

THE CAIRNGORM CLUB JOURNAL

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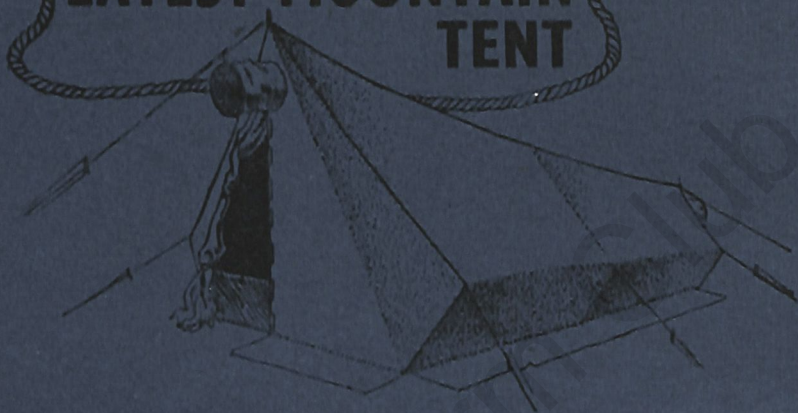
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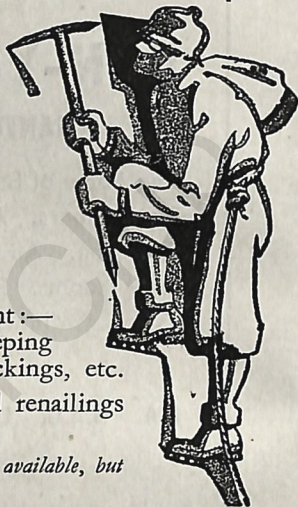
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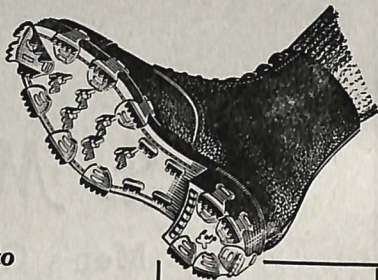
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No. 87.

THE WHITE MOUNTAINS OF NEW HAMPSHIRE.

W. MARTIN NICHOLS.

THE White Mountains of New Hampshire form the most elevated block of high ground in the northern half of the Appalachian Highlands. In Mount Washington they reach 6,293 feet and this height is only exceeded east of the Mississippi by a group of summits far to the south in the Great Smoky Mountains of North Carolina. Physiographically, the region consists of a highly dissected tableland of the type so well exemplified by our British hills, and shows a complicated radial system of drainage. Generally, the eastern half of the mountain tract, the whole of which measures roughly 35 miles by 35, is drained by the large rivers Androscoggin and Saco through Maine to the sea, while the western half drains either westward to the Connecticut and so to Long Island Sound or southward by the Pemigewasset into the Merrimac, whose mouth is not far north of Boston. These rivers and their tributaries divide the high ground into a number of blocks mainly trending north and south and provide a series of through routes of corresponding direction. The principal ones, all of which carry a high-road and the central one a railway as well, are the well-known passes of Franconia, Crawford, and Pinkham Notches; in all three the summit or height-of-land lies at about 2,000 feet. The most imposing mountains are those that compose the Presidential Range between the Pinkham and Crawford Notch roads, and here lie ten out of a dozen summits above 5,000 feet. The country lay full in the path of the great Pleistocene ice sheet and the heavy glaciation has so softened the contours of the land forms that only small areas of bare rock are exposed. The

steepest places lie everywhere in the "headwalls" where the glacial carries bite deepest into the rounded flanks of the otherwise rather featureless hills.

It might be thought that a mountain country of size, structure and elevation, thus sufficiently similar to our British Highlands, might bear a general scenic resemblance to what we are familiar with. This is far from the case, for one must remember that the area is not situated in the west coast climate of these islands but in a continental east coast climatic region and in the heart of the coniferous forest belt. The whole region, from valley floor to about 4,750 feet, is completely smothered by forest—spruce, balsam fir, and birch on the high slopes, and the same with an admixture of maple and aspen on the low ground. This is all second growth, for despite the steepness of the slopes, the valleys were logged in the latter half of last century for the valuable white pine and hemlock, and there is now hardly any virgin timber of any size. The woods give to climbing in the White Mountains a particular atmosphere, and most of the parties who make expeditions there seem to approach their task as a problem in woodcraft rather than mountaineering.

Route finding, where no trail has been cut, can be a very troublesome problem; in the hollows one plunges on among alder thickets and swampy patches; on the hillside it is often almost impossible to get a view. Fallen timber and dense young growth make for a snail's pace and drive the climber higher in the hope of seeing where he is going, and when a break in the trees gives the expected view, it is often only a tantalising vista of quite unrecognisable wooded spurs. The occasional avalanche tracks, here called slides, that scar the woods with scree and debris, are real blessings, for they offer rapid if rough lines of ascent and from them one can get an unobstructed view. Access in the woods has been immeasurably improved by the extensive cutting of trails so that, in the Presidential Range at least, every conceivable route has a properly marked and named path. This does not apply in the same way to some other less frequented areas and at the head of the east branch of the Pemigewasset

there is a wilderness 15 miles square where the enthusiast can lose himself to his heart's content.

I found the geographical nomenclature most absorbing. We are so accustomed to find our mountain vocabulary drawn from northern sources that it is a little strange to find words from the southern speech being used to describe hill features. A roaring burn, a thundering ghyll or beck, is here a brook or stream. A romantic lochan or tarn in a high corrie set with birches and sweet scented balsams is no more than a pond, and the corrie itself is a gulf or ravine. The open slopes above treeline are lawns, open treeless patches below that level are ledges and I have already mentioned the very expressive terms, headwall and height-of-land. The place names of northern New Hampshire fall into the same categories as are found elsewhere in North America. There are the names of Indian provenance that remind us that these hills were once the hunting grounds of the Abenakis and the Penobscots and that along their valleys passed many a war party in the old French wars. As always it is the rivers that bear the old names and the Indian names of hills are relatively few in number and recent in origin. The larger settlements tend to bear names of English places—Chatham, Conway, Woodstock, Gorham. In contrast with the beautiful Indian river names the peaks and passes are burdened with tasteless and unimaginative designations, the names of presidents and statesmen, local inhabitants and scouts, and we find an interminable string of Pine Mountains, Cedar Hills, Elk Brooks and Bear Mountains. This is not to say that there are not features with fine and mouth-filling names such as Nineteen Mile Brook, Swift Diamond River, Wild River and so forth.

These notes are based on a short trip that I paid to the region in May 1938. My wife and I alighted, at about 4 P.M., at the station of Gorham on the Androscoggin. Since crossing the Canadian border an hour or two before the train had traversed the wilderness known as the North Country. Here were low hills of bare rock, burned-over valleys with the whitened trunks rising from banks of black and grey ash, and big rivers with the trees crowding down to the

rocky banks. We knew there was a bus service that would drop us at Pinkham Notch Camp of the Appalachian Mountain Club a dozen miles away, but we didn't realise that there was only one bus a day and that we had missed it by five hours. The day was damp and the mist curled among the trees a few hundred feet above us. The river roared coldly on our right and twisted among great moraine heaps, the cars passed steadily, accelerating as we tentatively gave the sign of the road. By the time it was dark and had begun to rain heavily we had revised our ideas about American hospitality of the highway. The trudge was memorable, however, on zoological grounds, for we followed a half-seen blackish greyish animal at one point. We followed it excitedly, though a little timidly for I was sure it was a skunk, but it seemed to vanish. We cast cautiously about until I suddenly came face to face with the object in the fork of a small tree and found it to be a huge porcupine. I had never thought of them climbing trees—probably because a hedgehog doesn't.

Pinkham Notch Camp is a fine example of the larger mountain establishments of the Club. A couple of large log houses and some small cabins lie in a clearing at the summit of the pass. There are a number of hutmen, mostly Dartmouth College students, and food is supplied. I shall not forget the evening spent round the huge open fireplace for it was then that I made my only personal acquaintance with a cannibal, or rather with one who had once been a cannibal. (Although I have reason for believing his yarn implicitly, I have not yet met anyone else who will credit it. I therefore reluctantly refrain from telling this most interesting story.)

Low cloud next day forced a postponement of the ascent of Mount Washington and the substitution of the shorter traverse of Mount Wildcat (4,460 feet). The trail wound among the trees and only once or twice came out of the woods to cross open rocky slopes where there should have been—but were not—terrific views across at the great ravines on the eastern flank of the Presidential Range. The route led steeply upwards and we were glad to avail ourselves of the

magnificent hand-holds afforded by roots and tree trunks. After crossing half a dozen tops, all densely wooded, the path dropped very steeply to Carter Notch between our mountain and the higher Carter Dome which is crowned by an imposing fire-watching tower of steel. Carter Notch is a most exquisite place with two little ponds lying between tree-clad cliffs and a small log cabin at the waterside. After a meal we dropped down into the thick woods along Nineteen Mile Brook and I regret that here my woodcraft failed me and I became entangled in a maze of logging roads all entirely similar, all marked with indecipherable blazes on the trees and ending in clearings encumbered with piles of spruce slash, the cut branches after lumbering. My defence is that logging roads do not get on to maps and a hillside can soon relapse into wilderness if the trails are not regularly cut back. At dusk we got clear and followed the valley road back to the Camp.

Next morning was perfect and the foreshortened cone of Mount Washington, 4,300 feet above the camp, beckoned us early into the woods of Tuckerman Ravine. The woods became thinner and we began to get a view of the upper part of the ravine, the headwall which forms the most notable ski-ing ground in the East. Then we branched sharply to the right and took to a slide up the Lion Head, the north enclosing spur. A very steep pull took us to the crest at 4,800 feet and here, suddenly, we were at timberline. For several hundred feet above the trees there is a dense band of scrub, mostly dwarf spruce, about 3 to 5 feet high, and so impenetrable that, to force a way through, it would be both painful and extremely damaging to the clothes. There are now numerous trails cut through it to reach the open slopes of grass and rocks beyond. Above timberline the mountains rear great bare and rocky tops and, as the passes between them lie above treeline, it must be possible to walk for over 12 miles in the open. The summit cone is a huge heap of jumbled rocks crowned by an ugly group of buildings, including bare hotels, the terminus of a rack railway, shacks, and an observatory which records some of the most outrageous weather on our earth.

There is nothing very alpine about these hills in summer, but in winter the range is very formidable indeed. We in this country have no conception of the enormous masses of snow that drift into the ravines often covering the scrub completely and filling the woods so deep that it is quite impossible to thread them without skis or snow-shoes. The latter foot-gear seems to be more satisfactory in very rough forest. The upper slopes above the ravines become covered with sheets of hard wind-moulded snow and ice separated by broad gravel patches quite denuded of snow. The death rate of these hills in winter is very high; this is not surprising when we read that temperatures of twenty below zero with a 60 mile an hour wind are not uncommon.

Such weather was far from our thoughts as we pushed up the last few yards in blazing sunshine. Our objective was not far away, for the A.M.C. have an excellent hut at Lake of the Clouds only a short distance away and about 1,200 feet below the summit. It is just above treeline and commands magnificent views. Unfortunately, it had not belied its name and had been in the clouds for a week or two before our visit and the blankets were soaking wet. The sleeping accommodation consisted of a couple of bunk rooms with metal beds in three layers. In the morning we breakfasted on enormous piles of fried buckwheat cakes and maple syrup so that we were hardly mobile for some time after breakfast. The traverse of practically all the high peaks of the range came as a delight to a confirmed "Munro-bagger." The high route gave wonderful views into the forest-filled cirques on either side; the only distress was the absence of water on such a broiling day and, when we arrived at Madison Springs Huts on the Adams-Madison Col, Barbara was so exhausted that she fell fast asleep in the bunkhouse and had to be wakened after my return from Mount Madison by lashings of hot tea. Dark clouds building up in the west suggested that the fine weather spell was about to break, so we practically ran off the heights choosing a valley trail running north to the village of Randolph. The wild life of New Hampshire was represented by chipmunks, squirrels, and a group of white-tailed Virginia deer, and

we heard a wonderful demonstration of the warbling of the song-sparrow, a very different bird from his common relation.

A hitch-hike of 7 miles landed us at Dolly Copp public camping site where we had arranged to meet friends. It was pitch dark and we had some difficulty in finding the correct caravan in a field dotted with camp fires. The next night was a horror, hot and steamy, with a plague of the redoubtable blackflies. This insect sails with outstretched pinions through the meshes of mosquito screens and bites like the midges of Tobermory. No wonder our hosts rose at half-past three in pitch darkness to make breakfast, and led me to a swim in a cold dammed-up brook. That, I think, is overdoing it a little. By 8.30 we had struck camp and were bound for the Franconia region. I shall not relate our doings in those hills which are situated about 15 miles to the west. The hills are lower and only reach 5,000 feet in two peaks, but the ridges are narrower and somewhat rougher. Here is found the Great Stone Face of Hawthorne's story, and Franconia Notch is a fine pass with beautiful lakes and other tourist attractions including an aerial cableway up Cannon Mountain. While ascending in it I heard the attendant assure a questioner that there had never been any accidents, a statement that was not very impressive to me, for I knew it had been in operation only one week. A particular interest of the western White Mountains is the wilderness of the east branch of the Pemigewasset which was then completely closed to walkers on account of the fire hazard caused by many square miles of softwood slash. But we had no time to start fires for the holiday ended, somewhat hectically, with a rush back to our starting-point to board the Montreal train.



LAKE OF THE CLOUDS HUT.



R. L. Mitchell

THE TSCHIERVA HUT AND PIZ BERNINA

(This hut is endangered by erosion of the moraine and is to be rebuilt on a more secure site)

“ BE IT EVER SO HUMBLE.”

MALCOLM SMITH.

FANATICISM, salvationism, and all the other “isms” pertaining to mountains and mountaineering were the stock subjects at our mid-week meetings. Something was lacking if the conversation were not piloted into the old channels and the hoary topics once more hotly discussed. So it happened, one summer’s evening round a hostelry table, argument had waxed . . . and waned, when Winram, in an endeavour to warm things up again, mentioned the new issue of the S.M.C.J. As everyone had read it we immediately sailed in on this fresh tack and ordered another round.

In that issue, “Mountain Howffs,” an account of days and nights spent in caves and natural shelters, written by that doyen of troglodytes, Jock Nimlin, was considered the most interesting on account of its novel theme. We found ourselves in complete agreement with the writer that nights spent in a natural shelter were infinitely superior to those in windy, weighty, combustible tents. (With Winram as partner in an Arctic tent on a blizzardy night, combustibility is no small drawback!) Agreeing also that, in a mountain howff, one is in a more complete unity with the scene, we questioned why climbers in other airts should have their A’Chrois caves, Cobbler caves and Lost Valley howffs while we Cairngorms devotees did not enjoy this pleasure. True, we have the Shelter Stone, the cave on Devil’s Point, and the warren under Red Craig in Clova. But the first is a show place, visited by any Tom, Dick, and Fair-Weather Harry, and the second awkward of access, since the ascent and traverse over slabs is tricky, nay—exciting mountaineering. Furthermore, sleep is not to be casually wooed when one’s bed is inclined at the respectable angle of 25 degrees; and the monotonous drip from the roof would drive any sleepy-headed speleologist to the borders of insanity. Besides, the airy bed on Bod an Deamhain, if slept in for purposes other than enjoying the unusual, is not very convenient;

Corrour Bothy is much handier. The Red Craig caves, draughty, dirty, set in pastoral scenery at an elevation of 750 feet—nigh sea level—were dismissed as being of no interest to us.

Other caves there were in the Cairngorms, we felt sure, but their finders had been discreetly silent—an understandable discretion when the hovel that is the Shelter Stone is considered. When we went our respective ways that night it was after reaching the unanimous decision to find a howff of our own. We had become cave-conscious! In the succeeding weeks, therefore, though ostensibly on the normal ploys of the climber, we kept a weather eye for any unusually large boulder or hollow which might afford a place for bivouac. This resulted in an assorted bag: a two-man shelter on the Meikle Pap moraines, an unsatisfactory, open-sided cave on the talus slopes of Creag an Dubh Loch, and an open cave high up in Corrie Fee, which had the doubtful luxury of cold water laid on—across the middle of its floor! Two meritorious solo efforts may also be mentioned. Smith (E. L.), having given up a glorious day on the tops, spent some grimy hours plumbing the depths of Balnamoon's Cave near the headwaters of the North Esk. But this was in alien schistose country and his noble sacrifice was not appreciated. Dey had made a speculative entry into a cavern under the Stag Rocks of Coire Domhain, but, after worming his way through 25 feet of muck and moss, he called it a day. Further afield we went, even to Coire Garbhloch of Feshie, which beautiful corrie yielded but a shallow sentry-box, a cave in appearance only. These, with a slabby-roofed shelter near the imposing cliffs of Creagan a' Choire Etchachan, were the total for many a week-end's search. Could it be that Cairngorm granite does not readily afford material for "setting up howff?" Whatever the reason, we were getting nowhere very fast.

Then came a visit to Beinn a' Bhùird, our old friend and favourite mountain, dear to our hearts for its spaciousness and its approaches—through the Slugain and up the Quoich, names which immediately conjure up scenes of upland beauty; for its corries, honest-to-goodness snow

cirques magnificently corniced even on their mild-angled slopes and for its inaccessibility, for one must work before its environs are entered. Friday midnight saw us ensconced by the little stream of the Slugain as it issues from the Fairy Glen. A fine starlit sky and no wind to disturb the peace of this birch-begirdled hollow made us dispense with our tent. Lying on the short cropped grass, drinking the final mug of tea, we worked out exciting plans for the morrow. Agley, apley went the best laid schemes! On awakening, we found that a wind, bringing low clouds and a smirr of rain, had sidled insidiously out of the south-west. A hurried breakfast and off we set up the defile, past the remnants of the lamented Slugain bothy, out into the flats above the Quoich, to be greeted with the sight of a grey surge of mist engulfing the lower rim of Coire na Ciche. This decided our day. No greasy, lichened rocks to force a route on; for us the simple pleasures of pottering in and around Coire an Dubh Lochain and Coire nan Clach.

The way to the corries from Clach à Chlèirich, up the rising ground between the Allt Dearg and the Allt an Dubh Lochain, lay over a terrain which immediately brought to our minds the possibilities of its harbouring a howff. Large boulders were broadcast far and wide with heather and whortleberry clumps between, devilish ground to go over in darkness. With this new-kindled idea of howff-hunting in our minds, we ranged far that day. From the junction of the streams we climbed into Coire an Dubh Lochain, where the misty backcloth had dropped to hide familiar cliffs, past the Dividing Buttress into Coire nan Clach—the Stony Corrie. Here nature's forces have been hard at work; "glacier howkit" and weather worn, the cliffs round this fine amphitheatre have tumbled until but a frieze of rock remains on the north and north-west. On the west a big promontory divides the corrie into two bays, where the snow lies far into summer. Farther round, next to the headland separating the main corries, are three buttresses whose upperworks have decayed and now lie a mass of debris on the corrie floor. Piled together in all their stony confusion the boulders of this maze attracted our immediate

attention. With visions of finding the howff to end all howffs we launched a full scale search, squirming, squeezing, jumping our way through the debacle. The crazy pile did nothing to help us, though a small tunnel under the apex boulder gave good shelter when the wind, in one of its fiercer moments, lashed squalls of heavy rain across the corrie.

Our blood was up; we must find the cave, this grail of ours! In the next two or three hours we covered the whole corrie and scarcely a boulder lay unsearched, when suddenly, I saw what appeared to be the dark shadow of a crevice under a pyramidal block well over on my right. I shouted to Winram, intent on searching his own allotted area. He dashed across and together, with the bated breaths beloved of fiction writers, we advanced expectantly. It was it! Our spiritual home! Our Howff! In the damp, dark atmosphere of the mist-laden corrie I must admit it did not look a prepossessing place at first glance. On closer inspection it improved. A large block lay on a smaller slab forming one straight wall, and a semi-circle of rubble and small blocks provided the other walls and further support. Much work would be needed to make it windproof. The ceiling was flat, a quartz encrusted slab of pink unweathered granite standing about 5 feet off the floor. From the middle of the floor there rose a stony stalagmite, a veritable aiguille, fully 3 feet in height, 2 feet in width and 3 feet long at its base, weighing the devil knew how many pounds. Its removal would be difficult, too big to lever, it would have to be cut into pieces. We were elated, however, by our find, though a little disconcerted over the block. With a last look at the cave, we sped down the Quoich to our bivouac and food.

The tale of our discovery was unfolded to Tewnion that night when, surprisingly, he came up the glen alone. Over the final mug of tea and cigarette we waxed so enthusiastic over the cave that Tewnion, who had previously listened to our outpourings with but little interest, was won over. We decided to go up again next day so that he, the expert on stone, could view the "aiguille" and advise on its removal.

But fairer weather brought about a swift change of plan, subtly executed by Tewnion, ever ready to haul some dissenting companion to the Garbh Choire. We were still protesting vigorously when, at the Sneck, rain began to fall. Over the floor of the rough corrie we traversed, past the magnificent Square-face Buttress, past the Flume, a fine waterfall gully, to the foot of the Mitre Ridge. The initial groove on the original route was horribly wet and, after two or three attempts, Tewnion gave up. His excuses that his hands were numb, the rock too greasy, the day too cold, earned our ridicule.

It was not until the last week in May that we again visited the howff. Winram and I came up on the Saturday morning, light of step after a satisfying bivouac under the stars by the side of Slugain's stream. On a second viewing the cave did not seem to be the home from home over which we had previously enthused. The Dru, as we had dubbed the boulder rising from the floor, seemed to have increased in size and the openings under the roof slab were not minute. We set to work to effect a face-saver; it had to look its best for Tewnion and E. Smith who would arrive tired, and so, perhaps, a bit crusty about midnight. Boulders and moss were stuffed into cracks, and heather brought in to cover the floor until the den looked presentable; but that boulder, horrid excrescence, troubled us. What reactions would Tewnion and Smith display? Lights dancing down the Quoich heralded their approach, and our torch and shouted instructions piloted them to the cave. Winram and I, thrusting mugs of steaming tea into their hands, in the hope of kindling any spark of good humour still left in them, waited for the onslaught. It never came! Our fears need not have been. Tewnion surveyed the Dru with critical eye: "We'll drill a hole here, a hole there; put in a wedge this way and another that way," he said. But, like the proverbial plumber's mate, he had forgotten to pack the tools needed for Operation Dru. When we finally let him crawl into his sleeping bag to lick his wounds, we fitted ourselves into the odd angles formed by the boulder and settled for the night. The weather broke during the small

hours but the cave stood the test: our only problems were the entrance and the dreadful Dru.

The ensuing week-ends were spent on other mountains dear to our hearts, but we went up to the cave again on a fine night in August. With Petrie in place of Winram, we set to work on the Dru with a drill and a mason's 4 lb. hammer. We worked with a will, and noisily. Had any other climber been in the corrie that night he might have thought that the most horrible supernatural agencies were afoot: lights showing among the boulders; the musical sound of steel on steel; gales of laughter echoing from the crags. Ferla Mhor would have been a child's plaything that night on Beinn a' Bhùird! By three in the morning it was all over. Seven holes were drilled and four cuts made before the pieces could be rolled and levered to the entrance where they closed in and built up the entry, thus disposing of our last problem. Before turning in for the morning we went outside for a breath of fresh air. What an exquisite situation we were in! Below, in the valley mouth, mists were welling into the corries, creeping up, drifting back but never advancing: round us were the stern cliffs, forbidding in the light of a thin moon. When, eventually, we retired to our sleeping bags, the floor of the cave, laid bare of its heathery covering in places, in no wise hindered the well-won sleep of four tired trogs.

To celebrate the extraction of the pestiferous tooth we climbed two routes on the virgin rocks of Coire an Dubh Lochain next day: the week-end built up to a fitting climax in as fine a thunderstorm as any of us had seen in our climbing days. The heavens opened but we remained dry and dry we have remained on all subsequent visits. We have come to know the Ben in a more intimate way than would otherwise have been possible. The corries have much to show their devotees and I would recommend others to explore these fastnesses, for surely these walled recesses are the area's greatest asset.

We are devoted to our howff. It appears to be unique in its situation and is remarkably easy to get at, though some may doubt that a ten-mile stumble in darkness and

carrying a week-end Bergan to just over 3,000 feet could be called easy. It is ideal for sleeping four and there is water within 10 yards. It is rain-proof but not yet drift-proof, as we discovered one night of blizzard. Climbs of every degree of difficulty lie at its doorstep; we have even done one before breakfast. I may eulogise but I doubt if anyone will think as highly of it as the finders—it means so much more to them than just a hole under a big slab. It is a friendly gift from a friendly mountain.

GREEN MOUNTAIN.

OSWALD FARQUHAR.

ASCENSION Island in the South Atlantic is one of Britain's most isolated possessions, lying in mid-ocean about 750 miles north-west of St Helena, while the nearest points on the Brazilian and African coasts are respectively 1,150 and 910 miles away. Except for a few stacks, now separated from it by narrow sea channels, the island stands alone, almost triangular in outline, its 34 square miles culminating in Green Mountain's height of 2,817 feet. By comparison, the Isle of Man is 220 square miles in area, its tallest peak of Snaefell rising to 2,034 feet.

Ascension is of volcanic origin and the shapes of nearly thirty extinct craters can still be clearly seen, one surrounded by a broad rim being called the Devil's Riding School. Some are round and some oval, practically all with truncated summits sloping towards the south-east from which direction the trade wind blows. All the year round this trade wind provides a cool and refreshing breeze, and, though the island is only 8 degrees south of the Equator, the climate is remarkably pleasant. The temperature varies very little and is usually between 75 and 85 degrees round the coast.

The island is named from its discovery by a Portuguese explorer on Ascension Day 1501. Dampier's Springs are called after an Englishman who was wrecked there in 1701 but the island was uninhabited until 1815 when Napoleon arrived at St Helena. In this year the British Government garrisoned Ascension and it came under the rule of the Admiralty. Royal Marines built a fort and quarters at a point on the north-west coast, later known as Georgetown, which was used as a supply base for ships of the West African station.

At that time there was far more disease than now in those parts and fever-stricken men from these ships were sent to a sanatorium built on the side of Green Mountain. Ascension provided complete isolation and its extremely healthy position

made it ideal for recuperation. One ought to refer to the island during these years as "she" rather than "it" for as a shore station she was H.M.S. Ascension. But in 1922 the Admiralty ceased to be responsible for the island which then became a dependency of St Helena. Ascension's situation makes it an important cable link between the continents bordering the South Atlantic and for technical reasons it is also a good relay point for wireless transmissions between Britain and Canada.

There is no native population but usually there are about 150 people connected with Cable and Wireless (Holding) Ltd., living in Georgetown. This number includes thirty British officials with perhaps twenty wives and children, and 100 workers from St Helena. The tour of duty for the company's employees is normally only two years. This is largely because there are few recreations on the island though tennis courts and even a nine-hole golf course have been laid out amongst the lava rubble. Swimming is generally dangerous owing to the rolling surf but it is possible to bathe in Comfortless Cove and in Dead Man's Bay, however grim their names may sound. Communication with England, St Helena and South Africa is maintained by a monthly boat each way. In May 1947 the King and Queen, returning from South Africa in H.M.S. Vanguard, stopped about a mile off Ascension and the inhabitants came out in motor-boats from Georgetown harbour to greet the Royal Family. Ascension is a member of the Postal Union and, like many other British Colonies, has a fine set of postage stamps. Yet, with so few people to use them, they are seldom seen except in collectors' albums.

In the recent war the island served as a refuelling base on the long stretch from Brazil to West Africa for comparatively short range aircraft flying from the United States through to the eastern theatres of war. But for Ascension these aircraft and their crews would have had to be transported by sea on the devious voyage round South Africa at a time when the Mediterranean was closed to the allies. This little island, however, divided the South Atlantic into two air hops of reasonable length and within the fuel capacity of

the medium bomber fitted with additional tanks. New machines were flown from the North American factories to the Middle East in ten days and to India in a fortnight. The R.A.F. employed special ferrying crews whereas the U.S.A.A.F. planes, which greatly outnumbered them, were in most cases delivered by combat crews going out to form new squadrons. At the busiest period more than 100 of these transient aircraft were making an overnight stop at Ascension.

As in several other strategic British islands in the western hemisphere the airfield was built by U.S. Army Engineers. American officers arrived in two warships on Christmas Day 1941 to make a reconnaissance and in March 1942 a task force 1,500 strong reached the island with nearly 100 heavy vehicles, including several bulldozers which had to be put ashore by raft. Three months later the first aircraft were using Ascension. The problems of construction were entirely different from those encountered in Great Britain. The choice of a suitable area was severely limited by the rugged terrain of crater hills separated by dry watercourses, the whole surface being formed of volcanic cinders. For an airfield of similar size in the flat Vale of York or in Lincolnshire it would merely have been necessary to remove some fences and fill in a few ditches. On the other hand, in Ascension the volcanic ash itself, so readily available, provided an excellent foundation for the airfield and, owing to the prevailing wind, only one main runway was needed. Part of this coincided with "Wideawake Fair" in the south of the island, a small plain which was the breeding ground of thousands of Wideawakes or Sooty Terns (*Sterna fuliginosa*). They were soon persuaded to nest elsewhere in case they endangered aircraft by fouling their propellers, but their name is perpetuated in "Wideawake Field."

Another great advantage was the negligible rainfall, presenting no major difficulties in drainage during the layout of "Wideawake Field." In two years on and off the island with the R.A.F. Transport Command, I never knew heavy rain there, but it appears that every seven or eight years Ascension is subjected to a cloudburst, after which

grass springs up in gullies which have remained dry for many seasons. If this was Scotland one might expect to meet some older members of the rural community who were more than willing to reveal any significant meteorological events which had occurred during their youth. But, Ascension having no indigenous population and the written record being incomplete, the frequency of these cloudbursts must remain a matter of local tradition and speculation rather than of personal observation. Even so, the presence on the lower levels of the tableland of steep ravines which end in small bays may well support the idea of periodic deluges. Since rain so rarely falls except on Green Mountain, which appears to attract the occasional clouds downwards to its summit, the greatest need of the island is water supply. Just sufficient for the cable and wireless personnel and for the small garrison in Georgetown is obtained from large catchments on Green Mountain. Also near the top of Green Mountain is the only area under cultivation on the whole island and this amounts to little over ten acres. Here, there are a few springs for the farm which is the sole source of fresh vegetables and meat for the people of Georgetown. Under a British manager, half a dozen natives of St Helena work the farm which includes pigs, sheep and cattle.

Though Green Mountain is thus the main factor in human existence on Ascension by producing most of the food and water, various types of seafood are also caught, chiefly tuna, sailfish, amberjacks, squids and crabs. Schools of dolphin are often seen leaping out of the sea across the bows of the fishing vessels, but they are better to watch than to eat. Besides the shore-crabs there are land-crabs too which swarm all over this parched island and it seems strange to see them with their sidelong gait walking at ease high up the slopes of the mountain. Sea turtles come up the beaches at night, between January and May, to lay their eggs which resemble ping-pong balls. The turtles are caught and kept in ponds until, with the departure of the next ship, they begin their journey to a London market. Occasionally they are hatched in captivity and one of these, named Punch, was presented to the Regent's Park Zoo in 1945 by Mr and

Mrs Corns of the Cable and Wireless Company. Now and again, as the only exportable commodity besides turtles, small deposits of phosphates have been worked. These represent the residues accumulated from centuries of bird colonisation, organic matter leached and hardened by the tropical sun. Below Green Mountain there is nothing to hide the bare outcrop of the rock except a few castor oil plants (*Ricinus communis*) and prickly pears (*Opuntia vulgaris*) which are thinly scattered down to about 2,000 feet. The Americans solved the water shortage by bringing their own equipment for the distillation of sea water. In course of time they also started to grow fresh vegetables. These were planted, not in proper soil, for there was no spare productive ground, but in troughs of the volcanic ash irrigated by water containing the minerals required for their successful growth.

Almost complete freedom from rainclouds gives Ascension splendid visibility, always a vital consideration in operating air transport across the South Atlantic. With Ascension Island as destination an aircraft's route sheet can list no alternative, Wideawake Field being the only possible land-fall after the "point of no return" has been passed. Nor did the patrol squadrons often miss a flight by reason of the weather at their island "carrier." Mr (afterwards Sir) David Gill also chose the clear skies of Ascension in 1877 for his determinations of solar parallax, measuring the distance of the planets from neighbouring stars.

Other naturalists have visited the island from time to time, the best known being Charles Darwin. He reached the island in July 1836 on board the research ship *Beagle*. Between them the *Beagle* and another ship, the *Adventure*, spent eleven years cruising in the waters round South America, anchoring in numerous bays and inlets for the scientists to conduct their explorations. After the *Beagle* sighted Ascension, Darwin recorded in his memoirs his first unfavourable impression: "The day was clear and hot and I saw the island, not smiling with beauty, but staring with naked hideousness." He only spent five days ashore on this occasion but returned in H.M.S. *Challenger* forty

years later for a closer examination. From Darwin's investigations into the volcanic rocks of Ascension came an account which has long taken its place as one of the classic descriptions in the study of igneous phenomena. When he knew the island better, Darwin became less critical of its shortcomings. But he was never there long enough to appreciate the tremendous sense of relaxation given by the wooded uplands of Green Mountain to those who spend their days on the desert land over which it towers. In temperate countries we are accustomed to look down from the bare and craggy hills on to the green woods and valleys, but in Ascension the position is reversed and from the desolate wastes below we can only gaze upwards to the dominating form of—Green Mountain.

ENCOUNTER ON BEN A'AN.

ROBERT BAIN.

THE sun was shining brightly as we set off for Ben A'an—too brightly, said our pessimist, who gloomily forecast weather changes. There is nothing quite so fresh as the countryside early on a May morning and Donside was at its freshest that day. The river sparkled in the sun, whins and brooms splashed the prevailing greens with a blaze of gold and yellow, while the geans in full flower lent an air of delicacy to the picture. It is early in the morning, too, that the cock pheasant, in full plumage, looks his finest and seems most careless of the human presence.

We were wise to gather enjoyment while we could, for, as often before, our pessimist was right. Clouds gathered, there was a threat even of rain and, by the time we were within striking distance of our mountain, the mist was down to 2,500 feet and the outlook pretty grey. The climber, however, accepts that there is adventure wherever one cares to seek it, no matter how dismal the prospects may be, and he is truly unfortunate who finds nothing of interest during a day on the hills. It was therefore with hopeful optimism that we set off along the river-side for our objective, the central ridge on the eastern flank of Ben A'an.

An eagle soared above a rocky ridge on our left, dropped and landed on a summit rock, no doubt to take stock of the situation. Some twenty minutes later it glided low, just over our heads, following the contour of the valley below, where it appeared to land. It was trying to bluff us, however, for it had merely entered a rather deeply cut little ravine, gouged out by a burn flowing from one of the main corries. Moments later it was seen, a mile and a half to the west, rising out of the corrie into the clouds above. Soon we had left the peaty hollow at the base of the corrie and were moving up our ridge, heathery at first, but later mostly rock. It was about here that we first came on patches of the moss campion growing among the coarse, gravelly

remnants of decayed granite. Although it was the end of May the pink flower buds were not yet opened, but even then patches were little jewels in a grey world.

We were now up into the mist and soon came on snow, freshly-fallen, soft, wet snow about 6 in. deep, with the usual deeper pockets. Lead seemed added to our boots as we plodded on to the top of the ridge. The summit of Ben A'an is extensive, with several large granite tors scattered round the rim. Our intention was to make for the highest of these and then return by another ridge. Visibility was about 30 to 40 yards, snow melted indefinitely into mist and we were left to map and compass for guidance. It was the sort of situation that brings to mind the story of the ship's waiter who, having dropped a silver teapot overboard in mid-Atlantic, inquired of the chief steward whether a thing could be lost if you knew where it was. It was heavy work groping our way in the wet snow down to a more sheltered hollow.

We had found a useful spot and were seated when, suddenly, out of the mist 25 to 30 yards away, appeared two deer, a hind and a yearling. There was perhaps nothing very extraordinary in that, but what was extraordinary was that they were being driven by a pair of golden eagles. The eagles were flying, one on either side of the deer, a foot or two to the side, a foot or so higher and a little behind their heads. Our presence upset things a bit, for the eagles rose a few feet, the deer seized the chance and broke for the safety of the mist. It seemed as if the birds were not quite sure what we were, sitting there in the heather, for they circled us two or three times at a height of 10 to 12 feet, moved off into the mist and then came back to have another look.

So much is fact. What they were trying to do is only conjecture. Five minutes later there came a momentary thinning of the mist and it became possible to see that we were on the rim of a grassy corrie but that some little distance away there was clearly a steeper and rockier face. There is no doubt that, if the deer had kept on their original course, they would have arrived in a few moments at the steep part.

Were they being driven deliberately to this one area or was the intention merely to harry them into a state of exhaustion and collapse, with the chance of driving them over any cliff? If the first suggestion is considered a possibility, then the assumption is that the eagles, despite the mist, knew where they were going. It is true that they were following the edge of the valley and may have been getting assistance from air currents, but it would still have been a pretty good piece of direction finding, for the deer, in all probability, had been picked up in the main valley 1,500 feet below, and the last 1,000 feet of climb had been in mist.

It is perhaps not surprising that, after the thrill of such an encounter, we forgot our discomfort and returned to lower levels, feeling rather superior to those of our friends who earlier in the day had confidently asserted "there is no future in visiting the tops to-day."

THE RECONSTRUCTION OF CORROUR BOTHY.

G. A. TAYLOR.

I FIRST visited Corrour Bothy, now the most widely known of all Scottish mountain shelters, in 1929. The building was then fifty-two years old, having served its legitimate purpose of a deer-watcher's bothy for about two-thirds of its existence and acted as an unofficial climbing hut for the remainder. I have no very clear general recollection of the bothy on that occasion though I do recall vividly, amongst some other fitments, a prodigious rough timber armchair in which my companion and I were able to sit side by side. I observed also a good deal of internal timber work, a partition, ceiling, etc. Though I never experienced the pleasure of a night's sojourn in the bothy I paid several visits in the intervening years and noted with dismay the increasing and final destruction of its interior by an irresponsible minority. Concurrently the severe climatic conditions of the Lairig Ghru began to take toll of the exterior: in recent years it was obvious that the roof would not survive many more winters and, if it collapsed, rapid disintegration of the already weakened walls would follow. From time to time climbers who appreciated the bothy's location and robust construction, so unique and suitable for a climbing hut in the vast expanse of the Cairngorms, had suggested repairs but, for various reasons, no action could be taken. Eventually and rather suddenly in May 1949 our Past President, Col. E. Birnie Reid, to whose energy and initiative our Club owes so much, was able to secure the active co-operation of the Estate in our proposal for reconstruction of the building, the understanding being that it would remain the property of the Estate, but would



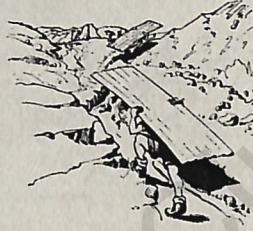
be left as an open shelter. The decision to proceed was quickly and enthusiastically ratified by our members, and a sub-committee, with W. A. Ewen as convener, had several meetings to thrash out details. Though the decision was to some extent dictated by necessity, we resolved to carry out the work entirely by voluntary labour, no inconsiderable undertaking when it is remembered that much building was involved over and above the difficulties of getting so much material to so remote a spot, keeping workers supplied with food and other necessities for over a fortnight and getting together at one time the necessary numbers. Our members, too, are mainly professional and business people and students with no first hand practical knowledge of building trades and many of them had already devoted a good deal of their spare time to the alteration and equipping of Muir of Inverey.

Obviously the first step was to raise money, the minimum amount required being estimated at £100. An appeal was published in several of the daily papers and notices were sent to all Club members. The necessary sum was quickly oversubscribed and the fund had to be closed. In many cases the subscriptions were accompanied by letters expressing feelings of regard for and touching recollections of the Bothy, and great appreciation of the initiative of our Club.

While all the talking was being done and preliminary arrangements discussed, I busied myself in quietly amassing and dumping in a multiplicity of peculiar places the heterogeneous mass of materials required, aluminium sheets, timber of various shapes and sizes and in alarming quantity (from a transportation viewpoint), door, window, fireplace, chimney can, cement, lime, steel bars, rolls of felt, etc., and smaller stuff, though the porters may not have thought so, such as tools of all types, bolts, washers, nails, screws, door fittings, camping and cooking gear, etc. Considerable care and forethought were required here as it would have been quite devastating to find oneself at Corroul without



some essential item of equipment, probably difficult to obtain even in town. Only one item was omitted—several hundreds of felt washers. I still have amusing recollections of these being improvised on the spot with the aid of a belt punch, hammer and a pair of tin-snips. I detailed my companions to hammer and cut them out from a roll of felt as a recreation after the day's work was done and supper disposed of. It was rather comforting to lie on one's camp-bed and listen to the methodical and rapid thud of the hammer from the other tent or watch a second victim deftly and impassively snip out the little discs. If I remember correctly, Drs Thomson and Stewart alleged, quite seriously, that they found it rather a fascinating pastime, but they refused to go much beyond the century at one session.



First moves in the site work took place on June 30, 1950 when I went up to Derry Lodge with all the material from Aberdeen, transport and some important fittings having been kindly provided by Mr W. J. Anderson, Contractor. On the same day Brooker, Crawford, Lyall and McConnach arrived to carry material from Derry. They were ably assisted by members of the Lairig Club in camp at the Lodge and before work started at Corrour much of the timber, all the aluminium sheeting, tools, and smaller materials had been carried there. Many amusing entries in the Visitors' Book testify to the gallant work done. Some of the loads, such as the door, being heavy and indivisible, must have been a real heart-break. Paradoxically, lightness was the trouble with the large aluminium sheets. A strong wind threatened either levitation or decapitation but fortunately the weather was fairly calm for portorage. We did have a very little trouble with the sheets at the bothy; in fact one completely disappeared, probably blown away. It is noteworthy that a large quantity of material was transported by Hutcheon in his jeep from Luibeg Cottage to Luibeg Bridge. When we built the bridge we considered that a

jeep could not be relied on to take a load up and we used manpower only, but Hutcheon did about five trips in one day with three men in the jeep and up to 5 cwts. of material. This help was invaluable since it reduced the total carry from 5 to $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles.



I should also mention here that many suggestions had been made for easing the labour of transportation, such as the use of a caterpillar tractor or helicopter,

but all had been flatly turned down on the score of likely trouble or expense or both. Just before we commenced, petrol rationing was most opportunely brought to an end and with this news an art student, Jolly, suddenly appeared announcing that he owned a Bren Gun Carrier with which he was prepared to try to reach Corroul. With some misgivings, I decided to let him tackle it and diverted the most awkward and least destructible part of our load, 10 cwts. of cement in twenty drums, five rolls of roofing felt, and some other materials to Muir of Inverey. On Sunday, July 2, Jolly, Lawrie, and Douglas loaded the carrier and set sail (I use the verb intentionally after seeing it in action) for White Bridge, the idea being to abandon the paths and proceed over Sgòr Mòr. All went well on the hills for about a mile, when the carrier dropped into a peaty hole and over four hours were spent in unloading and digging it out. I did not see the rest of the performance but the vehicle proceeded at a speed of a mile per day until the effort had to be abandoned and the material dumped beside the Loch of the Greenshanks about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Corroul. It was a very plucky attempt which, in my view, should not be repeated unless under ideal weather and ground conditions (which we had) and unless more than one vehicle were available, one to help the other when necessary.

The main body of workers arrived on July 7 and 8, Thomson, Stewart, McAndrew, McKenzie and I going directly to the Bothy and all others occupying the base camp, quite a village of tents, near Luibeg. I am quite sure that

the relatively exotic, colourful and luxurious life at this camp could in itself justify an article but, having seen none of it, I must remain silent. My lot was to lead a monastic existence in the apparently incessant rain of the Lairig, roaring for more and more people to carry sand and cement and sending insistent notes for ever greater, more varied, and more frequent supplies of food. I do regret, however, not having seen the Presidential Austin returning from Braemar with its owner and Nancy Arthur, our able camp warden, food executive, base camp cook, etc., and with both or all three submerged under a bale of hay for the ponies, great stacks of loaves, piles of groceries, often some ironmongery, and a bag of cement, bacon, sausages, and a whacking dollop of mince. The two last were so high, not only in altitude, by the time they arrived at Corrour, that instant incineration was the only solution. Our poor ponies were a sore trial at the base camp. I believe that, on the first day, nobody knew how to saddle them but the difficulty was overcome with the aid of our old friend, Bob Scott, who was so helpful in innumerable ways. Towards the end of the job it was alleged that both pony and load had to be man-handled to the Bothy. In the desperate search for experienced horsemen someone discovered that Keith had been in an Army battalion where mules were used, and though that unfortunate individual had probably never been within miles of a mule, he was instantly promoted O.C. Pony Transport. However, the animals were quite indispensable in carrying drums of cement, etc.

Meanwhile work on the site had been steadily proceeding except when it was held up by more than ordinarily torrential rain. First Thomson and Stewart laid about them with great abandon, with axes, hammers and crow-bar, and tore off the old roof, everyone else standing clear as rafters and rotten planks, plentifully studded with ancient and rusty nails, hurtled radially in all directions. When the roof was off and we could



better examine the shocking condition of the walls, so loose that one hardly dared to stand on them, we felt rather despondent, particularly as it was a foul day.



The Bothy seemed such a ghastly ruin that we looked at each other and someone remarked, "Well, chaps, we're not going to be very popular if we leave it like this, and it looks as though we may have to." However, our spirits

revived in the morning and we decided that, in the prevailing weather conditions, there would be no future unless we could get at least part of the roof on so that we could store cement and lime, which were continually arriving, and proceed with interior work during bad spells. We were now reinforced by H. Robertson, who walked from Coylum Bridge in a downpour, stayed a few days, proved a most adaptable and ardent worker, and returned by the same means in a similar downpour. We cast concrete bearing-blocks on the wall-heads below the roof truss positions, erected and levelled the trusses, fixed purlins and sarking, all previously creosoted, nailed on felt and spiked on aluminium sheeting, completing the south gable which was in better condition and leaving a gap at the north gable and chimney head for further attention when John Tewnton and Bob Still should arrive the following week. Three of our party, Thomson, Stewart and McKenzie, would then have completed their very considerable share and would take their departure. After a rather thin time for the first two days our commissariat was now functioning efficiently and food arrived every day together with workers to help in hauling materials across the Dee and up to the Bothy and to riddle and carry sand from the river, a cold, wet, and back-breaking job. Over 3 tons of sand had thus to be dealt with. I must not forget to mention the generous gesture of members of the Moray Mountaineering Club. They made the long journey from Elgin by bus, giving us a day's work hauling all the remaining planks from Luibeg Bridge and carrying sand from the river. Indoor work now forged ahead. We dismantled the remains

of the old fireplace, incidentally uncovering the haunt of the famous mouse, the existence of which I credited only when I actually saw the animal. By a sort of poetic justice, it subsequently invaded our tent nocturnally and helped itself to most varieties of our food. A new fireplace was concreted up, wall-heads built up, reinforced concrete lintels cast over door and window, bench shuttered and concreted, window fitted, door posts and door (timber obtained from the old Palace Hotel) fitted by Duguid, door step concreted, and many other incidental repairs carried out. I also had the idea of spiking to the roof ties fluted aluminium sheets to form an internal ceiling. The primary purpose was to make less obvious the existence of the timber roof trusses, though it is hard to credit that even the most irresponsible would touch these, but it was found to provide rather an attractive modern counterpart of an old timbered ceiling and at the same time to reflect a great deal of light, a commodity in which the Bothy was sadly deficient. This was further helped by giving the interior two coats of "Snowcem" applied by a stirrup pump previously used at Muir to spray creosote. As the gland was leaking horribly McAndrew and I finished up as white as the walls. By this time our personnel had changed, the party now being, McAndrew, Tewnion, Still and myself. Tewnion and Still immediately got down to the masonry and pointing work which kept them extremely busy for the complete week. The north gable was built up, roof completed, chimney-head built and can fixed, all walls internally and externally ripped out and pointed and a massive buttress built against the north gable in an attempt to prevent further outward movement. Work seemed to proceed progressively later and later into the night with only a break for tea during the day, and, with the arrival of Tewnion and Still, we had the ritual of preparing by candle-light a colossal meal at 11 P.M. or later. It was a strange and amusing experience to sit back and watch these two performing mystic rites and mixing strong and always voluminous brews in the dim light of a guttering candle surrounded by numerous primus stoves, pans and unfamiliar food tins, the while bellowing out

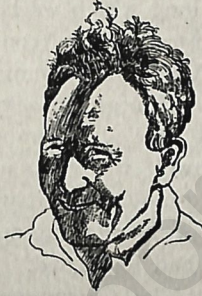
camp songs plentifully punctuated by irrelevant and often slightly irreverent interjections. All the work which we had undertaken to carry out was completed, with one exception, on Saturday, July 22. We did not clear the rubbish dump: some of my companions protested that it would be almost sacrilege to remove the heap of tins, one of the famous features of the Cairngorms. After a fortnight's stay I was only too pleased to defer it. On our last night, McAndrew and I were the first sleepers in the reconstructed Bothy. This was a necessity since an unmentionable individual allowed a primus stove to flare up and burn out a section of our bell-tent, thereby adding one more but very appreciable leak to the many which had tormented us by day and night. As the individual had given us grand service for a fortnight we cannot afford to reproach him overmuch.

May I conclude by expressing thanks, both personally and on behalf of our Club, to Mr J. G. Munro, Commissioner of the Fife Estates, for all the facilities put at our disposal, to all the helpers whose names are listed and to several whose names are unknown. They got no reward and expected none but I am sure they will always have pleasant and proud memories of work well done on behalf of the wider fraternity of climbers and hill walkers. Let us hope that the many, who will avail themselves of the Bothy's shelter, may be imbued with the same constructive spirit.

Contributors to the building fund included the following Mountaineering Clubs: Barnsley, Etchachan, Grampian, J.M.C.S. (London and Glasgow), Karabiner, Lairig (Aberdeen University), L.S.C.C., Midland Association of Mountaineers, Moray, Polaris (Derby), Rucksack, Scottish Ski Club, Sheffield University, S.M.C., St Andrews University, the Wayfarers' Association, the Scottish Ramblers Federation (Photographic Section, Glasgow); the 1st Carnoustie Rovers and the 15th Stirlingshire (Grangemouth) Boy Scouts. Two hundred and thirty-nine individual contributions were made. Of these, 106 came from our own members and, of the remainder, 88 from Scotland and 44 from England. One donation was sent from Elizabeth, N.J., U.S.A.

Donors of materials included: the Fife Estates (Mr J. G. Munro, Commissioner) and Messrs W. J. Anderson, T. W. Brown, M. H. Gray, W. Malcolm and G. A. Roberts. The list of workers which follows

does not include the names of those mentioned in the article: Misses Arthur, Clark, Ferguson, Lawrence, Levack and Newbigging; Messrs Bain, Bisset, W. Brooker, Cameron, Duff, Duguid, Hogg, Holden, G. Mathieson, A. McGregor, G. McKenzie, Shaw, E. Smith and A. Tewnion; members of the Lairig Club and some six or eight others whose names are not known.



MOUNTAIN VIEWPOINT.

A. M. THOMSON.

WE descended a few feet down the lip of the corrie to get out of a howling sou'-wester on the summit of Glas Thulaichean. Our limbs relaxed, we ate sandwiches and enjoyed the Autumn sunshine. Across the wide glen was the ridge from the Cairnwell along which we had tramped. Beyond, we could see the high tops—Ben Avon with its warts, Beinn a' Bhùird and Ben Macdhui. I remembered a Wagnerian thunderstorm on the first, a glorious spring day on the snow of the second, and the year's first sunburn on the third. But the ridge from Cairnwell was long and featureless, and I wondered if our journey along it would remain in my memory. Probably not, for nothing outstandingly dramatic, beautiful, or painful had happened.

I said casually, "The Cairngorms are pretty dull in summer. Nothing like as interesting as the West Highlands." Betty, smelling heresy, said *she* thought they were all right; jolly good, in fact. "Justify yourself," I retorted. "Look at the view. These hills have as much shapeliness as a plate of Bath buns. They are as colourful as a plain woman who doesn't believe in make-up. There is very little to recommend them except their quantity. People walk miles and miles in order to stand on "Munros" with about as much Alpine atmosphere as a deserted football field. To get there, all they need is sheer brute endurance, coupled with a certain agility in negotiating peat hags. On a fine day they usually have a squadron of flies for company. A dirty day comes as a relief, for the distance of the objective is no longer a visible reminder of toil to come; and the skill needed to keep dry and to maintain direction relieves the general monotony. The imaginative mountaineer, with little better to occupy his mind, keeps in front of him a vision of tea, which, like the donkey's carrot, keeps him going until he feels he can decently return to base. Just *look* at the view. As I gaze around me, ladies

and gentlemen, I am constantly reminded of practically nothing."

Bob finished his sandwich in silence and then said that there was always rock-climbing. "Rock-climbing, forsooth! Almost every corrie faces east or north, so the average climber has no sun to comfort him. He needs comfort, for his route is almost sure to involve him freely in slime, mud and wetness. I admit he needs skill, for Cairngorm granite is not famed for its wealth of holds—unless you include vegetable holds. Rock climbing in the Cairngorms is the last resort of desperate climbers who can't get at anything better."

"Anyway, I *like* the Cairngorms," said Betty. "And you must admit the snow climbing is as good as anything in Britain." "Yes, I'll admit that," I replied, "when you can get at the good snow and ice without wearing yourself out by immense approach marches. But the second best can be matched easily and much more accessibly in dozens of places on the West Coast." "You're biased," said Bob. "The Cairngorms have their own special character, and plenty of people get all the enjoyment they want on them."—We moved off downwards. "The Cairngorm Club," I said firmly, thinking of the six miles to Glenshee, "consists of people who must keep fit somehow and are prepared to go to desperate lengths to avoid organised games."

* * * *

At tea, I was amused to hear a discussion on the Winter Meet. "That's the worst of the Cairngorms," someone said, "Braemar is the only place easily reached from Aberdeen and reasonably near the hills."

I was rather late in booking for the next outing and feared the worst, but the Meets Secretary thought that there would be room in the bus. "Thank goodness," I said, and hung up the phone.

WIN FOR THE MOUNTAIN.

W. D. BROOKER.

ON March 17, 1950, I found myself toiling up the relentless flank of Lochnagar and feeling very much like an overloaded pack-horse. My sole consolation was that Douglas Sutherland and John Morgan, the instigators of the scheme, seemed to be in similar case. That night our camp threatened to be torn from its moorings in the mouth of the corrie and hurled back into the Dee valley. Sleep was almost impossible and it was not until after 9 o'clock the following morning that we ventured to emerge from our sleeping bags.

On the way to the cliffs we discussed what to attempt. The discussion was a mere formality as all our hearts were set on a winter ascent of Polyphemus Gully, and indeed, after our sufferings nothing less would satisfy. Conditions were not good, as the storm of the previous night had swamped the cliffs in powder snow. Stonefalls were unlikely but we were prepared for small avalanches. Steep snow slopes swept up into Shadow Couloir. From the rear of the Couloir sprang the great 100 feet pitch which seemed to be the most serious obstacle in the gully. It was really a wall in which the gully had carved a shallow gutter.

We roped up and I climbed a snow-choked funnel to a recess below an overhang where I belayed Sutherland on the first ice pitch. The left wall of the gully was thickly veiled in snow, fashioned into vertical flutings by the wind. Sutherland swung his axe and raked away the snow curtain revealing solid grey ice inviting attack. The ice was dull and lustreless except where a green-shining whorl, like a bubble in bottle glass, caught the eye. He carved steadily up the wall to a promontory, 15 feet above my head. A shelf, buried deep in soft snow, led up to a shallow cave in the bed of the gully. To reach the cave took an hour as the powder had to be cleared to a depth of 2 or 3 feet before steps could be cut in the hard surface beneath.

I joined Sutherland and surveyed the fearsome looking

second pitch. Above the cave, an overhanging gutter curved left. The 50 foot left wall was very steep and hung in bulging folds of ice buried beneath wind-packed snow. Quite unconcerned, Morgan was sitting at the foot of the gully, playing a mouth-organ with the philosophy of the winter gully-climber. Close to the cave a rib of ice, distorted by bulges and cavities, had been formed by the dripping of an overhang at the top of the wall. I chose this rib and very slowly began to cut my way upwards. The ice was tough and wet and all the time I was a target for the stream of drips from the overhang. The first 20 feet occupied an hour and then I made swifter progress after the welcome appearance of a solid flake of névé on the right. Using this as a handhold I made contact with the overhang sooner than I expected. The overhang presented a knotty problem until I saw that the top of the rib had formed a stalagmite with a delicate crowning spire of new snow. I swept aside the decoration and cut across a bulge to the lip of the wall. A moment later and I moved on to the easy snow of the gully bed. Twenty feet up, in a corner below a vertical wall I drove my axe in to the head and summoned Sutherland.

He could hardly move his limbs after his long sojourn in the cave, but to a zealous climber such a thing is no deterrent and ere long he was at my side and playing Morgan up the pitch. A glance at my watch brought the rather alarming knowledge that we had been on the climb for four hours. The gully here twisted left and Morgan disappeared round the corner at a great rate. Soon, however, the rope slowed and then crept out inch by inch and an hour had fled past before Sutherland moved off. I followed and rounded the bend to come face to face with a sharp bulge formed by a mixture of ice and treacherous snow. Under the lee of the right wall the angle relented slightly and here our leader had hacked a ladder of steps. Some distance above, I found the others belayed to their axes, at the foot of a long stretch of hard snow.

For 200 feet we made good progress up névé with a slash of the axe and a hearty kick sufficient for a good step. Above us the gully seemed to meander round a corner and finish

easily in a snow-filled amphitheatre. Before the bend was a steep chute of soft snow which gave Sutherland an hour's hard work. Morgan joined him at a precarious snowy stance beneath a partially iced overhang. There they both stood and exclaimed and their demeanour made it clear that something special was barring the way. The gully, instead of curving in an easy snow-slope, swung hard left in a right-angle groove, almost bare of snow and ice and fully 50 feet long. Morgan investigated but the groove held naught but thin wet snow. Once past the overhang above the stance, an easy snow-gully appeared to lead to the amphitheatre. Accordingly, Morgan applied himself to the overhang but without success.

I offered to try the left wall but the simple-looking route, which I could see from my position, 60 feet below, was invisible to my companions and they vetoed the proposal. We later found that the summer route did in fact take the left wall and we were attempting an unclimbed section of the gully. I next moved up to proffer assistance. Mounting the top of a massive spike of rather doubtful snow which thrust up beneath the overhang. I drove in a piton as a belay to safeguard the party while I offered my body as a step-ladder. First came Morgan but after a prolonged attempt he confessed his arms were unable to make the pull which would afford him a footing. Sutherland, made a similar attempt, but he, too, failed, and confessed that he lacked the confidence to trust all his weight to a fragile ringhold of ice. Personally, I was glad that I was not called upon to make an attempt, for the overhang was exposed and the strain of seven hours climbing was beginning to tell, especially as we were very wet. With more snow in the gully we thought that either the overhang or the groove should "go."

Zero hour, 5.30 P.M., had now arrived and we had to start the retreat. Morgan led and I belayed the others down from my piton before following. The next 200 feet of snow went smoothly, one man moving at a time. The others advised me to abseil the treacherous pitch at the curve in the gully, as some holds had broken away. Accepting this

welcome advice I began to search diligently for a belay or, failing that, for a suitable crack for a piton. By now, however, the night was upon us and, in spite of my diligence, I had little success. In answer to my demands, a torch was sent up from the depths and with its aid the piton was inserted and both our 100 foot ropes tied together and safely threaded. All this was not accomplished until considerable time and energy had been expended in unravelling the complicated network which every climbing rope forms in like circumstances. I descended the pitch, using the rope as a steadying hand-rail, and was soon reunited with my companions.

In spite of a steady supply of wet sleet from the sky, the morale of the party was very high (although Morgan's mouth organ had long since ceased to mellow the air). Even the prospect of the 100-foot wall below did not deter Sutherland as he flitted hither and thither seeking a crack in which to hammer a piton. At last the abseil rope was ready and I backed down the snow-roof. Suddenly, as my feet slipped past the overhang, I found myself dangling over a void of blackness and, since the rope was nylon, feeling very much like a yo-yo. After slithering down the wall I reached the cave and a moment later pendulumed across and down the shelf. One last flounder and I was below the last ice wall on the safe snow slope. I unthreaded myself and shouted up that it was "fine."

Before moving down the snow to a small bergschrund I shone my torch upwards and was astonished at the gigantic proportions which the pitch assumed in the rays. From my position at the bergschrund I saw Morgan had descended safely. Sutherland followed suit to within 20 feet of the foot when the iced rope slipped from his grasp and he accelerated accordingly. A slight rise hid the source of light from me but I could see the rays slanting upwards between the great walls, with a suggestion of aurora borealis. Any further Heavenly similarity was swiftly dispelled by the language which issued following Sutherland's rapid descent. For once the rope ran smoothly to drop in a swishing coil. It was well after 9 P.M. as we moved down

the snow and we had spent nearly eleven hours in the gully. I was truly thankful and I think the others were thankful too, that we were safely clear.

At the foot of the long slopes we sat amid the boulders and ate some food. The corrie lay in utter silence, except for the faint tinkle of water from a gully. We were tired, hungry, and soaked to the skin, with the prospect of a cheerless camp before us. The day could hardly be termed a success, yet I doubt if any of us would have exchanged the day's experiences for many a more successful but less memorable climb. The gully had beaten us, but in mountaineering it is the climbing and the comradeship, rather than the achievement, which is of the greater importance. Taking consolation in this, if we required any, we packed ourselves into the tent and with myself presiding over the stove as chef-in-chief, ate, talked, and laughed until 3 A.M., after which we slept the sleep of the weary and replete.

TRANSFORMATION.

E. C. W. RUDGE.

EVERYWHERE mist. Still, gloomy masses of it; tall, orange-tipped columns of it; solid grey walls of it. Its base could be seen creeping amongst the trees on the mountainside, but above the base nothing to break its grey-black monotony, except an occasional suggestion of orange light where the sun tried to pierce through some part of it, thinned by the slightest of breezes.

An eerie, oppressive dampness filled the valley. Drip, drip, from the motionless trees; tiny runnels of water crossing the path; a curious, heavy smell of wet earth, wet rock and sodden vegetation. Below, the dull roar of the swollen torrent sounded muffled, but louder even than usual; the mist seemed to act as a kind of sounding-board which exaggerated, but at the same time blurred its voice. The precipitous sides of the valley glistened dully above the torrent; a bird screeched suddenly and flew across, startling by its sudden sharp voice breaking into the even roar of the river. The yellow waves lifted and scattered their foam amongst the rocks 500 feet below; driftwood was piled up against the larger boulders, or tumbled helpless before the surge of rushing water.

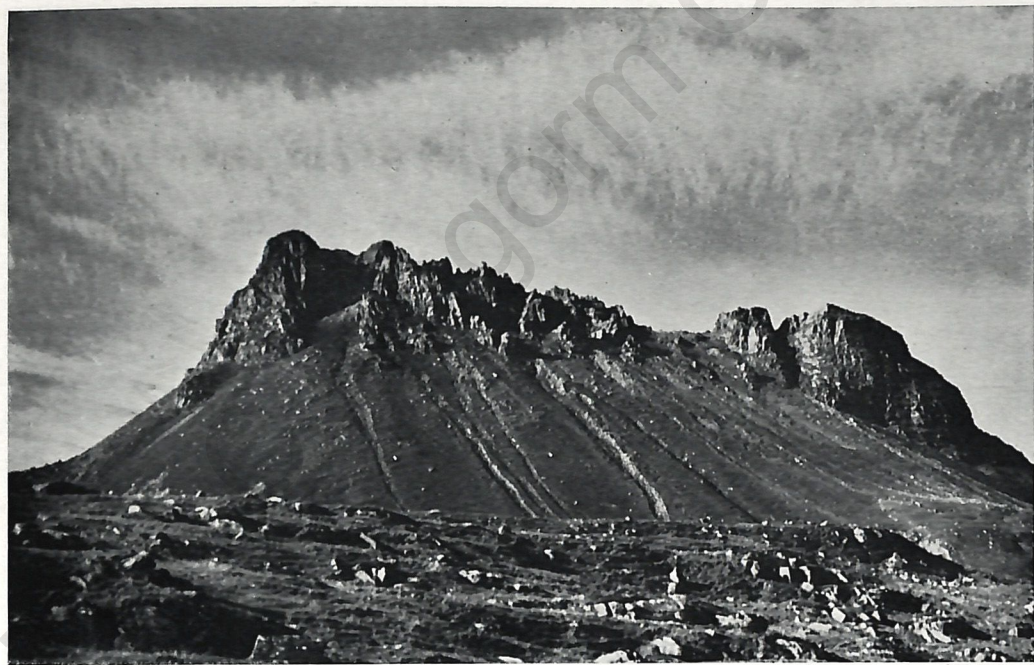
The heavy oppression made us sleepy; walking was almost an effort. The world would suddenly be reduced to a few yards around, as we climbed higher into the mist, only to return as it had vanished when the track led downwards. The track seemed endless, the mist everlasting. . . .

Then in an instant, unbelievably, we walked out of it, into the sunshine.

We looked back, then to the right and to the left—everywhere grey-black cloud. But before us a wide sweep of valley, tree-clad and boulder-strewn, was terminated abruptly by a colossal star-shaped mountain which looked, indeed, like a star fallen from heaven, with its lowest point buried deep in the earth. The thrill of this sudden appearance

was almost ecstatic; we stopped dead in our tracks, gaping at it. The sun was shining in a cloud-swept sky; the trees and flower-strewn alps were a vivid green, and bright after the recent rain; near a mountain hut at the end of the valley, a peasant yodelled as he watched his flock of goats. And towering above this peaceful scene was the mountain—4,000 feet of precipitous rock, split almost from summit to base by a huge gash, down which tumbled the thin ribbon of a waterfall. On either side of the main peak projected two smaller points—two lateral points of the star which had fallen to earth. Its impressiveness was tremendous; no words came to our lips for none were adequate to express what we felt.

At length we again moved forward along the track, which led up the valley and ended at the hut. Here we were to spend the night before setting out to make our ascent of the mountain. The joy of anticipation, or the joy of realisation; which would be the greater? To-morrow we should learn.



STAC POLLY FROM THE SOUTH

L. B. Perkins

AMONGST THE NORTHERN MUNROS.

E. W. SMITH and L. B. PERKINS.

DURING the last two years, time was found, between Club excursions, to visit the mountains in the North of Scotland. Altnaharra, Inchnadamph, and Ullapool were the centres in 1949, and Ullapool was visited again in 1950. We climbed Ben Hope, Ben Klibreck and Ben More Assynt in addition to the Fannichs, the Beinn Dearg group, Ben Wyvis and Fionn Bheinn. In all cases, the approach was made by road—a large car being used—and every effort was made to get as near to the hills as possible. The road journeys did not lack interest; in fact, the outward journey in 1949 resulted in a letter from a certain Chief Constable. Going north, a wait at a level crossing was made worth while by the delightful sight of a race between a cyclist and a train. The race started at a nearby station, and it was not until the cyclist dismounted and opened the level crossing gates that one realised that this was part of "British Railways." Alarm and despondency was spread on some mornings when acute symptoms of engine trouble developed soon after starting. Experience, however, led to the removal of the coat tucked round the engine before, and not after, starting.

BEN HOPE.—Altnaharra is a good centre for this, the most northerly Munro. With a good approach from the south, giving views of Ben Armine and Ben Klibreck, Altnaharra is easily reached from Aberdeen in one day.

Ben Hope is 17 miles from Altnaharra, and the road running through Strath More is now in reasonably good condition. A parking place for a car is to be found in a road quarry approximately one mile to the north of Altnacaillich. The route we took was, as usual, an easy one, and led up to the col between Craig Riabhach and Ben Hope itself. The summit was reached in two and a quarter hours. We would explain that times given in this article include all stops for meals, cups of coffee, taking photographs, admiring the view, and just resting. The summit of Ben Hope offers good views of Ben Laoghal, and the indented

northern coast of Scotland. The ascent, which presented no difficulties, can be varied by traversing Craig Riabhach, or possibly Leitir Mhuisseil, the "step" below Craig Riabhach, although this latter appears to be somewhat overgrown with bushes and birch trees. From above the "step" Leitir Mhuisseil seems to merge into the bottom of the glen, although a considerable height separates them.

The falls marked on the 1 in. map on the Alltnacaillich are well worth a visit. Dun Dornaigil should be inspected of course, but a better example, carefully preserved, can be seen in Glen Beag, near Glenelg.

BEN KLIBRECK.—Next day we climbed Ben Klibreck, the route commencing at "Klibreck," the farm on the shore of Loch Naver which was visited the previous evening, when some alarm was occasioned by murderous sounds coming from a wood close to Altnaharra. The possibility of herons and bitterns being the cause was discussed, but we were reluctantly forced to the conclusion that the birds were only capercaillies. Compared with Ben Hope, the ascent of Ben Klibreck is uninteresting, although Ben Klibreck is the higher. Three hours were taken for a rather leisurely ascent, and part traverse to Meall Nan Con—the summit—where the implements of ordnance survey triangulation were found, including two car batteries. These, we understand, require to be carried down, recharged, and taken up again daily, but then, the Ordnance staff get paid for climbing mountains.

BEN MORE ASSYNT AND CONIVAL.—From Altnaharra, we went to Inchnadamph, where trout fishing is of great local importance. Mountaineers are very welcome here as they do not require to be placed on the fishing rota. From here we climbed Spidean Coinneach of Quinag, Stack Polly, and a rather long day was spent in connection with Suilven. The path from Little Assynt to Suilven is still in good condition, possibly kept so by the feet of anglers who fish in Loch na Gainimh. The wall (English for dyke) which divides Caisteal Liath from the rest of Suilven was duly admired—were sheep once grazed there?—but no time was wasted on the top, on account of inclement weather.

The ascent of Ben More Assynt had been delayed, not so much on account of the delights of the hills just named, but in hopes of a clear day, and when this materialised, we made an early start, and were well up Gleann Dubh by 10 A.M. This route, with the name "Traligill," bringing back memories of the limestone country of Yorkshire, is entrancing, particularly if one has a smattering of geological lore, and can appreciate what is seen—the folding, the thrust planes, the dykes, the hills, and the caves. "The Geology of the North-West Highlands of Scotland" should be consulted before visiting this area.

From Gleann Dubh, up the tributary to the col between Beinn an Fhurain and Conival, and thence up the ridge to Conival, presented no difficulties. It is necessary to pass over Conival twice in order to reach Ben More Assynt, and return to Inchnadamph. Whether this counts as two ascents of Conival is, perhaps, debatable—it depends how urgently one needs to increase one's bag of Munros. The summit of Conival offers views of Ben More Assynt, and better still, to the north, the grand sight of Na Tuadhan. This spectacular hill receives the honour of being shown as the frontispiece of the book previously mentioned, but is shown only as a spot height on the 1 in. map. The ridge joining Conival and Ben More Assynt is traversed with little difficulty, but many ups and downs. Ben More itself has two cairns, each having good claim to be the summit, and the conscientious must visit both.

At this time, unfortunately, we had not developed the habit of taking "rubies," and thus missed the pleasure of a double celebration. Named after a Swiss guide, a "ruby" comprises sugar lumps soaked in whisky. More than one should be taken at the summit of each Munro. They are an excellent antidote for the effects of cosmic rays, which, as is well known, make mountaineers annoyed with each other. The ridge of Ben More Assynt extends lengthily southwards, and if followed, leads far from home. The total time for the round, Conival—Ben More Assynt—Conival from Inchnadamph was nine hours, the descent being made in heavy rain and mist. So much for the "first clear day."

BEINN DEARG (ROSS) is, like this article, a composite affair, and according to the "Munro" tables, consists of five separate mountains, Beinn Dearg (3,547 feet), Cona Mheall (3,200 feet), Am Faochagach (3,120 feet), Meall nan Ceapraichean (3,192 feet), Eididh nan Clach Geala (3,039 feet), and Seana Bhraigh (3,041 feet). Our first real view of the massif was from the shores of Loch Broom outside the Royal Hotel, Ullapool, and in the afterglow of a grand May day it really deserved the name of "Red Mountain," stretching, it appeared, to bar the head of the Loch in a series of symmetrical peaks. Next day was as good as its promise, and we were joined for the day by another party of three. The cars were parked in a small road metal pit on the Garve-Ullapool road, just beyond Loch Droma. Following a path marked on the O.S. 1 in. map, we soon reached Loch a' Gharbrain, and after this, our route took us up the ridge of Leac an Tuadh. One of our friends then cut across by the end of Loch nan Eilean, making for a steep face to the South ridge of Beinn Dearg, whilst the rest of us continued along the ridge of Leac an Tuadh until just before entering Choire Ghrunda. Here, the other two visitors turned back, and we entered the corrie. Following the advice of the S.M.C. Northern Guide, we continued along the west bank of the Loch, but why this is advised as a route, and the other side as very dangerous, we have still to learn!

A considerable snow field was encountered after leaving the col between Cona Mheall and Beinn Dearg proper. Short of this snowfield we found—and left—a very fine plant of the silene growing by the side of the burn. On the Northern Ridge of Ben Dearg is a march dyke which leads to almost the summit cairn, which we found later in mist, but did not linger. We retraced our steps to the col and continued north-east up a gentle slope to the summit of Cona Mheall, which was clear, and gave quite a view. Leaving this top, we just caught a glimpse of our lone companion on the North-West Ridge; we ourselves looking, as ever, for the most gentle route, returned to the col and down the burn to the loch which we found to be quite passable

on the east. We picked up our energetic companion paddling in the Allt Lair, and eventually found the other two "hiking" along the road to Ullapool. Discussing our plans for the following day, we did consider the possibility of investigating the other tops of Beinn Dearg, but the day itself was far too good to waste on peak bagging, so we had a picnic instead, and left Seana Braigh alone for another year.

June 1950 found us back in Ullapool, and without hesitation, the Braigh was definitely first on the list. Inquiries were made about getting permission to take the car beyond Loch Achalt, but these were not very promising, so we decided to go by the Inverlael route. This was a wise choice, for the walk through the recently planted forest, and up the shoulder of Druim na Saobhaidhe afforded some beautiful views of Gleann na Sguaiù leading up with the main summit of Beinn Dearg at its head. A well-marked path leads up the shoulder. Keeping to the north of the Druim, it eventually leads to the Coiran Lochan Sgeirich, after which it peters out, and leaves one on rough country, badly defined on the O.S. maps, which is actually a retaining wall of the head waters of the River Douchary. The final slopes to the summit of Seana Braigh are quite gentle. We retraced our steps to the col, and keeping more to the south, avoided the broken ground, and followed an even slope running west to the summit of Eididh nan Clach Geala. The mist came down just as we reached the summit, but lifted as we made our way down the ridge to the Druim, and so back to Inverlael where we had left our car eight hours previously. Now only An Faochagach and Meall nan Ceapraichean are left to do, and they will have to await another visit to the Loch Broom district.

THE FANNICHS.—A study of the current edition of the Ordnance 1 in. map suggests that the Fannichs are a group of nicely rounded hills. The Cairngorms themselves are often described in this way by railway passengers, and it may be suggested that the survey in the Fannich area was carried out in such a detached way, a number of errors and omissions being established during our visit.

There are nine Munros in the Fannichs, and they can be covered in three comfortable trips.

A car can easily be taken to the road leading to the fishing lodge at the side of Loch a' Bhraoin, and from the lodge itself, after crossing several bridges, the way led up to the ridge named Druim Reidh, from where Loch Toll an Lochan was reached. Several easy routes are available from the loch to the summit of A'Chailleach, the most westerly of the Fannichs. To the north-east of the summit a deep channel, possibly a glacial overflow channel, offers a geological problem. From A' Chailleach, we circumnavigated the false top at the head of the corrie, suitably guided by a track and reached the top of Sgùrr Breac in a short time. At this point, a cloud descended, and the route was determined by compass. The descent, which was intended to be direct to a point high up on the Allt Leac a' Bhealaich, was one of those all too familiar ones, where the contours entice one away from the true direction, until it is realised that one is 1,000 feet and one or two miles away from the intended point. Fate was, however, probably looking after us, or was it providence? We found subsequently that the nice easy rounded ridge we intended to follow had a number of 50-foot and 100-foot steps, not shown on the map. We reached a point well down the Allt Leac a' Bhealaich, and getting a good view of Loch Fannich, could establish our exact position, in spite of errors on the map. A long trudge over to the car appeared inevitable, but at this point, Smith announced that he had climbed ninety-nine separate Munros, and intended to climb his hundredth on that day. He marshalled several arguments, and, as often happens, we found ourselves climbing before we had agreed to do so—in fact, we were half-way up before all possible complaints were exhausted.

From near the upper tributaries of the Allt Leac a' Bhealaich to the summit of Sgùrr nan Each was as uniform a climb as we have met, 1,500 feet in one mile, each step like the last, and not even a stone to fall over. The summit is very narrow, and offers good views in every direction.



CONA MHEALL, FROM THE NORTH

L. B. Perkins

Four of the Fannich mountains were tackled in an easy eight-hour day, two days later. From a point on the Dirrie Mor, the road from Garve to Ullapool, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles to the west of the end of Loch Droma, the car was parked in a quarry with difficulty. There is a much better and bigger quarry, 100 yards further along, but we didn't know that then. The path alongside the Allt a' Mhadaidh was followed up to Loch a' Mhadaidh, on reaching which we found ourselves on the spit of land to the north of the loch. It was a very hot day, and we waded the loch, with glee on the one face and anguish on the other. A convenient route was then taken to the summit of Meall a' Chrasgaidh, no difficulty being occasioned. An Teallach and the Ben Dearg range could be seen in a heat haze. A little lochan midway between Meall a' Chrasgaidh and Sgùrr nan Chlach Geala promised a welcome oasis, especially as it lay in a snow girt hollow. Descending to the loch, we were amused at the tameness of some deer who would hardly get out of our way. This tameness was noticeable in other Ross-shire forests, in marked contrast to the timidity of the Cairngorm stags and hinds. From the lochan, an easy ridge walk took us up to the summit of Sgùrr nan Clach Geala. The Geological Survey honour the precipitous west face of this mountain with a full page plate in one of their memoirs, whilst the Ordnance Survey give it only one or two half-hearted scratches on the 1 in. map.

We retraced our steps to the lochan to get to Sgùrr Mòr, which is the highest of the Fannichs, and gives them the characteristic skyline view, so familiar to those having climbed in the district. If an excellent footpath down the glen to the Allt a' Mhadaidh can be resisted, the way to Ben Liath Mòr Fannaich is simple. The hill itself has no special features, but at one point on the route, clearance of stones to form a path has resulted in a very prominent landmark, as the path is some 2 feet below the general level. From Ben Liath Mòr Fannaich the route down to the Allt a' Mhadaidh is fairly simple, but long. One is apt to assume that the descent is short, on account of the 500-foot drop from Sgùrr Mòr, but Ben Liath Mòr Fannaich is one

of the hills which takes a lot of getting off, and not much getting on to, when approached from Sgùrr Mòr.

Much later in 1950, a week-end was spent at Garve, a week-end stolen from winter, as it turned out. The hotel was left in sunshine and frost on a morning late in October, and Grudie Bridge, on the road to Achnasheen, was soon reached. Here the road up to Loch Fannich was taken, but it should be remembered that the old road, running on the north of the loch, is the one required for An Coileachan and Meall Gorm. The car was again parked in a road quarry, about 1 mile from the eastern end of the loch. From this point the ridge was ascended to the little loch feeding the burn running into Loch Fannich, and from there the route to an Coileachan was simple. Another hour brought us to Meall Gorm, two and a quarter hours after leaving the car. The day was clear, and Stac Polly was clearly discerned, with other hills farther north easily identifiable. Slioch, Ben Eighe and Liathach were also clearly visible, as were the Glen Affric hills to the south. On Meall Gorm there is an excellent shelter made by local ghillies from the slabby rock, which provides shelter whichever way the wind blows. A path down to Fannich Lodge ends near this shelter. The path is well graded, and appears to have been paid for on a yardage basis, as it zigzags profusely.

Whilst climbing is supposed to be the all important feature of our holidays on the west coast, motoring and hotels have a great fascination. The latter especially deserve a little space in any descriptive article. Our first stop in 1949 was at the Hotel at Altnaharra. Despite its inaccessibility, this is a comfortable fishing hotel near Loch Naver, and the food was excellent. It was our base for climbing Ben Hope and Ben Klibreck. Inchnadamph Hotel, near Loch Assynt, was a revisit after four years, and if we missed the delightful hostess of our earlier trip, we were glad to see several "kent" faces among the guests. The situation of the hotel is delightful, its windows giving excellent views of Loch Assynt with its old Castle of Ardvreck, and of Quinag.

At Ullapool there is a fair choice of Hotels. We found

the Royal Hotel made excellent headquarters for Beinn Dearg and the Fannichs. The management were most sympathetic to climbers. Early or late meals were served willingly, and to get an early breakfast in hotels on the west coast is something to remark on. The Railway Hotel at Achnasheen, from which we climbed Fionn Bheinn, is a bustling centre of road and rail traffic, but we found that it is also a delightful country hotel, where guests are really welcomed and looked after. The same understanding of the needs of climbers was found there, and also at the hotel at Garve, from which we climbed Ben Wyvis and the southern tops of the Fannichs.

IN MEMORIAM

WILLIAM GARDEN.

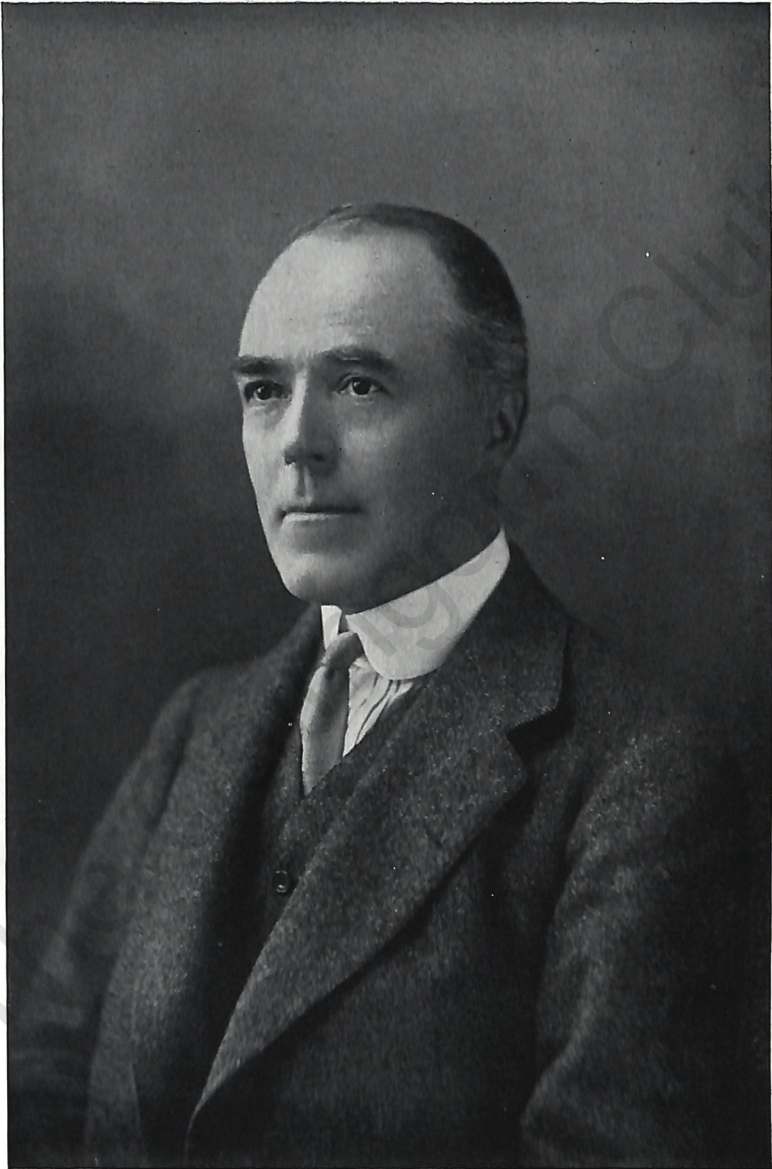
WILLIAM GARDEN died in Aberdeen on November 20, 1950, in his eightieth year. Only son of the late F. T. Garden, Esq., advocate in Aberdeen, William Garden graduated at Aberdeen University in Arts and Law, and spent some four years in Edinburgh before returning to Aberdeen in 1899 to become a partner in his father's firm of C. & P. H. Chalmers. From that time until his death he was active in the business of the firm and seldom absent from work, except for a period of illness some four years ago and again for a short time before his death.

A man of simple tastes and with no liking for public affairs, William Garden had two, possibly three, main interests for his recreation. Mountaineering and music were undoubtedly his two great loves, but literature, chiefly historical and legal, claimed much of his time especially in later years.

His pleasure in music was of a quiet and almost domestic type. For many years, he was a member of a quartette of friends meeting weekly to play chamber music for their own delight. William Garden, himself, was an able performer on the 'cello. He was also a piper of considerable ability, as many of his Scottish friends know.

His ruling passion, however, was centred in the sport and art of mountaineering. Truly may it be said that, in his day, William Garden was an international figure in his beloved sport. He climbed the heights in many countries, Switzerland, Norway, Canada, but his love of the Scottish hills and his knowledge of them was profound.

This love of the hills was no selfish passion. William Garden was for many years an active and enthusiastic member of three great climbing clubs, the Alpine Club, the Scottish Mountaineering Club, and the Cairngorm Club. Of these, the two Scottish Clubs undoubtedly held his



WILLIAM GARDEN

greatest affection. He was a member of both from 1896 until his death, and in the affairs of both he played an active and leading part.

In the Scottish Mountaineering Club he served on the Committee from 1904 till 1907, and again from 1929 till 1932. He was Vice-President from 1915 to 1919, and President from 1934 to 1936. In 1911, in collaboration with his great friend, the late James A. Parker, he compiled the Index of the *Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal*, Volumes I-X. He was also the author of several important articles in the *Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal*. In his earlier days he attended most of the Meets of the Club and was a pioneer in several difficult snow climbs in the Cairngorms and elsewhere, including an attempted ascent of the Douglas-Gibson gully with Raeburn.

In the Cairngorm Club, he served on Committee from 1911 to 1921, and again from 1928 to 1930. He was President from 1925 to 1927, but his greatest work in the affairs of the Club was done while he was Secretary from 1932 to 1949. During that long period of office, he conducted the affairs of the Cairngorm Club with most devoted skill under several Presidents. It may be said truly that he was the friend of every member. He did not contribute much to the Club Journal, possibly because of his activities as Secretary, but he was intimately associated with James A. Parker and others in the erection of indicators on Lochnagar and Ben Macdhui, and in the foundation of the Club library. There is no doubt, however, that his great contribution to the Club was his knowledge of the hills and of mountaineering. He gave freely and enthusiastically to anyone who cared to talk with him or who sought his advice. When he retired from the active work of Secretary in 1949, the Club presented to him, at the Annual Dinner, a composition of sketches of all the Presidents of the Club, as a token of the high regard in which he was held by all members.

In his younger days, as a member of the Alpine Club, his activities in Switzerland and elsewhere in the sphere of rock and ice climbing were curtailed as a result of an accident. In 1901, he had ascended the Matterhorn and the

Weisshorn. In 1902, in a party including J. H. Brown and the guides Knubel and Imboden, he climbed the Wetterhorn from Grindelwald. The ascent took longer than had been anticipated, owing to new snow, and the upper couloir was difficult, but they reached the top. On the descent, while crossing the lower couloir, much later than they had intended, they took care owing to the possibility of avalanches. William Garden and Imboden had crossed and anchored and Brown was in the act of crossing. An avalanche fell. The whole party was swept down 1,200 feet. Brown was killed and Knubel died a little later. Garden was injured and Imboden was severely concussed. They were rescued by a German climber and a guide.

This unfortunate accident resulted in Garden promising his father that he would not undertake any dangerous and difficult mountaineering again and, probably because of this, a few years later he did not complete the ascent of Mount Assiniboine while he was a member of the first party to cross this 11,800 foot peak in the Canadian Rockies. Nevertheless, he brought back with him a great collection of fine photographs of the Rocky Mountains and he delighted to show them to friends and to recall the incidents of this phase of his climbing activities.

For a long time after he had given up strenuous snow and rock climbing, William Garden loved to walk the Scottish hills. The effect of the mountains upon him was to make him young in spirit and he was a wonderful companion, full of humour and reminiscence, with a great knowledge at his fingertips and a delight in imparting this to the younger mountaineers. The writer's most vivid recollections of him are those of a climbing holiday in the autumn of 1919, at Sligachan in Skye in the most depressing weather with continual rain, when his instruction in the technique of rock climbing on Sgùrr nan Gilleann and on Blaven, Clach Glas and other peaks of the Black Cuillin, made a profound impression and laid a sound foundation for a wider knowledge of mountaineering.

William Garden will be missed by many friends. He had a solid quality in him which created a feeling of security

whether it was in the giving of an opinion or in the conducting of a party over the mountains, and certainly in the Scottish climbing clubs his great personality and commanding figure were an inspiration to younger generations of climbers.

DAVID P. LEVACK.

GEORGE DUNCAN, C.B.E., LL.D.

By the death of Dr George Duncan the Club has lost one of its prominent senior members, who attended many of its Meets and took a keen interest in its affairs. As a citizen of Aberdeen he was very well known, and tribute to his civic activities has been paid elsewhere. He was an active walker at all times and was familiar with the Braemar district where he spent his annual holiday for many years. All those who have accompanied him on walks in that region or elsewhere will recall the remarkable fund of anecdote and allusion which he had at his command. He could at all times recount curious circumstances relating to persons or places which enhanced the interest of such walks. Noticeable about his anecdotes, whether concerned with past or present, was the feeling for history which underlay them, Dr Duncan was an assiduous reader. His interests were many. Remarkable in so practical-minded a man was, for instance, his interest in supernatural events. The tales of the Ben Macdhui ghost, or the better documented case of Sergeant Davies, seemed to attract him as matters for evidence, not to be dismissed with a laugh. Dr Duncan's conversation on these and other topics will be fresh in the memory of many members; as is that of his excellent physique in his active years. Also remembered will be the cordiality with which he was wont to support any useful new project or idea.

W. M. A.

EDRED MOSS CORNER

WE regret to report the death of Edred Moss Corner, B.Sc. (London), M.A., M.B., B.C.(Cantab.), F.R.C.S., a life member of the Club and a distinguished surgeon. Born

in 1873, he joined the Cairngorm Club and the Scottish Mountaineering Club in 1897, and contributed notes and articles, particularly to the S.M.C.J. He had an outstanding academic and professional career and was consulting surgeon to St Thomas's Hospital and to numerous other institutions. One unique distinction he held was that of being the only candidate who had been first in every subject of the M.B., B.C.(Cantab.). During the World War, he rose to the rank of Major and was mentioned in despatches. Mr Corner was little known to the present generation of Scottish climbers but his contributions to mountain literature show him to have been an indefatigable explorer and climber of our hills, and to have possessed the capacity to write of his expeditions with clarity and humour. A. M. T.

DONALD McCONNACH.

DONALD McCONNACH was a member of a party returning from the south top of Beinn a' Bhùird in bad weather on March 11, 1951. Heading for Coire na Ciche in extremely poor visibility, he reached the edge of the cornice, which gave way beneath him. By the greatest misfortune, the accident occurred above steep rocks and he was killed, apparently instantaneously. He was twenty-two.

He was educated at Aberdeen Grammar School and at Aberdeen University, where he graduated in medicine in September of last year. He was then appointed House Physician at the Royal Infirmary, which post he held at the time of his death. His interests were wide and varied, and while at school were typically those of a normal, healthy, athletic boy. He played rugby and this he continued with the Former Pupils' Club. He was a good swimmer and tennis player, and an active member of the 1st Troop of Boy Scouts and of the Scottish Schoolboys' Club.

As much of his life as possible was spent in the open air. Cycling and camping expeditions took him to the hills, first to his local Cairngorms and then to areas farther afield. All University holidays, when not working, he spent

climbing with his friends from Aberdeen or Sheffield, and he had a wide first-hand knowledge of the Scottish hills, having climbed in Glencoe, Skye, the North-west, Nevis, and the Mamore range as well as in the nearby Cairngorms and Grampians.

Climbing with him was never dull, no matter how bad the weather or the going. He was a careful, confident, and trustworthy partner on a rock or snow climb. Donald had an unforgettable personality; all who knew him remember his extravagant stories, told with a serious face but with a humorous twinkle in his eye. Of course they were not meant to be taken seriously, but how we loved to hear them! With his patients in hospital he had sympathy, firmness, and understanding, and he made many genuine friends among them. He was popular with all his colleagues, who respected his abilities and decisions. He was proud of being a member of the Club, which he joined four years ago. We have suffered a grievous loss in his untimely death, but our memories of him will remain always fresh and pleasant.

I. M. B.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB.

GENERAL MEETINGS.

THE 61st Annual General Meeting of the Club was held in the Caledonian Hotel, Aberdeen, on November 16, 1949, the retiring President, Colonel E. B. Reid, O.B.E., in the Chair.

The Chairman made reference to the resignation of Mr William Garden from the office of Honorary Secretary and Treasurer, which he had filled for the past seventeen years with great satisfaction to the Club.

In presenting the Committee's Report for the preceding year, the Chairman said that a lease of a cottage at Inverey had been obtained and that it was proposed to have the cottage equipped and opened as a Club Hut. The Committee also had under consideration the reconstruction of Corrour Bothy. These two schemes were approved. The Accounts were submitted and approved and office-bearers elected for the ensuing year.

The 62nd Annual General Meeting of the Club was held in the Caledonian Hotel, Aberdeen, on November 22, 1950. The President, Mr W. M. Duff, was in the Chair and there were thirty-eight members present.

The Chairman referred to the death of Mr William Garden, a past President and, until recently, Honorary Secretary and Treasurer. The accounts for the year were submitted and approved. There were 305 members at the close of the year (235 Ordinary, 42 Junior and 28 Life Members). Office-bearers were elected as shown below. Dr G. A. Taylor reported on the Club Works and stated that the restoration of the Corrour Bothy had been satisfactorily carried out in July.

The meeting approved a resolution that the Club should resign from the British Mountaineering Council at the end of this financial year (June 1951).

Mr E. W. Smith proposed that Messrs William Malcolm, James McCoss and Hugh D. Welsh be elected Honorary Members in recognition of their past services to the Club. The proposal was carried with acclamation.

OFFICE-BEARERS.

Honorary President.—R. M. Williamson, C.B.E., LL.D.

President.—W. M. Duff.

Vice-Presidents.—Dr R. L. Mitchell and Dr G. A. Taylor.

Honorary Secretary and Treasurer.—J. E. Bothwell, 34 Bridge Street, Aberdeen. Phone 20931.

Honorary Editor.—W. A. Ewen, 242 Mid Stocket Road, Aberdeen. Phone 33446.

Honorary Librarian.—R. L. Mitchell, 75 Cranford Road, Aberdeen. Phone 35916.

Honorary Meets Secretary.—E. W. Smith, 6 Viewfield Avenue, Aberdeen. Phone 36067.

Honorary Auditors.—D. Allison and N. F. Dyer.

Honorary Custodian, Muir of Inverey.—R. Bain, 25 Ruthriehill Road, Bucksburn. Phone, Bucksburn 175.

Committee.—Miss A. F. W. Arthur, Miss E. J. Lawrence, R. Bain, Dr I. M. Brooker, A. D. Cameron, Dr A. D. Lyall, Dr W. Martin Nichols, Col. E. B. Reid and Dr A. M. Thomson.

ANNUAL DINNERS.

The 1949 Annual Dinner was held in the Caledonian Hotel, Aberdeen, on Saturday, November 26, Colonel E. B. Reid presiding. Some 120 members and guests attended, the latter including representatives from the other Scottish Clubs. Dr D. P. Levack welcomed the guests and Mr R. M. Gall Inglis, S.M.C., replied. The President spoke in appreciation of the services of Mr William Garden to the Club. Prior to the Dinner, Mr Douglas Scott, S.M.C., showed a magnificent collection of colour slides illustrating climbing in Scotland.

The 1950 Annual Dinner was held in the Caledonian Hotel, Aberdeen, on Saturday, November 25. Mr W. M. Duff presided and some ninety members and guests attended, including representatives from the S.M.C., L.S.C.C., the Grampian and Moray Clubs. The guest speaker was Professor Graham Brown, A.C., who described his ascent of the Via della Pera, Mont Blanc. The President and Dr A. M. Thomson both delivered highly amusing speeches, and Mr J. G. Osborne defended the S.M.C. in his reply for the guests.

INDOOR MEETINGS.

1949

- Jan. 31. Exhibition of Photographs.
- Feb. 24. Professor V. C. Wynne Edwards. "By Canoe down the Mackenzie River." (Film).
- Mar. 30. Dr R. L. Mitchell. "Zermatt and Beyond." (Slides).
- Sept. 21. Mr G. H. R. Spence. "Scotland in Colour."
- Dec. 7. Mr G. A. Roberts. "Around the Cairngorms." (Slides).

1950.

- Jan. 20. Mr Adam Watson. "Birds of the Cairngorms."
- Feb. 25. Mr Ian Charleson. Film and Slides; "A.C. Meet in Bernese Oberland."
- Mar. 21. Exhibition of Photographs.

MEETS AND EXCURSIONS.

1949-1950.

Dec. 30.	} Braemar.	(—)	Dec. 30.	} Braemar.	(27)
to			to		
Jan. 4.			Jan. 3.		
Jan. 30.	Clunie Lodge.	(27)	Jan. 29.	Spittal of Muick.	(26)
Feb. 13.	Spittal of Muick.	(41)	Feb. 12.	Danzig Bridge.	(26)
„ 27.	Glen Clova.	(27)	„ 26.	Glen Clova.	(27)
Mar. 13.	Danzig Bridge.	(27)	Mar. 12.	Spittal of Muick.	(33)
„ 27.	Derry Lodge.	(26)	„ 26.	Derry Lodge.	(27)

Apr. 14.	} Kinlochewe. (23)	Apr. 6.	} Roy Bridge. (26)
to		to	
Apr. 18.	} Delnadamph. (26)	Apr. 10.	} Delnadamph. (27)
May 8.		May 21.	
June 5.	} Spittal of Muick. (31)	June 4.	} White Bridge. (27)
June 25.		June 24.	
to	} Aviemore. (27)	to	} Blair Atholl (26)
June 26.		June 25.	
July 10.	} Schiehallion. (29)	July 9.	} Derry Lodge. (19)
„ 31.		„	
Sept. 11.	} Spittal of Muick. (24)	Sept. 10.	} Ben Lawers. (25)
Oct. 16.		Oct. 15.	
Nov. 6.	} Ey to Clunie. (28)	Nov. 12.	} Loch Lee. (25)
Dec. 4.		Dec. 10.	
	} Buck of the Cabrach. (21)		} Bennachie. (22)

(Figures in brackets indicate the number present.)

It is, they tell me, a solemn obligation on my part to report on the Club excursions but my mentors have so far always omitted to enlarge upon my duties. Mitchell, I am glad to think, said nothing about sticking to the point; and Taylor avers that excursions have no point other than getting back to dry clothes as soon as is decently possible. True, after one or two visits to Inchrory, one has almost reached the final decision to resign from the Club and take up the trombone. Then comes the perfect day, the cloud cover rolls back, the valleys sparkle and the hills are alive with light. Inchrory forgotten, you seek out the Meets Secretary, ruminating in a secluded nook like some Olympian Zeus, and beg leave to put your name down for the next excursion. It is so easy, when you are on top of the world, to give him your bond, redeemable at a happily distant date, to be at Golden Square, or the Cross, or Mannofield at the appointed hour. At the appointed hour—come wind, come wrack! Away base thoughts: “In yonder forest there’s a little silver river, and whosoever drinks of it, his youth shall never die.”

So we are at the Cross again before it is yet day, the sleep barely shaken from us, just alert enough to observe the President is on time and curious enough to wonder why. Before it is full dawn we are within sight of Lochnagar, where the snows have a chilly look. We reserve judgment on the day. Shortly we are approaching Beinn a’ Bhùird and, suddenly, the party stirs and comes awake. The leaden snows are flushed with the first rays of the sun and the corries are ablaze above a cold grey world. The rarer and more evanescent the picture the more it is treasured and whatever happens this 30th of January, we have had one hour of wonder and curious satisfaction. As we wended our various ways into the hills from Clunie, all eyes turned back to Beinn a’ Bhùird from which the glow and the splendour had not yet died away.

Of course, there is, sometimes, disenchantment. I once went to the Buck of the Cabrach, but the mountain visions which that magnificent

name had conjured up did not outlive the visit. The magic lies often wholly in the name; so that, if all of you know about the Props of Fasheilach, or the Lair of the Altdararie, or the Burn of the Glittering Skerries is in the name, I can only counsel you to be wary, if you would keep your dreams! But, if go you must, then take Angus Thomson with you and the result will be quite unpredictable. It may be that, moved by some dim memory of the diableries of his Celtic sires on Beltane's Eve, he will soon stop to light a fire, at which, between verses of poetry rarely finished as the poet intended, he will dispense a philosophy of mountaineering, at *circa* 1,500 feet. If, however, he protests that he is not very fit and will not be able to go far, then beware: he means to take in all the tops. So we were beguiled at An Socach, when he led us from Ey to Clunie, over steep heather slopes and stony uplands, at a good 3 m.p.h., while the man in the rear prayed audibly: "God grant that Thomson be speedily restored to health."

Among my pleasantest memories is that of Midsummer Midnight on the plateau of Càrn Bàn Mòr in a heat wave. We lay there an hour or two, watching the sun go down; a chilly dew fell; Past President E. B. Reid conjured up from the vasty depths of his rucksack the apparatus for making hot cocoa; dusk came and then the whistle, faint and far, of a train in the Spey valley. The world seemed far away. There were no other sounds but the piping of golden plover and the shriller whistle of dunlin as we came down by Loch nan Stuirteag in the morning. Rarely do we hear so many birds, although a January day on the Bachnagairn tops was also noteworthy. When we returned, we sought out Hendry to tell him about the blackgrouse, the peregrines, the eagles, the snow-buntings we had seen, satisfied that, for once, we had beaten him at his own game. I might have known by the light in his eye that he was not prepared to concede us victory. "Did you see," he asked, elation in his voice, "did you see the whooper swans on Loch Muick?" The wild Elk-swans, the trumpeters, the far-flying Sons of the Skein! Confound the man; we were reluctantly obliged to offer him a draw.

Still more exciting events occurred on occasion. There was the day when, because the rope was too short, Bain was left stranded on the upper snows of the Twisting Gully of Corrie Kander; the day when Crawford, indulging in his trick of sudden disappearances, turned to his companions on the Stuic with the remark: "I am going this way," and promptly stepped clean through the cornice; the night when E. B. Reid's conjuring failed him and the wonderful rucksack failed to produce the expected compass. There was next to no ski-ing and what snow we found was not always fit to climb on. When it was, the weather interfered. Ay de mi, never the time, the place, and the loved one all together!

Then there was the Fourth Annual Inchroary debacle. It was such a day as ought to have interested Taylor, part of whose professional task it is to study fluids in motion. But, no; we were ploughing our way up the Caol Ghleann, through a sea of peat, in driving rain, when

Taylor stopped and pointed to the Clach Bhun Rhudhtair looming through a rent in the mists above. "Jove with us," he exclaimed, "there's land on the starboard bow." The other bad days are forgotten; and the random notes the Hon. Ed. makes are invariably lost before he comes to use them. With the Meets Secretary, now, it is altogether different; his work is done in advance, the data tabulated, checked, duplicated, and filed, which explains his leisured air of unconcern on the day. Everything is under control, everything except the weather. I have read that the Malaguenian peasants take to the fields during August and, sleeping *à la belle étoile*, make certain observations which enable them to forecast the weather for the ensuing twelve months with accuracy and in detail. Well it's a far cry to Malaga but, if Smithy were even to try sleeping *à la belle étoile* at, say, Hazlehead, for a night or two before excursions, he might pick up some invaluable hints. And I might sign on for Inchroary again.

W. A. E.

MEETS.

The 1949 Meet at Braemar was smaller than usual. Deep snow defeated the annual pilgrimage to Lochnagar, *via* Ballochbuie, but two parties reached the top of the Stuib. It was, indeed, a major operation to reach the Lui Beg bridge. Nevertheless, parties were on Càrn Tuirc and on the An Socach, Sgòr Mòr, Morrone ridge.

The Easter Meet at Kinlochewe is the only one of which I have a full account—from Mr Gavin Alexander. There were twenty-three present and, on Good Friday, parties were on Slioch and on Beinn Eighe, one party climbing from Grudie Bridge, another by the rocks on the east side of Morrison's Gully, Sail Mhòr, and a third going straight up Ruadh Stac. The two latter parties traversed the whole of the main ridge. The day, having promised to be fine, turned by afternoon to steady rain. Sunday started with a warm and sunny morning, and thus encouraged, the Club sallied forth to spend the day, as it turned out, immersed in mist on Liathach. Some traversed all the tops but the weaker brethren descended to Fasag in order to get tea. The McArthurs, Mitchell and Miss Munro, walked up the Allt a' Choire Dhuibh Mhòr path in order to attack the Northern Pinnacles; unfortunately, shortage of time and thick mist prevented them from completing the climb and forced them to return the same way. Easter Sunday was a superb day and, taking full advantage of it, the Club disported itself over most of the surrounding countryside.

The 1950 New Year Meet at Braemar opened in good weather but conditions worsened daily. On January 1, parties were again on Lochnagar, *via* the Black Sheil Burn and Meall Coire na Saobhaidhe. Several parties had good snow climbs in the gullies of Coire Sputan Dearg but conditions on top were unpleasant.

Twenty-one members and guests weathered the Easter Meet at Glen Spean Lodge. Jupiter Pluvius was also present and rumour has it

that, on the second day, the President went looking for a white bull. All were on the hills the first day but, with blizzard conditions aloft and signs of avalanche everywhere, performance was limited to such tops as Aonach Mòr. Few ventured out on the second day, but, by the third, partial recovery had set in and one or two parties set out for Stob Coire Claurigh. Indeed the omens were ill-arranged; too late did the President realise the sinister significance of the flight of eagles over the Grey Corries at the hour of his arrival. A timely propitiation of the Fates might have spared him the car breakdown and any consequent misunderstanding regarding the number of his wives.

EDITOR'S NOTES.

The Editor regrets that, owing to pressure upon space, several articles have had to be held over. It is impossible to increase the size of the *Journal* and difficult even to maintain it at its present size. Articles, notes, photographs, etc., for the next issue should be sent to the Hon. Editor, William A. Ewen, 242 Mid Stocket Road, Aberdeen. I am indebted to Tom Train for the sketches in this issue and to E. W. Smith for presenting two of the blocks used.

At a meeting of the Association of Scottish Climbing Clubs, held in Edinburgh on February 10, 1951, Mr Ian Charleson, S.M.C., was elected Chairman and Mr J. K. W. Dunn reappointed Honorary Secretary. The Association has been invited to submit their views on the needs of climbers in the proposed Cairngorms National Park to the Working Party on this scheme. A Sub-Committee, comprising representatives of six local Clubs, has been appointed to consider the matter and report to the next meeting.

An account of the goings-on at Corroul in July is given elsewhere. It may be of interest to add that another bothy existed, prior to 1877, on practically the same site. Indeed, the present rubbish tip, which appears to be partially built up, is said to be the foundation of the older house.

The findings of the pre-war Cambridge Botanical Expeditions to the Cairngorms are now being published in the *Journal of Ecology*. The first paper (Vol. XXXVI, p. 233), by A. S. Watt and E. W. Jones, deals with the environmental and altitudinal vegetation, and the second (Vol. XXXVIII, p. 46), by G. Metcalfe, with the heather communities. From headquarters at Glenmore Lodge, the party studied the vegetation of Cairn Gorm and Cairn Lochan from about 2,000 feet upwards.

Members who possess the 1 in. Tourist map of the Cairngorms should treat it with unusual care. We learn from the Ordnance Survey that no re-issue will be made until the new Seventh Edition 1 in. sheets are revised and it is not expected that this work will be completed for several years.

Spring cleaning? Members anxious to dispose of any of the following items (by way of gift to Muir of Inverey) are requested to communicate with the Hut Custodian, who will arrange for their collection. Basin,

ewer or water can, clothes horse, kettle, mirror, bicycle(s) in good going order.

You may not be getting much for your £ these days but for 290 francs you can have instruction in rock climbing and ice climbing, with ascents of the Wetterhorn, Breithorn, Tschingelhorn, Gspaltenhorn, and Jungfrau (all W.P.), hotel, mountain-railway fares, and, as a grande finale, a night in the bar of the Oberland Hotel with dance and entertainment! The address: Stäger Werner, Bergführer, Lauterbrunnen. 34241 Interlaken Exchange, if you are in a hurry.

Alleingänger.—Students of Alpine history should note that the Matterhorn has now been climbed by a kitten. (*The Times*, 7.8.50; A. J., Nov. 1950). Having spent the night out, somewhere below the Moseley rocks, it reached both summits the next day and was assisted down to Breuil—

. . . and lived to carry
To Catland home his commentary?

MUIR OF INVEREY.

THE idea of building a Club Hut among the hills has been a recurring item before Committees for the last twenty-five years or more, but financial and other difficulties have always proved insurmountable. Immediately after the war the matter was raised again and, for a time, we appeared to be in some danger of acquiring a Mountain Hut, a Club bus, and a Ski Lift in Coire Sputan Dearg, all without the means of paying for them. However, immediate needs boiled down to a Club Hut, and negotiations for a lease of Derry Lodge, having finally broken down in 1949, we returned to the building problem. But Taylor's estimate of costs soon convinced us that we should have to make do with some existing building which could be adapted to suit our purpose at a relatively small financial outlay. And that led, eventually, to Muir of Inverey, the nearest available cottage to the hills, providing reasonably adequate accommodation and requiring no major alterations.

Such work as was required was carried out entirely by volunteers, under the tutelage of G. A. Taylor, at week-ends and holidays, and was, consequently, rather protracted. The kitchen was enlarged by the removal of a wooden partition, and the dust of ages; the annexe was lined with hardboard, walls painted and sundry less enjoyable tasks completed. But the most spectacular operation was the installation of a water supply, involving the digging of an incredibly long trench and various other holes in almost solid rock. The original lead pipe, punctured in seventeen places, was replaced with a new copper one, Taylor performing in the role of plumber. Taylor is not a plumber; he is a magician whose chief stock-in-trade is a wonderful sequence of mystic runes, crooned over all joints to make them water-tight. One had only to listen to discover which stage of the operation he had reached. (I remember some of the words and shall be happy to impart them to any member thinking of setting up in the trade). I have sometimes



MUIR OF INVEREY

G. A. Taylor

wondered whether our faith in Taylor was altogether justified; certainly he was the one who exhibited most surprise when it was demonstrated that the thing really did work.

By June 1950 the work was sufficiently far advanced for the cottage to be opened to members, which was done without ceremony. The cost of equipment and renovations was met from the Works Fund, to which members had been asked to send donations. These amounted to £142. 16s. 0d., and the cost of furnishings and repairs to £211. 12s. 6d. A copy of the regulations governing the use of the cottage was posted to members, together with a description of the facilities offered. Mr William MacDougall, Bellaneye, Inverey, holds a key for use in an emergency but all bookings must be made through the Honorary Custodian. The following table of distances may be useful in planning excursions:

Altanour, Glen Ey	5½ m.	(Cycle or foot-slog.)
Auchelie, ,, (nursery ski slopes.)	2½ m.	,,
Derry Lodge <i>via</i> Canadian Bridge	4 m.	(Car or cycle.)
White Bridge <i>via</i> Linn of Dee	4 m.	,,
Linn of Quoich	3½ m.	,,
Invercauld Bridge	8 m.	,,
Loch Callater Cottage	10 m.	,,
Glen Clunie Lodge	11 m.	,,

I append a list of members who took part in the work and helped to keep costs at a minimum. They approached their various tasks in holiday spirit and at least appeared to enjoy themselves. They were: Misses A. W. F. Arthur, H. M. E. Duncan, R. K. Jackson, M. Hoggarth, E. J. Lawrence, A. M. Pittendrigh, and Messrs Bain, I. and W. Brooker, Cameron, Cordingley, Crawford, Duff, Dyer, Hendry, Hunter, Lorimer, Lyall, McAndrew, McConnach, A. and J. MacGregor, McKenzie, McLellan, G. Mathieson, A. S. Middleton, Morgan, Semple, A. M. Thomson; my own part in the task was to set Taylor going—and then to restrain him when he appeared to be going too far! I should also mention the energetic Mr Fenton, of Abadan, a holiday-maker looking for exercise. It was provided.

W. A. E.

NEW CLIMBS.

Pinnacle Gully, No. 1, Lochnagar.—A first winter ascent of this gully was made by T. W. Patey and C. Morrison on January 27, 1951, in three and a half hours. The climb was on steep hard snow throughout and presented little difficulty. The rock crevasse on the original summer route was filled with black ice and an exposed traverse to the right over ice-covered slabs immediately below had to be made. The ascent from the saddle to the Pinnacle was complicated by iced rocks and required care.

Douglas-Gibson Gully, Lochnagar.—First winter ascent. G. B. Leslie and T. W. Patey, December 28, 1950. Snow in excellent condition. The first obstacle was a 20-foot ice pitch (the cave pitch in summer), climbed on the right close to the wall of the gully. Further steep snow led to the terminal cliffs 200 feet below the top (2 hours). The upper 200 feet occupied seven hours and was continuously hard and exposed. An awkward traverse on to the left wall, along a shelf of hard snow, led to the foot of a steep 15-foot pitch from which fragile snow was removed to permit an ascent on the ice-covered rocks below. At the top, excavation revealed a stance on a small ledge below the crux on the summer route. Here, however, the snow was extremely steep and the party diverged upwards and to the right, across the upper edge of the prominent slab on the wall of the gully. This was covered by several feet of hard snow set at a high angle. A run out of 90 feet led to a small cave above and to the right of the slab. Following an unsuccessful attempt on the chimney above the cave, the party traversed several feet to the left on to the back of a steep rib, which runs parallel to the summer route. The climbing at this point was critical as only about a foot of hard snow covered the slabs. Sixty feet of climbing on the rib led to deeper snow where a stance was necessary to safeguard the leader on the final 15 feet to the cornice. This proved one of the hardest sections of the climb as the snow steepened almost to the vertical and an ice axe was used as foothold to attain a large snow cave below the cornice. The second belayed at the back of the cave while the leader, after much hard work, fashioned a tunnel 3 to 4 feet in depth in the roof of the cave, through which the party climbed to the welcome security of the summit plateau.

Tough-Brown Traverse, Lochnagar.—Variation. October 1, 1950. W. D. Brooker and J. Morgan. From the Terrace by the 1936 route to the Ledge; instead of going right on to the big slab, they went left of the overhang where the difficulties soon eased off and they arrived at the belay 90 feet above the Terrace.

Polyphemus Gully, Lochnagar.—From the point where the original route leaves the gully, continue up past an insecure looking solitary chokestone to a cave. Climb a few feet on the right wall to a corner. Above this straddle up the gully bed for 30 feet to a platform. The next pitch is a 40-foot chimney with an overhung top. Avoid the overhang by moving out to the left. Here the ordinary route is regained. New section about 180 feet (D.). W. D. Brooker and S. McPherson, August 13, 1950.

Ardath Chimney, Coire Sputan Dearg.—Falls into Anchor Gully from the right hand side of No. 2 Buttress (D.). J. Tewnion and M. Smith. Straight cut chimney for about 150 feet, thereafter falling back into a grassy depression. Climb starts with a chokestone climbed on the left. Piled blocks, requiring care, follow to a good stance and belay below a small chokestone. Above rises the smooth water-worn gully bed, with good holds on the left for 20 feet where an awkward step right to a platform with belay must be made. Above this, small

rock pitches can be found on the right, followed by scrambling to the summit.

Janus Chimney, Coire Sputan Dearg.—The conspicuous chimney on the lower section of Janus Buttress (D.) E. L. Smith, T. Shaw, and A. Cameron, July 1, 1950. Climb starts with a bulging chokestone climbed on the left. Two moss-covered blocks follow and then loose vegetation to a small cave. The hardest move is to get round the bulge of the chokestone above. Climb the left wall. (Thread belay available). A short easy pitch leads to the upper buttress.

Clach Dhian Chimney, Shelter Stone Crag.—Six hundred feet. M.S., W. D. Brooker and J. W. Morgan, June 24, 1950. This is chimney referred to in the Cairngorms Guide under West Wall Route. Previous ascents were not made wholly in the chimney apparently. The first chokestone pitch was climbed by a crack on the left and a groove then led to easy ground. The second pitch was passed by a rib on the right wall, and on returning to the gully, the left of twin chimneys was climbed. The gully then peters out and an exit was made to the left. The next 200 feet was climbed by zigzagging up to the foot of the vertical upper wall of the Crag. An easy but sensational shelf led to the top of the lowest of the three towers seen on the skyline from the Stone. The final wall (150 feet) was climbed first by a fan-shaped slabby staircase (100 feet) and then by two parallel cracks and an overhang (crux).

Deep-Cut Chimney, Ben Macdhui.—The conspicuous vertical-looking chimney on the buttress to the right of Hell's Lum. I. M. Brooker and Miss M. Newbigging, September 1950. Start up the grassy fault in the rock curving to the left towards the crack. There were a number of steep rock pitches, with much vegetation, and most of these were climbed by back and foot methods. Higher up the rock was rather loose; 150 feet from the top the crack goes very deep into the rock and the outlet is blocked by chokestones, leaving too small an opening to wriggle through. It is quite remarkable rock scenery as the chimney is almost a tunnel through the rock. Escape on the right wall was engineered by a very hard and exposed mantelshelf movement and further quite difficult climbing to the summit.

Pine Tree Buttress, Cairn Gorm.—Five hundred feet (D.). W. D. Brooker and J. W. Morgan, July 25, 1950. This buttress lies to the right of Serrated Rib and just to the left of a gully housing three big pitches, roughly north of the Shelter Stone. At the foot is a long curving tongue of broken rock. Above this the route gradually diverges right to the edge of the gully. A short traverse left and a difficult groove lead to easier ground. Higher up, a steep, clean wall on the left of the crest enables one to turn a huge overhang. The climb ends at an easy 20-foot wall.

Juniper Buttress, Coire Etchachan.—I. M. Brooker and Miss M. Newbigging, July 6, 1950. To the right of the Bastion (see below). Pioneer Route is on the buttress to the right (Creagan a' Choire Etchachan). Start at lowest rocks. Climb 50 feet. Then at 80 feet (hard pitch) two ways are possible: (a) astride a smooth, exposed nose

of rock—stocking soles; or (b) a strenuous chimney move to the right. An easy 50-foot pitch is followed by three 20-foot pitches separated by ledges—all well protected but quite hard on very good rock. Scrambling to the top. Rock good throughout. 450 feet (V.D.).

Flanking Ribs Route, Coire Etchachan.—450 feet (S.). W. D. Brooker and D. A. Sutherland, March 26, 1950. Start up the slabby chimney at the right of the cliff. Fifty feet up, climb the left wall to platform (belay). Avoid overhang above on the left and carry on for 60 feet (belay). Climb wall above for 80 feet (flake belay). Step left and follow ill-defined rib up slabs and heathery cracks of continuous difficulty, trending right at the top. The line of overhangs looms above, so a traverse was made to the steep, narrow rib bounding the chimney on the right. Follow the rib until a small tower rears up. The crux follows. Ascend to a square recess and from there up a groove and on to the sloping roof. A mossy crack leads to easier ground. Two hundred feet of scrambling to the summit.

The Bastion, Coire Etchachan.—(S.). D. A. Sutherland and K. Winram, April 1, 1950. On big buttress on extreme left of the cliff, starting up a depression on the right side. The depression slants left and ends under an overhanging wall 150 feet up. A fine slab pitch round the corner of the wall leads to a tower 7 feet high. A wall pitch (50 feet) a few feet to the right follows. The route then went to the right. The side of a vertical rib was climbed and a very hard move to the right made. The left hand of two chimneys 10 feet apart was then climbed for 15 feet when a traverse right had to be made to complete the pitch. Above this some difficulty was experienced in getting lodged in a crack, which was climbed, followed by 40 feet of hard climbing (crux). At the top of this pitch is a huge V groove which can be avoided on the left by a big square cut chimney which leads to easy ground. 550 feet.

Crown Buttress, Garbh Choire Mòr, Braeriach.—400 feet (V.D.). K. Winram, C. Petrie, M. Smith, and J. Tewnton, August 13, 1950. On left hand side of Great Gully. Start at lowest rocks (cairn). Moderately difficult rock ribs are followed to a large block, climbed by a crack on the left. An awkward step right, into a groove, is followed by moderate scrambling to the foot of a groove 150 feet high. This is the high-light of the climb. The arête on the right is topped by the peculiar rock formation from which the buttress derives its name. Climb by back and foot methods for 40 feet to a bulge. A short vertical section follows and jamming and backing continues over a chokestone to a good stance (110-foot pitch). Forty feet of very loose rock lead to the plateau.

Lairig Ridge, Sròn na Lairig.—600 feet (D.). W. D. Brooker and J. Fowler; T. Shaw and A. Barrett, July 7, 1950. The longest and best defined of the rock ribs on the Sròn, opposite The Lurcher. Start at the lowest rocks on the right edge of a big wall to an overhang. Then traverse left and up a short wall to the slabs above. Easy for 100 feet to the first tower, the face of which is gained by a zigzag movement. Then right, round a corner and up a chimney to a nick behind

the tower. Follow the crest, which is sharp and has a series of towers. Rough, clean rock.

Consolation Gully, Garbh Choire, Beinn a' Bhùird.—400 feet (V.D.). J. Tewnton and K. Winram, July 30, 1950. The second definite gully to the left of the south-east gully (Mitre Ridge). A moderate pitch over slabs and piled blocks is climbed before the gully is entered. The first pitch is wet and mossy and the holds are not too reliable. The second starts with a 20-foot chimney, with a good stance on top, from which a mossy chokestone is climbed on the left. The third pitch is easier but about 100 feet long. The rock again tends to be loose. Belay below the chokestone. No great difficulty to summit.

Flake Buttress, Coire Sputan Dearg.—First winter ascent, April 10, 1950 W. D. Brooker and S. McPherson.

Pyramus Gully, Coire Bhrochain.—*Idem.* April 12.

NEW CLIMBING BOOKS.

- "Rock Climbs: Glencoe and Ardgour." S.M.C. Guide; 1949; 7s. 6d.
- "The Southern Highlands." S.M.C. Guide; 1949; 15s.
- "The Cairngorms"; 3rd Edition; S.M.C. Guide, 1950; 18s.
- "A Progress in Mountaineering," by J. H. B. Bell. (Oliver & Boyd, 1950; 25s.).
- "Undiscovered Scotland," by W. H. Murray. (Dent, 1951; 18s.).
- "Cairngorms on Foot and Ski," by V. A. Firsoff. (Hale, 1950; 15s.).
- "The Mountaineer's Week-end Book," by Showell Styles. (Seeley Service, 1951; 12s. 6d.).
- "Mountains beneath the Horizon," by W. Bell. (Faber, 1950; 8s. 6d.).
- "Mountaineering Handbook," S.A.C. (Paternoster Press, 1950; 8s. 6d.).
- "La Nature Alpine," by R. Godefroy. (Press Univ. de France, 1948).
- "Le Cervin I, II," by C. Gos. (Attinger, Neuchatel, 1948).
- "Climbs of My Youth," by A. Roch. (Lindsay Drummond, 1949; 12s. 6d.).
- "First on the Rope," by R. Frison-Roche. (Methuen, 1949; 10s. 6d.).
- "One Green Bottle," by Elizabeth Coxhead. (Faber, 1951; 10s. 6d.).
- "Subterranean Climbers," by P. Chevalier. (Faber, 1951; 16s.).

The three new S.M.C. guides will, for most members, occupy pride of place in the above list of new books, all of which have been added to the library through the generosity of the publishers. We must record our appreciation of this generosity, and regret that we have not space to deal adequately with them.

The first edition of the guide to the Southern Highlands, covering the area south of a line from Loch Rannoch to Loch Awe, and including in particular the Glen Lyon, Crianlarich, and Arrochar groups, has been long awaited. The rock climbs in the area are included in an

appendix, but the plan in the Cairngorms guide of incorporating these into the body of the work seems preferable, as, to cite only one advantage, it draws the attention of the hill-walker immediately to the routes where he is liable to be involved in climbing or scrambling. The new Cairngorms guide still rests on secure foundations laid by Sir Henry Alexander, and remains the best-written of the guides. Much new matter has been added, particularly in the sections dealing with rock climbs, but the changes need not be detailed, as most members will no doubt already have a copy. The general demand for W. H. Murray's guide to the Glencoe and Ardgour rocks may not be so wide, but scarcely a roped party is now to be encountered in Glencoe without a copy in the leader's pocket. Without giving a hold by hold description of each route, the adequate and clear information provided should enable any capable climber to choose and follow a route suitable for the capabilities of his party.

The S.M.C. guides are detailed descriptions; J. H. B. Bell's book is a handbook of climbing, particularly in Scotland. It tells, clearly and concisely, how to climb and what to climb, backed by all the authority of Scotland's most experienced rock climber. There is an atmosphere of competence and adequate knowledge and feeling for the subject about this book of Bell's—an atmosphere which the reviewer found lacking in V. A. Firsoff's rather pedestrian account of the Cairngorms. East of the Lairig an Laoigh the treatment is scant; the spelling often tends to be heterodox; and one gets the impression that the author's acquaintance with the area is somewhat superficial. Mr Firsoff does not appear to appreciate the distinction between a club hut, a hostel, and a bothy: his remarks about Miss Adam Smith's Corour suggestion (the reference to which is erroneous) and his comments thereon are thus pointless, as recent action at Corour indicates. But one could find on almost every page such lack of contact with reality (the typical Granite tors referred to continually as Egyptian rocks for instance!) Really good books about the Cairngorms are unfortunately few and far between. But W. H. Murray has done it again so far as Scotland as a whole is concerned. "Undiscovered Scotland" approaches the standard of "Mountaineering in Scotland." No more need be said.

A well-produced 400 page book for 12s. 6d. is uncommon nowadays, and when the contents comprise an excellent collection of mountaineering facts, hints, and extracts, it is a bargain indeed. Such is the "Mountaineer's Week-end Book"—something to dip into when there is nothing fresh on the bookshelf.

"Mountains beneath the Horizon" is a collection of the verse of W. Bell, who was lost on the Matterhorn in that bad summer of 1948. Modern poetry is a matter of individual taste and we can only suggest that members form their own opinion of these mountain poems.

There are five books, of quite different types, dealing with Alpine subjects. "Mountaineering Handbook" is an English translation of the standard Swiss Alpine Club handbook on technique, and as such

should be studied by those intending to visit the Alps. An addendum on Tarbuck's Nylon Rope Management is included. R. Godefroy's book is an excellent account of the physical geography of Alpine regions, with adequate sections dealing with snow and ice. The third Alpine book, also in French, is Gos's picture of the Matterhorn—almost entirely an anthology of quotations from both well-known and unusual sources. "Climbs of my Youth" is a series of accounts of early ascents by one of the best known Swiss climbers, and bears some resemblance to W. H. Murray's recent Scottish books—which is to say it is well above the usual run of books of this type. The last Alpine book is a novel dealing with climbs on the Dru and Aiguille Verte, technically correct, as we have here a novel written by a climber, not a novelist writing about climbing. The same atmosphere of realism pervades Miss Coxhead's novel of hostelling and rock climbing in North Wales; there is scarcely a false note sounded when the characters are among the hills—about what happens in the valleys one may not be quite so sure.

Finally, there is a book about what is perhaps not quite the negation of climbing, for P. Chevalier's book is not, despite its subtitle, "Twelve Years in the World's Deepest Chasm," an account of pot-holing as we tend to think of it, but is, in fact, the story of the exploration of the interior of one of the limestone mountains of south-east France. Some of the entrances to this 6,777 feet peak, the Dent de Crolles, are indeed near its summit. The atmosphere of exploration is well sustained, but the rendering of technical terms appears occasionally to differ somewhat from climbing practice, as does the use of mechanical aids, some of which recall the ladders of early Alpine travel.

There have been other additions to the library by purchase, but these need not be detailed here, as it is hoped shortly to issue to members an up-to-date and comprehensive library catalogue. R. L. M.

CLIMBING JOURNALS.

- Alpine Journal*, Nos. 277-281.
- Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal*, Nos. 140, 141.
- Climbers' Club Journal*, Nos. 74, 75.
- Rucksack Club Journal*, Vol. XI, Nos. 2, 3.
- Midland Association of Mountaineers Journal*, Vol. II, No. 2.
- Yorkshire Ramblers' Club Journal*, Vol. VII, No. 25.
- Fell and Rock Climbing Club Journal*, Nos. 42, 43/44.
- Moray Mountaineering Club Journal*, 1950
- Etchachan Club Journal*, Vol. I, Nos. 1, 2, 3.
- Cambridge Mountaineering*, 1948, 1949.
- Ladies' Alpine Club Year Book*, 1950.
- American Alpine Journal*, 1949, 1950.
- Iowa Climber*, 1949, 1950.

Journal of the Mountain Club of South Africa, 1948, 1949.

New Zealand Alpine Journal, 1949.

Der Bergkamerad, 1949, 1950.

Wierchy (Polish Tatra Society), 1949.

We have to record our indebtedness to the many clubs who exchange journals with us. The above list is so long that it is impossible even to mention the many important contributions. All are available in the Club Library and a regular perusal of the current journals is the only way of keeping up-to-date regarding new climbs. No one can get the best from a trip, be it to the Cuillins, to Wales or to the Alps, unless the more recent as well as the classic articles dealing with the areas in question in the journals of kindred clubs be consulted and digested. Conditions in the valleys change, as do the hills themselves, and valuable hints on accommodation and routes seldom reach the guide books in time to be of use.

Reminiscence, too, is aroused by the accounts in these journals—those friendly parties at the Schönbühl were, we learn, successful in their ascents of the Zmutt and Ferpeclé ridges—that unassuming rope on Nevis had just done something quite worthwhile—such details gleaned from the journals add to their interest.

We must, however, despite shortage of space, find room to welcome the Journal of our nearest neighbour, the Etchachan Club. While it is in itself modest and unpretentious, the policy behind the venture is, we consider, the proper one in that it fosters the individuality of the smaller clubs, rather than the merging of their literary output into a single journal as is suggested in some quarters. The articles are mainly of local interest, with accounts of a number of excellent new climbs, particularly on Ben Macdhuì and Beinn a' Bhùird. Articles dealing with our area are also to be found in the S.M.C. Journal, in particular, an account of the first ascent of the Black Spout Pinnacle direct by two of our own members.

Our sets of several club journals are reasonably complete, but we lack *Climbers' Club Journal*, new series, Vol. I, No. 1 (1912) and Vol. III, No. 1 (1926) as well as some of the old pre-1912 series; the *Fell and Rock Climbing Club Journal*, No. 41; and the *Rucksack Club Journal*, Vols. I and II, Vol. IX, No. 4 (1941), and Vol. X, Nos. 1 and 2, in order to complete our sets. The Librarian would be glad to know of any source of these missing numbers.

R. L. M.

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