

ROBERT L. MITCHELL

It is with deep regret that we record the death on February 7th, 1982 of Bob Mitchell after a period of failing health.

He joined the Club in 1935 and was intensely loyal, in his unassuming way, to the ideals and objects which are inherent in the Club's existence. He gave long and valuable service on the Committee from 1937 to 1945, as Librarian from 1945 to 1969, Editor from 1953 to 1969 and Vice-President from 1949 to 1952. In recognition of these services he was elected an Honorary Member in 1970.

It was not in the nature of the man to over-enthusiasm about his enjoyment of the hills, but it was obvious to all who walked or climbed with him that he gained tremendous inner satisfaction and fulfilment from a day's outing in the high places. He was always ready to help the beginner with kindly advice on matters of mountaineering. A keen photographer, he had an extensive knowledge of the wild life and flowers of the mountains at home and abroad. On one occasion he gave a precise map reference for a clump of edelweiss in the Zermatt valley to a Club member paying a first visit to the area.

He was one of the men of vision who soon after the war saw the necessity of having a list of names of volunteers who would be ready to take part in any search and rescue operations needed on the mountains and thus the local forerunner of today's highly organised Mountain Rescue teams was formed in Aberdeen with Bob as 'convener of keymen'.

Bob had a particular love of the Alps, and was a member of the Alpine Club and the Swiss Alpine Club, as well as the Scottish Mountaineering Club. He joined a number of Hamish McArthur's walking/climbing trips, notably to Zermatt in 1949, climbing the Matterhorn, Rimpfischhorn etc., to the Oetzal and Pontresina area in 1950 and to the Lienzer Dolomites, Stubaital and Zermatt in 1952, climbing Monte Rosa, Lyskamm, Zinal Rothorn etc. He remained an enthusiastic devotee of Switzerland. Until recently he regularly visited his friend Toni Biner, of the famous family of Swiss guides, and returned many times to his favourite haunts of St. Niklaus and the Zermatt valley.

However, even in the vastness of the Alps his international reputation as a scientist could not be overlooked. A member of the Club recalls meeting in a mountain hut in the Mischabel, an American who said that his object in coming to Europe was not to climb mountains but to meet the top man in spectrochemistry, Dr. Robert L. Mitchell of the Macaulay Institute in Aberdeen. When advised that the learned Doctor was then in Zermatt the American said that he could not wait to go there to meet the great man and requested, there and then, a suitable letter of introduction. Though no very adequate notepaper was available in the hut, the rather junior Club member obliged as best he could. Profuse thanks were his only

reward, and not the drink which he so dearly wanted but which he could so ill afford.

Bob studied chemistry at Edinburgh University and graduated B.Sc. with 1st Class Honours in 1931, when he joined the staff of the newly formed Macaulay Institute for Soil Research where he remained till his retirement in 1975. He was Head of the Department of Spectrochemistry from 1937 to 1968, Deputy Director from 1955 to 1968, Director from 1968 to 1975, and a Fellow of the Institute from 1975 until his death.

As a Department of Agriculture for Scotland Research Scholar carrying out research on soils and soil colloids, first at the Macaulay Institute and then for a year in Zurich, he was awarded the degree of Ph.D. by Aberdeen University in 1934. It was while in Zurich that his interest in spectrochemistry began and to which he devoted his career.

He was a world-wide authority on his subject and gave lectures in the U.S.A., Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the U.S.S.R. and many European countries, and produced some 90 publications. In recognition of his contribution to the advancement of the knowledge of trace element problems, he was awarded the Research Medal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England, and for his service to trace element analysis, the Society for Analytical Chemistry's Gold Medal in 1975.

He is survived by his brother, David, to whom we are most grateful for the gift of a large number of Cairngorm Club and Alpine Club Journals and other mountaineering publications and maps.

S.M.

DR. JOHN H.F. CRAWFORD

Within weeks of his return from service in the Falklands as Ship's Surgeon on the R.F.A. 'Resource', the news of John's sudden death at the age of 63 came as a tremendous shock, all the more so as he was spending his leave buying a new car, planning his annual continental tour and various other trips, after which it was his intention to return to the R.F.A. for another tour of duty.

He joined the Club in 1935 and during his student days was a very active member and served on the committee from 1945-1949 and from 1966-1969. He attended Easter Meets and Annual Dinners whenever possible and his incredible memory made it possible for him to recite in chronological order the venue of every Easter Meet from the time he had joined the Club. It had been one of his ambitions to climb all the Munros but lack of time and latterly lack of stamina denied him this satisfaction.

His medical studies spanned the period from 1938 to 1951, interrupted by five years in the R.A.M.C. and the Enniskillen Fusiliers. He spent thirteen years in general practice in Invergowrie, retiring from there in 1964, after which he was in the fortunate position of being able to combine his medical knowledge with his thirst for world travel. He