

**THE
CAIRNGORM
CLUB
JOURNAL**

92

1961

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THE CAIRNGORM CLUB JOURNAL

Vol. 17

1961

No. 92

Edited by R. L. MITCHELL

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THE regular appearance of the *Cairngorm Club Journal* depends on the availability of sufficient material. It is therefore primarily in the hands of members themselves. Contributions should be sent to the Hon. Editor, Dr R. L. Mitchell, 125 Cranford Road, Aberdeen. Articles should in general be from 1,500 to 3,000 words in length. Photographs submitted need not, in the first instance, be larger than contact prints, provided the negative is available.

Manuscripts, if typewritten, should be typed on one side only, double spaced, with ample margins for corrections and instructions to the printer.

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August 1958

'TWIN GABLE (20,042 feet) FROM ABOVE CAMP II

F. Solari

THE CAIRNGORM CLUB JOURNAL

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FLYING VISIT

MARGARET MUNRO

SEVEN weeks in a country so far and so different from one's own is too short a time to create any but the most fleeting impression. But my memories are real and vivid to me and all the more precious for being the fulfilment of a long-cherished ambition to see the Himalayas. I was lucky, for I knew Hamish McArthur who invited me to join his expedition, and of all the wonderful holidays I owe to him and Millicent, this was the best. With sorrow in our hearts we left Hamish in the Himalayas and I, personally, would like to record here my gratitude to him.

The aim of the expedition was to visit the head of the Thiroi Nal, a hitherto unexplored tributary valley of the Chandra River on the border of Chamba and Lahul, and to explore, photograph, and map this area. The existing Survey of India map of the Thiroi Nal fades out with some vague dotted lines on its eastern edge, and many of the actual contours look as though an imaginative cartographer had filled them in at his office desk just to satisfy his artistic instincts. It was a wonderful chance to combine a holiday with true exploration. The party was the same as for the Central Lahul Expedition, 1955—that is, Hamish and Millicent McArthur, Frank and Babs Solari, with two additional members, Emile Bayle from Billy-Montigny in France (a member of the Groupe des Hautes Montagnes), and myself.

Babs and Frank Solari and I flew from London to Bombay as advance party. Our job was to extricate the equipment (which travelled by sea) from the clutches of the Customs, a long and tedious business which occupied us fully for a week. Thus my memories of Bombay chiefly consist of countless taxi drives from Custom Houses to docks and back again, long earnest discussions with the hundred

and one official concerned with our business, the vivid clear colours of the saris which all Indian women wear with such grace, and the blanket of humid air typical of the monsoon season. Now and again the skies would let forth a deluge of solid water, so we were immediately glad of the umbrellas we had so prudently taken! (This important item of equipment I used regularly throughout our travels, chiefly as a sunshade, only parting with it reluctantly when we left Base to set up high camps on the glaciers!)

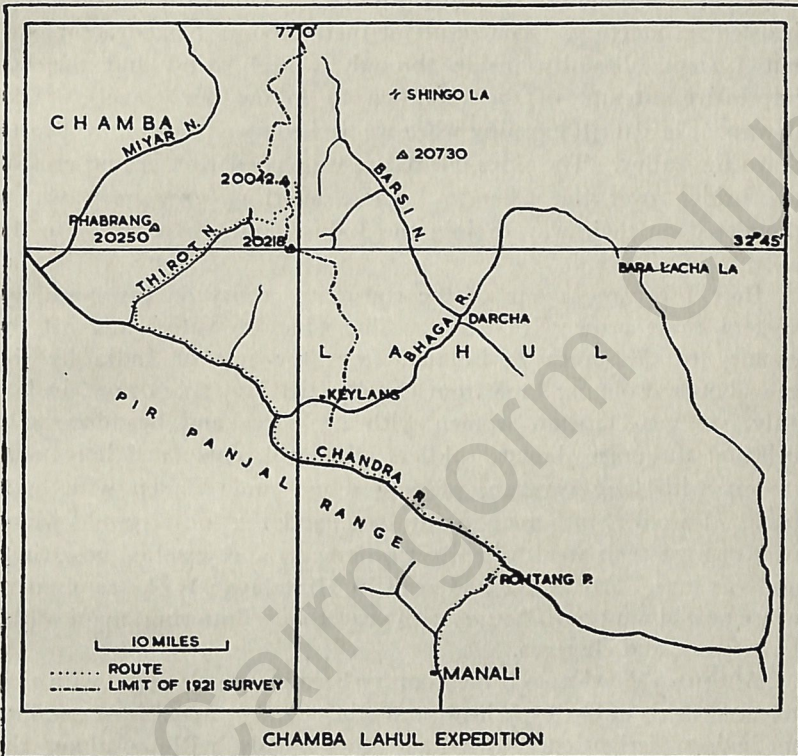
The Chamba-Lahul Expedition, 1958, really started when the six of us met in Delhi on July 18. Next day we travelled north by train to Pathankot, where we were met by our two Sherpas, Ang Tsering and Da Temba, after their five-day journey from Darjeeling. Here we hired an ancient bus to transport us and our mound of equipment for the next 200 miles, first east and then north, to Manali in the Kulu valley. This was an interesting two-day drive through jungle and foothills, rice fields and tea plantations to Mandi; then up the spectacular road which clings precariously to the side of the great gorge of the Beas River. We were fortunate for, though the monsoon had recently swept away sections of this "highway," it was mended and open again that day for traffic.

The road ends at Manali (6,000 feet), the busy trading centre for many distant people from the north who make arduous journeys each summer to trade wool and salt in the bazaar in exchange for some products of civilisation. They come from Lahul, Ladakh, Spiti, and even Tibet. It was sheer delight to be welcomed by one out of the throng as we drove through the village. This was Sonam, a Ladakhi, who greeted the McArthurs with a tremendous salaam. He had been with them in 1955 and was to come with us this time too.

Manali, owing to its height and sheltered position, is an excellent fruit-growing area. We stayed with Major Banon, who owns an enormous orchard of apple, plum, pear, and cherry trees. These fruits tasted specially good on our return from the mountains. Major Banon had arranged porters and ponies for the expedition, and next morning he introduced the Ladakhi porters he had engaged for us, and a cheery-looking bunch they were too—Sonam, Wangyal, Dorje and Ishe Namgyal. It was interesting to contrast their unbridled enthusiasm, when issued with boots and clothing, with the Sherpas' quiet acceptance of their dues!

On Thursday, July 24, the expedition took to the road. After some delay in getting the equipment sorted into loads and then tied on to the ponies, we set off in a monsoon shower—three sahibs, three

mem-sahibs, two Sherpas, four Ladakhis, twenty-five ponies, and eight pony men! An easy half-day's march this was to Koti rest house, only 7 miles from and 2,000 feet above Manali.



Next day was strenuous, for we had a steady climb up and over the Rohtang Pass (13,050 feet) to the Chandra valley. It was a brilliant sunny morning but, as we climbed, mist began to obscure the mountain views and made us all the more aware of the myriads of flowers by the track. It was a great thrill to see the Himalayan blue poppy in flower near the summit. Once over the pass we soon emerged from the gloom, and I was jerked out of my preoccupation with the miseries of slight altitude sickness by the glories of the splendid view ahead. This was what I had longed to see—snow peaks soaring above deep-cut valleys scoured out by glaciers and the powerful rivers that they feed. The mist hung round the mouth of the pass we had just crossed, but now we were in monsoon-free Lahul and had little rain for the rest of our travels.

That night we camped on a delightful grassy shelf about 1,000 feet above the river and revelled in the delights of luxury camping with the ever-helpful Sherpas and Ladakhis in attendance. Sonam and Wangyal had some fun with the guys of my Guinea tent which they insisted on erecting. The result of their labours looked a bit odd, but I slept blissfully inside through a high wind and the last impressive attempt of the monsoon to follow our travels. This downpour lasted till morning when we packed up and set off westwards down the valley. The skies cleared as we passed Koksar and crossed the bridge over the Chandra, whose swirling grey-green waters thundered on their way to join the Indus hundreds of miles to the west.

Here I became aware of the constant activity on this path, an ancient trade route with Tibet. The Chandra valley and all the country to the north is isolated from the rest of India by the snow-bound Rohtang Pass from October till May; but now, in late July, we met Tibetan women with necklaces and headdresses of brilliant turquoise, lamas, soldiers on patrol, emaciated holy men, traders with long caravans of ponies and mules laden with huge packs of wool, Spiti men in fur hats, and the local people whose women wear their wealth in silver ornaments and jewelled nose rings and earrings. All that I had read in Himalayan books came alive as we passed mud-built houses with prayer flags fluttering, mani walls, lamaseries, and chortens.

After two days' march the country became more fertile, with tiny terraced fields of barley, wheat, and other crops watered by a cunning method of irrigation. Now and then shady willows along the roadside gave us welcome relief from the strong sun which seemed specially fierce when we crossed the dry stony nullahs that sweep down the mountain sides. The south side of the Chandra is tremendous; the steep flanks of immense peaks rear straight up from the river, making the occasional flocks of goats precariously grazing on the few green patches look like tiny white lice. One particularly impressive rock face I remember was opposite the junction of the Bhaga with the Chandra. Its layers of red, yellow, brown, and grey were frozen into immense whorls and streaks as though a giant had stirred a huge molten pudding.

Apart from the constant interest to be found in the magnificent surroundings, in the flowers and the birds, and the passers-by, there was plenty of opportunity on the march to get to know our friends, the Sherpas. Ang Tsering (aged 48), our excellent sirdar, has had



August 1958

F. Solari

CAMP I AND THIROT NALA: PHABRANG (20,250 feet) CENTRE BACKGROUND

a most interesting life. At the age of 14 he was a porter with Bruce's last expedition to the Rongbuk side of Everest and in 1934, with the tragic German expedition to Nanga Parbat, was the last Sherpa to come down alive, though badly frost-bitten, from Camp VI. Unfortunately his English was very limited, and it was only possible to learn the bare facts of these tremendous experiences. On the other hand, Da Temba, his son (aged 24), spoke English fluently and was a very sophisticated young man. He also read and wrote our language and could keep accounts. On the march one day we discussed books and films. I was startled and amazed when he informed me that he found Shakespeare very difficult! I hope it was a comfort when I told him he wasn't the only one who did! It was a relief to find that, although he knew about atom bombs and other inventions of the "civilised" world, he had never heard of television. His home is in the Sherpa country of Sola Khombu, fourteen days' march from Darjeeling, where he spends the summer months seeing films between joining expeditions. His great ambition is to be chosen for the expedition the Sherpas are planning on their own.

On July 30 we turned north into the Thirot Nala and camped by the river just beyond Chokhang. At last we were nearing our objective and were right off the well-beaten track in the Chandra valley. At once the Thirot Nal showed its notable characteristic of keeping secret the impressive peaks that guard it on each side. Even when we reached our base camp site two days later, we still could not see much beyond the steep 2,000 feet moraines that hid the glaciers and mountains above. The last lap of the journey was the hardest for the ponies, as the path disappeared and we had to find our way over huge boulder screes and through rushing glacier torrents. When crossing the latter it was wonderful to be a mem-sahib, for mem-sahibs must not get their feet wet and were firmly led across on horse-back, usually by our faithful Sonam.

Base camp, at 13,750 feet, was set up on the last grassy patch beside a clear-running burn of good water. This was obviously part of the traditional grazing ground for the goats belonging to a very typical old gadi (nomadic goat-herd) who now joined our party. Perhaps the unusual company, the food, cast-off tins (much prized), and odd cigarettes compensated for the invasion.

Pictures of the head of the Thirot Nala give an impression of barren stony country, but this is deceptive for one of the chief pleasures of base camp was the wealth of different flowers growing all around—small asters of brilliant mauve, drifts of rose-pink persicaria, a

handsome species of sedum with deep-crimson flowers, the mountain cranesbill (its delicate blue-purple petals veined with red), masses of pedicularis with tall heads of bright-yellow flowers, and a myriad of others. Here, to our great joy, were more blue poppies (*Meconopsis aculeata*, as I have since found out) in full bloom, which were very difficult to photograph as they prefer to grow in the cool shade of enormous boulders. It would have been fascinating to make a collection of flowers had there been time, but now we had only sixteen days before setting off on the homeward march.

The first day was spent in settling in, sorting stores, and finding a way up the river and over the first great moraines. Some wonderful peaks came into sight and we began to see the layout of the glaciers, most of which had tremendous avalanche-swept ice-falls which did not suit us at all. We were looking for an easy, quick way to gain height and fortunately spotted one glacier high above which looked promising for, though a line of vertical ice-cliffs apparently barred the way, we thought a route might be found to one side or the other. The shapely peak Gangstang (20,218 feet) which dominates the valley and has already been climbed from the other (south) side by a party of Italians, looked a tough proposition from here with its steep knife-edge ridges and hanging glaciers. It has the same magnetism for photographers as the Matterhorn from Zermatt, and only when our films were developed on returning home did we realise how much we had fallen under its spell.

After a training climb from base camp of a snow and rock peak of 16,700 feet (in mist, unfortunately, so survey and photography was impossible), the first high-level camp was set up on the moraine 2,000 feet above base and a few yards from the snout of the chosen glacier. All the porters, and even some of the pony men, carried loads up the boulder-strewn route, through the ice-cold river where it spread out into fairly shallow channels over gravelly flats, and up the steep moraine. This was hard work for our untrained lungs and hearts, and I was very glad to see the tents already pitched when we tottered in with our comparatively light loads. After a good mug of tea with lemon, life took on a rosier hue and, having seen the pony men off down to base, we settled in for the night. The party at Camp I now consisted of Hamish, Frank, Emile, and myself and four porters, Da Temba, Wangyal, Sonam, and Dorje.

A heavy snowfall in the night led to sleet and rain next day, when we woke to find thick mist all around us and a quagmire around and inside the tents. The boys dug an efficient drainage system in the

sodden glacier clay and made stone "causeways" to the tent doors, and we bailed out the tents! We ate, read, and slept to pass the time and were rewarded for our patience by a bright clear dawn next morning.

We set off up the glacier carrying loads for Camp II. The first ice-cliffs were easily turned on the right and we made slow but steady progress, which became slower still as the sun grew hotter. The snow grew soft and, in our unacclimatised condition, we found it hard going. The view opened up as we gained height and wonderful peaks began to appear, notably one which Frank christened the Twin Gable, and another to the west of the Thirof Nal called Phabrang—both twenty-thousanders waiting to be climbed! I, for one, was very glad when at last a halt was called, and we dumped our loads. After a rest we returned to Camp I, had supper, and crawled thankfully into our sleeping bags.

Next day we established Camp II in a snow basin above the second ice barrier. This camp was memorable for the wellnigh insufferable heat caused by the strong sunlight reflected from the snow. Even in the tent there was no escape, for it was like a furnace inside and the camp was in a position well protected from any stray breeze. Sunset was a great relief for the crisp cold that it brought. Dawn at Camp II was really beautiful, for light mist-wraiths tinged with pearly colours floated up from the valley and the great peaks looked remote and ethereal rising above the haze. We started early and had a pleasant walk on good hard snow up to the "edge of the map," an easy col. It was exciting to approach uncharted country and, when we reached the col, a thrill to see other glaciers pouring down to a remote valley and ranges of mountains spreading north-eastward towards Tibet. We scrambled up a small rock peak, where Hamish and Frank made a start on the survey observations, and we all got busy with our cameras. Meanwhile the porters brought up loads from Camp II and then we all went back to fetch the rest before setting up Camp III on the col. This was a perfect site with magnificent views, though naturally rather exposed to the wind.

It was here that my exposure meter had an unusual adventure. I took off my camera and meter and laid them on what seemed to be level snow, while I took off my anorak as the sun was very hot. When I looked down, the meter had vanished, but a faint track could be seen running down the north-east side of the col, over the bergschrund and one crevasse, then disappearing into the next about 200 feet below. That, I thought, was the end of the meter and was thankful

that it was insured! It was impossible at that time to organise a "rescue" party, but early next morning, when the snow was hard and safe, Emile was seen approaching the second crevasse. He bent down, peered in, and let out a shout of triumph—the meter had landed on a narrow shelf about 18 inches down! When I tested it, encrusted with ice and the leather case frozen hard, it was working perfectly in spite of its night out.

At high camps one does not always feel at one's brightest and best. The brain works even more slowly than at sea level, the appetite is poor, and any exertion, such as struggling into sleeping bags or putting on boots, leaves one breathless. But all these discomforts are forgotten when you see such a dawn as we did next morning. It was a marvellous spectacle which I could never put into words and which I will never forget. We spent over an hour taking photographs of the brilliant light creeping over the peaks, throwing ice-fluting into sharp relief and making snow crystals glint and sparkle. At last we tore ourselves away and set off for an easy peak of about 18,000 feet nearby. The porters were delighted to come too—in fact, they took part in all our climbs. We divided into two parties; Frank and I roped up with Sonam and Dorje to climb the west ridge—an easy snow plod, a shattered rock arête, and finally steep snow to the summit, while the other four came up the east—a snow ridge finishing with a spectacular cornice which was most photogenic. The boys set to work on building a row of neat cairns (or chortens), while we took a round of survey readings. From here we saw a twenty-thousander to the north that appeared to be the only possible peak of that height in the vicinity for us to attempt.

We returned to Camp III and decided that the time had come to go down to base and see how Millicent and Babs were faring. Emile preferred to stay high and kept Wangyal with him. The rest of us roped up and made a quick descent of the glacier which, after the hot weather, had begun to reveal many more crevasses than we had encountered on the way up. I well remember the eternity it seemed to take going down the steep moraine and through the boulders before reaching the friendly welcome at base, and the joy of seeing flowers and grass and running water. The following day was wet and misty, and we wondered what the weather at Camp III was like. We packed up and started about 4 P.M., Babs coming with us for a night at Camp I.

Light was just appearing when we set off up the glacier next morning at 5.30. As we approached Camp III we caught sight of



August 1958

E. Bayle

THE OBJECTIVE FROM EMILE AND WANGYAL'S PEAK
Site of Camp IV below right-hand ridge

two tiny figures moving slowly up the steep ice ridge of the fine peak (over 18,000 feet) to the south of the col. Emile and Wangyal returned at 2.30 P.M., having had a splendid climb, the complete traverse of the mountain. Emile was full of praise for Wangyal's climbing ability, both on rock and on steep snow and ice—a wonderful achievement for a Ladakhi with very little previous experience of mountaineering. They told us—in fact, it was obvious from the state of the tents—that the previous day of rain and cloud at base had been blizzard and gale for them, so they could not venture out.

Now we prepared to move camp to the glacier basin under the proposed twenty-thousander. We went down the north-east side of the col (that is, still farther away from base), descended about 800 feet, then turned north up the other glacier. Camp IV was pitched near the head of the basin and below the south-east ridge, which we hoped would lead us to the summit. After a brief rest, Hamish and Emile set off on a reconnaissance and, after some difficulty in a steep ice gully, found a way to the crest of the ridge which was shattered and covered with loose rock. The top section still looked hard from here, but they returned to camp full of hope that a route could be found.

Next morning, August 14, Emile and Da Temba went off early as advance party to pioneer a route; indeed, we all hoped they might reach the top, which was at the far end of the summit ridge (about a mile in length), and get back in one day. The rest of us packed one tent, sleeping bags, and food to set a camp well up the ridge to be in a good position for a second attempt next day. The climb up the loose treacherous rocks to the crest of the ridge was unpleasant, for secure belays were non-existent and it was practically impossible to prevent stones falling but, once up, the view was tremendous. Now we could see the Himalayan chain stretching eastwards to infinity, and Hamish and Frank pointed out distant peaks in the area they visited in 1955. The ridge at this point was just a scramble, and a prominent gendarme seen from camp was easily turned to the left. We were soon up to a large snow patch which had been marked from below as a possible place for Camp V. As we rested and admired the scenery, a shout came from above drawing our attention to two figures silhouetted against the brilliant blue sky. When Emile and Da Temba joined us, we were disappointed to hear that Emile considered that this route would not go. They had reached the summit ridge after a harrowing climb up an iced-up chimney to find that access to the main top was along a knife-edged snow arête which was in rotten

condition and badly corniced on the north side. Emile was the best and most experienced climber in the party, and what he judged unsafe we certainly would not attempt.

We started down the ridge together, wondering if we could find an alternative route in the short time that was left, for we had to return to base on August 17. When we were on a short steep rock pitch, Hamish suddenly became unconscious. We got him to a safe place and, after what seemed an age, he came to and was able, after a rest, to scramble down the loose rocks to the glacier with strong support from Emile and the porters. Back at camp he appeared his usual cheerful self and ate a good meal before going to sleep. We all knew that we must get him down to a lower altitude at once. It was too late that day for it was now 4 P.M., so we planned to make for base camp first thing in the morning. But it was not to be, for at 5.20 next morning he suddenly became deeply unconscious and shortly after (we now believe) he died. At the time our one thought was to get him down somehow for we hoped his life might yet be saved, and here Da Temba's Sherpa School training came into action. Swiftly and with great efficiency he made a sledge-stretcher out of a mountain tent, with Hamish, in his sleeping bags and on his air mattress, firmly lashed on. We packed what we could and started off, leaving behind food and cooking equipment which we could not carry. It was dreadful to think of the news we must tell Millicent still far away, over a pass and many thousands of feet below, at base camp.

I will not go into details of that tragic day and the utter sadness and exhaustion at the end of it; or the next day when Frank, Emile, the porters, and pony men dug a grave, beside a little lake surrounded by grass and flowers, high up on the moraine and we three women followed with leaden steps to join in the simple burial ceremony. We were very touched by the expressions of sorrow and sympathy shown by the pony men and porters, who made a beautiful wreath and brought masses of mountain flowers to cover the grave of their Bara Sahib. Emile found a flat slab of stone on which he carved name and date and set it at the head of Hamish's resting place.

Sadly we returned to base and the tasks of packing up and going home. Millicent was an example to everyone with her calmness and courage which sustained us all on the long march back to Manali and the outside world. Exactly two weeks after leaving base camp, I was back at work in Edinburgh, with a host of unforgettable memories—sad and happy—which will remain with me all my life.

THE LINK

W. D. BROOKER

OF the buttresses of Lochnagar, one of the most intriguing is the Black Spout Pinnacle. Rising like a supporting column by the gateway of the Black Spout, and tiled by overlapping black slabs, it is small wonder that even as early as 1902 Raeburn answered the challenge of its appearance. Its left flank sweeps round in a roof of fairly gently tilted slabs to Pinnacle Gully No. 1. On the right, however, an almost vertical wall plunges into the Black Spout and its Left Branch. This steep wall continues, though rather slabbier, round the base of the buttress toward Raeburn's Gully. One-third of the way up, at about 200 feet from the base, occurs a grassy ledge known as the Springboard. Above this ledge rises a very steep face like an elongated isosceles triangle bounded by the slabby roof on the left and the Black Spout wall on the right. The apex of the triangle is formed by the Nose, a jutting prow of granite, from which a narrow ridge rises to the summit.

Equipped with such defences, it is not surprising that the first successful frontal attack was not made until 1949. This was Route I, which reached the Springboard from the Black Spout and then slanted by a chimney to gain the roof slabs of the left flank. In 1953 Patey and Taylor made Route II. Following the examples of Raeburn and Bell, they climbed a prominent crack slanting up the Black Spout wall from the Left Branch junction to reach the central face. Unlike their predecessors, however, they used stocking soles for a sensational traverse across the face, 80 feet below the Nose, to reach the slabby left-hand flank and so join Route I near the top. During his all too brief sojourn among us, Jerry Smith made a valuable contribution to Cairngorm climbing, of which the most outstanding route was Pinnacle Face. This climb, done in rope-soled shoes, breached the impressive lower girdle of slabs by slanting leftwards to gain easier ground among the slabs above and to the left of the Springboard. In 1956 the first winter ascent was made by way of Route I.

The exploration of the Black Spout Pinnacle illustrates perfectly how the passage of time brings new knowledge and techniques which result in changes of climbing atmosphere. With each change the standard of new climbs in any particular area advances. These advances are less a question of sheer technical difficulty than changes

in the character of what seems possible. Who in Raeburn's time would have thought Route II feasible, and who in Bell's heyday, or even in 1950, would have seriously considered Pinnacle Face? Yet both these climbs would have been within the compass of these men had the time been ripe and the atmosphere conducive. Our own area has always lagged well behind more highly exploited climbing grounds in rock-climbing development. Pinnacle Face was what we might term a break through in Cairngorm rock climbing, for it heralded other routes similar in character which now represent the best of summer climbing in these hills. It is significant that its author developed his technique in the south, and by applying it to Lochnagar granite brought about a change of atmosphere which persists to-day, when the steep open faces yield the finest climbs. Routes like the Citadel on the Shelter Stone Crag, Water Kelpie Wall on Creag an Dubh Loch, and several others, notably in Coire Etchachan, have all been made in this new phase of exploration and are all earmarked by the forsaking of the traditional nailed boot.

In 1956 the most recent chapter, though surely not the last, in the story of the Black Spout Pinnacle was written. Its telling is the real subject of this article.

Ken Grassick and I arrived in the corrie of Lochnagar on a grey, misty June day and, in spite of my lack of enthusiasm, he succeeded in coercing me to the foot of Pinnacle Face. The sight of greasy overlapping slabs tilting sharply up into the mist, together with the fact that we were wearing vibrams, hardly inspired confidence; but Grassick was off before I could summon argument to my aid. The gasps and grunts coming from above confirmed my suspicions that he had been over-indulging in night life. The granite seemed to exude a cold dampness, and when my turn came I spent some awkward moments wrestling up a diabolical little wall into an insecure and slippery groove. Sixty feet up I reached Ken, whose encouragement boosted my morale somewhat as I heaved up a short groove, raised a cautious head, and warily scanned a wide slab sweeping to an overhang. A ragged flake scarred its slabby surface, and to my surprise a series of knobbls on its edge provided easy progress. It led me leftwards beneath the overhang to a tiny stance furnished with a shaky flake belay. A numbingly cold wind had started to buffet me in irregular gusts, but unlike the "ill wind" of the proverb, it helped us by clearing the mist and drying the rocks.

Ten feet higher was a piton marking the crux. It offered security for a movement intimately concerned with the coefficient of limiting

friction. A mantelshelf had to be made to gain the slab above, which overlapped at chest height. After considerable skirmishing, Ken achieved this and then lurched crabwise to the right, allowing me a disturbing view of the soles of his boots as they projected over the lip of the slab. We began to comprehend Jerry Smith's seemingly unreasonable attachment to rope-soles. On easier ground a turf groove led back to the left for nearly 100 feet to a belay.

The next pitch was delightful. Twin cracks afforded satisfying jamming for 15 feet, whence a shallow flake beckoned invitingly up a bulging slab to another overhang. At this impasse, the flake conveniently provided a handrail to a corner 40 feet away on the right. Here I ran out of rope and used a piton belay. The 15 foot corner above proved much harder than it looked, and we found it cleaner and easier to climb by a projecting rib on the right. A good ledge led off towards the Black Spout and we sauntered along its friendly turf to Route I feeling very pleased with ourselves. Scrambling down the 100 feet to the Springboard, I could not help comparing our present easy passage with that of Jerry and myself a few scant months earlier when an armour of snow and ice had veiled the holds and ledges.

During rest and refreshment I sprang a surprise on Ken. Since my earliest acquaintance with the Pinnacle I had been aware of a potential line running up the steep face above the Springboard to reach Route II and perhaps even the Nose itself. No attempt had been made or even seriously considered, and it was only the recent developments in Cairngorm rock climbing which had revived its possibility in my mind. Three hundred and fifty feet above us we could see the Nose; it jutted forth, squat and ugly, and from it a crack descended to the Route II traverse. At the Black Spout end of the traverse was a kind of porch roof from which another, deeper fissure split the face to an overhang, 100 feet beneath. Below this interruption it continued as a trough which passed the rightward extremity of the Springboard, finally plunging to the floor of the gully as a thin crack. Ken was ready and eager for an attempt, and we agreed the major obstacle was likely to be the big overhang at the top of the trough.

I started from an upper ledge, balancing delicately over a peculiar little pillar and round a smooth corner to gain thankful entry to the trough. Moving up its cracked bed, I found a problem in the form of a large, precarious block. Shouting a warning, I eased past it using it as a momentary stepping stone to firmer holds beyond. It moved. Rumbling protestingly it slid downwards and ground to a

reluctant stop a foot or so beneath. Meanwhile, a watchful Ken had flicked my rope high and wide out of possible danger. Above this the trough reared in an overhang and I moved to a stance and belay on its right edge, where I was joined by my companion, who dealt conclusively with the offending block on his way. The whole cliff trembled as it thundered downwards and the familiar sulphurous smell stung our nostrils.

From our stance a shallow rib rose steeply and discouragingly to form the edge of the trough. At its steepest, the crest was fissured by kind of incipient flake which proved to be the key to the problem. I am always astounded by Grassick on a rock climb; that a man of his gross and ungainly shape could ever move gracefully would seem incredible, and yet he can, and does. Here to-day was gone the shambling gait he keeps for terra firma and in its place was a kind of tip-toe alertness. Smoothly he laybacked the flake and with reptilian grace glided up the slabby trough beyond to a belay hard under the big overhang we had noted earlier. From his position I edged to the right beneath the overhang, sidled round a big pointed flake, and found myself in a tiny alcove. This gruesome place rapidly drained me of every drop of confidence. Its two damp walls converged into an overhung pointed roof pushing me out of balance, and its turfy floor quivered with my every movement. The hungry maw of the Black Spout clinched matters; I banged in a shaky piton and yelled for Ken to deal with the situation. Disdaining my proffered shoulder, he squeezed past me after some mutual contortions, wedged his right knee in the crack splitting the apex of the roof, and thrust his head out past the overhang. On the second attempt he succeeded. Finding another crack, higher on the left, he jammed his limbs, one pair in each crack, and wriggled convulsively out of sight. When my turn came I found the whole thing most exhausting and I was gasping for breath as I swarmed caterpillarwise up the slab above the overhang. We agreed that what the pitch lacked in elegance it more than made up in character.

We had reached a kind of fork in the route, and from the shelter of a huge detached flake we scanned the prospect. Directly above an almost vertical wall soared 160 feet to our objective, the Nose. On its left a big groove led in 100 feet to the finish of the Route II traverse. This looked climbable but held some damp vegetation; we rejected it in favour of the steeper and much more exciting 100 foot crack leading up the right edge of the wall to the start of the traverse.

Straddling took me up an initial 10 foot chimney to the foot of

the crack. Here I twisted and turned in a stream of derisive exhortation from Ken, until at last I gained a lodgment and jammed my way up the crack. It widened, becoming easier as I progressed, so I left it in favour of the sensation provided by the central wall. This was slabby but not too steep at this point. Presently I stood on the traverse. Above me the wall tilted sharply to the vertical and, 20 feet higher to the left, one of Patey's giant pitons, the product of some stalwart Buchan blacksmith, condescendingly invited me to belay my humble rope. I reached it at the end of my 120 feet and yoked myself to its rusty but generous comfort. This piton is the belay for the crux of the traverse beneath, but Ken moved past me, up the crack leading straight for the Nose which jutted alarmingly a scant 40 feet overhead.

Twenty-five feet up he performed some peculiar antics to thread a sling behind a pendant block as a running belay. Using this as a stirrup, he knelt on the block and gave vent to an anxious gasp as it pivoted through an arc of 6 inches. However, apart from this eccentricity, the block was quite sound and he stood up with head and shoulders hunched under the jut of the Nose. From this position he extended an exploratory arm past the overhang to the right, followed with his head, and lurched round out of sight.

I joined him in an apparent cul-de-sac, its left wall the prow of the Nose and its right an overhang split by twin cracks. Ken pointed smugly at the cracks, but one glance was enough to make me seek elsewhere, and for a moment it seemed as if there was no alternative but retreat. Then to my joy I noticed that the left wall was split by a horizontal gash, like the lips of some colossal gargoyle. I heaved myself into the cleft, wormed along on my stomach for a few feet, stood up, and made a final stride across the extreme tip of the Nose, with almost the entire Pinnacle plunging beneath my heels. Such moments represent the acme of rock-climbing experience. With many exclamations of surprise and delight we scampered up the final arête to the summit, where we talked of the day's adventures and gazed contentedly at the long shadows creeping into the corrie.

Naming our route was easy; in fact, the idea of "The Link" joining the Springboard to the upper arête had been in my mind for years. The Link, though nowhere quite as hard as the crux of Pinnacle Face, had more sustained severity; together they had given us the best and most continuous rock climbing we had ever enjoyed on Lochnagar. The entire day, by its combination of excellent rock, steepness, sensation, and difficulty, is one which we shall never forget.

SNOW-BUNTINGS IN THE CAIRNGORMS

ALEX. TEWNION

THE snow-bunting (*Plectrophenax nivalis*), a passerine slightly smaller than the skylark, and with broad white wing-patches which make it readily identified, is a bird which most readers will probably have encountered on the hills in winter. At this season the species is relatively common in parts of Britain, occurring both along the coasts and on the inland hills in parties varying from small family groups to flocks containing upwards of a thousand individuals. These birds are mostly winter visitors from the Arctic, where the snow-bunting is the most numerous breeding passerine; but among them may be a few which have been hatched and reared in the Scottish Highlands. But only a very few, for the snow-bunting ranks among our rarest nesting birds. In Scotland—where it reaches the southern limit of its breeding range, and where breeders are usually regarded as relicts of the last Ice Age—only a few places apparently meet its rather exacting requirements. Nesting has been recorded on several occasions in the Shetlands, and once in St Kilda, but of the less than fifty nests or broods discovered in Scotland in the past hundred years most have been located on the high hills of the mainland.

The snow-bunting was suspected to breed in the Highlands for many years before the nest was actually found. In his "A Tour in Scotland, 1769," Pennant, in his description of upper Deeside, remarks that "snow-flakes breed here," while in August 1830 Macgillivray saw a family party on Lochnagar some three weeks before the usual arrival date of the first Arctic migrants. Adults were also seen in summer on various hills, but it was not until 1886 that the first definite mainland nest was recorded in Sutherland by Hinxman and Peach. In 1893 Hinxman, in company with Eagle-Clarke, also discovered the first nest recorded from the Cairngorms. Since then, more nests or broods have been found in the Cairngorms than elsewhere in Scotland, and there appears to be some justification for Harvie-Brown's statement in "A Vertebrate Fauna of the Moray Basin" (1895) that "the headquarters of the nesting haunts of the snow-bunting is among the highest of the Cairngorms." Despite this, however, the number of snow-buntings nesting in the Cairngorms appears to be very small, probably never more than a maximum of four to six pairs in any year, and often less, in some years none perhaps breeding at all.



Alex Tewnton



Alex Tewnton

MALE (LEFT) AND FEMALE SNOW-BUNTING IN CAIRNGORMS: SUMMER

Since 1893 at least twenty-two nests or broods have been found in the Cairngorms. Though twelve of these occasions date from 1945 onwards, the apparent greater frequency of nesting in recent years is due probably to increasing activity among ornithologists rather than to an increase in the number of nests or nesting birds. The nest is built of grasses and moss on a foundation of mud, and lined with deer hair and fine feathers, chiefly of ptarmigan. It is very difficult to find, usually being sited above 3,000 feet among screes or in broken crags and placed well out of sight in a niche or hole, with the entrance too small to allow admission of an exploring hand. The normal clutch in the Cairngorms appears to be four to five eggs, with an occasional three, though in the Arctic the average clutch is approximately six eggs.

The breeding season may extend from the end of May until early July, as I discovered when I began to study the snow-bunting seriously and added my own observations to existing information. In 1955 I found two nests, one at the beginning of July containing two (addled) eggs and one nestling, and the second on July 28 with four eggs. Circumstances, however, were exceptional at the latter nest. From observations in June and early July it appeared that only one hen was present in the nesting corrie; she had nested once, deserted when the solitary nestling was well grown, leaving its rearing to be completed by her first mate, and then I had seen her mating with a second cock while the first was actually feeding his chick. The exceptionally late clutch was therefore her second one, but by a different mate. Some time between July 31 and August 5 she deserted this nest also, but with good reason, for when the eggs were removed for examination they proved to be infertile.

In 1957, when I found another two nests, the chicks at one nest were just about fledged when I finally left the site on July 24, after observations carried on over a period of eight days. As incubation occupies some twelve to thirteen days and fledging about another twelve, on reckoning back it is obvious that the eggs in this nest must have been laid at the end of June.

During the breeding season the food of the snow-bunting consists largely of insects, chiefly craneflies, which it collects from the patches of Alpine vegetation which dot the nesting corries. At one nest I watched, the incubating hen was fed at intervals by the cock; at other times she left the nest and foraged for herself. The brood is fed by both parents; during sixteen hours of observation at one nest, spaced over three days, each chick received on an average one feed

every fifteen minutes. Food is collected at varying distances from the nest. In 1955 the three cocks and one hen seen in the nesting corrie fed quite often together on a communal feeding ground, a grassy slope about 600 yards from the nesting screes. Food was frequently carried from this slope to an incubating hen and to the solitary unfledged chick, though insects were also collected from mossy patches among the nesting screes and from small grass patches within 50 yards of the nests.

At the two 1957 nests (which were located on a different mountain some miles from the 1955 sites) food was collected much nearer at hand as a rule. The nests were about 500 yards apart, at a height of 3,650 and 3,600 feet respectively, and close to each lay a small snow-patch on which the parent birds frequently foraged for wind-blown flies. No opportunity appeared to be missed to snatch easily obtained food for the chicks. On several occasions a bird, which had just finished giving a chick a feed, checked itself as it was about to fly back to the vicinity of the snow-patch, ran rapidly over the flat slabs outside the nesting crack, snapped up a house-fly, crane-fly, or other insect that had just alighted nearby, and immediately ran back to the nest to feed an ever-hungry mouth.

From my limited observations and the scanty data published it is difficult to draw conclusions about rates of hatching and fledging success in the Cairngorms snow-buntings. In 1955 the two nests I found contained a combined total of six eggs which did not hatch and one chick which successfully fledged. Of the 1957 nests, one contained two nestlings and one egg and the other four nestlings when I discovered them. Only one of the two nestlings fledged and two of the four, the others being found dead, apparently drowned, among the screes within a foot or two of the nest. In 1958 I found a solitary chick, barely able to fly, in the 1955 nesting corrie. It was being fed by an adult cock, but despite intensive searching I was unable to locate the nest or any other fledglings—hardly surprising, perhaps, when one considers the countless thousands of chinks and crannies in a scree-field. Neither did I find the hen.

Adult snow-buntings were also present in the Cairngorms in the summer of 1959 and 1960, but shortage of time prevented me from making an adequate search for nests or broods. A brief account of my method of nest-finding may prove helpful to anyone interested. A very large area of high, rough ground has to be covered, but, using Derry Lodge, Corrour bothy, or some other mountain hut as a base, I make a preliminary reconnaissance of the high corries, preferably

about mid-June but not earlier than mid-May, because any buntings seen before then may be Arctic migrants which have delayed their departure northwards. If present, cocks with their black-and-white breeding plumage are readily enough located early in the season; they sing loudly and constantly from early morning until late at night, both on the wing and from song-posts (these are particularly large blocks of rock inside their territory). The rather sparrow-like hens are more difficult to spot, but once I have found the cocks I set up camp in their corrie and with high-powered binoculars watch their movements throughout the daylight hours. This method will certainly reveal nests if breeding has taken place, but it requires time and patience and a fair supply of food and fuel—in 1957 my camp stood at 3,750 feet for twelve days.

Such high camps mean that if photography is to be attempted, light-weight camera equipment is preferable. Many bird-photographers deride the small negatives obtained with a miniature, but such a camera has at any rate obtained the first reasonable set of photographs of the snow-buntings at their nesting sites in Scotland. For all my 1955 and 1957 bunting photographs were taken with a Leica fitted with a Telyt 20 cm. telephoto lens and a reflex housing, not particularly light equipment perhaps, but about the lightest and most robust and reliable in the circumstances prevailing.

SHELTER

P. D. BAIRD

A GOOD many letters to the papers have been written concerning the loss of five walkers from Glen Callater to Glen Doll on January 1, 1959. Much of this comment has been wise, stressing once again the well-known precautions that should be taken on the Scottish hills in winter. But none of them to my knowledge has mentioned one extremely important fact. There are not two simple alternatives—should one press on or should one turn back—there is another vital decision that ought to be made—should one *stay put*. I believe that future lives can be saved if the facts concerning sheltering are more widely known.

The decision to halt and sit out a storm is not an easy one to take in Scotland. Distances to the nearest house are seldom great: the thoughts of the warmth and comfort to be found there are compared with the certain discomfort of cold, shivering hours on the hill. But the decision can be one for life or for death.

I am considering here not mountaineering accidents where an individual or members of a party are injured by a fall, but the cases of death, from exhaustion and exposure, of physically fit people. During these last thirty years there have been several such cases, and I am selecting for comment four. All of these occurred around New Year, by far the most dangerous time of the whole winter.

There is an erroneous piece of folklore that a person must not sit down in the snow and sink “into that sleep from which there is no awakening”—that such people should be forcibly walked about, deliberately kept awake. I admit to having done this myself to a soldier on a mountain march, applied the point of an ice-axe to him when he said he wanted to sit down and die—but he was *far* from exhaustion; I knew it, and *he* knew it. A fit person whose will-power has driven his body to its limit collapses very suddenly and is liable not to recover, unlike the weaker one who has collapsed because he *feels* tired. Few of us have any close idea of our physical capacity; it is a far too dangerous experiment to attempt to find out.

Those of us who are experienced in Scottish hill walking know what conditions can be like. For the younger reader one cannot stress too strongly that at times, rather rarely, wind and blowing snow or hail (or blowing gravel!) can entirely prevent the strongest



G. M. McAndrew

BRAERIACH: COIRE BHROCHAIN

person from making headway against it except by crawling. Even a following wind can so retard visibility and so buffet one that one is in danger of falling over the least obstacle. And either case can make the reading of a map and compass out of the question, unless such things are strapped *outside* your clothing and instantly visible.

Meteorological statistics show that the period between Christmas and New Year is stormy forty-three years out of fifty. This is also the darkest period of the year. Typically comes a west to north-west gale of Maritime Polar air in which the temperature may fall four or even more degrees Fahrenheit per 1,000 feet of altitude and the wind speed become double or treble what it is in the valley. Here is an added danger in Scotland or other maritime areas: one can start in rain at the lower levels and be soaked before reaching frost level higher up.

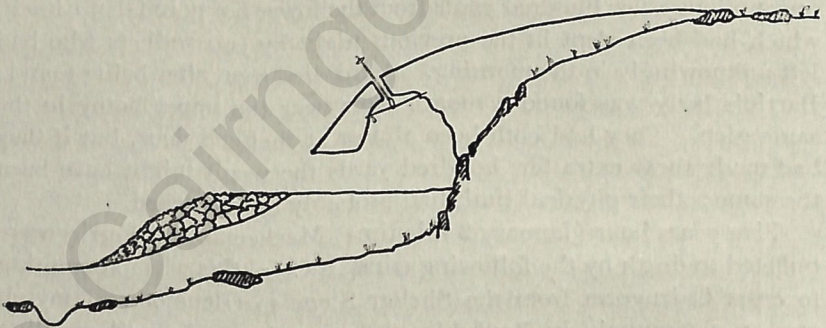
On January 1, 1928, such a blizzard was blowing in the Cairngorms when Baird and Barrie, two students of Glasgow University of particularly robust physique, set out from the Corroul bothy to cross Braeriach to Glen Einich. On January 2 Baird was found alive and unconscious a few hundred yards from the lower bothy in Glen Einich, which had been slept in the previous night by two walkers who had left unknowingly in the morning. Baird died soon after being found; Barrie's body was found a month later near the upper bothy in the same glen. They had both been almost at shelter's door, but if they had made these extra few hundred yards the result might have been the same; their physical limit had probably been reached.

Five years later (January 2 this time) Mackenzie and Ferrier were buffeted to death by the following wind in Coire Cas when attempting to cross Cairngorm from the Shelter Stone to Glenmore. I myself was on a mountain in Perthshire the same day and recall crawling downhill against the wind from the summit cairn.

On December 29, 1951, a party of five, one of them a woman, and including extremely skilful rock climbers, set out from Corroul Lodge to walk to Ben Alder on a moonless night with deep snow. Three of them became tired after two hours and bivouaced, two others pushed on but also were forced to bivouac and next morning turned back. They met the others, who had started to follow them, and then all five attempted to fight back 3 miles against the gale to Corroul Lodge. All four men died at intervals, the one girl of the party got through at 2.30; by evening the gale was spent and all five, if they had stayed in the one bivouac for 20 hours, could have made the retreat in a couple of hours.

Then we have the recent tragedy in Glen Doll, again occurring at the danger period, January 1, 1959. A final analysis of this is not yet possible and may never be so. It is known that they made a rather late start for such a short day, so were certainly still on the hill after dark; that they mistook the exit from Glen Callater and so reached the confusingly undulating high ground 1 mile to the west of the proper route; that the weather worsened rapidly during the day, so that whereas they were rained on in Glen Callater they then experienced a below-freezing blizzard on the higher ground. This party, like the other three quoted (with the exception of Mackenzie and Ferrier) was composed of strong and experienced people. One member at least, an *ex-Marine* Commando, must have received training in the art of emergency shelter in the snow.

It should be a cardinal rule that well before the limit of exhaustion is felt, a winter party, especially if uncertain of the route and/or benighted, should hole up. This can be achieved at worst by digging a shallow trench in the snow and roofing it with any material to hand—sticks, axes, groundsheets, with snow added on top.



Better still is to find a snow bank in a gully and excavate from this a narrow-mouthed cave in which all the party can congregate in reasonable comfort. The diagram shows a section of a typical snow cave. It is important to keep ventilation in such a shelter, since the door will drift up, and a suggested method is a ski stick arrangement as shown. The stick's vibration in the wind will keep the ventilator clear.

The best shelter of all is the Eskimo igloo. This, however, does require considerable skill combined with the right consistency of hard, wind-packed snow. I have built one in Scotland, however, as early as November, and myself have holed up in one on a Baffin Island ice-cap in summer when a blizzard prevented me from locating a camp.

All these types of shelter give relief from the wind, insulation from the cold by the covering layer of snow, and, most important, *rest*—rest until the blizzard blows itself out. In Scotland this seldom lasts more than twenty-four hours. Much longer periods have been survived by people in polar regions. Mawson in 1913, after one of his companions had been lost in a crevasse and another had died, pushed on alone to within 5 miles of his base when he had to hole up in a cave for a week. At Little America in 1940 a member of Byrd's Antarctic party was lost out more than forty-eight hours in a blizzard of 25 knots and 15° below zero Fahrenheit. He had repeatedly dug in and then moved when he was beginning to freeze. When the blizzard stopped he was still just able to make the 3 miles to the base, though it took him four hours to do so.

These were lone men. It is sometimes stated that there is safety in numbers on the hills. This is only true up to a point—the point, I believe, being three. A party larger than three ceases to be as efficient. In the first place, it is more of an effort to construct a shelter for larger groups. Secondly, there is the fatal possibility of confusion where a group splits, one lot deciding to stay put, another to go on. The Corroul Lodge tragedy was largely due to this splitting and a duty being felt by one group to recontact the other. Thirdly, as W. H. Murray has so clearly put it, the greatest safety requirement in the hills is to keep one's wits about one, continually and individually. A party larger than three is a mob—there is bound to be a reliance on "Joe doing the map reading." Moreover, in a bad blizzard it is difficult and delaying to the leader to try physically to see more than two other people behind him.

To sum up, I should like to urge again the essential duty of everyone on the Scottish hills in winter and particularly at New Year to realise when to quit and take cover. There is no valid reason why three fit and experienced men, prepared to take such a decision, cannot safely venture anywhere in our hills under any weather conditions. All talk of close seasons is nonsense, but as long as unwise people go out there will be disasters.

FOUR ELDERLY GENTLEMEN

THIS tale, anonymously told, touches in some small way on the activities of four moderately senior members of the Club, who, individually and collectively have been described in various terms, but in none more devastating than that used innocently enough by a rural lady of middle Deeside, of "Four elderly gentlemen." She was, of course, very rural and naturally very innocent.

What of these elderly ones who have quartered the hills and corries of Deeside and beyond, in good weather and in foul, in search of ski-able snow and companionship ?

Ewen must clearly be regarded as the No. 1, for only he had any pretensions to being a skier. He has, after all, been to Switzerland and is known to have in the course of a descent of Cairn Leuchan somersaulted through an arc of 360 degrees. It is true that the exercise was somewhat involuntary and that in some volubly explained but still unaccountable fashion he failed to maintain balance on completion of the circuit, but since none of the rest of the party ever reached, except very temporarily and mainly by mischance, a speed sufficient to change their course more than the 90 degrees or so involved in falling flat in any direction, his qualifications for the post are outstanding. Being a man of original and advanced ideas it is interesting, in view of present developments, to speculate on whether as a geographer he was making his personal contribution to the international geophysical year by making a really determined effort to get into orbit.

The party initially had implicit faith in his judgment as to the choice of areas suitable for the day's exercise, but, later, confidence waned slightly and there were even occasions when he was a great trial to all. After all, he knew the hills better than the rest; he knew just where the snow would be lying and the best way to get to it, so that if on occasion there was some slight doubt as to our exact location it was easy for us to accept the confidence with which, like the poet, "he gives to nothing an airy habitation and a name."

There were, however, occasions when fealty, friendship, and faith were strained to the limit; occasions when after slogging up never-ending slopes to the near vicinity of the promised land he would suddenly exclaim, almost it seemed with a hint of glee in his voice: "By God, chaps, it's the other side of the valley we should have been on to-day."

While "the other side" was frequently and fortunately too far away for anything to be done about it, there were dark days when it was close enough "to have a look at" and the dreary slog would begin again. There were terrible ones when the man was never satisfied; when there was always a possibility of better snow round some other corner; days when it was impossible to look with other than a jaundiced eye at the miserable patch of snow finally achieved and to remember, with any feeling other than regret, the wonderful ones that had been left behind earlier in the day. It was on such an occasion that one's reflections tended to dwell somewhat ruefully on the attractions of Bieldside Golf Course.

Thomson, justifiably enough, could be regarded as the gay adventurer of the party, a man prepared to try anything, even in the face of impending disaster, at least twice. He seemed to get away with it sufficiently often to instil a germ of admiration and perhaps also of envy in the hearts of the lesser members of the quartet. There were, of course, the more comforting occasions when he skied into utter and complete disaster, but you just had to admire the spirit of the man, for as a rule only exhaustion finally kept him down. He was not always a candidate for martyrdom, however, for should the weather and mood be right he was quite likely to curl up in some sunny corner and spend the day in reflective excursions into the philosophic and poetic arts.

Unforgettable is the occasion when, in an easy but masterly fashion, he used his powers of quotation, of exhortation, and even incantation to the full. He bullied, he praised, and he pled in an effort to cajole a smouldering collection of damp moss, green heather, and rotten wood into a reasonable state of igneous activity. Despite the undoubted merit of a prolonged oration which softened our hearts and which we felt was warm enough to melt even the mica schists of Craig Maskeldie, there was little response other than the production of vast clouds of a peculiarly viscous smoke. It was small reward for a wonderful effort, but Bain took advantage of the situation, at some personal discomfort, by allowing his clothing to become thoroughly saturated in the hope that he might be able on the homeward journey to compete in some small way with Duff's pipe.

Fearful of advancing age and brittle bones, Bain approaches the problem with caution rather than Ewen's casual aplomb or Thomson's gay abandon. A simple soul, he unprotesting follows his leaders in their every whim (they already being too far ahead to hear his protests anyway and unlikely to pay much attention if they

did), content to achieve some small measure of success in return for the labour and the knocks. The butt of his companions' humour, good or ill, he continues to ignore the situation and take what pleasures come his way. He has also been known on occasion to take some food.

What can be said about the last of the quartet, Taylor? A strange mixture, his friends know him as a determined man, an expert in the building of bridges and the control of water, yet the minute that water changes to snow and ice away goes his command, his confidence, his calm, and there he is, a broken man. How else can a man be described, who darkly and stealthily sells his ski? One must not be too hard on George, however, for undoubtedly he has had his moments, and who knows, they may come again as he gets younger. Moreover, we would not like to lose him entirely, for he brewed a beautiful brand of coffee, reserved as a rule for the end of the day. There was coffee in it, there was water in it, and there was rum in it. What the relative proportions were George kept to himself, but no clearer evidence of its effectiveness could be given than to report that at the finish of a desperate day in Glen Cluny, Gordon Matheson, after a couple of sips, stopped talking in approximately twenty-five seconds. The silence attracted attention in time to avert tragedy and the mug of coffee was safely recovered, though it was a near thing. By that time Matheson was fast asleep.

Now there are three more elderly gentlemen.



July 1959

G. A. Taylor

DEE FOOTBRIDGE NEAR CORROUR BOTHY

NEW FOOTBRIDGES IN THE CAIRNGORMS

G. A. TAYLOR

As I write this article I recall that at this time in July ten years ago I was camping with five other men near Corrou Bothy, itself reduced to a roofless shell and surrounded by piles of material laboriously amassed for its reconstruction. No job which I have ever undertaken gave me greater pleasure and lasting satisfaction. Tragedy soon followed on that wild holiday week-end in September of the same year, when a Glasgow climber was drowned in attempting to cross the Dee to reach the shelter of the bothy and another collapsed and died of exhaustion. This accident emphasised the desirability of erecting a bridge over the river in the locality. In July 1951 Mr Jack Milne, a retired Aberdeen postal worker, erected with very little assistance two cables slung between a timber post on either bank. This at least provided a dry crossing, somewhat perilous for the aged and nervous but highly stimulating for the acrobatic. The latter challenge probably precipitated the fate of the structure, which collapsed two or three years ago. Our Club did reconsider the matter but felt financially unable to do anything immediately.

In April of 1959 I was approached by the Scottish Land Agent of the Nature Conservancy, who explained that this body proposed to erect six footbridges on the Mar Estate, and asked if I would advise on the design of the three largest at Corrou Bothy, Derry Dam, and Glas Allt, the others being smaller timber structures. It was proposed to erect the lot in the summer. I hope I did not sound too unhelpful when I pointed out that a bridge over the Dee at Corrou involved some serious thought, that it would take time to order and obtain materials for all the bridges and, from painful personal experience, not the least important item, that it was not the easiest or quickest job transporting this considerable mass of material to all the scattered sites, three of which were 5 miles or over from Derry Lodge. My interest was whetted when Mr Arbuthnott replied that it was proposed to deal with the transport problem by chartering a helicopter. Without thinking very clearly where the labour was going to come from, though one has found this a successful technique in the past, I thereupon offered to design and erect the three bridges mentioned, leaving the Conservancy to make their own arrangements about the smaller bridges, only one of which, over the Etchachan, was actually erected, due to Estate objections to the others.

The use of the helicopter made the whole project feasible with a very small labour force of four young men, two being Club members. It did pose certain other problems, as the machine was very small, its load being limited to 500 lb. weight with a maximum length of 25 feet. I felt it most desirable, in fact essential, that there should be no piers in the middle of the Dee and the Derry, the spans at which are 48 and 34 feet. As weight had to be cut to an absolute minimum, since helicopter flying time at £30 per hour is indeed money, a rather unusual design of bridge was adopted for Corroul which might technically be described as a "tied arch." The bridge is constructed of two fairly slender steel arch ribs with a joint at centre span, the thrust being taken by two steel tie-rods, as will be seen on the plate. The footway of open steel tread-plate is attached to the ribs. The other two bridges are of conventional girder construction. That at Derry Dam strikes one as being a very neat and substantial steel bridge, while aluminium was used for the shorter span over the Glas Allt.

After final approval in mid-May the designs had to be completed and materials had to be ordered, collected, and dispatched to Derry Lodge in great haste, as the helicopter was scheduled to fly out the loads on June 22, while the construction of the bridges was planned for the first fortnight of July. Thanks to the efforts of several firms, not least John M. Henderson Ltd. of Aberdeen, who fabricated the two steel bridges, everything was obtained in time, though in one case only the day before dispatch. One of the worst preliminary jobs was the drilling of the rock at Corroul for the bridge foundations. After vain attempts with hammers and jumpers which only seemed to scratch the surface, I decided that a powered rock drill must be taken up. I obtained the loan of a petrol-driven Warsop drill from Wm. Tawse Ltd. for a Sunday. It was carried up to and back from Corroul on the one day by Malcolm Douglas and three of my helpers, and the holes were successfully drilled in a downpour of rain. At 11 A.M. on the appointed day the helicopter duly appeared over Derry and subsided amongst the methodically arranged piles of material. In a few minutes, after retrieving my hat, which for the first time but not the last was blown skywards by the rotor, I found myself sitting beside a red-bearded pilot inside a perspex sphere which, apart from a few bits of slender tubing and a four-cylinder engine, seemed to constitute the helicopter. I was draped around with a strictly limited collection of old cement-encrusted pails, shovels, riddles, sand-bags, etc., and in six minutes found myself stepping

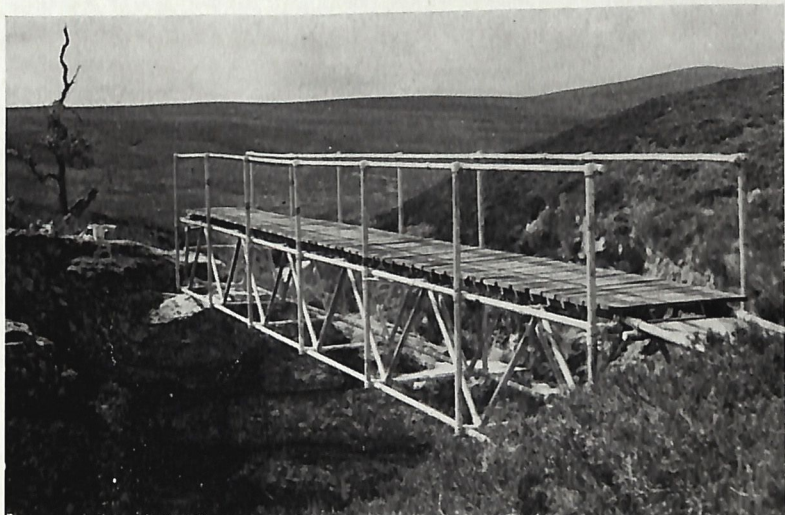
out beside Corrour Bothy. My job was to flag in the pilot as the loads came up and to indicate to him where I wanted them dropped. He did not land but released the loads by a cockpit trigger from a height of 3 or 4 feet above the softest piece of ground which I could find. That was no problem at Corrour. I noted that in most cases the helicopter was arriving at intervals of twelve minutes, that being the time for a round trip including loading. This meant that, carrying four bags of cement, the helicopter transport of one bag (costing 8s. ex-store) amounted to 30s. Previously we found that transport of one bag of cement, to Corrour was a day's work for one man and one garron. So, if the helicopter did not cost much if any less, it certainly did the job in a fraction of the time, and, of course, transported steel beams which could not otherwise have been carried up. In about thirteen trips all material was at the bothy, and Alastair, who had walked up, and myself were whipped back to Luibeg for lunch at 70 miles per hour. All day transport continued of material to Derry Dam, Glas Allt, Etchachan, and of fencing to Geusachan, and after eight hours a most successful operation was completed.

Thereafter it only remained for the five of us to erect the three bridges with all the usual digging, shuttering, concreting, etc. Apart from the first two days at Corrour, when my old tent was ripped to pieces in a gale, the weather was extremely good and work proceeded, if not quite from dawn, at least until dusk. Erection of Corrour Bridge had really been worrying me a good deal, as we had no lifting tackle and the heavy and long steel beams had to be lifted 10 feet above the river. However, the job was successfully completed by sheer brute force with the crude safety precautions which we could improvise by erecting in mid-stream a scaffolding constructed of parapet tubes, odd pieces of timber, and ropes, and weighted down with boulders. Valuable help was given by Bob Scott, Malcolm Douglas, and one or two other men who had been impressed for the great day. Work on all bridges was completed in fifteen days. I must express my thanks for help to Mr Arbuthnott, Mr Grant Roger, and Mr Malcolm Douglas of the Nature Conservancy; to Mr Robert Scott of Luibeg, to a civil engineering colleague, Mr R. G. Smith, who gave me great assistance in the rapid design of the Corrour Bridge; and finally to my enthusiastic and extremely hard-working helpers, Alexander and Alastair Davidson, William Blackett, and Ian Hird.

Before closing this article I should perhaps draw the attention of

members to two other bridging episodes. As is known, the Luibeg Bridge which we erected in July 1948 as a memorial to James A. Parker, was, along with several other bridges, swept away in the catastrophic cloudburst on August 13, 1956. When we visited the site a week later the destruction in the valley was unbelievable. Naturally I was bitterly disappointed at the fate of our bridge and, looking on the scene with the mangled remains half-buried in turf and boulders, I could not visualise that it could ever be re-erected. Certainly it was obvious that no bridge could be put up on the old site, where the landscape had simply been removed. However, after laboriously digging out the parts of the bridge, hope revived somewhat when it was seen that the main girders though bent and twisted were not damaged beyond possible repair, and the Club decided to renew broken parts and proceed with the re-erection. A new site at a rocky gorge about 200 yards upstream was selected, the girders were carried up there and, with a screw-jack prepared for the purpose, it was possible to straighten the girders. All other broken parts were renewed, and in June 1957 a Club work-party built abutments and re-erected the bridge. It will be agreed that it is now on a most secure, attractive, and picturesque site. It is rather farther away from the main path and possibly not so convenient for day-to-day use, but is still readily available for flood emergencies, and by the evidence of newly formed paths it is very regularly visited and crossed.

The other bridge to which I draw attention was not erected by the Club, nor can I recollect any members other than William Ewen and Alastair Davidson working with me on the job which was undertaken in July 1957 for the Scottish Rights of Way Society. This bridge, a tubular steel, lattice girder, crosses the Eidart, an extremely dangerous river in flood, about 300 yards above its junction with the Feshie. The bridge is in a very striking spot just above a deep chasm and most impressive waterfall. It should certainly be visited by the traveller even if the ford crossing proves safe and convenient. The story of its erection in one of the most remote spots in the Cairngorms would require too much space, and was in any case summarised in articles in the Press and other journals at the time.



July 1957

G. A. Taylor

EIDART FOOTBRIDGE



July 1959

G. A. Taylor

DERRY FOOTBRIDGE AT DERRY DAM

AN UNFREQUENTED IRISH RANGE

H. PROCTOR

EVEN among Irish mountains, the Blue Stacks in Donegal appear to be amongst the least visited and the least written about, and perhaps this may be accepted as the justification for introducing an account of some wanderings around a group whose highest point is only 2,219 feet. Mere height, however, is not everything, and these hills have qualities of remoteness and wildness which I think transcend their modest height.

Although the sea is not far away and can be seen in more than one direction from the top, the mountains have their feet in the land. They are granite, rising from carboniferous limestone to the south and otherwise from schist and gneiss. The highest point, Croaghgorm, appears to be an alternative name also for the entire group, which stretch in a semicircle of 8 or 9 miles some way north of Donegal town.

Of all the literature which I have read covering this part of Ireland, guide books and more impressionistic accounts, mostly the Blue Stacks are accorded a mere mention and they are worth more than this. Only in two small guides issued by the Irish Tourist Association is any direction given for approaching them, and the route suggested is from Lough Eske up by the Corab River to Lough Belshade; this is probably the best way for anyone with a car who wishes to return to the same point. My own route started from Donegal, and I approached from Meenataggart, more to the west so that I could make a traverse over the highest part of the range. There are several steepish slopes and lower summits to be gone over from the west before reaching Croaghgorm itself, and whilst the summit is broad enough—the cairn would be almost impossible to find in mist—there are steep drops all the way on either side of the main chain. From Croaghgorm to the col above Lough Belshade is about 2 miles of rough and rocky way, and then there is a not so simple scramble of about 1,000 feet down to Lough Belshade. At the top of the col is a most beautiful and placid little lake, framed in granite rocks, which must have few visitors to appreciate it. It is another 2 or 3 miles of hard pathless going from Lough Belshade before striking a farm track near Edergole Bridge, which runs down to Lough Eske and a road.

On my first visit to these mountains I confess to leaving a compass on the top pointing in the direction of Errigal, and some months later paid a further visit to see if it was still there. It wasn't—the Blue Stacks cannot be as unfrequented as I thought. I approached from the south again, from Lough Eske station on the little County Donegal railway to be precise, but tried a different line midway between the previous routes of ascent and descent. This was up to the ridge of moor leading on to Banagher Hill southwards, from whence a route through all sizes of rocks and up a gully can be made more or less direct to Croaghgorm. I was fortunate with the view this day (May 1959), which extended from the Sperrins, 45 miles east, to the Ox Mountains, 50 miles south-west. The better-known peaks of North Donegal—Errigal and its companions—are, of course, prominent from here, and there was a long tableland of a hill down to the south-east, probably Slieve Beagh (1,222 feet) on the Fermanagh-Monaghan border, where the view extends into the dimness and vastness of the Central Plain. The outliers of the Blue Stacks northwards, such as Gaugin, are shapely if not of impressive height. The ridge to the little lake above Lough Belshade was worth doing once more, and at this point I made north-east between Glascarne Hill and the main ridge aiming to get off northwards. Past this col there is a decidedly steep descent to Cronloughan, a tarn ringed in the dark and steep ridge behind. Probably a descent to the north is seldom made; you are a long way from anywhere when you get down, but I was making for Stranorlar and found myself faced with about 4 miles of bog-walloping to gain a lane circling Garranbane Hill and a few more miles of lane and road got me to Stranorlar about 10 P.M.

Some of the granite rocks look big enough to give rock climbers a course or two, but I cannot make any definite statement as to this. For those who might find this remote ridge of interest, the area is covered by the Irish Survey 1 inch map, No. 24, and the $\frac{1}{2}$ inch map, Sheet 3. The nearest hostelry will be the guest house at Ardnamona Estate by Lough Eske, which is far from cheap.

PETER

The Portrait of an Alpine Guide

ALLARDYCE DUTHIE

I HAVE met many interesting types in my life, but none more likeable or with such a personality as Peter. A native of the Bernese Oberland, he is indeed a true son of the mountains, and has dedicated his life to the service of others. He has trodden and climbed the high peaks for more years than he cares to remember, and, although now in the twilight of his career, still leads his parties with an ability that none can question. Climbing is in his blood, and coming as he does from a family who have been guides for generations I cannot imagine him in any other calling but the one he follows. A small, wiry figure, his build is ideal for the stern, exacting life of a guide, be it dangerous or otherwise. His weather-beaten face, lined by years of exposure to the snow, wind, and sun, is frank and extremely likeable, one that creates a good first impression. Behind his smile and somewhat quiet manner radiates a personality that inspires confidence and creates a profound respect for its owner. What are the qualities demanded of a first-class guide? Climbing ability and stamina under all conditions is probably the first essential, so valuable an asset when the safety of the party is his sole responsibility. Good leadership is a quality born to few men, and this a guide must have. Personality may depend on the man himself, and can help to bridge over difficulties when they arrive with unexpected suddenness on a mountain. The ability to read the weather signs and reach important decisions quickly cannot be overrated. Tact, and an infinite patience, are also absolutely necessary, for even on high mountains human nature is not always at its best. Combine all these things with a knowledge of first-aid and cooking, and the answer is the complete Alpine guide. This, in short, is a super man, but then the standard demanded by the Swiss authorities of a first-class guide is very high indeed.

If I say Peter possesses all these qualities, I am not overestimating. In every climb I was fortunate to take part in with him he played his part to perfection. The welfare of the party, large or small, came first—nothing was too much trouble to explain or help. He speaks three languages fluently—English, French, and German—and these, along with a rich sense of humour, made every excursion a

joyous affair. The ladies in particular Peter treated with a gentleness and patience that was good to watch. Feminine traits being what they are, there were sometimes signs of panic at a difficult part of a climb, but always he was there to smooth things over and lend a helping hand. "Take plenty of time," he would say, and always a strong arm would reach out to help a slender body over an obstacle. It was Peter who lit the fire and had that glorious cup of tea ready when we arrived at the Alpine hut, after our six hours' climb. Early next morning at 3 A.M., before we went to greet the sunrise, he again had the ever-refreshing cup of tea waiting. It was only when he saw that all were provided for that he sat down to take his own. When he once asked me if I would have more tea and I replied in my best Scotch accent for a "wee drappie," he laughed heartily. I somehow suspect that he really knew the true meaning of the expression.

His quick far-seeing eye pointed out many a thing that a novice would miss; he opened our eyes in a true sense. For instance, one might have missed the two chamois high up on the snowline, or the sight of ibex, these wild mountain goats with their magnificent curved horns standing on a rock and silhouetted against the sky. "What's the weather to be like, Peter?" is a familiar question. He would lift his face to the rolling clouds, then over to some distant peak, and give his reply. I have never known him to be wrong. On a glacier or crevasse he would always test the durability of the ice and snow, and to watch him cut out steps in the ice with quick strokes of his ice-axe was a lesson in efficiency. With a rope he is an expert, and infinite care was taken to see that the party was properly roped and at their ease. I can recall one incident during a glacier crossing, when one of the party stupidly let her rucksack fall. It rolled hundreds of feet down a steep snow slope and disappeared into a crevasse. To us it looked gone for good, but not so with Peter. Learning that there was a camera in the pack, he immediately went off to see what he could do. It looked an impossible task, but on reaching the crevasse he shouted for ropes. Three male members of the party climbed down to him. Taking the strain, with the two others standing by, I lowered Peter down to the foot of the crevasse, a distance of over a hundred feet. With a shout of delight he informed me that he had retrieved the rucksack, and it was a great relief for me to see him scramble up the last part of the crevasse. It was characteristic of Peter to make no mention of his feat afterwards. Such is Peter, the man.

The day must surely come when he will have to hang up his climbing boots and take things easier. Few men can have led a more interesting or active life than he; what memories he must have of famous climbers and personalities who sought his assistance. The Alpine glow comes late to the high mountains—a strange haunting beauty that brings each day to a close. So it is with life, and one of my most cherished ambitions is to be out with Peter again before he sits down in his chair to enjoy the retirement he so richly deserves.

Fine mountains breed fine thoughts—and fine men. In Peter I found one of them; his is a personality that enriches the memories of noble scenes and even nobler deeds.

IN MEMORIAM

ARTHUR R. BROWN

At the time of his death in March 1955, Sheriff Arthur R. Brown, a life member, was the senior member of the Club, and the last whose membership commenced in the nineteenth century. It was on the summit of Lochnagar at midnight on June 22, 1897, the night of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, and exactly ten years after the Club was conceived, that Arthur Brown was admitted to membership at a meeting under the presidency of Mr John A. McHardy. He knew the Cairngorms well and twice climbed in Switzerland, although his brother William Brown is much better known because of his ascent of the Tough-Brown Ridge.

Sheriff Brown carried on practice as an advocate in Edinburgh until about 1925, when he took up office as Sheriff-Substitute in Lanarkshire.

W. M. ALEXANDER

By the death at the age of 78 of William M. Alexander, M.A., B.L., LL.D., on January 16, 1959, the North-East of Scotland was deprived of one of its most able scholars. His knowledge of European and certain non-European languages, and of canon law, was profound, while he was also a keen student of geology, botany and astronomy. Dr Alexander wrote authoritatively on the academic system in medieval Europe, and took an active part in the production of the periodical *Scottish Gaelic Studies*. In 1936 his joint interest in languages and astronomy took him to Omsk in Siberia with the University of Aberdeen expedition to study the total eclipse of the sun. He is probably best known for his monograph on "The Place Names of Aberdeenshire" published by the Third Spalding Club in 1952, an outstanding study in toponymy and etymology, a copy of which he presented to the Club Library. He was honoured in 1952 by the degree of Doctor of Laws by his Alma Mater, the University of Aberdeen, where he had graduated in arts and law before studying at the University of Bonn. In his early days he was closely associated with his brother, the late Sir Henry Alexander, on the Aberdeen Free Press.

Dr Alexander joined the Club in 1924, and served as Vice-President from 1930 to 1933. He was a strong hill walker and

attended meets and excursions regularly until about 1935. He contributed numerous articles to the *Journal*, discussing such topics as geology, meteorology, and his favourite subject, place-names, in addition to that delightful Irish cameo "The Hungry Grass of Galtymore" in Vol. XIII. He assisted his brother in the preparation of the S.M.C. Guide to the Cairngorms. Reticent, quiet and retiring, yet ever helpful when asked for advice, W. M. Alexander was an unfailing source of information on the life and customs of the North-East.

JOHN ANGUS

John Angus, Advocate in Aberdeen, one of the senior Members of the Club, died very suddenly at his home on May 10, 1961. He joined the Club in 1931 and he and his wife were generally members of the cheerful parties which would gather for New Year Meets at the Invercauld Hotel, Braemar, in the 1930s. He was a keen walker to whom a day on the hills provided a happy relaxation from the busy life which he led in the city. During his later years he had to give up any strenuous walking on the hills, but still retained his interest in the Cairngorm Club and was invariably present at our Annual Dinner.

In his profession John Angus specialised in Court work and was a familiar figure in the Sheriff Court at Aberdeen for the past forty years. He was latterly an Honorary Sheriff-Substitute and at the time of his death the President of the Society of Advocates in Aberdeen.

A. C. W. LOWE

Mr Augustus C. W. Lowe of Lochiel, Boat of Garten, who had been a member of the Club since 1919, died on August 4, 1960, in his 70's. Although unable to attend the outings from Aberdeen, Mr Lowe occasionally either joined those which entered Speyside or met the Club on the Cairngorm tops. He also went out with H. D. Whitehouse on the latter's visits from the South.

Before his retirement in 1952, Mr Lowe was Food Executive Officer for Inverness-shire. He has since served on the Inverness County Council and was Chairman of the Badenoch District Council, taking an active interest in all matters concerning the development of Speyside. The magnificent library of books, on Scottish subjects and on all aspects of mountaineering, which Mr Lowe had built up demonstrated his keen interest and wide knowledge of these subjects :

the Club has been fortunate in having been presented with a selection of these through the generosity of our member, Mrs Ann Edge.

HAMISH MCARTHUR

On August 15, 1958, the Club lost one of its most enthusiastic and experienced members, Hamish McArthur, who died in his tent in the Lahul Himalaya during the expedition described elsewhere in this number. Our sympathy goes out to Millicent, his wife and our fellow-member, who was at base camp when Hamish collapsed at Camp 4 on an unclimbed 20,000 foot mountain.

Much of Hamish's early climbing was done in the Scottish mountains with Cairngorm Club members. His interests widened with the re-opening of the Alps in 1946, but until he later became Secretary of the Association of British Members of the Swiss Alpine Club, he was a regular attender of Club Meets. Tall and loose-limbed, a strong walker and a rock and snow climber of more than average ability, Hamish was a natural leader and an able organiser. Many will recall with pleasure his comradeship on the hills and the camaraderie in the evening which did so much to make the immediate post-war New Year and Easter Meets so successful. He was an able speaker and had a fund of party tricks—some will perhaps remember his antics with a ski-stick—but his high spirits never overstepped the mark.

In the Alps his expeditions, mostly unguided, were well planned and sensible. The Editor had five seasons in the Alps with the McArthurs, and recalls in particular a walk from Chamonix to Saas Fee, a traverse of Monte Rosa and Lyskamm, and visits to the Bernina, the Oetztal, the Stubai, and the Lienzer Dolomites. In other years Hamish climbed in the Monte Viso and Mont Blanc areas, in the Dolomites, in the Bernese Alps and in Jugoslavia. While a student, before his serious mountaineering began, his travels took him to Newfoundland and the African Copper Belt. From the Alps Hamish turned to the Himalaya and found in the Lahul an area of unmapped mountains suited to the small parties which he favoured. He described his first trip at an Annual Dinner, and members then had evidence of his photographic ability and of his interest in mountaineering literature.

Hamish McArthur was elected to the Alpine Club in 1951, joined their committee in 1957 and was appointed librarian in 1958. He was born in Johnstone, Renfrewshire, in 1913, and took a degree in

Electrical Engineering at Glasgow before joining the Factory Inspectorate, where his duties fortunately brought him to Aberdeen, and introduced him to the Club in 1941. In 1947 he transferred to the Ministry of Supply and was subsequently seconded to the Iron and Steel Board, where he held the responsible post of Chief Development Officer at the time of his death, being directly concerned with the organisation and rationalisation of the British steel industry.

J. B. McDONALD

J. B. McDonald will probably be best remembered for the very fine films of wild life in the mountains which entertained members at numerous indoor meets. Two in particular must be mentioned: the graphic record of a day's stalking and the vivid pictures of an eagle's nest near Derry Lodge. In the preparation of these films he was ably assisted by R. O. Mackay, who introduced him to the Club in 1939. Another of J. B. McDonald's climbing companions was Lord Malcolm Douglas Hamilton, with whom he climbed the Mitre Ridge in 1942.

J. B. McDonald was in business in Fraserburgh, and therefore not frequently seen at meetings or excursions. It was with deep regret that we heard of his death in 1958.

MARSHALL J. ROBB

Marshall Jeffreys Robb died in Aberdeen early in 1960 at the age of 71. Not many of our present members have had the pleasure of his company in the hills, for it is a number of years since he took a prominent part in Club affairs. He joined in 1919 and was active in the '20s and early '30s, for instance reporting to the *Journal* in 1923 on the novelty of one-day trips from Aberdeen to the Cairngorms by motor-car. He was a keen photographer who contributed several photographs to the *Journal*, notably at the time of the erection of the Macdhuì Indicator. He was a member of Committee during this period.

Marshall Robb was also a member of the Scottish Mountaineering Club, and served on their Committee from 1932 to 1935. His other outdoor interests included angling. He was associated for many years with Dr J. F. Tocher, public and agricultural analyst for Aberdeenshire and other north-eastern counties, and succeeded him in 1946, but had unfortunately to retire a year later because of ill-health. In the course of his professional duties he gained a wide

knowledge of the production of Scotch whisky, and compiled one of the few books on this subject.

It is with great regret that we have also to record the deaths of the following members:—

Miss Mary Agnes Skakle (1920).
 Colonel A. G. Nicol Smith (1925).
 Miss Una M. Ellis-Fermor (1926).
 Miss Emily A. Mavor (1928).
 Mr Robert C. Ross (1930).
 Mr James D. Auld (1933).

Miss Mary Skakle will be remembered as the author of the words of the Club Song, of which her sister, Miss Margaret Skakle, composed the music.

We also regret to report the deaths of two good friends of the Club:—

Captain H. D. Ross, who was H.M. Commissioner for the Balmoral Estates, or more popularly Balmoral Factor, from 1930 to 1948, died in 1960 at the age of 80. Captain Ross never failed to permit the Club to traverse the restricted areas whenever it was possible for him to do so, and in particular to grant permission to use the Danzig Bridge for Lochnagar excursions.

Mr James W. Duguid was even more closely linked with the affairs of the Club. Since the early Saturday outings and the first Sunday excursions in 1931, we have relied on Mr Duguid's Swallows to get us to the furthestmost roadhead. In recent years many of us have thought nostalgically of the 14-seat charabancs and 20-seat coaches of pre-war days, as the present 40-seaters attempted to negotiate the bends and turning-points of the hill roads. Coaches serving climbers suffer treatment more severe than normal touring duties, but Mr Duguid placed few restrictions on us, and many a time waited patiently and in good humour for the delayed return of a winter party, even when the snow in the Muick road was drifting deeply. Mr Duguid had not been at the wheel much himself in the past few years, but fortunately the family connection is not lost, as his son has taken over. We hope that there will be a family representative at the Dinner for many years to come, and that the Swallows will still leave Golden Square early on Sunday mornings, picking up at Queen's Cross.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 1957

THE 69th Annual General Meeting of the Club was held in the Caledonian Hotel, Aberdeen, on November 20, 1957. Mr A. Leslie Hay, President, was in the Chair. Reporting on the activities of the Club during the past year the Chairman referred in particular to the re-erection of the Parker Memorial Bridge, and expressed the indebtedness of the Club to Dr G. A. Taylor for his services in this connection.

The Accounts for the year to October 31, 1957, were submitted and approved.

It was unanimously agreed that Mr H. D. Welsh, who had been appointed Hon. President of the Club the previous year, should be reappointed to that office. The President and other Office-bearers were also reappointed.

On the motion of the Chairman, seconded by Mr W. M. Duff, Dr George A. Taylor was made an Honorary Member of the Club, in recognition of the outstanding services which he had rendered, not only to the Cairngorm Club, but to climbers in the Cairngorms in general. The Meeting indicated its cordial approval and Dr Taylor expressed his thanks for the honour conferred upon him.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 1958

The 70th Annual General Meeting of the Club was held in the Caledonian Hotel, Aberdeen, on November 19, 1958. Before commencing the business of the Meeting the President, Mr A. Leslie Hay, made reference to the death of two members, J. B. McDonald (1939) and Hamish McArthur (1941). He recalled the fact that Hamish McArthur had been the Speaker at the Annual Dinner in 1956, when he had given the Club a most interesting and entertaining account of his visit with Mrs McArthur to the Lahul Himalaya.

In reponse to an appeal from the Scottish Rights of Way Society for a contribution towards the cost of repairing the Bedford Memorial Bridge it was decided to make a contribution of £5. 5s. It was decided to remit to the Committee the question of erecting a bridge over the Dee at Corroul. A proposal that the Club should take steps to resuscitate the local Mountain Rescue Organisation was strongly supported and this matter was also remitted to the Committee.

The following Office-bearers were appointed: *President*, Col. P. D. Baird; *Vice-Presidents*, Mr A. E. Anton and Mr G. R. Page. The other Office-bearers were reappointed.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 1959

The 71st Annual General Meeting of the Club was held in the Caledonian Hotel, Aberdeen, on November 18, 1959. In the absence of the President, Mr G. R. Page, Vice-President, occupied the Chair. He referred with regret to the deaths during the year of Dr William M. Alexander (1924), Col. A. G. Nicol Smith (1925), and Miss Una Ellis-Fermor (1925)

The Chairman reported that the usual programme of Club activities had been

carried through successfully during the year. He stated that the Committee had taken no action on the remit regarding the Corrou Bridge, as the Nature Conservancy had provided bridges at Corrou and elsewhere in the Conservancy area. He mentioned that Dr G. A. Taylor had been responsible for the plans of the Corrou Bridge and had supervised and taken part in the work of erection. It was noted with interest that on this occasion Dr Taylor made use of aerial transport. It was reported that a local Mountain Rescue Organisation under the Convener'ship of Mr George A. Roberts had been set up and had been in action on more than one occasion during the year.

The following Office-bearers were appointed for the ensuing year: *Honorary President*, Mr H. D. Welsh; *President*, Mr Robert Bain; *Vice-Presidents*, Mr G. R. Page and Mr G. A. Roberts; *Secretary and Treasurer*, Mr J. E. Bothwell; *Honorary Editor and Librarian*, Dr R. L. Mitchell; *Honorary Meets Secretary*, Mr E. F. Johnston; *Honorary Huts Custodian*, Mr P. F. Howgate. Mr D. Allison and Mr G. G. Cook were re-elected Auditors. The following were elected to the Committee: Miss A. A. Adams, Miss C. M. Baxter, Miss A. F. G. Cordiner; Messrs N. F. Dyer, W. A. Ewen, R. A. Gerstenberg, J. Y. L. Hay, J. Quarterman, and H. C. Rennie.

The Chairman expressed regret at the loss sustained by the Club in the departure of the President, Col. Pat Baird, who had left to take up an appointment at McGill University. He referred to the great interest which Col. Baird had taken in the affairs of the Club since coming to Aberdeen, and in particular to his willingness to take a share in the work of the Club.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 1960

The 72nd Annual General Meeting of the Club was held in the Caledonian Hotel, Aberdeen, on November 16, 1960, with Mr Robert Bain, President, in the Chair.

The various Office-bearers made their Reports and the Accounts for the year to October 31, 1960, were submitted and approved. The Office-bearers for the ensuing year were appointed as follows: *Honorary President*, Mr H. D. Welsh; *President*, Mr Robert Bain; *Vice-Presidents*, Mr G. R. Page and Mr G. A. Roberts. The Secretary and Treasurer, Editor and Librarian, Meets Secretary and Huts Custodian were all reappointed. The following were appointed Members of the Committee: Misses A. A. Adams, J. C. Arthur, C. M. Baxter, and S. Murray; Messrs N. F. Dyer and R. A. Gerstenberg, Dr R. M. McAndrew, Dr J. Quarterman, and Mr H. C. Rennie.

Mr A. C. R. Watt moved the adoption of the following motion: "That this Club, having among its objects the encouragement of mountain climbing in Scotland, and being anxious that access to the mountains should be facilitated, endorses the Resolutions of the Club dated December 20, 1918, and November 29, 1924, in favour of the construction of a road from Deeside to Speyside through Glen Feshie and urges the Government and the Local Authorities concerned to approve this long-delayed project." In support of the motion Mr Watt gave an interesting résumé of the history of the project to link Deeside and Speyside by a road from the Linn of Dee through to Glen Feshie. He expressed the opinion that such a road, though very much more expensive to construct now, was still as desirable as in the years after the First World War when the project was strongly

supported by the Club. Mr J. A. Bothwell seconded the motion. Mr W. M. Duff, as leader of the opposition, warned the Meeting of the possible dangers of turning Glen Geldie and Glen Feshie into public thoroughfares which would be desecrated by the litter of picnic parties. Dr R. L. Mitchell also opposed the motion on the grounds that such a road would spoil the seclusion and charm of the area, merely to save a few miles on a journey from Aberdeen to the west, at a sum which would be better spent in improving existing roads. Further views were expressed for and against the motion before an interesting discussion was brought to an untimely end by the acceptance of a motion from Mr P. F. Howgate that the Meeting proceed to the next business. This indicated clearly that the majority of those present opposed the motion.

ANNUAL DINNERS

The 1957, 1958, 1959 and 1960 Annual Dinners were all held in the Caledonian Hotel on Saturday evenings late in November. The pre-Dinner lectures were by Mr J. Grant Roger on "Scottish Mountain Plants," Mr David Thomas on "The British Caucasus Expedition, 1958," Mr William Wallace on "A Visit to the Peruvian Andes," and Mr W. D. Brooker on "Climbing in Scotland." In 1957 and 1958 the Chair was taken by the President, Mr A. Leslie Hay. In 1959 Col. Pat Baird was unfortunately unable to preside, and the Chair was taken by Professor A. E. Anton. Mr Robert Bain took the Chair in 1960. The Toasts of the Guests were proposed by Mr N. F. Dyer, Mr G. R. Page, Dr J. H. F. Crawford and Mr G. A. Roberts, and responded to by Mr E. A. Wrangham (Alpine Club), Mr E. W. Thomson (Grampian Club), Mr J. C. Donaldson (S.M.C.), and Mr J. M. Brockway (S.M.C.).

MEETS AND EXCURSIONS

1957

New Year. Derry Lodge and Blair Atholl.

Jan. 22. Lochnagar.	June 9. Derry Lodge.
Feb. 17. Beinn a' Bhuid.	Midsummer. Blair Atholl to Inverey.
Mar. 10. Lochnagar.	Sept. 8. Lochnagar.
Mar. 31. Glen Clova.	Sept. 29. Spittal of Glenshee to Inverey.
Easter. Kinloch Rannoch.	Oct. 20. Glen Esk to Ballater.
May. 5. Lochnagar.	Nov. 17. Buck of Cabrach.
May 26. Glen Feshie.	Dec. 8. Clachnaben.

1958

New Year. Derry Lodge and Ardlui.

Jan. 26. Lochnagar.	June 8. Derry Lodge.
Feb. 16. Invercauld.	Midsummer. Loch Laggan.
Mar. 2. Lochnagar.	Sept. 7. Lochnagar.
Mar. 23. Beinn a' Bhuid.	Sept. 28. Cairngorm.
Easter. Garve.	Oct. 19. Glen Esk to Glen Clova.
May 4. Glen Clova.	Nov. 16. Ladder Hills.
May 25. Ben Lawers.	Dec. 7. Bennachie.

1959

New Year. Derry Lodge and Newtonmore.

Jan. 11. Lochnagar.	May 24. Glen Feshie.
Feb. 1. Glen Clunie.	June 7. Glen Fernate.
Feb. 22. Lochnagar.	Midsummer. Cluanie to Glen Affric.
Mar. 15. Beinn a' Bhuid.	Sept. 6. Lochnagar.
Easter. Crianlarich.	Sept. 20. Dalwhinnie.
April 12. Lochnagar.	Oct. 18. Glen Clova.
May 3. Derry Lodge.	Nov. 15. Glen Esk to Feughside.
	Dec. 13. Morven.

1960

New Year. Derry Lodge, Muir of Inverey, and Bridge of Orchy.

Jan. 17. Lochnagar.	May 22. Ben Vorlich.
Feb. 7. Glen Clunie.	June 5. Derry Lodge.
Feb. 28. Lochnagar.	Midsummer. Cluanie to Loch Quoich.
Mar. 20. Beinn a' Bhuid.	July 16-30. Arolla.
April 3. Glen Clova.	Aug. 28. Spittal of Glenshee.
Easter. Onich.	Sept. 18. Lochnagar.
May 1. Ben Avon.	Oct. 16. Loch Lee to Ballater.

The Meets and Excursions have been well supported. The Club, as the above list shows, revisited many old haunts, and has also explored some lesser known areas. The weather has been kind more often than not, or perhaps just seemed so in retrospect, thanks to the congenial après-climb atmosphere when the Club sups. The winter climbing weather followed a remarkably set pattern, with either clear, crisp days and good snow, or conditions that have been aptly described as "uniformly scandalous."

The 1957 midsummer overnight excursion from Blair Atholl to Inverey demonstrated that it can be winter at any time of the year on Scottish hills. There was no rising sun at dawn for the devotees, but, instead, glorious if chilling views of the higher Cairngorms capped with snow which vanished as the day brightened. It was certainly not a night for lingering on the tops. The following midsummer found a rather smaller number of enthusiasts on the peaks north and south of Loch Laggan. They were rewarded with a fine sunset-cum-sunrise and a warm and sunny morning. Attempts at bivouacking were more successful than on the previous year, thanks in some cases to the appearance of sleeping-bags which were considered well worth the carry. In 1959 the midsummer trek took us from Cluanie to Glen Affric with exhilarating ridge walking and some rock scrambling in the early morning, and a sunny walk down to Loch Affric which was looking its best.

The 1960 Meet augured well. There had been a week of good weather and the glass was high. A lightly clad and cheerful party set out from Aberdeen bound once again for Cluanie, this time to traverse the peaks southwards to Loch Quoich. Alas, something went wrong en route and we arrived to find mist low on the hills. Conditions did not improve and it will perhaps suffice to say that all parties eventually reached their destination. It should be stated, however, that one group



G. M. McAndrew

ZERMATT PEAKS FROM THE ROTHORN HUT

which was reported as being within sight of the starting point at 7 A.M., some ten hours after leaving the bus, were not lost, but were shrewdly confirming their location, having abandoned route A and being about to embark on route B !

There have been good attendances at the Easter Meets where it has been a pleasure to meet members from the South once again. At Onich the weather could not have been better and we enjoyed some memorable days climbing in Glencoe and on the Mamores.

Happily, the trips have been free of mishap and, apart from one notorious exception involving numerous members on the excursion allegedly to Clachnaben, missing persons have soon turned up. The Committee considered it advisable to tighten up procedure, and parties are now asked to give details of routes and climbs to an official before leaving the bus. The desirability of reading the Club circular is illustrated in the sad tale of the member who arrived at Queen's Cross an hour too early one morning. Fortunately he was able to return home and finish breakfast, but the member who, on another occasion, turned up a week late at an out-of-town rendezvous spent a vexing day.

The last two excursions of 1960, which were planned to enter the cattle areas of Feughside and Donside, were cancelled because foot-and-mouth disease restrictions were in force, and there might have been unnecessary risk of spreading the infection.

THE ALPINE MEET

The first official Alpine Meet was held at Arolla from July 16 to 30, 1960. It was quite informal in character, and as several of the chief sponsors unfortunately found it impossible to attend, the attendance was smaller than had been hoped. In fact, some ten years ago, much larger gatherings of members congregated in the Alpina in Zermatt on many August evenings. There was nothing but praise for the hospitality of the Hotel Aiguille de la Tsa, or, for that matter, of the Mont Collon, where one or two late-comers had to stay.

The early arrivals found heavy falls of new snow high up, and got into training by visiting the Glacier de Cheilon over the Col de Riedmatten and the Pas de Chèvres. Jean Arthur, Sheila Murray and John Crawford were now joined by Jean Callander, Anne Cordiner and Ginette Dalleré, the first recovering from the attentions of an Alsatian en route and unfortunately immobilised during most of the Meet, and the last two fresh from the rock ridges around the Weissmeis Hut and Almageller Alp.

An unorthodox approach to the Col de Tsarmine, between the Grande and Petite Dents de Veisivi took the party up steep Alpine azalea before the path was eventually joined. Anne and Ginette took in the Grande Dent (3,418 metres) in the gathering clouds. It was bright sunshine again when the party went up to the Bertol Hut, perched on a rock pinnacle between the Bertol and Mont Miné glaciers, on the high-level route to the Col d'Herens and Zermatt. The ascent was facilitated by a ride on a hoist leading to a tunnel gallery of the Grande Dixence scheme—one of the privileges of a predominantly female party. While the others gathered their breath after their first ascent to 11,000 feet, Anne and Ginette scrambled over the Clocher de Bertol before an appreciative hut audience. Next morning a slow steady plod over the extensive snowfield of the upper glacier of Mont Miné led to the Tête Blanche (3,724 metres) by 7 A.M. There were endless

wonderful views of the Matterhorn, Dent d'Herens, Dent Blanche, and all the Zermatt tops, but an icy wind made lingering out of the question. While the two tigers cramponed up Tête de Chavannes, Sheila and Jean, the novitiates, retraced their steps to the hut, then down the short glacier and long moraine path to Arolla.

Frank and Babs Solari and the Editor now arrived from the Graians—ten hours from Pont to Arolla by taxi, bus, train and bus demonstrating recent changes in road conditions in the high valleys—and joined the others (John had now left) in a wet ascent to the Vignette Hut. Several inches of fresh snow in the evening apparently ruled out anything serious next day, so everyone overslept, including the hut-keeper. But at 5.30 A.M. the sun shone from a crisp, clear sky into the dormitory and the party belatedly set out for the Pigne (3,796 metres). The ladies' rope was courteously allowed to lead up the steepish icy nose which was snow-covered, and where Ginette did a good job in cutting fresh steps up what is usually a well-made staircase. Unfortunately, her feet are more dainty than those of other members of the party, so they had to do some work too, voicing loud complaint in the process. The crevasses on the plateau were all covered, but only one member of the party made any attempt to explore them, and that was a very half-hearted effort.

The view from the top at about 10.30 A.M. was clear and extensive in all directions, with Mont Blanc impressive to the west. Clouds formed again as the main party returned to the hut. Anne and Ginette, followed by two Dutch climbers, descended *via* the Col de Breney to the Glacier de Cheilon, having reluctantly decided that Mont Blanc de Cheilon was not sensible so late in the day, and returned over the Pas de Chèvres. The following day, the last of the Meet, was one of blazing sunshine, and was spent lazing on the lower slopes.

The Meet was a very successful experiment, and gave several members their first Alpine experience. All who were there have memories of good company, good fun, and wonderful days in the mountains. The weather in this rather bad season was relatively kind, with some sun on most days. It is just a pity that more members were not there.

THE SIX TOPS

THE circuit of the six highest Cairngorms appealed to me as one of the finest high-level expeditions in the country which can be completed in a single day. It is an ideal excursion for anyone wishing to spend a long day on the hills with the travelling, of necessity, hard and fast. Interesting information giving the times taken by parties on the traverse, starting at Loch Builg and finishing at Corrour Bothy, appears in *C.C.J.*, Vol. xiii, pp. 98, 191, and I found this useful when planning my own trip. As far as possible I intended linking the best of the published times for the different stages, and hoped to complete the journey in approximately twelve hours, which would allow plenty of time to continue to Derry Lodge for the night. With the Lodge as a haven the round can be abandoned at any stage until one is committed to Braeriach and Cairntoul.

I camped at Loch Builg and set out early on July 31, 1960. There had been heavy rain overnight but after passing through mist on Ben Avon I had a clear sunny day until rain fell as I approached Cairntoul. The traverse, estimated as 28 miles in length with about 9,000 feet of ascent (*C.C.J.*, Vol. xiii, p. 98), certainly requires stamina but is not, I think, so formidable as is generally believed.

My times were:—

Time taken.

Depart Loch Builg	6.15 A.M.	
Arrive Ben Avon	7.50 A.M.	1 hr. 35 min.
„ Beinn a' Bhuidh	8.50 A.M.	1 hr. 0 min.
„ Cairngorm	11.55 A.M.	3 hr. 5 min.
„ Ben Macdhui	1.15 P.M.	1 hr. 20 min.
„ Braeriach	3.10 P.M.	1 hr. 55 min.
„ Cairntoul	4.40 P.M.	1 hr. 30 min.
„ Corrou Bothy	5.25 P.M.	0 hr. 45 min.

TOTAL . 11 hr. 10 min.

A car can be taken to Corndavon Lodge, where a locked gate bars the road to Loch Builg. An attractive return route for the following day is via Clais Fhearnaig, Quoich Water, and the path south of Ben Avon which follows the River Gairn to Loch Builg. This path, which leads off the path which comes up from Gleann an t-Slugain, is not easily spotted but there is a small cairn at the junction.

The highlight of my trip was on Ben Avon. During the ascent the sun appeared and it was wonderfully fresh and clear after the rain. Higher up I ran into mist but the sun shone through intermittently. As I reached the summit ridge with the sun behind me, I was suddenly confronted by a figure—the Brocken Spectre. The shadow was remarkably clear. We waved to one another and then, as my route veered northwards, marched off side by side for perhaps half a minute until the mist thickened and the shadow faded away!

E. F. JOHNSTON.

AN HONORARY MEMBER ON SNOWDON

WHEN a nephew invited me to join a family party for a week's stay in Snowdonia, in September 1960, it did not take me long before accepting, as I had never been in Wales. Although I was close to my eightieth birthday, and it was some years since I had climbed a Munro, there seemed a chance that my legs might still take me to the top of Snowdon. In any case, if they failed, there was a railway. A careful study of the map showed that of some half-dozen routes, the shortest, and that with the least height to climb was the Pyg track from Pen-y-Pass, a distance of about $3\frac{1}{4}$ miles, with an average gradient of about 1 in 7 and a net height of 2,410 feet to climb to the 3,560 feet summit. It looked easy on paper, and only later did I find that the guide book described it as the "most arduous" track.

With my nephew we started from Pen-y-Pass on a beautiful clear morning—I think the only day that week the summit was clear of cloud. For the first half-mile—mainly over grass—there was very little track to be found, then a rough rocky track led steeply upwards to the crest of the ridge below Grib Goch. Here my nephew left to ascend by the narrow ridge of the latter while I contoured along its side into the corrie below Snowdon summit. The "arduous" work was mostly here, as the ridge side rises very steeply and consists of scree and loose rock amongst which I very soon lost the track. More than once I was tempted to turn back, but, when half-way up, the sight of a train puffing along the top of the ridge urged me to plod on. In due course the railway line was reached and, after an easy half-mile, the summit hotel some 100 feet below the summit cairn.

There was time for a cup of tea with my nephew and then he left to descend by the Y. Lliwedd ridge, while I made the remaining ascent to the Cairn. After admiring the excellent view the descent was made by train to Llanberis.

The following day I joined the family party and ascended to a cloud-hidden summit by train—a somewhat tedious journey of three-quarters of an hour. Leaving the others to wait for the return train I walked down the usual tourist route to Llanberis, a rather rough, not very interesting and in places very wet track of about 5 miles. Altogether I found Snowdon a very fine mountain with its narrow ridges enclosing deep corries filled with blue lakes.

W. MALCOLM.

THE SHELTER STONE VISITORS' BOOKS

THE records of visits to the Shelter Stone, as given by the entries in the Visitors' Books covering the period from 1924 to 1954, have been studied by Mr B. H. Humble. He has abstracted details of numbers of visitors each month, and noted how many gave addresses from other parts of Britain and from abroad.

It is recognised that the records are incomplete, as pages have been lost or misplaced, and numerous visitors have been unaware of the existence of a book. It is impossible, too, to distinguish between day and overnight visits. Nevertheless, the total figure of 13,147 visitors in thirty years is impressive.

From 1925 to 1928, the annual total is between 100 and 150, exclusively in June to September. Thereafter, the numbers rise steadily until during the '30s some 500 to 800 visitors per annum are recorded, with a peak of 1,102 in 1933. The season is now March to October with a few visitors in January. Throughout the 1939-45 war, the number averaged about 300, with an exceptional peak of 602 in 1943, when 243 visitors are recorded for August. From 1946 to 1954 the annual numbers are between 400 and 700.

The highest number in any month is 381 in July 1932 (more than in any preceding year!), while in the whole thirty years only 17 people signed the Visitors' Books in February and 52 in November. There have been regular visitors in the summer months from Western European and Commonwealth countries.

The rather tattered Visitors' Books are in the Club Library. It is hoped at a later date to make fuller use of the most interesting figures which Mr Humble has obtained. We appreciate the amount of work which this involved, and are grateful to him for making them available to us.

It is interesting to refer back to an article by James L. Duncan (*C.C.J.*, Vol. xii, p. 212) which recounts the initiation of the Shelter Stone Visitors' Book and discusses the records of the first year, which are in general agreement with Mr Humble's figures.

HILL PATHS

FROM time to time there are suggestions in the press to the effect that hill tracks and routes on the high plateaux should be marked by a system of paint marks similar to that employed in certain continental areas. Where there is any need for such route indication, our hill tracks are generally adequately marked by cairns or stonemen, and the sponsors of the paint scheme appear not to appreciate

the dangers into which it could lead just those novices it is designed to help. Paint marks on boulders become almost invisible in thick mist or at night, and disappear entirely under snow or ice, conditions during which cairns are much more efficient as well as being at all time much more in keeping with the countryside. Most useful of all, of course, are a map, a compass and the ability to use them, and until this is achieved, the inexperienced hill-walker should not venture without expert guidance into situations where difficulty can arise.

The hills are best left undisturbed, as free as possible from all interference, visited only by parties fully competent to do so. If hill paths must be signposted, let it be only at the lowland access point. There is nothing more distasteful than a cast-iron signpost on an open plateau or in a distant valley. Some feel much the same about bridges.

It is gratifying to know that the Badenoch District Council, which has been listing rights-of-way and permitted tracks in its area, does not consider paint-marked paths to be desirable, whilst the Association of Scottish Climbing Clubs also favours cairns. Some education regarding the purpose of these is required, as it is not uncommon to see them being demolished by members of summer parties who, let us hope, fail to appreciate their significance.

THE MORRONE MOUNTAIN INDICATOR

AN indicator identifying the Cairngorm tops has been erected on the lower slopes of Morrone by the Deeside Field Club. This indicator was designed jointly by our Hon. President, Mr Hugh D. Welsh, and Mr J. Fenton Wyness.

THE GARBH COIRE MOR SNOWFIELD

It is seldom that snow does not persist throughout the summer somewhere in the Cairngorms, generally the snowfield in Garbh Core Mor of Braeriach being most persistent, as mentioned by Colonel Baird in the preceding number. This snowfield melted completely in September 1933 (*C.C.J.*, Vol. xiii, p. 253), but there appears to be no other record of its disappearance until September 1959, when its total absence was reported and illustrated by Alex. Tewnion (*Aberdeen Press and Journal*, October 16, 1959).

EASY ACCESS

THE success of organised skiing on Speyside depends on guaranteed access to good snow over a reasonable period between Christmas and Easter. For most of the visiting skiers whom the hotels hope to attract, access implies mechanical transport to the ski slope. After considerable discussion, funds became available in 1958 to meet the costs, some £40,000, of a motor road from Loch Morlich to near Jean's Hut on Cairngorm, at about 2,500 feet in Coire Cas between the Faicail and Sron an Aonaich from which respectively the Coire Cas and the White Lady ski-runs descend. Construction had proceeded far enough during the summer of 1960 for traffic to reach Jean's Hut, although the road was not officially opened, when, on August 4, some hundred yards of the new road and the bridge over the

Allt Mor were swept away by floods. A number of vehicles were marooned for several days and there was considerable confusion among some 40 tourists, unaccustomed to the fury of the elements in the hills, who were temporarily cut off until police, firemen and volunteers facilitated the crossing of the swollen stream. Repairs, estimated to cost as much as £15,000, were in progress when, exactly three weeks later, a further storm resulted in the temporary bridge and roadway being carried away once more.

These happenings were possibly anticipated by those who appreciate the havoc caused regularly by cloud bursts in the hills, although they occurred sooner than most expected, and before the effects of winter on the road could be assessed.

One result of the damage to the road was to delay the construction of the projected chairlift from Jean's Hut to the 3,500 foot level on the upper slopes of Cairngorm. This £30,000 project raises many problems, as, inevitably, inexperienced and ill-equipped tourists will wander over the summit plateau in dubious weather, and may have to make their own way down should storm conditions or mechanical failure preclude operation of the lift, or should poor visibility render the lift difficult to find.

These projects sponsored by the Cairngorm Winter Sports Development Board are therefore regarded with mixed feelings by the climbing community, on whom falls much of the responsibility for search and rescue and who generally prefer the hills as they were, but who realise that they are necessary for the prosperous development of skiing on Speyside. It is good to know that the sponsors appreciate many of the problems which may arise.

The following note, by one of our younger members, clearly illustrates the possibilities of mishap even in summer conditions. The lessons which it teaches are obvious; fortunately his party was physically strong enough to deal with the severity of the storm, which might well have produced freezing conditions.

STORM ON MACDHUI

ONE day in September 1959, at the end of a glorious summer, I experienced, along with several companions, an unpleasant variety of conditions, which, it turned out later, were confined to the Cairngorm mountains. The rest of Scotland basked under cloudless skies, and in fact it was under these skies that we left the Rothiemurchus Forest, bound for Ben Macdhui early one morning.

The party entered the gloom after crossing the lip of Coire Cas, but did not yet experience the fearful wind velocity which was to buffet us later in the day. Through the drifting cloud we looked first down to the green waters of Loch Avon and then to the play of the mists round the Barns of Beinn Mheadhoin. Ben Avon and Beinn a' Bhuird were entirely free from mist. We made a short stop by the burn which tumbles down Coire Domhain, but not for long, as the cold of the ever-increasing wind chilled us, calling for movement.

We made for the Lochan Buidhe, but owing to the mist, which was becoming very thick, we passed between it and the Lairig Ghru. Here for the first time we were caught in the full force of the wind, which in its terrible strength flattened us against the maze of boulders and gave us an uncomfortable suffocated feeling. The many bearings we took to the summit of the hill were useless, for high winds and accurate compass courses do not go together. Many of us found movement

exceedingly difficult, and when we reached the sangars which cluster round the summit, the wind brought rain. From here the top was easily found.

Soon after leaving the summit, we stopped to wait for two of our friends who had lagged behind. We waited in vain, for their forms did not materialise out of the white curtain surrounding us, and so we had to label them lost. Much as the clinging wetness of our clothes and the biting cold contrived to send us to a warm fireside, it was our duty to turn back and look for them. So it was that for the next hour and a half we trod backwards and forwards across the inhospitable Cairngorm plateau, amid the mist, the rain and the wind. Blowing whistles was no good because the wind swept the sound away. We soon found that we ourselves were lost and it was with luck that we stumbled upon the framework of meteorological instruments, the position of which I was fortunate in knowing.

A council of war was held, mouth to ear, and we all decided to hope that our friends would find their own way home. Soon we arrived at a hollow filled by largish pools, obviously part of the burn which we hoped to be the Feith Buidhe. Two climbers struggling with a flapping tent confirmed this, and we ascended the rise towards Cairn Lochan. At this point, by a stroke of luck, our friends were found sitting on a boulder, resting because one was suffering from cramp in his back. We helped him into a warm, dry pullover, and once again got moving.

Great was the relief and joy when we fell out of the mist into Coire an Lochain, and saw at last the longed-for picture of the Rothiemurchus Forest. Once we had reached the Clach Bharraig bridge we were again in the sun, and this, with the long walk home, soon dried out our sodden garments. That night, by the fireside, we could look back and say that perhaps we had enjoyed it after all.

It may be of interest to note that Aberdeen had a very hot day, in fact one of the hottest of the summer. This all shows that the Cairngorms have their own type of weather, a dangerous thing perhaps to those who are not expecting it.

HUGH R. SPENCER.

THE LITTER PROBLEM

At recent meetings of the Association of Scottish Climbing Clubs concern has been expressed regarding the condition of many of the more popular summits and hill tracks. It is seldom that members of climbing clubs are responsible, but they can do much by example and by judicious propaganda, as well as by assisting in cleaning-up operations.

The most objectionable constituents of the mass of litter accumulating at the more frequented spots are the many tin cans and bottles which, unless they are properly dealt with, or, better still, taken away again, become an almost permanent feature of the landscape. Unfortunately, the worst offenders are often groups sponsored by responsible organisations or even by official bodies who should know better. In certain places, for instance where the hill paths meet public roads, the local authorities could help by providing more litter bins and emptying them regularly.

SOME NEW CLIMBING BOOKS

- "Mountain Climbing," by Godfrey Francis. A Teach Yourself Book (English Universities Press, 1958, 7s. 6d.).
- "Rock Climbing," by C. M. Dixon. Know the Game Series (Educational Productions Ltd., 1958, 2s. 6d.).
- "A Dictionary of Mountaineering," by R. G. Collons (Blackie, 1957, 12s. 6d.).
- "Rock Climbing in Britain," by J. E. B Wright (Nicholas Kaye, 1958, 15s.).
- "Where to Climb in the British Isles," by Edward C. Pyatt (Faber, 1960, 20s.).
- "Mid Moor and Mountain," by Melville Balsillie and Jim Westwood (Hertfordshire Scout Council, 1955, 7s. 6d.).
- "The Outdoor Guide," by Roy McCarthy (Crosby Lockwood, 1960, 10s. 6d.).
- "Coronation Everest," by James Morris (Faber, 1958, 16s.).
- "Great Days in New Zealand Mountaineering," by John Pascoe (Bailey Bros. & Swinfen, 1958, 21s.).
- "Shadow Buttress," by Showell Styles (Faber, 1959, 15s.).
- "Selected Poems on West Penwith and Reflections," by A. W. Andrews, Vol. 1 (J. W. Saundry, Penzance, 1957, 5s.).

As Barford's Pelican "Climbing in Britain" is out-of-print and apparently unlikely to be reprinted, "Mountain Climbing" has been sponsored by the B.M.C. and the A.S.C.C. as "an up-to-date book on Mountain Craft, to introduce beginners and lead the more experienced into bigger mountains and advanced methods." The results of accepting an already prepared manuscript include a marked change of emphasis, for while Barford's book dealt with British conditions, here the bias is towards alpine climbing. This is unfortunate in the circumstances, as the book can scarcely be recommended to the *ab initio* beginner, although it is an excellent textbook on alpine climbing. Several examples may serve to illustrate this point. First of all, in our opinion, the danger of wearing rubber soles in Scottish conditions in winter is not adequately presented. Secondly a description of an expedition along a snow-covered cliff edge in mist in winter does not even mention the possibility of roping, in view of the danger from cornices or, perhaps more important, inability to see the edge in such conditions. Nor will those in full knowledge of the circumstances agree that winter incidents on Nevis in recent years have been almost equally divided between very experienced climbers and misguided beginners—unless a climber can be considered to be very experienced although lacking any winter experience in Scotland, an assumption with which we disagree. In a recent *Alpine Journal*, Dr T. W. Patey cannot recall a single serious incident in the last ten years befalling an experienced Scottish party on a Scottish winter climb. We hope that this book does not encourage still more beginners from the south to tackle Nevis under the wrong conditions, ill-equipped and ill-provided. Generally the descriptions of rock and ice technique are clearly and concisely stated, although many of the illustrations are badly located, a page or so too late. The book concludes with a chapter on mountain rescue, and lists of rescue posts and British Climbing Clubs. It is sad to have to report that

the author was killed by a rock fall on Pillar Rock during a thunderstorm in June 1960.

The less ambitious "Rock Climbing" is an excellent introductory textbook. It includes clearly-drawn sketches covering all aspects of rock work, which present the principles much more explicitly than pages of text. This is a pamphlet which is likely to be taken to the cliffs; its paper binding is therefore unlikely to survive. But it can be recommended to the beginner for close study.

It is difficult to decide what purpose "A Dictionary of Mountaineering" is intended to serve. It is a collection of short (up to three-page) articles on miscellaneous subjects of mountaineering interest, with English translations of the commoner continental terms, and a few diagrams and photographs illustrating some of the items. The choice of items is puzzling. Thus, the French but not the German abbreviation for the Swiss Alpine Club is included, while the British Mountaineering Council appears, but not the Association of Scottish Climbing Clubs. Is the bed of a gully really the level portion between pitches? Is cwm now in wider general use than coire or cirque? These examples are chosen to show how difficult it is for an author of a compilation of this nature to be comprehensive, while at the same time avoiding the temptation to say too much rather than too little. This is in fact our chief criticism of this book—its tendency of writing round a topic rather than defining it concisely. It will, on occasion, serve as a useful reference book but its limitations must be appreciated, as must also the fact that in reviewing a book of this type it is easy to detail a few shortcomings and to ignore its many qualities.

"Rock Climbing in Britain" and "Where to Climb in the British Isles" are both directed towards the climber who is turning to a new area and who requires information on the mountains with good rock and on the standard routes. The latter book attempts a more systematic treatment but is less well-balanced, devoting, for instance, twelve pages to the West Riding of Yorkshire and five to Skye. A useful feature of E. C. Pyatt's rather encyclopædic book is the inclusion of lists of references for each area, while J. E. B. Wright has produced a more readable overall account.

"Mid Moor and Mountain" is a handbook for senior scouts dealing with excursions of all grades from local hikes to alpine camps. Melville Balsillie has long experience of the organisation and supervision of such expeditions, and the book is dedicated to Ben Macdhui "in recognition of his outstanding services to Senior Scouting." It is good to know that proper guidance in mountain craft is available to the Scouts of Hertfordshire.

"The Outdoor Guide," a spiral bound booklet of 250 pages, attempts to advise on all outdoor activities on air, land and water. The section on mountaineering lists qualified guides and B.M.C. but not A.S.C.C. clubs, and suggests climbing areas, with the good advice to novices to avoid Scottish ice. Other relevant sections deal briefly with camping, rambling and hill walking; skiing and pot-holing.

"Coronation Everest" is yet another account of the ascent of Everest, but a refreshing one, written this time by a layman who was on the spot. It is interesting

to cover the ground from Katmandu to Base Camp and beyond with a guide whose personal ambition is not focused on the summit, who is planning rather how to get his despatches back to *The Times* without interception by the lurking newshounds. It is somewhat amusing to detect rather divided loyalties! But even the most hardened peak-bagger may feel a little sentimental over the account of the well-timed transmission to London of the news of final success and of the confirmation of the success by the little receiver at Base Camp.

“Great Days in New Zealand Mountaineering” presents stories of the exploration of the climbing areas of New Zealand, from the snow and ice peaks of South Island to crater mountains in the North. The local topography of each area is illustrated by clear sketch maps, but the reader ignorant of the wider geography would have welcomed a map locating the various mountain groups more precisely. A well-chosen collection of photographs gives a good impression of the rock and snow which challenged the climbers whose exploits are recounted by John Pascoe, himself a notable pioneer with numerous first ascents to his credit.

“Shadow Buttress” is a novel by an author whose mountaineering fiction has previously been of the detective story type, written under the pseudonym Glyn Carr. This, however, is the story, set in the north-west, of a professional guide whose sight fails, of misadventure on the rocks of Shadow Buttress, and of the relationships of climber and guide, man and girl. The writing is crisp and the atmosphere reasonably well-established, but the reader is left with a feeling that the dramatic situations are somewhat overdrawn.

The author of “Selected Poems on West Penwith and Reflections” was a notable figure in British mountaineering and the father of Cornish cliff climbing, persuading the Climbers’ Club to establish the Bosigran Hut. As we regret to record his death in 1959 at the age of 90, it seems appropriate to quote one of his verses:—

VALHALLA

To each his own Valhalla and release
 From perpetuity of petty things,
 But we who are the freemen of the hills
 Need no such sanctuary. We may not rest
 Until we have climbed high enough to see
 Beyond the false horizon’s beckoning line
 Which flatters us in vain for still we climb.

All the above books, and many more, are available in the Club Library.

R. L. M.

NEW ROCK-CLIMBING GUIDES

It will be noticed that this number of the *Journal* does not include a section dealing with new climbs in the Cairngorms. This is because the two-volume S.M.C.

Climbers' Guide to the Cairngorms Area has been announced for publication in 1961, and should provide these in a more convenient form. Three other areas are covered by the new guides which we are glad to have the opportunity of reviewing below.

"Climbers' Guide to the Cuillin of Skye." Edited by W. M. Mackenzie. S.M.C. Guide, 1958, 9s. 6d.

The long-awaited pocket guide to the Skye Rock Climbs has now been published, bringing it into line with the guides covering Ben Nevis and Glencoe. It will fill a much-felt gap, particularly for the climber not already well acquainted with the Cuillin. The restriction of the Guide to the Cuillin Hills only has deprived it of much of the charm and interest of the larger and older Guide, which it does not entirely outdate or replace.

Many new climbs made in the post-war years have been included. The great majority, being in the Severe, Very Severe or Hard Severe class, will presumably be of greatest interest to the Tigers of to-day, and little seems to have been added to the existing routes for the more ordinary mortal.

The Editor has done a fine job in recording these new climbs. It is a pity he has tripped up over an old favourite like Kings Cave (page 43) which the reviewer has taken many parties through during the past twelve years. On the other hand, the wet day excursion from Sligachan (page 14) was outdated some years ago by the fall of a considerable mass of rock.

Several rather unimportant old routes have been reclassified, usually upwards, and to be consistent in grading "for nails unless otherwise stated" some of the more worn popular routes might also have been reclassified instead of being down-graded, as, for instance, Cioch Direct from S to MS.

Of the seventeen diagrams collected at the back of the book, ten appeared in the old guide. These seem to have suffered from redrawing and condensation to a smaller size, and fail to come up to the usual S.M.C. standard. The new method of marking routes has added nothing to clarity, and the reviewer would hate to find herself for the first time on Sron na Ciche West Buttress depending on Diagram No. 15 to signpost the correct routes. The additional diagrams depict the more inaccessible cliffs which have been opened up in recent years.

The Guide concludes with the customary but very useful graded lists of climbs, working along the main range from North to South, and, despite the minor criticisms, can be thoroughly recommended.

"Climber's Guide to Glencoe and Ardgour: Buachaille Etive Mor," Vol. 1, by L. S. Lovat. S.M.C. Guide, 1959, 7s. 6d.

Time marches on apace and successive generations of climbers have visited, climbed and explored intensively in the easily accessible Glencoe region. So much so that ten years after the publication of the first special Rock Climbing guide covering the whole area, Buachaille Etive Mor now needs a whole volume to itself.

The new guide closely follows its predecessor in lay-out, using many of the same diagrams, with the addition of new routes. A few new diagrams have however been added and several of these could with advantage be larger. One or two of the old routes have been down-graded because this guide assumes Vibrams to be the generally accepted footwear.

To the beginner or a less serious climber a first glance through the book may appear rather intimidating because of the high grading: no fewer than 41 Very Severe, 36 Severe, some employing artificial technique and pitons! Coming down the scale a little the less highly-striped Tigers will be relieved to find that there are 37 Very difficults, 9 Difficults and 13 Moderates. Those from south of the border, not accustomed to the length of many of the climbs, would do well to note this factor, especially during our short winter days.

"Rock Climbs in Arran," by J. M. Johnstone. S.M.C. Guide, 1958, 4s.

The Arran Guide, which differs from the others reviewed in having soft covers, satisfies a genuine need in the list of rock climbing guides. It may not be long before it, too, will need a revised edition, for it is set out clearly and concisely with excellent diagrams. It cannot but lure many experts to these charming pocket-edition mountains.

Again, grading is for Vibram soles. The reviewer especially likes the adoption of the continental system of numbering the routes in text and diagram, making it very easy to identify and follow a climb.

There are again hard climbs needing artificial support, but there is plenty for the average climber. The usual subtle distinctions are made between the more difficult climbs in that we have 6 Very Severe, 5 Hard Severe, 12 Severe and 2 Mild Severe. Some of these vary because of their length or lack of it, and consequent exposure. In the lower grades Very Difficult and Difficult include 48 routes, Moderate and Easy 19 routes.

Generally speaking, the routes are shorter than the average Scottish climbs, but the keen types can always make up for this by doing a succession of climbs. Perhaps nowhere else in Scotland are so many different routes on different peaks to be found for so little walking.

A. F. G. CORDNER

CLIMBING JOURNALS

- Alpine Journal*, Nos. 294-301.
Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal, Nos. 148-151.
Rucksack Club Journal, Nos. 50-53.
Fell and Rock Climbing Club Journal, Nos. 51-54.
Cambridge Mountaineering, 1957-60.
Oxford Mountaineering, 1957-58.
M.A.M. Journal, 1956-60.
Yorkshire Ramblers Club Journal, Nos. 27-30.
Pinnacle Club Journal, No. 8.
Ladies' Scottish Climbing Club Journal, No. 4.
Ladies' Alpine Club Year-book, 1958-60.
American Alpine Journal, 1957-60.
Appalachia, Vol. XXXI, No. 3 to Vol. XXXIII, No. 1.
New Zealand Alpine Journal, 1956-59.
Journal of the Mountain Club of South Africa, 1956-59.

The *Alpine Journal* centenary number (No. 295) and the following number recount the development of mountaineering during the lifetime of the Alpine Club, and describe the events celebrating its hundred years of service to climbing. The Cairngorm Club had the honour of being represented by its President, Mr A. Leslie Hay, at the Centenary Dinner in the Dorchester Hotel, a full account of which is given in No. 296. Other functions included a Centenary Meet and Alpine Dinner in Zermatt, an Exhibition of paintings, photographs and items of historic interest, and a Reception in the Hall of Lincoln's Inn which Her Majesty the Queen and H.R.H. Prince Philip graced by their presence. At all these functions, a number of our own members were fortunate enough to be present, either as A.C. members or as guests, and the *Alpine Journals* present a full record of these historic occasions. The centenary number is remarkable in being the only one of those reviewed which is devoted almost entirely to alpine subjects. The tendency in all the other numbers is for the principal articles to describe exploration among unmapped peaks in the Himalaya, Africa or the Andes, and to present large-scale maps of the areas prepared by the parties whose expeditions are described. Mention must therefore be made of Tom Patey's account of Post-War Winter Mountaineering in Scotland in No. 301. Despite the detailed study which most of the classical ascents have already received, information of historical importance still comes to hand. The publication of the account by "Young" Peter Tangwalder of the first ascent of the Matterhorn, discussed in No. 294, is an example of the excellent work of the *Alpine Journal* in this field.

There has been a major change in the *Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal*, as in 1959 Dr J. H. B. Bell retired after twenty-four years, and has been succeeded as editor by Dr G. J. Dutton who, in No. 151, has produced a journal which is the same as before, yet different. Dr Bell's last three numbers are well up to his usual high standard, and round off adequately a distinguished editorship. He has been supported by regular contributions from several capable writers, notably Tom Patey, who has been on Mustagh Tower, Rakaposhi and Zero Gully; Tom Weir, whose subjects include the High Atlas, Peaks and Passes in Kurdistan, and Dalness Chasm; and C. G. M. Slessor, who describes climbing in Greenland and in Coire Ardair and, jointly with I. G. Cumming, discusses the dynamics of rope work. Other articles of particular interest are by John Nimlin on Pitons, and Bill Brooker on the Black Spout Pinnacle in No. 149, and Bill Wallace's account of the Edinburgh Andean Expedition in No. 150. Dr Dutton has persuaded Tom Patey and Tom Weir to continue their contributions, and in No. 151 the latter writes on Lochnagar. In all numbers are extensive lists of new climbs, including many in the Cairngorm area.

Emphasis in the 1957 *Rucksack Club Journal* is definitely on the Aiguilles, with articles on the Requin and Diables, on Noire de Peuterey, and a third—Mixed Climbing on the Aiguilles—which roams from summit to summit in rather uncertain weather. The chief article in the 1958 number describes the Manchester Himalayan Expedition to Masherbrum in the Karakoram, an attempt which failed in bad conditions a few hundred feet from the 25,660 foot summit. Unfortunately, the deputy leader, R. O. Donnes, collapsed and died at Camp 6. The Pyrenees and Kilimanjaro are among the other subjects discussed, while in a reminiscent article David Thomas describes, among other things, his Clachaig

Gully exploits. In the 1959 number he gives an account of the Caucasus Expedition which he described to us at a recent Annual Dinner, while the 1960 number has an interesting article on post-war developments in British Alpine climbing. The *Rucksack Club Journal* is always worth reading, and we look forward to learning of the Club's progress under Frank Solari's presidency.

The Fell and Rock Climbing Club continues to issue well-produced journals with varied articles as well as adequate reports of club affairs. The first two numbers under review describe activities in the Antarctic, the Himalaya, and the Andes as well as many of the more remote parts of Europe. No. 51, with an account of the 1955 ascent of Kangchenjunga, reminiscences by Dorothy Pilley Richards and a poem by I. A. Richards, opens on a standard which few journals can hope to maintain; but No. 52, in taking us to Pumasillo and Antarctica and giving T. Howard Somerville the opportunity to reminisce, bids fair to compete. Both issues also contain a wide selection of British and alpine supporting articles, while No. 53 features Sir John Hunt's Caucasus Diary and two Scottish articles. In No. 54, there is another article by Dorothy Pilley Richards, an interesting description of some novel knots, and an account of some ascents on Nevis.

In addition to a number of articles of more local interest to members of the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club, the 1957 Journal has a short account of the hill birds of Britain, together with a description of Praraye in the Valpelline, a note on the Old Brenva Route and a description of an expedition to South Georgia. The 1958 number is devoted to accounts of the Club's ill-fated 1957 expedition to the Himalaya, in the course of which the leader, C. I. W. Fox, and two Sherpas were overwhelmed by an avalanche and buried in a crevasse. The 1960 Journal reminds us that much of the activity of the Club is directed to pot-holing and caving, but there are also interesting accounts of a traverse of Eiger and Mönch, and of a Pyrenean journey.

The 1959 number of the *M.A.M. Journal* opens with another account of the Lahul Expedition described elsewhere in this number but written by another of our members, Frank Solari. The widespread range of his connections is illustrated by the fact that he is President of the Rucksack Club, has a note in the latest issue of *Appalachia* and often finds himself in the Alps with the Editor, who appreciates the courtesy of the *M.A.M.* in making available the block on page 167. The 1956 number includes an account of the Rough Bounds and their inaccessible Ladhar Bheinn as well as a description of the climbing possibilities of Corsica. The 1960 Journal finds the Club traversing Gulvain in the course of an Easter Meet at Fort William.

The most important contribution to the 1958 issue of *Cambridge Mountaineering* is the interim guide to the Carnmore area, north-east of Loch Maree. Is it too late even now to hope that a more specific name be given to this district where numerous good climbs are being explored? The present description covers thirty-six pages of closely printed material and will prove valuable to all going to the area. An impression of the type of rock gymnastics now popular on the Carnmor (as they prefer to term it) crags is found in an article entitled *Temerity in Oxford Mountaineering* for 1958. It is sad to learn that five members of the O.U.M.C. died during

the twelve months covered by the Journal. *Cambridge Mountaineering* for 1959 has articles on various Scottish climbs as well as the usual alpine notes, as has the following number, but here again, we read of the grievous loss of five members of another University Club in one year.

It is good to be able to record another issue of the *Pinnacle Club Journal*, covering the period from 1951 to 1958. It contains a number of well written articles, generally quite short but describing ascents of full Pinnacle Club standard including the Younggrat, Les Dames Anglaises, and expeditions to the Pyrenees, Scandinavia and Himalaya. The Journal of the Ladies' Scottish Climbing Club also appears irregularly—as indeed does the *C.C.J.* these days—but the 1959 issue is notable as it marks the celebration of the Club's Fiftieth Anniversary in 1958. It includes many short but excellent accounts of the exploits of members during the past six years, including a number of first ascents in the Alps and Himalaya. We extend our belated congratulations and best wishes to the L.S.C.C.

The annual publication of the Ladies' Alpine Club describes the widespread activities of the members, who nowadays range from the East Indies to the Rockies, as well as gathering for an alpine meet each summer. This, perhaps more than any of the other subjects of review, is truly a club journal, but at the same time it contains many items of practical interest to the alpine visitor which are lacking elsewhere.

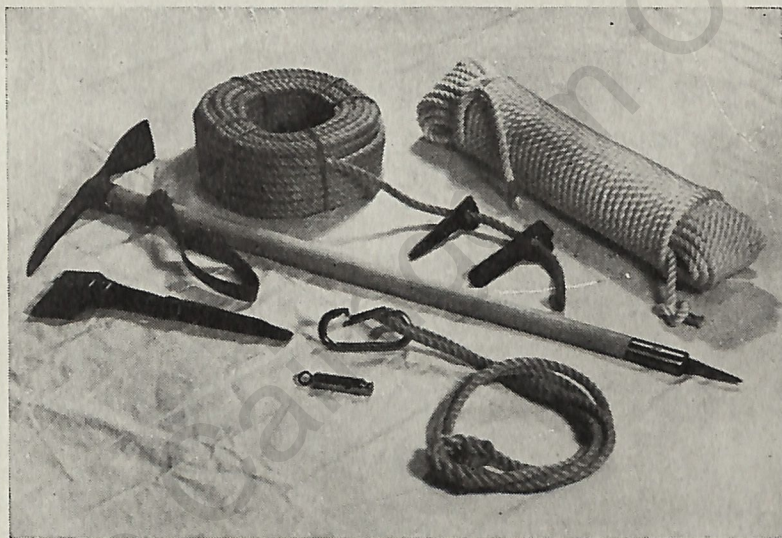
The *American Alpine Journal* continues to provide a very readable account of mountaineering expeditions throughout the world, as well as informative articles on specialised topics and guide book articles and historical reviews dealing with American mountaineering. But we feel a little aggrieved when the Cairngorms are described as a peak—under 4,000 feet! We have recently been fortunate enough to complete our set of this Journal, which is not read by our members as widely as it should be. In the 1957 number there are accounts of Tilman's traverse of the Patagonian ice cap, the Swiss Everest-Lhotse Expedition, and some New Zealand and Icelandic ascents, as well as articles on Rakaposhi, Pumasillo and the Ojos del Salado. The more general articles include a well documented climbing history of Mount Rainier, I.G.Y. glacier studies and an interesting report on Medicine on the Mountain. The 1958 Journal includes articles on snow blindness and crevasse patterns in glaciers, as well as a long report on Dr Cook's claim to have ascended Mount McKinley in 1906. The evidence still suggests that the claim was false, but was it necessary to include the obviously posed, and therefore incorrectly captioned Plate 163? In this number the remaining articles deal with various other American mountains. The Americans got their eight-thousander in 1958, the ascent of Hidden Peak in the Karakoram being described in the 1959 Journal. At the same time there was a very successful North American Expedition in the Andes of Peru which climbed several 20,000 feet summits and made two first ascents. This number also includes an interesting account of the mountains of Alaska. The articles on mountain exploration in the *A.A.J.* are invariably well illustrated, notably so those in the 1960 issue describing first ascent of the Western Rib of the South Face of Mount McKinley, the North American Andean Expedition, 1959, and some ascents in the Bugaboo Group in British Columbia.

Appalachia is of much more local interest, dealing in the main with the mountains of Eastern U.S.A. and with the expeditions of its members elsewhere. The activities of the Appalachian Mountain Club include all aspects of mountaineering from simple hill or trail walking to rock and ice climbing, and there is always much of interest in the Journals. In particular, general articles on such topics as Mountain Leadership, Winter Climbing and Camping, and Trail Times discuss subjects of wide interest. There is always a full discussion of any mountain accidents in the Eastern United States, and often of others elsewhere.

Among the many articles in the thick *New Zealand Alpine Journals*, mainly dealing with the Southern Hemisphere, may be mentioned one on the Transantarctic Expedition in the 1958 issue. The Journals of the Mountain Club of South Africa also concentrate mainly on their own peaks, but are none the worse for that, and our members are fortunate in having available long runs of these overseas Journals should their travels take them to the areas concerned. The 1958 number incidentally tells its members of the English Krantzes which somehow include North Wales and Scotland, placing our own mountains in the far north-west!

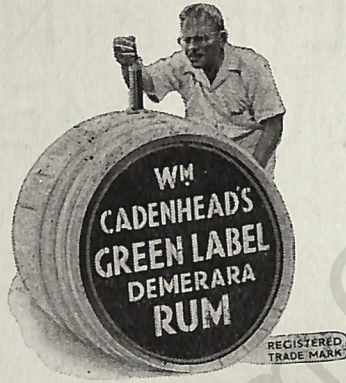
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