

**THE  
CAIRNGORM  
CLUB  
JOURNAL**

**90**

**1956**

**PRICE FIVE SHILLINGS**

*"Be it granted to me to behold you again . . .*

## **HILLS OF HOME"**

If you are new to Hill-climbing, an expert, or just a lover of Hills, you should read some of the magnificent books from the pens of those who know them well.

We stock all worth-while Books.

## **WYLLIES**

(Booksellers) LIMITED

247 UNION STREET, ABERDEEN

ESTABLISHED 1814

TELEPHONE 25534

## Nearest Hotel to the Cairngorms

THE

## **DELL**

PRIVATE HOTEL

**Rothiemurchus . AVIEMORE**

Beautifully situated in own grounds at edge of Rothiemurchus Pine Forest. Near Lairig Ghru Pass and one mile from Aviemore Village. Good centre for mountaineers, ski-ers, and motorists. Own farm and fruit.

Golf Course

Tennis Courts

Telephone 216

Mrs Grant

# THE CAIRNGORM CLUB JOURNAL

Vol. 17

1956

No. 90

Edited by R. L. MITCHELL

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
Flowering Plants of the Cairngorms, by J. Grant Roger . . . . .	57
The Ice-axe, by E. C. W. Rudge . . . . .	72
The Cairngorm Munros in Three Days, by P. D. Baird . . . . .	75
In and Around Glen Spean, by E. W. Smith and L. B. Perkins . . . . .	77
Two Mountain Holidays, by Marshall G. Laing . . . . .	83
In Memoriam . . . . .	94
Proceedings of the Club . . . . .	98
Notes—	
Farther Afield . . . . .	100
Still Farther Afield . . . . .	101
Reconstruction at Derry . . . . .	102
Mount Everest Foundation . . . . .	104
Animals and Accuracy . . . . .	104
Both Feet In . . . . .	104
The Cult of the Rubber Stamp . . . . .	105
Mountains of Britain . . . . .	105
New Climbs . . . . .	106
New Climbing Books . . . . .	109
Climbing Journals . . . . .	111

### Illustrations—

Flowers of the Cairngorms, by Mrs Grant Roger; A' Choinneach and Bynack More, and Gross Venediger from North, by G. M. McAndrew; Rosengarten from Rifugio Vajolet and Langkofel, by Margaret Munro; Dr R. M. Williamson (courtesy *Aberdeen Press and Journal*); Reconstruction at Derry, by G. A. Taylor; Tailpiece, by T. Train.

---

PUBLISHED BY THE CAIRNGORM CLUB, 34 BRIDGE STREET, ABERDEEN  
*Agents* . . . WYLLIES (BOOKSELLERS) LTD., 247 UNION STREET, ABERDEEN

CONTRIBUTIONS for the next number of the *Cairngorm Club Journal* should reach the Hon. Editor, Dr R. L. Mitchell, 125 Cranford Road, Aberdeen, by September 30, 1956.

Communications regarding advertisements should be addressed to Mr L. B. Perkins, c/o N.S.H.E.B., Millburn Street, Aberdeen.

The publication of this number has been delayed three months owing to the absence of the Editor abroad, and it is therefore dated 1956, there being no issue dated 1955. It is hoped to maintain publication early each year, but this depends on the submission of sufficient material in good time.

In this issue will be found an article on the Flowering Plants of the Cairngorms, by Mr J. Grant Roger, a member of the Nature Conservancy staff. It is fifty years since Professor Trail's paper of a similar nature appeared in the *Journal*, and it is not now readily available to many members. It is proposed to publish articles of this nature on subjects related to the Cairngorms at intervals.

## THE CAIRNGORM CLUB

ALTERATIONS IN MEMBERSHIP UP TO SEPTEMBER 30, 1955

### *Admitted to Ordinary Membership—*

MISS ELIZABETH M. DAVIDSON, 37 School Road, Aberdeen.  
GEORGE KEITH, 45 Woodburn Avenue, Aberdeen.  
Colonel PATRICK D. BAIRD, Inverdon, Bridge of Don, Aberdeen.  
ALAN C. R. WATT, 37 Richmondhill Road, Aberdeen.  
ALEXANDER R. WILLOX, 50 St Swithin Street, Aberdeen.  
ERIC F. JOHNSTON, 38 Wellbrae Terrace, Aberdeen.  
J. S. MCINDOE, 22 Newlands Crescent, Aberdeen.  
WILLIAM IRVINE, 6 Beechgrove Gardens, Aberdeen.  
JAMES K. W. DUNN, 1 High Street, East Linton, East Lothian.  
Miss SHEILA J. KIDD, 40 Morningside Avenue, Aberdeen.  
Miss OLGA G. RAE, 12 Rosemount Square, Aberdeen.  
HERBERT PROCTOR, 33 Thornsett Road, Sheffield, 12.  
MARTIN O. SLOCOCK, 977 S.U. (Inverbervie), Montrose.

### *Admitted to Junior Membership—*

IVAN M. GOODBODY, Natural History Department, Marischal College.  
KENNETH M. MACKAY, 50 Whitehall Place, Aberdeen.  
PETER STEIN, 75 Salisbury Place, Aberdeen.  
EDITH WHITTAKER, 10 Elm Place, Aberdeen.  
Mrs HELEN WATT, 37 Richmondhill Road, Aberdeen.  
NORMAN G. MALCOLM, 151 Victoria Road, Aberdeen.  
Mrs MARY G. DRON, Clachnaben, Cairn Road, Bieldside.  
Miss ETHEL C. YOUNG, 93 Union Grove, Aberdeen.  
Miss EVELYN M. LAW, 93 Union Grove, Aberdeen.  
Miss RHODA E. PIRIE, 7 Portland Street, Aberdeen.  
Miss MOIRA E. K. HENDERSON, 26 Woodburn Avenue, Aberdeen.  
JULIAN HOLT, Engo, Riversdale Road, Liverpool.  
RAYMOND ELLIS, 35 School Road, Aberdeen.  
Miss WINIFRED A. CRAIG, Hakka Villa, Stonehaven.  
JAMES E. FISHER, 5 Griffin Street, Rushden, Northants.  
NIGEL N. STANLEY, 50 Gade Avenue, Watford, Herts.

### *Transferred from Junior to Ordinary Membership—*

GEORGE DEANS, W. WRIGHT, JOHN L. HARPER, Miss JEAN C. ARTHUR,  
Miss MARGARET J. HENDERSON, Dr DAVID W. MATHIESON, KENNETH G.  
McKENZIE, DONALD R. BARR-WELLS, ALASDAIR D. MCINTYRE, Dr JAMES M.  
PRENTIS, and DAVID G. KILGOUR.

### *Resignations—*

Dr GEORGE W. ROSS, Dr THOMAS W. PATEY, Professor ANTONY G. N. FLEW,  
Mrs ANNIS A. H. FLEW, and Miss CHRISTINE D. FORBES.

# ROBERT LAWRIE LTD

*Alpine and Polar Equipment Specialists*

**54 SEYMOUR STREET  
MARBLE ARCH  
LONDON, W.1**

Telephone - - - - PADDINGTON 5252

Telegraphic Address 'ALPINIST,' WESDO, LONDON

Business Hours: Daily 9 a.m.—6 p.m.  
Sats. 9 a.m.—12 noon

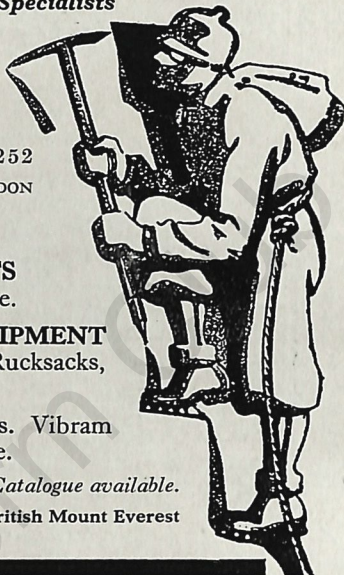
**CLIMBING & SKI-ING BOOTS**  
from stock or made to measure.

**CLIMBING CLOTHING & EQUIPMENT**  
Crampons, Ice-axes, Sleeping Bags, Rucksacks,  
Jackets, Socks, etc.

**REPAIRS & RE-NAILINGS** to boots. Vibram  
soles and heels now available.

ORDERS EXECUTED BY POST. *Illustrated Catalogue available.*

Bootmakers and Suppliers to the successful British Mount Everest  
Expedition 1953, etc., etc.



## AIRLIE ARMS HOTEL (KIRRIEMUIR) LIMITED

Established in 1760, this old hostelry was the changing place for horses in the old coaching days. From here the posts left daily for Glen Clova and Glen Prosen, nowadays much visited by climbers and hill-walkers. Though times have changed the AIRLIE ARMS retains its old-world atmosphere. At the same time it contains all modern conveniences. Bedrooms are large and comfortable, with hot and cold running water, and the whole building is centrally heated. The cuisine is of a very high standard, and the terms are moderate.



FULLY LICENSED

Miss GORDON, *Manageress.*

Telephone No. 47.

By Appointment Wine Merchants



to the late King George VI

*The connoisseur favours*  
**HARVEYS**  
*of Bristol*

THE WINE MERCHANTS WITH OVER 150 YEARS' EXPERIENCE



*"Bright to the Last Drop"*

Their Sherries, Ports and Table Wines are all characterized by unflinching high quality. Harveys' Retail List, available for the asking, offers 450 varieties of Wines and Spirits and your selection can be guided by experts who visit the Wine growing countries every year.

**JOHN HARVEY & SONS LIMITED**

*Founded 1796*

12 DENMARK STREET, BRISTOL, 1. *Bristol 2-7661*

Glasgow Office: 225 WEST GEORGE STREET. *Glasgow City 7644-5*

**FOR THE HIMALAYAS . . .**

**FOR THE ALPS . . .**

**FOR THE CAIRNGORMS . . .**

Grenfell Cloth has been the choice of mountaineers the world over.

First made for Grenfell of Labrador, used by Everest Expeditions and by many famous climbers.

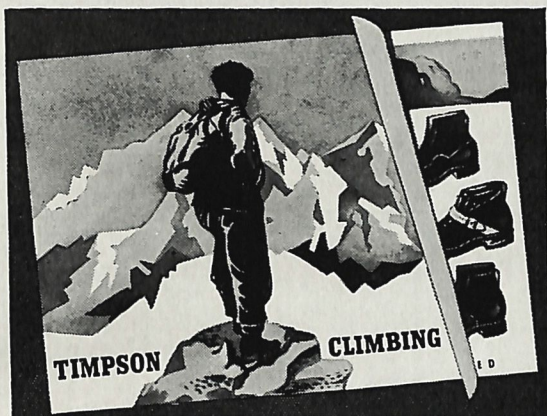
Why is it the best?

It is windproof, snowproof and light.



# **GRENFELL<sup>REGD.</sup> CLOTH**

**HAYTHORNTHWAITE & SONS LTD., LODGE MILL BURNLEY**



# Boots that you can trust

Write for this FREE  
illustrated BOOK to :

**Wm. Timpson Ltd.**

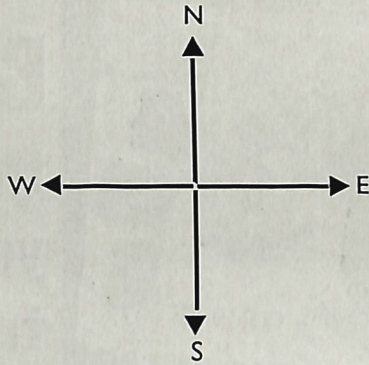
Great Ducie St.,  
MANCHESTER 3.

OFFICIAL CHOICE for Climbers and Sherpas of the 1955 Welsh Himalayan Expedition, Timpson Climbing boots are designed by climbers and made by skilled and highly responsible craftsmen who have been making climbing boots for years. Prices : Men's 64/9 to 115/-. Ladies' 62/9 to 100/-. Nailing extra.

REPAIRS AND RE-NAILING to any design at any Timpson Shoe Shop. Address of nearest shop sent on request.



**VIKING**  
*nylon rope*  
from all good  
**Sports Outfitters**

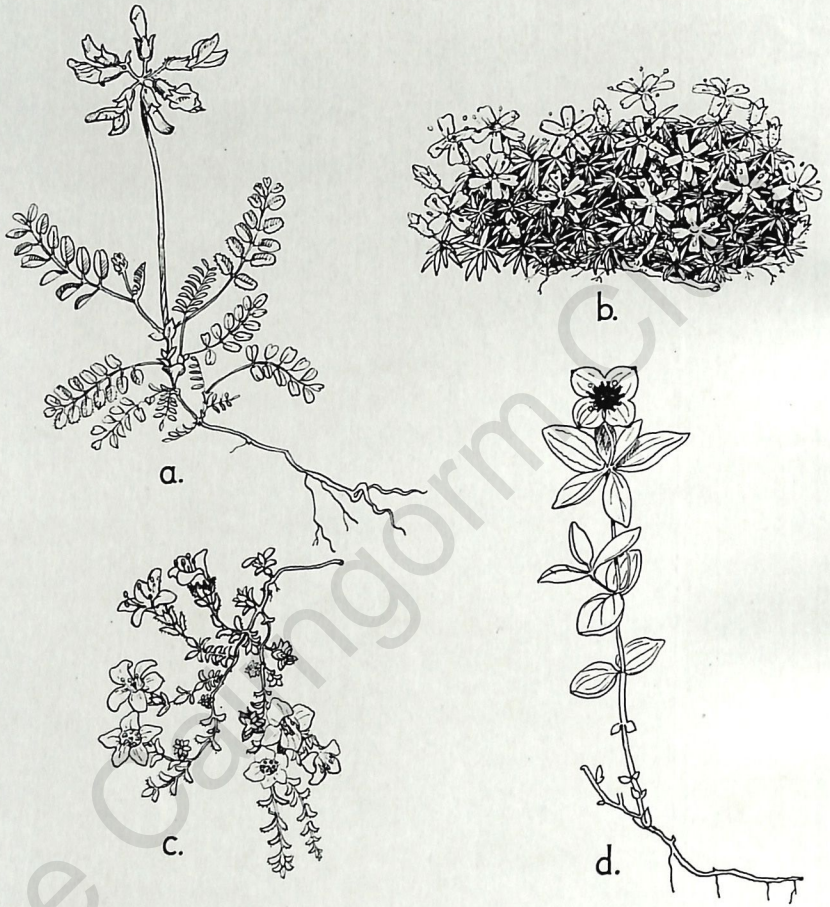


WHEREVER YOU GO  
WHATEVER YOU NEED  
YOU WILL ALWAYS FIND OUR  
EQUIPMENT WILL GIVE YOU  
**SATISFACTION**

**CAMPING**  
**CLIMBING**  
**SKI-ING**

***Campbell's Rubber Co. Ltd.***  
***150 Bridge Street . Aberdeen***

*Telephone . 20157*



- a. Alpine Milk-vetch: on mountain pasture, very local.  
 b. Moss Campion: corries and exposed summits, frequent.  
 c. Purple Saxifrage: on moist rocks, local.  
 d. Dwarf Cornel: on peaty moors.

*About natural size*

# THE CAIRNGORM CLUB JOURNAL

---

---

Vol. 17

1956

No. 90

---

---

## FLOWERING PLANTS OF THE CAIRNGORMS

J. GRANT ROGER

As the Cairngorms consist predominantly of a dissected mass of coarse-grained granite, originally thrust upwards into the Moine schists and gneisses, their flora generally comprises species characteristic of acid igneous rocks. The less resistant schists, which have been reduced by weathering to elevations mainly below 2,000 feet and rarely above 3,000 feet, support a rather richer and more varied flora, particularly in places where the schists are calcareous. On the areas of diorite also the vegetation differs noticeably from that on the neighbouring granite. Taken as a whole, the region of the Cairngorms presents a very interesting range of plant communities from the pine and birch woods upwards over the moors and mountain pastures to the high corries and exposed summits, including in all over two hundred species of native flowering plants.

In Mar and Rothiemurchus the pine and birch woods have their present-day upper limits near the 2,000 feet contour, although scattered pines may be found somewhat higher, and birches up to 2,400 feet. The most extensive pinewoods are those remaining on the northern and western slopes of the mountains where also regeneration is more evident than in Mar, but in Glen Quoich, Glen Lui, and Glen Derry there are fine areas of woodland containing many splendid trees. Such old woods of Scots Pine have a shrub flora consisting principally of Blaeberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*), Cranberry or Red Whortleberry (*Vaccinium vitis-idaea*), Ling or Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), and, locally, Juniper (*Juniperus communis*); while the characteristic herbs include Creeping Lady's Tresses (*Goodyera repens*), Linnæa (*Linnæa borealis*), Chickweed Wintergreen (*Trientalis europæa*), Intermediate Wintergreen (*Pyrola media*), and Single-flowered Wintergreen (*Moneses uniflora*). In the birch woods the following are among the

common herbs: Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), Tuberous Bitter Vetch (*Lathyrus montanus*), Hairy Woodrush (*Luzula pilosa*), Common Cow-wheat (*Melampyrum pratense*), Wood Sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*), Germander Speedwell (*Veronica chamædrys*), and Violet (*Viola riviniana*).

Usually along the lower parts of the glens the tree species include Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), Aspen (*Populus tremula*), Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*), and more locally Bird-Cherry or Hagberry (*Prunus padus*). The Rowans reach elevations up to at least 2,300 feet, particularly on steep rocks.

On a few hillsides, notably on Cadha Mor, in Rothiemurchus, the pine woods are associated at their upper limits with spreading juniper bushes which continue upwards to the open moors beyond the highest trees. Generally, however, this probably most natural transition does not prevail and Ling is very frequently quite dominant immediately above the woodlands, although it has many associates and several important competitors which replace it over large areas, according to the nature of the soil and the degree of exposure. Bell Heather (*Erica cinerea*) is prominent on the drier moors up to about 2,200 feet, while Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*) is very common on wetter areas, to at least 2,300 feet. Red Bearberry (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*) occurs, frequently along with the *Calluna*, to higher elevations, and Trailing Azalea (*Loiseleuria procumbens*) appears on more exposed places generally, from 2,500 to 3,500 feet—often associated with Mountain Crowberry (*Empetrum hermaphroditum*) and Ling. The Crowberry and Blaeberry are more tolerant of snow cover and shade than Ling, so they tend to be dominant over areas less suitable to the latter. The Cranberry or Red Whortleberry (*Vaccinium vitis-idaea*) is common on the moors up to about 3,000 feet, and Bog Whortleberry (*Vaccinium uliginosum*) is locally abundant between 2,000 and 3,500 feet. Dwarf Birch (*Betula nana*) is sparsely distributed on peaty areas usually between 1,500 and 2,500 feet, and Dwarf Juniper (*Juniperus communis* ssp. *nana*) is found up to 3,350 feet on Ben Macdhui.

The shrubby plants referred to above are generally the most conspicuous elements of the vegetation of the Cairngorms above the woodlands, but many herbs occur on the middle slopes of the mountains. Some of these are common species of the lowlands, e.g., Tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*), Heath Bedstraw (*Galium hercynicum*), Devil's-bit Scabious (*Succisa pratensis*), and Bluebell (*Campanula rotundifolia*), but others are characteristic mountain plants. The

latter include Averans or Cloudberry (*Rubus chamaemorus*), Dwarf Cornel (*Chamaepericlymenum suecicum*), Alpine Lady's Mantle (*Alchemilla alpina*), Procumbent Sibbaldia (*Sibbaldia procumbens*), and Dwarf Cudweed (*Gnaphalium supinum*). The Alpine Milk Vetch (*Astragalus alpinus*) is (for geological regions) confined to one hillside between 2,300 and 2,600 feet—its only known station in Scotland north of the Dee. Quite frequent in the wetter places, particularly by burns and springs, are: Alpine Meadow Rue (*Thalictrum alpinum*), Scottish Asphodel (*Tofieldia pusilla*), Starry Saxifrage (*Saxifraga stellaris*), Yellow Mountain Saxifrage (*S. aizoides*), Alpine Willow-herb (*Epilobium anagallidifolium*), and Chickweed Willow-herb (*E. alsinifolium*).

In the high corries several of the species present such as Rose-root (*Sedum rosea*) and Mountain Sorrel (*Oxyria digyna*) are widespread over the Highlands, others such as Alpine Rock Cress (*Cardaminopsis petræa*) and Alpine Speedwell (*Veronica alpina*) are generally more local, while a few are among the rarest members of the British Flora. The latter include Tufted Saxifrage (*Saxifraga caespitosa*), Brook Saxifrage (*S. rivularis*), Wavy Meadow Grass (*Poa flexuosa*), and Alpine Hare's foot Sedge (*Carex lachenalii*). Most of the thirty-five or so different Hawkweeds (*Hieracium* spp.) recorded for the Cairngorms occur in the corries and are among the most attractive plants appearing on the rocks in late summer.

Above the corries, on the extremely exposed tops, the vegetation is of special ecological interest because of the extensive areas near or over 4,000 feet subjected to terrific winds and great extremes of temperature. On the summit plateau of Braeriach and on the highest parts of Ben Macdhui, Cairntoul, Cairngorm, and Beinn a' Bhùird in particular the species of flowering plants present are indeed few, but the following can be found over the most windswept areas of stones and gravel—even near the indicator at the summit of Ben Macdhui: Rigid Sedge (*Carex bigelowii*), Viviparous Sheep's Fescue Grass (*Festuca vivipara*), Trifid Rush (*Juncus trifidus*), Curved Wood-rush (*Luzula arcuata*), Spiked Wood-rush (*Luzula spicata*), Least Willow (*Salix herbacea*), Starry Saxifrage (*Saxifraga stellaris*), and Moss Champion (*Silene acaulis*).

In the following summary the species are grouped according to their geographical relationships as recognised by Professor J. R. Matthews in his "Geographical Relationships of the British Flora" (*Journal of Ecology*, xxv, 1, 1937) and in his "Origin and Distribution of the British Flora," 1955.

## ARCTIC-ALPINE ELEMENT

Species mainly of arctic or subarctic regions and on high mountains farther south, but characteristically absent from the intervening lowlands (except, in some cases, on the sea coast). Most of the seventy-five British species of this group occur on the Cairngorms.

- Alchemilla alpina* L. Alpine Lady's Mantle. Abundant. Pastures, rocks, and exposed tops to over 4,000 feet.
- A. glomerulans* Buser. Rocks. Local up to c. 3,000 feet.
- Arctostaphylos uva-ursi* (L.) Spreng. Bearberry. Common on moors to 3,000 feet.
- Astragalus alpinus* L. Alpine Milk-Vetch. Extremely local in short pasture on basic schists, 2,300 to 2,500 feet.
- Betula nana* L. Dwarf Birch. Local on moors to 2,700 feet.
- Cardaminopsis petraea* (L.) Hiit. Alpine Rock Cress. Local on rocks to 4,000 feet.
- Carex atrata* L. Black Sedge. Very local on rocks to over 3,000 feet.
- C. bigelowii* Torr. Rigid Sedge. Common on stony and rocky places up to the highest summits.
- C. capillaris* L. Hair Sedge. Very local on basic rocks to 2,500 feet.
- C. lachenalii* Schkuhr. Very local. Wet places in a few of the highest corries. 3,000 to 3,900 feet.
- C. rupestris* All. Rock Sedge. Extremely local. On basic rocks from 2,400 to 2,500 feet.
- C. vaginata* Tausch. Brown-spiked Sedge. Local on rocks and grassy places, 2,500 to 3,800 feet.
- Cerastium alpinum* L. Alpine Mouse-ear Chickweed. Local on rocks to 4,000 feet.
- C. cerastoides* (L.) Britton. Starwort Mouse-ear Chickweed. Very local on rocks to near 4,000 feet.
- Dryas octopetala* L. Mountain Avens. Very local on basic rocks about 2,400 feet. Very rare on granite.
- Empetrum hermaphroditum* (Lange) Hagerup. Mountain Crowberry. Common and often abundant on moors and exposed places up to about 3,500 feet.
- E. nigrum* L. Common Crowberry. Common on moors up to about 2,500 feet.
- Epilobium alsinifolium* Vill. Chickweed Willow-herb. By springs and burns to about 3,500 feet.

- E. anagallidifolium* Lam. Alpine Willow-herb. Also by springs and burns but reaching higher elevations (to about 4,000 feet) than *E. alsinifolium*.
- Gnaphalium supinum* L. Dwarf Cudweed. Widespread on high rocky and gravelly places to over 4,000 feet.
- Juncus trifidus* L. Trifid Rush. Common and characteristic of exposed gravelly places, usually above 2,500 feet and reaching near the tops of the highest mountains.
- J. triglumis* L. Three-flowered Rush. Local in wet, usually rocky places to about 2,500 feet.
- Loiseleuria procumbens* (L.) Desv. Trailing Azalea. Exposed gravelly places from about 2,000 to 4,000 feet.
- Luzula spicata* (L.) D.C. Spiked Mountain Wood-rush. Widespread on rocks and gravel from about 2,500 feet to the highest summits.
- Oxyria digyna* (L.) Hill. Mountain Sorrel. Frequent on wet rocks up to about 4,000 feet, particularly in shaded gullies.
- Phleum commutatum* Gaud. Alpine Timothy Grass. Local and rare in wet places from 2,000 to 3,900 feet.
- Poa alpina* L. Alpine Meadow Grass. Local on rocks between 2,000 and 4,000 feet.
- Polygonum viviparum* L. Viviparous Bistort. Frequent on rocks and grassy places to over 4,000 feet.
- Potentilla crantzii* (Crantz.) Beck. Alpine Cinquefoil. Rare on ledges and grassy places to about 2,500 feet.
- Sagina saginoides* (L.) Karst. Alpine Pearlwort. Local and rare, usually on wet rocks, between 2,000 and 4,000 feet.
- Salix herbacea* L. Least Willow. Widespread on rocks and exposed gravelly places, from about 2,000 feet to the highest summits.
- S. lapponum* L. Downy Willow. Local on rocks to about 3,500 feet.
- S. myrsinites* L. Whortle-leaved Willow. Very local, usually between 2,000 and 2,500 feet, and favouring basic rocks.
- Saussurea alpina* (L.) DC. Alpine Saussurea. Very local on rock ledges usually between 2,000 and 3,000 feet.
- Saxifraga aizoides* L. Yellow Mountain Saxifrage. Common in wet places, particularly by burns, to about 3,000 feet.
- S. nivalis* L. Alpine Clustered Saxifrage. Very local and rare on rocks at about 3,000 feet.
- S. oppositifolia* L. Purple Saxifrage. Local on wet rocks from about 2,000 to over 3,000 feet.
- S. stellaris* L. Starry Saxifrage. Very common in wet places from about 1,200 feet to the highest summits.

- Sedum rosea* (L.) Scop. Rose-root. Widespread, but rather local, on steep rocks to at least 3,800 feet.
- Sibbaldia procumbens* L. Procumbent Sibbaldia. Common on rocks and exposed places from about 2,000 to 4,000 feet.
- Silene acaulis* L. Moss Campion or Cushion Pink. Locally common on rock ledges and gravel to the highest summits, flowering profusely over 4,000 feet.
- Thalictrum alpinum* L. Alpine Meadow Rue. Widespread in wet places to at least 3,100 feet.
- Tofieldia pusilla* (Michx.) Pers. Scottish Asphodel. Local from about 1,000 to at least 3,300 feet.
- Vaccinium uliginosum* L. Bog Whortleberry. Widespread on moors, mainly between 2,500 and 3,500 feet but reaching 3,700 feet.
- V. vitis-idaea* L. Cranberry or Red Whortleberry. Very common on woods and moors, reaching about 3,300 feet.
- Veronica alpina* L. Alpine Speedwell. Rare, on rocky places from about 2,000 to 3,300 feet.
- V. fructicans* Jacq. Rock Speedwell. Very rare and local on rocks about 2,500 feet.

#### ALPINE ELEMENT

Species found on the mountains of west, central, and south-east Europe, but absent from northern and arctic regions. Of the ten British species belonging to this group one is recorded for the Cairngorms.

- Cherleria sedoides* L. Mossy Cyphal. Extremely local on schists near 3,000 feet.

#### ARCTIC-SUBARCTIC ELEMENT

Species of definitely northern distribution ranging into the arctic or subarctic regions, but absent from the mountains of central Europe. In Britain there are in all about twenty-seven species of this group.

- Alopecurus alpinus* L. Alpine Fox-tail Grass. Very local and rare, in rather wet places, reaching at least 3,800 feet. (This strictly arctic plant is the only species of this element not found in Scandinavia.)
- Carex aquatilis* Wahlenb. Straight-leaved Water Sedge. Very local in marshy places to about 3,000 feet.
- C. rariflora* (Wahlenb.) Sm. Loose-flowered Sedge. Very rare, in wet, rather boggy places, reaching over 3,000 feet.

- C. saxatilis* L. Russet Sedge. Very rare, in wet places. On Cairntoul between 3,000 and 3,500 feet.
- Cerastium edmondstonii* (Wats.) Murb. and Ostenf. Broad-leaved Mouse-ear Chickweed. Local and rare, usually on rocky slopes and ledges, reaching nearly 4,000 feet.
- Cochlearia micacea* E. S. Marshall. Small Alpine Scurvy Grass. Local and rare, usually in rather wet places in the higher corries, to at least 3,300 feet.
- Chamaepericlymenum suecicum* (L.) Aschers and Graebn. Dwarf Cornel. Widespread, but rather local, on moors and sometimes on rock ledges to about 3,000 feet.
- Deschampsia alpina* L. Alpine Hair-grass. Local on rocks in the higher corries to at least 3,800 feet.
- Draba rupestris* R. Br. Rock Whitlow "Grass." Extremely local on rocks at about 3,000 feet.
- Luzula arcuata* (Wahl.) Wahl. Curved Woodrush. Widespread on stony places mostly above 3,500 feet, and reaching the summit of Ben Macdhui (4,296 feet). This species, so well represented on the Cairngorms, is rare in the Scottish Highlands generally.
- Poa flexuosa* L. Wavy Meadow Grass. Very rare in rocky places, in two of the highest corries at about 3,500 feet.
- Rhinanthus borealis* (Sterneck) Marshall. Northern Yellow Rattle. Local on pastures and rock ledges up to about 3,000 feet.
- Rubus chamaemorus* L. Averans or Cloudberry. Widespread on moors from about 1,000 to at least 3,800 feet.
- Saxifraga caespitosa* L. Tufted Saxifrage. Extremely local and rare, on rocks from about 3,000 to 3,500 feet.
- S. rivularis* L. Brook Saxifrage. Very local on wet rocks, in a few of the higher corries, usually well above 3,000 feet.

## NORTHERN MONTANE ELEMENT

Species of northern Europe and of the hilly regions of central and south Europe, but generally absent from the low-lying plains, the members of this group, about thirty in Britain, do not as a rule range so far north, nor to such high elevations on the mountains, as do the plants of the arctic-alpine element.

- Antennaria dioica* (L.) Gaertn. Mountain Everlasting. Widespread on hillsides, mainly short pastures, to at least 2,500 feet.
- Carex pauciflora* Lightf. Few-flowered Sedge. Rather local in boggy places, reaching over 2,500 feet.

- Goodyera repens* (L.) R. Br. Creeping Lady's Tresses. Locally common in Scots pine woods, but rarely over 1,000 feet.
- Juncus alpinus* Vill. Alpine Jointed Rush. Very local in wet places to about 2,000 feet.
- Leucorchis albida* (L.) Schur. Small White Orchid. Local in pastures to about 2,000 feet.
- Linnæa borealis* L. Linnaea. Very local in Scots pine woods, more rarely under birches to at least 1,500 feet.
- Listera cordata* (L.) R. Br. Lesser Twayblade. Local in woods and on moors, rarely on wet rocks, ascending to at least 2,300 feet.
- Rubus saxatilis* L. Stone Bramble. Very local, among rocks, in shade, ascending to 2,400 feet.
- Salix phylicifolia* L. Tea-leaved Willow. Local, usually on rocks by streams up to about 2,000 feet.
- Saxifraga hypnoides* L. Mossy Saxifrage. Extremely local, on basic rocks, to about 2,500 feet.
- Subularia aquatica* L. Awlwort. In the shallow water of a few lochs, to over 2,300 feet.
- Trientalis europæa* L. Chickweed Wintergreen. Widespread, but rather local, in woods and mountain pastures up to at least 3,000 feet. (Reaches 3,500 feet on Lochnagar!)
- Trollius europæus* L. Globe Flower. Local, in rather wet places in pastures or on rocks, reaching 3,700 feet on Braeriach.

#### OCEANIC NORTHERN ELEMENT

Species which in Europe have a distinctly north-westerly range, being characteristic of lands bordering the North Atlantic. Of the twenty-three British species, only three occur in the Cairngorms.

- Lobelia dortmanna* L. Water Lobelia. In several lochs to at least 1,950 feet (Lochan Beanaidh).
- Myrica gale* L. Bog Myrtle. Locally common in bogs to about 1,500 feet.
- Narthecium ossifragum* (L.) Huds. Bog Asphodel. Very common in wet moors, ascending to over 3,000 feet.
- Thymus drucei* Ronn. Wild Thyme. Very common in stony places, sandy slopes, and short pastures up to about 3,000 feet.

#### CONTINENTAL NORTHERN ELEMENT

Species having in Europe their chief distribution in central and northern regions, occurring farther south at higher altitudes. There are in all about ninety-seven British species in this group.

- Alchemilla glabra* Neugefind. Lady's Mantle. Widespread, usually by burns or on wet rocks in corries, reaching nearly 4,000 feet.
- Angelica sylvestris* L. Wild Angelica. Local, usually on rather wet rock ledges up to about 3,000 feet.
- Betula pubescens* Ehrh. Birch. Hillsides and valleys, ascending to 2,300 feet in Rothiemurchus.
- Carex curta* Good. White Sedge. Boggy places to about 3,500 feet.
- C. dioica* L. Dioecious Sedge. Rather local on wet moors to at least 2,500 feet.
- C. echinata* Murr. Star Sedge. Very common in wet places to about 2,500 feet.
- C. lasiocarpa* Ehrh. Slender Sedge. Very local, at loch margins, reaching 1,950 feet.
- C. pulicaris* L. Flea Sedge. Common in boggy places to about 2,000 feet.
- Cæloglossum viride* (L.) Hartm. Frog Orchid. Local, in pastures and on rock ledges, to at least 2,200 feet.
- Crepis paludosa* (L.) Moench. Marsh Hawk's Beard. Local, by burns and on wet rocks, to over 2,000 feet.
- Drosera anglica* Huds. Great Sundew. Rather local on wet moors to about 2,000 feet.
- D. rotundifolia* L. Round-leaved Sundew. Common on wet moors to at least 2,200 feet.
- Eriophorum angustifolium* Honck. Narrow-leaved Cotton-grass. Very common on wet moors to at least 3,500 feet.
- E. vaginatum* L. Hare's-tail Cotton-grass. Common on wet moors to about 2,500 feet.
- Galium boreale* L. Northern Bedstraw. Very local, usually on schistose rocks, to about 2,500 feet.
- Gentianella campestris* (L.) H. Sm. Field Gentian. Common in pastures to 2,500 feet.
- Hammarbya paludosa* (L.) O. Kuntze. Bog Orchid. Extremely local and rare, in boggy places usually on sphagnum, but probably not ascending above 1,500 feet.
- Littorella uniflora* (L.) Aschers. Shore-weed. Widespread, in the shallow water of lochs and lochans, to over 2,000 feet.
- Melampyrum sylvaticum* L. Wood Cow-wheat. Extremely local on damp, rather shaded rocks at about 2,000 feet.
- Menyanthes trifoliata* L. Bog Bean. Widespread in lochs and swampy places to at least 1,600 feet.

- Moneses uniflora* L. One-flowered Wintergreen. Extremely local in pine woods, ascending to about 1,200 feet. (It has seemingly been exterminated in a few areas by felling operations.)
- Oxycoccus palustris* Pers. Small Cranberry. Rather local in boggy places to at least 1,600 feet.
- Parnassia palustris* L. Grass of Parnassus. Local, in wet places to over 2,000 feet.
- Pinguicula vulgaris* L. Common Butterwort. Very common in wet moors, by burns, and dripping rocks to 3,800 feet on Cairntoul.
- Pinus sylvestris* L. Scots Pine. Represented in Mar and Rothiemurchus by the native sub-species *scotica* (Schott) E. F. Warburg, and ascending to about 2,000 feet, and very rarely higher as a tree, although seedlings and small shrubs reach much higher altitudes (3,400 feet on Ben Macdhui).
- Potentilla palustris* (L.) Scop. Marsh Cinquefoil. Common in boggy places to about 1,600 feet.
- Pyrola media* Sw. Intermediate Wintergreen. Rather local in woods and on the lower moors to about 1,500 feet.
- Ramischia secunda* (L.) Garcke. Serrated Wintergreen. Local in woods and on shaded slopes to at least 1,550 feet.
- Salix aurita* L. Eared Willow. Widespread by streams and on moors to about 2,000 feet.
- S. nigricans* Sm. Dark-leaved Willow. Local to over 2,000 feet.
- Sparganium angustifolium* Michx. Floating Bur-reed. Local, in pools, to about 2,000 feet.
- Trichophorum cespitosum* (L.) Hartman. Deer-grass. Abundant, as sub-species *germanicum* (Palla) Hegi, on the moors to at least 3,500 feet.
- Utricularia intermedia* Hayne. Intermediate Bladder wort, very local in the shallow peaty water of lochans and pools to at least 1,600 feet.
- Vaccinium myrtillus* L. Blaeberry. Abundant in woods and on moors to over 4,200 feet. (This species, often along with *Vaccinium vitis-idaea*, is frequently dominant in the closer pine woods, being more tolerant of shade than *Calluna vulgaris*.)
- Vicia sylvatica* L. Wood Vetch. Very local, in rather shaded rocky places to 2,000 feet.
- Viola palustris* L. Marsh Violet. Widespread in wet places to 4,200 feet.

## OCEANIC WEST EUROPEAN ELEMENT

Species distributed predominantly in areas of western Europe bordering on the Atlantic and absent, or very sporadic, in the central regions of the Continent. Only five of the eighty-five members of the British flora belonging to this group occur on the Cairngorms.

*Carex binervis* Sm. Ribbed Sedge. Common on moors to at least 2,800 feet.

*Erica cinerea* L. Bell-heather. Abundant on the drier moors to at least 2,200 feet.

*E. tetralix* L. Cross-leaved Heath. Abundant on the wetter moors to at least 2,300 feet.

*Genista anglica* L. Petty Whin. Common on rather dry moors to about 2,000 feet.

*Salix atrocinerea* Brot. Common Sallow. Widespread in wet places on hillsides and in rocky glens, ascending to 2,400 feet in Rothiemurchus.

In addition to the species summarised above, a considerable number of other flowering plants with generally less definite or very wide geographical relationships occur on the Cairngorms. Most of these are widespread over the lowlands and hills of Scotland, although some are represented at higher altitudes by sub-species or varieties.

The following ascend to 2,000 feet or above :—

*Achillea millefolium* L. Yarrow. In mountain pastures to about 3,500 feet.

*Agrostis canina* L. Brown Bent-grass. Widespread to over 3,000 feet.

*A. tenuis* Sibth. Fine or Common Bent-grass. Common to over 3,000 feet.

*Anemone nemorosa* L. Wood Anemone. Woods and shaded places to over 2,000 feet.

*Anthoxanthum odoratum* L. Sweet Vernal-grass. Abundant in woods and pastures to over 3,000 feet.

*Bellis perennis* L. Daisy. Frequent in pastures to about 2,500 feet.

*Caltha palustris* L. Marsh Marigold. Wet places, ascending to 3,900 feet on Cairntoul; the sub-species *minor* (Mill.) Clapham occurring from about 2,000 feet upwards.

*Calluna vulgaris* (L.) Hull. Heather or Ling. The most abundant flowering plant on the Cairngorms, dominant over large areas up to over 2,800 feet but occurring in dwarf form to nearly 3,600 feet.

- Campanula rotundifolia* L. Bluebell. Widespread in pastures and among rocks to over 3,200 feet.
- Carex demissa* Hornem. Yellow Sedge. Wet places to over 2,000 feet.
- C. flacca* Schreb. Glaucous Heath Sedge. Wet places to about 2,000 feet.
- C. nigra* (L.) Reichard. Common Sedge. Widespread in wet places to over 3,000 feet.
- C. pallescens* L. Pale Sedge. Local, in grassy woodlands and on hillsides to 2,000 feet.
- C. panicea* L. Carnation Sedge. Common in wet places to about 4,000 feet.
- C. pilulifera* L. Pill-headed Sedge. Widespread to 3,800 feet.
- C. rostrata* Stokes. Bottle Sedge. In the shallow water of lochs and in marshes.
- Chamaenerion angustifolium* (L.) Scop. Rosebay Willow-herb. Local, on rocks, to over 2,000 feet. (Noted at 3,600 feet on Lochnagar.)
- Chrysosplenium oppositifolium* L. Opposite-leaved Golden Saxifrage. Frequent by burns and on wet rocks to at least 3,500 feet.
- Cochlearia alpina* Wats. Mountain Scurvy-grass. Local, usually on wet rocks, to 3,800 feet.
- Deschampsia caespitosa* (L.) Beauv. Tufted Hair-grass. Widespread on moors and on hillsides to over 4,000 feet.
- D. flexuosa* (L.) Trin. Wavy Hair-grass. Abundant on moors and pastures to over 4,000 feet.
- Digitalis purpurea* L. Foxglove. Frequent at edges of woods and in rocky places to over 2,000 feet.
- Euphrasia officinalis* agg. Eyebright. Very common in pastures to over 3,500 feet. (Several of the rather critical species or sub-species of Eyebright occur on the Cairngorms, *E. frigida* Pugsl., being most frequent at higher altitudes.)
- Festuca ovina* L. Sheep's Fescue. Widespread, and locally abundant, in pastures to the highest summits, the sub-species *vivipara* (L.) Sm. being common on the exposed tops.
- Galium hercynicum* Weigel. Heath Bedstraw. Very common in pastures to over 4,000 feet.
- Geranium sylvaticum* L. Wood Cranesbill. Shaded rock ledges to over 3,000 feet.
- Geum rivale* L. Water Avens. Local, in wet places including shaded rocks to at least 2,500 feet.

- Hypericum pulchrum* L. Slender St John's Wort. Common on moors to over 2,000 feet.
- Juncus bulbosus* L. Bulbous Rush. Frequent in pools and wet places to over 3,000 feet.
- J. squarrosus* L. Heath Rush. Abundant on moors to at least 3,100 feet.
- Juniperus communis* L. Common Juniper. Locally common in woods and on moors; the sub-species *nana* (Willd.) Syme, occurring at higher elevations up to 3,350 feet.
- Lathyrus montanus* (L.) Bernh. Tuberos Bitter Vetch. Widespread in woods, pastures, and on moors to over 2,000 feet.
- Leontodon autumnalis* L. Autumnal Hawkbit. Common on hillside to over 3,000 feet.
- Luzula campestris* (L.) DC. Field Woodrush. Very common in pastures to about 3,000 feet.
- L. multiflora* (Retz.) Lej. Many-flowered Woodrush. Abundant on moors and pastures to about 3,000 feet.
- L. sylvatica* (Huds.) Gaud. Greater Woodrush. Woods and rock ledges to over 3,000 feet.
- Molinia caerulea* (L.) Moench. Purple Moor-grass. Abundant on moors to over 3,000 feet.
- Melampyrum pratense* L. Common Cow-wheat. In woods and pastures to at least 3,350 feet.
- Melandrium rubrum* (Weig.) Garcke. Red Campion. Local in shaded places to over 3,000 feet.
- Montia lamprosperma* Chamisso. Water Blinks. Common by springs and in swampy places to over 3,000 feet.
- Nardus stricta* L. Mat-grass. Abundant to over 3,700 feet.
- Orchis ericetorum* E. F. Linton. Heath Orchis. Common on moors to at least 3,050 feet.
- Oxalis acetosella* L. Wood Sorrel. Widespread in woods and shaded places among rocks to at least 4,000 feet.
- Pedicularis palustris* L. Red Rattle. Local, in marshy places to over 2,000 feet.
- P. sylvatica* L. Lousewort. Frequent in pastures to over 2,000 feet.
- Polygala serpyllifolia* Hose. Milkwort. Common in pastures to at least 3,000 feet.
- Potamogeton polygonifolius* Pourr. Bog Pondweed. Common in pools and bogs to over 2,000 feet.
- Potentilla erecta* (L.) Räsch. Tormentil. Abundant on moors and pastures to over 3,000 feet.

- Prunella vulgaris* L. Self-heal. Frequent in pastures to over 2,000 feet.
- Ranunculus acris* L. Meadow Buttercup. Common in pastures and among damp rocks to 3,800 feet.
- Rosa villosa* L. Villous Rose. Local, on rocks up to 2,000 feet.
- Rumex acetosa* L. Sorrel. Widespread in pastures and on rock ledges to 3,500 feet.
- R. acetosella* L. Common in pastures to over 2,000 feet.
- Salix repens* L. Creeping Willow. Locally common on moors and pastures to over 2,000 feet.
- Sarothamnus scoparius* (L.) Wimmer. Broom. Local, on hillsides to over 2,000 feet.
- Sorbus aucuparia* L. Rowan. Widespread in woods and on rocks to over 3,000 feet.
- Solidago virgaurea* L. Golden-rod. Common on hillsides and rocks to at least 3,600 feet.
- Stellaria alsine* Grimm. Bog Stitchwort. By springs and in marshy places to 3,200 feet.
- Succisa pratensis* Moench. Devil's-bit Scabious. Very common in pastures to over 2,500 feet.
- Taraxacum officinale* agg. Common Dandelion. Widespread to over 3,000 feet.
- T. paludosum* agg. Narrow-leaved Marsh Dandelion. Local, in wet places to over 3,000 feet.
- T. spectabile* agg. Broad-leaved Marsh Dandelion. Local, in marshy places and on wet rocks to about 4,000 feet on Cairntoul.
- Trifolium repens* L. White Clover. Widespread in pastures to over 2,000 feet.
- Veronica officinalis* L. Common Speedwell. Common on hillsides and rocky places to at least 3,100 feet.
- V. serpyllifolia* L. Thyme-leaved Speedwell. Widespread in pastures to over 3,000 feet, the sub-species *humifusa* (Dicks) Syme, occurring often in wetter places, usually above 2,000 feet.
- Viola riviniana* Rchb. Common Violet. Very common in woods, pastures, and rocky places to over 3,000 feet.

The many species of *Hieracium* (hawkweeds) recorded for the glens and corries of the Cairngorms are perhaps best referred to apart because of the peculiar difficulties which they present to the taxonomist and the plant geographer. Several are common to Britain and the Continent, others are apparently absent from the Continent, while a few seem to be found only on the Cairngorms.

Those of the first category include: *Hieracium alpinum* L., *H. argenteum* Fr., *H. calenduliflorum* Backh., *H. eximium* Backh., *H. globosiflorum* Pugsl., *H. gracilentum* Backh., *H. gracilifolium* (Hanb.) Pugsl., *H. holosericeum* Backh., *H. jovimontis* (Zahn) Roffey, *H. lasiophyllum* Koch., *H. molybdochroum* Dahlst., *H. pilosella* L., *H. sommerfeltii* Lindbg., and *H. vulgatum* (Fr.) Almq.

Of the second category are: *Hieracium aggregatum* Backh., *H. anglicum* Fr., *H. backhousei* Hanb., *H. centripetale* Hanb., *H. flocculosum* Backh., *H. graniticolum* W. R. Lint., *H. hanburyi* Pugsl., *H. hypocharoides* Gibson, *H. lingulatum* Backh., *H. marshallii* Lint., *H. nitidum* Backh., *H. pictorum* Lint., *H. pseudo-curvatum* (Zahn) Pugsl., *H. senescens* Backh., and *H. vennicantium* Pugsl.

Of the third category (Cairngorms only) are: *Hieracium grovesii* Pugsl., *H. macrocarpum* Pugsl., *H. melanochloricephalum* Pugsl., and *H. pseudo-petiolum* (Zahn) Roffey.

All the hawkweeds mentioned above have been described with great thoroughness by H. W. Pugsley in his "A Prodrum of the British Hieracia" (*Journal of the Linnean Society*, Vol. 54. London, 1948).

In conclusion it may be noted that, excluding *Hieracia*, 115 (or 62 per cent.) of the species mentioned above are essentially northern in their distribution generally; and indeed the high Cairngorms present a flora nearer in composition to that of arctic regions than can be found on perhaps any other group of mountains in the British Isles.

#### GENERAL REFERENCES

- CLAPHAM, A. R., TUTIN, T. G., and WARBURG, E. F. (1952). "Flora of the British Isles." Cambridge.
- DICKIE, G. (1860). "The Botanist's Guide to the Counties of Aberdeen, Banff, and Kincardine." Aberdeen.
- MACGILLIVRAY, W. (1855). "The Natural History of Deeside and Braemar." London.
- TRAIL, J. W. H. (1895). "The Flowering Plants and Fern-allies of the Cairngorms." *Cairngorm Club Journal*, Vol. 1.
- WATT, A. S., and JONES, E. W. (1948). "The Ecology of the Cairngorms," Part 1. *Journal of Ecology*, Vol. 36.

## THE ICE-AXE

E. C. W. RUDGE

DARKNESS. A bleak, cold wind blowing from endless leagues of ice; widespread canopy of stars, jarred and split by savage rock; everywhere, penetrating everything, the far-off sound of faintest music.

Unreality and reality meeting; inextricably mingling.

The glacier-lantern gave enough light for safe movement down steep rock, over crevassed ice and tiny glacier-streams. Beyond the level ice was again more ice—a vast upward surge of it, buried in snow—carrying onward and upward the indeterminate majesty of the mighty glacier. Riven rock; rent and tortured ice; split and tattered sky in which the stars sat fidgeting, wakeful, in aloof, celestial agitation.

On the huge bulge of snow-carpeted ice the lanterns twinkled faintly. The leader's feet sank deep into the snow, which was firm and held strongly. The course was a steep zigzag, traced on a monstrous highway between the embattled walls of a fortress of giants; a fortress in appearance everlasting, yet in reality eternally crumbling, as the great scars on its seamed and shattered walls gave proof.

The highway, too, was neither whole nor still. Its calm, unhurried downward march was too slow for human detection, but now and again with a voice of thunder it would signal its advance casting down some huge, unstable tower of its own building; as though this particular piece of architecture had served its purpose, and was now ready for demolition. Its surface, too, was scarred and split without plan or purpose by bottomless horrors of darkness—gaping crevasses in whose depths also could be heard that same strange music, far off, faint as though drifting on its own sound-breathings, stirring (or was it everywhere?) in an unfathomable abyss of emptiness.

The restless stars grew faint, their light quenched by a stronger flame. Colour and form began to clothe the vastness of silence frozen into gigantic material shapes. The terrible gashes could be analysed;

the tottering battlements traced in their uncertainty. The grandeur of their terrific austerity absorbed the mind, so that it became disembodied, aloof, on a plane unknown in human habitations.

Presently the highway ceased its steep ascent, changed to a vast pool of whiteness; a ghost-lake. Beyond the lake swept up in tremendous majesty the central keep of this castle of the Valkyries, towering into and through a floating cloud-wraith, pointing skywards the glorious summit of its gigantic peak from which streamed the very banners of Heaven. Down from this peak there stretched a monstrous curtain of savagely splintered towers and battlements, rent and twisted into most weird and fantastic forms. Up this curtain lay our path.

The music was louder here—or rather it now swelled and faded in cadences which reached the mind not so much through the ears as through the whole being. The sun's light glowed and streamed down upon this world in which we were as ants upon a housetop. The glory of infinite blue space above met, but did not blend with the glorious savagery of rock and ice around. "Ever upward" seemed to echo from every tower and bastion; "ever upward" was the wordless refrain of the continuous, soundless music.

With infinite care the leader traced his way amongst the mighty fragments which crested the great rock-curtain, like the teeth on a broken comb. We were in a new world now; a world of monsters, whose shape and size suggested no similarity to other monsters known to history, or pre-history. Furiously they towered over us, angrily enquiring by what right we violated their sanctuary of silence; but they could not harm us, for in the ages of chaos before men were born they had been stricken into fearful immobility by irresistible power.

We came at length out upon the head of a monster which was of sufficient width and flatness to allow us to rest on it. We took off the rope, took food from our packs, and ate. Then we lay down upon the stone—the music of Eternity rising and falling around us, a glorious anthem now. It told us of a time before the world was; of a time when space was filled with the beginning of worlds yet to come; of a time when Time itself was unthought of; of other things which cannot be expressed. Then it soothed us into slumber.

Hours later I awoke and looked around me. The music had ceased; the air was wintry cold; the monsters were sheathed in murky grey writhings of cloud; snow was falling. A shattering sword of lightning split the darkness, followed by the stunning explosion of thunder close at hand. I rose to my feet and put on

the rope; we must leave the Ridge of Monsters immediately, for our safety's sake.

But no one rose to take the rope's other end, which still lay loose upon the rock. No one was there to take it; no one save myself was on the rock, nor within sight or sound of it. Only upon its rough and hoary surface, fast becoming covered with new-fallen snow, there lay the ice-axe of my companion. . . .

It kept its counsel; the monster held its secret. I must descend alone.



## THE CAIRNGORM MUNROS IN THREE DAYS

P. D. BAIRD

DURING July 1955 I had the opportunity of spending a few days looking at the state of the remaining snow beds of the Cairngorms, and wished to cover as much of the range as possible. I managed to combine this investigation with the carrying out of a plan to climb all the Munros and see if, in my forties, I was able to keep up anything like the pace which I could twenty years ago. The result was fairly satisfying to my ageing ego and might be of interest to members of the Club. Undoubtedly some of the Tigers of to-day could do the round trip much faster, and it might be possible to devise a cleverer route, but I was in no great hurry, I had two good sleeps, and not being a believer in the "Tilman Breakfast" took a plentiful supply of food, a sleeping bag, a very light tent, and other comforts.

The trip came at the close of a fortnight's very fine weather, the first day was extremely hot, especially in the Lairig an Laoigh. But on the second day some mist came down on the Moine Mhor and the Glenfeshie tops and persisted for a good part of the third day. Quite a lot of compass work was required then, but I got some cheering views of the Feshie and Geldie valleys in breaks. The ground was very dry after the long warm spell; on the second night when the mist had dampened all the grass I searched long for a dry spot for the tent and finally pitched it most unusually—in a peat hag.

My intention had been to start from Loch Builg Lodge, to which I walked from Derry, but after visiting it I "cheated" to some extent by going back and climbing the path up the Allt an Eas Mhoir to a camp site at the fork at 2,700 feet.

The whole walk was most enjoyable. I saw, of course, many herds of deer, many pairs of ptarmigan, some with young just flying, and, in addition to the commoner hill birds, one eagle, one dotterel, and one snow bunting. Few other humans seemed to be about. On Ben Avon I met two who had camped even higher up than myself, a couple were strolling in the Lairig an Laoigh, a single youth was refreshing himself at the Marquis well on Cairngorm, four folk were on the col beyond. On the second day the only meeting was with three people from Glasgow on Geal Charn, and on the last day only a purposeful visit to the Durham University party's camp high up on Ben Macdhui gave me any human contact.

I have listed below the times of arrival on the summits. The whole trip consumed fifty-nine and three-quarter hours of which twenty-two were spent in the overnight camps and thirty-seven and three-quarters on the march. The distance is about 75 miles with 19,000 feet of ascent. My times work out at about 10 per cent. over Naismith's formula, but perhaps that can be attributed to carrying food and camping gear for a good part of the way. But I managed to dump the rucksack and make light side trips to the peaks on several happy occasions. The only record I dare claim is to have lit a pipe on each of the twenty-two summits, a ceremony which may not have been performed before in three consecutive days.

Start from camp at 2,700 feet on Ben Avon at 0800 hours on July 16.

1. Ben Avon . . . . .	0840 hours
2. Beinn a' Bhùird . . . . .	1005 "
3. Beinn Bhreac . . . . .	1145 "
4. Beinn a' Chaoruinn . . . . .	1330 "
5. A'Choinneach . . . . .	1520 "
6. Bynack More . . . . .	1550 "
7. Cairn Gorm . . . . .	1825 "

Camped near Loch Buidhe at 1940 hours on July 16 to 0400 hours on July 17.

8. Braeriach . . . . .	0540 hours
9. Cairn Toul . . . . .	0710 "
10. The Devil's Point . . . . .	0820 "
11. Carn Ban Mor . . . . .	1120 "
12. Sgor Gaoith . . . . .	1155 "
13. Geal Charn . . . . .	1240 "
14. Meall Dubhag . . . . .	1515 "
15. Mullach Clach a' Bhlair . . . . .	1555 "

Camped at Loch nan Cnapan at 1730 hours on July 17 to 0715 hours on July 18.

16. Monadh Mor . . . . .	0810 hours
17. Beinn Bhrotain . . . . .	0855 "
18. Carn Cloich-mhuillin . . . . .	0940 "
19. Carn a' Mhaim . . . . .	1320 "
20. Ben Macdhui . . . . .	1500 "
21. Beinn Mheadhoin . . . . .	1720 "
22. Derry Cairngorm . . . . .	1835 "

Returned to Derry Lodge at 1945 hours on July 18.



Sept. 1953

A' CHOINNEACH AND BYNACK MORE

G. M. McAndrew

## IN AND AROUND GLEN SPEAN

E. W. SMITH AND L. B. PERKINS

WHEN one of us had to buy O.S. Sheet No. 48 to complete the set of maps for the midnight excursion over the Minigaig Pass, he felt it was rather a useless expense, for he did not see much hope of using it. Then we discovered it covered Ben Alder and that reconciled the extravagance. Arranging hotels for the Easter Meet of 1950 put us in touch with Glen Spean Lodge—the most delightful climbing hotel we have so far come across; with its host and hostess—Major Andrew and Mrs Thomson—and a view from its doorstep of hills and hills from the westerly peaks of the Ben Alder Forest to the top of Aonach Beag. In fixing up accommodation for the Club for Easter we also arranged for a holiday in July, to explore the Grey Corries. The material for this article is the outcome. The climbs described are not long days, nor is it a case of climbing as many “Munros” as possible in one day, but in climbing them as gently and easily as can be, and always leaving an excuse for a return visit.

### *The Grey Corries*

The first day out was to the hills on the west side of Loch Treig. We left the car at the dam beyond Fersit and struck up the ridge to Stob a' Choire Mheadhoin (3,610 feet) and from there to Stob Coire Easain (3,658 feet), the last part being over a fairly steep climb to the summit. These two Munros were climbed in mist, but the journey back to the comfort of the Lodge was enjoyed in sunshine and good visibility.

Our next excursion carried us by car to Spean Bridge and up the left-hand bank of the River Spean, past Corrie Coillie and over the light railway that runs from Loch Treig at Fersit to the aluminium works at Fort William. This railway is sometimes referred to in the S.M.C. Guides as being out of use, but we would not care to be on one of the many viaducts on certain days when the upkeep gang are on their way by diesel truck to visit the various maintenance jobs on dam, pipeline, and track. It has since suggested itself to us that

it would offer an excellent opportunity for developing the holiday attractions for Fort William if that Corporation would buy Emmett's railway at Battersea Pleasure Gardens and run it here as an excursion tour for some of their Sassenach visitors!

We crossed the railway, and as both the car (a 1936 Alvis Crested Eagle) and the driver decided we had had enough, we continued on foot through the Lairig Leachdach for a further mile and so on to the ridge of Beinn Bhan. From there to Stob Coire na Ceannain and so to Stob Choire Claurigh (3,858 feet), the highest point in the Grey Corries, were just steps. The ridge was well defined and the views in every direction magnificent. On round to Stob Coire an Laoigh (3,659 feet)—a Munro not named in the O.S. Map—and from there on to Sgùrr Chòinnich Mòr (3,603 feet) concluded our outward journey. The return was made over the ridge of Stob Coire an Easain till we picked up the headwaters of Allt Choimhlidh, which we followed until we came again to the light railway—a sight which pleased us very much, for it led back to the car.

Stob Bàn was still left, and it meant another visit to Glen Spean Lodge to bag that Munro. Meantime we decided to go farther afield to climb Ben Nevis and if possible Carn Mòr Dearg. We took the car to Glen Nevis and started up to Allt Corrie Eòghainn direct to the Observatory, which we found in mist. Needless to say we did not stay long and made down with difficulty to the Carn Mòr Dearg ridge. The weather now completely deteriorated, and in a thunderstorm we decided to get back to the car by the most direct route.

On our return visit in the spring to Glen Spean Lodge and to the Grey Corries we made another journey to the Lairig Leachdach and followed the pass for about 3 miles before our objective, the shapely peak of Stob Bàn, came into sight. Looking like a small edition of the Matterhorn, it was clear that a firm snow slope would easily take us to the summit, and the climb and return was done in five and a half hours from the gate on the Lairig Leachdach—two hours up and down from the cottage.

Next day being fine, we climbed the Loch Treig hills from Fersit, where we made our first acquaintance of the pony track which leads to Loch Ossian and from this path we made a bee-line for the summit of Chno Dearg (3,433 feet) then westward on to Stob Coire Sgriodain (3,211 feet). Having "knocked off" the Grey Corries and Loch Treig hills we ventured farther afield.

*Aonach Mòr and Aonach Beag*

From Glen Spean Lodge these mountains dominate the western horizon. Seen in elevation like a gigantic drop-scene, the steep early ascent is dwarfed and the eye dwells only on the gentle curve of the "Aonach," the ridge.

By taking a car to Lianachan and a little along what must have been once a major road through plantations of non-indigenous trees, an ascent close to the Allt Choille-rai is made. There is a gate in the fence, and this is easier to climb than the fence itself. This first 2,000 feet is steep, but there is a path for part of the way which terminates just before the shoulder of Aonach Mòr is reached. From here it is just a matter of climbing, unless snow provides additional interest, but the slope gets less and less steep, until the gentle bare top of the ridge is traversed.

Here the dotterel may sometimes be seen, on ground which has a familiar resemblance to some of the Cairngorm tops, but the view to south, east, and west has a grandeur surpassing Cairngorm views, a grandeur aided by the sea, whose presence cannot fail but be felt.

Aonach Mòr falls short of 4,000 feet by one miserable foot, and is exceeded in height, but not mass, by Aonach Beag, which has many of its features compressed into smaller space. The summit is quite small and is an excellent platform for studying the Grey Corries. The view to the west is dominated by Ben Nevis, the structure of which is clearly seen.

From Glen Spean to Aonach Beag and back may give you three Munros, but alternative routes for descent may commend themselves to the hardy.

*Climbs from Corroul*

The grouping together of the hills best reached from Corroul necessarily exists in one's mind, as the rail journey from Roy Bridge or Tulloch, and the return from Corroul, provides an interesting prelude and postlude to each ascent. The railway journey itself did on one particular occasion provide the opportunity which has always enticed the writer—the opportunity to pull the communication cord. On arrival the door on to the platform was locked. The doors on adjacent coaches were also locked. The occupant of Corroul Station was disinterested; the guard was weighing fish; the two

engine drivers were signalling impatience by blowing off steam, and a disinclination to walk the length of the train tempted one to let the thing start and then pull the communication cord. Lack of support, however, led to descent to the ground remote from the platform and a golden opportunity was lost.

There is a road on each side of Loch Ossian on which lie islands where grow trees in which herons nest, their heads sticking out of the tops like umbrella handles. An easy Munro lies on each side of the loch—Beinn na Lap on the north and Càrn Dearg on the south. As Loch Ossian lies at 1,261 feet above the sea, the hills could claim to be easy; a good and not too strenuous day is obtained by including Sgòr Gaibhre (3,124 feet) with Càrn Dearg.

All excursions to Loch Ossian can be varied by returning over the "pony track"—marked on the 1-inch map and previously mentioned—to Tulloch, via Fersit. This pleasant walk takes about three hours from Corrour Lodge, and the last mile and a half can be most interesting if the obvious is not done. This "escape" route becomes more necessary as the hills to the north-east of Ossian, in the Ben Alder forest are climbed, and later returns are envisaged.

Due to rail timing the start of the day's climbing cannot be achieved before 11 A.M. The return train is 7.20 P.M., and the farther out hills make rail return possible only to those members who can time a trip properly—and our experience on club excursions prompts us to add, "if any." However, there are four Munros in a row, one of which, according to the S.M.C. Guide, is named Geal Chàrn, but is not shown on the O.S. 1-inch map. The correct naming, heights, and approximate linear distances from Corrour Station, from which they lie in a north-easterly direction, are:—

Beinn Eibhinn (3,611 feet), 6½ miles.

Aonach Beag (3,646 feet), 7 miles.

Geal Chàrn (3,688 feet), 9 miles.

Càrn Dearg (3,391 feet), 11½ miles.

The route is easy, although the ground may be bad to the south of these hills. The Uisge Labhair is followed until one strikes off to the ascent of the chosen hill. Good views of Ben Alder and Loch Ericht are obtained. Obviously Càrn Dearg presents a problem to the hotel-based mountaineer, but it is manifestly possible to walk 23 miles and climb 2,000 feet in eight and a half hours, even if one had to be lifted into the train on return. As an alternative a traverse

of the group is possible, and a possible overnight club excursion is indicated from Corrou to Dalwhinnie.

*Creag Meaghaidh and Ben Alder Forest*

May of 1952 found us back in our hotel with the Creag Meaghaidh range our principal objective. This we did on three separate days. The first day we made for Aberarder and a direct ascent of Càrn Liath (3,298 feet). The next day we tackled the main top of Creag Meaghaidh (3,700 feet) by the Moy March wall. This wall we hoped would lead to the summit, but it ends about half a mile short of the cairn. The day was misty and the summit, when we did get there, offered no views.

Our next excursion started in rain, but as we parked the car at Aberarder the weather broke and we had a grand walk up Coire Ardair, up over the window to Poite Coire Ardair (3,460 feet), with wonderful views into the headwaters of the Rivers Roy and Spey. To complete the range we had a visit to Beinn a' Chaoruinn (3,437 feet), but here again we encountered mist, and having found the main top we returned by the outward route to the car.

Having consulted the factor of Ardverikie and obtained permission to explore that estate, we spent a couple of days on the hills to the north of the Ben Alder Forest; first to Creag Pitridh (3,031 feet). We left the car at Luiblea, where we found a shepherd to have come out of Mar, and, in fact, he was a nephew of the late Alec Grant of Luibeg. Our road took us to the south-west, to Lochan na h-Earba, round Sgùrr an t'Saighdair, on to Creag Pitridh, and thence to Mullach Coire an Ibhair. We returned down Coire Pitridh, obtaining a fine view of Beinn a' Chlachair (3,569 feet), and it was very lucky that we did, for when we returned there next day in a mist we had to rely on the recollection of our previous day to make the top.

With a change of car our climbing excursions from Glen Spean Lodge took us farther afield. One memorable day we spent on Gulvain (3,224 feet). Major Ewan Cameron, the uncle of the present Cameron of Locheil, got permission for us to use the private road to Wauchan. This road leaves the main Fort William-Mallaig road at the end of Loch Eil and made the day far from hard. The climb to the first top (3,148 feet) is fairly steep, but a gentle walk of about a mile separates this from the main top. The hill can be termed "clean"—no bogs, no deep heather, no screes.

*Beinn a' Bheithir*

The two Munros of Beinn a' Bheithir can be bagged with ease from Glen Spean and, apart from hazards introduced by the Forestry Commission, are easy to climb.

The major difficulty as one commences to climb Sgòrr Dhearg from near Ballachulish station is to get through the forestry plantations. Probably the best solution to the problem is to circumvent these, ascending the ridge from its extremity; but a passage was forced this year through the narrow part of the belt, overlooking the station, more by luck than navigation or determination. Having cleared the trees, one felt, like any member arriving at Golden Square on the Saturday of the midsummer overnight excursion, that the worst part of the journey was over, and the summit of Sgòrr Dhearg was easily reached.

It is at this stage that the loss of height due to the bealach between two Munros is anxiously determined, and calculations made to give the total climb, which in the case of Beinn a' Bheithir is about 4,000 feet—1,200 feet more than the summit of Ben Macduih from Derry Lodge. The exact ascent is, of course, determined by the tide, and those who are doubtful of their ability should cross Ballachulish Ferry at high tide!

The S.M.C. "Central Highlands" Guide states that "there is no rock climbing on these mountains," but one feels that the vertical slabs dropping from near the summit of Sgòrr Dhonuill may provide "severes" for future generations of rock climbers. That the writer of this particular paragraph refrained from traversing the wide ledge below which these slabs drop cannot be ascribed to his respect for the alpine which may nestle there!

One should conclude this section with some practical and topographical hints, and these can be summarised, perhaps, in tabular form:—

1. The prominent stone shoot west of Sgòrr Dhonuill "goes" both up and down.
2. A road exists a good way up Gleann a' Chaolais, and is very likely to be extended.
3. The ferry ceases to operate at 8 P.M.
4. The total time for a very easy traverse of both Munros is six hours.

## TWO MOUNTAIN HOLIDAYS

MARSHALL G. LAING

THE following is an account of two short holidays, spent with a friend in well-known, widely separated mountain areas in Europe. I think I should make it clear at the outset that this article is not for the mountain purist or confirmed rock-climber, who will find in it no account of ascents hitherto regarded as impossible nor of any technical problem peculiar to his craft. Nor will the botanist or specialist in any other of those sciences peculiarly associated with mountains and mountain-landscape add in any way to his store of knowledge. This account is written primarily for those who delight in wandering, rucksack on back, amid the high places of the world, not disdaining the path which has been trod by human feet or the simple comforts of the mountain inn, but eschewing as much as possible the fast motor road and the big hotel. Some who have not yet tasted the delights of a holiday of this kind may even be tempted to have a go. If so, I would assure the would-be initiate that he will require only a normally sound constitution, a rucksack containing the usual paraphernalia for a holiday away from home, a pair of stout nailed boots, a quantity of money (not excessive in proportion to the normal requirement for a holiday abroad), and, if possible, a slight acquaintance with the language of the country in question.

The first of the holidays was spent in the latter part of September 1953 among the Dolomite mountains in northern Italy. The idea took seed in our minds from the account in the brochure issued by the Ramblers' Association of the trip organised by them to that area. We found this Association most helpful, and they were able to supply us with a very good large-scale map of the area. The comparative lateness of the holiday is partly explained by their advice to avoid the summer months as far as possible. Partly also, I wished to try out the off-season hotel charges. But, although the charges of the more fashionable and more elaborately run hotels fluctuate noticeably from season to season, those of the mountain inns, or rifugi as they are known in Italy, do not appear to do so at all. Incidentally, many of the rifugi are run under the auspices of the C.A.I. (Club Alpino Italiano), and in these membership of one of the alpine clubs often entitles one to cheaper facilities.

We travelled out via Basle and Innsbruck and thence through the Brenner Pass to Bolzano, a delightful town with a distinct old-world character of its own, superior in that respect, I think, to Innsbruck even with its memories of the Hapsburgs. The inhabitants are predominantly Austrian by race, and the language heard in streets and cafés is German, in spite of the fact that the town is well within the Italian frontier. In other parts, Italian is the language most often heard. In fact, the whole area is like a vast language chequer-board, the two races, noticeably different in appearance and behaviour, alternating with each other, sometimes from valley to valley.

We had had a glorious day for our rail trip through the Brenner, and when we went to bed that night in Bolzano, having chosen a moderately priced albergo, we were looking forward to our first close look at the Dolomites on the morrow under perfect conditions. Our hopes were not to be fulfilled, for next day the weather was overcast and there was cloud down to about four or five thousand feet—sufficient to effect a complete obliteration of all the higher ranges. “Just the good old Lairig Ghru all over again,” we thought as we boarded one of the local buses for the small village of Nova Levante. This was the place that, from its position on the map, we had picked as the likeliest spot from which to commence our tour. We had decided to stick, for the time being at least, to the route described in the brochure, and, according to this, our objective that day would be the Rifugio della Coronella. On arriving at Nova Levante, therefore, we looked about for some sign of a path that would take us there, and in fact found it without much trouble.

Here it was that we first encountered that system of marked paths and routes which is such a boon to the hill-walker in many of the mountain areas of Europe. The Dolomites are outstanding in this respect. Not only has each route its own peculiar colour, but it is numbered as well. The colours and occasionally the number appropriate to the route are painted at intervals along that route on some convenient flat surface. So, having carefully noted the number and distinctive colours of our own route, we hoisted our rucksacks on to our backs and addressed ourselves to the task in hand—a climb of some two to three thousand feet. Through woods, past saw-mills, finally, after emerging from the trees, past peasants working on the steep hillsides—still our path went on climbing. It was not long before we began to regret the fact that we had also planned for a fortnight or so of city life and so were carrying in our rucksacks quite a bit of extra clothing which would be of little use to us in the



ROSENGARTEN FROM RIFUGIO VAJOLET

*Margaret Munro*

mountains. Nor was this the last occasion for regrets on this score—Dolomite ascents tend to be steepish and, as a rule, rather long. Numerous indeed in the days that followed were the occasions upon which, after a hard spell of climbing had put what felt an intolerable strain on the lungs, we at last threw ourselves full length upon the ground to await at least partial recovery—rucksack being for the moment *persona non grata*. The pattern of these little halts became so well known to us—first the submerging of all other conscious effort to that of drawing air and still more air into the lungs, then the slow lessening of the pulse-rate and finally the gradual recovery of the feeling of well-being and with it the pleasurable consciousness of the external world—the sharp, clear mountain air, the magnificent panorama of mountain, valley, and wood.

That day, however, although we were fast learning the value of these short periods of relaxation, our attention was focused mainly upon the prevailing conditions of mist ahead. Later in the day it did begin to clear a little. We had not so far been vouchsafed our long-awaited look at the Dolomites at close quarters, but at last there came a moment when the mist lifted just enough to reveal—quite suddenly—an enormous rock-face straight ahead of us, towering up into the cloud. There it was marked on the map, for sure—yet its appearance from the mist just then was so unexpected that it had about it something even of the frightening. If the curtain had been drawn aside just a little to reveal that monster, what more might it not disclose shortly? However, the mist came down again very soon afterwards and that was that.

This glimpse was, as we confirmed by subsequent experience, as good an introduction as any to the Dolomites, which have something of the dramatic in their very nature. Great rocky buttresses rise abruptly from the green hillsides of a rolling upland countryside with which they do not seem altogether to blend, and which does not appear quite to accept them as part of itself. The rock which is a pinkish limestone has, in a great many places, weathered into a wide variety of shapes, some grotesque, others tantalising the mind with memories of familiar, but half-forgotten objects. Moreover, the highest plateaux, those above the vegetation line, have a curious bleak, dusty appearance characteristic, one might imagine, of the surface of some dead planet. The mist, of which we saw a fair amount during our short sojourn in the area, also contributes to the general effect, though disastrous from a photographic point of view.

Soon after the glimpse of the rock face which had momentarily

dumbfounded us we caught sight of our objective. It was perched at the very top of the long slope which we were climbing and looked at first like a doll's house alternately appearing and disappearing through the mist. When we reached it in another two to three hours we found, however, that it was of a quite considerable size. In front was a paved courtyard. Here we were met by a tall, dignified personage with heavy, sweeping moustaches, who turned out, on my addressing him in broken Italian, to be none other than the padrone. However, subsequent conversation having proved abortive by reason of language difficulties, the padrone disappeared and was not seen by us again during our stay at the rifugio. Exploration revealed a number of comfortable dormitories, a spacious dining-room, and what looked from the outside at least like a fairly well-equipped kitchen, complete with staff. Nor were we disappointed in the latter, for we were served at dinner with a most excellent meal. I used the word dormitories instead of bedrooms advisedly, but the service was undoubtedly up to good hotel standards. Nor was this exceptional. We found nothing to complain of in the catering at the rifugi. The general standard, in fact, was surprisingly good—especially considering the fact that many were in remote places, all but inaccessible, where provisioning had to be carried out by mule or donkey or sometimes even by porter. Again, the staff in these places would, during the tourist season, have to make up their minds to live a fairly secluded life.

From the Coronella the path to the next rifugio, the Vajolet, continued, according to the brochure, up a "seemingly vertical rock face." Before breakfast, on the following morning, we tried to spot our route on the ground. The mist had by this time cleared and we could see perfectly in all directions, but there appeared to be no vestige or trace of a path in our direction. The rifugio was actually built close up against the rock face already mentioned. This did not look as if it could be negotiated at any point without the usual rock-climbing equipment. At the same time we recalled the brochure and went in to breakfast feeling rather thoughtful. I decided to ask the cameriera where the path lay. "Su là" (up there), she replied, pointing to the rock face. Apparently, according to her, it was not dangerous either, but easy. It turned out that the path, beginning almost on the roof of the rifugio, wound upwards by fissures and faults in the rock, not visible from below, which made it quite a feasible proposition for the non-rock-climber. It was, however, rather steep and there were many places where hands and

arms had to be brought into play, and where the heavy rucksacks made the going awkward. I regretted not having proper nails in my boots. We reached the top safely enough after a climb of about two hours, and thereafter the path was quite easy. The Dolomites are, as in this case, apt to present the hill-walker pure and simple with situations which the ordinary member of that species in Scotland need not and would not face.

Our route led from the rifugio which lies beneath the well known and impressive Torri del Vajolet up and over the Passo del Principe. The path thereafter descended into a kind of natural bowl where the mist was eddying like steam in a cauldron, and then climbed once again over the Passo del Molignon. Our objective that day was the rifugio of the same name. This turned out to be situated, as might be expected, in the valley to which the path descended from the Passo del Molignon. The valley was an idyllic-looking place, just low enough in altitude to be cultivable, and remote from contact with the outside world. The Arcadian effect was enhanced by the fact that at the time the local country folk were engaged in bringing in the hay harvest and were, by the sound of it, enjoying themselves thoroughly in the process. We found this change from the bare, rocky plateaux which we had just been traversing very pleasant indeed.

We could not afford the time for a longer stay here than was strictly necessary, and so next day we resumed our journey. Our path led us from the valley up the course of a mountain stream and, after skirting the gigantic mass of the Sasso Lungo (Langkofel), took us on to the road winding over the Passo di Sella where we stopped that evening, putting up at a small rifugio. We recalled with a sense of pleasurable anticipation the glimpse which we had had that day of the Marmolada with its prominent glacier. Monte Marmolada is, at just over 10,000 feet, the highest mountain in the Dolomites, and beside it lay our ultimate objective, the rifugio of the same name. From the comfort of the rifugio we silently contemplated the towering rock bastions of the Gruppo di Sella. Somewhere up there, at about 9,000 feet, was our next stopping place, the Rifugio Cima Boe.

Next day we followed the road for a few miles to the point at which the path up to the Cima Boe led off. We then halted to take stock. Facing us there was what appeared quite a formidable climb, one which looked almost as perpendicular as the first part of the path from the Coronella to the Vajolet, but which would very likely be considerably longer. The sky was quite clear above, although the presence of some ominous-looking clouds farther down on the horizon

showed that the weather was very far from settled. We could at this point simply have continued along the main road to the Passo Pordoi and then gone straight on to the Marmolada. We decided to try for the Cima Boe.

After a few minutes we lost the path completely and thereafter pursued our climb up the bed of an almost dried-up water-course. This eventually gave way to a small plateau, on reaching which we succeeded in spotting the path again about a hundred yards to our left. This was lucky, for by now the weather was rapidly closing in and we were soon enveloped in thick mist. Vivid flashes of lightning and peals of thunder made it apparent shortly afterwards that we were, in fact, in the middle of a thunder-cloud. A furious wind sprang up, driving a sort of stinging hail into our faces with tremendous force, so that we could hardly keep our eyes sufficiently open to make out the path. Indeed, had the route-markings not been particularly numerous at this point we should have been in a sad plight. We were tempted to stop for shelter, but not knowing how long the storm would last, thought it wiser to keep going. Eventually, after what seemed an age, we reached a plateau upon which we could dimly discern the outline of the rifugio through the mist—a welcome sight indeed. This place was, it seemed, due to close for the season next day—as was soon indicated to us. It possessed only a very small skeleton staff, and much of it was locked and shuttered up. We succeeded, however, in obtaining a meal and a bed for the night. We had not up till then seriously envisaged the obvious risk attendant upon travelling in this kind of area in the off-season, which could have been very awkward for us on this occasion. I have no doubt that the C.A.I. could supply the necessary information with regard to this matter.

Next morning, which was bright and clear, we left the staff busy completing their locking up and came off the Gruppo Sella, descending to the Passo Pordoi which we reached about lunch time. After lunch we set out along the path to the Rifugio Marmolada. This lay for the greater part of its length along a ridge overlooking a deep valley, the Vial del Pan. The other side of this valley is dominated by the Marmolada massif. We had hoped to obtain a good view of the mountain, naturally enough, from the ridge, but—alas for this!—the mist was down again. By the time we reached the rifugio it had even begun to rain.

The next day, however, dawned blue and cloudless and the glittering north flank of Marmolada stood out in all its detail. We had, in

fact, a series of magnificent views of this spectacular mountain along the whole of the first part of our day's journey. The road was now smooth and downhill nearly all the way. It was very pleasant after our previous labours, and by now our rucksacks did not seem to weigh so much either. Our objective was Canazei, where we stayed overnight, and from which we caught the local bus next morning back to Bolzano. Our ramble in the Dolomites was at an end.

Although in the Dolomites we had adhered pretty much to the route suggested, we had made no advance bookings and had trusted instead to luck and the off-season to get accommodation. This had worked out so well, we felt, that we resolved to do the same the next year, this time in the Jotunheim area of Norway. Advice as to routes for this trip was obtained from the Norwegian Travel Association, who supplied us with an excellent large-scale map of the area.

The most convenient railway stations for an excursion to this part of Norway appear to be Fagernes and Otta. The latter was the more convenient for our project, and at the beginning of September 1954 we duly entrained at Oslo. The journey takes about eight hours, and as we had left by the afternoon train it was pitch dark by the time we arrived. As we groped our way out of the station we were inclined to wonder whether we should be able to make ourselves understood. Neither of us knew a word of Norwegian; up to that time, however, we had never had the slightest difficulty in this direction. Knowledge of the English language is apparently a *sine qua non* in Norwegian schools. And, in fact, we had no difficulty in Otta either, nor in any of the huts at which we later stayed. In that way we were better off than we had been in the Dolomites, where I had had to bring my somewhat doubtful Italian into service.

Otta is, by British standards, a medium-sized village on the main Trondheim motor road. The next stage was a bus journey along a side road in the direction of Bergen to the small village of Røysheim, from which we were to begin our trip proper. So next day we duly caught the morning bus at Otta, a very short distance from which, as we soon observed, the road became innocent of any kind of surfacing apart from the most primitive—mud. This being the main traffic artery of the locality, we could only guess at the state of roads regarded as more minor. We were, without a doubt, in real walkers' country. It was about 11 A.M. when we reached Røysheim. There we stocked

up with sandwiches and coffee (it had been wine in the Dolomites) and, having donned our hiking boots, started on the road to our first hut, Spiterstulen.

It was not a very gruelling walk—not to be compared with our first day's hike to the Coronella, and easily accomplished by 4 P.M. The path, which was broad and smooth, ascended gradually, following the River Røysheim. It was afternoon before we eventually got beyond the tree-line and had our first close look at the Norwegian mountains. The most vivid impression which we got—one which never subsequently left us—was of their similarity to our own. Perhaps it was the fact of the sky being overcast that day and of there being a slight drizzle that was responsible for this particular effect being so strong. But there is no doubt that for us these great granite monsters heaving their rounded masses from the sober-coloured landscape had an appearance of reality which the jagged stucco-looking Dolomite rock-towers and pinnacles could never have—not that the Norwegian mountain landscape is by any means identical in every respect with that to which we are accustomed in our own country. The scale is much larger, of course; but just as noticeable, I think, heather has not the universal prevalence that gives the Scottish Highlands their distinctive atmosphere.

In regard to Spiterstulen itself, and indeed all the other huts at which we stayed in the Jotunheim, suffice it to say that they were in every way of equal quality with the Dolomite rifugi, with comfortable quarters and magnificent food. Another thing worth mentioning is the extreme affability of all in these huts—Norwegians and Swedes for the most part. They all appeared to have at least a smattering of English which removed that most formidable barrier to friendly intercourse—language. In the previous year we had never succeeded, either at our various rifugi or elsewhere, in making any contacts with our fellow-tourists, who had been mostly Italian or German. Here, in Spiterstulen, at breakfast next morning, almost before realising it, we found ourselves enlisted in a party planning to climb the nearby mountain of Galdhøpiggen, which at just over 9,000 feet is the highest in Norway.

Besides ourselves, the party ultimately consisted of a Norwegian, a Swede, and a Dane. We set off thankful to be rid, for one day at least, of the burden of our rucksacks. It was an ideal day for a climb, sunny, but with a coolish wind blowing, and on such a day Galdhøpiggen is quite an easy climb, at least on its "safe" side. To reach the summit by the path involves about four hours' steady



LANGKOFEL

*Margaret Muir*

plodding which leaves one with a pleasing sense of achievement and in a by no means exhausted condition. Arrived there, we were consequently, despite the tricky snow and ice conditions near the top, in an excellent state to admire the view offered us by the surrounding country. My friend and I had long been looking forward to this moment. Jotunheim means, I understand, the home of the giants. According to Norse mythology it was in this area that the Nordic gods had their abode. Looking round, one could well understand the violent and capricious qualities which the early inhabitants had assigned to their gods, qualities which must have stamped themselves indelibly on the primitive imagination from the very nature of the country. To the east, quite near, a great inverted globe, was the white summit cap of Glittertind, the second highest mountain in Norway. To the north and west lay mountains, peak upon peak, to the very horizon, and among those peaks everywhere the white gleam of the glaciers that from a distance appear to wash round them like a sea. It was a part of the Ice Age somehow surviving into the twentieth century. We had so often come across the tell-tale marks which the passage of ice in bygone ages leaves upon the landscape, the corries in the Cairngorms, the great natural bowls in the Dolomites. But here before us was the process actually taking place, here in front of our eyes the slow but powerful glacial currents were at work, moulding and shaping the contour of mountain and valley.

Next day, on the way to our next hut, Glitterheim, glaciers did not inspire us with such sublime feelings. We had to traverse mile after mile of glacial detritus consisting mostly of huge granite boulders, wet and treacherous in the drizzling rain. Although we had no difficulty in finding the route, it became clear to us that the system of path-marking was nothing like so elaborate as that to which we had been accustomed in the Dolomites. There was, for instance, a complete absence of numbering or special colouring.

Two of the Galdhøpiggen party, the Norwegian and the Swede (Rolf and Lars respectively), accompanied us to Glitterheim. This hut lies at the foot of Glittertind, the mountain which had been such a prominent feature of the landscape as seen from Galdhøpiggen. It was decided to tackle its ascent on the morrow, depending on the state of the weather, which at the time looked most unsettled. However, next morning dawned bright and clear, and the party set out, minus myself, but supplemented by two Norwegian nurses who had also arrived at Glitterheim the night before. I wanted to rest

my heel, strained in the boulder-hopping episode of the previous day. Since I cannot bear personal witness to conditions on the summit of Glittertind, I might as well relate the interesting fact that on this summit one is actually at a slightly higher altitude than on the summit of Galdhøpiggen, the reason being the much greater thickness of its snow and ice cap.

The party, six in number since it now included the two nurses, moved next day to Memurubu Hut on Lake Gjende. It was one of the pleasantest days that I personally have ever spent among the hills. The weather was beautifully warm and sunny, inviting one to loiter and even, there being time to spare, to lie spread-eagled among the scrub, basking luxuriously in the hot sun—an invitation which, I may add, we did not refuse. Moreover, the landscape was interesting and varied, the highlight for me being a small lake with the romantic name of Rusvatnet—a veritable gem in its setting of rough moor and crag. At last, at sunset, we emerged on to a ridge which overlooked Lake Gjende and from which we had an excellent view of that mighty lake. It is rather like one of the larger Scottish lochs in appearance, apart from its vivid bluish-green colouring. Memurubu Hut was visible about a thousand feet below us, and it was here that we spent the night.

Our next objective would, we had very regretfully decided, looking at the map and the short time at our disposal, have to be our last. This was Gjendesheim Hut, which lay at the eastward end of the lake. The other members of our party decided to accompany us there, and for Rolf and Lars it was the last lap of the journey too. We hoped to reach Gjendesheim by traversing Bessegen Ridge which runs parallel to the eastern portion of Lake Gjende. Peer Gynt, so the story goes, did this on a reindeer. However, weather conditions next morning were, to say the least, adverse, and the ridge was completely blotted out by low cloud and rain. We were forced to make our way to Gjendesheim along the lake side. As it happened, we could all afford a day extra, and so, next morning, following an improvement in the weather, the whole party climbed the ridge from the Gjendesheim side. From this side it begins as a fairly wide plateau, but farther west narrows to about three or four feet in width, and descends steeply for a few hundred feet until it ends at a small loch on the opposite side from Lake Gjende. From here, looking in an easterly direction, it presents the appearance of a gigantic staircase hewn out of the rock, hard going even for a reindeer, I should imagine. While we were making our way off the ridge, the mist came down and it began to

pour, a rather disappointing valedictory gesture on the part of the weather which had, till then, been on the whole remarkably kind.

And that brings me to the end of this article, helplessly aware of its complete inadequacy to convey anything like the essential spirit or feel of either of the two holidays, and aware also of the great mass of material either forgotten or of necessity left to one side. But I suppose that the former is something which each one must experience for himself, while the latter is too personal to mean much to anyone but me. My only hope is that I have whetted the reader's appetite to visit these places.

## IN MEMORIAM

R. M. WILLIAMSON

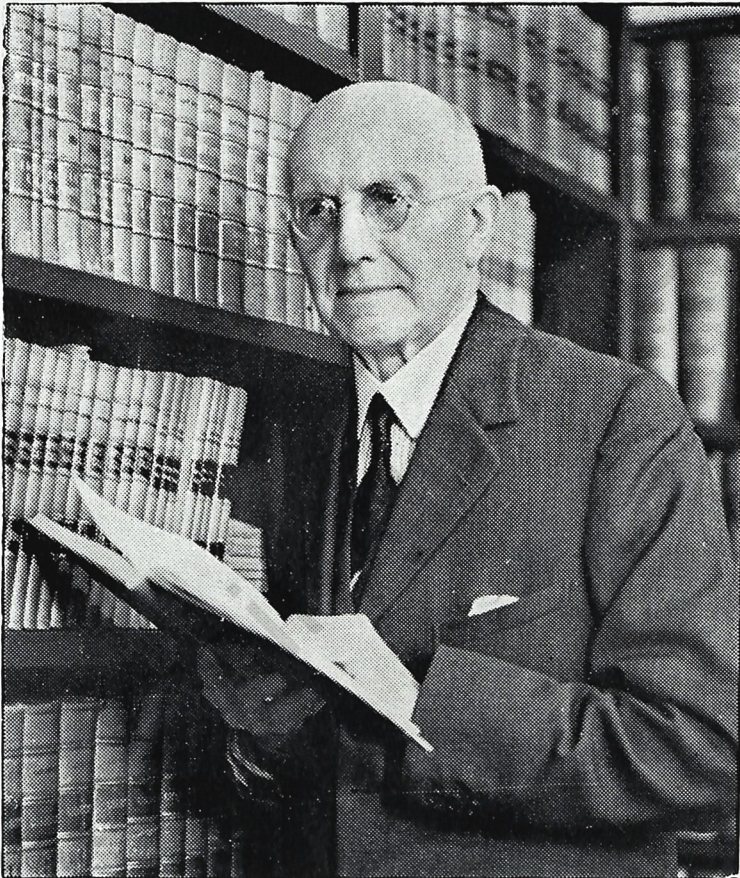
DR R. M. WILLIAMSON, C.B.E., our oldest member who joined the Club in 1892 and became Honorary President in 1947, died in November 1955 at the age of 88. He was senior partner of the firm of Paull & Williamson's, Advocates in Aberdeen, and an Honorary Sheriff-Substitute. Earlier, he had lectured in Constitutional Law and History at the University of Aberdeen, and was a member of the Senatus from 1925 until he gave up his University connections in 1933. For twenty-five years he was Chairman of the Managers of Aberdeen Savings Bank. In 1939 his services to the University and the community were recognised when the Degree of LL.D. was conferred on him, while in 1950 he received the C.B.E.

Dr Williamson's interest in the hills dated from his student days in Aberdeen, when with his brothers and other companions he made what would now be considered quite prodigious hill walks and climbs, without the benefit of motor transport. His favourite areas were around Braemar, Speyside, and Clova, where he often stayed with "Mammie" Birss at the Glen Clova Hotel. His wife also was a keen mountaineer and often accompanied him on outings, astonishing many of our members of the time by her ability.

For some thirty years up to 1939 the Williamsons went almost every year to Switzerland, preferably to the Oberland, and he returned thrice more after the war at an age of over 80. Dr Williamson, at an annual dinner following his sixtieth year of membership, gave an interesting and amusing account of some of these holidays, which were also the subject of two articles in Vol. 9 of the *Journal*.

Dr Williamson was professionally engaged in opposition to the Loch Avon scheme for the Aberdeen water supply favoured by the Town Council in the early years of the century and, as the objectors' Law Agent, contributed to the rejection of the Provisional Order, thereby saving Loch Avon from being relegated to the status of public reservoir.

His interest in the Club, which was maintained to the end, was illustrated on the occasion of a Club Excursion to Loch Lee in September 1946, when he asked unobtrusively to be allowed to defray all the expenses of the outing.



R. M. WILLIAMSON

*Aberdeen Press and Journal*

Following Lord Macmillan, Norman Collie, and James Parker as Honorary President was a difficult task, but one which R. M. Williamson performed with grace and dignity. To his family—Mrs Williamson predeceased him some years ago—we offer our sincere sympathy in their sorrow.

E. W. WATT

EDWARD W. WATT, one of the oldest members of the Club, died on April 19, 1955. To his many activities in other directions he combined a long fidelity to the Cairngorm Club and its interests. He became a member in 1912, served on the Committee from 1924 to 1926, and edited the *Cairngorm Club Journal* from 1924 to 1926, being well equipped for such a duty by his long and varied experience in journalism. Many times he spent his annual holiday at Braemar.

Himself in youth a participant in most of the games and recreations of early years, he remained throughout his life devoted to the interests of young people. He was actively connected with the Boys' Brigade, in which he was Vice-President and Treasurer of the Aberdeen Battalion. He was the first Chairman of the Aberdeen Juvenile Court; and amongst the other bodies with which he was connected were the Scottish Council of Social Service and the National Fitness Association for Scotland. He was an original member of the Scottish Central Probation Council.

In 1901 he joined the 1st Volunteer Battalion, Gordon Highlanders; and when the territorials took the place of the volunteers he commanded the University Company of the 4th Gordons. He was mobilised in 1914 as Captain, and served with the battalion in France and Belgium, retiring in 1921 with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. Most members will be acquainted with his activities in civic affairs. He entered Aberdeen Town Council in 1927; and after being in succession Bailie and City Treasurer, he became Lord Provost in 1935.

One remembers Edward Watt with pleasure as having been present, now a good many years ago, at various of the Club's excursions as well as at many of its annual dinners. He brought to these occasions the same easy and agreeable personality which made him a highly acceptable colleague on the many committees of which he was a member in the course of his career. His portrait, a public appreciation of his service as Lord Provost, hangs in Aberdeen Art Gallery.

W. M. A.

## J. LINDSAY DUNCAN

JAMES LINDSAY DUNCAN, Sheriff-Substitute of the Lothians and Peebles at Edinburgh, died there on Christmas Day, 1954. He belonged to a family which has had a long connection with the Cairngorm Club, his father, the late George Duncan, Advocate in Aberdeen, having been a member from 1899 until his death a few years ago.

From the time he joined the Club in 1928 until his professional work took him out of Aberdeen, James Lindsay Duncan was a frequent attender at New Year Meets at Braemar. A number of articles contributed by him to the Club *Journal* gave ample proof of his intimate knowledge of and love for the Cairngorms. He was one of the originators of the idea of a Visitors' Book at the Shelter Stone and was responsible for the first volume being deposited there in August 1924. The writer has happy recollections of more than one day spent in his company on the hills—particularly of a glorious spring day during the Club's Easter Meet at Spittal of Glenshee in 1929, when the highest top of Ben-y-Gloe was reached after a long cross-country walk. Latterly a serious illness prevented Sheriff Duncan from doing any strenuous climbing, but he continued to take an interest in the Club and was present at the Annual Dinner in 1951.

Sheriff Duncan had a distinguished legal career. A former pupil of Aberdeen Grammar School, he graduated LL.B. with distinction at Aberdeen University in 1930, being awarded the Hunter Medal as the most distinguished graduate of his year. The following year he was awarded the Cruickshank Law Prize of Aberdeen University and gained the Ph.D. of Edinburgh University. In 1931 he was admitted a member of the Faculty of Advocates and practised at the Bar in Edinburgh until in 1940 he was appointed Sheriff-Substitute at Stornoway. Two years later he was promoted to Kilmarnock, whence he went in 1951 to take up the important office in Edinburgh, which he held at the time of his death.

While practising at the Bar Sheriff Duncan for a time prepared reports for "Session Cases," the official collection of the reported cases of the Court of Session and the High Court of Justiciary in Scotland. He revised and brought up to date the third edition of Glegg on "The Law of Reparation in Scotland," and it is understood that he was engaged in revising the proofs of a further edition of that work at the time of his death.

In Sheriff Duncan's untimely death the Law has lost an able Judge,

and his friends in the Cairngorm Club have lost a good companion on the hills. To his widow and young family and to his sisters in the Club we would offer our respectful sympathy in their great personal loss.

J. E. B.

#### JAMES MCHARDY

JAMES MCHARDY, who died on February 6, 1955, joined the Club in 1932, and from then until the outbreak of war in 1939 was a regular attender of meets and excursions. He was always full of energy and enthusiasm and took a great interest in arranging outings for parties of our younger members, particularly long excursions—even starting at Derry Lodge and ending up somewhere in Glenshiel or in Skye. He latterly went to reside in Aboyne, and this, and failing health, prevented him from joining Club excursions, but to the last he was interested in its affairs.

#### MAITLAND H. GRAY

MAITLAND HENDERSON GRAY, who died on October 11, 1955, joined the Club in 1933. For many years his health kept him from the hills, but he retained his interest in the Club's activities, especially in connection with their various works projects, for which his most generous support could be relied on.

#### ROBERT T. SELLAR

R. T. SELLAR joined the Club in 1920 and did much of his climbing with James A. Parker. His connection with the hills was a real family affair, and we have had two of his sons as members. In fact, his last appearance at a Club excursion was when he arrived at Queen's Cross early one morning, having got up to see his son Pat on to the bus. He was also a member of the Scottish Mountaineering Club, on whose committee he served during the recent war.

We also regret to record the deaths of Mrs H. FENWICK, ARTHUR TAYLOR, A. MORICE WILSON, and ROBERT C. ROSS.

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1954

THE 66th Annual General Meeting of the Club in the Caledonian Hotel, Aberdeen, on November 24, 1954, was attended by thirty-eight ordinary and five junior members, a somewhat higher proportion of the membership than in the preceding year, but still a rather unsatisfactory turnout. Mr E. W. Smith presided, and the various office-bearers presented reports of the year's activities.

Office-bearers were reappointed as follows: *Hon. President*, Dr R. M. Williamson; *President*, Mr E. W. Smith; *Vice-Presidents*, Mr A. L. Hay and Mr R. Bain; *Hon. Secretary and Treasurer*, Mr J. E. Bothwell; *Hon. Editor and Librarian*, Dr R. L. Mitchell; *Hon. Meets Secretary*, Mr L. B. Perkins; and *Hon. Huts Custodian*, Mr R. Bain. The following were elected to the Committee: Miss A. A. Adams, Miss E. Cruickshank, Messrs A. D. Cameron, W. M. Duff, N. F. Dyer, W. A. Ewen, Col. E. B. Reid, Dr G. A. Taylor, and Dr A. M. Thomson.

On a motion of Dr Taylor the Club agreed to make a contribution of £50 from the General Works Fund towards the cost of the Mountain Shelter in Coire Etchachan, erected in memory of Dr A. G. Hutchison.

The question of access to and maintenance of the indicator on the Blue Hill was raised, and remitted to Mr H. D. Welsh to discuss with the proprietor.

### ANNUAL DINNER 1954

The Annual Dinner was held on the usual date, the last Saturday of November, when a company of about 100 members and guests met in the Caledonian Hotel. Before the meal Miss Anne M. Sheriff showed a series of slides of Alpine scenery. The President took the opportunity offered in proposing the traditional toast of the Club to review the year's activities. Mr Graham Ritchie of the Grampian Club replied to the toast of the Guests, which was proposed by the Meets Secretary.

### INDOOR MEETS

Four Indoor Meets were held during the 1954-55 season. On October 7, 1954, Mr Robert Bain presented a collection of slides of the Lochnagar, Cairngorms, and Arran areas, many being records of Club meets and some taking us back to pre-war outings. On January 19, 1955, Mr J. Hector Gray's talk about "West Highland Excursions" covered areas as far apart as Glencoe and Coigach, and was finely illustrated by his own slides. Mr William Kirk's subject on February 23 was "Kashmir and the Indus Basin," when he sketched in much of the background, geographical and cultural, to the areas traversed by many Himalayan parties. On March 24 the venue changed from the Palace Restaurant to Provost Ross's House in the Shiprow for the Members' Night, at which short items were presented by Mr Martin Nichols on Switzerland and Mr A. Tewnton on Scottish Sea Birds, in addition to films of the Cobbler and Hydro-electric Schemes. To all who entertained the Club at these meetings we offer our sincere thanks.

MEETS AND EXCURSIONS

1954

Sept. 5. Lochnagar.	Nov. 14. Glen Isla to Glen Clova.
Oct. 17. Ben Avon.	Dec. 5. Bennachie.

1955

New Year. Derry Lodge.	June 5. Derry Lodge.
Jan. 23. Lochnagar.	June 25. } Bridge of Orchy.
Feb. 13. Ballochbuie.	„ 26. }
Easter. Lochcarron.	Sept. 4. Lochnagar.
May 15. Monadhliaths.	

An exhilarating, cold, and sunny day on September 5 at the Spittal of Muick produced a bag of over seventy Munro ascents by members and guests who had declared intentions on setting out on no more than a training stroll after the holidays. How different at Corndavon, where a wet day—and that is putting it mildly—restricted the tops to nothing higher than the Brown Cow and two bus-loads could not claim a single 3,000-er. The crossing from Isla to Clova on a clear day with a lot of firm snow was more successful. Concern regarding the fate of one member, last seen engaged in photography of equine subjects whose man-eating habits were discussed by the worried members, was allayed by his only just punctual return.

At Derry at New Year there was the usual party, while a rebel group held an unofficial gathering at Tyndrum. Snow cover was abnormally slight at this period, and skiers had to search far for suitable stretches.

The first Lochnagar outing of 1955 was on a pleasant day with good firm snow, which led to a mishap to a young guest on her descent of the Ladder on the return journey, but immediate skilled paternal attention ensured no lasting complications to the arm. And there was another mishap—a lady member reached the bus rendezvous late through failing to read the circular, and as a result had to take the first bus to Ballater and walk up Glen Muick. As this is not an infrequent occurrence, may we suggest to all members that they check excursion times and even dates carefully—before the event!

After an uneventful outing to Lochnagar by Ballochbuie, the two following excursions were cancelled, through lack of support—the prevailing snow conditions tending to encourage ski-ing. One at least might have been held had intending participants sent in notification by the appointed date, which, may we remind members, is also the last approved date for withdrawals, although the Meets Secretary has a kind heart!

The 1955 Easter Meet at Lochcarron was not favoured by good weather: in fact, it coincided with a really wet spell on the west coast; those who stayed on a few days longer had excellent conditions. The main party were well looked after at Loch Carron Hotel, and excellent reports also came from those who were at Strathcarron Hotel. Despite the wet going most of the local Munros were visited, but Lurg Mhor proved just too far for a late start. The attendance of some twenty members and guests was not quite up to the usual Easter Meet standard.

The Sunday outing to the Monadhliaths was popular and enjoyed good weather—until about 4 P.M., when a snowstorm started, and several inches were lying in Glen Banchor as the bus returned to Newtonmore. Fortunately the storm was fairly local, and the journey to Aberdeen was made in better time than seemed probable. Some members question the justification for such long-distance day excursions, but the support they receive is often better than for the more local trips.

The midsummer excursion to Bridge of Orchy found the hills enveloped in mist, but the night-time navigation over Beinn a' Chreachain, Beinn Achaladair, Beinn an Dothaidh, and Beinn Mhanach was generally satisfactory—more than can be said for the attempts to find the col leading to Beinn Dorain after daylight! However, all the party were up to time for a good breakfast at the Royal Hotel, Tyndrum.

The hills around Spittal of Muick were busy on September 4, 1955, for the final excursion of this report, for our colleagues of the Moray Mountaineering Club were also there. After the long dry spell rocks were in good condition, and although the time limit kept members off the more difficult climbs, they were able to watch, for instance, the first ascent of the Black Spout Pinnacle from its base.

#### FARTHER AFIELD

MILLICENT and Hamish McArthur and Margaret Munro were in Jugoslavia and the San Martino area of the Dolomites in August 1954. After some days lazing in the sun and lotus-eating in Venice and on the island of Rab off the Dalmatian coast, they summoned up enough energy to head north to the Julian Alps. From Zlatarog on Lake Bohinj they crossed this range, climbing Triglav (2,863 m.), the highest peak in Jugoslavia, and staying in the Vodnikova Koca and Dom Planica huts. These huts were very good, and generally food and hotels were cheap, the people most friendly, and the language impossible. Some knowledge of German is a great advantage, as the Jugoslavs find English as difficult as we find Serbo-Croat.

Unfortunately the weather broke badly, so after some days of thick mist and heavy rain they fled west to San Martino di Castrozza in the hope of better conditions. Ascents were made of the Rosetta, Cimon della Pala, Dente del Cimon, and Pala di San Martino. The last was made more exciting by a blizzard which started as the party began the descent, leaving vivid memories of a hair-raising abseil on an iced rope.

Gordon McAndrew was in the Hohe Tauern with an Austrian Alpine Club party in July 1954. The climbing was restricted by heavy snowfalls. From the Warnsdorfer Hut the Sonntagkopf was attempted in a snowstorm, then the Krimmler Torl was crossed to the Kursinger Hut. After three days' snow the weather allowed ascents of the Schwarzes Hornl, the Gross Venediger, and Kleine Venediger in deep new snow by the ordinary route, the Keeskogel, and a traverse of the Grosser Geiger by the north-east face and north ridge with descent by the ordinary west ridge.

The Editor went first, late in July 1954, to Fafler Alp in the Lotschental, where, with a Swiss geologist friend, who was equipped with a guide and a porter to carry the specimens, the ridges of the Petersgrat gave good scrambling for a few days.



*July 1954*

GROSS VENEDIGER FROM NORTH

*G. M. McAndrew*

Then a conveniently placed granite outcrop near the summit justified the snow walk up Ebnefuh in a full gale. The weather did not relent thereafter, and at St Niklaus with Toni Biner he was glad of the comforts of the Pension Monte Rosa, where an after-dinner session with Josef Knubel and Franz Biner, listening to tales of earlier days, helped to mitigate the disappointments of repulses at the Bordier and Rothorn Huts. At the latter an evening which continued till after midnight, so unpromising was the weather, with Alfred Zurcher and the two young Lochmatters continued the feast of reminiscence.

The weather in 1955 behaved even more atrociously as far as your Editor was concerned. With Margaret Munro it was no more than cloudy over the Monte Moro, from Macugnaga to Alagna was quite the wettest day he has experienced, and over the Col d'Olen was still cold and bleak. So to Breuil, with its miserable modern edifices, and up to Testa Grigia where 6 inches of fresh snow softened the plod to Zermatt. Harry Whitehouse joined the party, which thereafter was valley-bound with rain or snow every day, except for one venture towards the Topali Hut which only produced a sore head—but that is another story!

### STILL FARTHER AFIELD

IN 1955 Hamish and Millicent McArthur made a journey through the Lahul Himalaya in northern India just south of the Kashmir frontier and near the borders of Tibet. They were accompanied by Frank and Babs Solari, who are known to many Cairngorm Club members, and were joined in India by Capt. Kailash Goswami and his wife Tara. The party engaged two Sherpas, Ourkien and Numbe, and two local porters, four horsemen, and twenty mules and horses. They left Manali (6,000 feet) in the Kulu valley on July 14, 1955, crossed the Rhotang Pass (13,000 feet), and descended to the valley of the Chandra River (at this point about 10,500 feet). The party then went four days' march up the Chandra to the Kunzam La (15,000 feet) and camped for several days in a meadow a short distance below the pass on its eastern side. From there the highest of the peaks to the south of the pass was climbed. Its height is about 18,000 feet, and this was probably the first ascent. It was found to be an easy climb, apart from the effect of altitude on an unacclimatised party. Leaving this camp they descended again to the Chandra River and crossed with some difficulty to its west bank—the rivers are so rapid that it is never easy, and often impossible, to ford them. A base camp was established at about 14,000 feet, and from there a large glacier system comparable in size with the Aletsch glacier in Switzerland was explored and roughly surveyed. This glacier is shown vaguely and incorrectly on the Survey of India map, and it does not appear to have been visited previously. Two first ascents were made in this area—one a mountain of about 19,000 feet, which is not shown on the map, and the other the highest mountain in the immediate neighbourhood, the unnamed point shown as 20,430 feet on the Survey of India map sheet 52H. The lower mountain was climbed from the advanced base camp at about 15,000 feet and the higher from a camp in an icefall at about 17,600 feet. When the party started on the return journey it was found that the Chandra River had risen and could not be crossed, and a detour had to be made over the Bara Lacha La (16,000 feet) and down the Bhaga River. This detour added about

60 miles to the return journey and caused difficulties later with the Indian authorities, since it involved entering a prohibited area for which the party had no permit, but it led partly through inhabited country and this added interest to the return journey. The remote village of Kyelang seemed warm and fertile—indeed almost Italian—compared with the barren country that had been left behind. The party returned to Manali over the Rhotang Pass on August 16. Although the journey was made during the monsoon, the first range of mountains stopped the clouds and little rain was met beyond the Rhotang Pass, and the weather could hardly have been better. The Sherpas and the other men worked splendidly, the party's health was excellent, and the whole trip was enjoyed by all who took part in it.

We hear that other members have been in Arctic Norway, Africa, the Rockies, and the Falkland Islands during 1955 and hope that accounts of their travels will be forthcoming!

### RECONSTRUCTION AT DERRY

FIVE years have slipped past since the Editor last decreed that the Club's building operations be put on record. It should not for one moment be imagined that these have been years of stagnation; rather it has been a period of consolidation. With insistent and almost monotonous regularity the call has gone out for volunteers for work parties, and many unspectacular but valuable improvements and repairs have been carried out at our two climbing huts. However, it had been felt for some time that a rather major repair must be faced at Derry Lodge, where the back corridor and scullery, always a menace for anyone over 5 feet tall, had become rather crumbly and definitely draughty. The serious obstacle was the cost of having such a job carried out by contract. The decision was therefore taken to attempt the work by voluntary labour and, furthermore, to carry out a complete reconstruction with improved headroom and accommodation.

Detailed plans were duly made, and July 2, 1955, was fixed as the date of commencement. Several workers arrived on the evening of the 1st and immediately attacked the old structure. We were again treated to a spirited exhibition of the Thomson demolition technique, so effective at Corrour Bothy and so unnerving to those who visualise being left to restore the more delicate parts of the contiguous fabric such as drains, water-pipes, lath and plaster, etc. By 11 P.M. the corridor and several of the aforementioned ancillaries were virtually non-existent. Incessant rain on the following day did not hold up completion of demolition and preparation of foundations, though rather dejectedly we resigned ourselves to our usual building weather and made preparations by shoring up and leaving temporarily in place the roof of the scullery. Little did Sheila Murray and Ethel Scott, who generously volunteered to act as "kitchie deems" and performed very acceptably, realise how fine a margin separated them from extinction. As it turned out, the work was more nearly held up by scorching heat, the weather for the remainder of the period being incredibly good.

The Still-McAndrew and Prentis-Chalmers building units now swung into operation, very professionally laying foundations and erecting the walls for which Tee-Beam cavity blocks were used. If any junior member survives to see these walls demolished—which God forbid—he is very welcome to my best pipe-spanner



*July 1955*

RECONSTRUCTION AT DERRY

*G. A. Taylor*

dropped down the cavity. Glass brick windows were built into the corridor to avoid the use of timber, minimise the risk of breakage, and provide insulation. The effect has been favourably commented on. A normal window, but of enlarged size, was used for the scullery. It was alleged that inventive at times surpassed the imaginative standard previously noted on our construction sites. On one such occasion two of our very senior workers struggled, sweated, and cursed for a full half-hour loading an unusually large foundation stone on to a barrow for disposal; one of our juvenile associates, dozing nearby as usual up to this point, rushed forward with the impetuosity of the adolescent, grabbed the handles, and only succeeded in tipping over the barrow and its cargo.

At times the emphasis veered to the other extreme, as when I picked up a piece of timber which I had directed to be shaped to specified dimensions I was rather shaken and, in the circumstances, temporarily puzzled to find beautifully lettered on it "Gulielmus Ewen fecit Georgius Taylor imperavit MCMLV."

The floor of the new corridor is of pre-cast concrete slabs supported above and insulated from the ground. The roofs are constructed of timber rafters, purlins, and sarking covered with roofing felt, and finally aluminium roofing sections are bolted on. Insulation boarding nailed to the rafters forms a ceiling. Other work carried out included: painting of nearly the whole exterior of the Lodge; renewal of a substantial portion of flooring in the small kitchen; renewal of all copper cold-water pipes from the scullery to the bathroom in larger bore alkathene; overhaul and renewal of numerous plumbing fixtures; some interior painting; installation of gutters, down-pipes, and drains on the east and south of the Lodge; repairing of lounge carpet; cleaning up of the area at the back of Lodge; and building a masonry dwarf wall along the foot of the slope.

Work continued not quite from dawn but certainly to dusk every day, and it is pleasant to record that substantially everything, except refinements, was completed in the fortnight—no mean achievement when it is recalled that the work party included no tradesmen. It was even possible to throw in a few games of bridge and a few walks from midnight onwards.

The Club is very much indebted to the following, who spent on the job times varying from a fortnight to a day or a few days. Without their magnificent efforts the work could certainly not have been carried out under several times the present cost.

*Members.*—Misses Adams, Arthur, Cruickshank, Murray, and Scott. Messrs Bain, Baird, Bothwell, Cameron, Duff, Ewen, Harper, McAndrew, McDougall, Malcolm, Prentis, Still, Taylor, and Thomson.

*Non-members.*—Messrs Cannon, Chalmers, Broomfield, Scott, G. and I. Ewen, and Peterkin.

G. A. T.

### MOUNT EVEREST FOUNDATION

THE substantial fund which has been accumulated from the proceeds of the lecture, film, and book rights of the successful Everest expedition will be used to make grants to encourage exploration in the mountain regions of the world, and will be administered by the Mount Everest Foundation, a trust established by the Alpine Club and the Royal Geographical Society.

Grants, which will not normally be more than a limited contribution to the expenses, will be made to expeditions of mountaineers or scientists qualified to embark on the proposed exploration or research, which should be competently planned. A proportion of the grants will be to less experienced parties with a well qualified leader, others to parties none of whom has had previous opportunity of visiting the area of exploration.

“The Foundation intend to support mountaineering where this involves the exploration of new or little known mountain regions and will, equally, support parties whose objectives are scientific where their proposed research is in mountain country. Preference will be given to amateurs in the wide sense.”

Mr J. M. Wordie is Chairman and Sir Edwin S. Herbert Vice-Chairman of the Foundation, which also includes Lord Nathan, General Sir James Marshall-Cornwall, Major-General F. Llewellyn Brown, Mr Eric Shipton, Mr B. R. Goodfellow, Lieut.-Col. H. W. Tobin, Mr Leonard Brooks, Mr H. N. Fairfield, and Commander A. R. Glen. Interested parties should apply to the Hon. Secretary, Mr A. D. B. Side, c/o The Alpine Club, 74 South Audley Street, London, W.1, outlining plan, date, area, and object of the proposed expedition, at least three months before the date of departure from Britain.

### ANIMALS AND ACCURACY

NOT to be outdone by the exploits of the kitten on the Matterhorn, an Irish setter from Gressoney (deposited in the Aosta valley!) has, reports *The Times*, followed an unguided ascent to the Cabane Margherita on the Signal Kuppe last year by a late spring traverse of the Col de Lys to Zermatt, a totally unjustifiable exploit for an unaccompanied climber. Unfortunately two unwarranted claims accompany the report: one that the Margherita is the highest hut in the world, when there are, or have been, huts up to 7,000 feet higher in the Andes; the other that 15,000 feet is probably a high altitude climbing record for domestic animals—or are the Himalayan beasts of burden not domestic animals?

A local paper, in a garbled version of the same exploit, combined the expeditions and made this year's route to Zermatt lead over Monte Rosa. May we ever hope to have reasonable journalistic treatment of mountaineering subjects?

### BOTH FEET IN

THE agency message reporting from Katmandu the success of the L.S.C.C. party in the Jugal Himal claimed that the ladies were members of the S.M.C. Several (but not all) Scottish papers which should have known better printed the report without correction. On the following day the *Scotsman*, in a valiant attempt to put matters right, only gave occasion for further apologies by describing them as three Scotsmen before explaining that they belong not to the S.M.C. but the L.S.C.C. We are sure that there is a moral regarding the advantages of mixed clubs somewhere! And, belatedly, our most sincere congratulations to the three ladies, who are well known to many of our members.

### THE CULT OF THE RUBBER STAMP

It may be worth while warning members that difficulties on the Italian frontier, which we hoped might have departed with the Fascists, still continue. Even a recognised frontier crossing, such as the Monte Moro, is apparently only manned on the whim of the local officers, and one is liable to be packed off on the two-hour journey to Domodossola to have the five-second operation of stamping the passport completed. There is apparently no ink in Macugnaga. The contrast with the enlightened policy towards climbers in frontier districts of the northern neighbours is marked.

### THE MOUNTAINS OF BRITAIN

It is reliably reported that a perspicacious old lady of Upper Deeside recently described a C.C. quartette, Taylor, Thomson, Bain, and the writer (who remains anonymous!) as "four elderly gentlemen on ski." I have failed so far to persuade my thoroughly shaken friends that some small, but estimable, mountains lie yet within our reach, but a powerful new instrument has been put into my hands, a privately printed volume: "A Selection of some 900 British and Irish Mountain Tops," by William McKnight Docharty of the S.M.C. In a foreword, briefly biographical and explanatory, the author writes: "The grandeur, grace, or technical problems of a hill do not necessarily increase with height, nor does it follow the character or interest of the ridges are enhanced, or a view improved, the higher we go. In fact . . . only since I began visiting these lower hills have I seen, appreciated, and enjoyed the full majesty of the mightier ones of 'Munro's Tables.'"

There follows the Lists, with O.S. Map and Grid references, remarks, etc.; and there is a full Index. The book is magnificently illustrated with nine panoramic photographs, spreading out to five pages, taken mostly in the north-west region. I repeat—they are magnificent and should be studied with the O.S. map, or maps, spread out in front of you.

The Club is indebted to Mr Docharty for this handsome gift, now available to members in the Club Library.

## NEW CLIMBS

## CAIRNGORM: COIRE AN T-SNEACHDA

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

## BEN MACDHUI: COIRE SPUTAN DEARG

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

## CARN ETCHACHAN: LOCH AVON FACE

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

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

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

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

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

#### BEINN A' BHUIRD: GARBH CHOIRE

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

#### CREAG AN DUBH LOCH

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

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

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

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

## LOCHNAGAR

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### NEW CLIMBING BOOKS

- “Introduction to Mountaineering,” by Showell Styles. (Seeley, Service, no date, 15s.)
- “The Untrodden Andes,” by C. G. Egeler and T. de Booy. (Faber, 1955, 25s.)
- “The Moated Mountain,” by Showell Styles. (Hurst and Blackett, 1955, 18s.)
- “Commando Climber,” by Mike Banks. (Dent, 1955, 18s.)
- “The Island Hills,” by Campbell Steven (Hurst and Blackett, 1955, 18s.)

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

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

them up the Nevado Pengos and the 20,981 foot Huantsan, the latter a first ascent which was not completed without some misadventure. A lucky escape from a 300 foot fall and a blizzard at a rather inadequately supported high camp are described with the vigour and simplicity which characterises the whole book. Much of the detail of preliminary organisation, choice of party, and journey out will seem familiar to readers of accounts of earlier expeditions to Asia, Africa, or South America, for there is somehow a certain similarity about the snags which tend to arise. Nevertheless the authors, and the translator, have been able to achieve a welcome freshness: this will not always be possible, and the market for books of this type must be diminishing unless they have some outstanding ascent to relate. To return to the climbing, the Dutchmen proved that they were not the novices they claimed to be by climbing a virgin unnamed peak of almost 18,000 feet in the Pongos Massif before Terray joined them.

No sooner had the above been written than "The Moated Mountain" arrived for review, and demonstrated that an excellent book can indeed still be made from an expedition which, judged from the number of peaks ascended, was rather unsuccessful. It is an account of the attempt of a small English party to climb Baudha, a mountain of nearly 22,000 feet in Nepal a few miles south of Manaslu. It proved beyond the capacity of the party of four, all new to the Himalaya, in the unfavourable weather conditions of May 1954. But here we have a book which seems to get the spirit of the country by introducing the people and the scene with an informality often lacking in modern climbing books. Here Showell Styles has material which suits his style, and, as we said recently about his Norwegian book, we hope he will be able to go back and find more to tell us. R. L. M.

"Commando Climber" gives an account of the writer's climbing experiences from the time that he qualified as an instructor at the Commando Cliff Assault Centre at St Ives in Cornwall. Perhaps the opening chapters, which deal mainly with the routine work of the Centre, will appeal more to those who know the Cornish cliffs, but it is interesting to learn that the Royal Marine training establishment in Cornwall was a development of the Commando Mountain Warfare Training Centre established at Derry Lodge during the last war. In the few years since Captain Banks took to mountaineering as a sport he has travelled far, in more senses than one, and his accounts of his climbs in Cyprus, in the Alps, and in Greenland are always interesting, well salted with humour, and never marred by any emphasis on his own share in an expedition. Those who know the Brenva face of Mont Blanc will doubtless read with special interest his account of a moonlight ascent of Route Major, but to the reviewer the best parts of his book are where he is on the Scottish hills. He climbed frequently with members of the Scottish Mountaineering Club and the Creagh Dhu Club, and while paying tribute to the climbing ability and good fellowship found in the latter club he occasionally allows himself to poke a little gentle fun at them. The west of Scotland climbers can hold their own at that game too. How else can we account for the extraordinary statement that Captain Banks and the men he took to Arran heard in the stillness of the hills there "the wild, shrill mating call of the haggis"!

The author in his Introduction expresses the hope that others will follow him in exploring "The Island Hills." We are sure that many after reading this book will want to do so. Campbell Steven tells us of days in Arran and in Skye, and many of his readers will be on familiar ground, but he also takes us to the hills of

Jura, Mull, and Rum to the Sgùrr of Eigg, to Ailsa Craig, and Handa and the little islands that lie at the mouth of the Firth of Lorne. He has many a good tale to tell and the manner of the telling is such that we would all want to go with him the next time he closes his office door in Glasgow at 5 P.M. on a Friday and land with him before the sun is up next morning on one of the Western Isles.

J. E. B.

### CLIMBING JOURNALS

- Alpine Journal*, Nos. 289, 290.  
*Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal*, No. 146.  
*Climbers' Club Journal*, No. 80.  
*Rucksack Club Journal*, No. 48.  
*Fell and Rock Climbing Club Journal*, No. 48.  
*Cambridge Mountaineering*, 1955.  
*Oxford Mountaineering*, 1955.  
*American Alpine Journal*, 1954, 1955.  
*Iowa Climber*, 1954, 1955.  
*Appalachia*, Vol. XXX, No. 2, 3.  
*New Zealand Alpine Journal*, 1954.  
*Journal of the Mountain Club of South Africa*, 1954.  
*Club Alpino Italiano, Sez. di Milano, Boll. Mensile*, 1954, 1955.  
*Wierchy*, 1954.

A pile of journals more than a foot high cannot be reviewed adequately in the limited space which can now be spared in the journal of most climbing clubs. The printers' bills have made the reviewers' job much easier, or is it more difficult? But as last year we evaded the issue entirely, an attempt must now be made to pin-point a few outstanding items in the current batch. Once again we record our thanks to all the clubs who exchange with us and draw our members' attention to the availability of the journals in the Club library.

The *Alpine Journal* gives us an opportunity of reading at leisure the talk by Dr Frauenberger and Hermann Buhl on Nanga Parbat, which many of our members have already heard. The accent is on the Himalaya in both numbers, bringing the K2 story to its culmination with accounts of the 1953 American and 1954 Italian expeditions, describing the 1954 reconnaissance of Kangchenjunga—possibly we should say preliminary reconnaissance, since the 1955 reconnaissance finished the job off—and the 1952 Scottish Nepal and 1953 Creagh Dhu expeditions, which at least make us feel a little nearer home. Perhaps the same might be said of the account of the exploration of the Api and Nampa group. There is the story of the ascent of the south face of Aconcagna in No. 290. Alpine articles cover the Peuterey ridge, the east face of the Petit Dru, the Führerbuch of young Peter Taugwalder, some notes on A. F. Mummery, and Sir Arnold Lunn on Human Nature in the Valais. There is an account of the technique of artificial climbing in which the method of using the etrier, or rope stirrup-cum-ladder, which recently made its appearance on Lochnagar, is described. Finally, it seems worth while drawing attention to the consolidated index to Vols. 39 to 58 of the *A.J.* covering the period 1927-52, which will facilitate the search for specific items of information.

The *S.M.C. Journal* is a thick number, but then it has an article by Professor Manley on Disappointing Summers, and British Weather in general, about which much can be said! D. J. Fraser writes on Photography for Mountaineers, and illustrates his points with two excellent snow scenes, in an article which details the equipment and accessories available and discusses lighting and composition. Coireachan Ruadha has been further explored by C. M. Dixon, there is a previously unpublished account of Raeburn's attempt on Ushba, and Dr Maitland writes with authority on First Aid and Mountain Rescue.

In the latest *Climbers' Club Journal* Eric Shipton stresses again the advantages of small Himalayan expeditions, Michael Ball tells of the 1954 expedition to the Makalu area, and Dr R. Fisher describes an attempt on Rakaposhi. Nearer home we read of climbing in Devonshire and a guide-book article on Cwm Silyn and Tremadoc. These climbing articles, together with a few of more general character, go to show the activity of the Club and provide an excellent journal on which the new editor is to be congratulated.

The highlight of the *Fell and Rock Journal* is John Hunt's Letters from Everest, but in another field the names of Alf Gregory and Douglas Milner indicate the quality of the illustrations. Some of the pictures catch our eye, too, in the *Rucksack Club Journal*, particularly the snow scene frontispiece of V. T. Dillon, who writes engagingly of an ascent of the Dent d'Hérens. Then there is the story of a week-end walk from Fort William to Aviemore, taking in all the Scottish 4,000-ers *en route*—98 miles and 13,100 feet!

The journals of the university clubs record the organised and unorganised meets of their members—covering often the same ground as the journals of the more senior clubs. Limits tend to be pushed a little further, a clue to the approach being found in the remark that in northern Scotland “one tends to climb below one's best because not assured by nail scratches that a route will go—which is perhaps a bad thing.” It is perhaps a bad thing that many young mountaineers are initiated through clubs in which there is little opportunity to learn by precept the traditions of the craft.

We should also acknowledge the receipt of the bulletins and handbooks of numerous other clubs, including those of the Grampian Club and the Etchachan Club.

Among the overseas journals there are interesting accounts of K2, Makalu, and the Japanese on Manaslu in the *American Alpine Journals*, and of climbing in Japan in *Appalachia*, in addition to many articles dealing with the American continent. The *New Zealand Alpine Journal's* list of authors includes the names of Hillary, Lowe, and Odell, while in the *Journal of the Mountain Club of South Africa* we read of winter climbing in Scotland “where climbing is truly mountaineering.” We may point out to members that it is in periodicals such as the *Bolletino Mensile* of the Milan section of the Italian Alpine Club that details regarding alpine huts can be found, and in this connection may we also mention that *Die Alpen*, the Swiss Alpine Club journal, is presented to the library by our President, E. W. Smith. It does not reach the library immediately after publication, but any member desiring to consult current numbers for details of hut bookings and similar information should apply to the Librarian.

Finally, there is the Polish *Wierchy* with an article on the Himalayan Sherpas. But we are anxious to find a reviewer qualified to deal with this journal!

## ***Ski Mountaineering Rucksack***

The special feature of this rucksack is two slots behind the outside pockets through which the ski can be passed. The tips are lashed together to prevent swaying and the tails protrude below the pockets. The sack has proved most useful to ski mountaineers as it leaves both hands free and thus enables them to take ski to summits where it would otherwise be impossible to do so. This method of transporting ski is also useful in Spring on the long walks below the snow line. As used by the recent Kanchenjunga expedition **10 gns.**

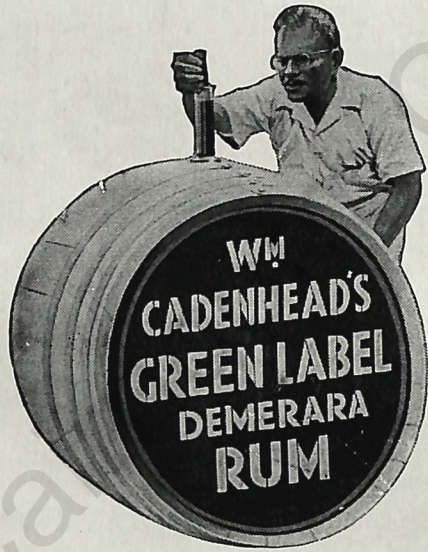


★ *Our fully illustrated Winter Sports Catalogue contains every type of ski equipment, clothing and accessories for men and women. Copies will be available in October.*

***Lillywhites***  
LTD

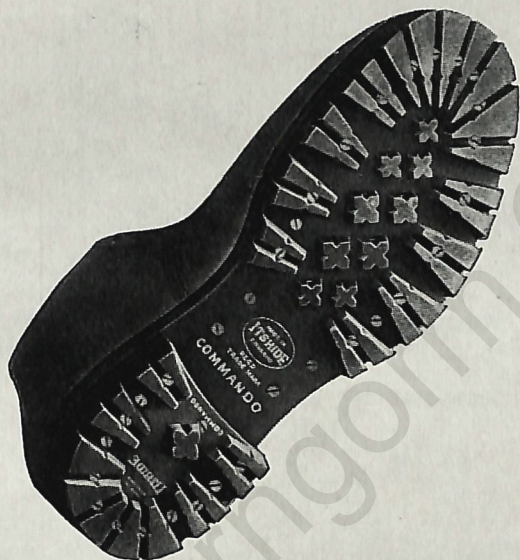
**129, PRINCES STREET, EDINBURGH. Tel. 31255**

BY TEST THE BEST



Since 1940 . . .

the **Commando**  
Name and Design Registered



Wherever the going is strenuous the famous "Commando" soles and heels have proved their worth. They have been used in all major expeditions since 1940—for tackling the greatest heights to overcoming the most robust conditions. Be sure your climbing boots are fitted with "Commando" soles and heels.

**The World's Best Soles and Heels**

**ITSHIDE**

RUBBER CO. LTD.

PETERSFIELD . HANTS . ENGLAND

---

---

*There's*  
*no use*  
*talking*  
**TASTE IT!**



**MACKINLAY'S**  
*Scotch* **WHISKY**

*ESTD. 1820*

AS BLENDED BY  
THE MACKINLAY FAMILY FOR

FOUR GENERATIONS

# NETHYBRIDGE HOTEL

Nethy Bridge . Inverness-shire

*Telephone No. 203*



*Open*

Mid-March to Mid-October



IDEAL CENTRE FOR  
CLIMBING AND SKI-ING



*Special Terms for Parties*

For Tariff and all information apply  
to the Manager

# W. J. Milne Ltd.

ESTABLISHED 1904

Men's Outfitters

Tweed Hats and Caps



Aberdeen Scotland

Grams: "GALLOWSES" ABERDEEN

Telephone: 23950

THE  
DARIEN  
PRESS  
LTD.



BRISTO PLACE  
EDINBURGH 1

Telegrams:  
"Printing, Edinburgh"  
Phone: CENTral 7104

## Perfect Printing

MAGAZINES, CATALOGUES,  
PRICE LISTS, REPORTS OF  
CHURCHES, SOCIETIES, ETC.,  
PRODUCED IN A TASTEFUL  
FORM, AND AT REASONABLE  
PRICES.

EST  
1790

*The King  
of Whiskies*

(REGISTERED TRADE MARK)

**SANDEMAN  
SCOTCH  
WHISKY**



Blended in Edinburgh from specially selected fine whiskies under the same family proprietorship since 1790.

**SANDEMAN & SONS LTD**  
25 & 27 Forth Street  
**EDINBURGH**



