

The Cairngorm Club Journal



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THE CAIRNGORM CLUB JOURNAL

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Slochd Wall, start of crux pitch; Slochd Wall about to enter crux corner; Slochd Wall, entering crux corner; west face of Mitre Ridge; the crux of the Primate; cold weather laboratory on Morrone; Dr David Levack; Col. E. Birnie Reid.

Drawings by Ian Strachan

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THE PRESIDENT

Since the last issue of the Journal in 1977, the past President, Mr H. M. R. Watt, has been succeeded by Mr P. F. Howgate, who was elected at the Annual General Meeting of the Club on the 21st November 1979.

Peter Howgate was born in Liverpool and later gained a degree in Chemistry at Liverpool University. His first hill walking and climbing experience was gained in Wales and the Lake District, starting in 1948 and his first visit to Scotland was in 1951 when he climbed on Ben Nevis and in Skye. He moved to Aberdeen in 1955 in order to be nearer the Scottish hills but also to take up a post at the Torry Research Station where he is now a Principal Scientific Officer. Fairly recently, his work enabled him to be seconded to Malaysia for sixteen months.

Mr Howgate and his wife, Pamela, joined the Club as Ordinary members in 1956 and quickly established themselves as active participants in Club activities. Reference is made to a description in the Journal, Vol. 17, No. 91, 1957, regarding a route (D) on Juniper Ledges, Stac Polly which Mr and Mrs Howgate climbed in July 1956 and which was believed to be a new route.

Peter Howgate was elected to the Committee in 1957 and served until 1959 when he was appointed Huts Custodian, an office which he held until 1967 and again from 1970 until 1972. He was, therefore, very closely involved in the alterations to and the enlargement of Muir of Inverey which culminated in the official opening on the 1st July 1973. He was elected a Vice-President in 1972, an office which he held until 1975.

Mr Howgate becomes the 31st President and his election is to the great good fortune of the Cairngorm Club.

THE PAST EDITOR

The 98th edition of the Journal and the first of Volume 19 sees a change of editorship. The past Editor, Donald Hawksworth, was Librarian from 1969 to 1970 and Editor from 1969 to 1979 and during that time, he edited the four editions of the Journal which make up Volume 18. The Club is grateful to Mr Hawksworth for maintaining the high standards of the Journal, which is due in no small part to his intimate knowledge of the hills at home and abroad and also to his other wide-ranging interests which, in the end, persuaded him (but not the Club) that he would not do full justice to another volume. Club members will recall that Donald Hawksworth has long since reached the PM ('Post Munro') stage, as described in characteristic fashion in a joint article - CCJ, Vol. 18, 94, having climbed his first Munro in 1951 and his last in 1967, with all the 'new' Munros being added since then.

When not working as Music Adviser to Grampian Regional Council, Donald Hawksworth continues to be very involved in Aberdeen music-making — as conductor of youth ensembles, pianist and organist. Still he manages time for the hills and the acquisition of a cottage near Strathdon a few years ago, encouraged him to enjoy the delights of lesser known lower hills and to set off on his next target of Corbett-bagging. The present Editor, having drawn on Mr Hawksworth's editorial experience, has quickly extracted the promise of additional assistance in the form of an article based on his more recent adventures in the hills.



CAIRNGORM CLIMBING – A CONTRIBUTION

ANDREW NISBET

Aberdeen's climbers have always held their own special regard for the Cairngorms, a love of the remote corries untouched by civilisation, but a love not always shared by those from the rest of Scotland. The visiting climber tends to see only the protracted approach walk, the unspectacular scenery and finds an awkward style of rock climbing which has been accused of offering little technical interest. The grassy ledges offend the purity of the climb and the perpetual cold wind from the tops chills their enthusiasm. In winter the cliffs are plastered with crusty powder or hoar frost, forcing the methodical clearing of holds and vegetation; it's a slow and cold business, with little of the physical pleasure of blasting up a steep ice pitch on front points, but requiring craft, patience and a certain dedication to unfold the secrets of each pitch.

I can see their point. I think of past days in the Cairngorms with a warmhearted feeling, a friendly affection; not the vertical excitement of Glencoe rock, the dramatic peak scenery of Torridon or a route snatched from the teeth of a Ben Nevis storm. Somehow the memories are sunbathing on the sands of the Dubh Loch, watching the evening light fade at Loch Avon or peeping out from the Smith-Winram howff at swirling clouds in the corrie below. The Cairngorm addict has the dedication to his mountains to require more than just the short term rush of adrenalin.

But now I detect a hint of change. The hermitic existence of the serious Cairngorm climber is slowly being eroded. It's not so much that the Cairngormer is losing his addiction but more that the outsiders are waking up. Development and publicity are packing the popular climbing centres. "Hard Rock", "Mountain" magazine and motorways from the South are turning Glencoe into a climber's Blackpool, while only the Cairngorms and the North-West can offer the escape which many Scottish climbers seek. But equally important in attracting the new visitor has been the development of modern-style routes, clean rock, steep and hard, sufficient to satisfy the rock gymnast while retaining the mountain wilderness setting. Ever since the early sixties the rock climbing standards have been creeping up as local climbers gradually adopted new equipment and a new psychological approach. And as the standard rises, so does the quality of the routes. Most notable was the development of Creag an Dubh Loch, but the traditional Scottish reluctance to publicise kept visitors to a minimum.

Winter climbing, however, has progressed in a different way. The standard of buttress climbing in the fifties was so high that almost all the summer routes had ascents in winter and no real rise in difficulty was seen

until the mid seventies. Ice climbing standards had been rising, but much more slowly than on the icier cliffs in the West of Scotland, so the ice routes in the Cairngorms, less spectacular than their Nevis counterparts, had attracted little attention in the outside world. With the advent and subsequent consolidation of front pointing techniques in the seventies, suddenly many climbers were repeating the hardest routes and it was only a matter of time before standards took off again. And so they have, with a new generation of climbers trained only in front pointing and a new climatic trend producing an icier winter every year (1980 being the iciest of all). The new spectacular routes will bring the publicity to attract the visitor. Already the visitor from other parts of Scotland is noticeably more common and soon the hordes from down South will follow. The change in rock climbers happened earlier, but the process looks similar; the development of hard routes on Creag an Dubh Loch and the Shelter Stone Crag in the late sixties and early seventies, the subsequent generation of publicity in the seventies and now the attraction of national and even international visitors. Publicity is more voracious these days. This year's hard winter routes on the Dubh Loch will be splashed across the popular magazines. The final stage of a mass invasion may be on us in only a year or two. Sad, you may think, but it doesn't dismay me too much. The increase in the number of climbers seems small compared with the proliferation of hillwalkers and will be a minor factor in environmental damage caused by the rising population in the hills. The increased activity is leading to more competition, more information and more discussion, encouraging a more intense approach to the sport; not to everyone's taste but I find it exciting. I make no claims as a rock climber, but in winter I've been involved in a few of the new desperate routes, although usually on the blunt end of the rope, I must admit; the sort of route that has led to the controversial call for an extra grade six at the top, but which I personally think is premature.

These new climbs are on steep, smooth faces, usually on thin ice with a little vegetation where the angle allows. Crack climbing with axes torqued or simply slotted into icy cracks is allowing VS rock pitches to be climbed free in winter, and an air of confidence in crampons on ice down to verglas thickness has given the necessary psychological boost to attempt pitches which look unreasonable. Where before you looked for holds or drools of ice, the odd tuft of grass or invisible crack may be enough. Crypt, on the Tough-Brown face of Lochnagar is such an example.

Despite its quality as a rock climb, Crypt has always been discussed as a realistic possibility for a winter route. The big corner system often collects a high-angled snow drift in powdery conditions and the white streak catches one's eye. "Wouldn't it be great if it thawed and froze a couple of times?" But it always seemed to disappear after any thaw. The cliff held its usual big accumulation of hoar frost plastering every surface.

But unlike the previous few winters, there was a thin and fairly general plating of ice underneath. How it got there remains a mystery. As far as I knew temperatures had been well below freezing ever since the powder arrived. Maybe an unsuspected temperature inversion had allowed some local thawing and freezing. It certainly goes to prove that you can never be sure of conditions without actually putting your nose against the rock. I'd been severely caught out by these unusual conditions the weekend before, on a first ascent of Link Face on the Black Spout Pinnacle with John Anderson. Equipped with tricouni plates for snow covered rock instead of crampons, the ice had been a major shock and had forced me to prussick the route behind John. I should say what an achievement it was for him to lead almost all of what is one of the hardest routes around. It scared me stupid (and probably him too!) watching him lead an unprotected crux above a terrible belay, something which had been haunting me all week (and did for the rest of the winter). However, I knew conditions were ripe for a chance of success on Crypt, though nothing like the idealised nevé-banked corners that everyone seemed to be waiting for. Poor John had suffered bad frostbite on the Link and was out of the game for several weeks but I had managed to interest Aberdeen's other ice monkey, Brian Sprunt, as a suitable leader for the crux. In a moment of weakness on the Monday morning after the Link I had let slip the secret of unexpected good conditions and admitted an interest in Crypt. Such information should have been kept well guarded because I had underestimated the efficiency of the climbing grapevine, so that by Thursday two rival pairs had already been to investigate Crypt. Inexplicably they both came back saying conditions were rubbish. I'd probably have believed them too if I hadn't been there myself the previous weekend.

The weather on the Friday night was anything but pleasant. The fierce wind that made road conditions so marginal on the final miles across the moor to the Loch Muick car park howled unabated as the alarm rang at six. The sprinkling of snow that had crept through cracks in the door and lay on our sleeping bags did nothing to encourage a quick rise. Neither did a blast of spindrift that greeted a peep out of the door. This always the crucial moment in winter but fortunately the will was just strong enough to nip out and collect pans of snow for a brew. Even so, it was near eight before we set off up the path and there was an air of pessimism. The rising sun reflected streaks of spindrift trekking endlessly southwards across the total snow cover of this exceptional February. But this hostile and impressive panorama did little to inspire us as gale-driven ice particles lashed our faces, while only the knowledge that the corrie can be in shelter when the rest of the mountain is stormbound kept us going over the maelstrom of the final col.

From the col the cliff looked identical to the weekend before, as one would expect in such cold weather, though ominously the corrie was

ravaged by whirlwinds of spindrift. In this wind the extreme cold would become a significant factor. Even though the route is only 280 feet long, it is so continuously steep that every move is difficult and the main central corner pitch might take several hours, quite an ordeal for the incarcerated belayer. A quick scratch at the summer start showed that the rocks were bare of ice; fortunately perhaps, as this must have been why our rivals were discouraged. But we had more confidence in conditions so Brian set off up an easy looking ramp on the left, hoping to cut back on to the summer line. But the ramp sloped outwards and the wall above pushed him out on to the slope into a peculiar crab-like position so it was awkward even looking back right let alone climbing that way. So we made the excuse that at least we were gaining height going left and perhaps we could use the rope to tension back right from higher up. This strategy ended with a terrible belay miles to the left of where we were supposed to be with only a few extra feet of height gained. Now the horizontal tension traverse is discouraged by gravity so that at some point while following this pitch I had to find a way right. But by now I was very cold, my confidence was at a low ebb after the previous weekend and the only runner on the pitch was a long way to the left. I found standing around on verglassed sloping rock with no handholds was inducing a rising panic so I too was compulsively drawn left to safer ground away from the route.

Clearing the snow to my right I uncovered a useful lump of grass which allowed me to swing my feet on to a hopeful pile of snow. Much to my delight it turned out to be a big flat-topped flake with a perfect crack above (actually on a summer route called Sylph). A peg at full stretch gave a solid runner and an acrobatic move with a jammed terrodactyl allowed the placement of an even higher one for a tension traverse across the blank wall into Crypt. But crampons give little or no friction on rock and as soon as I got more than three feet to the right my feet just slipped and I ended up dangling under the peg feeling stupid. Finally by clipping ten foot of slings into my harness, I found I could free both arms and just hook a terrodactyl round an edge away to the right and pull myself round far enough to clear some snow. At last I found some of the ice we'd been expecting. A tiny chipped foot hold in the ice allowed the most delicate of step ups into a depression where I could unclip the sling. I was lucky. If the sling had been an inch shorter I could never have got round that corner. It was quite a moment standing on two points on a half inch by one inch patch of ice and having to let go off that sling, watching it swing back round the corner. It was very much a point of no return but I needed to let go of the sling before I could find out if the next move was possible or not. It was, but only just and I was left a little shaken at the base of the "perfect layback crack", back on the summer route at last, after more than 4 hrs and still below the big bulge which leads into the main corner and which would definitely be the crux. The layback crack looked most

unattractive so I continued round another edge below the main corner. Here a wet, overhanging and leaning section blocks entry in summer, hence the alternative layback route. There was ice in abundance, at least half an inch thick, but the corner leaned out so much that I ran out of strength just standing underneath it. After a hurried retreat a now frozen Brian called for an end to the day and a totally demoralised Andrew reluctantly agreed. It had taken a whole day for the first 120 feet. By now the wind had died down so we could relax on the walk back and we vowed to give the pub a miss that night to make an early return in the morning.

It didn't take long to convince Brian that my failure was purely psychological and that he would like to have a try the next day. So we lit a warm log fire and as we slowly suffocated in choking black smoke, we managed to generate an air of enthusiasm.

The next day dawned perfection, cloudless, windless and cold. A 4.30 rise and away before six proved our revitalised spirit. Feeling much more optimistic and relieved of leading the crux, I raced up the first pitch and belayed securely at the tension point. Just as he unclipped from the tension sling, Brian's foot slipped and he spent ten minutes of desperate effort to avoid falling off. But Brian, who tends to get demoralised standing at belays, is unstoppable once he's climbing (unless he falls off) so he moved undismayed into the main corner. Planting a rather psychological ice screw in a clod of frozen earth and cutting two big footholds to allow a comfortable bridging position, he uncovered a secondary crack on the right wall of the corner. Excruciatingly strenuous bridging gained the critical ten feet, during which he miraculously placed a peg runner at a place where I could barely stay in contact with the rock. The final grass overhang was a close thing on failing arms but the corner had been entered and, though still quite steep, was filled with a six inch wide ribbon of ice in the back. Pausing only to comment (to everyone within five miles) on the pleasant anatomical features of three female climbers who were passing below, he quickly reached the next overhang, where the ice disappeared behind a cornice-like formation. Being Brian and somewhat impetuous, he decided to climb round it instead of laboriously chopping it down and found himself dangling from one adze in the snow with only a bare rock rib for his feet – the crampon scratch marks will probably astonish summer climbers. Despite repeated shouts of impending doom, much scraping of crampons and clattering of gear, the adze remained secure despite pulling his whole weight up on it. The route was beaten for sure. The 4 hrs taken to lead that 140 foot pitch was quick considering the sustained difficulty but it took me another one and a half to pull up on the rope often enough to follow. We soloed back down the lower part of Tough-Brown Traverse and made the first aid box just as darkness fell. 14 hours total for 280 ft, but only one point of aid!

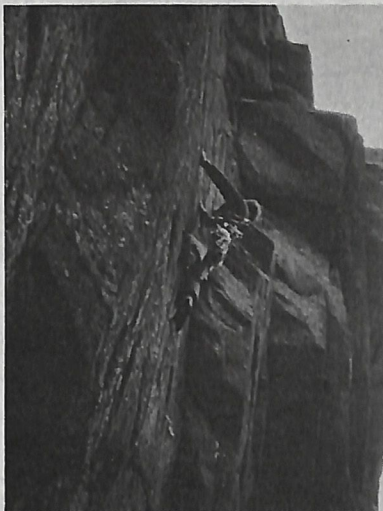
To me the corries of Beinn a'Bhuird represent the most traditional

style of Cairngorm climbing. There are no huts, car parks, tourists or roads and the huge approach walk discourages the one day visit. The only accommodation is the howff, draughty and barely watertight, as close to nature as you might wish. Few people would visit Beinn a'Bhuird for the quality of climbing alone. Most of the routes are short, rather messy and the rock near the top of the cliffs tends to have a gritty surface. The attractions therefore lie elsewhere, in the peace and beauty of the remote corries, where one is almost certain to be the only climber on the cliff. Possibly Coire an Dubh Lochain is the most picturesque, a near perfect coire bowl with a loch nestling in the bottom and snow lying till August. I've seen the loch snow filled in July. Even when one arrives at the Smith-Winram boulder howff at the foot of the dividing ridge between the two coires, Coire an Dubh Lochain remains hidden in an upper bowl, waiting till the next morning when it basks in the first sunlight. But even here, in one of the most perfect corrie settings, the climbing is indifferent. Who cares, you may ask? I think some people must, for the number of climbers on Beinn a'Bhuird has remained constant while other cliffs continue to rise in popularity. Though I confess I too tend to favour the bigger cliffs of Lochnagar, Creag an Dubh Loch and the Shelter Stone, I always reserve a long weekend to stay in the Smith-Winram howff, centrally placed between Coire an Dubh Lochain and the most remote coire of all, the Garbh Coire.

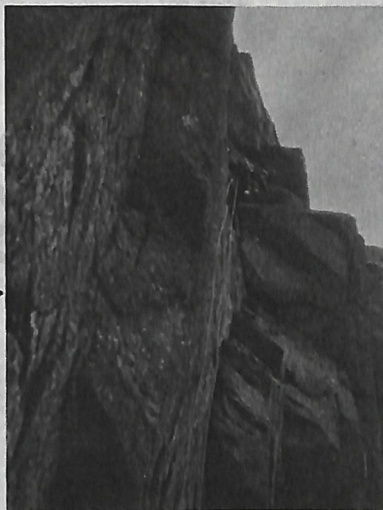
The Mitre Ridge in the Garbh Coire has recently become the exception to the classic mountaineering image of Beinn a'Bhuird with the discovery of several fine technical HVS's. The rock on the West face of the Mitre Ridge is very steep and looks improbable from a distance. But a close inspection reveals a surprising number of small, rounded flakes, unusual for Cairngorm granite. It always surprises me that each Cairngorm cliff has its own characteristic rock formation. My earliest encounter with the West face of the Mitre Ridge was a very nervous excursion on to J.H.B. Bell's finish to the classic Mitre Ridge, technically easy but possibly the most exposed position I'd experienced at the time. I still have a vivid memory of trying not to look down but catching a glance just at the wrong moment. And when the only route on the steepest part of the face, Slochd Wall, has a grade of HVS and A3, the obvious conclusion for an impressionable novice is that this must be the hardest route in the Cairngorms. Somehow the description conjured up a picture of continuous layers of overhangs interspaced with vertical walls, and a mixture of awe and dread stayed with me right up to a successful ascent of the route. Though the image was wildly exaggerated, the distant view of the line from the plateau approach was impressive enough to forestall a previous attempt. A long smooth vertical corner interrupted by an ominous roof forms the line. Only when you reach the first belay do you realise that the angle is significantly under vertical and you see a generous scattering of

SLOCHD WALL

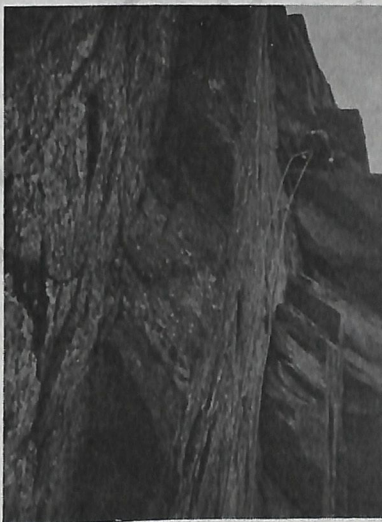
Climber: Brian Lawrie



← *Start of crux pitch (first pitch). The crack of The Primate can be seen on the top skyline just right of centre.*



About to enter crux corner.



← *Entering crux corner.*

West Face of Mitre Ridge. The Slochd Wall is the face in the centre which rises highest in the picture. The band of overhangs half way up is the crux of The Primate (the crack can be seen curving just above the overhangs. Slochd Wall route follows corners on the left of the face passing the main overhangs immediately at their left side.



The crux of The Primate.



The crux of The Primate.



small flat holds. The climb, the first free ascent, was memorably enjoyable. The first pitch following the big corner, was technically hard (HVS, though close to extreme) and a bold lead by Brian Lawrie but somehow the route had all the quality we expected with none of the epic nature. A biting cold day mellowed and the long walk back to the car was leisurely and relaxed.

To the right of the corner of Slochid Wall is a big horizontal roof. One wouldn't give it a second look were the eye not drawn to a very prominent wide crack splitting the roof. From below it was impossible to judge the width of the crack but it looked, and proved to be, just the wrong width – too wide to fist jam but too narrow to chimney. The challenge was irresistible and I was back with John Anderson a fortnight later, just before the weather deteriorated into the worst summer I can remember. Despite the awkward width of the crack a well-situated but extremely loose chockstone and an obscure hidden hold were the key. It's a dawdle when you know how, but it took a day and a half's effort to find the hidden hold, and I'm not going to give away any secrets because the route drops a grade if you know in advance where the hold is. And if for any reason, spiteful or natural, the chockstone disappears, it's going to be even more desperate dangling half way over the roof searching for this hidden hold. We called it *The Primate*, in accordance with the ecclesiastical names of the routes hereabouts and the apelike manoeuvres involved in climbing it. Both these routes are excellent and an ascent of the two in a day would be superb; but somehow *Beinn a'Bhuird* climbing is not that competitive.

The first taste of real winter competition hit the Aberdeen scene this past winter. There has always been a strong element of competition in climbing but until now it's always been local, with other Scottish climbers shunning the new challenges in the Cairngorms. Following a lucky(?) visit to *Creag an Dubh Loch* by two Edinburgh climbers, the best icy conditions on the cliff for many years (since 1972) were discovered in advance of Aberdeen knowledge and the first complete ascent of *Pink Elephant* was bagged. Fortunately the spies were out and hurried arrangements were made for an immediate midweek visit. The only problem was to convince a non-climbing boss of the urgency of the situation. Like the rest of the *Etchachan Club*, I knew of the cliff's potential in icy conditions and indeed had watched it expectantly for many years. But somehow it always had been disappointing, either powder covered or stripped immediately bare by even a small thaw. The biggest plum of all was *Goliath*, a route made famous, and justifiably so, by its inclusion in "*Hard Rock*". It was well known, even to some outside Aberdeen, even including some Englishmen, that in 1972 the route had been iced from top to bottom, but this was before front pointing was established and there's no way you could cut steps up it. The critical piece of ice forms down a steep groove left of the summer crux. Nicknamed "*the Goliath icicle*" even

though it's not an icicle, it never seemed to quite reach the bottom. But right from the first snowfall in early November the ice increased on the cliff. The temperature must just have been warm enough to keep the springs open but cold enough to freeze the water as it trickled down the grooves. The Etchachan Club had been watching the route in vain for so many years that their concentration had slipped just a little and suitable conditions arrived unnoticed. Hence the Edinburgh lads were there first and the sudden discovery of good conditions was greeted with an almost panic-like scramble for the cliff before word got round and the hordes arrived the following weekend. My boss showed a surprising understanding and a Wednesday visit with Neil Morrison was successfully negotiated.

The weather was near perfect as forecast, so it was a relief to find the Loch Muick car park free of competitors. I felt apprehensive at tackling a route like Goliath so early in the winter so was keeping an open mind about conditions. The first view of the cliff was disappointing. The huge sheets of ice which had covered the Central Slabs last April were conspicuously absent and the Central Gully Wall looked bare, although Goliath was still out of sight. The thaw on Sunday had removed the ice from the bottom of Pink Elephant and we assumed Goliath would be the same. As we trudged up the Central Gully towards the route I confessed to the hope that the ice wouldn't be there. I didn't feel like the anticipated 150 foot pitch on thin ice with no runners. But as soon as I saw it I knew there was enough ice. It was one of those special moments that will probably be remembered for the rest of my life. The sight of these monstrous overlapping slabs and huge corners plated with ice was breathtaking and awesome.

Instantly intimidated, I tried to rationalise the situation. "That ice is only 70 degrees, maybe 80 degrees for a couple of bulges. I shouldn't be on my arms for long. I ought to be able to climb it even if there aren't any runners." But it didn't really work. Even when I walked round to the side to convince myself of the angle, it just seemed to look steeper. But the sense of obligation at being first arrivals in such superb conditions prevailed. From that moment on everything came right. As soon as I was on the ice my confidence returned and I could relax a little. Suddenly the ice wasn't so steep and though it had a tendency to dinner-plate, I was able to climb slowly and carefully so there was never a chance of a slip. Runners hardly seemed necessary but a horizontal crack appeared behind a nest of icicles just at the steepest point. After this pitch we rejoined the summer route. The disadvantage of climbing a fine and popular rock climb is that there's no grass to sink an axe into. Nor was there much ice, except filling the cracks, so they would take terrodactyls but not runners. A series of tool jamming moves took me under a bulge where I found myself rapidly running out of both ice and strength. I could see the ice sloping away from me on a smooth slab to the right. This was the crux, a move

where I would finally have to take a gamble and alarmingly far away from the last good runner. My ice axe slotted into a crack over the top but though I couldn't tell if it would take my weight, I knew I couldn't spare any energy in pulling over. I leaned back on it, swung my feet up high and hauled over the bulge aiming for the ice. The terrodactyl struck first time and I abandoned my footholds, launching out over space on to the slab. A quick pull up, pray that my foot would hold for a second and then I had made it on to a comforting ledge below the final pitch. The whole of the final slab was coated with ice between a quarter and half an inch thick except for a bare ten foot radius around us but I remembered a thin horizontal crack which gives a series of tiny footholds in summer. Now it took a razorblade for aid and then half an inch of a terrodactyl pick before I could swing across to a welcome tuft of grass. The summer route goes straight up here, following a series of deep jamming cracks but they were glazed with ice and looked evil. Also it was nearly dark and I felt we were running out of time. I wasn't going to miss out on this route after so much effort so I headed downwards across the blank slab trusting my feet alone on the thin ice. An ice screw in a clump of grass encouraged me onwards and I rounded a blind corner suddenly seeing the easy ground only a few feet away but across the thinnest ice of all. I was to get my reward for being bold and spotted a perfect crack under the ice. It was over, the rest was no problem, even by the light of headtorches.

The six miles back to the car floated euphorically past to a final sweet conclusion. The opposition had arrived from Edinburgh, only a day too late. But they got their revenge by scooping a winter Mousetrap three days later.

How will winter climbing progress? Some take a pessimistic view, claiming it's reaching an impasse. You can see their point. There's a limit to where ice will form, and without at least a little the top grade rock climbs are impossible. It's maybe significant that none of the summer extremes have been climbed in winter. I have more faith. I admit it's soon going to be much harder to find new routes, but there are lots of cliffs in Scotland; and judging by the skill we've seen from recent international visitors, standards can go much higher yet.

Footnote – At the time of going to print, news has come of the successful ascent of the North Face of the Eiger by Andrew Nisbet and John Anderson. The route was that taken on the first successful ascent between 21st – 24th July 1938 by Andreas Heckmair, Ludwig Vorg, Fritz Kasperek and Heinrich Harrer. – Editor.

THE REGIONAL SUMMITS

LEWIS McALLAN

All over the country in 1977 people were planning ways of raising money to aid the Queen's Silver Jubilee Appeal Fund. In June of that year, I took the notion of getting myself and anyone else who might be interested, sponsored to ascend, during the month of July, to the highest point in each of the new Regions and Islands Council areas in Scotland. Mechanised transport could be used on approach roads, but the actual hills would of course be ascended on foot. In Scotland there are nine Local Government Regions and three Islands Council areas, and so twelve hills had to be climbed. To ascertain which twelve occasioned some research involving ordnance survey maps, maps showing the new regional boundaries, and the Local Government Act of 1973 itself. The research produced the following table:—

Regional or Islands Council Area.	Highest Point	Height above sea level
Grampian	Ben Macdhui	4300 ft.
Highland	Ben Nevis	4418 ft.
Western Isles	Clisham (Harris)	2622 ft.
Strathclyde	Ben Lui	3708 ft.
Central	Ben More (Criannlarich)	3843 ft.
Tayside	Ben Lawers	3984 ft.
Fife	West Lomond	1712 ft.
Lothian	Blackhope Scar (Moorfoots)	2137 ft.
Borders	Broad Law	2754 ft.
Dumfries and Galloway	Merrick	2764 ft.
Orkney	Ward Hill of Hoy	1565 ft.
Shetland	Ronas Hill	1475 ft.

Approaches to possible sponsors soon showed that the exercise would be worthwhile in terms of its financial objective and I went on to plan possible itineraries. I was satisfied that none of the ascents would involve mountaineering in any technical sense: nor was I out to break any records. The project would merely be an exercise in travel over land and water and up-and-down hill-walking within a set period of time. Having regard to the convenience of potential companions and because of the need to be at home at certain times during the month, I divided the project into four separate circuits. The first would cover Strathclyde, Central, Western Isles, Highland, and Tayside: the second would take in Fife, Lothian, Borders, and Galloway: the third was to be Shetland and Orkney: and the last would be the "home beat" — Ben Macdhui.

Circuit one

On 2nd July I set off in the car for Perth, where I collected the circuit-companion, kinsman George Scott of St. Andrews. The first two nights were to be spent at Tyndrum (for Ben Lui and Ben More). The next day was fine with rising mists and we took the well-known track (now a forestry road, not open to vehicles) from the "Oban" station to Coninish. Ben Lui was then ascended by its north ridge and descended by the Beinn Oss bealach and the Allt Coire Laoigh. It was George's first visit to the mountain, so it was good that it was looking so impressive. On the way back along the forestry road we met by chance a close friend of George's daughter. Next day, in similarly fine conditions, we made the usual slog up the north-west slope of Ben More, returning more pleasantly by the Stobinian saddle and Benmore Glen. Stobinian himself beckoned, but so did Father Time, and he won. Our wish was to drive as far north as possible that day to shorten the journey to Harris on the morrow; in the event we reached Fort-William.

Next day the feet were at rest, and the time was ours, provided only that we caught the 8 p.m. car-ferry from Uig to Tarbert. Everything on the way showed up splendidly — the Cluanie Ridge, the Five Sisters, Sgurr nan Gillean and Am Bhasteir from Sligachan We had time to deviate in Skye by Dunvegan and linger a little on a lochan-side. When we arrived at Portree, we found in Somerled Square a young evangelical preacher, in casual mufti, holding forth to the holiday-makers, supported by hymns in modern idiom sung by a bevy of good-looking young women. The Minch was dead calm. As the ship approached Tarbert, the sun, having worked hard for us all day, disappeared impressively behind the Harris sky-line. One remembered the title "Enchanted Isles" in a MacBrayne brochure some years ago.

The Tarbert motel was new and comfortable, so near the pier that, in driving to it from the ship, you were never out of first gear. The morning was again fine. The plan was to ascend Clisham from a high point on the Tarbert-Stornoway road, but first we took time off to drive south to Rodel through a blissfully remote land, with, on the west side, some magnificent stretches of machair and white sands. By the end of the forenoon we were driving up the single-track road north from Tarbert. We parked in an old quarry just north of Loch a' Mhorghain (616ft.), and from there we walked up a slope and over the moor to the south-east ridge of the mountain. It is quite steep, with plenty of boulders higher up. The view was good, and without the heat-haze, it would be magnificent. In the afternoon we drove on to Stornoway, over the Lewis moorland, which is all space and horizon — a fine sight in the continuing sunshine. We agreed that "The Clisham" (as the locals call it) and the other summits in the area are well worth exploring.

In Stornoway we enjoyed the hospitality of the Rector of the Nicholson Institute. It was good to learn about this interesting town from one of its leading citizens. Next day, the Minch was re-crossed by the northern route on the 1.30 p.m. sailing from Stornoway to Ullapool, and from there we drove straight to Fort-William in the evening.

The next objective was of course Ben Nevis, which we reached by the normal "tourist" path. This was our first summit under mist but it was intermittent and there were a few striking glimpses into the great corrie, with some corncicing still in position. The path was well populated by many nations in varied garb and footwear, some of the latter being as usual highly unsuitable for this quite rough track.

Next day — the last of the circuit — was a mixture of driving and walking. As we crossed Ballachulish Bridge there were furtive glances at undone Mamores, but it had to be Lawers. Lawers was in fact quite beautiful; it was the brightest weather yet, with most of the heat-haze gone. The route taken was the now well-known path from the National Trust Information Centre by way of Beinn Ghlas. For almost the whole way this track is smooth and comfortable. There were many parties on the hill, including a group of botanisers from the Netherlands. I imagine that nowadays most occasionally hill-walking tourists tackle the summit of Tayside from the Information Centre rather than by the traditional route starting at Lawers Hotel, perhaps under the impression that, with the lift in the car to the centre high above Loch Tay, there will be fewer feet to climb. Remember, however, the bump of Beinn Ghlas to be got over both up and down. In fact we calculated our total ascent and re-ascent as at least 3500 ft., whereas the direct climb to the summit from Lawers Hotel is, according to the map, only 3400 ft. or thereby.

Circuit two

The next round did not involve very high mountains, but it was largely new ground and was full of interest. The companion was fellow-club-member W.A. Baxter. The four tops involved were reached in the course of a long weekend. The first one — the West Lomond of Fife — was visited on the way south from Aberdeen, the car being left at a picturesque picnic-place near the summit of the Falkland-Leslie road (from that point the sister hill, the East Lomond, would be even more accessible). We drove on to an overnight base at Innerleithen in the Borders. Here there was some local colour: it was the town's Gala week and there was a brass band procession. This was most agreeable.

Next day we planned to reach the tops of two regions. Driving up the pleasant Leithen valley on the Innerleithen-Heriot road, we found a layby at its summit. From there we struck up over very featureless, soft and tussocky country to Blackhope Scar in the Moorfoots. This used to be the highest point wholly in the County of Midlothian, but, like Ben Lui, it is

now a frontier hill, with the boundary between Lothian and Borders passing through its summit. We made sure of attaining the highest ground in Lothian by tramping about on the west side of the sizeable cairn! Fine clear conditions produced a view as sparkling as the ascent over the tussocks had been dreary. But this would be a difficult top to find in mist. Down again, we drove back westwards to the Megget Stone on the road from St. Mary's Loch to Tweedsmuir. From there it was an easy ascent on a fine track to Broad Law, the highest of all the Border hills. Again there was a glorious panorama, but with a colder wind. As we drove on through Moffat to New Galloway for the night, we thought how welcome the hills and towns of the Borders had made us.

Next morning for the Merrick, we were joined by Sandy Sim from Edinburgh. Now at last the weather picture was transformed, with unrelenting mist and wind and rain from the south-east. It was the kind of day when one would not normally think it worth-while going on the hills. But we had driven over two hundred miles for an assignment at the top of Galloway and an effort had to be made to keep that assignment. As we started off in full waterproof order from the Bruce Stone at Loch Trool, our vehicle was the sole occupier of the car park. A path went north in the right direction. We followed it, first along a narrow wooded valley and then up the open slopes with visibility only a few yards. We suspected that the track would lead right to the summit, but we confirmed that by frequent compass readings. When we reached the subsidiary top with the beautiful name of Benyellary, the wind was particularly strong, and we saw nothing.

As we moved up a ridge to the main top, we could only imagine the scenery around us: but at least the underfoot conditions were at this altitude, superb. Lunch at the cairn was rather uncomfortable, and on the hurried descent by the same route, air and water remained the most conspicuous elements.

Circuit three

The ascent in Orkney and Shetland seemed unlikely to involve major hill-walking, but on leaving Aberdeen for Lerwick on the "St. Clair", I did not know whether there would be problems in reaching the base of each hill. Ronas Hill is in the northern part of the Shetland Mainland, and some kind of transport from Lerwick was essential. There was no bus out in the morning, and the answer was a self-drive hired car. Driving up the north road (with much reconstruction in progress), I pondered whether a parking place would be found where wanted. Luck was with me: there was a neat little quarry right opposite the hill.

Even on the lower slopes the heather was pleasantly short and above about 1000ft. the ground was bare and gravelly, as on the Cairngorm plateaux. This phenomenon may result from the more northerly latitude.

It was a day of high cloud and clear air and from the summit virtually all Shetland and even Foula could be seen. Marvellous! But I was alone and would my kind sponsors believe I had reached the top? Lucky again! I spotted a mass of people following me up. They turned out to be a school party from Leeds. Their leader certified our brief encounter on the back of an envelope.

To discover a means of travel from Shetland to Orkney, otherwise than by air, involved persistent investigation. The main shipping line included no such passage in its publicity material, and an enquiry at their office produced a mere hint of a Sunday evening boat from Lerwick to Kirkwall. So on returning from Ronas Hill on the Saturday evening, I called at the Harbour Office, as the most likely place at which to obtain an accurate prediction of shipping movements. Happily it was open. Yes indeed, the "St. Rognvald" was expected to berth about 8 p.m. and, in ordinary course, would leave about 5 p.m. on Sunday with cargo and a few passengers for Kirkwall and Aberdeen. A cabin? "Oh, for that, you just see the purser." Sure enough, that evening I saw from the hotel dining-room window a ship gracefully sliding into the harbour. I hurried to the pier, where there was already a small number of hopeful voyagers. I joined them and got a cabin.

The voyage was a journey one does not forget. The "St. Rognvald" seemed a rather elderly vessel, but with comfortable cabins. Her twelve passengers — of diverse nationalities, including two French and two Irish ladies — spent a merry evening in a room which was both restaurant and lounge, and in which there was served a highly calorific high tea. One rather languid traveller seemed to deplore the fine weather, saying he "would like to have seen how she would do in a decent sea". For the rest of us the slight swell was enough.

Orkney was efficient. On landing at Kirkwall my thought was of transport (if any) over to Hoy, where the hill was. The Information Office immediately handed me the time-table of a boat service from Stromness: a return trip to Hoy in the morning, and another in the late afternoon. How very convenient! Viewed from Stromness, Hoy looked much hillier than the rest of Orkney, and the Ward Hill was inviting.

As it happened, the Irish colleens of the "St. Rognvald" — Rosaleen and Sandra — were next day also bound for Hoy and I had their company along the north-south track which leads through the hills from Moness Pier, where we landed, to Rackwick. Near the highest point of the path, I took to the hill eastwards up a corrie of rather deeper heather than on the Shetland expedition. The summit is on a long plateau, gravelly as on Ronas Hill. For the first time on these walks I was alone on a summit; it was misty and I traversed the whole plateau to make sure the top had been reached. The mountains of Hoy show very steep slopes in some directions, and from below look higher than they are. Obviously there was much

more to explore than there was time to cover and the island would repay further visits.

Next morning the journey home was commenced: the girls to Dublin and I to Aberdeen. The "St. Ola" ferry took a narrow course along the cliffs of the Hoy west coast, giving us a fine sea-view of the "Old Man". At Scrabster many of the passengers bundled into buses which whisked us straight to Thurso railway station.

The long rail trip from the Far North is traditionally tedious; but not today. The train was comfortable and full of cheerful holidaymakers: the land was resplendent in a crystal light. We headed out west from Georgemas over the great moors. Was this wilderness really Scotland or were we in New Mexico or perhaps on the high plains of Africa? And so over County March Summit and past Forsinard and such-like places with beautiful winter drifts to catch the trains. Then down the fair Strath of Kildonan, hugging the Helmsdale River. As the train sped along the flat East Sutherland littoral, there were glimpses of high hills with snow-fields on the south-east horizon across the water. I explained to the girls that these mountains were the Cairngorms – which takes us to the final chapter of this story.

The last

There remained Ben Macdhui. It was decided to make this ascent on 31 July, the last day possible under the rules of the sponsorship. On this occasion I was honoured by the presence of six companions – Bill Baxter (of Circuit two), John Low, John Russell, Fergus Watt and two American student girls, Barbara and Pamela. We were to follow the well-known route from the south. George Scott (of Circuit one) was in Aviemore with his family and there was a chance of a rendezvous at the summit cairn.

The morning was beautiful and as we moved slowly up the Sron Riach it was a joy to see the familiar ridges and corries sharply etched in the sunshine. But it flattered to deceive. A small cloud appeared in the north-west, and came rushing to meet us. As we reached the plateau, we were engulfed in mist and hit by harsh rain and wind. Athletic Barbara was first at the cairn, but almost immediately a youth appeared from the opposite direction. This was George's son, David, closely followed by his parents. Though conditions on the summit were not conducive to administration, sponsors at once began to hand over envelopes.

It looked as if some agent had contrived to put a cloud on the enterprise precisely at its zenith, because early on the descent the sun shone again and the evening was as magnificent as the morning. Magnificent also was the meal in Braemar which the company afterwards enjoyed.

WHO GOES THERE ?

RICHARD C. SHIRREFFS

Amongst Scots who like to escape the beaten track there is a well established and proudly held view that there is no law of trespass in Scotland. Unfortunately this view would find scant support in a court of law and an account of the true position may be useful.

In principle all land in Scotland is the private property of someone. The proprietor may be a "public" body such as a local authority or the National Trust for Scotland, but even then the land is that body's private property and any freedom of public access (other than public rights of way) derives not from any public quality in the body's ownership but from its constitution or policy. The principal right which a landowner has is the right to admit or exclude other persons to or from his land – the admission of others includes the granting of feus and leases as well as allowing casual access and the exclusion of others includes the erection of buildings as well as the erection of walls and fences and the use of guards and gamekeepers. The owner of a field or a farm or a mountain has as much right to exclude members of the public as does a householder and one who intrudes without permission is a trespasser in Scotland just as in England.

What gives rise to the belief that there is no law of trespass in Scotland is the weak position of the landowner in enforcing his right to exclusive possession. Trespass is a criminal offence only when associated with poaching or when the property is subject to specific legislation, as with railway property. Apart from these cases, the police will therefore not involve themselves with complaints of trespass unless there is some further element present such as assault or malicious damage which would be prosecuted as such and not as aggravated trespass. Although not a criminal offence, trespass is certainly a breach of the landowner's right of exclusive possession and as such is a civil wrong. One might therefore expect the landowner to have some civil remedy, but his position in practice is weak. He has in principle two remedies – interdict or damages – but he will succeed in an action of interdict only if he can prove that the same person is likely to repeat the trespass and will succeed in an action of damages only if he has suffered some provable damage and monetary loss; in any event civil action is possible only if the trespasser's identity is known and there is corroborated evidence of the trespass.

The foregoing concentrates on the landowner's viewpoint, but walkers will be more concerned about the position of someone who wants to walk on another's land. Excluding rights of way from present consideration, a walker has in terms of law absolutely no right to walk on another's land without permission and asking permission is not necessarily easy if it is a

mountain that one wants to walk on, as one may not know where to ask or may be miles from the appropriate house or office. Fortunately there has in Scotland traditionally been a good relationship between walkers and landowners and objection is rarely taken to a walker climbing without permission outwith seasons when it may interfere with the landowner's use of the hill for such purposes as stalking or gathering in sheep.

If a landowner catches a walker on the point of entering his property, he is entitled to stop him or to allow him in subject to conditions about where he may go. If the walker does not take no for an answer, the landowner may use reasonable force to exclude him and this does not count as an assault. If the trespasser resorts to any degree of force in retaliation, or if he even only threatens violence, this amounts to a criminal and/or civil assault, the walker being able to plead self-defence only if the landowner has used more than reasonable force. If the trespasser manages to evade or by-pass the landowner and the latter gives chase, a greater degree of force to stop and turn the trespasser still counts as reasonable but discharging a firearm certainly does not.

If the walker is already onto a resentful landowner's property when he is caught, the landowner is entitled to ask the walker to leave by any reasonable route and if necessary to escort him there and to resort to reasonable force. If this occurs on the hill a question may arise as to whether the walker, willing to turn back and asked to descend in a direction adding significantly to his total journey, could hold out to descend in a direction that suited him better. There is no legal authority on this point, but in principle it would seem that if his preferred route off the hill were not significantly longer than the route requested by the landowner and would not aggravate the objection to the walker's presence on the hill, as by disturbing deer or sheep, the walker would be entitled to hold out for his preferred route. Further, any point on a right of way would count as "off the hill" and the walker could hold out to descend to a right of way.

Rights of way come in different shapes and forms. Motorways, A roads, B roads and unclassified minor roads are highways subject to some measure of statutory definition and control but freely open to walkers except in the case of motorways. At the other extreme are private rights of way, perhaps better thought of as rights of private access, normally leading from a public route across one person's private property to another's, for the use only of that other. The category of right of way that most concerns walkers is that of public right of way. By legal definition this must be a well-defined route used by the public and linking two public places. For this purpose another public right of way or highway can count as a public place, as can the foreshore, but there seems not yet to have been any court decision as to whether a mountain top or beauty spot can

be a public place — Ben Nevis, Ben Lomond, Ben Lawers and Lochnagar are arguably places of public resort.

The law as to the constitution of public rights of way was changed when the Prescription and Limitation (Scotland) Act 1973 came into effect on 25 July 1976 and there seems to be scope for argument as to some detailed aspects of the law as it now stands. A public right of way could and still can be created by express written grant by the landowner, but while many landowners will acquiesce in public access, few will take active steps to create a public route over their land. The normal way for public rights of way to come into being was and is through the operation of prescription. In general terms, if a route has been regularly used by the public, openly, peaceably and without interruption, for the full prescriptive period (formerly 40 years, now 20) the existence of a right of way becomes exempt from challenge. Before 1973 interruption of a practical nature (the erection of a locked gate which the public acquiesced in or the advertised closure of a route one day a year) broke the running of the prescriptive period, and a landowner could defend a right of way claim on the ground that use had been by tolerance and not as of right. Now, however, it appears that use for the prescriptive period constitutes the right of way, whether the use is attributable to tolerance or to right, and that only "judicial interruption" (a claim in a court action or an arbitration) or a definite break in the continuity of public use break the running of the prescriptive period.

A public right of way can be a footpath and bridleway or a cart track. Which of these it is depends upon how it has been used by the public within the last 20 years. A cart track can be used as a bridleway or footpath and a bridleway as a footpath, but not vice versa. However a pedal cycle seems to be accepted as an extension of a pedestrian and to be legitimate transport on a footpath.

Users of a public right of way must do so in the manner least injurious to the interests of the landowner. They must keep to the established route, must close gates which they find closed, and must not damage crops, trees or anything else. They have no automatic right to camp at the trackside, although presumably they are entitled to take their weight off their feet and to slake their thirst at a burn. If they are challenged by a landowner they are not obliged to state their destination, although they should be prepared at least to confirm that they mean to keep to the right of way. Restrictions on voluntary access to the hills during the stalking season have no application to rights of way, even in their higher sections.

The landowner who has a right of way passing over his land is not entitled to cause an unreasonable interference with the right of way. A low locked gate might not be an undue interference to an energetic walker but should not be acquiesced in lest it should be the beginning of an attempt to close the route (a public right of way is lost by 20 years non-use).

Damage by a walker to crops or trees planted along the line of a right of way so as to obstruct it would not be a wrong, and activities such as ploughing for tree-planting could be interdicted by court action by any member of the public. It is irksome for walkers to find a pleasant track converted to a hard stony bulldozed road, but as long as passage is not adversely affected the public have no legal ground of objection.

It is not always easy for a member of the public to ascertain if any particular route is a right of way. Until recently there was no system whatever of registration of public rights of way and no-one could say authoritatively that any route was a right of way unless it had been the subject of a court action (for example Glen Tilt and Glen Doll) or was publicly referred to as a right of way without demur from the landowner (for example various of the Mounth tracks). One might enquire of local residents, but commonly the nearest resident might be the keeper or factor who would be reluctant to admit that a route was public. The Scottish Rights of Way Society has for a long time kept records of known rights of way and fought litigations to protect them, but they would be the first to point out that there may be rights of way which for lack of definite proof or otherwise have never been reported to them or listed by them. The Countryside (Scotland) Act 1967 introduced the idea of listing of rights of way by local authorities, but not all local authorities have responded enthusiastically. Certainly it can never be argued by a landowner that a route cannot be a right of way because the local authority have not listed it.

To some extent this article touches on matters which most walkers would not wish to put to the test in a situation of conflict with a landowner and which even landowners would consider too inconsequential to go to law over. To this extent it contains some degree of conjecture as to what the law is. However, anything said above by way of conjecture is based on extrapolation from established principles and the filling in with reasoned conjecture of gaps between the certain areas of the law should, it is hoped, facilitate understanding of the basic principles which are so often misunderstood or misrepresented. The writer's last Journal article (*Glissando!* 1977) ended with an editorial disclaimer of the consequences of practising what was described. Perhaps this one should do likewise.

COLD WEATHER LABORATORY ON MORRONE.

IAIN LEVACK



Walkers from Braemar will now be familiar with a substantial building adjacent to the Brian Goring Trust telecommunications hut on the summit of Morrone (see Figure). This is a University outpost of the Institute of Environmental and Offshore Medicine – a field station for the study of climatic conditions and human physiology.

Albeit situated on one of the most exposed plateaux of the Cairngorms it is inaccessible only during the worst winter storms and is relatively safe since a downhill walk in any direction leads to a road. There is a winding land-rover track that runs to the summit and a walkers' path that starts from the car park at the top of Chapel Brae in Braemar.

The purchase of the hut was made possible by "Action for Disaster", a national fund for Scotland, instigated as a means of assistance in times of emergencies, crises or disasters. The situation, by courtesy of the Laird of Invercauld Estate, is convenient due to the proximity to Aberdeen and the ready source of power and GPO communications already serving the Goring hut.

The type of structure required was not initially clear but collaboration with the British Antarctic Survey, whose medical and physiological research policies are directed from Aberdeen University, concluded that a pre-fabricated building similar to one already in use in Antarctica would be most suitable. The building panels are four inches thick consisting of two sheets of plywood interfilled with polystyrene insulation. The building consists of a laboratory and a living room with bunk beds and cooker on either side of the entrance lobby and there is a small cubicle housing a portable lavatory. Cooking and lighting is by gas from portable propane cylinders kept at the rear of the hut.

The foundations upon which the laboratory is built consist of railway sleepers bolted together with additional weight provided by boulders on a steel mesh. The building sections were hoisted by helicopter from Braemar to Morrone Summit and the construction effort was through the manpower of the Grampian Police Mountain Rescue team, Braemar Mountain Rescue, British Antarctic Survey personnel and students and post graduates of Aberdeen University. The main structure was built within two days but full completion continued over several weekends. During the hut's first winter in 1977 there were a number of teething troubles: the water supply from the roof reservoir was contaminated by roofing felt, there were burst pipes, water and spindrift penetration and inadequate ventilation resulting in fungal growth. The foundations were firm and the hut stood up to wind and storm although a carpet has been lost when taken outside to dry.

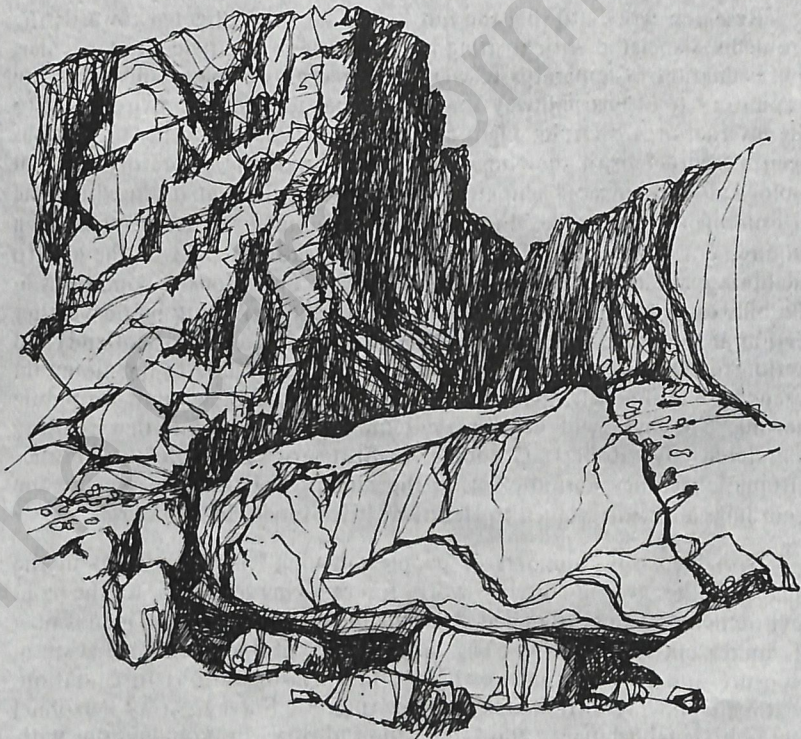
Research work utilising the hut has so far been directed towards the problems associated with treating hypothermia in the field. In particular, the evaluation of apparatus to warm inspired air on the premise that the respiratory tract is a pathway for heat exchange from the environment to the internal organs (Auld, Light and Norman, 1979). Another project has been measurement of the climate in the region of the laboratory since all biological work in cold climates must relate to the climate in which the measurements are made. Furthermore, mountain rescue teams have a requirement at their base for instantaneous weather reports in the hills to facilitate planning and co-ordination of rescue operations as conditions in the hills can vary greatly from those in the valleys. An automatic weather station at the laboratory, that was funded by both Tenovus (Scotland) and Action for Disaster transmits the recordings by land line to the mountain rescue base in Braemar, the Police Station and to a shop window for public viewing. The data will be displayed on a digital read-out that is being completed by Robert Gordon's Institute of Technology. Another automatic weather station exists at the summit of Cairngorm, whence the recordings are radio relayed to Heriot Watt University in Edinburgh.

With increasing numbers of people pursuing leisure activities in the hills and the ever increasing work forces being exposed to the cold environment offshore, detailed study of the effects of cold on man is now of increasing importance. The interrelated problems of exhaustion, exposure and hypothermia justify further investigation as to causation, treatment and prevention. The British Antarctic Survey, Army Personnel Research Establishment and the Oil Industry in conjunction with Aberdeen University are taking an active interest in the development of what is likely to turn out to be a major study. The Morrone laboratory is intended to facilitate physiological measurements in an exposed part of the Cairngorms.

H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh visited the laboratory on July 1st 1978 and a plaque was unveiled to commemorate his visit. Subsequently, the building has been formally presented to the University of Aberdeen through the generosity of Action for Disaster.

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THE CENTRAL CAIRNGORM AND GRAMPIAN ESTATES

ADC
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THE GREAT ESTATES IN THE CAIRNGORM AND GRAMPIAN MOUNTAINS

INTRODUCTION

A. D. CHESSELL

During our travels across the vast high-level areas of Scotland, in mist, rain, howling gale, driving snow or complete whiteout, many of us have had cause to be grateful for encountering a line of rusting fence posts marking an old County boundary as shown on Ordnance Survey maps, thereby confirming that we were either on course or enabling us to correct our course, in the same way as Theseus must have clung to his line of twine when returning from the labyrinth. Many of these old County boundaries as shown on the map, coincide at times with estate boundaries, but the latter are seldom known to anyone except those owning or working the estates and certainly not with any great accuracy. Our Meets Secretary does have sufficient information of course to enable him to liaise with the estates regarding the areas visited by the Club, particularly during the shooting season and this relationship with the estates has proved to have been of great benefit over the years.

The writer, having often wondered exactly where he was in relation to the boundaries of the estates and having heard other members speculating on this whilst recuperating on various summit cairns, thought that some investigation would be helpful for those interested in the matter.

Information was obtained from the following sources:—

1. Grampian Regional Council — Department of Physical Planning, from a set of maps showing the ownership of landed estates prepared some years ago by Dr R Millman and others in the Geography Department of Aberdeen University and which cover six large areas of Northern Scotland.
2. A more recent study by the Nature Conservancy Council from information obtained directly from landowners.

It was necessary to interpret the information from both these sources and additional information has been given by some of the landowners and factors. As a result of these investigations, a fairly detailed record of the estate boundaries in the Cairngorm and Grampian Mountains — the areas of particular interest to the Club — is now available.

However, all the information obtained for these areas cannot be easily reproduced in the Journal as the small scale of the map would not allow the required detail to be interpreted by the reader.

The map reproduced here shows, in a simplified way, the boundaries of the central Cairngorm and Grampian estates, these being the great and historic estates which have been most closely associated with the activities of the Club since its early foundation.

Having obtained some of the "bones", it is interesting, if not essential, to provide some of the "meat" in the form of information on the estates in respect of such matters as history, acreage, broad land uses and other items of interest. Again, space does not permit a catalogue of every estate, even in this inner area and therefore, for the time being, brief information is given on two of these estates.

The owner of Glenavon Estate has kindly provided information about the estate within which is the spot where the Club was formed in 1887, Maghan na Banaraich (the Dairymaid's Field) on the shore of Loch Avon. The Resident Factor of Invercauld Estate has been kind enough to describe an estate which provides the setting for so many Club activities, covering as it does such a wide and interesting area in the Grampian mountains and extending southwards into Perthshire.

GLENAVON DEERFOREST

D. S. WILLS

Formerly one of the estates of the Duke of Gordon, it came first into the hands of the Gordons in 1490 when it was relinquished by the Stewarts. In 1935 it was acquired by Colonel Oliver Haig, a relative of the famous field Marshal and in 1963 was bought by the present owner D. S. Wills.

From the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries the river in its upper parts provided a useful route for the traffic in booty from Banffshire and Aberdeenshire to Lochaber and Speyside. Military garrisons were set up to try and prevent this. In 1667 the Earl of Athol was commissioned to raise a force and to this has been ascribed the origin of the Black Watch. As late as 1747 several military posts were set up, one at Inchrory. The estate which is sometimes referred to as Inchrory, the name given to the lodge, is reputedly derived from the fact that a certain Rory Mackenzie rested his cattle there in 1600 and in subsequent years when on his way south to the Trysts at Falkirk. The Estate is more correctly described as Glenavon.

The Estate stretches South and West from Tomintoul, some 14 miles from Grantown on Spey, on the Lecht Road. It lies largely within the wild and magnificent mountainous district of the Cairngorm Mountains. The lowest ground is 1250 feet above sea level and the highest point is Ben Muich Dhui at 4,296 feet. About 35,000 acres are above 1,500 feet and it probably has more ground over 3,750 feet than any other deer forest in Scotland. Loch Avon which lies wholly within the estate at the western extremity at the foot of the Cairngorm is about 2,500 feet above sea level. The River Avon, the fastest flowing river in Scotland, flows eastward

through the Estate for 23 miles and affords excellent salmon and seatrout fishing.

There is a derelict lodge at Faindouran from which it was possible to stalk the four western beats of the estate almost to the shores of Loch Avon. At the present time the remainder of the forest is divided into four beats and the country varies from the precipitous grandeur of the Slochd Mor to the rolling heather covered moors of Blairnamarrow to the South east.

The permanent staff comprises three stalkers and during the season three farmers can be called upon to act as ponymen. It is possible to have four rifles out on the forest in any wind.

In recent years 100 stags have been shot in a season at an average weight of 14 stone. Since 1964, winter feeding has been introduced and should result in improved weights as well as preventing the deer leaving the forest and marauding local farms and holdings where they will be indiscriminately shot. Prior to the formation of the Red Deer Commission in 1961 200 hinds were shot, but since then the forest has come within a control area and the Commission has insisted that a minimum of 300 be culled every year.

In addition to the deer forest the estate has extensive grouse moors and since the reintroduction of driving an average yearly total of over 1400 brace has been achieved. The yearly catch of salmon in the river exceeds 200.

INVERCAULD ESTATE

D. P. PETRIE

The history of the Estate is that it has been in the hands of various branches of the Farquharson family since at least 1500, although the whole property only came into the hands of the Invercauld Branch in the early 1800s, and it was of course, then much larger than it is now. It included at one time, parts of Cromar, Deskry Side, Glenmuick, Balmoral and Marlee in Perthshire.

The present acreage is something in excess of 200,000 acres, but being extremely mountainous, it is somewhat difficult to be completely accurate. So far as land use is concerned, along the north side of the Dee Valley, from Ballater 660' westward to Braemar at 1100', is farming land, being arable and livestock breeding/rearing. The sheep on the various farms also graze out to the much higher ground in Summer and the farms are both let and in hand.

Forestry takes place along the Dee Valley also, up to 1500' in some places, there being over 1,430 hectares of dedicated ground, the main

species being Scots Pine although Douglas Fir and Larch also do well in certain locations. The complete rotation is 100 years.

The open hill area up to 3,000' is managed as grouse moor and summer grazing for sheep, and virtually all this ground carries red deer, managed in the wild state in the traditional manner, and providing the finest of stalking.

The highest point on the Estate is the north top of Beinn A' Bhuid at 3924' and most of the Estate is over the 1000' mark, with a large number of tops over 3400'.

The Estate extends southwards into Perthshire on both the east and west sides of the A93 to the Spittal of Glenshee, and thereafter on the north bank of the Shee for a further 4 miles, where the pattern, except for forestry is very similar.



MOUNTAIN ACCIDENTS

- 6.4.77 Two men, well clad, were walking in poor visibility and strong winds above Coire an Lochain when a cornice collapsed resulting in one of the men, aged 32, falling, sliding and bouncing about 600 feet. His companions raised the alarm. Mountain Rescue personnel and a helicopter were alerted, but the man, only slightly injured, was able to walk out with little assistance.
- 21.5.77 Angela Mary Wrapson, Edinburgh, accompanied by two companions, was walking through Lairig Ghru from Aviemore to Braemar when she injured her right foot. She managed to get to Luibeg Cottage from where she telephoned the Police for assistance. Conveyed to Braemar by Landrover.
- 21.5.77 Richard William Sumner (54), Middlesex, was walking the ridge between Dubh Loch and Loch Buidhe, Balmoral Estate when he collapsed and died. Evacuated by helicopter.
- 24.6.77 A Dutch youth, aged 19 years, with no snow experience and poorly clad, studying reindeer in the Cairngorms, was crossing a patch of snow near the Summit of Coire Ruadh when he lost his footing, slid down the snow slope and fell about 50 feet onto rocks, sustaining a fracture of the left leg and lacerations to his head. A helicopter and doctor attended and removed the casualty to Raigmore Hospital, Inverness.
- 9.7.77 A 14 year old schoolboy, well clad, accompanied by his father and a female companion, was descending a rocky slope on the west side of the Col of the Fiacaille of Coire an t-Sneachda when he lost his footing and fell down the rocky slope for a distance of about 60 feet. He sustained lacerations and bruising to his back and head and was removed by helicopter to Raigmore Hospital.
- 11.7.77 A 27 year old female was climbing the Savage Slit in Coire an Lochain along with three companions. About 200 feet up the climb she inserted her hand into a crack on the rock to get a hand hold. When she tried to remove her hand she found that her wedding ring and engagement ring were stuck in the crack and she was unable to release her hand. Assistance was summoned and, eventually, by using a liquid called Fluid Film, the woman's hand was released and she was none the worse.
- 24.7.77 Ann Elizabeth Hughes (23), Strathaven, along with three companions became ill while hill-walking on Ben MacDui. She was able to continue to the bottom of Sron Riach from where she was picked up by Landrover. She declined medical attention.

- 27.7.77 Howard Piper (23), Ilford, twisted his knee while walking southwards through Lairig Ghru. Telephoned Police from Luibeg Cottage from where he was picked up by Landrover.
- 5.8.77 Hillwalkers called at Police Station, Aviemore and reporting meeting a man, woman and child in an 'exhausted state' near Pools of Dee heading south. Search mounted. The three persons involved (who had not been in difficulties), read of incident in evening press and immediately reported to Police.
- 30.11.77 James Wilson Denny (19), climbing in Winter Corrie, Glendoll fell some 15 feet and fractured facial bones and right wrist. Airlifted out by helicopter.
- 3.12.77 Paul Duff (20), Belfast, skier became lost on ski slopes at Cairnwell. Found safe and well.
- 27.12.77 Four men, well clad, were climbing in Coire an t-Sneachda. On completing their climb they separated into two couples. One couple, aged 32 and 40 years, without map or compass, headed for the Coire Cas car park, lost their way in poor visibility and ended up at Fords of Avon Bothy where they took refuge. They then decided to try and walk out and wandered blindly through the hills to Coire Odhar where about 1800 hours they bivouacked. About 2300 hours they again began walking by moonlight and followed the water of Caiplich to Castle Gorge. Realising they were hopelessly lost, they retraced in an effort to locate Fords of Avon Bothy, where they arrived about 0900 hours on 28.12.77. Shortly after arrival there they were rescued by a helicopter summoned for the search operation. They had walked about 25 miles in very bad conditions. Other than being tired and cold they were uninjured.
- 28.12.77 A 24 year old man, well clad, and his companion were climbing in Coire an Lochain, when he was avalanched and carried down for approx. 200 feet. He sustained a broken leg and was uplifted by helicopter and conveyed to Raigmore Hospital.
- 11.1.78 George Duncan Anderson (21), Aberdeen, was reported missing on walk from Mar Lodge to Glenfeshie. Found dead from exposure the following morning by helicopter crew about five miles east of Glenfeshie Lodge.
- 15.1.78 Five students, adequately clad, were engaged in snow climbing on Stob Coire Cas when one, aged 33 years, overbalanced and fell 200 feet down the slope. He sustained serious head injuries and was conveyed by helicopter to Raigmore Hospital.
- 21.1.78 John Robertson Greenhill (22), Menstrie and Stephen Crossier (19), Invergowrie, climbing Raeburns Gully, fell about 400

- feet. Greenhill found to be dead while Crossier had back and chest injuries. Both evacuated by Snow Trac.
- 21.1.78 Four students, aged 22, 20 and 28 and 18 years, adequately clad, were avalanched when climbing on the Goat Track, Coire an t-Sneachda. The two first-named both suffered from broken legs and were removed to Raigmore Hospital by helicopter. The third was removed by stretcher party and thence to Raigmore Hospital, the fourth was uninjured and walked out, although suffering from hypothermia. He was not removed to hospital.
- 29.1.78 In extreme blizzard conditions and against Police advice, four junior soldiers all aged 17, and inadequately clad, set off walking from Aviemore to Rothiemurchus Ski hut. A search was quickly mounted but due to the very adverse conditions the youths were not found until the morning 30.1.78. They were removed by helicopter to Raigmore Hospital, from where they were soon released.
- 24.2.78 John Henry Sterling (22), Glasgow and Mary Harold (21), Rothesay, skiers became lost on ski slopes at Cairnwell. Found safe and well.
- 26.2.78 David Wilson (15), Aberdeen skier, became lost on ski slopes at Cairnwell. Found safe and well.
- 24.3.78 A 19 year old student, well clad, was caught by a severe gust of wind and blown over the edge of the Fiacaille of Coire Cas resulting in him falling down a snow slope for about 300 feet. He sustained bruising to his body. The student was able to walk out assisted by other climbers, and the rescue team alerted was cancelled.
- 24.3.78 Search mounted when car was found apparently abandoned at Cairnwell. Search called off when it was later learned that the five occupants were cross country ski-ing in the area for four days.
- 24.3.78 A party of five men, quite well clad, were walking by the shore of Loch Avon when one of them, a 31 year old, sustained injury to his right knee. He was assisted to the Shelter Stone where he remained overnight. On the following day he was uplifted by helicopter and taken to Raigmore Hospital, Inverness.
- 26.3.78 Harry Crawford (42), East Kilbride, was glissading off Craig Derry on a plastic sheet followed by other members of the party. On reaching the bottom Crawford stood up and was promptly felled as one of the party crashed into him. He sustained a double fracture of his left leg. Evacuated by Snow Trac.

- 2.4.78 Alan Christopher Wigginton (25), H.M.S. Condor, Arbroath, was cross country ski-ing on Ben MacDui when he skied over cornice surrounding Coire Sputan Dearg. Was uninjured.
- 9.4.78 Ronald Niven (28), Dundee and Eric Niven (20), Dundee fell climbing Douglas Gibson Gully, Lochnagar. Eric received only minor injuries while Ronald died before rescue.
- 15.5.78 59 year old mental patient went missing on a walk in the Glenmark area. Search for two days by helicopters, police and civilian teams. Man found safe and well in Ballater area.
- 3.6.78 Susan Cooper (32), Nairn, struck by falling rock at beginning of ascent of Eagle Ridge, Lochnagar. Sustained broken clavicle and minor head injuries. Evacuated by helicopter.
- 10.6.78 33 year old man went to photograph an eagle's nest in the Loch Loch area of Kirkmichael, Perthshire. He fell about 160 metres and sustained serious head injuries from which he died in Dundee Royal Infirmary two days later.
- 20.6.78 Pauline Mackay (17), Livingston, became ill near Loch nan Stuirteag, on walk from Fort William to Braemar. Helicopter called only to find that girl had recovered and no medical assistance required.
- 25.6.78 Brian George Kirkwood (35), Edinburgh, slipped and fell while crossing small stream behind Corrour Bothy. Received slight head and back injuries. Evacuated by helicopter.
- 3.7.78 Nigel Wilson (16), Herbert Bastian (16), Iain Gibbs (16), and Rude Andre (17), all London, overcome by exposure in Lairig Ghru. They had been on a three day expedition in the hills and were accompanied by four other youths and two teachers. Evacuated by helicopter.
- 8.7.78 David McLean (18), Aberdeen, went out of control while glissading down steep snow slope near top of Allt Clach nan Taillear and landed among scree at bottom. Serious facial injuries. Evacuated by helicopter.
- 12.7.78 Paul Schmitz (46), West Germany, slipped and fell 10 feet into River Quoich, while attempting to gain vantage point to take photographs of family. Received double fracture of left leg. Evacuated by Landrover.
- 16.8.78 Christopher Hempstead (16), fell whilst climbing on the Scottie, Glendoll and slid/fell for approx. 250 ft. Taken by police team and helicopter to Dundee Royal Infirmary with head injuries and body bruising.
- 19.8.78 A party of seven adult hill walkers adequately clad completed a climb of Braeriach and started to descend by Beanaidh Coire.

At the time thick mist restricted visibility to about five yards; later two of the party, aged 51 and 71 became separated. Both were well experienced. A rescue helicopter uplifted both men the following morning and found them uninjured. They had sheltered overnight.

- 2.12.78 Stephen May (26), Aberdeen, on hill walking expedition became separated from his companion on Carn Bhinnein. Found safe and well by ground search.
- 19.12.78 A party of 5 men, aged 21, 21, 21, 20 and 23 years, adequately clothed were avalanched on a snow slope in Coire An Lochain and swept down for about 250 feet. Except for one who was uninjured, all sustained bruising and superficial injuries. The men were evacuated by helicopter and removed to Raigmore Hospital.
- 25.12.78 After leaving a route card at the Police Station, Aviemore, two men, aged 35 and 28, left to go hill-walking from Loch an Eilean to Braeriach, returning by night fall. They did not return and search was mounted. On afternoon of 26.12.78 both bodies were found Coire an Bogha Choiche. The bodies were buried except for one foot sticking out of the snow and had obviously been avalanched. Both deceased were well clad.
- 3.1.79 David John Kilburn (18), Droitwich, got lost in the mist while out walking from Braemar having crossed the frozen River Dee. Was benighted and sheltered below fallen tree in Glen Quoich before being found by ground search safe and well the following day.
- 6.1.79 Maurice John Tough (20), Aberdeen, skier, became lost on ski slopes at Cairnwell. Found safe and well.
- 14.1.79 Mark (13), and Paul Dempsey (12), Rutherglen, skiers, became lost on ski slopes at Cairnwell. Found safe and well.
- 14.1.79 Fergus Forbes Robertson (23), Stonehaven, skier, became lost on ski slopes at Cairnwell. Found safe and well.
- 27.1.79 Two men were climbing, unroped, but well clothed, in Alladins Couloir, Coire an t-Sneachda, when one, aged 21 years, slipped and slithered over stone scree for approx. 900 feet. He sustained fractured nose and lacerations to the face and general bruising, and was removed to Raigmore Hospital by helicopter.
- 28.1.79 Stanley Johnston (53), and John Storey (39), were overdue on a walk on Ben-y-Vrackie, Pitlochry, during a severe storm. Police and civilian teams conducted a search. Helicopter called at first light. Men returned well by themselves having sheltered during the storm, unaware of emergency created.

- searches were made in quite atrocious weather but the body was not found until 23.12.79, when it was found covered in snow on a cornice at the top of The Rummell, Coire an t-Sneachda.
- 27.12.79 Flare reported at Killiecrankie battle ground by very reliable shepherd. Area searched by police and civilian teams but no trace found. Flare described as red and of parachute variety.
- 31.12.79 Two army captains, well equipped, lost their way when walking from Coire Cas to Jean's Hut and wandered into the Lairig Ghru where they were avalanched. Both stayed overnight in the Sinclair Hut and were picked up by helicopter the following day. Both sustained superficial injuries.
- 8.1.80 Four climbers, well clad, started to climb Red Gully in Coire an t-Sneachda. One lost a crampon and discontinued the climb. The other three continued to the top to find almost white-out conditions. They decided to snow hole for the night. Their companion reported their non return. Advance search parties went to the area; the three men admitted to seeing white flares set off by the searchers but made no attempt to use their torches to attract attention. At first light they started down the Goat Track and were found by rescuers whilst descending by that route.
- 19.1.80 David Wilkinson (33), Birmingham, fell about 140 feet while climbing Black Spout, Lochnagar. Sustained minor injuries; evacuated by helicopter.
- 20.1.80 Michael and John Fawkes (27), Maryculter, and Douglas Fraser (22), Aberdeen avalanched below Parallel Gully 'A', Lochnagar. Other climbers in Coire went to assist and found Fawkes who suffered a collapsed lung and broken rib. Eight and half hours later Fraser was located with only his hands showing above the snow. He was unconscious but alive and evacuated by Snow Trac. He made good recovery.
- 18.2.80 Three separate ski-ing parties comprising six persons became lost on ski slopes at Cairnwell. All found safe and well together by ground search.
- 2.3.80 George Anthony Hardman (42), Altringham, Andrew James Coleman (38), Sale, fell about 600 feet while climbing Rae-burns Gully. Both fatally injured. Evacuated by Snow Trac.
- 7.3.80 On 5.3.80 a 39 year old Army Major left Aviemore to ski tour in the vicinity of the Lairig Ghru, intending to return to catch the overnight train to London on 6/7 March. His non arrival there was reported. A search was mounted and he was found

on 8 March in the Lairig Ghru near Sron-na-Lairig. He had obviously skied over a very steep slope and lost control thus meeting his death. He was very well equipped and very well experienced.

25.3.80 Neil McCallum (22), Fraserburgh, and Lynn Mitchell Brown (24), Largoward, fell a considerable distance while climbing Parallel Gully 'A', Lochnagar. Both died as a result of the accident before being found.

29.3.80 A woman and a man, 31 and 34 years, both very inexperienced skiers and unused to the mountains, went to ski at the Ptarmigan, Cairngorm. They wandered from the area, realised they were lost, walked down Coire Raibeirt into Strathnethy where they snow holed during the night. They were found the following morning by a rescue helicopter very tired and very cold but otherwise none the worse.

The Editor is grateful to John Duff, BEM of Grampian Police, for compiling the above list.



FOUR POEMS – IAN STRACHAN

CRAIG LEEK

A ragged line, bleak against leaden cloud,
Plunges steeply, where cliffs fall away
To blend with scree.

Shrill, the falcon cries above lichened rock,
Where the smooth viper, coiled near ling'ring snow
Basks below.

'Neath waving birch, the nimble hinds move as shadows
On emerald slopes, where primrose shows its face
In velvet gold.

LOCHNAGAR

Your face reveals the joys I seek
To walk alone on snowy height
Where silence reigns on frozen peak
Your mountain vastness bathed in golden light.

Corniced cliff looms above the distant loch
Buttress, gully, scarring ancient rocks
Scree-lined corrie scaling sheer, to touch
The silver crown decked with winter's gems.

Burnished slopes plunge 'neath parting mists
To Giant's Head, Pinnacle and Polyphemus
Where chilling hand pounds on ragged rims
That vanish soon in flurried flakes.

Lochnagar, your voice is stern and stark
Your aged head raised high above all men
On those who may your wildness seek
Cast your spell and timeless charm.



SILVER PEAKS

I walk on Sg'or Dubh's crest and gaze
Upon your silvery cloak,
Cairntoul, Braeriach, Beinn Mheadhoin,
Your towering cliff reminds of mountain days,
And solitudes I seek
On barren heights, in wooded glen.

On leaving, sadness lies upon the heart,
And only memory holds the scenes of past.

MOMENTS (THOUGHTS ON LOOKING FROM A HILLSIDE)

Moments spent in joy, in timeless places,
Where life is still'd to 'grave in mind,
Scenes of experience and remembered faces,
Ling'ring in thought,
Where no image shall fade.



A UNIQUE DAWN CHORUS

ANTHONY ARCHER-LOCK

The last of the sun mellowed the northern face of the Cairngorms late on the 20th of June, 1973, prompting thoughts of a perfect dawn for the morrow, but at 2 a.m., my mountaineering companions, as we climbed towards the cairn at Fiacail a Choire Chais, were expressing their view on bird watchers who would go to the hills at night in thick soaking mist! Passing the cairn, we skirted the titanic masonry of Coire an t-Sneachda plumbing the invisible depths, to make rapid progress along the flank of Cairn Lochan ridge, the full moon casting a vast halo through the cloud at our side in this silent world of mystery.

From the direction of Curran Bothy, still well ahead, came the unmistakable song phrase of a snow bunting, wild, evocative, and so much in harmony with those desolate surroundings. As we paused to listen, the clear notes, sung with passionate vigour, reached us at regular intervals, adding a touch of magic to the scene. Then whilst we picked our way forward, there was an explosion of wings just below, as a pair of ptarmigan startled into the gloom, the male snorting his reel full of indignation at such an intrusion.

Curran Bothy loomed out of the fog, a silent monument of boulder dome overlooking the brooding waters of Lochan Buidhe and the snow wreath above the murmuring Feith Buidhe; an atmosphere which could not fail to cast thoughts back to those who had met with disaster only two winters ago. The silence was severe and watchful — did one detect a sense of guilt of mere indifference emanating from these solemn surroundings? Such figments of the imagination were abruptly dispelled by the reeling of another ptarmigan from a rock merely a few paces distant. In the mist he looked huge and proud. A pair of dotterel chased unseen with excited peeping above the snows, anticipating the first hint of the dawn.

For some minutes, silence once more fell around us, emphasised by the trickle of water and the muted roar effected by countless burns tumbling in the distance. From the scree above came one more phrase from the snow bunting before he left his song stone, a commanding boulder encrusted with dripping lichens of black and green, the top splashed white to confirm a constant use. Perhaps this sentry post had been occupied at intervals by snow buntings throughout the centuries; this little fellow of icelandic origin had returned for the third year in succession, perhaps with the same mate, to rear their brood.

From somewhere out in the mists there drifted the rather repetitive feeble notes of another songster, a stuttering performance with a touch of pathos, but occasionally strengthening as if by some supreme effort. This was no meadow pipit or wheatear. The song bore no resemblance to that

of any snow bunting I had heard, and certainly not to the bird which had entranced us before this dawn. Very perplexing! An ultra-cautious approach and investigation eventually revealed that we were listening to the first and only shore lark ever known to breed in Scotland. It was not possible to ascertain on this day whether he had already acquired a mate, but certainly one was to join him for a successful nesting. As if sharing this sense of surprise, a ptarmigan muttered from the scree beyond.

As the drizzle thickened, the shore lark ceased his little song, and the ptarmigan escorted his mate down the gravelly slope, watching importantly over her while she hungrily plucked shoots of crowberry, no doubt famished after a long spell of brooding. A wheatear chattered briefly from a pile of rocks and later, the shore lark offered just one more utterance. The time had come for the trek homewards, a signal for the long silent snow bunting to serenade our departure. Slushing through the gravel, we passed a cock ptarmigan hunched in the wet – for him enough was enough.



IN MEMORIAM

It is with regret that the Club records the death of the following members:

Mr George Cook (OL 1951)

Miss A.M. Pittendrigh (OL 1931)

Mr Alexander Duncan (O 1940)

Col. E. Birnie Reid (OH 1919 Pres.
1946–49. Hon Pres. 1969–80)

Dr David Levack (OL 1917
Pres. 1935–38)

Mr Thomas Train (O 1936)

Mr Martin Nichols (O 1949)

Mr George Walker (A 1958)



DAVID P. LEVACK

Dr. David Proudfoot Levack, C.B.E., West Manse, Drumoak, our senior member, died in Aberdeen on 26th February, 1979. He joined the club in 1917 and in the years between the wars took a very active part in the affairs of the club, being Vice President from 1932 to 1934 and President from 1935 to 1938. Older members will have pleasant memories of days on the hills spent in his company at New Year Meets at Braemar and at Easter Meets further afield. A love of the hills was in his blood as his father Dr. John R. Levack had been President, or Chairman as it was then styled, of the club from 1919 to 1924 – the only case of a son following a father in that office in the history of the club.

David Levack also followed his father in that he had a distinguished medical career in the City of Aberdeen where both specialised in the field of Radiology. David Levack was Honorary Radiologist to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary from 1928 to 1947 and Senior Consultant Radiologist to the North-East Scotland Regional Hospital Board from 1948 until his retirement in 1964. In 1955–56 he was President of the Aberdeen Medico-Chirurgical Society.

During the 1914–18 War David Levack served in the Royal Signals and after graduating M.B., Ch.B. with Honours at Aberdeen University in 1924 he gave a considerable number of years of service in the Territorial Army when he was Regimental Medical Officer to the 51st (Highland)

Division. Soon after the outbreak of the second world war he was in France and in 1940 as Assistant Director of Medical Services to the 51st Division he was captured at St. Valery and was a Prisoner of War till he was repatriated in 1944. In 1945 he was made a C.B.E. for "gallant and distinguished services in the field".

J.E.B.

SIR LANDSBOROUGH THOMSON

The death of Sir Arthur Landsborough Thomson was recorded in the last *Journal*, as was his talk to the Club on 'Mountains of the World'. When, in course of arranging for the talk, the writer informed Sir Landsborough that he was the Club's senior member, he reflected in a letter: "it is wonderful what the mere effluxion of time will do for one; it is a position of honour that is not held for long, and the foregoing suggestion about a date for a talk is put forward with due reservation". His caution proved unnecessary and his Club audience in September 1976 greatly admired the liveliness of presentation of Sir Landsborough's illustrated lecture. He died in London in the following June, not far short of his eighty-seventh birthday.

He joined the Club in 1911. Within one year he had contributed the first of at least four *Journal* articles, all worth tracking down. Although his First War service and his subsequent career as a scientist based in London took him from Aberdeen and prevented active involvement in Club affairs, his attachment to Aberdeen and to the Club was unambiguous throughout his long life. Aberdeen Grammar School, Aberdeen University and the Cairngorm Club were, appropriately, represented in the large and distinguished congregation at the Pont Street memorial service.

There was no one near to being a Club contemporary of Sir Landsborough's to chronicle the man and his life at anything like first hand. Members may however care to conjecture whether the Club roll has ever had on it anyone *more* distinguished than Sir Landsborough. Qualified obituarists have recorded *inter alia* that: he was outstanding as an administrator of medical and biological research, having from 1919 been chief of staff of what became the Medical Research Council; he was equally outstanding as an ornithologist, becoming President of the British Ornithologists' Union, subsequently President of the Zoological Society of London and Chairman of Trustees of the British Museum (Natural History); in both fields he made major contributions to the literature – for example, as author of the two-volume *Half a century of medical research* and as editor of the massive *A new dictionary of birds*; he was an OBE and a CB, FRSE and FRGS, and an LL D of both Aberdeen and Birmingham.

His recreations were noted in *Who's Who* as 'travel, formerly climbing'. He was indeed a world traveller: in the year he talked to the Club he had already visited Peru, the Galapagos Islands, New Zealand and Switzerland. As for climbing, in 1961 he was elected to the Alpine Club 'in recognition of his sixty years' passion for the hills'.

H.M.R.W.



COL. E. BIRNIE REID

We regret to record the death on 18th March, 1980 of Colonel Edward Bernie Reid, OBE (MIL), TD, DL, C.A., the Honorary President of the Club. He was a student at Clare College Cambridge when the First World War interrupted his studies. After war service he joined the family business of Meston & Co., C.A., Aberdeen, eventually becoming senior partner of that firm until he retired in 1972. His services to the accountancy profession in Scotland were recognised by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland who elected him President of their Institute in 1966, the centenary year of the Aberdeen Society.

He maintained his army connection and became Honorary Colonel of the 51st(H) Division Signals Regiment.

Colonel Reid's recreational interests included hill walking, ski-ing, riding and golf. Just as in his professional career there was a strong family connection, so there was in his connection with the Cairngorm Club. His father, Dr. Walter Reid, was a well known and active member who had served as a Vice President. Colonel E.B. Reid himself joined the Club in 1919. He served on several occasions as a member of the Committee, as Vice President 1936/38 and 1944/46 and as President 1947/49. He was made an Honorary Member in 1966 and Honorary President in 1969.

The primary objects of the Club are to encourage mountain climbing in Scotland and to issue such publications as may be considered advantageous. Colonel Reid supported these objects in full. He was fo

many years a regular attender at Club outings and meets. He took his full share of Committee work and contributed occasional articles to the journal.

He had a very friendly and sociable disposition and was always ready to offer hospitality. These qualities perhaps concealed from those who were not so well acquainted with him those strong business qualities reflected in his professional success and particularly during his term of office as President his successful negotiations on behalf of the Club with Estate Factors in relation to the Club huts.

A.L.H.

TOM TRAIN

Tom Train (1890–1979) who died last year, frequently contributed to the Journal, usually in the form of delightful pen sketches, to illustrate articles or as merely decorative in-fills. (See Vol XV, No. 80 etc.) He also wrote one article :Artist in the Hills, which attracted favourable notice from the Rucksack Club reviewer. It was, however, as an artist that he excelled.

W.A.E.



PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB

GENERAL MEETINGS

The Eighty-ninth Annual General Meeting was held on 23 November 1977. The Office-Bearers appointed were Hon. President Col. E. Birnie Reid, President Harold Watt, Vice-Presidents Ian Stephen and Graham Ewen, Secretary Richard Shirreffs, Treasurer Sandy Reid, Editor Donald Hawksworth, Librarian Jean Callander, Huts Custodian Denis Hardy, Meets Secretary Graham Ewen and Indoor Meets Secretary Neil Cromar. Other significant business included a decision to increase subscriptions by 50% as from 1 October 1978.

The Ninetieth Annual General Meeting was held on 22 November 1978. The Office-Bearers appointed at the 1977 Annual General Meeting were re-appointed apart from the appointment of Denis Hardy as Vice-President in succession to Ian Stephen. A resolution limiting expenditure on the Journal was passed.

A Special General Meeting was held on 16 May 1979 to consider proposals which the Committee had for the future of the Journal in the light of the resolution referred to above. The meeting failed to produce any clear indication of what members wished and ended in the anomaly of an amendment to the Committee's motion being carried by 13 votes to 9 and the amended motion then being defeated by 13 votes to 9.

A Special General Meeting was held on 21 November 1979 and passed unanimously a resolution proposed by the Committee for the alteration of the constitution to permit time-apportionment of subscriptions paid by members for the year of their admission and to allow greater flexibility in relation to reduced rate subscriptions.

The Ninety-first Annual General Meeting was held on 21 November 1979. The Office-Bearers appointed at the 1978 Annual General Meeting were re-appointed except that Peter Howgate was appointed President in succession to Harold Watt and Antony Chessell was appointed Editor. The life membership payment was raised substantially but other subscriptions were not varied. Further discussion of the future of the Journal took place with a slightly clearer view emerging.

ANNUAL DINNERS

The 1977 and 1978* Annual Dinners were held at the Northern Hotel, Aberdeen, and the 1979 Annual Dinner at the Station Hotel, Aberdeen. The Guest Speakers and their subjects were –

1977 W.H. Murray – Exploration on the Tibetan Frontier

1978 John Bartholomew – The Mapping of Hill Country

1979 Ronald Faux – Everest Goddess of the Winds

* At the 1978 Annual Dinner, the President, Mr H.M.R. Watt, proposed the toast 'The Cairngorm Club' in the following terms:–

If, ladies and gentlemen, what I said at the dinner last year, and the year before, was, as is quite likely to be the case, infinitely forgettable, I couldn't expect you to remember that, two years ago, after that scamp member of ours (Peter Davidson), who is also a member of the Grampian Club, had, wilfully or otherwise, publicly got the age of the Cairngorm Club and my age all mixed up, thus making an advanced

octogenarian out of me, I promised to tell you, at some other time, the favourite octogenarian story of mine with which I got my own back. I'll tell you it now. There was an octogenarian who mentioned that he had, during the past few days, received a perfect score in his medical check-up. In response to a question as to how he managed to keep in such fine shape, the old fellow replied – 'Well, when I was married nearly sixty years ago, my wife and I agreed that, if *I* lost *my* temper, *she* would remain silent and if *she* lost *her* temper, *I* would leave the *house*. I attributed *my good health*', he said, 'to the well-known advantages of an *outdoor life!*'

Well, none of us belongs to the Cairngorm Club to get away from our spouses (many of whom are members in their own right), but the Club does exist, in part, in order to allow its Aberdeen-based members (at any rate) to enjoy the advantages of outdoor life.

There are no rules, to the best of my knowledge, for Presidents, as to what line they are to take when entrusted with the responsibility of proposing this toast of 'The Cairngorm Club'. It would be easy, and of interest no doubt, to go over the past year and review the events and activities of the Club and submit, for the members' critical scrutiny, the conductance of the Club's affairs by the office bearers and committee members during that time. But, for one thing, that would be no way to treat guests, by talking Club 'shop'. For another, this all happened at last Wednesday's a g m. If you weren't able or entitled to be there, you did miss something, you missed confirmation that, over a tremendously wide range of lively activity, the Club is in good heart due, in large part, to the friendly, constructive, participation of so many members, and of all the office-bearers and committee team to whom the members have currently entrusted the day-to-day running of the Club. By range of activity you will see what I mean if I mention just some subject headings of business, or activity, dealt with, or in course of being dealt with, other than routine matters: the planning of a Club photographic library; basic hillcraft tuition for those who want it; the Linn of Dee caravan site; keeping down the rates on Muir; the encouragement/discouragement of children at Muir (tremendous importance attaches to the oblique stroke); spreading the news about other good places for climbers to stay in Scotland; helicopter interference on the hill; a new Geldie bothy; the Shelter Stone visitors' books; library service – bringing books *to* the members, at indoor meets.

These, as I said, in addition to so-called routine matters which themselves, of course, demand – and get – careful, indeed punctilious planning from the several people responsible: the 14 day meets, the 14 opportunities in the year for healthful exercise; the overnight meet; the Easter meet; the indoor meets: the Dinner meet and the pre-dinner lecture; the supper-dance; Muir and all that is involved in making it the civilised Club hut that it is; the subscription work and the careful balancing of the Club's books; the servicing of the Committee's work, the minute preparation, the correspondence and the hundred and one points of detail we expect of our Secretary; the maintenance of that great luxury, our Club library; and everything that goes into the upholding of standards in the context of the Club *Journal*.

Alternatively, a President could dwell on a few of the highlights of the past year. I don't think there were many highlights last year, but there were amusing incidents. For example, the day (the unprecedented day) the bus left Golden Square *early* (three minutes early, Graham's watch being three minutes fast), and the havoc *that* caused to the morale of Neil Cromar, that douce Aberdeen lawyer, who, before the

bus had doubled back to collect him disconsolately trekking homewards in the dark, really wondered if he was starting to lose grip on his normally very orderly mode of living. Or the Lochnagar meet, when we were crossing Ballochbuie with the full assurance of Colonel McHardy's written blessing, and when the Balmoral estate minion at the wheel of a Land-Rover did rather come to regret having queried Brodie Lewis as to whether he did 'realise that he and his companions were on private ground'. Or, the extraordinary guardedness, verging on outright suspiciousness, of our hotel hostess at the Fort William Easter Meet. Or, Angus Thomson's superlative entry in the Muir Log Book. Read it in full when you are up there next. I have copied some extracts. Under the heading 'Cairngorm Club: Geriatric Division', Angus, too long exiled in Newcastle, wrote:

Muir Cottage, on arrival, like a model on the cover of *Vogue* – beautifully groomed, incredibly clean, very good looking – and cold as charity. Treat her like a dollybird, warmth, food, drink and affection, and she becomes the friendly Aberdeenshire quine she has always been . . . Atmosphere very suitable for reverie on forty years of Club membership. Things which have not changed, so as you'd notice: the smell of the bakery in Ballater, and the best mutton pies in Scotland; the meallie Jimmys at the butchers in Ballater (Did you know that it is forbidden to import these – or the haggises – into Canada? This proves the sheer savagery of the things); Bob Scott at the bar in Mar Lodge (Sure, this is anachronistic, since the bar at the Lodge wasn't there forty years ago, but think about the enduring granite of Bob Scott's continued presence hereabouts) . . . I was a committee member when Muir was still a twinkle in the President's eye (though George Taylor was probably the real father). There were great discussions on the lines of 'keep the place clean, tidy and comfortable, and it won't degenerate into the usual kind of climbers' bothy.' It restores my faith in human nature to contemplate the quite remarkable success of that philosophy. Salutations to the present membership.

These few instance of how cheerfulness keeps breaking through are wholly within Club tradition, and are surely proof of the truth we all know, that solemnity is not particularly a by-word within the Club. Nor must it be allowed to become so.

This then is where I come to the single theme I thought I might hang a few reflections upon tonight. They are not original or deep. They are basic and simple, but I think deserve to be articulated from time to time.

The Club's constitution properly starts by enumerating the Club's objects in formal terms: to encourage mountain climbing in Scotland; to procure and impart scientific and other information concerning mountains; to consider right of access; to issue publications.

Well, in 1978, the Club is seen to be embracing all of these things in the range of its activity. But before the Club even had objects it became a club, and a club is a club is a club. By that dark saying I mean (I think) that this Club is a loose linkage, clean across the generations, of like-minded people, people who have different backgrounds and many different kinds of experience to contribute, but who share one mode of recreation, share also one perspective in particular. They see mountain climbing and hill walking – which the Club Constitution constrains them to encourage – not as ends in themselves, but as means to an end, and the end is simply, unashamedly – enjoyment. This end needs no special justification and doesn't require any special defence. We get enjoyment and we share enjoyment on the hill;

we are sharing it tonight; we keep on getting, and sharing – enjoyment.

We see this spare-time occupation of ours not so much as a sport, which is nearly always competitive and therefore something different in nature from ours, which is just a recreation, a refreshment if you like. It seems to me that we have to make a conscious effort to keep it just that.

Sir Robert Grieve, when President of the Mountaineering Council of Scotland, was showing that he feels likewise when he spoke this year in opposition to over-promotion of mountaineering. He warned against 'undesirable professionalism' and 'unnecessary organisation'. The M C S should remain an 'unobtrusive organisation, in being simply to protect the interests of its constituent clubs.'

That, with proper acknowledgement and due humility, is the philosophy of the chap who is currently privileged to be your President, and I hope it shows through on Meets and elsewhere. I doubt whether any of my predecessors thought differently: they have I think always stood out for the freedom of members of the Club to do their own sensible thing on the hill.

And, if you are saying under your breath 'Yes, and they were much less solemn about it', you are probably quite right. But then they in their time were all maturer than I, had learned more about life, had 'arrived', whereas I am still 'journeying'. But I am learning, gradually learning, that there are some quite clearly defined Laws of life. For example, there's the one which states . . . 'Nothing is impossible – for the man who doesn't have to do it himself.'

There's another which goes quite simply: 'Any time that things appear to be going better – you have overlooked something.' There's a development of that simple truth which states: 'Anything that can possibly go wrong – will go wrong.' And a further refinement of the same theme: 'Even that which can't possibly go wrong – will go wrong.'

Then the well-known Law which states, a little discouragingly: 'It is impossible to overestimate the unimportance of nearly everything.'

But there is only a thin dividing line between Laws and Commandments. And, although there used to be a total of 10 Commandments, you may perhaps have heard of an 11th one, specially tailored, I believe, for wives: 'You shall not always be right'; or, put another way. 'Do not always appear to be right – even when you are.'

And that seems to bring me right back to where I started, about losing cool, leaving the house, and the well-known advantages of the outdoor life – the *outdoor life*, the safeguarding of which – by all – is one of the fundamental reasons for the existence of the Cairngorm Club, whose health and prosperity I ask everybody now to rise and join me in toasting: – 'The Cairngorm Club.'

INDOOR MEETS

Since the spring of 1979 indoor meets have been diversified by the addition of summer indoor meets with a more social content than the format of traditional winter indoor meets has permitted. The programme since the last Journal has been as follows: –

1977	Nov.	Members' Night
	Dec.	Cancelled due to clash with other event of interest to members
1978	Jan.	Dolomite Holiday – Donald Hawksworth
	Feb.	Red Deer in the Highlands – Brian Staines

	Mar.	Exploring, Working and Surviving in Cold Climates – Donald Hadley
	Nov.	Members' Night with Quiz
	Dec.	Scotland's Hills as seen by me – James Will
1979	Jan.	Kanchenjunga 1955 – John Clegg
	Feb.	A History of Mountaineering – Bill Brooker
	Mar.	Mountain Rescue and Hazards – Malcolm Duckworth
	May	Navigation classes (two evenings) and informal gathering
	Nov.	Members' Night
	Dec.	A Progress in Mountaineering – Greg Strange
1980	Jan.	A Little Bias – Bill Marshall
	Feb.	Where Eagles Dare – Dick Balharry
	Mar.	Films (original programme unavoidably cancelled)
	Apr.	Navigation class and informal gathering
	May	Navigation class and informal gathering
	June	Car Treasure hunt
	July	Slide competition
	Aug.	Barbecue

SUPPER DANCES

The Supper Dance has become an annual event since instituted on an experimental basis in 1974. In 1978 and 1979 the venue was the Three Pocerros Restaurant, Aberdeen on 27th April and 26th April both Thursdays, but in 1980 a switch was made to the Amatola Hotel, Aberdeen, on 9 May, a Friday. Attendance is now normally between 70 and 80.

MEETS AND EXCURSIONS 1977 – 80

The excursions continue to be well attended, although the average attendance of 35 shows a further drop from the 37 and 43 recorded for the period covered by the previous two journals. (The number attending is given in brackets after each excursion in the list at the end.) The pressure of bookings for the more popular excursions has been somewhat alleviated by the bus company's acquisition of larger buses. On no occasion has more than one bus been hired. The best attendance was recorded at the 1980 excursion to Glas Tulaichan when some additional members attended by car.

The 1978 Easter Meet was held at the West End Hotel in Fort William, the arrangements having been made much more easily than in the previous three years. Unfortunately it proved to be the wettest Easter weekend since our stay at the Falls of Lora Hotel in 1972. Very few hills were climbed due to the bad weather and very heavy snow conditions on the hills. Attempts were made on some of the lower Munros such as Sgurr Eilde Mor. Some were successful but on most occasions parties were forced to turn back short of the summits.

The 1979 Easter Meet was held at the Dundonnell Hotel. Once again the weather was disappointing and restricted the amount of climbing possible. Nevertheless a number of hills were climbed mostly in the area of the Fannichs and in the Beinn Dearg group. On this occasion the hotel proved to be very good and this was some compensation for the poor weather conditions.

The Easter Meet of 1980 was again held at the Dundonnell Hotel. About 50 members attended, most being accommodated at the hotel with a few staying at nearby houses. The decision to return to this centre was fully justified since, in contrast to that of the previous year, the weather was excellent. Members took full advantage of the conditions to indulge in a most immodest orgy of Munro bagging. The Ben Dearg group and the Fannichs were again very popular with just about all the main tops being climbed by parties from the meet. Several members climbed An Teallach, and further afield Stac Polly to the north and Sgurr Ban to the south were visited. Altogether the magnificent mountains in the area, the fine weather and the comfortable accommodation combined to make this a most enjoyable meet.

The weather looked threatening for the 1978 overnight excursion from Loch Tulla to Taynuilt but in fact, it cleared up by morning. Some parties walked through by the low level route via Glen Kinglas – itself a long walk. Others were more ambitious attempting a rather lengthy ridgewalk between Stob Ghabhar and Beinn nan Aighenan. Some went over Beinn Eunaich and Beinn a Chochuill while one party did the ridge of Ben Cruachan.

The 1979 overnight excursion was from Bridge of Orchy to Glen Lochay, scene of a very wet night on a previous visit several years ago. On this occasion the weather was very much better with the result that almost every Munro possible between Rannoch Moor and Glen Dochart was climbed by at least one party.

As usual there were excursions which were accompanied by extremely unpleasant weather conditions. On the 1977 excursion from Glen Isla to Glen Clova we had thick mist and heavy rain and latterly a high wind. On reaching the quarry at Braedownie early we found 'no bus'. It transpired that it had broken down three miles down the glen. It arrived eventually, towed by a Land Rover.

The 1978 excursion to Lochnagar did not get past Ballater, as all roads past this point were blocked and the snow was still falling. Most members went for walks around Ballater, the highest point reached being the summit of Craigendarroch. The High Tea at the Craigendarroch Hotel was rearranged for Lunchtime and we returned to Aberdeen in the afternoon.

The excursion to the Ochil Hills was attended by very thick mist which came down low enough to impede the progress of the bus on the way to Sheriffmuir. The route from here to Dollar proved to be extremely testing, due to the lack of definite features across the top and at least one party emerged at Tillicoultry instead.

The 1980 excursion to Glen Clova will be remembered for the road conditions which were experienced on the way home. Those who were there are probably still wondering how the bus got through the huge snowdrifts on the road from Kirriemuir to Tannadice. It was indeed good fortune that allowed the party to get home that night.

There were of course a large number of good days. The 1977 excursion to Ben Lawers had very good weather to make up for the many wet days we have spent there in recent years. Unfortunately only 23 people were there to enjoy it, the lowest attendance of the period covered by this report.

Particularly good winter conditions were found on the excursion to Cockbridge in 1979 and Glas Tulaichan in 1980. Summer excursions which stand out as having very good weather include Ben More & Stobinian and Ben Vorlich in 1978, and Schichallion and Crathie to Loch Muick in 1979.

One disturbing feature which has marred the excursions of the last two years has been the increased frequency of members returning to the bus late. This has caused a

WEEKEND MEETS

The question of Weekend Meets was raised, not for the first time in the history of the Cairngorm Club, at a committee meeting in November 1978. Three members of that committee supported the suggestion to the extent that they each volunteered to organise a meet for the 1979 season. Thus for the first time in the history of the Club Weekend-meets appeared in the Club programme.

Those first meets were held at Glen Nevis (Hostel), Glen Coe (Black Rock Cottage) and Kintail (Guest House) and all proved to be most enjoyable even when the weather was far from ideal. The outcome of this rather tentative venture into Weekend Meets was pressure from all those who attended that there should be more arranged for 1980, a request accompanied by a long list of possible venues. Thus the three leaders met to discuss developing the meets on a more regular basis, taking into account the experiences of these first meets. The committee was subsequently presented with various suggestions which were discussed and accepted.

The sub-committee which was formed to organise the meets is deliberately a small one – Bill Barlow, Tibby Fraser, Anne Lindsay, Gillian Shirreffs – each member assuming responsibility for organising one or more meets.

There are various reasons for the development of Weekend Meets – one important one being to enable the more distant members to become more active in the Club – a fact which is being borne out in the number of 'regulars' from the south. Another equally welcome factor is that such meets enable those newer members who regularly attend Bus Meets to meet and get to know the more established members who, for some reason, may not so regularly attend the Bus Meets.

Several factors have been taken into account in arranging the meets. Firstly, the timing and venues of the meets must not clash with or be similar to any of the Bus Meets and it is hoped they will complement each other. There will be one meet a month between May and October excluding June. Venues include the more and the less remote areas but the shooting season and access is a major determining factor.

With the cross section of members interested in attending meets various types of accommodation are to be offered in order to cater for varying preferences. Experience will enable the organisation of this aspect of the meets to be improved upon. It is deliberate that no deadline for bookings is set since not everyone is in a position to plan well in advance – obviously if advance, block-bookings can be made this is of benefit to all concerned. Over a period of time a register of accommodation and information regarding access will be compiled which will be of general interest to all members.

The Leaders or Co-ordinators of the meets will have all information regarding bookings etc. and will be the points of contact for members attending specific meets.

The second season is now underway, 40 members were attracted to Ben Alder, being equally divided between bothies and Guest Houses. Cannich and Loch Tay have attracted 30 and 17 members, again divided between Hostel and Hotel, more particularly at Cannich. The two remaining Meets are still in the process of organisation but again seem to be attracting about 20 members with more interested.

The enjoyment and therefore the success of these first Weekend Meets certainly seems to override the doubts expressed in the past that such a venture is not a viable proposition for the Cairngorm Club.

Gillian Shirreffs.

Individual accounts of some of the weekend meets by members of the sub-committee are as follows: —

THE GLEN NEVIS MEET

The first Club weekend meet was held on the 25th to the 27th May 1979, the locus being the Glen Nevis Youth Hostel, Nine members were involved. The party motored across to Lochaber after work on the Friday and had two full days "on the hill". The tops "done" included Aonach Beag, Aenach Mor, Cairn Mor Dearg, The Ben and in the Loch Treig district, Stob a'Choire Mheadhoin and Stab Coire Easain. While the venture was not a Munro bagging expedition, all participants increased their scores. The weather was reasonable. The forecast had not been all that good and it rained for most of the way to Glen Nevis and for much of the return journey. However, while we scrambled on the slopes it was dry and we had a few lengthy sunny periods. Views were excellent, especially on the Saturday. For a number of those present the youth hostel was a new experience. The beds were alright but the dormitories were large and there was a near capacity booking. Nevertheless, even in such circumstances it was agreed that a youth hostel provided acceptable accommodation on such an occasion. The weekend was undoubtedly a success. If enthusiasm was the measure it was clear that the "weekend meet" would become a popular aspect of Club activities.

Bill Barlow

GLENCOE — JULY 1979

Eight people attended the first "official" weekend meet. In July 1979 we used Black Rock Cottage in Glencoe. This belongs to L.S.C.C.

The weather in Glencoe was what it so often is — damp! We drove to other areas nearby — Glen Etive and Bridge of Orchy — and climbed hills there. An abundance of wild flowers, a fox and a pair of golden eagles made our day on Beinn Achaladair and Beinn a' Chreachain outstanding. Glencoe hills were admired from a distance especially Buachaille Etive M'or which commanded one's attention, being just west of Black Rock.

The cottage was comfortable and the company congenial. Many thanks to John Hetherington for downing oil-skins and doing what he did with the Elsan!

Anne Lindsay

KINTAIL AUGUST 1979

20 members attended the meet to Kintail all staying in local Guest Houses. For most members the chief attraction of the weekend was the walk along the South Cluanie ridge so collecting up to about 7 Munros. This they did on Saturday in good conditions. Others of us opted for the more isolated An Socath and its neighbour time permitting. This proved to be a good if long walk with an extraordinarily bumpy private road to negotiate by car — our thanks to the landowner and Sandy Anton's car. There was a wealth of Alpine Flowers among the route up and some good views with swirling, low cloud on the top. There proved to be insufficient time for the second top. Other members ventured on to the North Cluanie ridge.

The Sunday dawned cloudy and this worsened as the morning progressed. Every one had plans for either the Sisters or the Saddle. However the rain became so heavy that only one of the Sisters was attempted and the party returned to the cars literally soaked to the skin. Those on the other side suffered a similar fate — some sensibly abandoning the exercise!

As a gathering of club members the weekend proved to be most enjoyable and for the Munro hungry it was most successful.

Gillian Shirreffs

BEN ALDER – MAY 1980

The first of this year's meets was held from 2nd – 5th May in the Ben Alder area.

A total of 37 people were in the area staying in a variety of accommodation – tent, caravan, bothy and guest house. We were also joined for the day by a group on Sunday.

Almost everyone saw almost everyone else during the weekend which gave a feeling of unity. Parties on the hill were fairly small though some 14 people converged on Ben Alder on Sunday. Loch Ericht must have been at its blue-est that day in the sunshine.

Saturday started off cold due to very strong winds which made walking difficult. As the day progressed the weather improved and it continued to do so over the rest of the weekend.

Early morning mist drifted away on Sunday to give us two days of beautiful sunshine.

The weekend was all the more successful due to the co-operation we received from Loch Laggan and Alder Estates. Through them we obtained keys enabling us to open locked gates.

Anne Lindsay



NOTES

RECORD RUN

Congratulations to Mel Edwards who, on the 9th July 1979, ran over the four 4000ft peaks of Braeriach, Cairn Toul, Ben Macdui and Cairngorm from and to Glenmore Lodge in a record time of 4hrs. 34 mts. 8 secs. The distance was 25 miles and involved 7600ft of climbing. The previous record was held by Eric Beard who ran the same route in 1963 in a time of 4hrs. 41 mts.

COMPARATIVE TIMES

	BEARD (1963)	EDWARDS (1979)
Braeriach	1.36 (1.36) hrs	1.29 (1.29) hrs
Cairn Toul	2.12 (0.36) "	2.04 (0.35) "
Ben Macdui	3.23 (1.11) "	3.14 (1.10) "
Cairngorm	4.03 (0.40) "	3.58 (0.44) "
Glenmore Lodge	4.41 (0.38) "	3.34.08 (0.36) "

Mel Edwards has been training to make a record breaking run from Glenmore Lodge to Ben Macdui to Glenmore Lodge in September 1980 in order to set a standard for the distance. This run like the four peaks run, will be for charity.

A DAY IN GLEN OGIL
or
TADPOLES IN DECEMBER

Tadpoles in December? Impossible! Never heard of them! but – a day in Glen Ogil could be possible, if one could find Glen Ogil.

The Cairngorm Club circular said that a meet would be held on the second of December 1979 in Glen Ogil, map number 44. Now, map number 44 is a big one and includes a good part of the River Dee area and Southwards to Glens Prosen and Isla. After a search with a strong magnifying glass the glen was eventually found on the southern part of the map at 447653. But beware Glenogil (all one word) 2.3km due south of the 'O' of Ogil!

It was dreich in Golden Square at 8 a.m. on that Sunday, and the club members crawled silently into the bus hoping to have another hour's sleep and to wake up at least semi-refreshed at Redheugh beside "The Noran Water" in Glen Ogil.

Our walk took us northwards through a beautiful wooded glen along the east bank of Glenogil Reservoir. A buzzard gave us a passing glance but decided that we were no use for either a late breakfast or an early lunch.

After walking about two miles in a gentle drizzle we left the Noran Water and climbed north-westwards up the ridge between the Trusty Burn and the Toardy Burn eventually topping Duthriss Hill. There was a small herd of about twenty-five deer on our left, but we could see ahead a large herd of about five hundred moving from east to west which had probably been disturbed by a party of walkers in the region of Bettywharran or Birse Shades.

Dog Hillock was our next point of ascent, then right turn on to Hill of Glassie and Shank of Peats – the latter well-named due to the house sized lumps and banks of peat rising from the eroded gravel of the almost level ground. The young boys of

the party including Richard and myself had to scramble to the top of one of the very unstable lumps – just to show we could do it!

One of the larger banks gave us shelter from the cold fairly strong wind while we had lunch and decided at the same time that our compasses all pointed in the same direction. This came as something of a surprise to us.

A dip down and a crawl up this time on to Birse Shades and Mount Sned, after which it was a fairly straight route due south into Glen Ogil.

A few hundred feet below us and about half a mile away we saw again the big deer herd moving quietly across our line of descent. In the previous sighting the deer had been going from east to west but now they were traversing from west to east casually jumping the fence on the ridge.

It seemed quite a time before they saw us descending in their direction. It even gave some of our keen photographers time to get within a few hundred yards of them. But, when they did see us they did a quick about turn and eventually gave us an unforgettable sight of a Deer Derby at Beechers Brook as they undulated back over the fence. We discovered on our way down that they had broken the top wire of the fence in a few places.

The sun was now shining on various parts of the hills giving some very beautiful light effects, while a pale new moon looked down and said "Frost tonight"!

Soon we entered Eastside Wood on our way back to the bus. There was a glade in the wood in which was a pool surrounded by sphagnum moss at approximately 400 metres above sea level. It was no ordinary pool because Richard (him again!) stooped and then he glared, and then he pointed. Then we all stooped and glared and pointed and said Oh! there is another one, and another, and another and many more tadpoles.

As I said at the start of this account, Tadpoles in December? Impossible! but there they were swimming around in a pool of about twelve feet in diameter – and we all saw them.

We sat on the grassy bank of Glenogil Reservoir watching the rising trout while we ate the last of our sandwiches and pondered on the magic we had seen that day in December.

Robert L. Harper

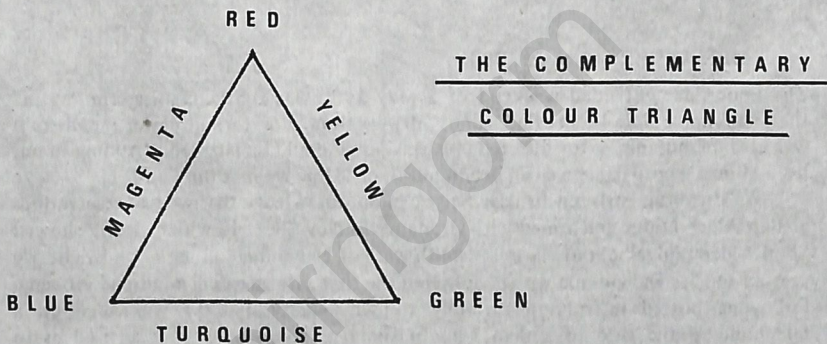
AN OPTICAL ILLUSION – BENNACHIE, 16TH DECEMBER 1979

The pre-Christmas meet was a traverse of Bennachie from east to west. Several members, when descending from Hermit Seat to Black Hill and down the flank of the mountain towards Keig, with the sun in their faces, remarked upon the brilliant iridescent blue colour of the patches of snow lying between the heather. The effect created was so striking that the Editor asked Ann Hay of the Department of Medical Physics, Aberdeen University and a member of the party, whether she could provide an explanation of the phenomenon. Ann Hay puts forward the following hypotheses:—

On the meet of 16th Dec. '79, a certain illusion was noted by some of the walkers: As they were walking towards the sunset, patches of snow, which were in the shadow of the sun, appeared a brilliant peacock blue. At first I attempted to explain this in terms of interference, but I realised that this was impossible as the sun is not a

monochromatic source of light. It then occurred to me that this was probably more of a physiological phenomenon than anything else. Let me explain:—

The sun, as it gets lower in the sky, appears yellow — red, because the shorter wavelength components of white light, i.e. purples, blues & greens, are scattered out more by the atmosphere because of the greater distance that the light rays have to travel through this media. This bright yellow — red light was entering directly into the eyes of the observers and it is in the colour — sensitive cones of the retina of the eye where the physiological reaction takes place. Subjection to bright light produces fatigue of the retina, but when it is light of one part of the spectrum, then only the cones sensitive to that part tire. When the same retinal area is subsequently subjected to white light, all the previously inactive cones respond more vigorously than those which were originally stimulated and a complementary colour is seen. This is illustrated by a standard physics colour triangle which shows all the components of white light and the resultant hues when these are added or subtracted.



The sunlight was yellow tending towards red, which gave a complementary colour on the opposite side of blue tending towards turquoise, when the white snow was observed. It must be pointed out here that the snow was not directly illuminated by the yellow — red of the sun, but had all the components of white light, including re-scattering from the sky.

Another possible explanation is the Purkinje effect in which the rods of the retina have the effect of shifting the eye's maximum sensitivity to the blue — green part of the spectrum, but really the illumination was far too bright for this, so I adhere to the colour fatigue theory.

This is not the last word on the subject, and it would be nice to hear other people's opinions. I have not enlarged on the colour triangle as a full explanation would take too long, but it is a well established fact through experimentation.

Ann Hay

70 YEARS AGO — JANUARY 1910

CCJ, Vol.VI, No.34 — James Gray Kyd wrote an article entitled "Twenty-one Years or our Club".

This is a small extract: —

" The last twenty-one years have seen great changes in our sport in Scotland. In the late 'Eighties the mountains were visited oftener by elderly people than

they are now. I have been told that twenty-one years ago it was not uncommon to see as many as four parties ascending Ben Muich Dhui, each with a guide and ponies. Nowadays the profession of Mountain Guide has almost died out in our country. This no doubt is the result of greater knowledge of the mountains fostered by our club and the clubs of similar constitution. Further, there is more climbing among young men of the less leisured class than there was twenty years ago; the great frequency of holidays and the cheaper travelling that now prevail have opened the "large religion of the hills" to many that could not enjoy it in years gone by. The great passes now figure less in the lives of the people of the Highlands than they used to do. Were it not for tourists, such passes as Glen Feshie and the Learg Ghru would seldom be crossed.

In closing these notes of the first score of years of our Club, we would express the hope that our membership may increase as our age grows and that the good work that has been done in the past may flourish as the years roll on."

BEN ALDER – 2 MAY 1980

The Ben Alder extended weekend of 2 May 1980 was another Cairngorm "extra" that was memorable for its fine, sunny, dry weather. For certain newer members it was also memorable – for different reasons – and could be labelled: "Adding to our list a Munro whose name we can pronounce", or "How we met the Laird".

We drove up early on Friday. Secure in our knowledge that we had reservations at Ben Alder Lodge and armed with Ordnance Survey Sheet 42 which clearly showed "Ben Alder Lodge" about six miles south-west of Dalwhinnie along Loch Eicht, we pressed on. At Dalwhinnie we encountered the first gate guarding a railroad crossing. Following posted instruction carefully (under penalty of £25) we called on a telephone by the gate to a man who in some mysterious outpost advised us to proceed across the right-of-way. At this point a small boy on a bicycle was consulted as to the direction to Ben Alder Lodge. His instructions confirmed our map readings.

After passing several other open gates, we arrived at our destination, an imposing pile of rock nestled in a dark grove of pines. In the deepening shadows of early evening the setting, to romantically inclined Americans, had a brooding element of mystery, a haunt for the likes of Heathcliff. Only one other car was parked behind the lodge. We banged the front door knocker but there was no response. After waiting for some minutes in the brisk late afternoon air, we decided to enter the lodge and ask for the inn-keeper. A log fire was burning in the lounge and an open guest book lay on a table in the entry hall. We sat down in the lounge near the fire, and I began reading *Time* while Audrey pulled out her class notes on Buddha's "Middle Way" or path to enlightenment, in preparation for a coming exam. After forty-five minutes with no other member of the club arriving and no inn-keeper, a certain uneasiness began settling in. Finally, a noise in the kitchen area was heard and a lady appeared with a startled expression on her face. We introduced ourselves and explained that we represented the vanguard of a group of hill walkers that had reservations at the lodge. Her started expression changed to one of alarm and she said that she would call her husband. After a short interval, he appeared and we repeated our introductions.

At this point the "inn-keeper" quietly said, "but this is not a public lodge. It's a private residence." At this point if it had been possible to dig a hole in the floor and

pull ourselves in, we would have done so. We went outside, abject apologies following one after another until Audrey nudged me saying, "That's the fifth time you've said we're sorry."

By this time it was determined that the gates along the loch were now closed and that one was locked. It was now necessary that "his man" precede us out to unlock the gate. After saying yet another apology, we departed. In retrospect, the only saving grace to hill walkers was that this intrusion could have only been carried out by brash Americans. Happily, we weren't brash enough to ask for tea.

Dick and Audrey Vincent

ALL THE DONALDS.

All the Donalds is something to admit to, rather than an achievement to be claimed. So why write about it?

There are reasons. The Donalds do not lack interest. Has not the Club had excursions recently to the Ochil Hills, where nine of them are situated, and did not the S.M.C. hold its first meet at the Crook Inn? Also, with an average intake of about 1½ Munros per year, it will be about the year 2070 before I can write about all the Donalds. It is too long to wait, so I will write about all the Donalds.

As might be deduced from the above remarks, I am domiciled south of the Border, and each year to get to the Easter Meet or at other times, I have to pass through the Southern Uplands. The first Donald I climbed was Windlestraw Law as long ago as May, 1948 and for some years they were taken in desultory fashion or not at all, until by the end of 1974, 21 had been done. Then I started to take a more intensive interest in these hills I passed through so often, and with a maximum of 30 in 1978, they were all done by 1980, the final one being Cardon in the Culter Hills on 15th April in that year.

They have provided many memorable walks, mostly on circular routes from a base point. For example, the fifteen Etrick Hills, which might not look too accessible from the map, fell in three fairly easy rounds from the Moffat valley, two from Caplegill and one from Selcoth. Not all of them fit in with this arrangement, the isolated Tinto for instance and that most inaccessible one of them all, Mullwharcker.

One's own transport is as necessary as with Munros. Only two of them can be regarded as being within reasonable walking distance of a railway station, Blackcraig from Kirkconnel and Blairdenon from Dunblane. Another necessity for a large number of the hills is clear weather. Many of them have no distinguishing feature at all on the top and only by gazing around and perceiving no higher point can one be sure of having made it.

They provide solitary unfrequented routes. With two exceptions, I can count on the fingers the total number of fellow walkers met, that is, on 131 of the hills. The two exceptions are Auchope Cairn and Windy Gyle, the route between which is contiguous with the Pennine Way and in July 1 I met dozens of people here. All of them in a bigger hurry than I was, doing a leisurely round from Sourhope, for this is the last long stretch of the Pennine Way.

One thing that is less than a blessing is the spread of forestry. Forest tracks can be useful if one knows where they are going, I have found such helpful on going up Millfore and Blackhope Scar. Incidentally, I was disappointed to find the cairn of old fence posts on Blackhope Scar which Dr. Donald mentions, gone. I should have liked

to have seen a cairn of old fence posts. But in general, forestry is a nuisance, and one finds one's nice line of projected descent complicated by trenches and young trees. Two of the hills I remember here are Shalloch on Minnoch North Top and Cairnsmore of Fleet. So if you want the Donalds, go and do them before forestry becomes still more of an impediment.

H. Proctor

CONSERVATION OF THE MOUNTAIN ENVIRONMENT

PETER HOWGATE

Nowadays a wide section of the population takes an interest in the many and diverse aspects of 'conservation' – the protection of historic and interesting buildings, the preservation of endangered species of plants and animals and the conservation in as near pristine a state as possible of areas of outstanding beauty or natural interest. I am sure many Club members are active as individuals in the conservation movement and perhaps it is surprising that the Club as a body has not taken a more active interest in protecting and preserving the environment of those areas where its members have a particular interest.

A strong element of the rewards of climbing and hill walking is that these pastimes are carried on in wild and often remote areas where man's activities have had little impact and his artefacts are largely absent. These attributes contribute greatly to both the excitement and aesthetic pleasure of the sports. We are fortunate in that living in Scotland we still have ready access to many areas which fulfil these requirements. Even so the wildness and remoteness of many of them are being slowly eroded in many ways – bulldozed estate roads, new motor roads, forestry plantations, hydro-electric schemes, facilities for leisure activities are examples. In a survey conducted in 1961 for the National Trust for Scotland*, W.H. Murray identified 21 areas of natural beauty in the Highlands. He considered many more could have been included were it not for the disfigurement caused by man's activities. Even within this selected list he warned that only 6 areas were totally unspoiled, the rest having suffered some degree of impairment of their beauty. Almost 20 years on from that report I know from my own experience that there have been further man-made intrusions into many of the areas Murray listed. He included the Cairngorms in his list but noted that the development of the ski-ing facilities, which at that time had not long been started, had had an effect on the landscape.

The objects of the Cairngorm Club as stated in its constitution do not refer specifically to environmental matters, other than 'to consider the right of access to Scottish mountains', but I am certain that members generally would wish to have mountain areas remain unspoiled, wild and remote. The committee during the past year has had to consider and take action on behalf of the Club over 2 cases where it appeared that the environment of areas of interest to members would be adversely affected by proposed developments. These 2 areas though could hardly be more different in character and in the use members make of them.

One area is the stretch of coastline running north from the Bullers o' Buchan towards Peterhead and centred on the Blackhills quarry at Longhaven. Both the sea cliffs and the walls of the disused quarry have been used for rock climbing, certainly since 1951 and very likely since before that. Though it is clearly not a mountain area

and a road runs not far back from the cliffs, anyone who has been there or climbed there will agree it has a surprising air of wildness and remoteness akin to that of a mountain. This feeling is even more enhanced when a mist blows in from the sea. A few years ago the quarry was purchased by a company which applied, unsuccessfully, to the planning authority for permission to rework it. In spite of the refusals, the company reopened the quarry and later negotiated a temporary agreement with the planning authority, Banff and Buchan District Council, under Section 50 of the planning acts to continue extraction of stone. The company has negotiated contracts, mostly for projects in Holland, for large quantities of hardcore and although final plans have not yet been issued it is expected that several hundreds of tonnes of rock will be quarried annually for perhaps 30 years. Extraction on this scale will lead to the formation of a huge quarry and, associated with it, large spoil tips. The quarry and its workings will have a serious adverse effect on the environment of the area and hinder access to the cliff tops. Though the sea cliffs themselves will not be obviously affected by the quarrying, blasting could well affect the structure and integrity of the rock to the detriment of climbing on them.

It is an essential requirement for the successful operation of a quarry on this scale that the stone be transported in bulk to its destination. The company has therefore laid an order before Parliament praying permission to construct a harbour at the inlet of Longhaven. (This procedure has to be adopted because the construction of harbours lies outwith the control of local planning authorities.) Because the harbour is an essential part of the whole project and in view of the affects the developments would have on the environment of the area the committee on behalf of the Club has lodged a petition objecting to the order.

The other area of concern is the northern corries of Cairngorm – or at least those not already affected by ski-ing developments. The Cairngorm Chairlift Company who operating the existing ski-ing facilities have applied to the planning authority for permission to extend them into Coire Lochan, Coire an t-Sneachda and Lurcher's gully. The proposals include the construction of an access road into the lower parts of Coire Lochan with a large car park and the provision of ski-tows and chair lifts in the corries. With the existing situations in Coire Cas and Coire na Ciste as examples of the impact ski-ing facilities have on the mountain environment most climbers and hill walkers could not view these proposals other than with considerable dismay. However, it would not be possible for the Cairngorm Club to speak with a single voice on these proposals. Those members with an interest in ski-ing would perhaps welcome extended opportunities to practice their sport; those who seek unspoiled mountain scenery would consider the proposals abhorrent. Both views are represented on the committee but after debate the majority decision was to oppose the development and a formal objection in the name of the Club has been lodged with the planning authority, Highland Regional Council.

It is almost certain that both these proposed developments will go to public enquiries and the Club as an objector may be asked to appear or be represented at them. This will be a new experience for the Club but if members feel strongly about the preservation of the mountain, or in one case, near-mountain environment, then the Club as a corporate body should formulate an attitude to such developments as I've described and if necessary be prepared to oppose them. The Cairngorm Club is not alone in objecting to these particular proposals – other climbing and hill walking clubs in the Aberdeen area and elsewhere in Scotland, have also done so. It is recognised that when it comes to public enquiries the amateur objector is frequently

at a disadvantage in comparison with the developer who usually has considerable resources of finance and professional advice available to him. It is therefore to the benefit of the objectors if those of a like mind can join together to present a joint case. Promoted very much by the need to take action over the proposals regarding Longhaven and Cairngorm but with future cases also in mind, the climbing and hill walking clubs in the Aberdeen area have formed a body called The North-East Mountain Trust. The Trust was inaugurated in June of this year with the Cairngorm Club as a founder member. Its main function is best summarised by an extract from its constitution.

"The objects of the Trust shall be to protect the environment of hills and coastal cliffs of Scotland and in particular North-East Scotland, for the benefit now and in the future of climbers, walkers and others taking recreation there from developments likely to damage that environment. . . ."

I hope that the Trust will be successful in its aims and would like to see the Cairngorm Club give it full support. I believe that it is a duty of the Club to try to ensure that the Scottish mountains and in particular the Cairngorms, are at least as attractive to climbers and walkers in the future, as they are now.

**W.H. Murray. Highland Landscape. National Trust for Scotland, Aberdeen, 1962.*

Footnote -

At the time of going to print Longhaven Quarries Limited have been placed in the hands of the receiver. This does not necessarily mean an end to quarrying at Longhaven, as the receiver might decide to keep the company operating as a going concern in order to attract a purchaser. Even if the company were to be wound up any purchaser of the assets might revive the quarrying operations. - Editor.



BOOK REVIEWS

After Everest. Tenzing, as told to Malcolm Barnes. Allen & Unwin, 1977. £4.95.

Tenzing, who is illiterate, has dictated his book to a skilful and sensitive amanuensis, who I feel has delivered Tenzing's message like a medium or good advocate, as he would have wished had he had the ability himself.

From being a simple yak-herder, the author became an outstanding mountaineer and leader of men, conquerer of Everest, honoured throughout the world and a hero, above all, to his own countrymen. Such fame almost overwhelmed this retiring and unsophisticated man; he was invited to many countries, he was awarded many honours and decorations including the George Medal, the Cullum medal of the R.G.S., the Hubbard Medal of the U.S.A., two Soviet Medals and the Star of Nepal. He was transformed from a peasant to a man whose name was a household word in every country. Attempts were made to drag him into politics, newspaper men tried to involve him in East/West confrontation, and large sums of money were offered to lure him into the film world, a great temptation to a poor man. Like many other people, some not so far from here, he worried lest the tourist traffic for which he was partly responsible, would destroy the old way of life and tempt young Sherpas away to try the 'good life'; and whether prosperity and western skills, especially medicine, would outweigh these disadvantages.

However he remembered the advice of Sir John Hunt to stick to mountaineering, and accepted the post of Director of Field Training at the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute at Darjeeling. He has, he says, lived three different lives, as a peasant boy on the pastures, as a mountaineer, and as a teacher of climbers; each of them satisfying, happy and rewarding. He has a rich family life, has travelled to far distant lands, and met many people. He feels a lucky and happy man.

Tenzing's modest personality smiles out from this book. It is a very good read, and I recommend it warmly.

P.W.

Hamish's Mountain Walk. Hamish Brown. Gollancz, 1978. £7.50.

"Where lies the land to which the ship would go?

Far, far ahead, is all her seamen know."

If these lines strike a chord in you, read this book. If you know and love our hills, read this book. Read it anyway, for it will tell you things.

As everyone now knows, this is the book of Hamish Brown's traverse of all the Munros in one journey. He passed through some pretty remote places on the way, and has a heartening comment on that remoteness, "the best of defences in a lazy society, long miles of necessary self-propulsion." Some of the hazards of that means of progress are nicely summed up with words like *slaistery*, and this quote from Kipling:

"Hail, snow an' ice that praise the lord; I've met them at their work,

An' wished we had anither route or they anither kirk."

Some of the lonely spots are not as lonely as they were. Even the "sheep" road sign at Fasag in Torridon that someone modified into a mammoth was soon corrected by the bureaucracy. The book is full of interesting lore. I found it fascinating to read

new bits about areas I thought I knew quite well; to follow yet a different route to a hill already "done" several times.

Hamish Brown is a self-confessed elitist, the antithesis of the committee-directed, "properly" equipped person that some would have as the only frequenters of the hills. Read him on *rules*, "... a set of procedures which ultimately fail"; read him on the hazards of cooking with Zip firefighters in Knoydart. Just read him; you'll enjoy it.

D.G.H.

Everest, Goddess of the Wind. Ronald Faux. Chambers, 1978. £5.95.

Ronald Faux is the Scottish correspondent of "The Times" and an experienced mountaineer who has taken part in major ascents in the Himalayas, the Alps and in Norway. His book makes full use of the journalist's skills; never boring the reader and supporting the printed words with good lay-out, clear maps and diagrams and above all, breath-taking photographs for which alone the book would be worth having.

It relates the history of this greatest of mountains from its discovery in 1825 and naming after Col. Sir George Everest, a former Surveyor General of India; through every attempt at conquering it, until the fastest ascent in 1977 by a South Korean expedition. Many of these early attempts are today almost unbelievable. Mallory and Norton are shown in a photograph of 1922 at 27,000 feet dressed in tweed suits, felt alpine hats, First World War puttees and boots more suitable for Snowdon. Yet in 1924 Norton reached over 28,000 feet, and Odell spent 11 days above 22,000 feet and twice climbed to 27,000 feet without oxygen. On this expedition Mallory lost his life, climbing a mountain, as he said on his American lecture tour in 1923 "Because it is there" whether he ever got there – to the top, will never be known.

Though the main value of this book is as a history, and for its pictures, there are additional interesting chapters on the flora and fauna of Nepal as well as the Yeti and the people.

This book, of little over 100 pages, can easily be read in an evening but it will remain a pleasure and a source of reference for much longer.

P.W.

Mountain Adventures. Karl Lukan. Collins 2nd Impress. 1978. £2.50

My first impressions were that this book was well worth the price for the photographs but I do have some reservations. It is sometimes rather difficult to find what the photographs are, as they are not always beside the text describing them. The paragraphs in the various chapters jump suddenly in time and place and make disjointed reading. Although not a book on the technique of climbing, it does include some aspects of this and, in several instances, are either not clear (P 34 – Prussiker) or not safe (P 36 – 2 man roped party). As for the belay (P 75), it is both confusing and inaccurate. If anyone reads the book to learn about actual climbing, I would advise him not to try and unravel the illustrations but to buy something authentic on climbing techniques.

Despite these criticisms, there is much to enjoy and interest in the various stories and photographs.

T.C.W.

The Games Climbers Play. Edited by Ken Wilson. Diadem Books Ltd, 1978.

Do not be misled by the title, This is not a compendium of pastimes like Piton Darts or Putting-the-Boot played in and around the base on wet days or long evenings, nor even of mountain frivolities like Blind-Man's-Bluff-on-the-Cornice indulged in to while away the tedium of a boring ascent. It is in fact an anthology of articles on climbing inspired and guided, according to the editor, by an article – reproduced in the collection – which first appeared in "Mountain" in 1967. In this essay climbing as a pastime was viewed as a set of games which could be arranged in order of increasing difficulty of achieving the objective but of decreasing complexity and rigidity of the unwritten, but accepted, rules by which the game is played. The games, as the author of the article classified them, ranged from bouldering to climbing big and distant mountains. This concept of games with rules led on to a discussion of the ethical background to climbing. With this essay as a starting point Wilson has compiled a collection of writings which reveal more of climbers' attitudes to, and impressions of the sport than of technicalities of the craft; the mountains themselves hardly figure except as the arena in which the games are played.

There are just under one hundred and thirty articles almost all taken complete from magazines or club journals – a mere half dozen or so appear to be extracts from books – and thereby reveal a facet of the literature of climbing which few members other than the most avid reader would come across. The anthology is about climbing as distinct from hill walking and about hard, modern climbing at that. The majority of the contributions were first published in the 1970's and only about ten appeared originally before 1950. They therefore represent the attitudes of the post-war generation of climbers up to the present day. These attitudes do differ from those of the previous generation of climbers whose writings influenced me when I first started climbing in the late 1940's and which are represented in this collection by extracts from books by Frank Smythe and Colin Kirkus. I would have liked to have seen more examples of that generation the better to have made a comparison, but Wilson has not set out to provide a history of attitudes to climbing and the anthology as it is, provides a fascinating insight into the minds of those climbers who tackle these extremely difficult and arduous climbs.

American and British authors are represented and among the latter are Scottish writers. There are two articles by Tom Patey and five by Robin Smith – both tragically killed in climbing accidents – including the latter's 'The Bat and the Wicked', one of the most entertaining climbing articles I have ever read, which was first published in the S.M.C. Journal.

Though most of the contributions to the book relate to hard climbing there are sections devoted to the use of mountains as training grounds i.e. as the location for what are generally termed 'Outdoor Pursuits', and to mountain safety. For example there is an excellent account and discussion of the Cairngorm tragedy of November 1971 when six members of a school party died of exposure in a blizzard on that mountain, which bears on both these aspects of mountain activity. This series of articles should be of particular interest of those Club members who are involved with taking parties of young people to the hills.

Like any anthology it is meant to be dipped into; it cannot be easily or enjoyably read from cover to cover. Because of this and it is quite a thick book, I imagine there will be a problem for the librarian to get it back onto the shelves for the next reader.

P.R.H.

"Trango" The Nameless Tower. Jim Curran, Dark Peak 1978. £6.95.

A story of the second attempt on this small but spectacular rock tower partway up the Baltoro Glacier in the Karakoram Himalaya. After Doug Scott's epic on the Ogre most people will have heard of the region. Likewise most will have heard of Joe Brown and will approach an account of an expedition including Joe and Martin Boysen with some considerable interest.

The account reads well, is a masterpiece of understatement as regards the climbing itself, but the reader's interest is well held to the final conclusion. As so often happens with some of our famous climbers writing about themselves, there are too many derogatory remarks as regards fitness and organisation or as they would have us believe, lack of it, some of the humour too is pretty 'basic' nevertheless the tale goes well.

There are some excellent photographs and some not so good. I found it annoying to constantly have to turn back to an index at the beginning to find out what all the colour illustrations were.

Generally an interesting well produced book, but at £6.95 one which I am well pleased to borrow from a library shelf.

A.F.G.C.

Collins Guide to Mountains and Mountaineering. John Cleare. Collins 1979. £7.95.

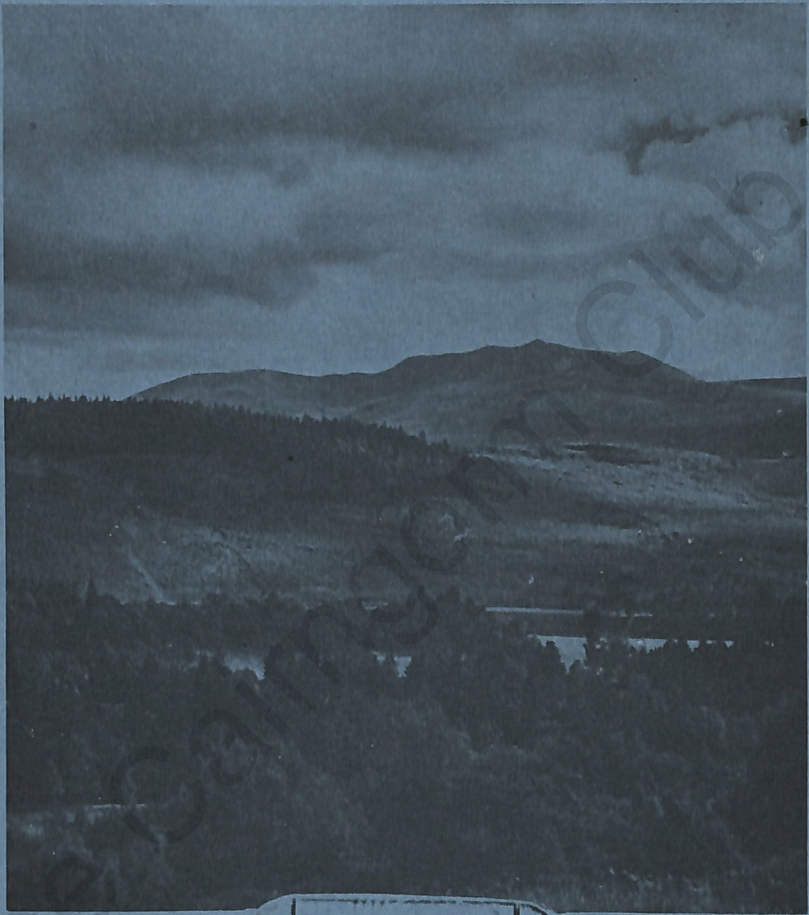
This large book claims to be a complete guide to the principal mountain ranges of the world. Major peaks and other features of each range are listed, with notes on centres, facilities, guide-books and maps. Thus the two pages on Scotland reveal that Some Important Mountains include 1 Ben Nevis 2 Ben Macdui 20 Lochnagar 71 Liathach 117 Sgurr Alasdair (nine such are named, the numbers appear to be due to Munro). The SMC, JMCS, and BMC own seven huts, and it is traditional to climb from "bothies" or "howffs". Fort William, Aviemore, Glencoe, and Glen Brittle are the only centres named, and access is said to be often difficult (to the centres, not the hills). Rather more useful is the information on guide-books and maps (here the author records that the OS maps "still suffer from recent metrication").

That all sounds rather critical, but I enjoyed reading and looking at, this book. The photographs are very good. The diagrams seem adequate and of course if one's interest is aroused regarding a particular region, a starting point is given to enable guide-books and maps to be located. Anyhow, it's there in the Library for browsing through, or for more serious initial consultation if you're thinking of going anywhere from the Punjab to Patagonia. It's a *macro* mountain book in contrast to *Hamish's Mountain Walk* which is full of *micro* mountain detail.

D.G.H.

CONTRIBUTIONS -

The Editor welcomes a constant supply of material for the Journal. The main articles, by tradition, should be from 1500 to 3000 words in length. However, smaller articles would be appreciated particularly for the Notes section, Black and White photographs need not be larger than contact prints and it is helpful if the negatives are available. It would be much appreciated if all contributions could be typewritten "fair copies". The Editor reserves the right to edit, abridge or omit material submitted for publication.



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The Cairngorm Club