

THE 1965 OVERNIGHT EXCURSION

THERE were only ten of us—but what a walk! From Cockbridge to Derry Lodge. It was about 4 p.m. that we left the Mini-bus and under dull, forbidding skies, in the face of a gusty north-west wind, set out on our long trek.

From Delnadamp Lodge the road becomes a cart-track over the heather and turf to Inchroy Lodge three miles farther on. Now and again the plaintive cry of the curlew drew our attention to these long-beaked birds wheeling down to their distant nests. Not far from the Lodge, the track led to a bridge over the Builg Burn and so to the Linn of Avon where the clear water comes rushing down over the boulders in a series of lovely waterfalls with deep clear pools below. With a fire made of heather roots, my old kettle was used to great advantage for a cup of tea all round.

From the Linn the old hill-path has been bulldozed into a wide rough track along the hillside for about a mile and a half, then abruptly right to the bridge to the north bank. The country hereabouts is fairly open and although the high tops were completely veiled in mist and we were buffeted by occasional showers, we found no lack of interest or beauty. A distant cuckoo reminded us that it was actually summer. An odd break in the clouds allowed sufficient brightness to light up the scenery. We were constantly refreshed by the music of the stream so near us, bubbling along over its pebbly bed. Away to the south we caught glimpses of the fine corries of Ben Avon and at the Slochd we had a good view of the Mitre Ridge of Beinn a' Bhuid.

What a joy it is to be alone with the peace of the everlasting hills! Only the sounds of nature break the silence: the rushing waters of the stream, the shrill cries of the oyster-catcher and the snipe flitting past almost invisibly as the evening wears on and we slowly progress on our way. Gradually the path becomes steeper and leads into a great defile with the river rushing far below. Once again we stopped briefly to shelter from a heavier than usual squall.

Our first objective was Findouran Lodge. We decided that if possible we would shelter there during the darkest hours, as it was cold for mid-summer and unusually dark as well. I was somewhat in advance when I came in sight of this old shooting lodge. Although only about 10.30 p.m., the light was fading fast and visibility not

very good. As I rounded a bend in the path, a great herd of deer came down to graze on the patches of grassy ground surrounding the lodge. The moment they caught sight of me they made for the river, leaping, bounding and rushing across and straight up the steep hillside on the south bank. It was a grand sight. There must have been hundreds of these fine animals guarded by many noble stags.

At the Lodge, I was appalled at the devastation : windows smashed and doors swinging in the wind. It was a dismal sight. Broken glass lay on the dirty floors inside, and not a stick of furniture could I see. Even floor-boards had been torn up in places. There was, however, one habitable room. I wish I could paint a picture of this room after it had been occupied. Soon a fire was blazing in the derelict hearth. Candles helped to illuminate the place. There were a couple of chairs and tables as well as a wooden bench. Our past-president got his primus-stove going and in the few hours we spent there he must have dispensed dozens of cups of tea. Most of us spent the time stoking the fire and sharing flasks and half-bottles to keep up the inner warmth. There was a great spirit of mutual happiness.

About 3 a.m. we set out again, following a path which was not very good. It was probably the wrong path, as we found later, nearer to the river, a much better one which we followed until we reached the Lairig-an-Laoigh path about a mile short of Loch Avon. Here we were glad to find a good bridge across the river. It was now getting lighter and brighter, with Beinn a' Chaorruinn directly ahead of us and Cairngorm swathed in heavy mist to the right. At this point three of our party decided to follow the Lairig path to Derry, but I wanted to go up over Beinn a' Chaorruinn and Beinn Bhreac. The remainder of the party followed me. It was rather slow going as I had to wait frequently for the others. I found it very enjoyable going up the dry slopes to the top of Beinn a' Chaorruinn from which we had a splendid view of Corrie Etchachen directly opposite. Coming down towards the Yellow Moss, I nearly trod on some young ptarmigan running along after the mother bird. I could not resist picking up one of these tiny balls of fluff to have a closer look at it. The Yellow Moss is an ugly stretch of ground between Beinn a' Chaorruinn and Beinn Bhreac. It seemed an endless mass of peat bogs and water holes which made tiring going towards the end of a long walk.

As we came down towards Glen Derry from Beinn Bhreac, the sun broke through a sudden heavy shower, causing a brilliant rainbow to arch across the sky right ahead of us, seemingly from end to end of the glen. We struck the Derry path exactly at the spot where the

bridge crosses the burn and the pine trees begin. It was 10.30 a.m. when we reached the Lodge, to be greeted by our worthy Huts Custodian with the good news that there was plenty of hot water on tap for all. After an excellent breakfast and short rest, we left Derry Lodge by our Mini-bus for the Craigindarroch Hotel at Ballatar where we completed a memorable mid-summer meet with an excellent lunch.

I cannot conclude this account of our Meet without recording our indebtedness to our Vice-President, George Page, for his happy inspiration in hiring the Mini-bus and to his son, Graeme, who drove it most skilfully. The original Meet to Glen Lochy having had to be cancelled because of lack of numbers, we might once again have had no meet at all.

R. A. GERSTENBERG.

THE CLUB LIBRARY

THE Cairngorm Club Library evolved gradually and in a rather informal manner until 1929, when the President at that time, Mr J. A. Parker, compiled a catalogue which appeared in the *Journal* (Vol. 12, p. 87). The introductory paragraph commented that "Local mountaineering literature and maps are of special interest, but any works on mountaineering subjects will be most welcome", indicating the intended scope of the library. It also suggests that expansion was expected to be largely by voluntary contributions of books and maps from members. From the same source we learn of the presentation by Messrs Parker and Garden of the bookcase which still serves to house most of the books, although the journals have long since overflowed into a much less splendid cupboard.

The first formal recognition of the status of the library was made at the 1930 Annual General Meeting, at which J. E. Bothwell was appointed Honorary Librarian and an annual grant of £5 for the purchase of books was approved. This sum remained unchanged for over 20 years, when the Committee resolved to increase the amount to £10 per annum. This is the sum currently available, but fortunately in recent years many books received for review in the *Journal* have passed to the library and the journals of kindred clubs are received on an exchange basis. For this reason alone, the lack of material to enable the *Journal* to be produced regularly (at one time it appeared twice a year!) is to be deplored.