

The Cairngorm Club Journal



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The Cairngorm Club Journal

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Plan of hut by Jock Lamb.

Drawings by James Will

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Muir of Inverey

P. F. HOWGATE

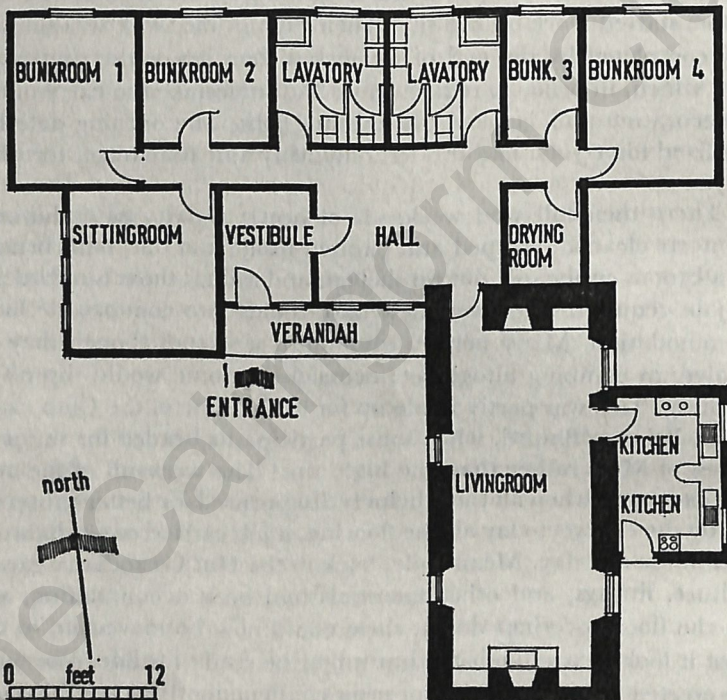
The notes in the last issue of the *Journal* reported on the agreement to purchase Muir, and gave a preliminary account of the alterations which would be made to increase its accommodation. Much of 1971 was taken up in preparing plans, and in obtaining official approvals and tenders. It was not until the beginning of November that contractors started work on the site. Their part of the work was substantially completed by the end of April, but then it was the turn of the Club, which, in order to reduce costs, had undertaken to carry out all the decorating and some of the finishing jobs. The opening date had been fixed for 1 July, and this left only May and June to get the place ready.

There then followed weekends of hectic activity as enthusiastic volunteers cleaned, scraped and painted inside and out, built benches and a broom cupboard, put up shelves, and did all those hundred and one jobs required to convert new bare rooms into comfortable living accommodation. Many helpers came each weekend, though they did not give up climbing altogether; occasionally some would slip off for an outing. This was partly made up for at the time of the Club excursion to Beinn a'Bhuird, when some participants headed for the paint brushes of Muir rather than the high tops! The weekend of the overnight excursion when all these helpers disappeared for better things was used by the experts to lay all the flooring, a job carried out at lightning speed inside one day. Meanwhile, back in the Hut Custodian's garage, furniture, fittings, and other materials had been accumulating, and, with the floor coverings down, these could now be moved in, so that at last it looked as though the hut might be ready in time. The bunks were erected—more of an engineering construction than anything else, curtains made and hung, and two stalwart members built the stone-flagged path to the front door, in spite of the rain. Even on the morning of the opening, there were last-minute jobs to be completed before the workers could lay down their tools, clean up, and present themselves, neat and tidy, for the Grand Opening Ceremony.

The alterations have been designed to provide simple but comfortable accommodation for 18 persons in a building which would be easy to maintain and convenient to use.

The wooden annexe which housed a dormitory has been demolished, and the partition in the main building which separated off

another bedroom has been taken down. All the bedrooms are now in the new extension, along with the washrooms, a drying room, and a small common room. To provide sufficient living area for the increased numbers, the whole of the main building is devoted to a dining/common room, and the fireplace there moved to the opposite end of the room. The whole of what was the scullery and bathroom has been gutted and made into a kitchen. The main entrance is now in the new extension, and leads into a vestibule, and then into a large hall.



Plan of Hut

The new building is a timber construction formed of logs, pressure treated with preservatives to resist attack by fungus and insects, and shaped so they interlock to give a weathertight seal. The material is cut to size according to the architects' plans at the contractors' works in Innerleithen, and assembled at the site on a prepared platform. Compared with traditional methods of construction, this prefabrication technique simplified some of the problems of building at a somewhat remote place like Inverey, and shortened the length of time the

hut was out of action. Inside surfaces have been left in a natural state, but the exterior has been stained dark brown to blend with the surrounding trees. The original stone building has been finished outside with white stone paint, with the result that the complete structure has a very pleasing appearance, and is entirely in character with both its surroundings and its function.

The four bedrooms will hold 6, 6, 4 and 2 persons, an arrangement which permits a great deal of flexibility in allocating rooms to different parties. The rooms have double-tiered bunks, constructed of canvas slung between galvanised steel tubing fixed to the walls. The washrooms have shower cubicles and electric shaving points, and, though this latter facility may seem odd in the one labelled 'women', the rooms were made identical so that large parties of one sex could use them both. Furniture has been bought, or, in the case of the dining tables, made, in natural wood styles to suit the building. The floors in the vestibule, hall, and corridors are concrete slabs, but in all other rooms are covered in vinyl tiles or sheeting, a surface that is hard wearing and needs little upkeep. There are electric heaters in the bedrooms and the small common room. Cooking, water heating, clothes drying, and frost protection of the plumbing system are also serviced by mains electricity, the supply having been augmented to cope with the increased load.

At the time of writing, the 'new' Muir has been in use for six months, and all visitors have praised the building and its facilities. The Club now has a fine hut ideally suited to the needs of climbers, and the credit for this must go to a succession of Hut sub-committees who carefully considered the sort of accommodation required by the Club, and to the architects, George Bennett, Mitchell & Son, who planned and supervised the alterations. The Club is fortunate in that one of the senior partners in that firm, Jock Lamb, is a member, and took a personal interest in the project. Though there was financial assistance from public bodies, the purchase and improvement of Muir would not have been possible without the Taylor bequest, and a plaque in the main living room acknowledges his generosity.



Muir of Inverey, Official Opening

2/ The reconstructed Club hut was officially opened on Saturday, 1 July 1973 by the Hon. President, Col. E. Birnie Reid, in the presence of over 100 members and guests, including Captain Alexander Ramsay of Mar, Councillor George Collie representing Aberdeen Town Council, Mr John L. Russell representing Aberdeen County Council, and a cousin of the late Dr George Taylor, Mrs M. McKenzie of Nethybridge accompanied by her husband.





Left to Right - R. Scott; Mrs J. L. Russell; J. L. Russell (Representing Aberdeen County Council); Councillor G. Collie (Representing Aberdeen Town Council); Col. E. Birnie Reid, Hon. President; Miss Sheila Murray, President; Capt. Alexander Ramsay of Mar, Mr and Mrs MacKenzie, E. F. Johnston, Secretary; Major Cheyne, Factor, Mar Estates.

[photo by Joan Johnston]



[photo by P. F. Howgate]

Ecologists at work in the Cairngorms

C. H. GIMINGHAM

Mountain plant ecology is a subject which cannot escape the attention of members of the Cairngorm Club. After all, they walk on plants, sit on them at lunch time, look them in the eye when ascending the steeper slopes, even – perhaps – grab them in emergencies. That mountain plants are different from those of the lowland is an elementary fact to most members, who are – or ought to be – better acquainted than the average man with the environment in which these plants have to live. Indeed, walkers and climbers in the hills have all shared with the arctic-alpine flora the conditions of low temperature, rain, mist, ice and snow, which characterise the habitat. They have rejoiced in the sun and warmth of the growing season but have had occasion to be painfully aware of its shortness. Only when it comes to the many days of hibernation under a protective blanket of snow, do we encounter an aspect of the environment of which – it is hoped – Club members have little personal experience.

To suggest, then, that not enough is known about the plant ecology of our mountains could almost be taken as an insult, and if it seems insulting to the mountaineer, how much more so to the amateur or professional botanist! For years, mountain plants seem to have had a place of honour amongst botanists – so much so that the unfortunate flowers have sometimes been hard put to it to survive their attentions. Their very rarity placed a kind of scarcity value upon them, so that devotees expended vast energy in efforts to locate them. Fortunately for their continued existence, however, records and photographs are nowadays regarded as sufficient reward, and the collector's specimens of rare plants are happily largely a thing of the past.

None the less, a valuable outcome of all this activity over the years is that the distribution of some of these plants has become so well known that every locality in which they occur can be charted with accuracy and confidence. Indeed, the painstaking searches of generations of naturalists have provided the foundation of facts upon which is based part of the case for establishing the largest of Britain's National Nature Reserves in the Cairngorms. There is ample evidence that the area contains a remarkable variety of those plants, birds and other animals which are most characteristic of British uplands, and which – because of their specialised requirements – occur often in small numbers and few localities. Who can doubt that one of the functions of a

Nature Reserve is to recognise a situation of this kind and to provide for the protection and preservation of this special flora and fauna?

All this is as it should be, and yet at the same time it is by no means the whole story. In addition to harbouring a number of rather unusual plants and animals, the Cairngorms as a whole constitutes an area of the highest scientific importance; and this provides another and equally important justification for retaining as much as possible as a Nature Reserve. Admittedly, as propaganda on behalf of conservation this may seem less promising, to many people, than the simpler idea of a wild-life sanctuary. So it is perhaps relevant to make an attempt to dispel the notion that the scientific interest of an area like the Cairngorms concerns only a minority of specialists.

Walking over the high plateaux, it may not be too easy to see at a glance why scientists should be moved to expend the considerable effort necessary to undertake research at these altitudes. Inspiration derived from the grandeur of the scenery is hardly a sufficient motive. Nor is there a great deal of easily visible evidence of research programmes in progress: the mountains could scarcely be described as cluttered with busy scientists, or even with marker posts or little enclosures labelled 'keep out'. None the less, these things can be seen if one knows where to look, though they are not the only manifestations of active research. Investigations are indeed in progress in the Cairngorms, although there is still much to be done.

The point is that while the distribution of mountain plants has received much attention, there is all too little understanding of the reasons why they occupy these inhospitable environments. Most of what we know about the processes of plant growth has been discovered from studies in temperate or tropical conditions. Adaptations which enable plants to survive in mountain or polar environments are virtually unexplored. Apart from filling gaps in our understanding of the natural world, the solution of this kind of problem may have far-reaching implications in terms of extending the range of crop plants in severe climates, increasing frost-resistance, and other useful developments.

Some examples of ecological research programmes, either recently or currently in progress in the Cairngorms, may serve to illustrate a few of the wide range of problems available for investigation. In one recent project the aim has been to measure the amount of plant material produced each year by the natural vegetation at high altitudes, in a selected study area on Beinn a'Bhuird. This has contributed a link in a grand chain of similar measurements being made on all kinds of

vegetation in localities ranging from the equator to sub-polar regions and from sea-level to high altitudes, under the auspices of the International Biological Programme. It was of course, no surprise to find that, because of low temperatures, a short growing season, and other unfavourable factors, the rate of production by vegetation growing at 3,000 feet in the Cairngorms is not as great as in nearby lowlands. The surprise was that the difference proved to be very much less than expected. This was particularly evident when the performance of one species in particular – heather – was compared at low and high altitudes, showing that this plant does quite remarkably well when growing close to the upper limits of its range. It is evident that, under natural selection, certain compensatory mechanisms have come into play both in the form and physiology of the plants of high altitudes, and here is a wide field for future research.

To take another topic, work has just been started on the stabilising effects of mountain vegetation. In the past, the large-scale geomorphology of the Cairngorms has been described and interpreted in relation to processes of glaciation. Also the main types of plant community have been classified. The geographer's interests are now turning to the smaller-scale processes which are continually at work at high altitudes: rock weathering, movement of gravel and sand by wind and water, scree and terrace formation, and the development of small scale stripes and patterns by cycles of freezing and thawing. At the same time there is increasing realisation of the role of vegetation in landscape-development, and of its effects on the small scale geographical processes. So another line of research is concerned with correlating plant community-type with terrain, and measuring surface movement in sites occupied by different kinds of vegetation cover as well as those where cover is incomplete or lacking. This is one of the studies involving small forests of markers, apparatus to trap moving gravel and sand, and other equipment: but most hill walkers are unlikely to encounter them for they are deliberately inconspicuous! Among the objectives here is to assess the firmness of anchorage of the vegetation and the coherence of its cover, and to relate these to its surface-stabilising properties.

This type of study leads naturally to the investigation of erosion. Erosion is a natural process occurring all the time at high altitudes, but it is greatly intensified by the passage of many feet. Hence it has become a serious problem in the neighbourhood of the Coire Cas chair-lift, where the use of heavy machinery and building operations have added to the difficulties. Perhaps the more alarmist prophecies

are exaggerations, but the fact remains that there are ugly scars on the slopes, while the deterioration of vegetation in the more frequented areas up to and beyond the summit of Cairn Gorm is all too obvious. This has been the subject of research by members of the Nature Conservancy staff, who have also been called on for advice in connection with experiments on reseeding denuded slopes. These have met with considerable success.

Another extensive field of research concerns the major type of land use in the Cairngorm area – deer management. The sport of deer stalking provides an important source of revenue on the large estates, but until recently little has been known of the relationships between the deer population and their food resource – the vegetation. This subject – for which the American title ‘range ecology’ has been borrowed – is now a major concern of the Nature Conservancy’s research staff. On a selected estate, the size of the deer population is being measured and levels of control suggested, while at the same time detailed analysis of changes in the vegetation is being carried out.

This study offers an opportunity for ecologists to assess the impact of a system of land use which operates over much of the Western Highlands of Scotland. The signs are that certain aspects of management have in the course of many years contributed to deterioration of the habitat. Experiments have been designed to investigate means of upgrading the quality of the grazings, and of approaching a balance between the numbers of deer and the carrying capacity of the ground. The objective is a sustained improvement in the standard of animals in the herd, combined with conservation of the environmental resources.

Another aspect of this problem is that it has become increasingly evident that deer are in many instances responsible for the failure of regeneration in the surviving fragments of native pine forest, and even for progressive reduction in the amount of juniper scrub. These types of vegetation, formerly widespread in the Cairngorm area, contribute greatly to the scenic and wild-life interest of the region. Furthermore, it may be held that among the functions of a Nature Reserve is the maintenance – or even re-establishment – of examples of native vegetation types. Hence, research on the means of achieving a degree of expansion of natural pine and juniper woodland, in some sort of balance with a controlled deer population, is clearly important.

All these, and more, are topics in which there is opportunity for research in the Cairngorms. Research carried out mainly in other upland areas is also relevant to problems of land management in the

Cairngorms. For example, the management of upland grazings for hill sheep has been intensively studied in other parts of Scotland by the Hill Farming Research Organisation, and in Wales; while there has been a long series of investigations on the ecological implications of heather burning on grouse moors. There is scope for new work on the role of hill cattle in the mountain ecosystem, and their balance with the vegetation. The effects of commercial afforestation also require more detailed study.

These studies will find their applications not only in Scotland, but very generally in the upland districts. Management policy in the upland areas of Britain is bound to undergo change in the coming years, and it is of the utmost importance that new developments should rest on sound ecological principles.

Ecological research requires not only study areas for intensive research where the scientist is in full control of management, but also larger territories where, in co-operation with owner or manager, the long-term changes can be followed. This is one facet of the importance of the Cairngorm National Nature Reserve which can accommodate the interests of mountaineers, walkers, and skiers, as well as scientists. A Nature Reserve does not, except in rare cases and small areas, demand the exclusion of the public. What it does demand is the sympathy of the public, and this is perhaps best achieved by showing that a Reserve offers scope for scientific studies which can be of interest and significance, not only to a minority of specialists, but to everyone.



'Mu chraobhan agus ghoibhrean' **(of trees and goats)**

P. W. SCOTT

Trees

'Tuitidh a'chraobh a bhithear a'sior shnaidheadh'
The tree that is constantly hewed will fall.

Gaelic Proverb

Absence of trees is a feature of most of our Highland hills. A stranger to our mountains must be surprised to find that our 'forests' are usually tree-less, heather-covered, boggy moorlands. Similarly the use of the Gaelic 'coille', a wood, and 'doire', a grove, are not usually indicative of the presence of trees.

But once the Highlands were covered by great forests of pine, oak, birch, rowan, hazel, juniper and alder. They provided habitat for many species of animal which have since become extinct – the lynx, lemming, brown bear, wild boar and wolf – to mention but a few.

What then became of the great Caledonian Forest? Many factors have combined to cause its disappearance during the last twelve centuries. Vikings burnt it during raids and to clear land for settlement; later the Highlanders burnt it to produce more arable land and to help in bringing about the extermination of the wolf; Government troops burnt it to oust brigands and 'rebels' from their lairs; land-owners burnt it to improve pasturage for sheep. Little wonder the Highlanders have the proverb

'Is fhurasda tein' fhadadh 'an cois craoibhe' – It's easy to light a fire at the foot of a tree!

The greatest contributory factor, however, in bringing about the destruction of the forest, was the felling of thousands of acres of timber for its commercial value. In particular, iron smelting was extremely avaricious in its consumption of timber. Moreover, the natural regeneration of woodlands was (and still is) prevented by overgrazing; deer and sheep soon destroy scrub hazel, birch, willow and gorse.

However the memory of our great forests is kept alive in many place-names. Lochs, mountains, islands and rivers frequently recall to mind the trees and woods of yester-year. Let us now examine some of these names with particular reference to our mountains.

On several occasions when climbing in Ross-shire, I have stayed at Altguish. Now 'giubhas' is Gaelic for 'pine', so 'Altguish' means 'burn of the pine'. But do not expect to find many pines (or trees of any sort) within twenty miles of Altguish! Similarly Meall a'Ghiubhais (2,882 feet near Kinlochewe) is 'the rounded hill of the pine' and Sròn nan Giubhas' (Top no. 339)* is the 'ridge of the pines'.

The Scots' Pine was the predominant tree of the Central Highlands. Vestigial parts of the great pine forest remain at Rothiemurchus, Rannoch and elsewhere. A most attractive feature of the Scots' Pine is the shape of the mature tree which is more akin to that of the deciduous trees than to the typically conical conifer.

A deciduous tree often found in association with the Scots' Pine is the graceful birch. Natural birchwoods have sprung up in many places where land has been cleared and has not become subject to overgrazing. Indeed the birch regenerates more readily than any other tree. Next time you motor from Aberdeen to Ballater take note of the many natural birchwoods which you pass en route. Natural birchwoods of great antiquity are preserved by the Nature Conservancy Board at Inverpolly. The Gaelic for 'birch' is 'beith'. So we have Stob Coire Nam Beith (Top no. 80), the 'top of the corrie of the birches', and Sgùrr a' Choire Bheithe, the 'rocky peak of the birch corrie'.

Last May I climbed Beinn Avon with Donald Hawksworth, Malcolm Johnston and Peter Kelly. Walking along Gleann an t-Slugain towards Slugain Lodge, I noticed the vestiges of an ancient birchwood - hoary, rotten trees, festooned with mosses. Only once did I notice regeneration and that was high up the glen where a few saplings had taken root amongst loose rocks where grazing would be difficult. We returned from Beinn Avon by way of the path which skirts Creag a'Chait (Crag of the Cat). Here are some magnificent pines. The evening sun was high-lighting the russet colouring of the upper boughs and the rich green of the new needles. But alas, not a sapling, not even a 'middle-aged' specimen could I find.

A few weeks later I was walking through the Nevis Gorge, having just climbed Aonach Mòr and Aonach Beag. The woods here were in marked contrast to those we had seen during our Beinn Avon walk. Where the glen is narrowest and its sides steepest, regeneration is much in evidence. Young birches, rowans and hazels abound. Here is a living forest not a dying one.

With its bunches of brilliantly red berries the Rowan or Mountain Ash is a well known tree of good omen. The Gaelic for this tree is

* References to "Tops" and "Separate Mountains" are to Munro's tables.

Caorunn and it is incorporated into the names of many of our highest mountains. So we have Beinn a' Chaoruinn (Sep. Mt. no. 50 and Sep. Mt. no. 79), the mountain of the rowan, Creag a' Chaoruinn (Tops no. 136, 261 and 317), 'the crag of the rowan', Meall a' Chaoruinn (Top no. 538), 'the rounded top of the rowan' and Sail Chaoruinn (Top no. 506). Sail Chaoruinn probably means 'The heel of rowans' where 'heel' is used to describe the shape of the mountain. [Compare this with the use of 'druim' (the back of a man or animal) and 'sròn' (a nose) to describe a mountain ridge.]

Although the woods have by and large disappeared, the walker will frequently see these splendid trees growing in deep gorges or from the ledges of inaccessible crags.

'Fearn' is Gaelic for 'alder'. I have on several occasions stayed at Letterfearn, 'the alder slope' when climbing in the Kintail district. A beautiful walk from Letterfearn takes one to the broch just beyond Totaig. On the way, one passes through fine groves of alder interspersed with birch, hazel and juniper. Taking its name from the alder is Meall Na Farna (2,500 feet, near Ben Vorlich), 'the rounded hill of the alder'. The Highlanders have a peculiar saying concerning the alder:

'Gach fiodh as a bhàrr, ach am feàrn as a bhun' - All wood from the top but the alder from the root.

Next time you are splitting wood, bear this in mind!

The Gaelic for juniper is Iubhar-Beinne (mountain yew) but usually in mountainous areas Iubhar alone is used without the qualifying 'beinne'. Thus we have Sgòr an Iubhair (Top no. 224), 'the rocky peak of the juniper', and Mullach Coire an Iubhair (Sep. Mt. 76), 'the summit of the corrie of the juniper'.

Great forests which were predominantly of oak were once found in the Western Highlands stretching from the Gairloch district southward to Kintyre. Clas Dhearg (red furrow or hollow) in Lorne, is one of the finest remaining natural oak-woods. Another fine remnant oak-wood, well worth a visit, is the Ariundle Oakwood Reserve, north of Strontian. Part of this wood has been enclosed by a fence to prevent deer and sheep from grazing and in this area is a lush undergrowth of hazel and rowan. There is also a wealth of bird life including tree-pipits, red-starts, siskins, whinchats, wood-peckers, long-tailed tits and lesser red-polls.

None of our higher mountains takes its name from the oak tree since it is a tree of the lower slopes and glens. Nevertheless, many less prominent hills and other natural features incorporate the Gaelic Darach in their names. Craigendarroch (the crag of the oak) near

Ballater and Clashindarroch (the hollow of the oak) near Rhynie, spring to mind.

On two occasions I have visited Barrisdale Bay in Knoydart. The descent from the rugged, rock-strewn heights of Màm Barrisdale to this bay on Loch Hourn, takes you through natural woodlands where the oak is still common. Unfortunately the large herds of deer and sheep in this area are now making regeneration the exception rather than the rule.

Apart then from the echoes from numerous placenames, little remains of Scotland's natural forests. Let us hope that the Forestry Commission and enlightened landowners will preserve and extend natural woodlands which not only beautify but provide habitat for our indigenous flower, insect and animal life.

Goats

The goat was once a domestic animal wide-spread throughout the Highlands; it provided the Highlander with milk, cheese and meat whilst its fleece and pelt could be put to a variety of uses.

Highland folklore provides us with much information about the goat. We are informed that they hate dogs; they make good parents; they have a penchant for ivy; they are very sharp sighted and at harvest time are reputed to go deaf. No doubt the last statement would ring true to the poor Highlander trying in vain to separate a contented munching billy-goat from a field of ripe hay!

The following proverb sums up the goats' importance to the Highlander.

'Bainne nan gobhar fo chobhar's e blath, 'se chuir a' spionnadh's na daoine a bha.' Goat milk, foaming and warm, that gave strength to our fathers.

The wild goats of Scotland are the descendants of these domestic animals which went feral many centuries ago. These sturdy, sure-footed animals are at home amongst even the most inhospitable crags. Young are born in mid-winter when the severest weather can prevail. For the young goat it is indeed the case of the survival of the fittest.

Herds which tend to be small are widespread throughout the Highlands and Islands. They thrive in the hills of Rum, Jura, Harris and Arran while on the mainland herds are found as far north as Ross-shire and as far south as Dunbartonshire.

The goats of Beinn Lomond are famous and were known to King Robert the Bruce who took a great interest in them. No doubt Bruce

also knew about the goats of Glen Trool for it was here that he defeated an English punitive force in the year 1307. The Nature Conservancy Board have recently established a Wild Goat Park in Glen Trool. The non-mountaineering naturalist will thus find it easier to see these magnificent animals for himself.

It is not surprising that the Gaelic word for goat 'gabhar' or 'gobhar' has been incorporated into the names of many of our mountains.

The following are found in Munro's Tables.

SECTION IV

Stob Ghabhar (Sep. Mt. no. 54), - Peak of goats.

SECTION V

Stob Coire Gaibhre (Top. no. 351) - Top of Goat-Corrie.

Sgòr Gaibhre (Sep. Mt. no. 148) - Rocky peak of a Goat.

SECTION IX

Càrn Nan Gobhar* (Sep. Mt. no. 148 and Sep. Mt. no. 150) - Cairn of the Goats.

SECTION XIV

Mullach Lochan Nan Gabhar (Top no. 58) - Summit (above) the Lochan of the Goats.

SECTION XV

Càrn Nan Gabhar (Sep. Mt. no. 32) - Cairn of the Goats.

SECTION XVI

Lochnagar (Loch na Gabhair) [Sep. Mt. no. 20] - Loch of the Goat.

Next time you climb any of these mountains keep a sharp look out for a shaggy bearded apparition on the sky-line. It *could* be a member of the Lairig Club but it will more likely be a billy-goat keeping a wary eye on you!

* Gobhar is pronounced gó'-ur and is declined

	<i>singular</i>	<i>plural</i>
Nom. } Accus. }	Gobhar	{Gobhair {Goibhrean
Voc.	A Ghobhar	A Goibhrean
Gen.	{Goibhre {Gobhair	Ghobhar
Dat.	Gobhar	{Goibhrean {Gobhair

'Gabhar' is an alternative form of 'Gobhar'.

The quest for Shangri-la

A. LESLIE HAY

The following article was prompted by a recent trip to Nepal and a request from the Editor to write something for the *Journal*. As the last issue of the *Journal* (no. 94) contained an article 'March into Everest' by Myles Morrison dealing with a similar trip, I decided to write something entirely different.

James Hilton, in his novel *Lost Horizon* located his Shangri-La in the Himalayas, for centuries the abode of Gods and Demons. These mountains are a meeting point of stupendous forces – geological, meteorological, but, above all, human – different religions, political ideas, racial characteristics. A pilgrimage to the Himalayas has almost invariably made a lasting impression on the mind of the traveller.

To me Shangri-La is to be identified neither with the Nirvana of the Buddhist religion nor with the perpetual drowsy afternoon of Tennyson's Lotus Eaters. No – it is a goal to be sought after actively. It must be worth seeking and not easy of attainment. An ambition achieved is apt to leave a vacuum. R. L. Stevenson knew this when he wrote 'To travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive'. The search for Shangri-La should be pursued actively and hopefully, and in the company of one's fellows.

In the make up of man there are three constituents – the physical, the rational or intellectual, and the emotional or moral. All three interact. On the physical side, mere strength is not to be sought, nor mere absence of disability or pain. Physical fitness on the contrary should be a positive state of well-being – a *joie-de-vivre* which makes all other activities more efficient and more enjoyable.

To members of the Cairngorm Club, physical fitness should require no justification. However, the following observations may encourage some to adopt a natural method of increasing and prolonging physical fitness.

The human body is in a perpetual state of change. Activity is a form of combustion like the fire in the grate, and it creates waste products. Not only must the body be constantly replenished by fresh fuel, but, equally important, the waste products must be removed like the ashes from the fire if the fire is to continue to burn brightly. Both functions, replenishment and removal of waste products, are performed by the circulation of the blood. The arterial blood replenishes the fires, the venous blood removes the ashes. To understand the circulation it

is necessary to appreciate that the action of the heart is only a part, although a vital part, of the process. An equally important part is the action of countless muscles in the arteries and capillaries which by their rhythmic contraction propel the blood along. These muscles, like all muscles, need regular and prolonged exercise to maintain their tone. It is not sufficient to indulge in violent exercise at the week-end and neglect the muscles for the rest of the week. What is required is regular and sustained exercise.

Most of us have read of communities where a surprisingly large proportion of the population remain vigorous to extreme old age – claims of 150 years have been made. The National Geographic Society commissioned a report on these communities which appeared in the January 1973 issue of their Magazine. The investigation covered communities in the Himalayas, the Andes, and the Caucasus. In all cases, the centenarians had three things in common: (a) they were mountain people; (b) they continued to lead physically active lives; and (c) they maintained their interest in the world around them.

You may ask what all this has to do with Shangri-La. Just as much of religious thought has abolished the idea of a geographical location of Heaven and Hell and holds that they exist in the mind of man, so I believe that Shangri-La will never be found on any map but that it is an activity of the human mind. The qualifications for the quest are perhaps a combination of Eastern Religion and Western Thought – *Mens sana in corpore sano* – coupled with a philosophy that has come to terms with the Universe. The possession of these qualifications would not necessarily lead one to Shangri-La. I doubt whether a Shangri-La which is attainable is worth striving for. Much better to set one's sights higher, and, like Stevenson, to travel hopefully. But the stimulus of a visit to the Himalayas, the land of Gods and Demons, the meeting point of immense forces, physical and spiritual, can give one a glimpse of the way ahead.

I have seen Everest towering above all other mountains, and the knowledge that I shall never climb it does not detract from the experience. Similarly the belief that I shall never reach my own Shangri-La does not prevent me from travelling hopefully towards it. I would like to encourage others to maintain their physical activities to assist them in their quest for their own individual Shangri-La.



A naturalist in the Rockies

ALEX TEWNION

Our introduction to Rocky Mountain wildlife came unexpectedly quickly. Twenty-four hours after landing in Canada, and approaching Jasper National Park on Highway 16 in my brother John's car, we slowed at sight of what appeared to be a traffic jam just outside the park gate. No jam; an accident maybe, for now we saw people jumping out of cars and running excitedly to one side of the road. I was still peering for the crashed car when John, accustomed to such scenes, remarked 'Rocky Mountain sheep. Will I stop?' 'Yes. Quick!' And hurriedly gathering my cameras I joined the roadside throng.

A small flock of ewes with a few lambs, the sheep (also known as bighorn sheep) were not particularly photogenic specimens. Tufts of pale brown hair remaining from the spring coat gave the rich brown autumn pelage a patchy look. What was interesting was that the sheep were below 4,000 feet at this date (30 July) when normally they summer in subalpine and alpine regions at 6,000 feet or higher, though I learned later that both the mountain sheep and mountain goats often come well below timberline in summer to visit their ancient saltlicks. Another point was that the sheep paid little attention to the happy camera-clickers all around. They showed no fear, but when pressed too closely by some over-eager youngsters slowly crossed the road in single file, causing a real traffic jam this time, and then fell to grazing the lush vegetation on the far side.

I took a few photographs in case no later chance came along – the photographer/naturalist has to be an opportunist and I long ago overcame inhibitions about joining the tourist throng if opportunity knocks. However, two weeks later when we passed this way again, en route for Banff and Yoho National Parks farther south, even John did not disdain stopping and getting out his camera when I spotted a couple of bighorn rams having a friendly spar on a roadside crag, at well over 6,000 feet up the Sunwapta Valley on Highway 93.

Readers will know that the Rocky Mountain National Parks are famous for all kinds of mountain sports, but I think I should mention that they are also very strictly maintained as wildlife sanctuaries. The only shooting permitted is done by the park rangers and the only animals shot apart from very sick or injured ones are those individuals that make a nuisance of themselves to the extent of being dangerous. The chief offender is the black bear. It has a habit of frequenting picnic

spots and campsites and rummaging in the garbage bins for scraps, and on occasion may damage or destroy tents to get at food. When this happens the culprit is trapped, marked, and transported 40 or 50 miles to the far side of the mountains before release. If it returns to its old haunts and commits a similar crime, a marked animal is shot. This is the only way to prevent serious accidents, yet people are occasionally badly injured in nasty incidents. For their own safety, therefore, park visitors are advised not to feed, touch, or molest wild animals in any way. Many visitors do in fact feed some of the smaller mammals and birds, especially ground and tree squirrels and Clarke's nutcracker and magpies, but these activities give visitors pleasure, do not harm the animals, and are accepted by the park authorities.

Visitors are chary of feeding or stroking bighorn sheep, though; the animals are parasitised by ticks which can all too easily transmit virus diseases from sheep to man. Enjoying complete protection, however, the sheep have acquired a measure of tameness in place of their proverbial caution. Perhaps no bad thing; sight of a small group by the roadside makes the day for many a park visitor.

After the sheep overture, we cruised on into the township of Jasper, an extremely well organised tourist centre. Here John ordered groceries and got some beer and other refreshments for friends up in the camp we were heading for. This was the annual two-weeks summer camp of the Alpine Club of Canada (A.C.C.) of which John was the hon. camp manager. Doreen and I had arrived in Canada just in time to spend the second week at the camp as John's guests, a trip made possible for Doreen by the fact that John's wife Bunny had most unselfishly stayed behind in Edmonton to look after our two children, Lesley and Hamish, in addition to her own three. On, then, to the park rangers' hand-operated cable car across the swift-flowing glacial waters of the Athabasca River, here 100 yards broad. Once across we left our heavy gear under a tarpaulin at the horse-packers' dump, to be brought up next day by the pack-train; and carrying only sleeping bags and a change of clothing we set off on foot along the final five miles of dusty trails to the A.C.C. camp in Fryatt Valley. Here John searched vainly in the gathering dusk for the tent assigned to Doreen and me, finally putting us into an empty tent in the single ladies' quarters. This raised a few eyebrows when I stepped out in the morning.

Roughly six miles long, Fryatt Valley is walled by the steep rubbly slopes and towering cliffs of a number of glaciated 10,000 foot peaks, built chiefly of limestones and sandstones, the main rock formations in the Rockies. Mt. Fryatt, the highest at 11,026 feet, stands some two

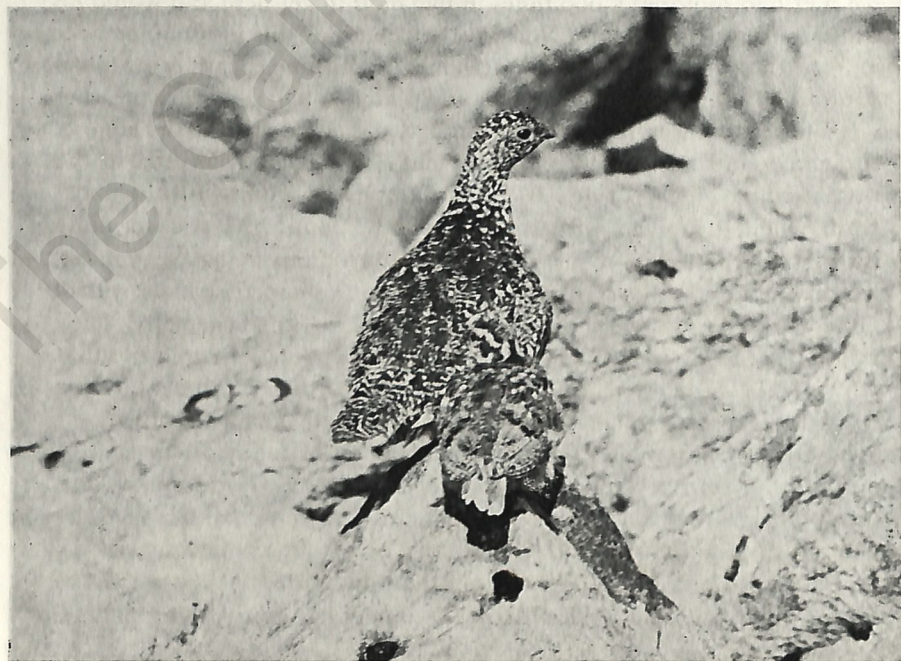


Mt Fryatt, highest of the Fryatt Valley peaks

[photo by Alex. Tewnton



A young bighorn ram in the pink of condition



Female white-tailed ptarmigan and chick

[photos by Alex. Tewnton

miles back from the valley. A 400 yards broad expanse of morainic boulders floors the valley which is drained by Fryatt Creek (a creek is a tributary of a main river; Fryatt is roughly the size of the River Dee at Corrou), while thick coniferous forest covers the slopes to about 6,500 feet. The A.C.C. camp was sited by a clear stream at 5,300 feet at the junction of valley and forest. Arranged on somewhat military lines but providing the facilities without any formality – having, for example, a very capable and pretty kitchen and serving staff who daily provided over 100 climbers with two very large cooked meals inside the capacious mess-tent – it catered for all standards of mountaineer. Before we came, beginners had been introduced to snow and ice-techniques on a nearby glacier of suitable steepness. The most experienced A.C.C. members led parties of less experienced and beginners up different peaks most days, while two professional guides from the park staff were present and also led when required. Apart from a few minor accidents, arrangements went like clockwork. One party of six was benighted on a 9,000 feet col and huddled till dawn in an expanding bivouac/rucksack made for three – but they were happy, the guide whose sac it was had just led them up a new route on a 10,000-footer. A.C.C. members certainly enjoy their annual camp; several travel the length or width of Canada or the States to attend, and one couple we met had motored 5,000 miles in five days to get here and would do the same returning home. Nor did they consider this unusual.

At the camp we enjoyed long hours of sunshine each day and soon could identify the commoner birds and plants. A pair of hermit thrushes were feeding young in a nest in some avalanche debris at the edge of the camp and used to fly past our tent – our second, located in the married quarters this time. A cowbird appeared along with the pack-train when it arrived with supplies but we found the packers more interesting than this, to us, new bird. Apart from being weaponless, from their dress and speech they could have stepped straight out of 'The Virginian'. The boss, a tremendous personality called Glen Kilgour, was a horse-rancher and owned the ponies; he told me that without the protection of tough leather chaps their clothes would be ripped to shreds in a single day's riding through the forest scrub.

Another personality we met was Mrs Phil Munday, the naturalist and author and a Hon. President of the A.C.C. Formerly a keen mountaineer and back-packer, she is now sorely handicapped by arthritis, but led a party up through the forest to see a specimen of the rare Calypso orchid or fairyslipper, the only species (*Calypso bulbosa*) of this genus in the Rockies. After the others had gone, she remained

behind to chat while I photographed the Calypso and later when we walked slowly down through the trees she pointed out and named for me a number of plants which I did not know. A wonderful lady – old in years and body but still young in heart – she had ridden into camp on a pony, and she rode out at the end having relished every minute of her stay.

The dense coniferous forest was interrupted at intervals by avalanche tracks which reached down to the valley bed. These tracks as well as the forest floor were absolutely carpeted with a wealth of wildflowers, showing that in these high valleys grazing pressure from herbivores is slight. I was delighted to see several species which are rare in our Scottish pinewoods growing in profusion here on the slopes and hollows. *Linnaea borealis*, the twinflower, was one; another was *Moneses uniflora*, the single-flowered wintergreen, in Canada called woodnymph or single delight; while a third was the one-sided wintergreen *Pyrola secunda*. Many other plants were identifiable to genus at a glance even though the same species do not grow in Britain, a few examples being bunchberry which is a *Cornus* similar to our dwarf cornel, the pink wintergreen – a *Pyrola*, and yellow columbine *Aquilegia flavescens*. Completely unfamiliar species included the mountain death-camas *Zigadenus elegans*, Labrador tea *Ledum groenlandicum*, and Indian paint-brushes of genus *Castilleja*. The list of flowering plants is long compared with a list from coniferous forest in Britain and I would willingly have spent several days on the forest slopes just studying and photographing plants, but by this time I had got so badly bitten by mosquitoes and large black wood ants while lying on the ground taking pictures at plant height that my body at any rate required a change. The cool breezes of the subalpine and alpine meadows promised relief for the itching bumps on my face and legs, so after two days in the forest we ventured farther afield.

A dipper called from the frothing waters of Fryatt Creek as we followed a rough track across the stonefield to Lake Fryatt – its waters are the beautiful turquoise so typical of the Rocky Mountain glacial lakes. Though superficially barren, the stonefield provided a habitat for numerous small mats of yellow *Dryas* growing wherever the limestone had crumbled to form pockets of soil, while yellow mountain saxifrage beautified the meltwater streams trickling down to the creek. A spotted sandpiper calling anxiously from a willow bush betrayed by its behaviour that it had chicks hiding somewhere on the *Dryas*-carpeted flats at the lake mouth, but we had insufficient time for an adequate search. Following a path through spruce and fir at the lake

edge, we at length crossed a clearing and then ascended a steep head-wall to the A.C.C. High Camp. This consisted of a snug log cabin built in 1970 by the A.C.C. (the building materials having been lifted in by helicopter), and half a dozen tents. Only 50 yards away, three harlequin ducks swam and dived in a large 'sink', a rock-basin into which the creek water flowed at one end and disappeared into an underground cavern at the other. Up-creek from the camp we saw our first Columbian ground squirrel in a patch of 9-inch-tall willow shrub. As this burrowing rodent is a rather unwary species, easily caught by predators such as fox and golden eagle, I had little difficulty in stalking and photographing it. By a small glacial lake at the head of Fryatt Valley I succeeded in photographing a golden-mantled ground squirrel, an inquisitive, colourful little rodent less than half the size of the Columbian ground squirrel. The feat required no little agility as the squirrel scurried and leapt amongst the gigantic boulders at the lake margin, for no sooner had I focused the camera than the squirrel had reached another boulder 20 feet farther off – or 10 feet closer! These ground squirrels of the mountains are hibernators, the Columbian ground squirrels especially being famed for spending about seven months sleeping and then stuffing themselves with the lush vegetation during the short four months of spring-summer-autumn. In the alpine zone of the Rockies, these three seasons are telescoped into one: old snow still lay in patches on some of the meadows in the first week of August, and new snow dusted the peaks down to 9,000 feet just a week later.

The wildflowers of the high subalpine and alpine meadows were a wonder and delight to us, for long accustomed to the effects of over-grazing by deer and sheep in the Scottish Highlands. The summer of 1972 produced the finest blossoming of mountain flowers I have ever seen on Ben Lawers, but even so it did not begin to compare with the breathtaking splendour of the Rockies' alpine flora. Listing a long series of plants is pointless but I should like to mention the heaths that grow up to and above the timberline – white mountain heather *Cassiope tetragona*, yellow mountain heather *Phyllodoce glanduliflora* and pink mountain heather *P. empetriflora*; and the resplendent red and yellow Indian paint-brushes below the towering precipices of Mt. Belanger – I scarcely believed my eyes when a male rufous hummingbird flitted like a colourful overgrown bee from one flower to another to hover and sip nectar.

To improve our acquaintance with the alpine wildlife, we spent a night at the High Camp, emerging at dawn from the funnel entrance

of a mountain tent to find the ground hoared with frost. But up on the meadows after sunrise the air was warm, and we spent several hours with the ecological equivalents of our rock ptarmigan, snow bunting and meadow pipit, here represented by the white-tailed ptarmigan, gray-crowned rosy finch and American water pipit. Some of our Scottish ptarmigan often appear ridiculously tame, especially hens on the nest and with young chicks, but I am convinced that at least some of the white-tailed ptarmigan hens we saw had never seen a human being before, nor had their ancestors. They showed no fear or nervousness when we walked slowly about but fed right up to our feet, industriously pecking at flowers and seeds. At one point when I was about 10 feet from a hen with four chicks, stalking them to get a picture, the bird stretched up its neck and uttered a low warning. The chicks immediately crouched where they were and remained frozen for about two minutes, during which the hen cocked her head and kept a watchful eye on something I could not see as I was in a hollow. Then she relaxed, called the all-clear, and the chicks unfroze and began feeding again. I asked Doreen, who had been behind and above me, what had frightened the bird. She explained that a Columbian ground squirrel had popped up at the mouth of its burrow about 30 feet beyond the ptarmigan. The fact that the bird should ignore me, a bulky giant when carrying my camera kit but obviously living and mobile, and yet be afraid of the ground squirrel which was roughly its own size, showed clearly that the bird did not identify man as a potential enemy. The rosy finches also showed no fear, and fed about our feet, but the water pipits were wary birds and did not permit close approach.

Spending a final weekend at the main camp, in between helping John and the staff to dismantle tents, burn rubbish, and pack stores, I spent some amusing hours trying to tame a golden-mantled ground squirrel whose home was a hole in the stonefield at the camp edge. By the time we left, he allowed me to approach to about 8 feet. Next day we paid a brief visit to Mt. Edith Cavell chalet where, to my mortification, golden-mantled ground squirrels and Clarke's nut-crackers were so tame that they took food from the hand, and any trigger-happy tourist could snap them. As I have already betrayed my secrets when writing about the sheep, you should not feel surprised when I mention that I, too, bought a bag of nuts and persuaded Doreen and a squirrel to pose!

Ten days later, two carloads of Tewnions (John's family and mine) left Edmonton en route for Banff via Jasper. Next day, near Pocahontas, in the early morning we saw a coyote slinking through the knee-deep

grass at the forest edge, and a couple of hours later at a picnic site in Sunwapta Valley we had the inevitable bear encounter. On the tourist trail now, we stopped at Lake Louise and in torrid heat staggered up a dusty trail to the Plain of Six Glaciers, witnessing a great avalanche thundering off Mt. Victoria on one hand, and on the other picnickers throwing scraps to tame Columbian ground squirrels. Then on again, with a constant succession of giant peaks looming up ahead, drawing alongside, receding astern, till at last we drew in to the A.C.C. cabins on a hillside above the tourist township of Banff. The A.C.C. cabins here were run somewhat on youth hostel lines, with a resident warden in charge. The main building resembled a Highland shooting lodge, but built of logs, with a communal kitchen and dining-room, warden's quarters and office, a huge sitting room downstairs and another huge room housing the Club Library upstairs. An adjacent large wooden building provided sleeping accommodation in double rooms, toilet facilities and showers, while a row of four-bunk cabins was available for families. Cooking and cleaning arrangements were much as at Muir Cottage, and members and guests could come and go with little restriction as to time. (I write in the past tense here, as these buildings have now been dismantled and replaced by new buildings at Camrose, outside the park boundary.) The fee was \$3.00 for adult guests and half of that for juniors. After seeing us settled in, John and Bunny with their children returned to Edmonton, leaving us Bunny's car so that we could move around freely.

With the weather remaining fine we took things easily. A couple of miles from Banff lie the three Vermilion Lakes, a natural paradise where we spent some time bird-watching. An osprey flew across one lake and settled on top of a tall tree, no doubt keeping watch on the human fishers in boats and canoes on the lake. On the muddy shore fed a pectoral sandpiper and a small flock of lesser yellowlegs. More homely were a flock of starlings in the trees, mallard on the lakes, and a family of geese in the river, while a rare spectacle was provided by a family of red-necked grebes on one of the lakes. This species was recorded breeding for the first time in Banff National Park in 1965. Nearby were several beaver ponds with dams and lodges. Almost submerged, a beaver rippled across one pond and with a quick flip of its broad flat tail dived to the underwater entrance of its lodge.

Above Banff towers Sulphur Mountain, which we climbed the easy way by gondola car. Up on the ridge at 7,000 feet the first tints of autumn were already discernible in the reddening leaves on some

of the deciduous trees and shrubs. While Doreen, Lesley and Hamish scrambled along the three miles of rocky ridge to the summit, I stalked and photographed a least chipmunk, a fascinating little tree-climbing rodent; and afterwards, on the sloping limestone ledges, I stalked a small flock of bighorn sheep and obtained a few of the spectacular pictures that one dreams about but seldom gets oneself.

The climax of our trip was a three-day visit to Lake O'Hara in Yoho National Park, B.C. This high-lying lake with its surrounding 10,000 foot and 11,000 foot peaks is one of the most picturesque spots in the Rockies. A gravelled fire-road runs through the forest to Lake O'Hara from Wapta on Highway 1; private motorists cannot use it, but a bus from Lake Louise in Banff Park makes the return journey two or three times daily. Laden with food and the usual equipment, we caught the bus and in no time were staggering under our heavy loads up to the A.C.C. cabin on the Alpine Meadow. (Yes; another cabin! The Canadian Rockies are dotted along their long length with A.C.C. huts in the most useful and often magnificent locations.) From this excellent base, we covered all the walks in the immediate vicinity – the Odaray Plateau, Lake McArthur, Opabin Lakes, Morning Glory Lakes, Wiwaxy alpine trail – and marvelled anew at the astonishing tameness of some of the animals. Some of those memories will take long to fade. Particularly vivid in mind is the family of hoary or whistling marmots on the stonefield bounding a small glacial lake below the precipices of Mt. Odaray; these normally very timid animals were completely unafraid of us, and again I formed the impression of creatures that had never before seen a human being and consequently did not associate us with danger. We saw and heard many of these wild whistlers on the screefields and rubbly slopes by Lake McArthur and the Opabin Lakes. Those strange hay-making lagomorphs the pikas were common here too, and I spent several hours among the rocks watching them. But the memory I cherish most is of a white-tailed ptarmigan hen with a brood at Lake McArthur – she led them straight to where I stood at the water's edge, passed me, and then returned to sip the water at my very feet. No Scottish ptarmigan has ever done that!



Mountain accidents — Grampians and Cairngorms

[Following a request from the Editor, Sgt John Duff agreed to supply the *Journal* with details of Mountain Accidents in the Grampians and Cairngorms. He has also contributed a substantial article about Mountain Safety, which should be of considerable interest to Club members—especially, perhaps, to younger members who are just starting their climbing careers. The Editor feels sure that Club members will join him in offering congratulations to Sgt Duff on his being awarded the British Empire Medal for considerable services to mountain rescue over the past several years.]

- 4.11.71 John Graham Norris (16), Junior Soldier, Aberdeen, one of a party walking through the Lairig Ghru, carried out from Corrou Bothy suffering from suspected appendicitis.
- 20-21.11.71 Feith Buidhe Disaster — six died. See full account.
- 14.12.71 John Maidman (33), RAF and Neil Dudley (36), RAF, both stationed at Scarborough, while skiing at Cairnwell, got lost in fog and wandered down Baddoch.
- 5.1.72 Kenneth Duckworth (26), Laboratory Attendant, Aberdeen. Broke his ankle near the south end of Loch Muick. Hill walker.
- 23.1.72 John Morrison (23), Quantity Surveyor, Dundee, became separated from 3 companions on the west ridge of Lochnagar, just above the loch. Found dead of exposure on 25 January 1972 at MR 245915. About 2,250 man hours expended on search.
- 13.2.72 Elizabeth Ann Kettles (19), Student, Dundee. Leader of party of four fell while climbing Raeburn's Gully, Lochnagar. Suspected broken left leg.
- 13.2.72 Robert Hutchison (25), Schoolteacher, Northumberland and George Mitchison (19), Student, Monk Seaton, overdue from day's climbing in Red Gully, Coire an-t Sneachda. Both returned at 9.30 am having spent the night in Nethy Bothy after walking down Strath Nethy.
- 1-2.4.72 Arthur Jenkinson Bain (58), Teacher, Cluston Muir Porteus (40), Teacher, Adam Cuthbertson Ramage (43),

Teacher, plus ten youths aged 16–18 years. Combined Cadet Force from Melville College, Edinburgh, under Mr Bain. About 10–11 am on 1 April 1972 this party set off to go hill walking. Those left behind thought they had gone to Derry Cairngorm. At 8.45 pm they were reported missing, and their vehicles subsequently were found on the Beinn a'Bhuird road. At 10.45 pm, eleven members of the party turned up at Derry Lodge, and about 2½ hours later the other two turned up also. The party had got lost in white out conditions near the North Top of Beinn a'Bhuird and had descended to the Avon instead of the Quoich. This is almost exactly similar to the incident in 1965 in which two Cadets died, except that the weather on this occasion was quite good.

- 1.4.72 James Petrie (69), Retired, Ballater. Missing from home since 12 January 1972. Found dead on precipitous south face of Craigendarroch, on a ledge below a 20 feet vertical.
- 16.4.72 Leslie Hall Raeper (33), Aberdeen. A roped party of three were climbing Raeburn's Gully, Lochnagar when they were avalanched by a collapsing cornice. All slid about 350 feet. Raeper's leg was badly gashed by 'dead man' belay.
- 27.5.72 George Edward Hodgson (25), Sailor, Lossiemouth. Glissading on Lochnagar, lost control, struck a boulder and suffered two broken ribs and severe bruising.
- 27.5.72 James Alder (51), Artist, Northumberland. While walking through Lairig Ghru slipped and fell slightly injuring knee and shoulder.
- 26.7.72 Roger Smith (15), Schoolboy, Durham. Set off to walk from Blair Atholl to Cairnwell. Reported missing when he was late at the pick up point. Found on main road, having gone down Glen Lochsie.
- 15.8.72 David Satch (16), Student, Sheerness. Cragfast in Alladin's Couloir, Coire an-t Sneachda. Removed by Glenmore Lodge Instructor.
- 22.8.72 Brian Everett (35), Schoolteacher, Kinellar. Coming off Ben Mheadhoin in dusk, became cragfast in Coire Etchan.
- 28.8.72 Hugh George McIntyre Turley (20), Student, Greenock. Killed outright in a fall of about 60 feet while leading the 'Citadel', Shelter Stone Crag.

- 16.9.72 Grant Stephen Mackie (5), Methlick. One of a picnic party of fifteen adults and thirty children on Craighshannoch, Benachie, got separated from the rest of the party and became lost in Benachie Forest. Not missed for about one hour. Found at 8 am next day about 150 yards from search headquarters. About 850 man hours expended on search.
- 22-23.9.72 William Sidney Alford Sibley (44), and Arthur Adcock (44), both London Police Officers, became lost on Lochnagar in mist. Found at summit at 1.45 am.
- 9.11.72 Harriet Coleman (25), Unemployed Social Worker, Manchester. Hillwalker reported overdue. Search of entire northern Cairngorms and Glenmore Forest. Found by helicopter, sheltering at the Fords of Avon Bothy. She had spent a night out under a boulder on Loch Avon side after visiting the Shelter Stone and leaving it too late to return to Glenmore before dark.
- 12.11.72 A party of about sixty Junior Soldiers, aged 15-16 years, on Adventure Training in Cairngorms. After spending a night at Corrou Bothy, two were flown out to Glenmore suffering from exposure.
- 16.12.72 Martin Robertson (24), Quantity Surveyor, Glasgow and David Main McKerlie (24), Quantity Surveyor, Linwood. Having completed Crotched Gully in Coire an-t Sneachda, got lost while trying to come off plateau by Fiacaille a' Choire Chais. Walked down Strath Nethy and out to Glenmore Lodge, arriving about midnight.
- 27.12.72 Helen Tenn (21), Student, Ambleside, David Paskitt (19), Student, Windermere, and Michael Waite (26), Student, Kendal, were reported overdue from a 3-day expedition in the Cairngorms. A search was organised but the party turned up, about 24 hours overdue.
- 28-29.12.72 Kenneth W. Maynard (23), Student, Sunderland, Christopher P. Roach (23), Student, Callercoats and A. Nigel C. Watson (21), Student, Newcastle. Party of six separated into two parties of three. One party got lost on plateau, spent night under boulder near Fords of Avon and were found next day heading down Strath Nethy.
- 13.1.73 Madeline Thompson (23), Secretary, and Denis Rankin (27), Lecturer, both from Belfast. Climbing in Coire an Lochain when Thompson, unroped, lost ice axe and fell about 500 feet, injuring head and shoulder.

- 6.1.73 Susan Baillie (21), Physiotherapist, Claydon, and Brian MacDonald (22), Physiotherapist, Inverness. Both climbing on a face in Coire an Lochain when Baillie slipped and fell about 300 feet, receiving fatal injuries.
- 28.1.73 Robert Gatton (27), Scientific Officer, Aberdeen, fell while rock climbing (unroped) on a small outcrop of rock near Tullich Burn, Ballater. Broken left leg.
- 6.2.73 John Williams (24), Student, Culter, broke his left leg while climbing at the Pass of Ballater.
- 10.2.73 John R. Fowler, Edinburgh, was avalanched in Raeburn's Gully. Sprained ankle.
- 10.2.73 George F. M. Swift (46), dislocated knee at Clach nan Taillearan in Lairig Ghru. Walked to Luibeg where he telephoned for assistance.
- 11.2.73 Frank Harrington (34), Assembly Worker, Airdrie. Glissading in Winter Coire, Glen Doll. Lost control, went over crag, slid 400-500 feet, two broken ribs.
- 12.2.73 A party of three English climbers were climbing in North East coire, Lochnagar, when a cornice collapsed, causing the leader to fall. He was held by his second, but was badly bruised and shaken.
- 3.3.73 Robert Kemp (18), Student, Kimberly, Notts. Glissading on the west side of the Sneck of Lochnagar. Lost control and slid about 100 feet. Fractured and dislocated pelvis, cuts and bruises.
- 26.3.73 Eric Renshaw (27), University Lecturer, Edinburgh. Climbing near the foot of Coire an Lochain, and fell on a traverse. Dislocated right shoulder, lacerated chin.
- 19.4.73 Bruce Simpson (12), Schoolboy, Glasgow, one of a party skiing down the north side of the Allt Clach nan Taillear, fell and fractured his left leg.



The Feith Buidhe disaster

At 7.25 pm on Sunday, 21 November 1971, it was reported at Aviemore Police Station that a party of six schoolchildren plus an instructress and a trainee instructress had failed to return from an overnight expedition in the Cairngorms. This was the first intimation of the Feith Buidhe Disaster – the worst disaster in Scottish Mountaineering history, in which five teenage schoolchildren and the trainee instructress died, and the two survivors, badly exposed and frostbitten, were saved by a very narrow margin.

Those in the disaster party were as follows:

Catherine Jane Davidson (20), Student Physical Education Teacher – survived.

Raymond Oliver Leslie (15), Schoolboy – survived.

Sheelagh Elaine Sunderland (18), Student – died.

Carol Elizabeth Bertram (16), Schoolgirl – died.

Diane Dudgeon (15), Schoolgirl – died.

Lorraine Margaret Dick (15), Schoolgirl – died.

Susan Byrne (15), Schoolgirl – died.

William James Kerr (15), Schoolboy – died.

About 10 pm on Friday, 19 November a party of fourteen schoolchildren from Ainslie Park School, Edinburgh, in the charge of William Beattie (23), an Instructor of Outdoor Education, and accompanied by Catherine Jane Davidson, and Sheelagh Elaine Sunderland, arrived at Lagganlia Centre for Outdoor Education, Kinncraig. Lagganlia is an outdoor centre administered by Edinburgh Education Authority, with a resident Principal, Mr John Paisley (39). Miss Davidson, Beattie's girl friend, was there in the capacity of an instructress, and Miss Sunderland, whose first visit this was to the Cairngorms, was to be working at Lagganlia Centre as a Voluntary Instructress for three weeks.

The purpose of the visit by the Ainslie Park School party to Lagganlia was to practice navigation and emergency bivouac techniques on the Saturday and the Sunday, but on arrival at Lagganlia the bivouac plan was changed to spending the Saturday night in Corrour Bothy. The planned route was as follows:

Outward Cairngorm Car Park – Fiacail a' Choire Chais – Cairngorm – Lochan Buidhe – Ben Macdhuì – Allt Clach nan Taillear – Lairig Ghru – Corrour Bothy.

Alternative Bivouac at Curran Bothy at Lochan Buidhe.

Inward Corrour Bothy – Cairn Toul – Braeriach – Sron na Lairig – Coire Gorm – Sinclair Hut, Rothiemurchus.

Alternative Lairig Ghru – Sinclair Hut.

The party was to be split up into two groups, the older and stronger group under Beattie, and the younger and weaker group under Davidson, with Sunderland accompanying the second group, partly to assist, but mainly to gain experience.

On the Saturday morning the combined party left Lagganlia between 10.30 am and 11 am and drove to Cairngorm car park. At this time there was snow on the ground, and the forecast was of deteriorating weather, with snow.

At the car park, the plans were modified, and both groups took the chair lift to the top station, going to the Ptarmigan Restaurant, where they ate their lunch. Beattie, with eight children left about 20 minutes before Davidson and Sunderland with six children.

Beattie's party had a fairly uneventful walk to Curran, but were faced from Coire Domhain on with increasing wind and lessening visibility, forcing them to navigate by line bearings. They arrived at Curran bothy about 3.30 pm, having decided to implement the bad weather alternative plan and stay there overnight. When the second party did not arrive, they assumed that Davidson had gone to the St Valery refuge or to Jean's Hut, as these had apparently been mentioned earlier. They were not worried about their non-appearance, and spent what must have been a cold and uncomfortable night in the bothy.

When Davidson's party left the Ptarmigan Restaurant, they climbed Cairngorm, and left the summit for Curran, according to a Glenmore Lodge Instructor who was working at the radio station there, at about 1.20 pm. They encountered bad conditions in Coire Domhain, with knee-deep snow and a strong SSE wind. In the Feith Buidhe basin the snow conditions were worse, and Davidson took the party to the Feith Buidhe stream, hoping to follow it up to the Lochan Buidhe and so to Curran Bothy. This proved to be impossible, as the stream was completely covered over by snow, and as dusk was rapidly approaching, Davidson decided to bivouac where she was rather than to risk tiring out her party in a possibly vain attempt to find the Curran Bothy. The snow was floury, and useless for snow holing, and they eventually lay down behind a makeshift wall of snow. They removed most of their wet clothing and got into their poly bags and sleeping bags.

During the Saturday night, the weather worsened and the party started to become buried by drifting snow. Some of them panicked,



Feith Buidhe flats, looking towards Cairn Gorm. The bivouac site is in the centre, at the stream. It is indicated by a cross.

[*photo by A. Watson*]



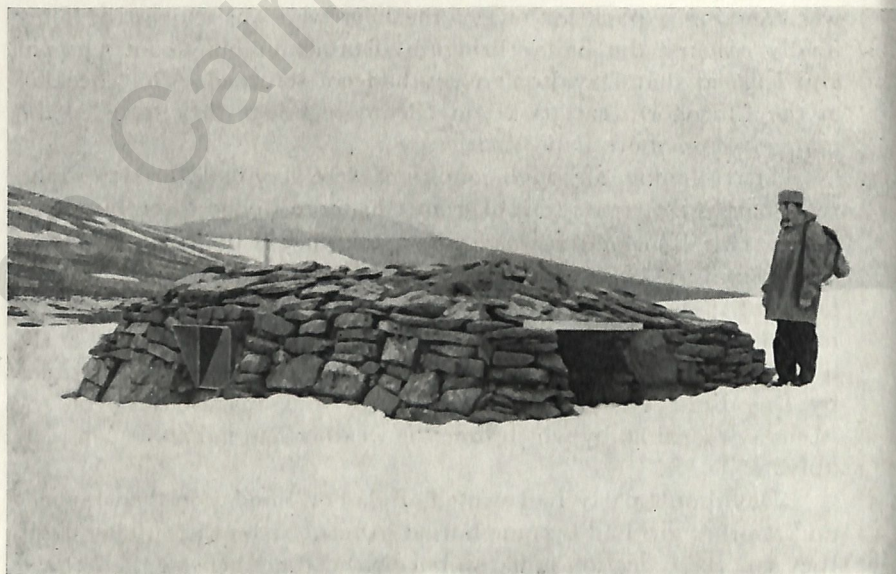
A view from near the top of Cairn Gorm in mid summer, looking south west past the cliffs of Coire an t'Sneachda towards Cairn Toul. The large snowfield on the plateau is at the head of the Feith Buidhe and immediately upstream from the bivouac site.

[*photo by A. Watson*]



The Curran Bothy covered by about 7 feet of snow in early March 1972. Only the ventilator is visible.

[photo by D. Grieve]



The Curran Bothy in early June 1972, still with about 4 feet of snow. It was not possible to open the door till midsummer day.

[photo by J. Duff]

and Davidson did her best to dig them out, losing her mitts in the process. At first light on the Sunday, Raymond Leslie was completely buried but could still be heard, and two of the girls were lying on the surface, out of both their sleeping bags and poly bags. Another girl was described as being 'in a bit of a daze'. It seems likely that these three girls were already dying of cold.

Davidson got the two uncovered girls back into sleeping bags, and, along with William Kerr, who appears at this stage to have been still quite strong, tried to go for help. This effort was abandoned, however, after about 25 yards, because of thigh-deep snow and strong wind. They returned to the bivouac and waited, hoping that the weather would improve.

On the Sunday morning, Beattie's party, still assuming that Davidson was at St Valery or Jean's Hut, found the weather considerably worse. They had difficulty in getting out of the Curran Bothy because of the door being jammed shut with snow. They descended the March Burn to Lairig Ghru, the descent involving a commando abseil during which one boy slipped and almost fell. Beattie had to fit crampons to the children's feet, and one boy cried because he was scared. In Lairig Ghru conditions were still very bad, and it was not till about 3 pm that they reached the Sinclair Hut. By this time Beattie was carrying a pack for one of the boys who was exhausted. They finally reached the Bailey Bridge at Rothiemurchus about 5.30 pm and learned that Davidson's party had not returned. After checking at the Cairngorm car park and Glenmore Lodge they reported the matter at Aviemore Police Station.

That evening, although conditions were very bad, three two-man reconnaissance parties set out from Glenmore Lodge to probe-search likely areas. This search was fruitless, and in fact the conditions were so bad that the parties completely failed to find the St Valery refuge, and had to search for the Shelter Stone. One party returned to Glenmore Lodge, and the other two spent the remainder of the night at the Shelter Stone. The reflection of flares set off by these parties was seen by Davidson. The search was resumed on a massive scale on the Monday morning, by which time the weather had improved considerably.

Davidson's party had waited all day on Sunday in their bivouac and another girl had become buried. After dark on the Sunday night, they saw the reflection of flares, but by this time their own mini flares were lost and they could not reply. The party was now in dire straits, and probably some were already dead.

At daybreak on the Monday, Davidson and Kerr again tried to go for help, but the boy was too weak and collapsed. Davidson was found by helicopter at 10.30 am. She was close to total collapse, and was unable to give the position of the rest of the party.

About 12.30 pm the position of the buried party was established and between then and 1.30 pm all the buried children were found. The last to be found was Raymond Leslie, who was still alive although unconscious and badly frostbitten. He was buried under four feet of level snow. He was flown by helicopter to Raigmore Hospital and subsequently recovered.

By the time all of the party had been found and the survivor evacuated, it was too late in the day to start evacuation of the bodies, so that it was the Tuesday before they were finally flown off the hill. All of the flying was carried out in extremely marginal conditions.

A Fatal Accident Inquiry was held in Banff in February 1972, and it lasted for six days. The jury returned a formal verdict and did not allocate blame, but made the following recommendations:

The Jury state that they would not discourage the spirit of adventure in outdoor activities with children, but they suggest the following recommendations from the evidence before the Inquiry:

1. That more care be exercised in the organising of parties of young children in outdoor activities with special regard to fitness and training.
2. That fuller information regarding outdoor activities should be given to parents and acknowledged by them.
3. That certified teachers should accompany their pupils to outdoor centres such as Lagganlia and that expeditions should be led thereafter by fully qualified and long experienced instructors in their own field. This includes references to weather forecasts and local conditions.
4. That certain areas of the countryside be designated as suitable for children's expeditions in summer and winter. These areas to be decided after consideration with the Scottish Mountain Leadership Board, Mountain Rescue Organisations and local knowledge.
5. In the matter of high level bothies, advice as to their removal or otherwise should be left to the experts.
6. That they endorse what the Court said in praise of Mountain Rescue Operations and suggest that thought might be given to furthering the good work done by them, financially and otherwise.
7. In the event of a disaster closer liaison should be kept between authorities and parents concerned.

Editorial Post Script

Arising out of item 5 above, the following important notice has been widely displayed and publicised, although, due to certain objections being raised, the removal of the bothies has been delayed. It seems likely, however, that the notice will still be valid, as the bothies will very probably have been removed by the end of this summer.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

HIGH LEVEL BOTHIES

Following a decision made after the fullest possible consultation, the bothies known as:

CURRAN situated beside Lochan Buidhe at MR 983010
EL ALAMEIN on North Ridge of Cairngorm at MR 016054
and
ST VALERY on the cliffs above the west end of Loch Avon at
MR 002022

are to be removed on 2nd June 1973 or as soon as possible thereafter. It is most important that no plans be made involving the use of any of these three bothies after 2nd June 1973.

TOM CHASSER
Chief Constable
Scottish NE Counties Constabulary

A. L. McGLURE
Chief Constable
Inverness Constabulary



Thoughts on mountain safety, mainly in the light of the Feith Buidhe disaster

JOHN DUFF

The Feith Buidhe Disaster and the subsequent Public Inquiry should have had a deep and lasting effect on the thinking of those concerned with taking parties of youngsters into our Scottish hills, particularly the Cairngorms. In the past decade, we have carried the bodies of nine teenagers from the Cairngorms, and at least ten others have been saved, some of them unconscious when found: all of them literally at death's door. Dozens of others have been very lucky in that the weather remained clement until they were rescued or reached shelter.

It has been obvious for years that a major disaster was bound to take place. The Ainslie Park School expedition was no worse than many others, and indeed the children were better equipped than most. What is not commonly realised is that this expedition was fortunate in that only six lives were lost; it could so easily have been more than double that number, as the other half of the party also was only a hair's breadth from catastrophe when they were descending the March Burn on ropes and struggling through the deep snow in the Lairig Ghru.

There is nothing new to be learned from the Feith Buidhe Disaster, and there is nothing in the following article which has not been known to experienced hill men for generations. Nevertheless, if the reiteration of known truths can save anyone grief, either as a parent or as a leader, then it will be more than justified.

In mountaineering, as in any other situation, there is no such thing as absolute safety, and different people find that different levels of risk are acceptable to them. It may be that an adult, confident in his strength, feels able to challenge nature, and he may derive personal satisfaction from deliberately taking risks. While one may not agree, one must admit that each individual is entitled to his own opinion. However, this must be at all times a personal decision, and no one has any right to impose deliberate risk on others. This is relevant to anyone who has charge of a party less experienced than himself, but above all it is mandatory for those in charge of parties of young people. Adults make a reasoned and personal decision to go to the hills, and implicitly accept some risk, but children who are being taken hill walking, perhaps as part of their education, have not made any such decision,

and therefore the degree of risk acceptable in their case is very low indeed. A 'press on' or 'do or die' attitude is inexcusable. It is extremely important to realise that only relevant experience allied with good judgment will enable anyone to properly assess the potential risk of any proposed expedition, and that there is no fast way of gaining experience.

There are many tools, techniques, and items of equipment designed to help us survive in adverse circumstances, but it should never be forgotten that man, although physically a puny and defenceless creature, has survived because he has used his brain instead of what little brute strength he has at his disposal. If we are to survive in any difficult situation, it is crucial that we use our brain to avoid hazards we may be unable to cope with physically. 'Survival' is nowadays a popular subject for discussion, and in this context, the fable of the oak tree and the sapling is particularly apt. True survival consists of avoiding uncontrollable situations, not of trying to live through them.

The foundation for most accidents (including getting lost, exposure and so on) is laid before the party leaves base. The most common basic causes are over ambition; lack of appreciation of weather conditions; insufficient navigational skill, and lack of foresight. I do not include poor equipment. Accidents attributed to this are usually caused by someone putting equipment to a use for which it was never intended, such as trying to rock climb with smooth soled shoes, or trying to carry out serious navigation with an inappropriate map or a compass from a Xmas cracker. The only bad equipment is equipment which is not functional, for example, waterproofs which do not keep the wearer dry, or ice axes which break too readily.

Of all planning faults, over ambition is the most dangerous. An expedition should be what one is capable of doing, not what one would like to be capable of doing, and there is often a vast gulf between the former and the latter. There is no pleasure, only danger, in tackling something beyond one's capabilities. By all means use Naismith's Rule,* but it should be modified to suit the user. The only sensible thing to do is to gradually increase the length of walks, so that one knows how far one can walk and climb in comfort carrying a certain load. If any of the components (load, distance, height climbed) are increased, then the others should be reduced accordingly. Load should always be kept to a minimum, as heavy loads are excessively tiring. Other factors apply, such as the type of terrain, and, very important, weather

* One hour for every three miles of distance plus half an hour for every 1,000 feet of climbing.

and snow cover. Deep soft snow can easily reduce speed to 1 mile per hour, and with a head wind, progress may be impossible. The effect of all these different variables can be learned only from experience, never from books.

Over ambition is often followed by false pride, preventing the party concerned from modifying the route or turning back. This is especially a danger on a walk from one point to another, where transport has been arranged for the return journey, or where accommodation has been booked. Never be afraid to modify a route or turn back.

Lack of appreciation of weather conditions has caused many fatalities, especially in the Cairngorms. It should be borne in mind that Scotland is as far north as southern Alaska, and that the weather conditions on the high tops (over about 3,000 feet) are equivalent to those experienced north of the Arctic Circle. The weather, and especially the wind, can be a relentless and fearsome enemy, seeking out all the weak points in protective clothing. Wind multiplies the chilling effect of cold on the body, and a wind of only 15 miles per hour at 30° Fahrenheit, or 2° of frost, is equivalent in chilling effect to still air at -38° Fahrenheit, or 70° of frost.

A sudden winter storm is one of the most serious things which can overtake a traveller in the Cairngorms, and if overtaken by one, the most sensible thing to do is to lose height and find sheltered ground, travelling with the wind on one's back, where it will assist instead of impeding progress. Both wind and cold increase with altitude, so always allow for the fact that a breeze with cold rain in the valley may well be a gale driven blizzard at 4,000 feet, during any month of the year.

Before setting off, always try to get a weather forecast from one of the offices listed in the front of the Telephone Directory. A general forecast may be inaccurate for the hills, so tell the forecaster where you are going. The information required is wind speed, direction and trend, freezing level, cloud cover, precipitation and outlook.

Insufficient navigational skill, or merely the lack of navigational instruments, is also a frequently recurring cause of mishap. Nothing much need be said regarding this, except that 'sufficient navigational skill' is a variable quantity, depending entirely on conditions. On a fine summer's day it may be sufficient merely to be able to read a map. In a white-out, an error of a few yards on a compass bearing may end in death. It is therefore again important to realise one's own limitations and to act within them.

Lack of foresight is allied to over ambition. It is failure to use the brain to best advantage. One should always consider the likely and the possible implications of any proposed action, and it is important always to keep open as many options as possible. Perhaps the most obvious example of this is the planning of bad weather variations on a route, and noting the presence of escape routes.

Before setting off, one should know where one is going to go for help, should the need arise on any particular part of the route. This usually entails knowing where the nearest telephones are.

Always be careful in coming down a convex slope on a strange mountain. From above, one can see the more gentle slopes, but if they are interspersed with crags, these will probably not be visible. In a situation of this sort, it is easy to become crag-fast, especially in failing light.

Party size is very important, and it is noticeable that the larger a party becomes, the more it assumes the characteristics of a flock of sheep, with everyone following whoever happens to be in front. In any party, regardless of size, it is important to keep a check on navigation, lest everyone thinks that someone else knows where they are going. This sounds ridiculous, but it can very easily happen, especially on 'known' ground.

A party of six or seven is the largest desirable size, even in summer. In winter, it is too big, the optimum being three or four. If the party is more than about six strong, it is very easy for someone to fall behind and not to be missed.

Where the party is of children accompanied by adults, then the ratio of adults to children is important. It is impossible to lay down hard and fast rules about this, as so much depends on the age, strength, and comparative experience of the children, but the ratio should in some cases be as low as one adult to two children. A party of about thirty children accompanied by one or two adults is very unwise, other than on a very sheltered and well-defined low-level route.

If a planned route involves fording a river or stream, be very careful. The force of water is extremely deceptive, and mountain streams can rise to spate levels in a very short time. If in any doubt about the safety of crossing a stream, do not hesitate to make a detour, and always use bridges when they are available.

The possibility of accident is ever present, although completely unavoidable accidents are very rare. It is essential in a case of accidental injury to make the victim as comfortable as possible, and, even more important, to make him feel that the situation is under control

and that he is going to be all right. Part of the danger of solitary expeditions is that an incapacitating injury is followed by the psychological shock of knowing that there is no one else to rely on and that no outside help is available.

When treating mountain accidents, it may well be impracticable to effect any positive remedial treatment, but remember that if you can prevent any deterioration in the patient's condition, you will have done well.

Always treat the most immediate danger first; for example, severe bleeding, stoppage of breathing or heart failure; and do not leave the patient at risk from dangers such as further falling, rock fall, avalanche, and so on. In an emergency, unorthodox methods may have to be used, and possibly un-sterilised material used for dressings; but remember that the saving of life comes first, and that secondary complications caused by infection and so on can be treated. The hospital will not thank you for a sterile corpse. In the words of the late George Mackenzie, 'If you encounter a massive wound with serious bleeding, and you have no dressing available, then if necessary, shove your bonnet in it. You *must* stop the bleeding'.

Someone should always stay with the patient, while others go for help. Before leaving, the patient should be protected from the weather as much as possible, and should have insulation between him and the ground. If his injuries permit, it will probably be advisable to move him a short distance to a more sheltered spot, which should be marked as conspicuously as possible, and the patient should not thereafter be moved. If it is unavoidable that he should be left alone, it should be impressed on him that he must not move, even if he feels better. Signalling apparatus should be left with the patient, and the exact map reference of the spot written down. Compass bearings from prominent points can also help greatly, provided the reference points are fairly close at hand.

Before anyone leaves to get help, each member of the party should know exactly what is planned, and the one going for help should have all relevant details written down, especially the map references. If two are going for help it is better for them to go together, rather than splitting up and making for two different places.

If the party consists of two, and one is injured, then a decision must be made whether to stay with the injured person or go for help. This will inevitably be difficult, and the condition of the patient will be an important factor, as it may not be advisable to leave him. Other factors affecting a decision are the remoteness of the area, the weather,

and the likelihood of being found. If the patient is unconscious or semi-conscious, or has severe head injuries, he should be tied to a belay so that he cannot wander off. In this case, it is even more important to clearly mark the spot. As a general rule, however, it is better to stay with a badly injured person and try to signal for help.

Benightment, or a similar situation in daytime, when one must stay put, can arise from a variety of causes, of which the most common is getting lost. In summer conditions, this is usually not serious, provided those concerned do not lose their heads, but it must be stressed that an emergency overnight bivouac in the mountains in winter is an extremely serious undertaking, the possibility of which must be avoided by good planning and foresight.

If however, the worst happens, and an enforced winter bivouac is necessary, there are certain things which should be done.

There must be no panic. This is the most immediate danger, but if one forces one's self to act deliberately, the urge to panic will slowly recede. First of all, the situation should be examined and a reasoned decision made. The most important thing is to get out of the wind, and the best way to do this may be to find a suitable spot and dig a snow hole. This, however, takes time, and without a shovel it is very difficult. If a snow hole is out of the question, one can still find shelter, possibly in the lee of a stream bank, or behind a large boulder. The ideal sort of situation is where one will become covered over by snow without being deeply buried. The most satisfactory place is a small sheltered corner in an otherwise exposed area. Avoid large hollows which are likely to accumulate considerable depths of snow. Remember that about 1 foot to 18 inches of snow provides tremendous insulation and complete protection from the wind. If plenty of rope is available, then a rope spread out over boulders can make a useful guide to a bivouac site, but otherwise rope is better utilised to sit on. One's chance of survival in adversity in severe conditions is dependent to a very large extent on one's mental attitude, and so a plan should be made to last through the night – a sandwich or a sweet or whatever is available, every so often, is a great morale booster, although in terms of physiology, it will probably not do very much good. It is important that a party should have a feeling of being all together, rather than being a collection of separate persons, and therefore I greatly favour the large type of emergency bivouac sack which will hold about six persons. In a sack such as this, each person encourages his neighbour, and it is possible to light a stove in the centre. There is however a danger of lack of ventilation which should be guarded against.

In an emergency, every effort should be made to utilise anything which will stop the body losing heat. All spare clothing should be put on, tight clothing and boots loosened, and the feet placed in a rucksack. If a rope is available, it should be used to sit on to prevent heat loss by conduction. Body surface area should be reduced as much as possible by adopting a crouched, foetal position, with the arms crossed inside the anorak or cagoule, and by huddling as close as possible to the others in the party. Never get out of a bivouac to urinate – use a mug or whatever else is available. One's life is much more important to one than hygiene or delicacy. In a difficult survival situation, all one's will-power must be concentrated on reaching the next milestone, whether it be the next sandwich or sweet, or merely the next time the minute hand on the watch reaches the hour. Have a definite goal, but live in the present, and meet each difficulty as it arrives, without worrying about all the dangers to be avoided. Most important of all – do not lose hope.

Exposure is a commonly misunderstood ailment, but has with good reason been called 'The Killer of the Unprepared'. It is the most dangerous malady which can afflict one on the hill, as it is insidious, and it affects the brain, so that the victim is entirely dependent on help from others, and in the absence of such help will inevitably die. Exposure is a syndrome, that is, a combination of various causes which combine to produce a common end result. The symptoms may develop with apparent rapidity, and death can ensue within as little as three hours after their appearance. The main component of exposure is hypothermia, a falling of the body's core temperature, leading progressively to collapse and, finally, death. Although hypothermia is the cause of death, its killing power is greatly increased by two other factors almost always present in 'exposure' deaths: shock (either physical shock caused by injury, or nerve shock caused by anxiety or fear); and exhaustion. A healthy person can survive a considerable degree of any one of these conditions, but the three combined rapidly prove fatal, especially to young people, who have been found to succumb much more quickly than adults in their twenties or thirties. It can be seen therefore that it is a mistake to look on exposure and hypothermia as being the same, although they are certainly closely related. Hypothermia, as has been said, is a lowering of the core temperature of the body. The normal temperature is 37°C, and death usually occurs at about 25°C. It is not necessary to be exposed to low temperatures to become hypothermic – all that is necessary is that the body should be losing heat faster than it is being manufactured by the metabolic

process. It is therefore better to think of 'losing heat' rather than of 'getting cold'. Heat is gained by the body in four ways – by the basal metabolic process; by exertion, which can increase the heat production by up to ten times the basal metabolic rate; by shivering, which can produce the same amount of heat as slow running; and by external means, such as radiation from the sun, from drinking hot liquids, or from taking a hot bath. Heat may be lost in five main ways – by radiation, which is an important cause of heat loss, especially through the head; by conduction, as when sitting on a cold rock; by convection as when in a wind; by respiration (cool air is being inhaled and warm air exhaled); and by evaporation, as of sweat, which is one of nature's ways of keeping the body from overheating.

The whole process of gaining and losing heat may be looked on as an equation which must be kept balanced, otherwise the body temperature will move out of the range within which life can be sustained.

In this country, we are nearly always concerned with heat loss rather than heat gain, and so it is important that everyone who is liable to be in exposure-prone conditions should know what to do to conserve body heat.

Before going on to deal with the conservation of body heat, however, I feel that an important word of caution should be given. Many people suffer considerable distress, not because of too little clothing, but because of too much. Not only is it difficult to move freely when encumbered by too many clothes, but the excessive sweating which inevitably takes place renders the wearer even more uncomfortable, and worse, ends in dehydration and excessive salt loss, which can cause cramps, headache and nausea, and greatly decrease stamina.

The most rapid and dangerous heat loss takes place in wet, cold and windy conditions, where wet clothing conducts heat away from the body (the insulation value of wet clothing is reduced by a factor of at least 10), where the wind evaporates moisture, which takes its latent heat of vaporisation from the body, and where the heat loss by convection is greatly increased. If in addition the victim has been over-exerting himself and is breathless, the heat loss by respiration will be considerable. This is not serious so long as the victim can generate enough heat by exercise to balance the heat loss, but should he become exhausted or otherwise be unable to produce sufficient heat by exercise, then the body will rapidly cool down and serious hypothermia will occur. Add to this a state of shock or fear, which further reduces the body's capacity to survive adverse conditions, and it can be readily

seen that an extremely dangerous combination of circumstances has occurred. Although I can produce no concrete evidence to prove this, I am personally convinced from my own experience that the psychological aspect is at least as important as the others, and that as soon as a person submits to fear and becomes demoralised, his chances of prolonged survival are enormously reduced. Conversely, I have seen persons suffering very badly from exposure and rapidly approaching death, make an amazingly speedy recovery on realising that help was at hand, although as yet there is little that can be done on the hill to reheat a hypothermic patient, and all efforts are concentrated on preventing further heat loss. Pugh, in his Report to the Medical Commission on Accident Prevention, dealing with Accidental Hypothermia in Walkers, Climbers and Campers, states, 'The evidence is that unconscious or nearly unconscious patients revive spontaneously whatever treatment is administered once further cooling has been prevented'.

To prevent exposure, I suggest that three things are necessary: competence, good planning and good clothing. Competence will engender confidence and avoid demoralisation in adverse circumstances; good planning will avoid the possibility of trying to do too much, leading to exhaustion; and finally, good clothing will avoid unnecessary heat loss from the body.

Woollen underclothing is best, as wool retains a considerable proportion of its insulation value even when wet. I refer here not only to vest and pants, but to shirt, pullovers and trousers. Trousers especially are important as the legs contribute such a large percentage of the body's surface area. 'Jean' type trousers are not suitable for mountaineering, especially in winter. A thick cloth with a high woollen content is what is needed. The upper body should be covered by a windproof hooded anorak which will allow ventilation and prevent condensation problems. This should be long enough to completely cover the buttocks, and should have storm cuffs. It should be of a 'breathing' material and so it will not be entirely waterproof, but this is immaterial, as a completely waterproof cagoule and overtrousers should be carried in case of bad weather. The ideal headgear is a woollen balaclava, which can be worn as a cap or pulled down to cover the face and neck in bad weather. The saying, 'If the feet are cold, put on a hat', is not so foolish as it appears, and should be remembered, as a very large amount of heat can be lost through the head.

One final word about exposure. The aim of every party should be to avoid it. If it is encountered, then somewhere along the line

someone has failed. Diagnosis and treatment should be learned but ideally should never be needed.

Getting lost and becoming exhausted very often go hand in hand, and all too often are the fore-runners of death from exposure. Both can be prevented by good preplanning and working within one's abilities. Exhaustion can easily occur in a large party, where natural paces vary considerably. Everyone has his own optimum pace, and in a large party some members have to go too fast, and some too slow, so that the party may stay together. The ones who are going too fast are unnecessarily exhausting themselves, while the ones who are going too slow may well be producing too little heat to keep up their body temperature. Either extreme can very easily lead to exposure.

Exhaustion and dehydration on the hills can be more easily understood if it is remembered that an easy hill of, say 12 miles and 2,500 feet of climbing, is equivalent in energy consumption to a hard day's manual work, and that during the same easy hill day, one can lose almost 7 pints of water (normal - about 4 pints daily). These two dangers can be avoided by having frequent snacks of high calory foods, such as chocolate or dried fruit, and by drinking frequently. One is frequently warned against drinking stream water on the hills, but, provided the water is not contaminated, very little harm can be done. The dangers of dehydration are very much greater.

Haste is always a bad thing on the hill, and it helps one greatly to memorise the lie of a strange piece of country if one stops quite frequently to have a good look around. By doing this, one also sees what the terrain should look like coming back. Needless to say, one should at all times know one's exact position on the map, but if the worst comes to the worst, and one does get lost, the first thing to do is to stop and reason out the situation. At all costs avoid panic action like running. If possible, one should start working out one's approximate position by dead reckoning from the last known position, taking into account time, speed and direction of travel. Other points which may help are directions of slopes and streams, distinctively shaped natural features, lochs and so on.

In summer, one is unlikely to walk over a cliff, but it is very easy to do so in winter, when very often large cornices overhang the cliff edge, and when one may well be navigating in a white-out. In conditions of this sort, extreme caution is necessary, and if there are cliffs in the vicinity, it is advisable to rope up lest the leader should inadvertently go through a cornice. The possibility of this may seem unlikely, but it has happened several times in the Cairngorms in recent years.

No article on safety in the Cairngorms would be complete without some reference to the plateau bothies – the Curran, El Alamein and St Valery. By the time that this article goes to print, we hope that wise counsel will have prevailed, and that they will have been removed. While one tries not to be cynical, one cannot help noticing how few objected when they were built, but how many were knowledgeable about their dangers after the Feith Buidhe Disaster. I think that mountaineers have a lesson to learn from this – that they have a responsibility not only to protect the few remaining unspoilt wilderness areas, but to protect the vast mountain-ignorant public by speaking out loudly and without fear against undesirable and dangerous developments.



Poems

MOUNTAIN-TIDE

A. J. K. MONRO

Vista Distance – Disappearing
Reappearing – As of Lark
Horizon Backdrop – Shading Fading
Manifesting – Shapely Stark

Olden Golden – Browning Frowning
Heightening Depth – Long Breadth in Dark
Greening Tongue – Rich Emerald Flaming
Rocky Roughs – Grey Scree Stone Mark

Heathery Offshoots – Belling Swelling
Dioramic Sunset – Moonclear Hark
Clouding Lowering – Sky Impelling
Thunderous Dinning – Storm Lit Spark

Iced White Crumbling – Snow Pile Freezing
Mist Laced Towering – Frost Lit Bark
Rain Globed Spun Web – Shimmer Glimming
Sun Turned Rainbow – Lucent Arc



EXILE'S RETURN

GORDON C. GRANT

Ye proud, benign, companionable hills
Of Scotland, with what joy shall I behold
Once more each brooding crag and elfin peak,
Adornèd with a wisp of silken cloud,
Begirt with storms or glorified with light.

Stand fast, ye hills of home! bold Bennachie,
Black Arthur's Seat, Scolty, Kerloch, Morrone,
Ben Loyal, Ben Muich Dhui, Ben-y-Gloe –
Dear names! that fall as music on the ear
And haunt the memory. Hail, Lochnagar!
Schiehallion, Cruachan, Craigellachie
And all majestic mountains whose wild names
Are incantations, trumpeting to war
Or breathing peace and blessing – like Ben Avon.



ALLT AN LOCHAIN UAINE
(The burn of the green lochan)

by UILLEAM RIDIRE-NAOMH

Aig Allt an Lochain Uaine,
Ged bha'n t-aite fuar,
Bha'n fhardach fuasach blath
Ged thigeadh gaoth 'on thuath orm
'Us cathadh luath o'n aird.
Bha Allt an Lochain Uaine
Le' fhuaim ga m' chur gu pramh.

Mo chailin bhoidheach chuach-bhuidhe,
Na biodh ort gruaim no greann,
Ged tha mi a' dol as m' eadail
Ma's beò dhomh thig mi ann;
S' nuair bhios damh na croic
Ri boilich anns a' ghleann,
Cha d-thoirinn blas do phoig
Air stor nan Innsean thall.

Oidhche dhomh 's mi a' m' aonar
'S mi' comhnuidh anns a' ghleann,
Ann am bothan beag nan sgod
Far an cluinnear boilich mheann,
Air leam fhein gun cuala mi
Fuaim a' dol fo m' cheann
Ag innseadh dhomh 'bhi 'sealltainn
Gun robh an tòir 's a' ghleann.

Dh'eirich mi le buaireadh
'Us thog mi suas mo cheann;
Gach badag 'bha mu'n cuairt domh,
Chuir mi mu'm' ghuailinnibh teann.
Bha 'Nigh'n a' chornail'* shuas uam
A choisinn buaidh 's gach am;
'Us thuirt i 'Na biodh gruaim ort !
Ma's ruaig e, na bi mall.'

Shiubhail mi gach caochan
 O Laogha gu Carn-Mhaim,
 'Us bheachdaich mi gach aon diubh,
 Nach bitheadh daoine annt'.
 Mu'n d'fheuch i air aon charn,
 Ghrad dh'aithnich mi 'san uair sin
 Am 'Madadh Ruadh'† 's a' ghleann.

Labhair mi le ceile,
 'Us dh'eisd mi ris gach allt,
 Mar fhreagradh iad d'a cheile,
 'Us iad gu leir gun chainnt.
 Labhair mi ri m' Uachdaran
 'Thug uillt a' cruas nam beann;
 Le comhnadh 'n Fhir 'chaidh cheusadh,
 Cha bhi mi fein a'm fang.

By the stream of the green lochan,
 though cold was the situation,
 I once had my dwelling which was remarkably warm
 although the piercing North winds often blew
 the drifting snow from the brows of the mountains.
 The gurgling of the burn of the green lochan
 soothed me to sleep.

O beautiful, yellow-haired maiden,
 fret not nor frown,
 though I should leave the place which I love,
 for I shall again return;
 and when the stag of the hill
 is heard proclaiming in the glen,
 I would not exchange the kiss of thy lips
 for all the treasure of the low country.

One night alone
 and resident in the glen,
 sole occupant of that lonely shieling
 where the roes are heard proclaiming,
 I thought I heard
 a sound below my uneasy pillow
 telling me to be watchful,
 for the hunt was already in the glen.

I rose with anger
and lifted up my head;
I buckled on my accoutrements,
fast about my shoulders.
The Colonel's daughter * stood at my right hand
– she who ever behaved well in extremity;
and she said "Be not fearful!
if it comes to pursuit, be not slow."

I travelled the course of every stream
from the Lui to Carnavaime,
and I narrowly explored every hollow,
that might conceal the pursuers;
and before the sun lit up one cairn,
I quickly perceived
that 'Reynard' † was already in the glen.

I sank into serious meditation,
and listened to every stream,
as if they were answering each other,
and they entirely without language.
I spoke to my Lord
who caused the streams to issue in the rocky parts
of the mountains;
through the merits of Him who was crucified
I shall be rescued from difficulty.

* The Colonel's daughter is a figurative name for his favourite rifle, the constant companion of his wanderings, which had been presented to the bard by Colonel Grant of Rothiemurchus.

† The 'Reynard' is the bard's way of describing the gamekeeper.



In memoriam

COLONEL HENRY JACKSON BUTCHART
D.S.O., O.B.E., T.D., LL.D., B.L., J.P.

By the death of Colonel Butchart in August 1971, we see the passing of a great man, who has left us many happy memories of a long and useful life as administrator and sportsman. His boundless enthusiasm for both pursuits was most infectious to all who met him.

Colonel Butchart joined the Club in 1913, and had a very wide knowledge of the hill country from Aberdeen to Glenshee. He was made an Honorary Member of the Club at the Annual General Meeting in 1970.

He created a record by climbing in June 1908 the six main Cairngorms in nineteen hours. His companions were L. J. Davidson, H. G. Drummond, H. Kellas, and I. McLaren. Leaving Loch Builg at midnight, these are the details of timings, as printed in the 1950 revision of the *S.M.C. Cairngorms Guide* (p. 18):

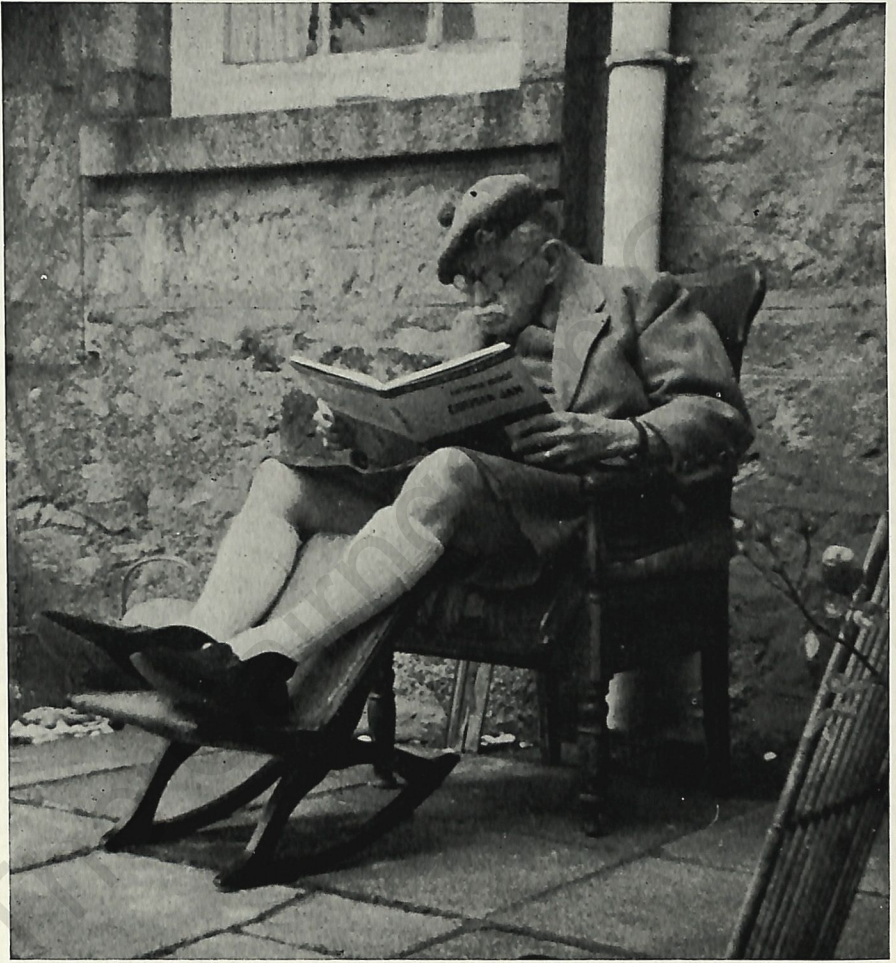
Ben Avon – 02.23
Ben a'Bhuird (North Top) – 03.50
Cairngorm – 08.00
Ben Macdhuì – 10.34
Cairn Toul – 15.16
Braeriach – 17.30
Glen Einich (Lower Bothy) – 19.00

This record was to remain unbroken until 1932.

Colonel Butchart was a founder of the Scottish Ski Club in 1907. For five years, he was President, and was accustomed to doing the necessary climbing on foot, and not by ski lift, chair lift, or téléferique – although in later years he made full use of mechanical aids. His favourite skiing resort was Kleine Scheidegg in the Bernese Oberland, where for many years he was a familiar figure in his Balmoral Bonnet.

It is interesting to read an account of one of his early skiing outings to Morven in the winter of 1905:

In those days, the motor car was practically non-existent. We therefore depended on the railway and on horse vehicles. In my first expedition, we took the train to Dinnet, where by arrangement we were met by a waggonette with two horses. W. J. Cook of Aberdeen, being an expert, went on his skis, being towed from the waggonette. We went to Morven from a point near Logie Coldstone, and returned to Ballater on ski, down the Tullich Burn, and took the train back to Aberdeen.



Colonel H. J. Butchart

His military career was both outstanding and varied. During the First World War, he held important staff appointments in France, Egypt, and Palestine, earning a D.S.O. and other decorations. Later, he commanded the University O.T.C. for eight years, was chairman of Aberdeen Territorial and Auxiliary Forces Association, and in the Second World War, set an excellent example by his service as a sergeant in the Aberdeen Battalion of the Home Guard.

For many years, he was County Commissioner of the Boy Scouts, and received the Silver Acorn – the movement's highest award.

A keen Rugby player in his younger days, he was a regular supporter of the University Rugby Football Club. I have heard it said that when he was touch judge at King's College, it often meant a gain of five to ten yards for the University!

A Memorial Service was held in the Chapel at King's College on 3 December 1971, and I should like to quote from Principal Wright's brilliant oration at that very well attended ceremony:

I remember him at a Grammar School Prize-Giving giving the boys this advice: 'If ever you have to choose between taking exercise yourself, or watching someone else doing so, choose the active alternative.' It was therefore very appropriate that we should have named the Butchart Physical Recreation Centre of the University after him.

Amongst his many other accomplishments, Colonel Butchart was an expert in Scottish Reels and Country Dancing. Before he had been long in a hotel anywhere in Europe, he had a knack of getting people of all nationalities to dance and enjoy an Eightsome Reel.

He had a wonderful life, and although not able to climb in his later years, his interest in all Scottish activities was evidenced by his continuing to wear Highland Dress with the bright Butchart tartan until his death at the ripe old age of 89.

E.B.R.

MARGARET GAULD

Margaret Gauld's unexpected and untimely death on 11 February 1972 was a great shock to her many friends. She was a person of such clear and honest thinking who perhaps took the pain of others into her hands too often, but always appeared so capable, and must have given such a feeling of trust and peace to her parents.

The interest and closeness of a conversation with Margaret while both she and yourself walked among the hills was something to stay

in the mind for a very long time and which quite a few of us will be privileged to remember.

On the practical side, Margaret soothed or averted several nasty blisters on a number of hillsides with her special system of bandaging.

For those who only knew Margaret from a distance, she will be remembered for the energy and enthusiasm she put into all she undertook, and be respected for her knowledge, sense, ability and enjoyment of the hills.

Margaret, who joined the Cairngorm Club in 1965, also joined in many Club outings and was often at Muir Cottage. Latterly she became a great bothy enthusiast, and it was her ambition to stay in every mountain bothy in Scotland, especially the more remote ones.

For a great many years to come, certain places such as the Cuillin of Skye, where she climbed her 100th Munro in 1971, and so many hilltops and bothies, will hold fond memories of Margaret Gauld. For the many of us who knew her well, it will be these memories which pay tribute to a very special member of our Club.

J.M.M.

GEORGE EDMOND CROMBIE

We regret to record the death of George Edmond Crombie in December 1972. Although a comparative newcomer to the Club, he had known the Cairngorms well since boyhood. During family holidays spent at Braemar forty to fifty years ago he explored the glens and visited the tops in that area. After graduating, with honours in Classics, at Aberdeen University, in 1930 he entered the Indian Civil Service. In the Second World War he served in the Indian Army. After 1947 he was transferred to the Foreign Office and held a number of overseas appointments, which took him to, among other places, Canada and Gambia. On his retirement he returned to live in Aberdeen and joined the Cairngorm Club to renew his acquaintance with the Scottish hills. Many of us will have happy memories of his company on recent excursions.

J.E.B.

ANNE ELIZABETH ESSELMONT

Betty Esslemont died in Wick last September, after becoming suddenly ill at Bettyhill where she and her husband were on holiday.

As Betty Duncan she joined the Cairngorm Club in 1928. She had little opportunity of sharing in Club activities, however, as her marriage to Gordon Esslemont in 1929 took her to London. But for over forty years the Esslemont return to the hills of home was an annual pilgrimage. The lessons Betty learned in climbing and hill-walking as the eldest of Dr George Duncan's three children were unremittingly put into practice not only in Scotland and England but overseas. When her husband and she went on a post-retirement tour of the world, she climbed in Australia and Canada and her article in the last number of the Cairngorm Club Journal – 'Hill Walking in Distant Lands' – gives proof of her continuing interest, as do many of her poems.

In the Thistle Cottage Visitors' Book, Betty's name in a large childish hand first appears as one of the five Duncans who were Maggie Gruer's guests in August 1913. And regularly after that the name recurs, in the family group, with student friends, and later alongside that of her husband.

The long Duncan association with the Cairngorm Club – George Duncan himself joined in 1894 – is still actively maintained by the youngest of the family, Helen, who has been a member since 1931. To her as well as to Betty's husband and two sons we offer our sympathy in their loss.

L.D.



Proceedings of the Club

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

The *Eighty-third* Annual General Meeting was held on 24 November 1971. Before commencing the business of the Meeting, the President Miss Sheila Murray referred with regret to the death of Col. H. J. Butchart, an Honorary Member.

Office-Bearers appointed were: *Hon. President* Col. E. Birnie Reid; *President* Miss Sheila Murray; *Vice-Presidents* Mr J. S. Galloway and Dr S. A. B. Black; *Secretary* Mr E. F. Johnston; *Treasurer* Mr W. A. H. Reid; *Editor* Mr D. Hawksworth; *Librarian* Miss J. A. Callander; *Huts Custodian* Mr P. F. Howgate; *Meets Secretary* Mr G. Ewen; *Indoor Meets Secretary* Mr J. S. Galloway.

The *Eighty-fourth* Annual General Meeting was held on 22 November 1972. Before commencing the business the President referred with regret to the deaths of Mrs A. E. Esslemont, Miss Margaret M. Gauld and Dr J. A. Sellar.

The President in her report expressed the thanks of the Club to all those who had contributed to the success of the project for the reconstruction of Muir of Inverey.

Before the election of Office-Bearers the President intimated that Mr E. F. Johnston would not be standing for re-election as Secretary, nor Mr P. F. Howgate as Huts Custodian. Both were thanked for their years of service.

Office-Bearers appointed were: *Hon. President* Col. E. Birnie Reid; *President* Miss Sheila Murray; *Vice-Presidents* Dr S. A. B. Black and Mr P. F. Howgate; *Secretary* Mr R. C. Shirreffs; *Treasurer* Mr W. A. H. Reid; *Editor* Mr D. Hawksworth; *Librarian* Miss J. A. Callander; *Huts Custodian* Dr D. G. Hardy; *Meets Secretary* Mr G. Ewen; *Indoor Meets Secretary* Mr J. S. Galloway.

Mr A. Leslie Hay and Mr Alan C. R. Watt were elected to Honorary Membership of the Club. Welcoming their election the President paid tribute to the service which both had rendered to the Club over a long period.

ANNUAL DINNERS Northern Hotel

- 1971 Dr R. A. North, 'Overland to the Hindu Kush'
1972 Mr Roy Dennis, 'Birds of Fair Isle and the Highlands'

INDOOR MEETS Beechgrove Church House

- 1971 Jan. 'Mount Mlanje in Malawi', Dr A. M. A. Hutcheson
Mar. 'Highland Excursions', J. Hector Gray, Esq.
Mar. 'In the foothills of Machapuchare', Miss Claire Geddes
Nov. Members Night
- 1972 Jan. 'Travels in Peru', Dave Marden, Esq.
Feb. 'Antarctica', Dr D. E. Sugden
Mar. 'South African Mountains are Different', Miss Jean A. Callander

- Nov. Members Night
1973 Jan. Showing of Old Cairngorm Club Slides, Miss Jean A. Callander
Feb. 'Everest Trek', A. Leslie Hay, Esq.
Mar. 'Scottish Coasts', Dr W. E. Fraser

All Indoor Meets were well attended, especially the talk by Mr Hay when there was an audience of ninety-three. Another feature is the popularity of the Members Night – it is intended to open each Indoor Meets session with a Members Night in future.

MEETS AND EXCURSIONS 1971-73

The excursions have continued to be very well attended, with an average of forty-two persons present. The smallest turnout was for the overnight excursion, at one time a very popular event, from Bridge of Orchy to Glen Lochay; the largest for the Inverey to Spital of Glenshee Traverse in October 1972. (Numbers attending the excursions are given in brackets after the excursion in the list at the end.) Two coaches were hired on two occasions, and on two others, a minibus was required in addition; on a number of other occasions members 'on the waiting list' kindly offered their own cars as additional transport; very few, therefore, were ever disappointed.

The Corrieyairack Pass has perhaps more historical than climbing interest, nevertheless it attracted a very large turnout. The minibus proved useful for ferrying people from Garva Bridge up to Melgarve, a distance of some three and a half miles, the bus failing to negotiate the hump back of the General Wade bridge.

On the Ladder Hills excursion, a large number of members were turned back by keepers at Glenbuchat Lodge on the track from there to Glenlivet, which is, in fact, a public right of way. Most people found alternative hills to climb on the north side of Glenbuchat. Those baulked of their objective may have been disappointed but, on the lowest plane, it is in the Club's long term interest not to insist too strongly on one's rights. For the Christian attitude, see *Journal*, vol. 12, p. 35, 'A Case for Forbearance'.

The Easter Meet of 1972 was held at the Falls of Lora Hotel, Connel, Argyllshire. Once again the hotel was unable to accommodate the entire party of around fifty members, the surplus being accommodated in various houses around the village. Three days of heavy rain restricted our activities, although a number of hills were climbed, both around Loch Creran and to the east in the Ben Cruachan area. One party missed breakfast on the Saturday to catch the early morning ferry to Mull, where the ascent of Ben More was accomplished. The less adventurous of the party paid visits to Oban; others pioneered a route up the highest mountain on the Isle of Lismore, all 269 feet of it! (The ferry boat was very small too!) Meanwhile the Meets Secretary spent the afternoon under the bonnet of his car, worried by noises from the engine and from the inquisitive herd of Highland cattle surrounding him. Mr Bain announced that he spent his day in New York. Close examination of the map showed that this was possible, although his 'New York' has no Statue of Liberty on its approaches.

The overnight excursion started off near Bridge of Orchy in torrential rain, which continued for much of the night. A large number of the party sought shelter at Tomochoarn at the head of Loch Lyon, having had great difficulty in crossing the Abhuinn Glas which was in full spate. Those who arrived at the burn before total darkness had set in found the ruins of a bridge, which facilitated the crossing a little, but some were unable to cross during the dark hours and so had to spend the night in the open. The morning, in contrast, was clear and bright, so the second part of the journey was much more pleasant than the first.

The excursion to Ben Lomond was the first day excursion, to my knowledge, to go so far afield. No meal was arranged so that more time would be allowed for the climb. The bus made very good time to Kinlochard, helped no doubt by recent improvements in the roads. A good but very windy day changed strangely at the summit, which we reached in mist and a flat calm.

The winters of 1972 and 1973 have been notable for their lack of snow. Nevertheless, few members reached the summit of Lochnagar in February 1972 owing to deep soft snow all the way up, and on January 1973, again on Lochnagar, it was snowing heavily and blowing, and few were able to find the top. The Morven excursion of February 1972 was noted for the huge bird-like statues, formed by ice around the fence posts near the summit, like a row of sentinels standing guard.

G.E.

EXCURSIONS

1971

- 11 Sept. Corrieyairack Pass (55)
- 3 Oct. Lochnagar (46)
- 24 Oct. Devil's Elbow to Inverey (50)
- 13 Nov. Ladder Hills (41)
- 5 Dec. Cairn Mona Gowan (50)

1972

- 16 Jan. Glen Clunie (40)
- 5 Feb. Lochnagar (39)
- 27 Feb. Morven (32)
- 19 Mar. Glen Clova (40)
- 23 Apr. Ballater to Glen Esk (41)
- 13 May Pass of Drumochter (41)
- 4 June Beinn a'Bhuird (38)
- Midsummer. Bridge of Orchy to Glen Lochay (30)
- 9 Sept. Linn of Dee to Blair Atholl (36)

1972

- 30 Sept. Ben Lomond (37)
- 22 Oct. Inverey to Spital of Glen-shee (57)
- 12 Nov. Lochnagar (43)
- 3 Dec. Hill of Wirren (41)

1973

- 14 Jan. Lochnagar (48)
- 10 Feb. Auchallater (38)
- 3 Mar. Loch Lee (41)
- 25 Mar. Glen Clova (42)
- 29 April Carn Bhac (29)
- 19 May Craig Mheaghaidh (39)
- 3 June Beinn a'Bhuird (36)
- 23/24 June Cluanie to Affric (29)

EASTER MEETS

- 1972 Connel
- 1973 Ullapool

Notes

BEN NEVIS RACE 1972

The race began officially in 1895 when William Swan, a local barber, ran up and down the mountain in 2 hours 41 minutes. From then on, the race was held intermittently until 1951, and since annually without a break. It is now held on the first Saturday in September. The route commences at the new Fort William Town Park at the foot of Glen Nevis and follows the tourist track for 7 miles to the mountain top at 4,418 feet. Weather conditions vary considerably from year to year, and in 1957 the only fatality in the history of the race occurred, when a young man died of exposure in atrocious weather conditions.

1972's race took place on a day of perfect visibility and very high temperatures. The event is efficiently organised, with medical and mountain rescue teams positioned at frequent intervals along the track. The runners' progress is monitored and relayed back to the park by radio. For a small entry fee, the competitor is provided at the end of the race with refreshments and a shower at the park, plus high tea later in Fort William.

This year, out of 153 names submitted for the race 115 completed the course. The winner, David Cannon of Kendal A.C. finished in 1 hour 32 minutes, a fine performance in the gruelling heat. I was running in my first race, and, due to my occupation, had not been able to train as much as I would have liked. However, I decided to have a go before I got too old (I am 53).

We started off from the park at 2.30 pm and immediately the hard men were away. I tagged along somewhere at the rear sweating profusely, and decided that if I got up and down in 3 hours, if at all, I would be content. Somewhere about the burn at the half-way stage, I seemed to be passing quite a number of young lads, and felt a bit happier. Not a great deal higher, the hard men passed me flying downhill, some shouting in pain. I never discovered whether this was due to muscular injury or to falls on the steep scree, I certainly saw blood on the rocks at more than one point. Crossing a small slushy snow field where a handful of snow cooled my face, I reached the top in 1½ hours. At the top, I received a small disc from a race official to hand back at the bottom as a check. Then came the jolting jog downhill. On the upper slopes, a good deal of effort was needed to retain control on the steep loose scree. In common with many competitors, my legs felt like jelly on reaching the level 2 miles at the foot. I jogged round the final circuit of the arena quite pleased with my performance of 2 hours 20 minutes, and in 67th place.

As I passed the finishing line the announcer commented 'It just shows what can be done', and I felt like remarking 'You can say that again!'

G. M. KYNASTON

ALL THE 4000s

Having joined the Munro-bagging fraternity from the ranks of long-distance runners in the spring of 1971, it was inevitable that a competitive element

should be present in my approach to the Scottish hills. Among the aims which sprang to mind were (a) to do them all, and (b) to do them as quickly as possible. Both were unsatisfactory from a competition/satisfaction viewpoint, the first being rather protracted and the second undesirable, as I wanted to spend a long time doing the '277' Munros.

The solution presented itself after a visit to the Club Library in spring 1972. In the 1920s, Eustace Thomas, president of the Rucksack Club, along with three companions, had scaled all the 4,000 feet Scottish peaks within 24 hours. The party had motored north from Borrowdale at Easter, at their leisure, and at 15.02 hours on the Friday afternoon started their walk from General Wade's old road on the north side of Aonach Mor. They reached the summit of the latter hill at 16.40, Aonach Beag at 17.01, Carn Mor Dearg at 17.50, and Ben Nevis at 18.44. They descended the west face of the Ben, and had dinner at Fort William before leaving for the Cairngorms by car at 23.30. Glenmore Lodge was left at 03.55 on the Saturday morning, and Cairn Gorm reached at 05.36. The north top and main top of Ben Macdhuì and Coire Sputan Dearg were reached at 07.08, 07.38 and 07.59; then, after the descent to Glen Dee, Cairn Toul and Angel's Peak were achieved at 10.50 and 12.12, followed by the Braeriach Plateau Top at 12.46, Stob Coire an Lochain at 13.25, and Braeriach at 01.40. The total time from the start of the walk to the final cairn had taken 22 hours 32 minutes, the weather being fine and clear throughout.

The prospect of tackling all the 4000s was an inviting one, so plans were made. My friend, Trevor Evans, who had just completed 100 Munros, was keen to tackle them and we decided, that as access to the mountains had improved in the half century since Thomas' walk, we would commence our attempt from Glen Nevis, and later drive to the Cairngorm car park. We considered utilising the same starting points as Thomas, but felt that by commencing at definite and obvious points, giving quickest access, we would set a 'norm' for future attempts.

On Friday, 23 June, we left Aberdeen by car in the early evening and motored to Glen Nevis, sleeping in the car, in the park at the foot of Allt Coire Eoghainn. After four hours' sleep, and a drowsy breakfast, we set off at 03.53 up the Coire in light drizzle and wind. It was quite a shock to see the amount of snow on the summit of Ben Nevis, after scaling the protected southern approach (05.53). After a brief stop, we followed the arête to Carn Mor Dearg (07.03), crossing then to Aonach Mor (08.12), and Aonach Beag (08.45). The underfoot snow diminished as we followed a burn south-west to Steall. We reached our car at 10.12 in a dampish state, after 6 hours 19 minutes, in which we covered 8 miles and scaled 6,200 feet.

We departed from the Glen at 10.25 and motored the 75 miles or so to Cairngorm car park, with a couple of stops en route, recommencing our walk at 13.16 hours. By this time, the day was fine and sunny, and the summits of Cairn Gorm, Ben Macdhuì (North Top), and Ben Macdhuì (Main Top) were reached at 14.18, 15.45 and 15.58 respectively. After a short stop, and in chilly conditions, Coire Sputan Dearg was attained at 16.21. Perhaps the most pleasant part of our walk was the descent to Glen Dee via Tailors Burn, although crossing the chilly Dee, our bare feet seeming to be pierced by the sharp stones, was best forgotten.

The summit of Cairn Toul was reached at 18.35, then mist encompassed us and delayed our arrival at Sgor an Lochan Uaine (19.20). Worse was to follow. In trying to stay clear of cliffs in the poor visibility (20 yards), we headed south-west for 10 minutes or so, before checking our map. However, the plateau top of Braeriach was attained at 20.14, Stob Coire an Lochain at 20.40, and finally Braeriach at 21.05. Our time from the start of the walk was 17 hours 12 minutes, a new target for '4000 baggers', and by the time we reached the car, we had walked approximately $26\frac{1}{2}$ miles, climbed 13,350 feet, and been 'on the go' for 20 hours 27 minutes.

We descended to the Pools of Dee as dusk fell, clambered 1,000 feet up to the Curran Bothy, and walked through the dark and rain until the car was reached at 00.20. Trevor drove to Ballater, where he rejoined his family in their caravan, leaving a half-asleep Edwards to continue to Aberdeen. At 02.15 my eyes refused to stay open, so I slept in the car at Aboyne for four hours before completing a memorable journey.

We hoped that our attempt would be of interest to others, and in favourable conditions, no doubt a faster time is possible.

MEL EDWARDS

ALL THE MUNROS

Well, it's all over! Just under four years from Cairngorm to An Teallach, with 275 others in between, I find myself sitting wondering why, when discovering what a Munro was, I said that I was going to climb them all. Initially it was simply a challenge, latterly a fetish, and finally a relief to get finished. Now I feel that I can approach the hills from a different point of view – perhaps linger a little longer on some, even try less high hills, but perhaps more interesting ones, and even repeat the more rewarding. I have no regrets, though, about being a Munro-bagger.

The very fact that my aim was to climb more than Munro himself has opened my eyes to the natural beauties of Scotland, taken me to remote areas, given me companionship in strange places, shown me the power of the elements in the mountains, and made me aware of the magnificent country in which we were born. Ignorance of one's own country is embarrassing. This has been rectified to some extent by my travels in these wild and isolated zones where nature still is the master and litter rare. No! I have no regrets!

I have to thank many people for their help and friendship over the last four years. First the Aberdeen Grammar School hillwalking Club for starting it all off – especially Ian Stephen and Jim Will: also several boys in the school who were kindred spirits, and who accompanied me on many ventures. Secondly, the Cairngorm club and its members, for companionship – who can forget the warm 'spirit' which flowed on my last Munro, An Teallach! And thirdly, my long suffering wife, who, when I had climbed three and said there were still a few to do, replied, 'For goodness sake, go and do them – you'll not be happy till they are all done'. My dear, I thank you for your tolerance!

IAN C. SPENCE

BOB SCOTT'S RETIRAL

The Mar Estates divided, Derry Lodge lost to the Club, and now Bob Scott has retired! There will always be climbers and walkers to frequent the area, but things will never quite be the same again.

If my memory is good, Bob once told me that his father had been keeper at Derry, and that he himself had been born there. Other information is that he was born at Linn of Dee. This is an academic detail of no real consequence to any other than Bob himself. Those who have read of Neil Munro's famous character 'Para Handy' will remember that that worthy claimed that 'he had been born all along Loch Fyne side'. There is a precedent, therefore, for saying that Bob Scott, a character in his own right, was born 'all around the Derry'.

After the war, he had a brief spell at Linn of Dee before moving to Luibeg where he remained until his recent retiral. During the Club's tenury of Derry Lodge, he acted for the Club in a care-taking capacity. This was not an easy position for him to be in, for he had his main employers' interests to consider as well as ours, which, as an ex kind of factor myself, I could appreciate. I am sure that he kept a fair and reasonable balance between the two interests.

Bob, besides an imposing figure, has a fair command of language, and, in his own inimitable way, was able to convince minor wrong-doers of the error of their ways. On occasion, he had to write to me regarding more serious crimes which might upset his superiors. Such complaints were never frivolous and always, on investigation, justified, so he had my full support when dealing with them. It was after all, in the Club's own interests that the Estate should not be upset in any way.

So much for the record. What of the man himself? Those meeting Bob for the first time were perhaps inclined to be over-awed by his commanding presence and stentorian voice, developed over the years, no doubt, by calling to his favourite stags across the water on Meall an Lundain, or up the slopes of Sgur Dubh. Given time, however, one realised the underlying kindness, the sense of humour, on occasion extremely subtle, and the explosive laughter which are inherent in the man. The former was evident in the warmth of the welcome given by the late Mrs Scott and Bob to many callers at Luibeg. There are many examples of the latter but perhaps one gem will suffice. One sunny summer Sunday I arrived at Derry. Bob had been taking his usual look round, and, as we were chatting in front of the Lodge, a car passed by and stopped at the stables. There was, perhaps, nothing unusual in that, but when four men got out, complete with fishing rods and baskets, it was clear from the astonished look on Bob's face that something very much out of the ordinary had occurred. He stepped out into the middle of the road, and drew the party's attention to his presence. One approached diffidently, not quite sure of the reception he would get, and asked if there was anywhere around where they could be given permission to fish. Bob explained with great courtesy that the only place where he could give them such permission was Loch A'an. After a momentary pause, he added 'and that's not in my beat'. The interview terminated with a burst of his explosive laughter.

While Luibeg was no doubt, a lonely place at times, the Scotts were friendly people who liked the transient company of the thousands of young folk who, over the years, called at Luibeg looking for shelter. This they usually

got, for a nominal charge, in the several outbuildings, although I understand that the pony stable was a bit more expensive, since the pony provided company and warmth! Many visitors came again and again, and Bob got to know them, and to know how they were likely to behave, and where they were likely to go. All in all, I am sure that he always had a pretty good idea of what was happening 'on his beat'!

The Cairngorm Club and its members, as well as the thousands of others who have passed his way, will, I am sure, be glad to join me in wishing Bob Scott health and contentment in his retirement at Allanquoch.

ROBERT BAIN

LOCH TURRET

Activities of the Central District Water Board and of the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board have led to changes to the footpaths through the hills west of Crieff. Old maps are out of date, so it is hoped these notes may be helpful to wanderers in this area.

Loch Turret has been increased in length by the construction of a dam about $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles downstream from the original outflow. The road along the lochside to Glenturret Lodge has been submerged, as have the foundations of the Lodge itself. During the past year, a track, presumably for shooting purposes, has been bull-dozed north out of the side of the hill. It is undulating, but about 200 feet above the loch, and extends beyond the head of the new loch to the base of Auchnafree Hill. From here, a loop rises steeply for 800 feet round the SE shoulder, then swings right round the valley to the plateau above the Blue Craigs, from where it descends to Glen Turret. For climbers coming off Ben-y-Hone, there is a sheep track above the south shore of the loch. This ultimately joins a wider track leading to the dam.

The public footpath from Invergeldie to Ardeonaig on Loch Tayside has also been affected by the building of a dam above Spout Rollo in Glen Lednock. The new loch thus created is about 2 miles long, and has submerged the old footpath for this distance. The hillsides are steep, and, though an intermittent sheep track exists on the north shore, this is no longer the accepted route. Walkers coming from Ardeonaig should leave the footpath half a mile before it reaches the loch, and go round the head to a Hydro Board building on the south shore. From here, a track goes over the water shed into Glen Maik, whence it follows a route roughly parallel to the original, which it joins below Spout Rollo.

ROBERT BAIN

Book reviews

Scottish Climbs, vols 1 and 2. HAMISH MACINNES. Constable, 1971. £1.75 each.

The subtitle of these volumes, 'A Mountaineer's Guide to Climbing in Scotland' is an excellent description of their purpose. They contain a representative selection of climbs on all the major crags in Scotland including two sea stacks, the Old Man of Stoer and the Old Man of Hoy. The photographs are excellent, not only illustrating the topography of the rock faces, but also showing climbers in action on rock and snow. The text and photographs together give an exciting and informative survey of the wealth and variety of climbing available in Scotland.

The books are not meant to supplement the traditional guides published by the Scottish Mountaineering Club, the author emphasising this himself in the introduction, but they must inevitably invite comparison. The obvious difference, of course, is in the smaller number of climbs described. For example, only about a third of the routes on Lochnagar featured in the SMC guide appear in MacInnes. The descriptions of the individual climbs are shorter, but, without actually trying them out on the rock, appear to be adequate. However, an important and welcome feature of these volumes is the emphasis given in both the illustrations and the text to the crags under winter conditions. Indeed, some routes, for example, Polyphemus and Raeburn's gullies on Lochnagar, are described only as winter routes although they are also rock climbs.

Anyone climbing regularly in a particular area will need the appropriate SMC guide, but for occasional visits to less familiar districts, 'Scottish Climbs' will be good books to have.

A. J. K. M.

The Scottish Lochs, vols 1 and 2. TOM WEIR. Constable, 1970. £1.75 and £2.

It is not often that books are published which can fit easily into a rucksack pocket, but that surely is where Tom Weir's *Scottish Lochs* books belong. So much information on many different subjects is packed into these narrow volumes, they demand to be used when out and about, and not left on the book shelf at home. Have you forgotten how the parallel roads of Glen Roy were formed? Do you want to fish in Loch Watten? What kind of alpine are you likely to find in Trotternish? Has anyone ever heard of the song made up by the poacher who liked to live near Lochan Uaine near Derry Cairngorm? And exactly when did the ospreys come back to Speyside? Apart from the most interesting text, there are many photographs of the high standard we have come to expect of the author. These are the kind of books which, bought for someone's birthday, somehow end up rather battered but well used in one's own collection.

J. C. A.

