal route.) Continue direct upward line, with minor deviations, climbing to left of central rocks of the Mitre. Some 200 feet of mixed climbing, hard to describe, led to the foot of the winter couloir and 60 feet up to a block belay (just difficult in summer). The winter exit, 20 feet above, seemed hard without the aid of a snow bank. Climb rib on left, passing just left of overhangs ringing the top of the couloir (V.D.). Easy gully on right leads to final gap, but best finish is straight ahead on rib to top of final Tower.

CREAG AN DUBH LOCH

Vertigo Wall.—450 feet (V.S.). T. W. Patey, G. MacLeod, and A. Will, October 10, 1954. On right-hand wall of Central Gully, much lower than Sabre Edge. Probably the hardest route in the Cairngorms. On first ascent cold, wet rocks enforced use of four pitons for direct aid: in dry conditions none should be required. Start about 200 feet up Central Gully where level grass ledge goes on to the face to the right, beside a large block in gully bed. Looking up, a dark chimney (often wet) is a prominent feature of the route. Go straight up for 20 feet from near end of ledge. Traverse right along top of slab overlooking ledge, to gain a grassy groove, which peters out below a 20 foot vertical, severe crack climbed with aid from a piton. Above, two recessed overhangs of red rock threaten, so move right and up to large detached block. Traverse 10 feet right to safe recess. Climb short wall on left to steep, grassy shelf, continuing up slabs to foot of dark chimney. This was streaming with water, and two pitons, otherwise unnecessary, were used. Overhangs impend above, so make a 30 foot exposed traverse right and ascend a few feet, crossing back left on slabs above overhangs and so to pile of boulders in huge recess. Avoid heathery exit up to left, but above boulders take horizontal ledge on to great wall on right. Pass precarious flake 30 feet out, and

then move up steep inset corner (shaky piton), followed by a delicate ridge traverse to right. Good holds (but use with discretion) allow a vertical pull to large ledge. This is a very severe 80 foot run-out from the boulders. Scrambling for 100 feet ends at the top.

J. Smith and J. Dennis, September 3, 1955, found water still running down the crucial pitch after prolonged good weather. Only the middle of the three pitons was used for direct aid.

Sabre Edge was led by J. Dennis on September 3, 1955, without combined tactics at the needle (H.S.).

LOCHNAGAR

Shadow Buttress "B."—T. W. Patey and A. Will, January 23, 1955. First winter ascent. In good snow and ice conditions Bell's route followed, using piton at crux (as on original ascent). Steep lower section was continuously severe for 200 feet owing to ice. Upper section was straightforward with cutting in hard snow.

Raeburn's Gully: Winter Variation.—T. W. Patey and A. Will, January 23, 1955. Up steep right branch 200 feet below cornice: a more interesting finish in good snow. An initial 30 foot ice pitch, then a 60 degree snow slope. Previously climbed in summer by Brooker, Bates, and Hay in 1954.

The Clam.—250 feet (H.S.). T. W. Patey, J. M. Taylor, F. R. Malcolm, A. Thom, G. H. Leslie, and M. Smith, September 27, 1954. Narrow formidable slit on right (Scarface) wall of Raeburn's Gully, just above the jammed blocks forming the winter crux. Immediately above the slit a steep branch gully breaches this right wall. Climbed after a frosty night. Probably the rocks, especially near the bottom, would normally require careful handling. Huge piled blocks filling lower part of slit are climbed for 60 feet to square recess on right and thence by a short wall into base of slit. Pass inwards up steep floor of slit to innermost recess. Traverse out by back and foot towards ledge on left wall at outside edge. Flake belay 6 feet up a slab on outside. Return from flake inwards to slit by a hard traverse to a thread belay at back. Gain top of hanging chockstone and surmount the last chockstone to a stance on left, then scramble up. The last 80 feet affords remarkable climbing.

Pinnacle Face.—600 feet (V.S.). J. Smith and J. Dennis, September 4, 1955. In rubbers. Comparable in difficulty to Parallel Gully "B." On face of Black Spout Pinnacle; steep and exposed, becoming progressively less steep and easier. Considerable vegetation. Start at corner of Black Spout, 30 feet above lowest point of face. Two grooves slant leftwards; take the shallower left-hand groove, cairn. Climb an awkward wall and follow the shallow groove, steep grass at 40 feet and block belay at 60 feet. Line of the groove continues as cracks still trending leftwards, flake belay (50 feet). Climb a few feet to a piton in a corner used to safeguard a very severe pull on to the right-hand slab. Work left across slabs and vegetation to a large grassy stance, piton belay (80 feet). Traverse left a few feet to two severe cracks. Climb the left by jamming or the right by layback, finishing at the top of right-hand crack, flake belay (30 feet). Continue up crack, traverse right on flakes to a grassy niche, and climb an overhanging corner (S.) to a piton belay (60 feet). Take an easy grassy ledge on right to join original route (*S.M.C.J.*, 21, 209), flake belay (60 feet). Steep grassy climbing leftwards to

short V.D. corner, block belay (70 feet). First up 10 feet to left, then easy climbing right to a large block (50 feet). Climb two successive V.D. corners, right to a large block (90 feet). Moderate climbing (150 feet) now leads to the top of the pinnacle—three hours.

Gargoyle Direct.—R. H. Sellers and G. Annand, December 5, 1954. First winter ascent; heavy powder snow conditions. Normal summer route followed, except for 60 feet on middle buttress where small gully directly above the neck was preferred. As chockstone at cave pitch (summer crux) was heavily iced, a piton was required. Five hours, leading through.

We are indebted to the Editor of the *Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal* for permission to reproduce several accounts of new climbs which have already appeared in that journal.

NEW CLIMBING BOOKS

“Introduction to Mountaineering,” by Showell Styles. (Seeley, Service, no date, 15s.)

“The Untrodden Andes,” by C. G. Egeler and T. de Booy. (Faber, 1955, 25s.)

“The Moated Mountain,” by Showell Styles. (Hurst and Blackett, 1955, 18s.)

“Commando Climber,” by Mike Banks. (Dent, 1955, 18s.)

“The Island Hills,” by Campbell Steven (Hurst and Blackett, 1955, 18s.)

“Introduction to Mountaineering” is another of the many short textbooks which have appeared in recent years. It attempts in 130 pages of text to indicate how and how not to climb as well as where to climb. In this respect it is no worse and sometimes better than many of its predecessors, but what Mountain Craft required nearly 500 pages to do cannot be done thoroughly in one-fifth of the words, especially as in addition it attempts to review the climbing areas of Britain. Scotland comes better than usual out of it, getting almost as much space as North Wales! Only winter climbing in Scotland is considered, and we doubt the wisdom of the advice to the novice to do some of the ridges such as the Aonach Eagach before tackling the easy Nevis gullies. He is more likely, in our opinion, to come to grief on the double cornices or iced slopes of the ridges than on the straightforward snow climbs of the gullies, provided conditions there are indeed suitable for a party of novices. Can we ascribe some of the difficulties in which parties from the South have recently found themselves to the cursory treatment which the Scottish ridges in winter get in mountaineering textbooks such as this? In the best of conditions they may resemble easy Alpine ridges in summer—except that the days are only half as long—but snow and ice conditions can change much more quickly, blizzards and gales are often much more severe than summer Alpine storms, and, a factor often ignored, distances are much longer than in most English and Welsh climbs. Appended to the text is a vocabulary of mountaineering English which demonstrates the abundance of foreign words in the climbers’ jargon. Some of home origin, such as the use of expressions like “safing,” would be better forgotten. And are the English and Welsh 3,000-ers Munros?

“The Untrodden Andes” is an account of a small expedition to the Cordillera Blanca of Peru. The Dutch authors were accompanied by Lionel Terray, who led