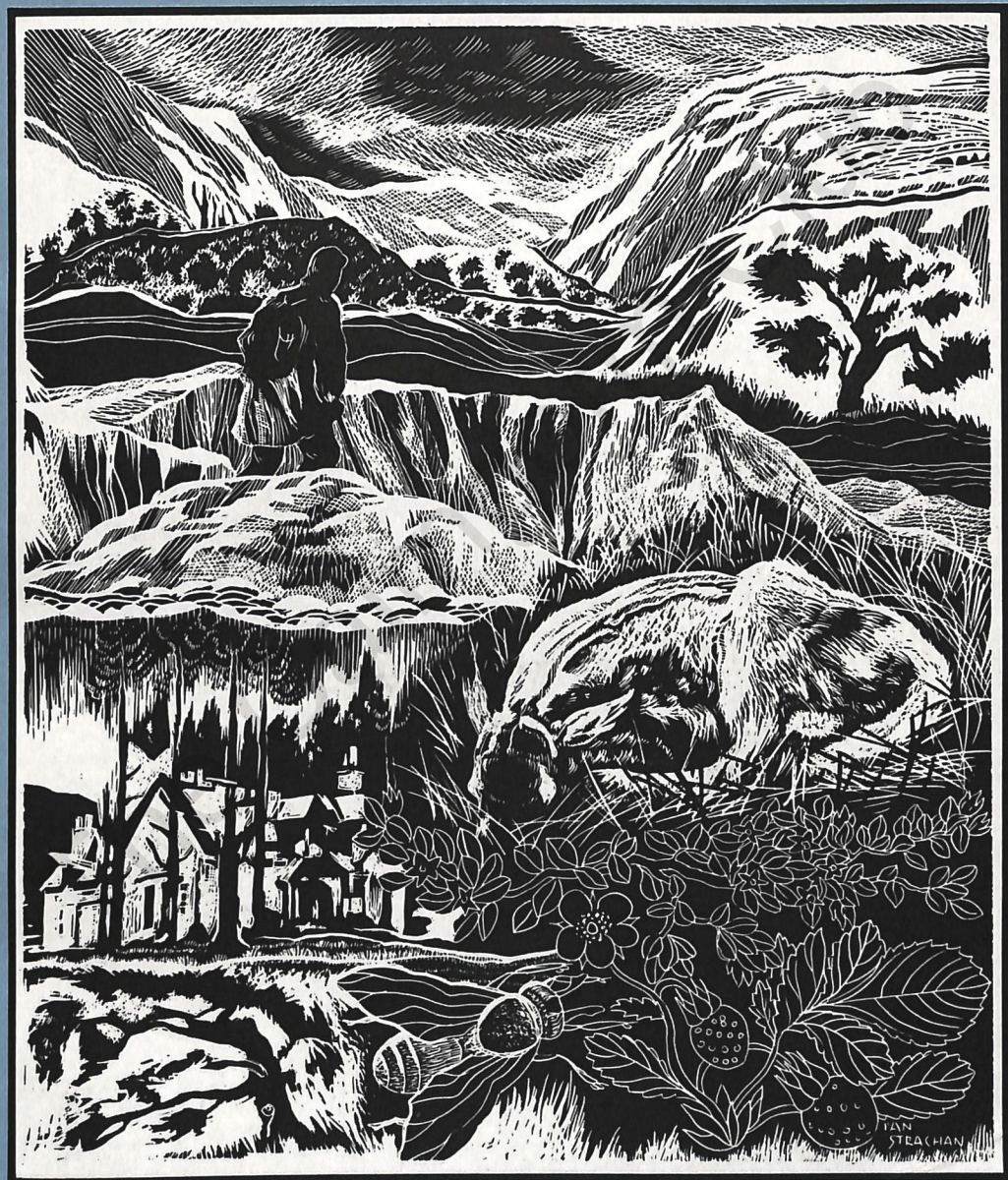


The Cairngorm Club Journal

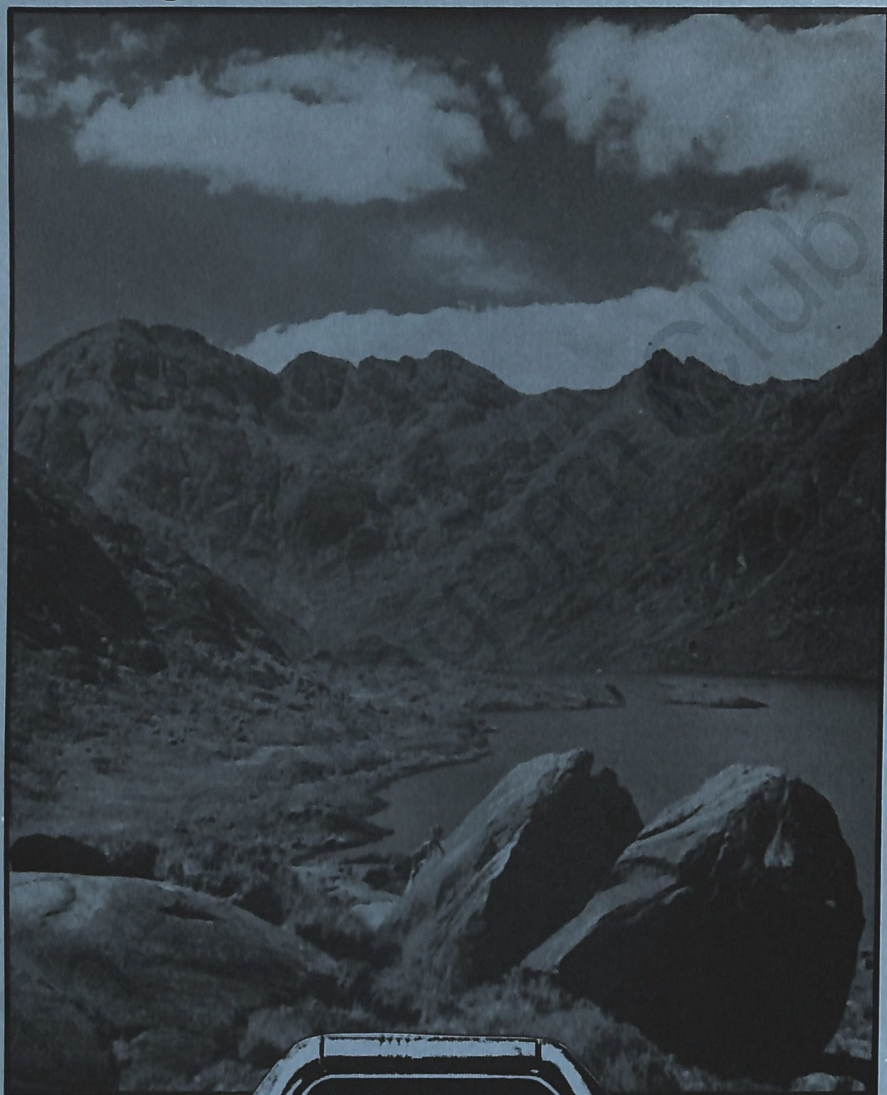


Volume 19

1986

Number 100

Congratulations on your 100th Journal.



Mountain & Ski Equipment
250 George Street · Aberdeen · Tel.636952

The Cairngorm Club Journal



Volume 19

1986

Number 100

W.J. MILNE

for menswear

*A mansion house in the West End of
Aberdeen selling the best of clothes for men.*

MENSTYLE HAIRDRESSING

By appointment

Haircut.....**£2.50**

Haircut, Shampoo & Blow-dry.....**£5.00**

Tel. 588114

Car Parks at
front and rear of
shop.

27 ALBYN PLACE, ABERDEEN. Tel. 583950

Car Park Established 1904



JOHN W. JOLLY

BUTCHERS

BRAEMAR

Deep Freeze Meat Supplied

VENISON AVAILABLE IN SEASON

ONE QUALITY ONLY — THE BEST !

Telephone: 206

THE CAIRNGORM CLUB JOURNAL

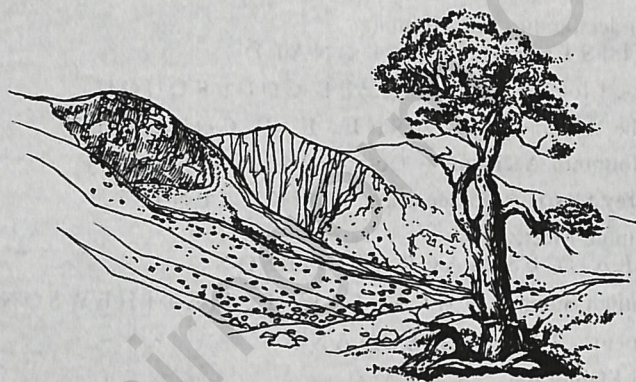
Volume 19 Edited by Antony D. Chessell
Number 100
1986

CONTENTS	Page
The One Hundredth Number	1
The President	3
The Glen of the Birches – HAMISH M. BROWN	4
Ganesh II South Face – RICK ALLEN	9
Understanding the Ultimate – ALISTER G. MACDONALD	13
Food for the Hills – HAZEL COUBROUGH	17
The Walking Bug – ANNE. F.G. CORDINER	23
Mountain Accidents – Compiled by JOHN DUFF	27
Grey Corries, Golden Days – MIKE KENT	34
Alpine Meet, 1984 – FRANCES MACRAE-GIBSON	40
Indian Summer – ALASTAIR P. MATTHEWSON	48
Poem – IAN STRACHAN	54
In Memoriam	55
Proceedings of the Club	60
Notes	69
Book Reviews	80

Illustrations

Ganesh II South Face; the Team; approaching the summit of the Zuckerhutl; the summit of the Wildspitze; Relaxation, one of the plusher huts; the team with Peak 6150 m in the background; Ben Macdhuì indicator; Sugartop Mountain, South Georgia; Harker Glacier, South Georgia; other figures as described in the text.

Drawings by Ian Strachan except where indicated
Published by The Cairngorm Club, 18 Bon-Accord Square, Aberdeen



THE ONE HUNDREDTH NUMBER

Robert Anderson in his introduction to No. 50 of the Cairngorm Club Journal, headed 'Our Fiftieth Number' in January 1918, commented:—"We may be pardoned a modest note of self congratulation. To members of the Club it must be a matter of satisfaction that the *Journal* has been carried on regularly since it was started five-and-twenty years ago, and equally gratifying that it is still vigorous and flourishing." Sixty-eight years on brings us to the One Hundredth Number and surely we are again justified in taking some pride in our achievement. It has not always been an easy progress, as witnessed by the considerably longer time span between the fiftieth and the one hundredth numbers, compared with the twenty-five years between No. 1 in 1893 and No. 50 in 1918.

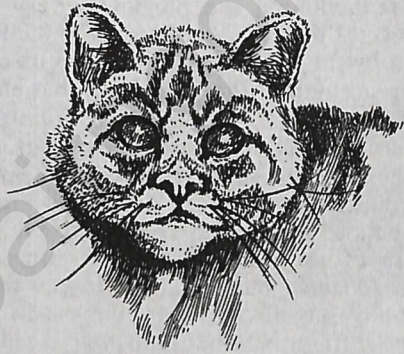
A few years ago, some doubt was cast upon future publication of the *Journal*, but a change in production methods was decided upon by the Club in order to keep costs at a reasonable level. This change, combined with the appointment of a new Editor, meant that initially there was some reduction in the previously very high standard of production. However, the *Journal*, according to the Rules, is one of the agencies employed by the Club for carrying out its chief purposes and it is the continuing strength of the Club which has ensured the survival and resurgence of the *Journal*. Number One Hundred is the first issue to be wholly typeset using computerised production methods and this, combined with the renewed interest of Club members in providing material, gives grounds for optimism that some future Editor will be writing an introduction to the Two Hundredth Number.

Past numbers of the *Journal* have described the history and contents of the *Journal* and mentioned the different styles of Editorship. Reference has already been made to Robert Anderson's introduction to the Fiftieth Number, which gives interesting details of the early years of the *Journal*. R.L. Mitchell's article headed 'Back Numbers' CCJ Vol.XV, No. 81, is essential reading for those interested in the history of the *Journal* and takes this up to 1940. W.A. Ewen also referred to the history of the *Journal* within his article 'Fifty Years of the Cairngorm Club' CCJ Vol.XV, No. 80, ending his article with the sentence, "It seems a good point for the unknown chronicler in the Centenary Number to begin!" Ewen was, of course, referring to the *Journal* which would be reporting on the Centenary of the Club and not to the one hundredth number of the *Journal*. It is not proposed in this introduction to bring the history of the *Journal* up to date as this might impinge upon any references to the *Journal* which may be included in the official Club History being written by Sheila Murray and to be produced to mark the Club's centenary year, 1987.

It is merely fortuitous that the one hundredth *Journal* nearly coincides with the centenary of the Club and as it has turned out, the

'unknown chronicler' referred to by W.A. Ewen, will be the author of the official Club History.

With regard to the present number, the intention has been to produce something a bit special and it should be said that if this has been at all successful, most of it is due to the enthusiasm of the contributors, with special reference to Ian Strachan who has been a regular contributor and also the artist for all the numbers in this volume.



THE PRESIDENT

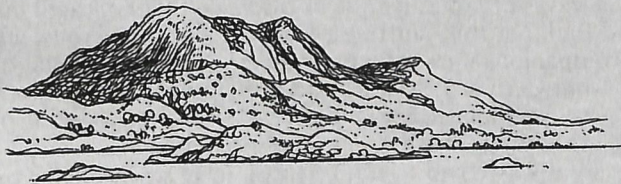
At the Annual General Meeting of the Club on 27 November 1985, Miss Anne Cordiner was elected President in succession to Mr E.F. Johnston.

Anne Cordiner was born in Glasgow although her parents were from Aberdeen. Her interest in the hills was first stimulated by her father, but her career as a teacher of physical education and the fact that her first teaching post was in Skye meant that her early interest in mountains was strengthened and maintained in later years.

Miss Cordiner was a part-time instructor during the early years of Glenmore Lodge and later she became an instructor with the Mountaineering Association. Her teaching posts ranged from Bristol to Derby and back to Aberdeen, but in 1965 she was appointed as the full-time Warden at the Outward Bound School for Girls in Wales, a position which she held for twelve years until she joined the Blood Transfusion Service in Aberdeen. She retired last year.

Anne Cordiner's holidays are often spent abroad, climbing or skiing in Switzerland, France and Italy, a trip to Spitzbergen and climbing in the Himalayas. A Churchill Fellowship took her to Poland, Czechoslovakia and India, enabling her to climb in the Tatras as well as other mountain ranges. A particular highlight was an expedition to Greenland in 1970 with members of the Ladies Scottish Climbing Club, as described in CCJ Vol. 18, No. 94.

Miss Cordiner joined the Cairngorm Club in 1949 and her first term on the Committee was in 1957. She served as Vice-President from 1962 until 1965 and 1984/85. The new President's term of office will cover a historic period with the centenary of the Club in 1987 and the start of the next one hundred years of Club activities. Club members will wish her well during what will be a busy term as President.



THE GLEN OF THE BIRCHES

HAMISH M. BROWN

What does one do after the Munros have been ticked off? The Corbetts perhaps? (The Corbetts indeed for, per foot-poundage, they are better value.) The Donalds? (Nae bad either.) Not being a ticker of lists it is not a problem I've faced. Scotland is too full of good things to concentrate on any one mountain game. Being in the hills is more important than the esoteric things we do there.

If I consciously collect anything it is islands, especially in summer when Scotland sinks and seethes under the pressures of rain, midges and visitors. My earliest passion was tracing water to or from its source, a habit picked up in The Valley of the Thousand Hills in Natal as a boy, and pursued ever since. It is a grand way of meeting the charms of slippery schist or discovering the richness of mountain flora. Historically, rivers (and the passes that usually top them) were far more important than the barren summits. After all, on top, all one can do is come down!

Each year I have enjoyed a coast-to-coast walk as part of the Ultimate Challenge. This is a sort of non-event Event for it is completely self-determined as to style, speed, route and anything else. On such crossings I have always enjoyed mixing days over long mountain crests or following down rivers. The rivers come in to their own towards the end. Five days of deluge following the River Don from its source did not even discourage one year. Last year it was the River North Esk: the one grey day on a sunny crossing but none the worse for that. The North Esk is the river of Glen Esk.

The South Esk is the river of Glen Clova so Glen Esk hardly needs the addition of North to its naming. The North Esk headstreams spider the moors above Glen Clova so, having wandered from Loch Morar, the start for Glen Esk was Dan Smith's youth hostel of Glen Doll, a social night during which the good weather broke down. We set off into a gale that had the trees shimmering silver in the wind.

It is a gey pech up those slopes overlooking Glen Doll but even the stops produced magic touches like the diamond-bright jewels of water held in the leaves of lady's mantle or the vixen that appeared out of the cloud and took her time sniffing across the slope a mere twenty yards off. My companions were two young nurses: Sandy, an Irish lassie, and Claudia, from Germany. Neither had been in Scotland before. Neither had done any walking except to break in their boots (visions of heavy tramping in the night wards!)

The cloud was down to top-of-forest-level so we zig-zagged blind to the plateau country but just where was impossible to say. I explained to the girls the difference between being lost and merely mislaid. Claudia at once suggested the difference was they were the first and I was the second. I was not going to be let out of sight, not round a single

peat hag. Loch Brandy was a target easy enough to hit and when we found ourselves on its corrie rim within four minutes of a time estimate given an hour before they thought this was magic. I always think so too when tricky navigation works out. Thanks be to St Silva!

We cringed by a cairn on Green Hill ("far away" Sandy suggested) to have a snack. Procrastination failed to move clouds. We never did see Loch Brandy. (The crags were edged with creeping azalea, a bonny alpine.) We tramped off on timed bearings along the well-named Long Shank as an alternative to the ominous sounding Burn of Slidderies. A great deal can be read into the names hereabouts: Watery Knowe, Black Hill of Mark, Wolf Hill, Hunt Hill, Benty Roads and the like.

There was an extraordinary crevasse-like hole in one snow bank but the Long Shank gave springy walking of blissful ease before turning into a fine example of the local peaty chaos. As always there seemed to be endless bits of dead hare lying about. (Why?) On Mount Keen one year two shot off at our approach and 'hared' round a peat hag just ahead, one to each side. There was a second's pause and then a great thud and two hares spun into view over the hag. Walt Disney could not have bettered it. We all just about died when a grouse rose at our feet and went flapping off in a distraction display. There were nine eggs. Later we saw dipper and pipit nests and at night a thrush chick landed with a clatter on a car roof beside us.

We came down to the Water of Unich and with all the visible snow rims pouring melt water into it there was no chance of boulder-hopping. It ensured we had a chilly paddle. (Water of eunuch perhaps would have been better.) I crossed and then came back for the girls' rucksacks before scampering to a ruin to put on a brew. Ignorance has some advantages—but they will not forget their first river crossing.

The descent by the Falls of Damff and the Falls of Unich is one of the most memorable miles in Scotland. Very few gorges can surpass it. The blaeberry patches were artificially vivid in colour and the spraying waters would soon be hanging gardens. We tramped down an old path, a gem of its kind compared to today's indecent scourings by bulldozers.

The O.S. do not bother showing the bridge across the Lee and if there is one thing worse than bridges shown not being there it is the opposite. (We even have the odd Wade bridge that has never made it onto the map!) We boulder-hopped across—and then I saw the bridge up the gash in the pearly-grey sculptured rocks. Being a coward I did not point it out.

Loch Lee never seems a very cheery water. Perhaps it is too haunted by sad memories of all the departed peoples of a century ago. The lodge's kennels were built of solid granite, far better building than the dispossessed had ever known. We stopped to look at the ruined churchyard and had a last brew while Claudia replastered a blistered heel. Several eighteenth century stones here are still in good legible

condition. A local teacher, Alexander Ross, was a poet once admired by Burns, but now forgotten.

Invermark Castle is a pepper-pot of a tower, with nasty loopholes at ground level and the entrance with its iron yett fifteen feet up the wall. Not much you could do to it if armed only with an ice axe! It stands at glen junctions and must have been a thorn in the flesh to cattle thieves, mercenaries, gangrels and smugglers—of which the area had its share. The castle was built by Sir David Lindsay of Edzell who lived a cultured life in the brief years before the bloody 17th century came in, and who made Edzell Castle such a unique creation. Claudia was interested to hear he had introduced German miners to work the glen. (The old workings could still be made out.) Sandy noticed the door above ground level and compared it to Irish round towers, without knowing we would see one of Scotland's two Irish towers at Brechin the next day.

The original route cut over Hill of Rowan and we took this rather than the hard surfaced road down to Tarfside, our destination. It has a narrow gap of a pass cut in the heathery slopes. On top of the hill is an odd conical cairn which is the dominant feature of Glen Esk. Our weary legs rejected a visit but I could tell them it was built by an Earl of Dalhousie in 1866 'in memory of seven members of his family already dead, and of himself and two others when it shall please God to call them hence.'

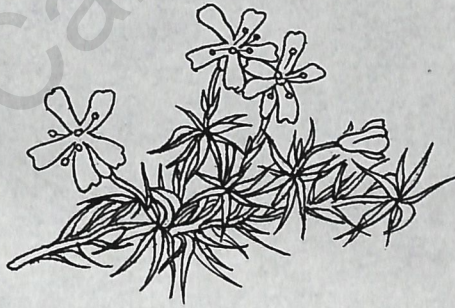
As we straggled off the hill Claudia asked if we knew what her name meant. With a sigh she said "the lame". Never mind, we were at the old cross stone (one of the earliest Christian carvings in the country and starkly simple and right in that setting), and the Parsonage was at the foot of the brae.

There is no name or B & B sign but the Old Parsonage is a home much loved by walkers. (The next night Mrs Guthrie did three sittings for dinner and had thirteen tents on her lawn.) Routes are regularly 'bent' to take in a night at the Parsonage. The roadside episcopal church has been restored very pleasantly. Historically this was a Jacobite and episcopal region—and it suffered accordingly after the Forty Five.

It is amazing what tea and pancakes, followed by a bath can do to those who have tramped for nine hours. The supper table beat us as usual though. What contrasts that day had given: the plover-crying moors in the mist, the wonders of the Unich, bleak Loch Lee in the rain, the Hill of Rowan in rainbowed evening, the silver of waters which we had traced from threads on the brown tweedy heights to the wide satins of Glen Esk, the glitter of the trees, the birch trees that form a tapestry all down to Edzell. This is called the Glen of the Rowans but it is really the Glen of Birches. Tarfside too is haunted by history. The Fungle and Firmounth come over from Deeside and many a pony stepped out for the Clash of Wirren and the south with the local distillation on its back.

The sun shone the next day for the walk down to Edzell and on to the sea. We had run into friends at The Parsonage so we ambled and chatted along the traffic-free south bank with the landscape growing greener and richer by the mile. The Muckle Burn of Kiltrie produced a 'ciste dubh' of a pool (and a brew afterwards) and beyond The Rocks of Solitude we pulled up a waup-loud brae for a last look back to the hills.

The river became too hemmed in by farmland to walk easily so we took in Edzell Castle and Brechin instead before an evening hike to the sea at Montrose. I can recommend a stravaig from Morar to Montrose and, looking back, we three agreed the days of following the Esk were as splendid as any. We had not sought Munros (well we actually did one or two), there were no Corbetts (quite a job to miss one) but we had enjoyed the many varied delights of moor and mountain. We travelled paths steeped in history (and black peat) and it was watching Sandy and Claudia discovering this kingdom of adventure that was my reward. Poor lassies, they had to return to London. We live on its fringes.





GANESH II SOUTH FACE

----- Line of ascent on right.

▲ Bivouacs.

GANESH II SOUTH FACE

RICK ALLEN

Nick and I had encountered one another several times in the last few years in a variety of bars, tea houses and bothies and we both entered 1984 with plenty of enthusiasm and no place to go. During a stormy January weekend in Glencoe the decision was made to go somewhere, the rest was just detail.

I was keen to return to Nepal and the recently opened Ganesh range with its relatively short approaches seemed to offer abundant opportunities. However, the few published pictures showed only the wrong facets of the wrong mountains. Picking a line from a hazy telephoto shot in a journal is enough of a pig in a poke without indulging in an outright guess. A chance meeting with John Cleare, one of the few British mountaineers to have visited the area, yielded a magnificent collection of prints of the southern side of the range and an oblique view of the south face of Ganesh II accompanied an application just two weeks before the deadline for the post-monsoon period.

The face is about 2,500 m high and curves round in a huge arc to join the tumbling seracs of the south face of Ganesh IV. The right hand half appeared to be relatively free from objective danger, predominantly snow and ice slopes interrupted by some major rock bands.

In March, reports were published describing the Polish attempt on the face in 1983, the first we had heard of it. We suspected that Wielicki and Pawlikowski were not types to give up lightly and they reported unstable snow and loose rock. Correspondence with the editor of a Polish Journal yielded valuable photographs and we knew beyond doubt that we had not picked a cake walk.

Permission was received and the project launched although we were too late to qualify for grants. The budget received a knock as late as August when His Majesty's Government of Nepal doubled the peak fee.

Our arrival in Kathmandu in mid September was delayed by late rains and major obstacles loomed. The rains had cut the road from India causing paraffin rationing, a Swiss expedition, apparently with permission for the same face, had just left and the air freight was firmly in the hands of the customs officials. However in just three days of frenetic activity all problems were solved, circumvented or ignored and we could leave for Trisuli Bazar in a hired bus with a full complement of porters.

Phu Tsering Sherpa was something of a star. He had been a high altitude porter on the SW face of Everest, tried but disliked an office job and returned to the mountains in the more comfortable role of sirdar.

Mr. Bishnu had been plucked from behind a desk to act as liaison officer in the unfamiliar uplands of his own country for a two man show which did not match his preconceptions of an expedition. At least he stuck at his non-existent role to the end.

The approach route lay across country to the Anku Khola then up the valley of this river to its source below the Ganesh peaks. Few trekkers venture up this cul de sac and only a handful of expeditions have passed this way. Little Western influence is apparent in the self-sufficient villages and buying a few potatoes is a major exercise for a sirdar who speaks no Tamang. Beyond Hindung the trail entered the steep upper gorge of the Anku Khola, rising rapidly and repeatedly crossing the river. The Swiss expedition on their 12 day walk had rebuilt every log bridge, saving us four days. We reached base camp on an exposed vegetated ridge below Ganesh IV to find the Swiss committed to a circuitous icefall route leading to the west ridge of Ganesh II. Entente cordiale was established over a bottle of whisky with Roland Garin and his team mates, secretly relieved not to be debating who should be climbing where.

Across an intervening glacier the scale of the south face defied appreciation; with the upper two thirds foreshortened it was still a monster. We crossed the glacier and established our advanced base camp tent on the far bank about 200 m below base camp. This was not much help in acclimatising so despite streaming head colds we embarked on the face with massive sacks on 3rd October. Climbing up the glacier and over rubble strewn ledges at the foot of the face led to a key chimney pitch with an abandoned rope and more traces of the Polish visit at their first bivouac site. The next day a major ice gully led to the foot of the most prominent rock wall on the face. The sun turned this gully into a bowling alley by midday so we were glad to move leftwards below the sheltering wall. The combined effects of a head cold, diarrhoea and altitude exerted themselves and I reached the second Polish bivouac site utterly spent. Nick was in better shape and managed the tent and the cooking single handed.

We retreated the following morning having had as much acclimatising as we could take and left a dump of food, gear and gas. The peculiar siting of our advanced camp left an uphill slog to base, a nightmare on this occasion as I lost the track in the dark and blundered through streams and dwarf juniper scrub.

After two days' rest the weather persisted fair and there were no excuses left. Repeating the first two days took us to about 5,200 m, poised above the next ice couloir. From here the Poles had continued upwards on to successively more difficult rock to emerge on the pinnacled SE ridge, separated from the summit slopes by major obstacles.

Linking some crucial transverse pitches was required to break out into the centre of the face.

In the couloir early next morning we climbed sixty degree glassy ice for several pitches until Nick moved on to a short wall composed of loose mica flakes. Rock ledges took us left to an excellent natural platform and an early bivouac.

Crossing a short snowfield in the morning we reached a crucial ice pitch leading through the rock barrier above. Without the sack for once I climbed a full runout of good Scottish IV, revelling in a brief liberation from the oppressive burden. Snow flutings and another bivouac led to more steep ice through the next rock barrier and on up into a fan shaped hanging icefield. Climbing the left edge daylight faded without any chance of a site for the tent. My attempt to chop out a ledge struck rock almost immediately and we settled for the Kekus mark one angled snow ledge with rock fin. Thrashing about with the tent we broke one pole and finally settled for wrapping the fabric around us. Unable to brew up, two bundles were suspended in misery as spindrift trickled into the tent sack. A strong contender in the league table of appalling bivouacs.

In the morning just one ropelength led to a site where a tent platform could be dug and the day was spent brewing up. This hiatus at about 6,200 m may have helped acclimatisation and partly counteracted the weakening effects of the previous night.

The seventh day on the face began with a sensational traverse across vertical rotten snow on to a steep icicle and so out of a Z shaped ramp system through the last rock barrier. The slopes above were deeply fluted with hard green ice channels, alternating with icing sugar crests. Progress was slow; the steep ground demanded unrelenting concentration and diminishing loads could not compensate for fatigue and the debilitating effects of recurrent diarrhoea. At least we were never both ill on the same day.

So far the weather had been stable with clear skies every morning but on the eighth day banks of high cloud moved in from the west and enveloped the mountain. The tent platform that night was dug into the crest of a snow fluting leaving us exposed to the gathering wind. In the morning we faltered, retreating to our bags as snow flurries circled. Descending the way we had come was not inviting and with one meal left we could not sit still. We would go on until we could dig a snow hole. A slight improvement in visibility led us on and we decided to go for a descent by the west ridge, which entailed reaching the summit. Heads down against the wicked wind we emerged on to easier angled ground overlooking the east face and reached the level summit crest in a whiteout in the late afternoon.

Dropping below the crest we dug a small snowhole and began brewing up. My taste for instant noodles had declined to such an extent by this time that half of the last meal remained uneaten.



THE TEAM—L-R: Nick Kekus, Bishnu Datta Uperty—L.O., Sherbahadur Cook, Phu Tsering Sherpa—Sirdar, Rick Allen.

The wind was unabated in the morning as we stumbled down the upper slopes of the west ridge. A rock gendarme barred the way after a while and it became obvious that the Swiss team had not completed their route. Visions of descending a succession of camps stocked with chocolate were shattered and we embarked on a descent of the south face which was partly sheltered from the wind. This area of the face was capped by steep rock and as we abseiled into the mist, down overhanging walls, the situation seemed close to getting out of hand.

In the evening we reached a broad snow terrace which was familiar from photographs and would lead diagonally leftward to our line of ascent. We dug a level tent platform and brewed up lemon tea as the sky cleared. Two days later we reached advanced base camp after twelve days on the mountain.

Footnote – Following the Ganesh II expedition in 1984, Rick Allen was selected for the North East Ridge Everest Expedition in 1985. He spoke at an Indoor Meet on the first of these expeditions in January 1985 and one year later in January 1986 he spoke to the Club regarding his experiences on Mount Everest—Editor.

UNDERSTANDING THE ULTIMATE

ALISTER G. MACDONALD

Reader in Physiology, University of Aberdeen

The one hundredth number of this *Journal* prompts questions of how times have changed since its first edition in 1893, and in particular of how mountaineering has changed.

Although in 1893 it was known that the highest mountains on earth were in the Himalayas, the height of Everest was only settled in 1954 at 8848 metres (29,028 feet). Early attempts to climb Everest were very nearly successful, in particular the astonishing achievement of Somervell and Norton in reaching over 8500 metres on the northern approach in 1924, without using supplementary oxygen to assist their breathing. The main difficulty of high altitude climbing, the lack of oxygen, was fully appreciated, but Norton (1925) and his colleagues, Odell and Hingston in particular, were correct in their view that exceptional climbers could reach the summit without carrying oxygen. Nevertheless most subsequent attempts to climb Everest were large scale 'siege' expeditions, in which oxygen cylinders were used. Edmund Hillary and Sherpa Norgay were the first to reach the summit of Everest, and they did it assisted by cylinders of oxygen and the support of the Hunt expedition in 1953 (Hunt, 1953). Numerous similarly equipped expeditions followed, some successful, others not, but the scientific climbing world was astonished when in 1978, the Austrians Reinhold Messner (Messner, 1979) and Peter Habeler (Habeler, 1979) reached the summit without using supplementary oxygen, and without large scale expeditionary support. In 1980 Messner repeated the climb – solo!

In this article I want to explain the physiological significance of these climbs. The results of the 1981 American Medical Research Expedition to Everest are now published (West, 1982) and together with other developments provide us with a reasonably clear understanding of Messner and Habeler's achievement.

The atmosphere at high altitude

Air is four fifths nitrogen and one fifth oxygen and at sea level their combined pressure is 760 Torr of which oxygen constitutes about 152 Torr. (1 Torr is the pressure which will support one millimetre of mercury and is equal to 1/760 standard atmosphere or 133.32 Pascals). Atmospheric pressure decreases with an increase in height in a predictable way, subject to local climatic conditions. The 1981 American expedition recorded the pressure on the summit of Everest at 253 Torr which is significantly higher than predicted. This provides an oxygen pressure of about 50 Torr, which is desperately low to sustain

active climbing. In fact by the time the air is drawn into the lungs, where it is mixed with the water vapour and carbon dioxide coming out of the body, the effective pressure of oxygen in resting conditions is down to 35 Torr. This should be compared to 100 Torr in normal conditions. It is also important to realise that high altitude atmospheres are also very cold, windy and dry. Water vapour is rapidly driven off by bodily heat, especially through the lungs, and the ensuing dehydration is a major debilitating factor.

The need for oxygen

Oxygen is a vital chemical in the process through which muscles release energy in the form of movement and heat. The rate at which we can carry out muscular exercise is called fitness, and this is largely set by the rate at which we can get oxygen to the muscles. Oxygen moves down a series of pressure gradients; lung gas to blood, blood to muscle cell, cell to the chemical reaction, and the rate at which this can occur is fundamentally limited by the initial pressure of oxygen in the lung. Should the muscles use oxygen more rapidly than the rate at which it can be supplied, lactic acid accumulates, acidified blood forces our breathing rate up even faster and painful exhaustion ensues. We cannot go on so we reduce our oxygen 'demand' by resting. Oxygen is also a vital chemical in the reactions supporting consciousness and other functions of the brain. We rapidly lose consciousness when the rate at which oxygen reaches the brain cells falls below a critical level, and irreversible damage can occur if the reduced oxygen supply is severe or prolonged.

Breathing is normally an automatic process, although we can impose temporary, conscious control over it. The normal breathing rhythm at rest or asleep is set by the acidity of the blood, but at high altitude the low oxygen pressure takes over and drives a vigorous breathing rhythm, which maintains as high an oxygen pressure as possible in the lungs. The extra requirements of muscular exercise drive the breathing rhythm even faster. From all this it is apparent why very high altitude climbing is made desperately hard by the lack of oxygen and was considered by some to be potentially dangerous through the sudden loss of consciousness, or worse.

Fitness at high altitude

Successful high altitude acclimatisation is a prerequisite for a serious attempt on Everest, with or without supplementary oxygen. Acclimatisation takes many weeks and involves a shift in the breathing rhythm to an automatically high setting and changes in the blood and its circulation, all of which assist in a good delivery of oxygen to the tissues. Sometimes the body responds poorly, as if it is anaemic rather than short of oxygen and it can also get its blood pressure out of

balance. The result is an insufficient oxygen supply to the tissues, fluid in the lungs, and a sick climber who has to retreat, because he may die if he does not.

When the revised figures for the oxygen pressure at the summit of Everest became available, it was calculated that it was just possible for an exceptional individual to supply oxygen to his muscles at a rate which would support a slow rate of climbing. Ascending at a rate of, for example, 2 metres per minute, implies a certain rate of oxygen consumption, which is primarily limited by the oxygen pressure in the lungs and the blood circulation to the muscles. The oxygen pressure in the brain of such a climber is calculated to be 30% of normal, and his maximum oxygen consumption (fitness) has been measured at 25% of normal. Climbers usually adopt a pace at which they consume oxygen at between $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{2}{3}$ of their individual maximum. At extreme altitude, without supplementary oxygen, this involves very hard breathing and frequent rests. A typical description would be Somervell's (1925):

“Approaching 28000 feet, I found that for every single step forward and upward, seven to ten complete respirations were required.”

Habeler and Messner not only acclimatise to high altitude very effectively, they possess other important physiological properties. They are exceptionally good athletes; about 50% better than some other Everest climbers, and they have a remarkable cerebral tolerance to low oxygen pressure. Indirect evidence shows they also have exceptional tolerance to dehydration and when fasting, readily switch to metabolising fat. These last two attributes are important in other endurance ‘sports’. It has been estimated that during their three day final assault on Everest they consumed about 10% of the calories required for the energy expended.

Their climbing technique complements their remarkable physiology. By all accounts their technical climbing skill and judgement is outstanding. Quite simply, they climb very fast without expeditionary support. On Everest their speed and endurance enabled them to carry few supplies, which, in the absence of oxygen cylinders, kept the packs they wore to the summit down to only 10 kg, compared to the 26 kg carried by Hillary and Tenzing. Above all else however is their superhuman commitment to succeed. Their fitness did not protect them from the mental stress of forcing their bodies to the theoretical limits of physical exercise. Messner's account (1979) makes this very clear:

“As we get higher it becomes necessary to lie down to recover our breath.”

This seems quite relaxed when compared to his experience at the top:

“I am nothing more than a single, narrow, gasping lung, floating over the mists and the summits”.

REFERENCES

- HABELER, P. (1979). *Everest: Impossible Victory*. Arlington Books, London.
- HUNT, J. (1953). *The Ascent of Everest*. Hodder and Stoughton, London.
- MESSNER, R. (1979). *Everest: Expedition to the Ultimate*. Kay & Ward, London.
- NORTON, E.F. (1925). *Fight for Everest: 1924*. Arnold, London.
- SOMERVELL, T.H. (1925). *Journal of Physiology*. 60, pp. 283-285.
- WEST, J.B. (1982). *Journal of Applied Physiology. Respirat. Environ. Exercise Physiol.* 52 (6) pp. 1393-1399.



FOOD FOR THE HILLS

HAZEL COUBROUGH

Area Dietitian, Grampian Health Board

Food appears to be of great interest to Cairngorm Club members. We peer into each other's lunchboxes with the unfeigned curiosity of six year-olds. Any assertion that a particular food has improved uphill speed/endurance/ability at altitude is discussed in great detail. New or unusual delicacies are passed around for trial and comment. This interest was tapped by handing out questionnaires at the barbecue in June 1984 and much of the ensuing information derives from the twenty four which were returned. Here then is the Good Hill Food Guide for day and weekend outings.

Start the day well with a breakfast, preferably with plenty of cereal bread or rolls. If travel sickness is a problem and/or you have to leave home very early, take a picnic breakfast to eat on arrival. Some members note that a large cooked breakfast, particularly if fried seems to slow them down. This is because foods which contain mainly fat and protein take a long time to pass through the stomach so are slow to be absorbed and thus available as energy.

DRINKS

Fluid balance is much more important than most of us realise. Normally we drink when we feel thirsty but the sensation of thirst diminishes during exertion, in cold conditions and at altitude. We can lose a lot of fluid by two main routes:—

Perspiration, which is greatest during ascent and in the unfit. Absence of damp on clothing does not mean that we are not perspiring. Sun and even a light wind quickly cause sweat to evaporate.

Expiry—the more we pant the more we lose as vapour. Anyone with a stuffed up nose will lose even more since they must keep their mouth open to breathe.

It is surprisingly easy to become dehydrated and once two to three litres of body fluids are lost, physical performance deteriorates. This can be prevented if we make a point of drinking little and often. Most mountain burns can be reckoned to be safe and some members drink water from each burn that they cross. In very hot conditions beware of drinking a lot of cold water at once or stomach cramps can develop. Stop for a few minutes and have a gap between mouthfuls so that it has a chance to warm up on the way to the stomach. After prolonged hot or freezing weather there may be no water on or near the tops, so accept the fact that you must bear the weight of carrying at least a litre of fluid on these occasions. If you have miscalculated and run out of fluid in freezing conditions, break off small chunks of ice and pop them

into the mouth to melt. Avoid touching the lips to prevent ice burn. Polar explorers are advised to put ice into their hot water bottles and place this next to the chest to melt—but I can't recall seeing any 'hotties' in club members' rucksacks! In winter it is best to carry hot drinks. These heat us up and so help to reduce the amount of energy used trying to keep ourselves warm. Hot drinks also have a reviving effect since we tend to slow down when body temperature drops. In very cold conditions it is a good idea to stop only long enough for the hot drink and to eat as you move along, as you may be dependent on the heat generated by movement to keep body temperature relatively stable.

Drinks favoured by club members are, in order of preference:—

Winter— Soup, tea, coffee, hot water with small containers of fruit squash, Ribena, teabags, coffee and instant soup mix, and hot orange squash.

Summer— Empty water bottles—to be filled when required. Some carry concentrated orange or apple juice, fruit juice crystals or fruit squash for variety. Milk, flavoured milks, unsweetened fruit juice and iced tea are enjoyed by others.

Only two occasionally take alcoholic drinks, lager and gluhwein. These may add to the enjoyment of a moderately active day but could adversely affect a very energetic one. Alcohol acts as a diuretic, so increasing the chance of dehydration.

FOOD

During energetic days in the hills most of us find it best to re-fuel little and often. Digestion is impaired to some extent since part of the blood flow is directed away from the internal organs towards the skin to assist temperature regulation. This can result in loss of appetite, but the experienced hillwalker will eat even if not hungry. Table I lists the most popular foods consumed and rates them as three star (excellent) down to no stars (poor) under the following headings:—

Instant Energy. These are the foods with a high sugar content. Sugar is digested and absorbed rapidly, causing the blood glucose level to rise and be available as energy. If sugary foods are eaten on their own then the blood glucose level can plummet within an hour or so causing tiredness, hunger and perhaps apathy. Thus foods which have three stars in this column should be eaten along with or quickly followed by those starred in the next column. Frequent nibbling of dried fruit, fudge or sweets may keep a flagging body in motion at the end of a hard day.

Sustained Energy. Foods which contain a lot of fat and protein, i.e. meat, pies, sausages and boiled eggs are theoretically good as they take a long time to be digested. In practice however they are top of the list of foods most disliked on the hills, probably due to the

body's reduced digestive ability during exertion. A few folk do tuck into pork pies, meat sandwiches and cold sausages, but most do not.

Wholegrain cereals are the best bet for sustained energy. They are easily digested over a long time, so releasing a regular supply of glucose over a prolonged period. Refined cereals such as white bread and tea biscuits do not have such a sustained effect. Most Club members do use wholemeal or wheatmeal bread or rolls for their sandwiches and the most popular fillings are shown in Table I. Thick oatcakes sandwiched together with spreading cheese and bound in cling film to prevent crumbling are also enjoyed. Most foods eaten on the hills should have at least two stars in this column.

Moist cakes containing dried fruit star in both these columns and are justifiably popular.

Weight. Foods with a high energy content in relation to their weight are given star rating. Pot noodles should perhaps not be listed here since they require hot water for reconstitution. Select brands which are ready in five minutes or less once the water has been added. Packaging of food can make a significant difference to the weight of supplies carried and the inexperienced walker may be handicapped by bottles of lemonade or even jam in a glass jar. The robust walker who was seen enjoying a family sized can of mandarin oranges on a remote peak, clearly reckoned that the pleasure derived from it outweighed any lighter alternative.

Temperature Stability. Intense heat or cold can cause problems to the uninitiated. Heat causes runny honey to ooze into all other contents of the lunch box, so use crystallised honey in the summer and wrap each sandwich individually. Chocolate melts, but cooking chocolate, Galaxy and Ritter Sports varieties have a higher melting point so will travel better. One enterprising member wraps her favourite brand in foil before setting out, then in hot weather pops it into a burn for a few minutes to solidify. Chunks of cheese ooze fat, harden on the outside and develop a fudge-like consistency within, which I find delicious. During heat, Dutch and cottage cheeses are more stable than Cheddar, cream or spreading varieties.

In very cold conditions, slice up chocolate bars and packets of dates and break up chocolate into bite sized pieces before leaving. The memory still haunts me of five minutes of agony in sub-zero conditions on Cairnwell, impaled in a Mars bar, upper and lower teeth embedded in this most tenacious object and freezing air numbing my tonsils.

Moistness. Breathing through the mouth and any degree of dehydration reduce salivary flow, so moist foods are easier to chew and swallow. Fresh fruits are particularly moist and apples are the most popular fruit carried. A little weight can be saved and the need to remove gloves on cold days avoided, if oranges and grapefruit are peeled and partly segmented beforehand then carefully wrapped up.

Tomato, marmalade, pickles or jam added to cheese or meat in sandwiches can greatly increase their palatability.

A most important factor in choice of food for the hills is our own liking for them. This was not taken into account by the planners of a Russian attempt on Everest in the 1970's. Rations described as nutritionally perfect for each stage of the expedition bore no relation to the preferences of individual climbers and the whole undertaking failed due to the ensuing dissention. Some foods which are normally enjoyed, particularly meats and other savoury foods may appear to change in flavour during exertion. Altitude may play a part in this phenomenon which is common to deep sea divers. It seems that our enormous consumption of chocolate, dried fruit, sweets and fruit cake while on the hills bears little relation to normal eating habits. Tolerance for very sweet foods appears to rise when energy demands are high.

Emergency supplies carried by club members are, in order of frequency:—chocolate, raisins, Kendal Mint Cake, fudge, nuts, boilings, chocolate bars, fruit cake, fruit and nut mixtures and dates. Some take large supplies while others with the end of the walk in sight, eat up their 'emergency' stocks as a bonus. One person keeps a packet of dried figs, which she dislikes, in her rucksack, thus ensuring that they really will only be used for a true emergency—or perhaps as the ultimate deterrent to avoid one.

Once off the hill our primary need is for fluid, usually at least half a litre right away. In cold weather a flask of soup has a dual effect. The body cools down quickly when exertion stops and hot fluids can minimise the resultant feeling of chill. Soup also helps to make up the deficit of salt which is lost in perspiration. If 'instant' soups are the main fluid taken at this stage of the day, dilute them with much more water than directed on the packet otherwise their high salt content will intensify a thirst. Salted crisps can seem particularly tasty, but have these along with plenty of unsalted drinks. Some of us who do not normally add salt to foods feel that a main course tastes insipid without it after prolonged exertion—a demonstration of the remarkable ability of the body to indicate a real need. A hot main course can be kept in a wide necked thermos flask if home is a long way off and you don't intend to stop for a meal on the way. Alcohol should only be consumed once you are well into the process of dehydration with other fluids, and if you will not be driving. Full rehydration cannot be accomplished quickly so take more fluid before settling down for the night. A hangover-like feeling the next morning is a sign of continuing dehydration. Drink the teapot dry before setting out again or you will feel 'under the weather' all day.

Food supplies for weekend trips are based mainly on those in Table I. Additions for breakfast are muesli ready mixed with milk powder, which only needs hot or cold water added to make a most satisfying dish, wholegrain breakfast cereals, milk powder, wholemeal

bread and rolls, oatcakes, crispbreads, honey, marmalade and spreading cheese.

When an evening meal has to be prepared, the choice of foods will be partly determined by availability of cooking and storage facilities and whether supplies have to be carried in. The following were popular:—

Instant and 'quick cook' dried soups

Corned beef, tinned or home made bolognaise and chili con carne, quiches, omelettes, bacon, packet cheese sauce, baked beans, instant potato and dried vegetables.

'Quick cook' noodles, rice, macaroni and spaghetti

Tinned puddings, tinned fruit and 'quick mix' custard.

Tea and coffee bags, lager, beer, cider and wine.

Fresh fruit and salad vegetables.

I am continually impressed by the sophisticated meals produced in often adverse conditions on weekend meets, often three courses which would do credit to a superior hotel.

Yes, Cairngorm Club members love to eat, but we also eat to walk. One mysteriously remarked that he enjoyed my company—especially in misty conditions. As I pondered his true meaning he continued "I'll never become separated from the group while you continue to put all that garlic in your pizza".



POPULAR HILL FOOD

	Instant Energy	Sustained Energy	High	Temperature	
			Energy/ Weight Ratio	Stable	Moist
Meat pie		***	**	**	*
Sausage/sausage roll		***	**	**	*
Cheese/boiled egg		**	**	*	
Pot noodles		**	***	**	**
Pizza		**	*	*	*
Wholemeal/wholewheat sandwiches					
+ cold meat/paté		***	**	**	*
+ cheese		***	**	**	
+ cheese + tomato, pickle marmalade		***	**	**	**
+ jam/honey/marmalade	**	**	**	**	**
+ tomato/salad		*	*	*	**
+ banana	*	**	*	**	**
Buttery rolls		**	**	*	*
Fruit loaf	**	**	**	**	**
Fruit cake/black bun/ brownies/chorley cakes/ clottie dumpling	**	**	**	**	**
Muesli bars	**	**	***	***	
Dried fruit bars	**	**	**	**	*
Nuts		***	***	***	
Dried fruits	***	*	***	***	
Mixed fruit and nuts	**	**	***	***	*
Yoghurt	*	*			**
Sweet biscuits	***	*	***	*	
Chocolate biscuits	***	*	***		
Savoury/cheese biscuits	**	*	**	**	
Oatcakes	*	***	**	***	
Crisps/savoury nibbles	*	*	***	**	
Banana	*	**	*		*
Apple	*	*		***	***
Citrus fruits	*			**	***
Chocolate/chocolate bars	***	**	***		
Kendal mint cake	***		***	***	
Fudge	***	*	***	***	
Boilings	***		***	***	

TABLE 1.

Footnote—In the last number of the Journal, Hazel Coubrough contributed an article entitled 'Food Intake and Endurance Events'. Not all Club members run the whole distance on a Meet and Hazel Coubrough therefore agreed to provide information which is of more direct benefit to the mountain walker and climber. For those members who do or might be tempted to run the whole way, please note that in her previous article, page 32—line 3, the figures should read 800ml-1000ml fluid/hour—Editor.

THE WALKING BUG

ANNE F.G. CORDINER

In 1983, looking for something which would take an out of practice mountaineer who was not getting any younger, amongst big mountains, yet not be too serious, I interested two friends in the idea of completing the 'Tour du Mt. Blanc'.

Having achieved it and seen in passing 'other country' or as Robert Frost put it "way leads on to way", I was able to amuse myself on dull winter nights in dreaming up another route for 1984.

So in summer 1983 it was the 'Tour du Mont Blanc'.

We were a threesome. Two from the far north, Sheila (Murray) and myself, who first had an overnight train journey to meet Gwen (Dunkley) at Heathrow where a leisurely breakfast preceded an uneventful flight to Geneva. All other transport ran smoothly and by late afternoon we had booked into a small hotel in Martigny and were savouring our first return to Switzerland in many years.

Next day dawned bright and sunny, we did our early morning shopping, dutifully wrote postcards and duly presented ourselves at the bus stop to catch a mid-morning Post Bus to the little village of Trient.

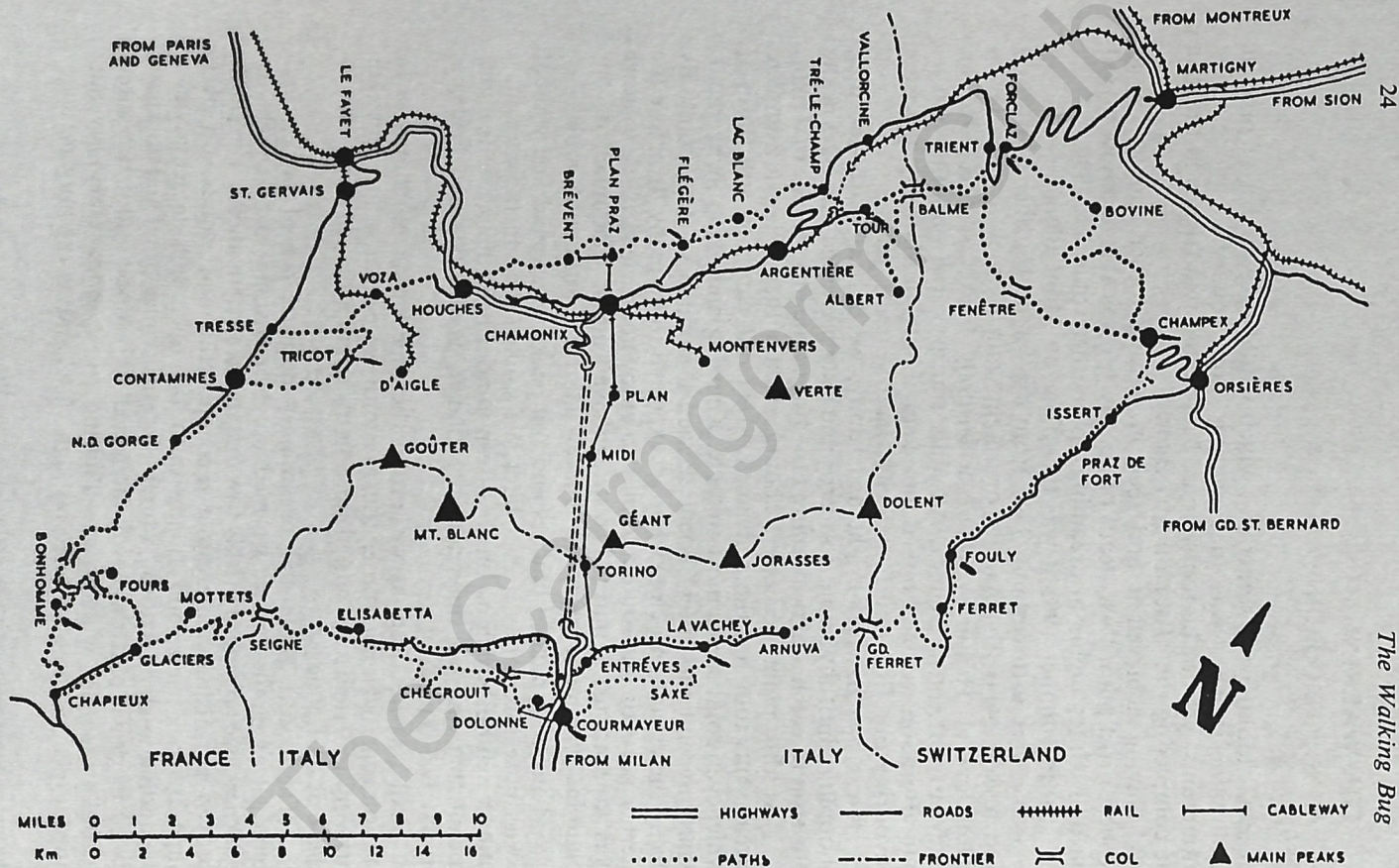
At this point perhaps I should explain that being a complete circuit, this tour has the convenience that one can start and finish at whichever point seems most suitable. Knowing and liking Switzerland, Martigny and the hotel, Trient seemed a suitable starting point. By doing the circuit anti-clockwise, we expected to be really fit before the sterner parts of our route and also to enjoy good views if the weather was kind to us. I must also straightaway admit that much of our planning was made easier by Andrew Harper's little guidebook.¹

Thus with packed lunches and full packs, we waited and waited! Swiss buses are rarely if ever late! We studied the timetable again; a minute symbol which no one had seen in poor light the previous night, meant that one bus only ran on Monday, Wednesday and Friday—to-day was Tuesday!

All was not lost, as we passed the time eating our lunch on a station seat, watching other tourists until we caught a later bus. On arriving in Trient, we wasted no time in striding out on our climb to the Col de Balme.

There were the usual preliminary adjustments of packs, and removal of clothes as we warmed up. Not wishing to be caught by darkness, we advanced briskly towards the steep path ahead. The climb proved surprisingly interesting through scrub and woods, up over slippery rock steps and finally onto the open hillside with views expanding in all directions. A brief glimpse because cloud and darkness raced us down past the newly 'arranged' ski slopes, and it was three 'drookit' females who began enquiring for a room. Obviously our appearance was not sufficiently 'high class' and as the hoteliers who

¹ *Tour of Mont Blanc*. Andrew Harper. Cicerone Press.



Reproduced by kind permission of Cicerone Press, Milnthorpe, Cumbria.

turned us away may have guessed, neither were our purses! Full marks to Andrew Harper—the dormitory at Montroc took us in at 7 p.m. For a meal, we had to venture into Argentière, but duly wine and dined, it proved no great hardship.

Breakfast was provided, not alas fresh croissants, but middle-aged French bread and then we were off for our first complete day's walking. Gradually as we gained height along the 'balcony' path on the west side of the Chamonix Valley, the clouds also lifted and the sun came out. We ambled along seeing plenty to keep us interested. Old friends among the alpine flowers, pupils of a climbing school on some rocky stretches, the rocks festooned with their ropes and gear, but no one proceeding up their pitches with any alacrity! We found some wire hausers and iron steps and finally a nice sheltered corner for lunch and the first of many brew-ups.

A day by day description of the trip would soon bore, but there were highlights and perhaps points which may be useful to others.

Accommodation varied. From a hotel at the upper station of a cable car (La Flégère) most reasonable; to private bunk house or dormitory or alpine hut. The huts were interesting, from the gaunt draughty Croix de Bonhomme in its half ruinous state, to the civilised, expensive Elisabetta Italian hut which employed its own chef in the summer months. In small resorts such as Courmayeur, La Fouly and Champex Lac, we were very lucky, usually obtaining a room for three in small hotels and eating our evening meals there. Prices seemed very reasonable and on the whole we enjoyed good service and felt that we received good value. The occasional hotel room let us enjoy the luxury of a shower or bath and keep up to date with our washing.

We met and exchanged views with several other parties also 'doing' the Tour, and gained considerable amusement from the group of three tough British lads also doing things our way round. Our first meeting may have been in Courmayeur but thereafter, until we decided on two nights in Champex we would see them load up and dash off each morning. Our gentle day would include a stop for lunch, a brew-up, usually plenty of photographic halts, not to mention chat and we would roam in just after afternoon tea-break to find the bold lads had arrived at lunchtime and had been 'passing the time' ever since. We wondered why they just didn't do two sections each day. We also suspected that we afforded them quite a bit of amusement!

We had some fun at one hut. Five French fellow travellers rudely grabbed the bed space allocated to us, but by the time we gained three mattresses elsewhere we reckoned that with five in a space for three, we had definitely come off best!

Another day we stopped above some big melting snow patches and watched a weasel at play in the snow and among the boulders. It would pop up through a hole and slide down the snow and repeat the performance again and again, always choosing a different hole – greased lightning indeed!

Beyond Courmayeur the only accommodation was at the Mt. Dolent Chalets – a collection of old cow sheds. We did not meet any rats, but were apprehensive, for it seemed that kind of place. Again our fellow travellers provided some levity, as some well built Italian couples endeavoured to heave their spouses into top bunks; some slept well if the snores were anything to judge by.

Next day over the Col Grand Ferret, 2537 m (8321 ft), there should have been magnificent views, but alas, we covered the distance in thick wet mist all the way. Our Scottish hill training came to our rescue here, with compasses out in doubtful places, and like tortoises we would catch up our continental friends, pass them and plod on. As the path again became obvious, they would rush past and disappear into the gloom – until the next time – and the next.

One lunch break, sheltering among a few larches, we looked across the steep banks of a small river and sat fascinated, watching a sturdy Swiss cow ‘besting’ her cowherd! He had whacked her with his hefty stick and obviously hurt her feelings! So, disappearing among the scrub, never causing a ‘dong’ from her large bell, she gradually worked her way uphill to pastures of her liking – quite an intelligent animal!

Strange to say, on our days off (there were only two) we spent them walking, but minus full packs, and our return to Martigny was a glorious day of sun and magnificent views and a long hot descent through miles of pasture and forest. We enjoyed blackberries and raspas and finally grapes as we dropped down through the vineyards. The views of the Dents du Midi, the Barbarine Lake and the Oberland sparked off the idea that grew into the next trip!

Meanwhile relaxed and sunburnt, well pleased with our circuit, weary, dusty but with no blisters, our Martigny hotel welcomed us back. Hot showers soon restored us to a condition fit to celebrate the end of a most enjoyable and successful holiday.

For the technically minded, we covered approximately 132 miles and 46,000 ft. of ascent in 14 days. About £400 covered everything, transport from and back to Aberdeen, flights to Geneva and all our accommodation and meals.

Footnote—In the last Journal, Anne Cordiner gave us a flavour of Nepal and the Annapurna Sanctuary. In this number, she has taken us to Switzerland, France and Italy in the vicinity of Mt. Blanc. There will be another instalment of Anne's travels in the next Journal when she will be describing an expedition on both sides of the French/Swiss border travelling south from St. Gingolph on Lac Lemman to Les Houches near Chamonix—Editor.

MOUNTAIN ACCIDENTS—GRAMPIANS AND CAIRNGORMS

Compiled by JOHN DUFF

- 6.2.83 Eighteen soldiers of 8th Battery (R.A.) 29th Commando Unit, Plymouth were reported overdue on a walk from Glenmore, Aviemore to the Linn of Dee, Braemar via the Lairig Ghru in blizzard conditions. Found safe and well at Derry Lodge where they declined assistance and made their own way out the following morning.
- 10.2.83 Two Nottingham climbers were ascending a climb known as 'The Vent' in Coire an Lochan when one slipped and fell about 35 feet on the rope. His crampon caught on ice and twisted his ankle. His friend walked out to Glenmore Lodge and summoned a helicopter.
- 17.2.83 A party of four English climbers were ascending Pinnacle Gully when one was struck by a windslab avalanche and fell 1,000 feet, suffering slight injury.
- 21.2.83 Two men from Kent were climbing at Coire an Lochan when one fell. They were rescued, then taken to hospital by helicopter.
- 3.4.83 A solo walker from Inverness lost his way in white-out conditions in the Bynack Mor area. When darkness fell he dug a snow trench and covered himself with a space blanket. An extensive search was carried out by rescue teams during the night. At first light he was located by RAF helicopter.
- 13.5.83 A 36 year old male ornithologist was reported overdue, due to a misunderstanding after spending a week in the hills on Invercauld Estate, Braemar. A search party found him making his own way off the hill, near Corndavon Lodge, Crathie, safe and well.
- 22.5.83 A hillwalker from Aberdeen was crossing a burn near Bynack Stables when she fell and sprained her ankle. She was taken from the hill by a mountain rescue team.
- 28.5.83 A hillwalker from Carnoustie whilst in the Lairig Ghru suffered severe muscle fatigue and was overcome by exposure. He was removed from the hill by a mountain rescue team.
- 2.6.83 Two males of 15 and 36 were two of a party of 15 pupils and 3 teachers, from Warrington, spending a week hillwalking in the Cairngorms. On the 5th day, shortly after leaving their camp in Glen Luibeg, Braemar, the younger showed signs of suffering from hypothermia and about the same time the other slipped on the muddy path at the same location. Both were put into a tent until the arrival of the rescue team and thereafter taken to Braemar where they received medical attention.
- 12.6.83 A 38 year old male was walking northwards through the Lairig Ghru with five companions when he became unwell. He was assisted to Corrou Bothy where he was later picked up by an R.A.F. helicopter and flown to Raigmore Hospital, Inverness, where he was found to be suffering from a stomach upset.
- 15.6.83 A member of the Royal Air Force was struck by a dislodged boulder at Lurchers Crag.
- 18.6.83 A 28 year old male slipped and fell about 600 feet on hard snow while descending Braeriach into the Lairig Ghru. As he did so he hit protruding boulders and received a stomach wound and body bruising. After receiving first aid from his companion he continued down into the Lairig Ghru, where he remained while his companion went for assistance. A helicopter in the area on another mission was diverted to his assistance and evacuated him to Ninewells Hospital, Dundee, for attention.

- 18.6.83 An adult female was one of a party of 33 on a sponsored walk going southwards through the Lairig Ghru, when she twisted her ankle near the Pools of Dee. She continued to a point opposite Corrou Bothy where she decided she could go no further. Some of the party continued and on reaching Derry Lodge, telephoned for assistance. During this time she continued and was met by the rescue team near Derry Lodge. On examination she was found to be suffering from a sprained right ankle and blistered feet.
- 30.6.83 An Edinburgh man, whilst hillwalking at Carn Ban Mhor, Glenfeshie, with his wife, suffered a minor heart attack and was removed from the hill by helicopter.
- 25.7.83 An Edinburgh female had walked to the Ptarmigan Restaurant when she felt unwell and collapsed. She was removed to hospital by helicopter.
- 2.8.83 A teacher from Darlington slipped on snow, fell 15 feet and struck a boulder. She was uplifted by helicopter and taken to Raigmore Hospital.
- 16.8.83 A hillwalker from Stonehouse underestimated time required for walk to Devils Point. Mountain rescue teams searched and found him on his return journey.
- 16.8.83 A 17 year old male was a member of a group on an Adventure Training Scheme, engaged in rock climbing at Craig-a-Barns, Dunkeld. He fell approximately 8 feet at the start of a climb, and had to be stretchered off the Craggs to an ambulance at the roadside. He was taken to Bridge of Earn Hospital having sustained a fractured collar bone.
- 27.9.83 A hillwalker from New Pitsligo became ill and collapsed. He was rescued by Land Rover and later conveyed by ambulance to Raigmore Hospital.
- 2.10.83 A teacher from Inverness was leading a party of children through the Lairig Ghru when bad weather delayed their return. Mountain rescue teams were alerted and spotted these people coming from the hill.
- 6.11.83 Rescue teams called out to make a search of the Logie Coldstone area where lights had been seen low in the sky and it was believed a light aircraft had crashed. No trace found of any aircraft.
- 18.12.83 A hillwalker from Paisley became separated from the main party and was unable to re-establish contact due to bad weather. He was later found by a mountain rescue team and dog handler at Sinclair Hut.
- 26.12.83 A lone hillwalker from Leeds fell and dislocated a knee. He managed to make his way to the Chair Lift Car Park and was transported by ambulance to Raigmore Hospital.
- 26.12.83 A 33 year old female was fatally injured when she slid about 900 feet out of control on ice covered snow, on the east side of Cuidhe Crom, Balmoral Estate, hitting protruding boulders en route. She had gone to the aid of her companion, a 60 year old male, who had slid down the steep slope but managed to stop himself. He was uninjured.
- 30.12.83 Two hillwalkers from Kilmarnock and Belfast, became benighted on the hill and were later found safe by a rescue team and dog handler at Sinclair Hut.
- 30.12.83 A female from Aylesbury was receiving instruction on the use of an ice axe when she lost her footing and slid some 150 feet. She was removed from the hill by helicopter.
- 1.1.84 Two climbers from Newcastle were caught by darkness on Coire an t'Sneachda and bivouacked on the hill. A mountain rescue team located both men on the hill.
- 3.1.84 An 18 year old male was benighted in Corndavon Lodge Bothy, Invercauld Estate, because of blizzard conditions and reported missing. He was found safe and well early the following morning.

- 5.1.84 A 26 year old male was spending a few days walking in the Cairngorms but remained at Corrou Bothy when caught up in blizzard conditions. His mother reported him missing and he was found safe and well at Corrou Bothy by the rescue teams.
- 6.1.84 A hillwalker from Spain got lost at Bynack Stables due to not having a map or compass. After an extensive search by a mountain rescue team and R.A.F. helicopter, he was spotted near Bynack Stables.
- 6.1.84 A hillwalker from Bristol went to the hills without map or compass. He took the wrong way on Coire Cas and got lost, eventually arriving at Tomintoul.
- 15.1.84 A schoolteacher and six boys got lost due to inability to navigate in bad weather conditions. However, they found themselves at Bynack Stables and then made their way to Glenmore Lodge. An extensive search was undertaken by mountain rescue teams.
- 22.1.84 Two soldiers, aged 30 and 37 years set off from Coire Cas Car Park for a two night snow holing and navigational exercise in the Cairngorms on 20.1.84. They encountered exceptionally bad blizzard conditions and were reported missing when they failed to turn up at their appointed times. Lengthy searches were made and on 26.1.84 their bodies were found in the snow in Coire an t'Sneachda.
- 22.1.84 Four hillwalkers were caught in the open in bad weather conditions. Three perished and one managed to reach safety. The bodies of the three deceased were later located on Coire an Lochan by rescue teams and helicopter.
- 5.2.84 A 26 year old male became exhausted after spending the night in a snow hole in Glen Derry and walking out to Derry Lodge in deep soft snow. From Derry Lodge he telephoned for assistance and he was evacuated by a snow vehicle.
- 12.2.84 A 39 year old male strayed from ski-ing area at Cairnwell in bad weather. Eventually found safe and well by search parties. R.A.F. helicopter using specialised heat seeking equipment used during night search.
- 19.2.84 A climber from Orpington was blown off the edge of Coire an t'Sneachda by a gust of wind. Rescue team removed body from the hill.
- 26.2.84 Two males of 20 and 24 years were caught up by darkness while climbing in the north-east Coire of Lochnagar, and were reported overdue by two other companions. They eventually made their own way back to Spittal of Glenmuick where they were found in their car by searchers en route to look for them.
- 27.2.84 to 4.3.84 A Netherlands couple of 42 and 39 years were on a week's hillwalking expedition in the Cairngorms. Blizzard conditions prevailed which slowed their progress and they were reported overdue by their landlord. Search parties met the couple, safe and well, walking out.
- 2/3.3.84 A 17 old male, one of a party of five R.A.F. personnel taking part in a four day exercise in the Cairngorms, became detached from the rest of his party in whiteout conditions on the Fords of Avon/Bynack Stables path. Search parties were called out to make an all night search but with negative results. The following morning he was found safe and well by a search and rescue helicopter after he had snow holed for the night.
- 25.3.84 Four girl students went on a hike in snow conditions over a circular route from Glen Doll Hostel, to Loch Muick and return. On the return leg of the journey over Capel Mounth track, they encountered deep soft snow which slowed progress, drove them downhill off the track until darkness fell and they became lost. Their failure to return was reported to the Police and rescue teams set out from Glen Doll and Braemar to search over the route. About midnight the sound of a whistle and screams carried by the wind, guided a team of searchers to the missing girls, who had built a snow shelter

- at the headwaters of the Moulzie Burn. They were suffering from slight exposure, but after hot food and drink they were strong enough to walk with assistance back to Glen Doll Hostel. They did not require medical treatment.
- 26.3.84 A lone hillwalker from Glasgow was caught in severe avalanche conditions and was missing for approximately one month before his body was found in Coire Domhain, Glenfeshie.
- 3.4.84 A lone hillwalker from London got caught in bad weather on Coire na Spreidhe and was found dead on the hill by a hillwalker.
- 10.4.84 A man of 48 and two boys of 13 were on a hike from Glen Doll to Mayar, via the Kilbo Path, in snow conditions. They encountered falling snow and spin drift and they were forced to take shelter as darkness fell. Their failure to return was reported to the Police and rescue teams set out to cover the route. Clear conditions between snow showers allowed searchers to find the party near the head of the Kilbo Path during the night. Due to the extreme cold, the condition of the two boys was found to be deteriorating and a helicopter from R.A.F. Leuchars was able to uplift the party from the locus and convey them to Ninewells Hospital, Dundee. All three were treated for exposure.
- 11.4.84 A 27 year old female was one of a party of eighteen members of the National Red Rope Mountaineering Club, hillwalking in the Cairngorms and was descending from Cairn Toul to the Garbh Coire Bothy. In doing so the front point of her crampons caught in the hard snow twisting her leg badly as she fell. At the time she felt pain in her leg but with assistance got down to the bothy where she spent the night. The following morning she was unable to stand on the leg in question. Assistance was eventually summoned and she was uplifted by an R.A.F. helicopter and flown to an awaiting ambulance. In hospital, she was found to have a fractured right fibula.
- 24.4.84 A cross-country skier from Merseyside overbalanced on Coire Cas and slid 200 feet. He was located by the ski patrol and removed from hill by helicopter.
- 3.6.84 A hillwalker from West Midlands became lost due to mist. She was removed from the hill by a mountain rescue team.
- 21.6.84 A youth from Cranwell fell whilst rock climbing on Lochan Vaine. He was airlifted out by helicopter to Raigmore Hospital.
- 6.7.84 A 47 year old male, accompanied by his son were hunting for rabbits on the banks of the Erich near Bridge of Cally, Blairgowrie, when he slipped and fell down a 60 foot cliff face. Due to his location, a rescue team attended. He was found to have sustained serious injuries and was raised by roped stretcher, then removed to Dundee Royal Infirmary by ambulance. Both serious external and internal injuries were diagnosed. At a later date he was transferred to Ninewells Hospital, Dundee, but failed to recover and died on 31.7.84.
- 8.7.84 A 28 year old female became separated from her brother in clear weather while climbing Clachnaben, near Banchory because she was lagging behind. An all night search was mounted and she was found suffering from fatigue and exhaustion in the grounds of Glen Dye Lodge. She refused medical attention.
- 26.7.84 A hillwalker from Bolton underestimated his time of return and rescue teams were alerted. However, Aviemore Police spotted him coming from the hill safe and well.
- 26.7.84 A female hillwalker from Dundee suffered a heart attack whilst walking in Lairig Ghru. A passing walker contacted rescue services when the remains were taken out by helicopter.

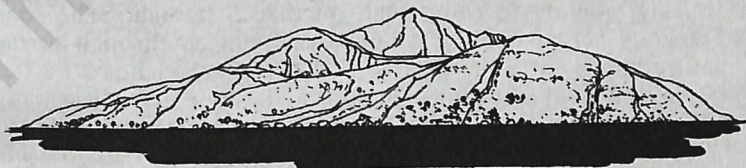
- 1.8.84 Two males of 39 and 22 years left Glen Doll to hike to Loch Muick, Fafernne and return via Jock's Road. Their failure to return resulted in a search from first light on 2.8.84 by teams from Tayside and Grampian and a helicopter from R.A.F. Leuchars. They were traced on Carn-an-Tuirc and returned to Glen Doll none the worse of being benighted. They had become lost on 1.8.84 during the hike, due to fog and darkness and bedded down in a survival bag.
- 25.8.84 A local man had parked his car at the car park, Cairngorm and went absent from home for over a week. A full-scale search was conducted for two days with negative result. However, this man later called at the Police Office at Aviemore and reported his return.
- 26.8.84 Two males, both 15 years became detached from a party of 11 cadets and 6 adults of Arbroath Air Training Corps in poor conditions on Carn-an-Tuirc, Invercauld Estate. Rescue teams were called out together with and R.A.F. helicopter to search the area. About two hours after the search got underway, it was learned that the two youths had made their own way home to Arbroath and were safe and well.
- 2.9.84 A 24 year old male was fatally injured when he slipped and fell some 300 feet on wet slab rock while descending from summit of Devil's Point to Corrour Bothy.
- 3.9.84 A 25 year old male was reported overdue after a two day walk from Braemar to Grantown on Spey, via the Lairig Ghru. The following day a helicopter search was made of various routes in the Cairngorms in bad weather until early that afternoon when he arrived home safe and well, unaware of the ongoing search.
- 3.9.84 A hillwalker from Stamford, Lincs., left Braemar and walked through the Lairig Ghru, leaving a route card at Braemar Police Station. Several hours later his family reported him missing and members of a mountain rescue team set out to search for him. He was later located at Glenmore Camp Site.
- 23.9.84 A brother and sister of 57 and 54 years were two of a party of nine organised by a Rotary Club to walk through the Lairig Ghru from Coylumbridge to Linn of Dee, Braemar. The two became detached from the remainder of the party in very wet and strong windy conditions and were not reported missing until the rest of the group arrived at Perth at 0030 hours the following day. Mountain rescue teams made a night search of the area and at 0520 hours found the woman on the shoulder of Carn a Mhaim, disorientated, confused and unable to stand up due to exposure and hypothermia. She recovered after two days in hospital but with no recollection of what happened on the night in question. At 0750 hours her brother was found dead from exposure in the Lairig Ghru some three miles from his sister.
- 1.10.84 Two males of 39 and 22 years were reported missing after a one day walk from Glen Doll - Loch Muick - Fafernne - Glen Doll. They had become lost in poor visibility but were found safe and well by rescue teams the following morning.
- 13.11.84 Two males of 38 and 34 years left Coylumbridge to walk through to Glen Feshie, via the Lairig Ghru, and Glen Geldie on a three day expedition. They left no route card and due to a misunderstanding they were reported missing after two days out. Rescue teams were called out together with an R.A.F. helicopter. The two men were found safe and well and it was only just then that the misunderstanding was realised.
- 18.12.84 One crag-fast sheep removed from rocks in Coire Kander.
- 18.12.84 A 27 year old male slipped and fell on a flat wet rock while descending with a party from An Socach into Glen Baddoch, Braemar injuring his right

- ankle. Evacuated by helicopter to hospital in Dundee where it was found his ankle was badly sprained.
- 27.12.84 Two climbers from London were climbing Spiral Gully, Coire an t'Sneachda, when the lead climber fell and was fatally injured. They were located by the rescue teams and rescued by R.A.F. helicopter.
- 19.2.85 Three men from Sussex were climbing North End of Lairig Ghru when they were benighted. They were located next day by a mountain rescue team and R.A.F. helicopter.
- 5.3.85 A climber from Cumbria when at the start of the Vent, Coire an Lochan, was struck on the head by a rock. He was attended to by members of a mountain rescue team and later removed from the hill by helicopter to hospital in Aberdeen.
- 30.3.85 A 19 year old male and a 21 year old female failed to keep an appointment in Aviemore with two friends after leaving the Linn of Dee, Braemar to walk through the Lairig Ghru. The alarm was raised and the two missing persons were found safe and well in the Allt Garbh Coire Bothy early the following morning. They had become disorientated and stumbled on the bothy by chance, where they met two climbers who looked after them until the searchers arrived. They were airlifted out by helicopter.
- 31.3.85 Two hillwalkers from Aberdeen got lost but found a bothy at Garbh Coire where they sheltered for the night and were found at first light by a mountain rescue team.
- 5.4.85 A party of hillwalkers from Huntington were traversing the Coire an t'Sneachda ridge when one of the party fell and struck her head on rocks, causing fatal injuries. She was taken from the hill by helicopter.
- 24.4.85 A 20 year old male was descending Angels Ridge to the Allt Garbh Coire Bothy when one of his party dislodged a boulder. The boulder hit him, knocking him off balance, with the result that he fell some 100 feet over slab rock, badly injuring himself. He was airlifted out to Raigmore Hospital where he was found to be suffering from a crush fracture of his first lumbar vertebra and severe body bruising.
- 28.4.85 A 50 year old female with a party on a one day hike out from Glen Doll was descending via the Kilbo Path, on the return leg of the route, when she stumbled and fell breaking her left ankle. The emergency services were notified and she was assisted off the hill by her companions to an awaiting ambulance which took her to Dundee Royal Infirmary.
- 12.5.85 A skier from Lockerbie slipped on ice and fell some 350 feet on Fiascail a Choire Chais. He was located by a mountain rescue team, then flown out by R.A.F. helicopter.
- 1.6.85 A 48 year old female in a group on a one day hike out from Glen Doll, was returning via Bachnagairn, when she went over her ankle on the rough path and was unable to continue. She was reached by Land Rover and brought down to an ambulance which took her to Dundee Royal Infirmary, where she received treatment for a broken right ankle.
- 7.6.85 Two females of 52 and 20 years left Kingussie to walk through the hills to Blair Atholl via Minigaig. When they failed to arrive, a search commenced during the night over the route as far as possible with vehicles. Rescue teams and a helicopter from R.A.F. Leuchars joined the search at first light on 8.6.85. The two were traced near the head of Glen Tilt by the helicopter, about 10 miles east of their intended route, having become disorientated the previous day due to heavy snow showers and taken the wrong track. They were unharmed having spent the night in a bothy, but were airlifted out to Blair Atholl.
- 12.6.85 Two 16 year old males along with others were taking part in a two day training exercise for their Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award. On the second

- day the two became separated from the main group in bad visibility after one complained of fatigue, while walking between Tarfside, Glen Esk and Aboyne, via The Fungle Road. Rescue teams called out but the two missing boys found safe and well near Aboyne, making their own way back. They were minus their rucksacks which they had left on the hill.
- 22.6.85 A Manchester man was bird nesting at Craiggellachie Hill when he slipped and fell 100 feet to his death. His remains were removed by a mountain rescue team.
- 25.8.85 A 56 year old female, accompanied by a group was descending Kilbo Path returning to Glen Doll, when she stumbled and fell on the rocky path. Rescue teams attended and the casualty was stretched to the summit of the Path, where a helicopter from R.A.F. Lossiemouth uplifted and took her to Ninewells Hospital. She was transferred by ambulance to Dundee Royal Infirmary and treated for a broken ankle.
- 31.8.85 A 53 year old male, together with his two grown up sons, were uplifted to near the summit of Cairngorm by chair lift thereafter intending a one day walk to Linn of Dee, via Ben Macdui. The party lost their bearings on Ben MacDui and eventually came out at Loch Avon later that afternoon. Heavy rain and high winds prevailed. The father was suffering from sore feet and exhaustion when he was given shelter in a tent at the bottom of Loch Avon by two hillwalkers. The two sons continued to Derry Lodge to raise the alarm and he was eventually evacuated by helicopter.

Footnote—The Editor is grateful to John Duff, B.E.M., of the Grampian Police Force for compiling yet another list of mountain accidents. John Duff acknowledges the assistance and information received from the Grampian Police Force, Tayside Police Force and the Northern Constabulary and mentions that apart from the Police teams, the rescue teams usually involved in Grampians and Cairngorms rescues are:

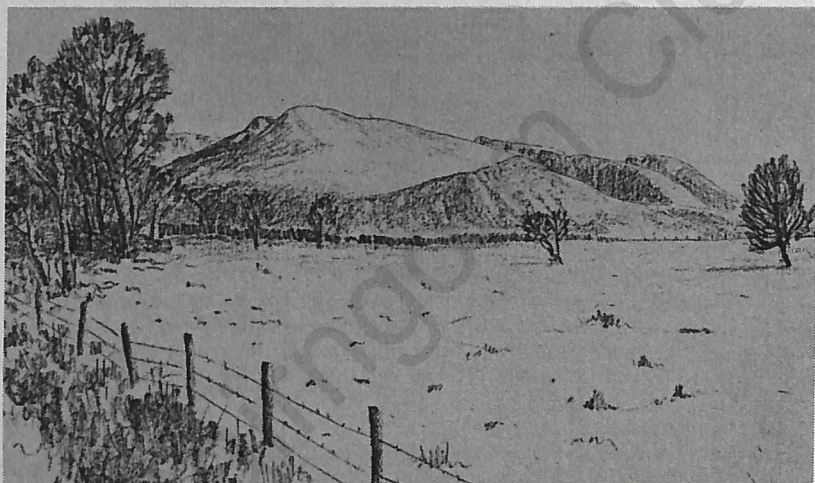
*R.A.F. Leuchars and Kinloss
Search and Rescue Dog Association
Aberdeen, Braemar, Cairngorm, Glenmore Lodge,
Gordonstoun School and Tayside Mountain Rescue Teams
Helicopters from R.A.F. Leuchars and Lossiemouth.*



GREY CORRIES, GOLDEN DAYS

MIKE KENT

My days in the Grey Corries began one Aberdeen Spring Holiday, late on a Friday afternoon. Friends were motoring down to stay in Lochaber for the long weekend and I took the opportunity of a lift, arranging to come back with them on the Monday night. Leaving Aberdeen early in the afternoon, I was very soon standing alone just off the A82 outside Spean Bridge.



View of Grey Corries Massif from near Spean Bridge.
(Drawing by Mike Kent)

The weekend weather promised to be settled, with high pressure squatting over the country like a great warm hen, protecting all us wee birds from the vagaries of the normal climate. It was 4.30 p.m. and I set off briskly wanting to camp high on that first night. The road climbed steadily across open grassland then plunged through vernal green mature larches into the depths of the Leanachan Forest. After another 2 km the farm of Leanachan appeared, alone in its clearing in the forest. There, concentrating on avoiding unplumbed depths of mud, I lost the path that I wanted so I struck straight up the hill through the trees heading for the disused tramway that ran from Loch Treig to Fort William during construction of the aqueduct to the smelter. Now it lies abandoned along the contour of the hill just fifty metres below the 'parallel road' at 260 m. Those shore line signatures of a long gone ice-dammed lake are well enough known in Glen Roy but also can be found on the hills around Glen Spean. Once I reached this tramway which is now overgrown with forest vegetation, I

followed it eastwards to join up with my originally intended path. In a short distance I came to a bridge, still standing, with the track left across the firmest part of the structure. Deciding that I was no Blondin I scrambled down through the ravine it spanned.

At the next bridge my neck hairs danced. There confronting me at its end was a notice which ominously warned 'Poachers! You are being watched!' Is this the route the Fort's salmon thieves take into the hills? A highly predictable one if it is. A brief interlude of industrial dereliction followed as I walked up the Cour, or Allt Coire an Eoin, to the deserted quarry and dam, then, up by rushing water onto rock and heather, out of the trees and away from these depressing signs of humanity. Nature is always left to tidy up the place after us and our mountains suffer most in that respect. Many industrialists must feel that a man-made heap of rubble looks no different from the natural version.



'JCB gouge' between Aonach Beag and Aonach Mor. (See page 36)
(Drawing by Mike Kent)

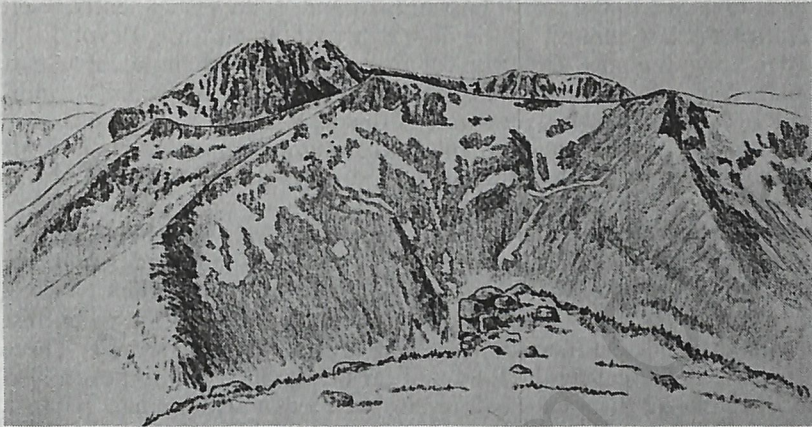
I knew that I had barely an hour of daylight left, so I sought a camp site by the Allt Coire an Eoin close to An Guirean, a rocky prominence square in the middle of the valley. Nothing ideal was found, everywhere being rank heather and pretty soggy, but needs must and the tent was soon pitched near the burn where it ran in thin sheets over wide, water-worn slabs. I cooked in the lee on convenient slabs under the bank of this stream and soon the wind and the sun were gone leaving a sky of astounding clarity and a night of frost and stillness.

Next morning, muesli and tea, then on my way with the sun streaming down Glen Spean and mist filling all the glens. Creag Meagaidh I could see above the inversion haze but ahead, to the south,

the view was cut off by the ring of cliffs from Sgurr Choinich Mor to Aonach Beag. I climbed up quickly onto Tom na Sroine and looked out across forest, mist and smoke towards the Great Glen. Now on the ridge of Stob Coire an Fhir Dhuibh (unnamed on the 1:50,000 O.S. sheet) I walked over loose slabby rock and short vegetation along the sharp rocky spine of this hill which offers magnificent views of the cliffs of Aonach Beag and Aonach Mor. The dip between these two hills appears as if excavated by the bucket of some giant JCB. The snow gathered there reflected a green luminosity onto the base of the shaded cliffs of Aonach Beag, a quality of light impossible to capture with mere pencil.

I scrambled down towards the nearer col between my hill and Aonach Mor then found the way up its ragged face over granite blocks and snow fields. I felt a little relieved that I had brought my ice axe and not let the extra burden it represented persuade me into leaving it in my friends' car. From Spean Bridge the lying snow had seemed of little consequence and with 4 days' food, tent and winter clothing I was by no means 'travelling light'. Hungry, I reached the plateau of Aonach Mor and settled down by the cairn for lunch. I was soon joined there by an Englishman from Manchester who had come up from Glen Nevis. The hills which I had felt belonged to me some few hours before were already getting populated. I had forgotten that for once the Aberdeen local holiday and Easter coincided, one being a movable feast, the other being fixed. In any case it was the weekend and this, I reasoned, was a popular area. Thankfully not as popular as the great Ben across to the west where already I could see figures dotted along the summit, with others crocodiled out along the Carn Deargs. The snow was still fairly thickly plastered in the gullies, but not as much as I have seen in other years. The sun was comfortably warm by now, but a chill still lingered in the clear air. I had toyed with the idea of descending to reascend on Carn Dearg but the sight of the height lost between it and Aonach Mor persuaded me otherwise. It is in fact something like 400 m descent and I had no wish either to sacrifice that hard won altitude or to join the hordes on the other side.

Leaving my lunchtime companion I moved off in the general direction of Aonach Beag. The cornices were massive and looking none too stable but as I climbed towards Aonach Beag another problem revealed itself. The whole dome-like summit of the mountain was covered in a cap of ice with apparently no break in it. Although presenting no excessive slopes it was almost impossible to make progress without crampons, but progress I had to make. Eventually I contoured around this icy pate until I felt in a position to tackle it, protected and well away from the cornices. Hacking crude holes (I hardly dare call them steps on such a meagre slope) in the glazed surface I slowly made my way to the summit near the cliff's edge. My descent from this convex ice-rink was along the same path back to more secure rock and vegetation.



Ben Nevis seen across Carn Dearg
(Drawing by Mike Kent)

As I continued eastwards along the cliffs I was compelled to pause frequently and admire the view across Glen Nevis to the panorama of the Mamores. The Grey Corries must provide one of the finest viewpoints for these their sister hills, and their constant presence across the glen gives a satisfying sense of altitude. The changing backdrop that they make is for me a lasting impression of that weekend on the Grey Corries ridge. Memorable too was the overwhelming impression of height presented by Ben Nevis when seen from the slopes of Aonach Beag. It rears up from Glen Nevis like a vast breaking wave. You see the back of this 'surf' rising over a thousand metres from the glen below in a steep unbroken slope. Even when partly obscured by the other hills around, it still looks massive and pre-eminent. You realise why it is the honeypot that it is.

After scrambling out to the outlier, Sgurr a Bhuic, I found my way down the steep slopes on the eastern flank of Aonach Beag to the start of Sgurr Choinich Beag. This and many other peaks on the Grey Corries ridge have that same Nevis-like quality of breaking waves and thus they had seemed from Aonach Beag. There is a well known aerial photograph taken from above Fort William which shows Ben Nevis, Carn Dearg, the Aonachs and the Grey Corries as retreating echoes of each other, all with the same basic underlying shape. The folding of the ridge has produced near vertical strata in the corries to the north of Sgurr Choinich Beag which adds to the singularity of these hills.

It was late afternoon when, on the summit of this latter hill, I stopped and brewed-up again. My companion this time (for by now companions were almost unavoidable) was a lad from Nottingham, also camped in Glen Nevis. We chatted for a while about those many mountaineering sons of Nottingham, not a few of whom have at some

time gravitated to the North East of Scotland, some permanently. I left him for my last summit of the day, Sgurr Choinich Mor. Beyond this lay my own intended campsite for that night. In a shallow corrie east of the ridge, below Stob Coire Easain, at 875 m lie two small lochans and I scrambled down over scree to this spot and a perfect site. The Mamores were my silent companions that night when all others had left the hill. I slept little though, as the wind strengthened from the north-west and the tent flapped noisily.

Next morning I thought I had said goodbye to fine weather. The hillside was shrouded in cloud but even by the time I had struck the tent, the cloud base was lifting and sun was glinting in Glen Nevis. I clambered over scree, back onto Stob Coire Easain and into the mist and bitter wind. On then to Stob Coire an Laoigh and a puzzle. These tops were now clearing of cloud and far below, in a similar position to my lochans of the night before, isolated on a wide ledge, another lochan of equal size. But this one was unmarked on even maps of the latest survey and combining with the effects of the obscuring mist threw my navigation into temporary confusion. All the more so since these water holes seem to be a characteristic of this ridge, yet another one (charted), lying below the ridge some kilometres further on from where I thought myself to be. What criterion selects a lochan for inclusion on the map? There seemed to be little to distinguish between these fellows.

After the top of Caisteal the ridge seems appropriately man-made. Here the strata are exposed in the ridge itself, forming a near vertical wall of several courses like the remains of some fortification. I found a place on the lee side of this natural dyke with a convenient square hole into which I fitted my stove and made my mid-morning cuppa. Now the clouds were lifting fast and once again the Ben was clear seen over the intervening tops. The quartzite ledges ran for hundreds of metres along the ridge giving the opportunity for a fairly exposed ridge walk on top of the ramparts or, a more comfortable windless scramble along in the lee of the ridge.

From the summit of Stob Coire Claurigh the view is stunning. Westwards, the successive ridges enclosing the Grey Corries stand superimposed like stage scenery until Ben Nevis itself terminates the scene. Southwards, the Mamores of course were with me always with the hills of Glencoe beyond, but between us now stood the lonely outlier of Stob Ban. I sat and watched a lone walker slowly ascend to its perfect point of a summit, stop, then slowly descend again. An exercise in futility? Could he see my own futility?

The ridge now swung northwards and I descended towards the north top. At this point a further neat piece of confusion arose from the map. What appears to be a higher contour surrounding a top at 1110 m (263743) is in fact a circular depression formed in the ridge itself. The summit is some 200 m further to the east on a nicely pointed corner of the ridge. There is a very similar hollow on the Five Sisters ridge in Kintail, just below the summit of Sgurr na Ciste Duibhe.

Maybe there, that is the 'Ciste Duibhe'.

I left my rucksack at the north top of Stob Choire Claurigh and scrambled down and out along the pleasing arête to Stob Coire na Ceannain. This is truly a summit on which there is room for one person only. Here I sat wondering at Sgurr Innse on the opposite side of the Lairig Leacach. From this viewpoint it has all the appearance of some desert Butte in Arizona.

Having missed Stob Ban, I had only one more top on the ridge to cross and that, Stob Coire Gaibhre, seemed an anticlimax below, and northwards, on the other side of Coire na Ceannain. I could see the slope down from it was an effortless stroll back into the Leanachan Forest. After collecting my sack, I decided to make my way down from the last top into the Lairig Leacach below Coire na Gaibhre and in this way avoid the forest. First though, I luxuriated in the sense once again of being alone on the hill, of having no ties, no plans to rush anywhere and no need to leave this ridge. Tomorrow I would meet my friends in Roy Bridge but now I had the hills to myself again. North-eastwards, thick cloud obscured the Cairngorms and I was thankful for coming west for the weekend: not usually the right decision.

I camped that night by the Allt Leachdach on sheep cropped grass. The night was still and cold and when I awoke next morning the tent was stiff with frost. I sat in the doorway watching the shadow of Cruach Innse creep down the slopes of Coire na Gaibhre, the frost melting in the sunlight, and when finally, it reached the tent, I rose and ate. This day passed slowly, no hills to climb and a heat of unseasonal intensity. I sunbathed and struck camp late, strolling down the track then up onto the slopes of Croc nan Ceann Mora to gain access, without entering the forest, to the intriguing monument marked on the OS map. This monument turned out to be as enigmatic as the map entry. It was a small statue of a Presbyterian minister (or a statue of a small minister), sometime painted and holding-what? A Bible? It has long disappeared but in the mannie's cupped hands I saw silver coins. What kind of totem or idol is this, associated with such an iconoclastic (in the proper sense) religion? His nose has worn away from the attentions of less religious or superstitious passers-by, giving his face a cadaverous gloom. But I would dearly like to know what he is paid to do. The effect on me of his eyeless stare and this evidence of latent superstition, was one of a certain depression of spirit.

I turned my back on this dour figure and followed the 'parallel road' at 261 m again to the east for some 3 km until just above the farm of Chlinaig. There I dropped down to the Spean and found the ramshackle bridge high above the gorge of the river. In another 2 km, my far from grey days in the Grey Corries were ended as I entered Roy Bridge and located my friends.

That night, Mother Hen left. The weather finally broke, snow and wind swept down across Scotland from the north and the summer retreated for several months.

ALPINE MEET, 1984

FRANCES MACRAE-GIBSON

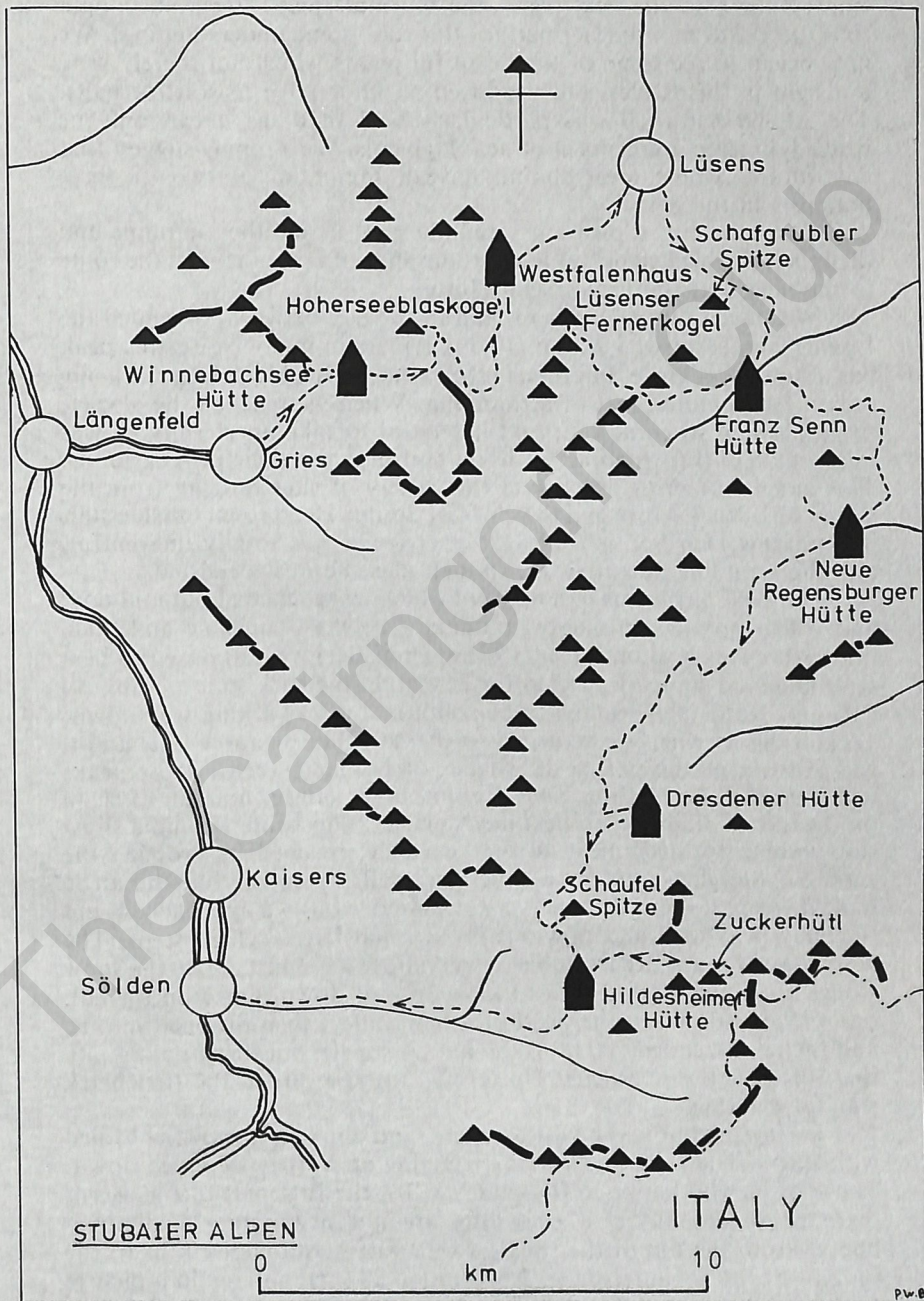
The idea of this meet was floated as far back as early 1983. I suppose we thought that as it was some good number of years since the Club had graced the Alps, it would take time to stimulate the necessary interest. However, once the plan began to take shape, and we had a meet leader in Peter Bellarby, a viable size of party quickly formed itself. The original party was not identical with the final one, but in fact we used all the 10 aircraft seats booked, using the Independent Touring arrangements of Ramblers Holidays, and even had an additional member who joined us by way of train and boat.

As we left on Friday 13th July it was perhaps appropriate that massive disruption should be scheduled on the Channel ferries, so the rendezvous at Oetzal Station with the train traveller was awaited with interest. The programme for the first two days appeared capable of being carried out in one day, should some of us have to wait at Oetzal; had we known what these days would involve in route-finding and in total effort, this prospect would have appalled us. The rendezvous however was successfully made, and we went up valley to our starting point by Funktaxi, unexpectedly cheaper than the bus. Funktaxi means radio taxi and is nothing to do with the prospective tourer's feelings!

All good things have to come to an end, and so finally we picked up rucksacks and headed for our first hut. The sun beat down upon us, and the pack's dead weight seemed to increase inexorably with each gain in height. The path, fortunately, was well made, and when we arrived we were able, being abroad, to drink deeply. Thus revived, four of us even managed to walk for another couple of hours to take in the first summit of the trip, the Gansekragen, 2,902 m (9519 ft).

Our first full day started too much like home; mist to hut level. Our route at first was an undistinguished path, which changed to very steep scree based casually in mud, with no sign of a trail. From the ridge top, a way was supposed to lead down to a glacier, but our arrival was above a precipice, and Peter had to search before a line was found. Both now and later, the contrast between the paths, and the route finding on the areas where the paths gave out, was dramatic. Once on the glacier – no crevasses on this one – some of us headed for a summit, the Hoher Seebaskogel, 3235 m (10,611 ft), others for the hut, the Westfalen haus. The mist cleared on the top, and there was a fine view, though in dark, stormy colours. We caught up the rest by a series of glissades, the last of which was mistaken, as the snow was by then too soft to provide proper braking, and one of the party scraped himself on the rocks. Luckily, blood on snow gives a very dramatic impression of a minor actual injury.

The next day we started downwards, and about 8 a.m., arrived at a Gasthof, which provided a second breakfast to strengthen us for a



lengthy climb to the next pass – the Horntalerjoch. We even bought rolls (deep frozen – the German for this took some understanding). We now began to see some of the beautiful plants which not merely were a delight in themselves, but produced an imperative reason for halts. The Alpine Snowbell was particularly well sited, as it can only be studied on steep gradients at or near high cols. We strongly suggest that any future Alpine meet should have a minimum of two or three botanists in the party.

From the col, a pleasant scramble gave us another summit; and then the valuable height was lost – thousands of feet of it – on the route to the next hut, the Franz Senn Hutte.

We stayed two nights here, and in the day between, ascended the Lisener Fernerkogel, 3,229 m (10,591 ft). As in many cases, this peak has a superb rockface, but on its other aspect has a high glacier, leaving only a few hundred feet of scrambling. When we reached the glacier, the ropes had to come out, and it seemed to take an eternity (it was misty and cold) for people to tie on and organise their prussik loops. This in spite of prior practice at the variety of sites ranging from the slopes of Bynack More and the cliffs of Soutar Head to an outside stair in Rubislaw Den South. The glacier crossing was totally uneventful, and the scramble not difficult, though alas the mist persisted.

Our next day led us to a high col which we reached about mid-day, and which provided a narrow boundary between sunshine and thick mist. Above us a summit (the Schrimmenneider) was supposed to be a scramble, and some of us tried for it, to find the rock so loose that we gave up. None of it seemed to be solid, and it was a long way down! To console us when we returned to the col, the sun came out, and it was Austria of the postcards; shades of brilliant greens, snow peaks and blue sky. And at the Neue Regensburger Hutte, hot sun to sit in on the terrace, looking up next day's glacier. Our route was up a snow slope which formed one wall of the valley, reached by crossing the snout of the glacier below a superb ice fall. From the hut the angle looked steep; it seemed to get very steep indeed as we approached, but the snow was firm and previous groups had left excellent steps. The worst part was a short scramble on very loose scree just above the snow slope; it seemed a good idea to look up, not down. Once on the col, our way contoured to the head of a new valley, then dropped into it, and then re-ascended 500 m to the hut. A superb but tiring day; a pity that this hut (the Dresdener Hutte) had to be awarded the first black star for catering.

Facing the hut was a vast moraine, and above it a snowfield filled with skiers. The next day we were trudging up as they swooped down. Those of us who had used the cable car for the first part of the ascent regretted profoundly that drag lifts are not negotiable in climbing boots. From the top of the snow, a very easy scramble took us to the summit of the Schaufelspitze, 3,333 m (10,932 ft), and again a picture postcard view of endless peaks. The euphoria of our third ten-

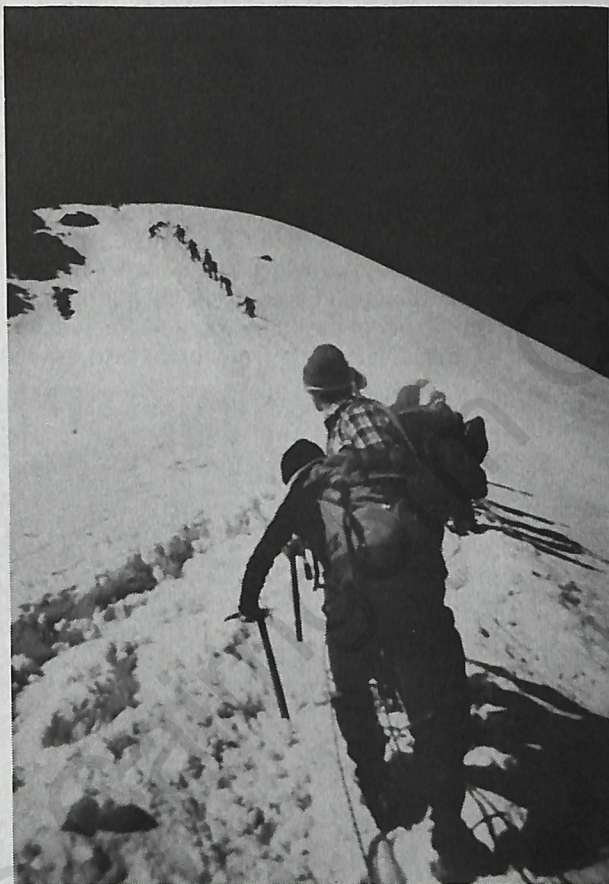


Figure 1 Approaching the summit of the Zuckerhutl.

thousand-footer, led to a snowball fight, and we were glad of hot sun to dry out as we made our way over a series of beautiful snow fields, and past a frozen lake with, in its centre, a melt-water patch of brilliant blue, to the next hut, the Hildesheimer Hutte.

A very early start took us next morning to the glacier below the Zuckerhutl, 3,505 m (11,496 ft), while the snow was still firm. Here, our path led between crevasses, over a snow bridge whose solidity we had to take on trust, but the prussik loops were again not needed.

This peak has a very steep snow cone summit, and the route leads up a ridge with a spectacular curve of snow below it, at whose foot is a vast crevasse. The way up was easy, the way down, with the sun beginning to loosen the snow, more interesting, and we had to wait

while several earlier parties manoeuvred themselves down the steep section before we could get up. Going down the glacier the snow was getting steadily softer, and it was good to reach firm ground.

Our destination was Sölden, right down in the main valley, so in all we dropped 2400 m, nearly 8000 ft. The temperature of course got higher and higher, and we were almost melting when we got into Sölden, to meet our advance party with the news that there was another half hour's walk. However, a superb mixed ice with fresh cream turned us into new beings, and we made it in 25 minutes.

There followed a rest day, in which the extravagant paid about a pound for a shower and the good Scots (some by adoption) washed all over for free in a small hand basin. Also, a large lunch was eaten instead of a slice of bread left over from breakfast, postcards were



Figure 2

The summit of the Wildspitze.

written, waterfalls admired, beers drunk (the prices slightly less astronomic than at altitude), and in fact we reverted to being ordinary tourists. Next day we took a bus but only to reach our next objective, the Breslauer Hutte, from which the Wildspitze is climbed (3340 m), the highest mountain in the area.

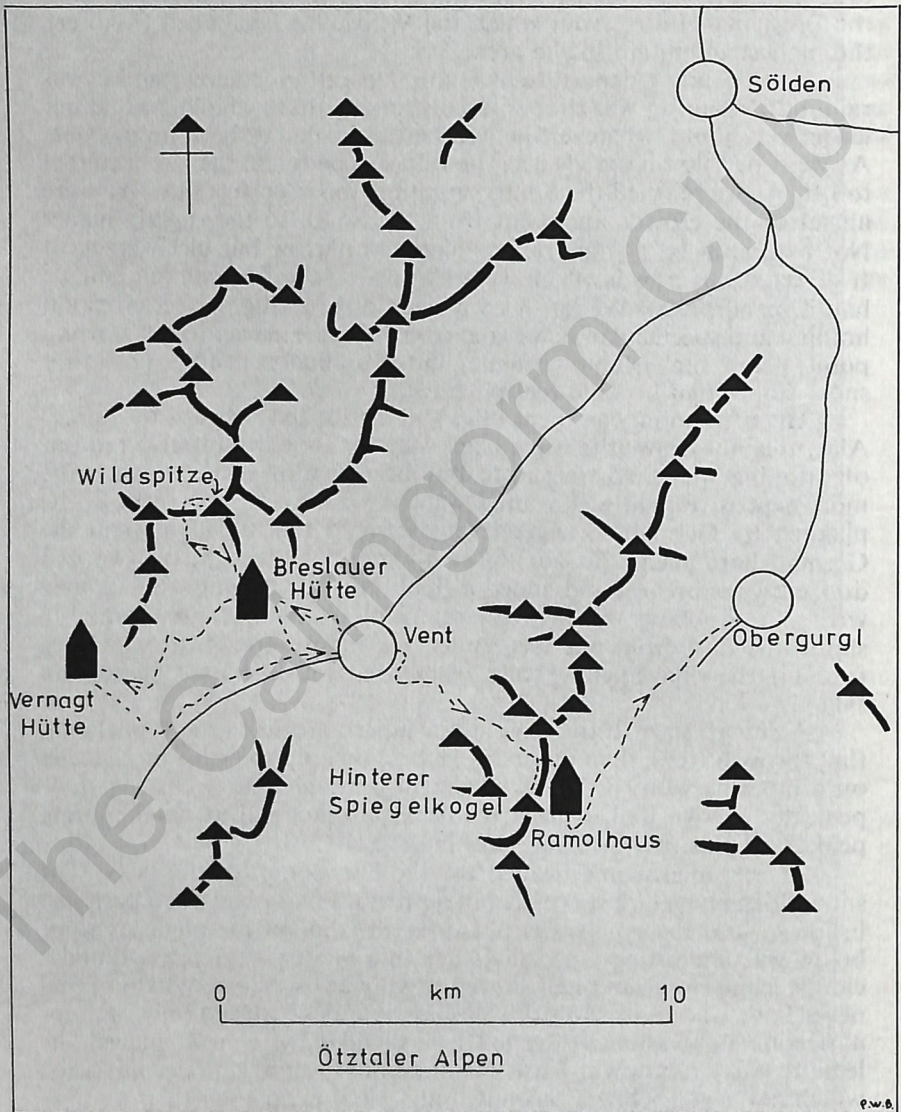
Up at 5 a.m., departure at 6 a.m., to get good snow, and it was raining! Pessimism was rife, especially among those who knew that our leader was going, whatever the weather, as he hadn't been up this one. As we roped up on the glacier, the rain stopped, and the cloud started to lift. As we reached the South summit it was a perfect day. We were ahead of the crowds and went from the South to the slightly higher North summit by a snow ridge which was narrow but nicely tracked. It deterred the crowds which were by now on the first summit and we had it to ourselves. We left it by a steep ridge giving perfect crampon holding and spectacular views, and re-crossed the glacier to our starting point, below snow slopes glistening in the brilliant sunshine. The lower snow slopes had become real porridge.

The afternoon was spent idly, and we looked forward to dinner. Alas, this hut draws the triple black star for food, and it also ran out of drinking water, so we had to buy beer or Skiwasser, which is the most expensive lightly flavoured water. We went to bed early, to be plagued by German teenagers, who seem to talk all night, and the German hard men who got up at 4 a.m., put the light on (we had dressed with torches) and added a final touch by leaving it on as they went out. Luckily, we met very many nice Germans elsewhere. We shook the dust from our feet by leaving before breakfast, which we found in the village below; rolls, real coffee, lots of butter, cheese and salami.

A superb start to the day, and a superb ascent to the Rameljoch, first through trees, then up grassy slopes, then up the edge of a glacier on a moraine with the most wonderful gentians, and a curving snow peak above. We looked back to the Wildspitze and its neighbouring peaks. All this and brilliant sunshine too.

At the Joch, some headed for the hut, some for the peak. The snow ridge had a large cornice, but a previous party had put a path just inside it, and the going was not difficult, though the angle of slope below was interesting especially when in a matter of minutes, thunder clouds came close, and hail started driving at us. We speeded up, and never have I been on and off a summit so quickly. I had only time for a fleeting impression of serried peaks and dark clouds; indeed the leading party ran down. I was counting the flash to thunder intervals, which never got below 2 seconds, but several people felt their ice axes singing.

From the Joch, a route was marked down easy rocks, but at the edge of the rocks it looked as if we had to jump. Closer inspection revealed a ladder down to the snow. We reached the hut, one of the highest, in quite thickly falling snow.



Next day, it was all downhill to end the walk at Obergurgl. The cloud cover lasted almost all the way. Then, suddenly, we were back in civilisation, and catching the bus again.

The return trip was broken briefly to take in the sights of Innsbruck, and we flew out from Salzburg in such torrential rain that we were given umbrellas to use between departure gate and plane. It must make a habit of raining at Salzburg airport.

On the plane it was felt that the experience should definitely be repeated, and Summer 1986 has been suggested. To those of you who haven't tried such a trip, I think we'd all say that you would find it at least one of the 'experiences of a lifetime'.

Those taking part were:

Peter Bellarby
Nicholas Boss
Stuart Ford
Rhona Fraser
Harry Hancock
Ian Lowitt
David Moseley
Frances, Duncan, Margaret Macrae-Gibson
William Robb.



Figure 3

Relaxation! One of the plusher huts.

INDIAN SUMMER

THE EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY LAHUL EXPEDITION

ALASTAIR P. MATTHEWSON

In the summer of 1985 I took part in an expedition to the Miyàr Nala glacier system, in Lahul, part of the Greater Himalaya in northern India. The six-man expedition had a very small (student!) budget of £5,500 and we were lucky to receive sponsorship from many sources, including the Cairngorm Club. We were hoping to make the first ascents of at least two of the 6000 m peaks at the head of the glacier.

The planning of any Himalayan expedition is a lengthy task, and it took us nearly two years to complete our preparations, from the first application to the Indian Mountaineering Foundation, to the frantic packing and weighing of our equipment the day before our flight on July 18th.

We raised a few eyebrows in Heathrow departure lounge, our duvets being crammed with climbing gear and duty-free Mars bars in order to keep our 30 kg. baggage allowance within the limit. Despite its extra burden, the 747 managed to take off safely and eight hours later we were deposited in delightful Delhi (an assault on all the senses!) still reeling from the effects of the air hostess's generosity with the drinks trolley!

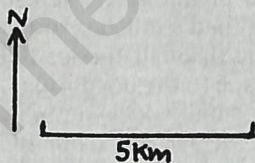
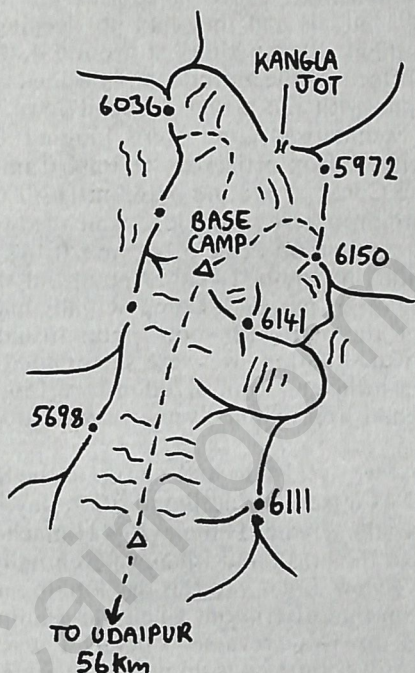
Two days later, after obtaining our permit and Indian Liaison Officer from the IMF we left the 33°C heat of the capital and boarded the infamous Manali bus (3rd class), the first stage of our journey to the mountains. For 17 hours through the night we endured the bus's blaring horn and, even worse, the Indian radio music, which consists of a very unmelodic wailing. The road was in a worse state than the Derry Lodge track and at one point, in the early morning hours, everyone got out to help push the bus out of a monsoon-flooded river! Eventually, we reached Manali, 1,981 m (6,497 ft) and I had just enough strength left to crawl from my seat and collapse in the gutter, where I was very ill for the rest of the morning!

The Kulu valley, where Manali is situated, is one of the main apple producing areas of India, and we spend five days here, waiting for a landslide on the road ahead to be cleared. We wandered around the market place buying local food, such as rice, lentils, sugar, tea and flour, to supplement the Batchelors dried meat we had brought from Scotland, and BG, our Liaison Officer, was a great help with this.

When the road was finally cleared we spent another 12 hours or so being jolted around on the final stage of our bus journey over the 4,267 m (13,996 ft) Rotang La Pass into Lahul and so down to the roadhead at Udaipur on ever-worsening roads.

From Udaipur we trekked for five days up the Miyàr Nala Valley, walking in the cooler hours of morning and pitching camp in the early afternoon. We had hired six ponies as well as two porters to carry most of the heavy gear, so the walking was very enjoyable with only light

rucksacks. The scenery had gradually been changing: thick Scandinavian pine forests turning to beautiful grassy meadows surrounded by fields of seed-potatoes, and eventually barren moraine-covered slopes with tantalising snow peaks rising thousands of feet above.



MAP OF HEAD OF THE
MIYĀR NALA VALLEY.

Figure 1 Map of head of the Miyār Nala Valley.
(Drawing by Alastair P. Matthewson).

The ponies left the six of us, BG and the two porters at a camp within sight of the moraine-covered snout of the glacier at a height of around 4,256 m (14,000 ft). We were now faced with the task of moving ourselves and our food and gear the further 24 kms to our intended Base Camp site at the head of the glacier.

This took nearly two weeks of load-ferrying and involved two intermediate camps, one on a spur at the side of the glacier and another higher up on the bare ice itself. The carry through the horrendously loose moraine was possibly the most demoralising part of the trip, but the porters were amazingly cheerful considering that their only footwear was plastic sandals and they had no sleeping bags—we lent them our duvets at night. By this time, at around 4,408 m (14,500 ft) BG was feeling the effects of the altitude, and decided to go back down the valley to Udaipur with the porters. Luckily, we were all feeling relatively fit and acclimatised, and were looking forward to the independence of being liaison-officerless at Base Camp.

We set up Base Camp at around 5,168 m (17,000 ft), on a level piece of ice below an impressive snow ridge which led to a rocky tower and eventually the summit of Peak 6,141 m (20,142 ft), one of the mountains we intended to climb. I should point out that none of the mountains in the region of our Base Camp actually had names – they were just marked on the map with spot-heights (usually inaccurate).

It was a beautiful situation; we were surrounded on all sides by virgin peaks ranging in height from 5,700 m to 6,150 m (18,696 ft to 20,172 ft), and we had approximately two weeks in which to get to know them better!

After a 'rest day' we decided to make a trip to the Kangla Jot Pass, 5,468 m (17,935 ft), as a training/acclimatisation day. The Pass is on one of the routes over the Greater Himalaya of Himachel Pradesh from Lahul into Zaskar to the north and when we eventually reached it, we had a very impressive view down into this dry-looking northern region. I had a shock later on that afternoon, when, descending the glacier to BC, I fell 6 metres down a crevasse. Luckily I was roped-up, but prusikking out was still a time consuming (and very cold!) process.

Back at camp, our thoughts turned to the possibilities of various routes up the surrounding mountains. As Peak 6141 m looked rather tricky we decided to try something else first, and unanimously agreed on Peak 6150 m which we could see from BC, and had studied through binoculars. The most obvious route seemed to lie through the ice-fall to the west of the peak and up a steep snow/ice slope to the north ridge, which appeared to lead without difficulty to the small rocky summit.

Two days after our visit to the Kangla Jot we set out from BC again, at the rather unsociable hour of 2 a.m., our eyes set on the starlit hump of Peak 6150 m. A lightning storm further down the valley looked impressive, but the sky above us was clear and bright with stars, so we only used our head-torches at the most complicated crevasse sections. The early start meant that we crossed the glacier in its safest (frozen) state and had us roping up below the major difficulties just before sunrise at 5 a.m.

The bergshroud below the ice-face posed a tricky overhanging problem, but was overcome with a strenuous heave and soon we were making steady progress up the 50° ice slope. The climbing was not

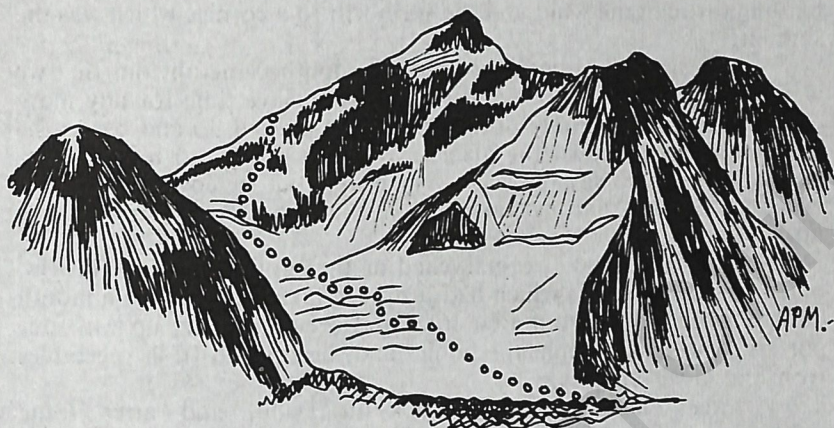


Figure 2 Peak 6150 m showing route to North Ridge.
(Drawing by Alastair P. Matthewson).

particularly hard (similar to the North Face of the Tour Ronde, Chamonix Alps) but was very tiring on the calf muscles, and I was glad of the rest at every delay. Eight 50 m pitches later we popped out onto the summit ridge, and the sun! It was only 9 a.m. so we had some breakfast and did some sunbathing, until the cold wind persuaded us to get moving again. Here, at around 5,928 m (19,500 ft) we were beginning to feel the altitude and I was only managing ten steps at a time. As we gained height however, the views of the surrounding hills and glaciers improved, and as we neared the summit itself all feelings of fatigue were lost! We unroped below the final rocky step and scrambled up the remaining 9 metres of mountain, crampons scraping wildly. Much to everyone's relief there was no cairn, and with great difficulty we all tried to stand on the small summit platform at exactly the same time!

We stayed on top for over two hours, soaking up the amazing panoramic view, taking photos and, of course, building a cairn. The weather was perfect, and the feeling of satisfaction immense; it all made up for the dysentery on the walk-in!

Following our steps back down the ridge, we covered the ground surprisingly quickly, but instead of descending the 400 m ice-field we chose to continue along the ridge to a 'bealach' from where we could abseil over a loose rock buttress down to the glacier below. From there it was a long trudge back to Base Camp, which we reached at 7 p.m., totally exhausted and looking forward to a decent night's sleep.

During the next few days at Base Camp, we spent a lot of the time recovering from our exertions on Peak 6150 m, but we did manage to get up another peak, 6,036 m (19,798 ft) although the weather turned bad half-way up, and it was more like Scotland than the Himalayas,

battling through the wind and the sprindrift to a cornice which was the summit!

After this second peak, however, it soon became obvious that we were running out of food, and we wouldn't have time for any more climbing. So, not entirely disappointed, we packed up and began the long march back down the glacier. With no porters to help us, our rucksacks were, to say the least, very heavy; but we covered the same ground in 3 days that had taken 2 weeks of load-ferrying on the way up.

As we descended, we marvelled at the proliferation of flowers, butterflies and animals which had just been taken for granted a month before. Then we saw our first trees and eventually met up with our porters, who had brought the ponies and, best of all, fresh vegetables from the lower villages.

A week later we were back in Delhi, and after some sightseeing – Taj Mahal of course! – flew back home, where we learned all about the terrible British summer.

	Map Height	Recorded Height	Route Description
<u>PEAKS CLIMBED:</u>			
From a Base Camp at 5150 m.	6150 m	c. 6100 m	By west face and north ridge. Grade: D inf (Alpine) 11 hours to summit
	6036 m	c. 6250 m	By east face and south-east ridge Grade: AD (Alpine) 12 hours to summit

The Team: Fraser Alexander
Ulric Jessop
Teresa Lee
Alastair Matthewson
Pete Smith
Jonathan Whitaker



Figure 3 The team with Peak 6150 m in the background.
(Photograph by Alastair P. Matthewson).

POEM



OH, MAN OF HILLS

*(A tribute to the late Robert Scott – 'Bob' –
Former Head Stalker at Luibeg.)*

No longer does the foot tread on Derry's Rock,
Nor hand ply the skill of gun and rod,
But come again to Luibeg and gaze on studded peak
Oh, Man of Hills, your golden days relived,
Look back on mountain joys.

IAN STRACHAN

IN MEMORIAM

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

Col. Patrick D. Baird (OL 1954)	Mr. A.W. Clark (O 1933)
Prof. John Boyes (O 1942)	Mr. Roger J.C. Fleming (OL 1938)
Mr. Archibald C. Campbell (OL 1926)	Mr. Dirom C. Young (A 1955)
Mr. Robert Chapman (O 1949)	

WILLIAM M. DUFF

William ('Willie') Duff whose death was reported in the last *Journal*, was born in Edinburgh in 1885, the eldest of a family of seven. He was educated at Daniel Stewart's College where he was one of the bright boys. On leaving school he entered the Civil Service. He worked in London and it is said that in his early days there, money was scarce and, so, of necessity he acquired the habit of walking – a practice which he maintained into his 90's. On appointment as Inspector of Taxes in Aberdeen he was introduced to the Cairngorm Club which he joined in 1936. He participated fully in the Club's activities both its outings and Committee Work and served as President, 1950-52. He enjoyed Annual General Meetings when he seldom failed to raise some point of order and when in his 80's and regularly attending Easter Meets in his black Humber car, he was a willing chauffeur. The Club elected him an Honorary Member in 1961.

He maintained an interest in his old school through its Former Pupils Club, took an active part in the Scottish Youth Hostels Association and latterly travelled extensively, doing several trips round the world.

He was never a rock climber but he loved the hills. He derived much pleasure from his association with the Cairngorm Club and with his genial and sociable disposition and enthusiasm gave the Club much in return.

A.L.H.

PAT BAIRD

Patrick Douglas Baird, who was President of the Club in 1959, died in Ottawa on 1 January 1984. Though he was born in Newmarket (in 1912) he belonged to a well-known Scottish family and had strong childhood connections with Caithness. He attended Edinburgh Academy before going to Cambridge, where he graduated as a geologist in 1933.

While at school he was keen on rock climbing. In 1933 he visited the Garbh Choire of Beinn a' Bhuid with the Cambridge University Mountaineering Club, and was one of the party of three that completed the Direct Route up the Mitre Ridge for the first time on 4 July; a second party pioneered a different route the same day. These achievements were to set a new trend. All the rock climbs in the Cairngorms up till then had been in gullies and chimneys, and these were the first routes to break out on to exposed faces where granite climbing is actually at its best. The same year Pat also climbed in the Alps from Saas Fee, and became a member of the SMC (he was later to serve on its Committee in 1958-59). The following year J.M. Wordie invited him, along with Tom Longstaff and others, to join a summer expedition to West Greenland and central Baffin Island.

The 'Eastern Arctic' of Canada, and especially Baffin Island, were to become the main focus of his long career in arctic exploration and glaciology. Although he spent a year working for a West African goldmining company in between, he accepted Tom Manning's invitation to join the British-Canadian Arctic Expedition which set out in 1936, to explore the little-known country bordering the inland sea of Foxe Basin, north of Hudson Bay, which includes Southampton Island, Melville Peninsula and western Baffin. He made many long journeys, with other expedition members, with Inuit (Eskimo) families, and alone. Returning north after a short visit to Britain in 1938 he was hoping to reach his base at Igloolik in the mission schooner; but she was stopped by ice, and he and Reynold Bray, an ornithologist, were put ashore with a whaleboat at Winter Island, near the Melville coast, 300 miles short of their destination. They had been making good progress northward for a fortnight when the engine gave out. On 14 September, while Baird was ashore and Bray on board, the anchor dragged in a gale. Bray tried desperately to pole the heavy boat to shore, in vain. He then launched their folding canvas boat, hoping he could bring a line ashore. Instead the gale took charge, and he was swept out to his death at sea.

Pat got to Igloolik safely; and in December-January he sledged by dog-team the 300-mile length of Melville Peninsula south to Repulse Bay, to send out news of the tragedy, and then back again. Soon after, in February 1939, he began another long journey, crossing Fury and Hecla Strait to Baffin Island with Eskimos, and continuing alone across the 250-mile width of Baffin to reach the east-coast settlement of Pond Inlet. From there he sailed south in September in the supply ship *Nascopie* to Montreal.

He had come out to join the Canadian army. He spent the war years training arctic and mountain commandos in the Rockies, Iceland and Scotland (which brought him to Glenfeshie and Braemar). Soon after the war ended, Pat, now a lieutenant-colonel in the Royal Canadian Artillery, was given command of Exercise Muskox, during which, between February and May 1946, he led a squadron of

snowmobiles on an epic journey of 3000 miles across the frozen tundra, from Churchill north to Victoria Island (69° N), then west to the Coppermine and Mackenzie rivers, back into timbered country and south to Alberta. It was the first venture of its kind, and its headline success in the world press owed not a little to Pat's great experience and thoroughness, and skill as a navigator.

He left the army to become Director of the newly-founded Arctic Institute of North America at its main headquarters in Montreal; and from there he led two large scientific expeditions to Baffin Island in 1950 and 1953. The first was to the middle of this huge island, principally to make glaciological studies on the low-level Barnes icecap which he had originally discovered (in the distance) in 1934. The second was to the high-level Penny icecap in south-east Baffin, a region of mountains fantastic even by Baffin standards. It is now a Canadian national park, called Auyuittuq, and Pat had made several more recreational visits to it in later years.

I was lucky enough to share in the 1950 expedition, and to take Sandy Anderson with me from the Aberdeen Zoology Department. We spent most of the summer at the biologists' camp at the head of Clyde Fiord. In 1953, when Adam Watson was the expedition zoologist, I also joined the party at their Summit Lake base at the end of the season and helped to portage their equipment down to Pangnirtung Fiord. Pat was a genius at expeditions, combining foresight with a talent for appreciating and furthering the work his scientists were keen to do. He toured our far-flung camps and kept us in mutual contact through two-way radio schedules. Calm and self-reliant, there were few things in life he himself relished more than venturing through dangerous country alone, but safely, with the barest of creature comforts.

He brought his family to Aberdeen in 1954, to take up a senior research fellowship in Geography at the University. His indoor work was to write a textbook, *The Polar World*, eventually published in 1964. Outdoors, as many members will recall, he established a meteorological station about ¼ mile northeast of the cairn on Ben Macdui, getting it going in February 1956. It contained instruments run by clockwork which he (and occasionally others) managed to service on average at 8 or 9-day intervals, at least through the next eight months (CCJ 17: 147-9); my own notes show it was still going in July 1958. In the fine summer of 1955 he visited all 22 of the Cairngorm Munros, in typical Baird style, in 59¾ unhurried hours, of which 22 were spent in overnight camps and 37¾ on the march: the distance was 75 miles and the total climb 19,000 feet. He lit a pipe on each Munro (CCJ 17: 75-6, 1956)! Incidentally I remember him saying that Braemar village recorded a range of 100°F in 1955, from -15 to 85, and he doubted whether any other locality in the UK could equal it. A third of his Journal contributions, on 'shelter' as an alternative strategy for people overtaken by blizzards on the hills, appeared in 1961 (CCJ 17: 184-7).

He returned to Canada, his adopted home, in the autumn of 1959, to a post at McGill University, Montreal, as warden of the Mont St Hilaire field-centre; and from that he retired in 1969.

He will be remembered by a multinational circle of friends and admirers, as a tall, spare, commanding figure – a man to thank for his help and respect for his courage, exploits and attainments. Moved by the occasion he could enjoy uproarious fun, or sing in a deep rich voice. He could also be aloof at times, though he had a warm and remarkably generous heart. He was awarded the Bruce Prize by the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1946 and the Founder's Medal of the Royal Geographical Society in 1953, for his contributions to arctic geography and glaciology. The Baird Peninsula, named for him, stands out from Baffin into Foxe Basin, and Bray Island is nearby.

V.C.W-E.

ALEXANDER W. CLARK

It is always sad to record the death of a long-standing member of the Cairngorm Club, even though known to only a few of the present generation of members. Alex, or Sandy, was an Aberdonian by birth and upbringing. He graduated in Hons: Classics in 1924 and moved to Ayrshire to his first teaching post in Kilmarnock Academy. He lived in that county until his death in Kilmarnock on 4th March 1984, following a stroke three months earlier.

His love of the hills often brought him back to the Cairngorms where he spent many happy days with his friend, Bill Ewen in the early 'thirties, both before and after he joined the Club in 1933. The summers of 1931 and 1932 found them climbing in other parts of Scotland and, in 1934, mainly in Skye. Graham (Ewen) has found, recorded in his father's Log Book, that Bill and Sandy made the first winter ascent of Raeburn's Gully on 27th December 1932 and, the next day, the first winter ascent of Pinnacle Gully, No. 2.

In Ayrshire, Alex became Head of the Classics department in Spier's School, Beith in 1940; of Ardrossan Academy in 1942; then became Headmaster in Darvel in 1947, from where he retired. In each school, he was very keen on hill-walking clubs and I well remember a superb day on Ben Lomond with Ardrossan Academy pupils, when I was a colleague of Alex's, at the end of the war. Ten years later, two young friends and I met him at Derry Lodge and climbed several Munros in his company. He himself spent many holidays climbing in Arran with A.F. Duncan from the Cairngorm Club, then Head of Classics at Ayr Academy. Sadly both his death and that of Bill Ewen, were recorded in the last *Journal*.

Alex was a gifted musician, playing both cello and double bass, encouraging all players in school orchestras. He was very active in the Ayr Music Festival, was Vice-President and its Director of competitions

and was the driving force behind the establishment of the Ayrshire Schools Orchestra.

As a person, he was kind and friendly, never known to speak ill of anyone, this being in keeping with his religious beliefs. He was for many years, superintendent of the Sunday School and an elder in his church, in which capacity his visits were much appreciated, especially by the house-bound in his congregation. His wife, Jean, also an Aberdonian, to whom he was married for 54 years, must miss him sorely and to her we extend our deep sympathy.

J.A.C.

ROGER JOHN CARY FLEMING
OBE TD JP DL

Roger Fleming, a Club member since 1938, died suddenly when on business at Lerwick on 4 September 1984. The tribute paid to him at his memorial service in King's College Chapel enumerated his very many distinguished contributions to business and public life:

Fortunately, it was not all hard work . . . His lovely home at Bridge of Canny must have been a constant joy to him, backed up by the cottage at Glengairn. He loved his day's shooting and he adored the hills. He walked the Cairngorms throughout his whole life. One of his companions on these walks made the interesting observation that, latterly, Roger was only interested in 'through' walks. In life, as on the hill, he was never happier than when the objective was 'up and over' or 'through' whatever was in the way. He didn't much care for 'back to base'.



PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB

GENERAL MEETINGS

The Ninety-fifth Annual General Meeting was held on 23 November 1983. The office bearers appointed were Hon. President Leslie Hay, President Eric Johnston, Vice-Presidents Ruth Payne and Neil Cromar, Secretary Richard Shirreffs, Treasurer Sandy Reid, Editor Antony Chessell, Librarian Jean Callander, Huts Custodian Eddie Martin, Meets Secretary Graham Ewen and Indoor Meets Secretary Neil Cromar. The President gave to the Club, a gavel and board made of Rosewood. A plate on the board is inscribed:—'Presented by E.F. Johnston, 1983'.

The Ninety-sixth Annual General Meeting was held on 21 November 1984. The office-bearers appointed the previous year were re-appointed except that Anne Cordiner became Vice-President in succession to Ruth Payne.

The Ninety-seventh Annual General Meeting was held on 27 November 1985. Anne Cordiner was appointed President in succession to Eric Johnston and Eddie Martin was appointed Vice President in succession to Anne Cordiner. The other office bearers appointed the previous year were re-appointed.

ANNUAL DINNERS

The 1983, 1984 and 1985 Annual Dinners were all held at the Stakis Tree Tops Hotel, Aberdeen, the 1983 Annual Dinner, which had been arranged for the Royal Darroch Hotel, Cults, having been re-arranged at short notice because of the tragic explosion there. The guest speakers and their subjects were –

1983 Tom Weir—'Then and Now—A Look Back on Fifty Years of Climbing'

1984 Dr. Donald Bennett—'Mountains in Perspective'

1985 Lea MacNally—'Highland Year'

R.C. Shirreffs

At the 1983 Annual Dinner, the President, Mr. E.F. Johnston, proposed the toast "The Cairngorm Club", in the following terms—Editor:

It is my privilege and responsibility to rise to propose the toast of the Club now in its 97th year of existence. And I rise of course from our famed President's Chair – Maggie Gruer's 'fireside comforter'—presented to the Cairngorm Club for safe keeping – and on this night of 'looking back', and these are always occasions for nostalgia – I look back perhaps 50 years, when I remember being taken to Thistle Cottage to meet the great lady by my father – who was not a climber but was a great friend of the Inverey postman noted for doing his winter round on skis. However, I cannot recall if I sat on this chair then – I very much doubt it – but I do remember the formidable lady whose mother, of course, played hostess to the founder members of the Cairngorm Club. I also recall the Stygian gloom as we entered and the smoky atmosphere. I like to imagine that I ate one of her famous scones, said rather ambiguously to require a hungry appetite to appreciate them and immortalised by the entry in her famous visitors book 'Scones? in loving memory'.

Still reminiscing, I served as an office-bearer of the Club under seven wise Presidents, from whom I learned much, and I remember the first of these Presidents saying when proposing this Toast that he had been advised the first requisite of making a good speech

was to have a good secretary. Well, a friend who was a senior manager of a professional body claimed that his most difficult task was the writing of speeches for honorary officials. Eventually, he found the answer. Every time he heard a cliché he wrote it on a postcard and put it into a box. When preparing a speech he shook the box vigorously and took out the cards at random. These formed the basis of the speech. No one ever complained. His favourite cliché was 'there is nothing so constant as change' and perhaps that is not an inappropriate theme – if that is not too grandiose a word – for me tonight.

We have looked back tonight in the company of Tom Weir on fifty fascinating years of climbing – and what changes have taken place in attitudes to walking and climbing in that period. Looking back much further in the 19th Century there was much agitation in the North East about the 'profane practice of idle strolling through the countryside on the Sabbath' – and now the paths on the likes of Lochnagar get wider and wider as people enjoy a 'Deeside Dander'. Not too long ago, when I worked in Stornoway, I remember that my landlady made it a condition of our going to climb Clisham that I wheel my motorbike out of earshot when leaving in the morning and that I return to the house after dark.

And what would our predecessors have thought of the modern cult of jogging. There is an irritating truism 'What America thinks yesterday will happen here tomorrow'. Well, some time ago the American PR men coined the slogan 'Walking is for horses, quit horsing about, get yourself a Cadillac' and as a nation they appeared to take that advice. Now jogging has been the rage but I read from the Washington correspondent of one of our leading daily newspapers that jogging is out, walking is in – with appropriate paraphernalia – I quote 'Some walkers carry hand weights and the more sophisticated use foot weights' – perhaps a modern version of tricouni and clinkers! Walking it is claimed by this correspondent is the best exercise for the brain and heightens clarity of thought. Walking is a thinking persons activity – you can't think when jogging – faithful joggers will no doubt dispute this claim but never having got beyond scout's pace I can't comment.

So, equipment, fashions and pastimes change but some things don't, and I am very pleased to be able to say that one of the things that has remained as before in the past year is the ethos and health of the Cairngorm Club. Now the place where we report and analyse and ponder on the health of the Club in detail is, of course, our AGM where last week we again had an extremely good turnout of members.

However, our guests will perhaps forgive me if I dwell on our affairs briefly – and mention that we had a very full year indeed as our office-bearers reported – and what dedicated office-bearers they are, members know them all and how much we owe them – and we heard of the many excursions, the meets – both indoors and weekend, the Cheese and Wine party and the Barbecue, the care of the finances and all the multifold correspondence, the state of Muir Cottage and the rehousing at Christ's College of our magnificent library and, of course, the publication of the 99th issue of the Cairngorm Club Journal – and a first rate issue it is on which, I know, our Editor has had well-deserved congratulations. Nor did we forget the responsibilities of the Club – while we welcomed the result of the Lurchers gully enquiry in which we played our full part we were girding ourselves to get involved in the Knoydart affair – now in abeyance – while a sub-committee under Peter Howgate made a written submission to Kincardine and Deeside District Council in regard to the preparation of the Deeside Local Plan which encompasses most of the high Cairngorm tops – a submission of great value and a model of the constructive approach.

So a typical Cairngorm Club year – and in typical fashion some of our members were pursuing personal elitist goals on the mountains and have joined the august company of 'PM' mountaineers, i.e. Post Munro. Neil Cromar, by good planning over a long period in the midst of a busy life, climbed the necessary 276 mountains – at the last count – to be elevated to the peakage, Eddie Martin, who had introduced his son

Andrew to Munros only to be overtaken, has now emulated Andrew to become a 'Pop of the Tops' and of course Ken and Tibbie Fraser, our re-cycled teenagers, 'we twa' of the mountains, have in ten years of senior citizenry gone, metaphorically at least, hand-in-hand up all the Munros. Our congratulations to them all and to another lady in a hurry, Geraldine Guest, already a Munroist, who has now climbed all the tops listed by Munro and will now doubtless go on to complete The Trinity, Munros, Tops and Furth (the comparable peaks in Ireland, England and Wales).

And so Ladies and Gentlemen to this old but active, well rounded Club, I ask you to rise and join with me in the Toast - "The Cairngorm Club".

INDOOR MEETS

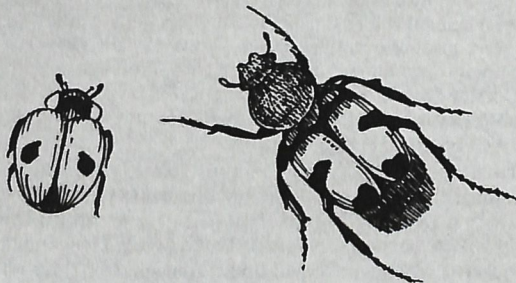
The following indoor meets have been held since the issue of the last *Journal* -

- | | | |
|------|-------|---|
| 1983 | Nov. | Members' Night |
| | Dec. | Michael Waller - The Work of the Ordnance Survey |
| 1984 | Jan. | Ian Dalley - The Alps, Mount Kenya and the Rockies |
| | Feb. | Mrs. A.H. Sommerville - Hills of Home and Beyond |
| | March | Dr. Mark Young - The Scottish Wildlife Trust |
| | Nov. | Members' Night |
| | Dec. | Prof. C.H. Gimingham - Mountain Plants at Home and Abroad |
| 1985 | Jan. | Rick Allen - British Ganesh Himalaya Expedition |
| | Feb. | John Breckenridge - The Cuillins |
| | March | Peter Bellarby - Alpine Meet 1984 |
| | Nov. | Members' Night |
| | Dec. | Sandy Anton - The Cairngorms before the Club |
| 1986 | Jan. | Rick Allen - The North East Ridge Everest Expedition 1985 |
| | Feb. | Judy Middleton - Chamonix to Zermatt by Ski |
| | March | Alastair Matthewson - First Ascents in the Indian Himalaya. |

SOCIAL EVENTS

Barbecues have been held at Templars Park, Maryculter, Aberdeen, on Wednesday, 27 June 1984 and Wednesday 26 June, 1985. Cheese and Wine Parties have been held at the Winter Gardens, Duthie Park, Aberdeen, on Friday 2 March 1984, Friday 8 March 1985 and Friday 7 March 1986.

R.C. Shirreffs



MEETS AND EXCURSIONS 1983-85

The attendance recorded at the excursions for the period covered by this *Journal* continues to show a drop, the average being 30 on this occasion compared with 32 the previous time. (The number attending is given in brackets after each excursion in the list at the end.) Very poor attendances are particularly noticeable for the longer day meets to Perthshire or beyond of which there were four, the average attendance on these being only 17. It may well be that there will have to be fewer such excursions in future. The best turn-out was to Beinn a Bhuird in 1985 when 45 people were present while the poorest was to the Ochil Hills when there were only 13.

As reported in the last *Journal* the deep snow experienced in 1983 at Ballachulish dissuaded most members from tackling the Glen Coe hills, and so it was decided to return there for Easter 1984, in the hope that the later Easter would bring better conditions. Unfortunately the weather was very wet, especially on Saturday and Sunday morning. On the Saturday one large party walked from the head of Loch Creran across to Ballachulish village by the low level route. They experienced some trouble with a herd of cattle near the end of that journey. Sunday started even wetter and some members set off to spend the day in Fort William or Oban, one visited the Blackwater dam and at least one party climbed some of the Mamores. On the Monday, which was a very good day a large party completed the Aonach Eagach ridge. The number of people at the meet was around 30 but not all of these stayed at the hotel.

The 1985 Easter Meet was held at the Loch Duich Hotel in Dornie. About 40 attended, most staying in the hotel, the others being farmed out elsewhere in the village. The weather was much better than on the previous year, the only poor day being the Saturday. All the Munros on either side of Glen Shiel were climbed by at least one party while other members went further afield – one party going to Beinn Sgriol while another went 'Corbett bagging' in the Applecross area. The hotel on this occasion proved to be extremely comfortable.

The overnight excursion of 1983 to Ben Lui started off in a very promising manner with really beautiful weather all the way from Aberdeen to Crianlarich where we had tea. Alas! It was not to be and by the time the bus reached Tyndrum it was raining. A small number of members climbed all four Munros in the Ben Lui group. It was still clear at midnight on the top of Beinn Dubhchraig and the lights of Tyndrum could be seen clearly in the distance. From Beinn Oss onwards the mist was thick and Ben Lui strangely difficult to find. One party ended up climbing Beinn Oss twice. The weather cleared late in the morning and the party returned to Aberdeen in bright sunshine.

The 1984 overnight excursion was from Rannoch Station to Fersit. About half the party caught the 7.30 p.m. train from Rannoch to Corroul while the others walked all the way. Chno Dearg and Stob Coire Sgriodain were climbed by several parties while others climbed hills to the west of Loch Treig. The weather which had not been promising at the start cleared up to give a really good morning.

In 1985 the overnight excursion started from Bridge of Orchy, which proved a much more comfortable bus journey than the previous year's trip to Rannoch. On this occasion the train was a bit late and the station master apparently none too pleased to see such a large crowd disturbing what he had expected to be a quiet evening. The whole party with one exception took the train to Corroul. The main target of the evening was the ridge starting with Beinn Eibhinn and running north-eastwards to Carn Dearg. This was climbed by several parties despite the thick mist which prevailed on this occasion. Others took the low level route through. The weather cleared eventually and the walk from Loch Pattock to Dalwhinnie was done in sunshine.

Bad weather conditions were experienced on several of the day meets. In 1983 the Cairngorm to Linn of Dee excursion proved to be a particularly cold wet day. Winter conditions were experienced anywhere above 3000 feet. Most members did the traverse either through the Lairig Ghru or other relatively low level routes, although at least one party did make the traverse of Ben Macdhui.

The 1984 excursion to Lochnagar started from Invercauld Bridge as the Glen Muick road was impassable. Deep snow was experienced and once clear of the Ballochbuie woods a strong wind as well. Nobody reached the top of Lochnagar that day.

The following excursion to Glen Clunie also experienced deep snow. The main road was closed at the south end of Braemar and so it was decided to leave the bus in the square at Braemar. Some members climbed Morrone while others did low level walks.

The excursion from Boultenstone to Lary was accompanied by very thick mist which came down very nearly as far as the starting point. Most members were content to follow the lowest route through to Morven Lodge and from there to Lary.

The winter excursion to Lochnagar in 1985 was accompanied by high winds which made conditions on the summit plateau very uncomfortable.

There were also some very good days. Among the more outstanding ones was the Ben Lawers excursion where most of the party climbed Beinn Glas and Ben Lawers from the Lawers Car Park. On the way up there was a conservation group making some repairs to the path. And on the top of Beinn Glas a census was being taken of the number of people on the hill that day.

The excursion to Glas Tulaichean had a fine sunny day with good firm snow conditions. Most members climbed Glas Tulaichean but two parties climbed the group of hills on the south side of Glen Lochsie from which a very fine view of Glas Tulaichean was obtained.

The excursion to Alltdourie was also a good day. About half the party set off for Ben Avon while the other half went to Beinn a Bhuid. The latter had great difficulty fording the River Quoich which was swollen by melting snow. The return journey was made via Cnap a Chleirich and the Sneck, a wise decision as the River Quoich was obviously even higher in the afternoon than it had been in the morning.

A good day was experienced on the Schiehallion excursion when the party traversed the hill from the Kinloch Rannoch side to White Bridge.

Another very good day accompanied the Ben Vorlich excursion when most of the rather small party ascended both Ben Vorlich and Stuc a Chroin. This was followed by another beautiful day for the Cairnwell to Glen Clova excursion. Most members climbed Glas Maol, Cairn of Claise and Tom Buidhe and some went on to climb Mayar and Driesh as well.

The 1985 Cairngorm to Linn of Dee excursion had banks of mist lying in the hollows especially over Loch Avon and the Lairig Ghru but the high ground was mostly clear. Most members went to Ben Macdhui. Although the weather was good the views were not very good on this occasion as it was very hazy. It was confirmed on the return journey that some damage had occurred to the hand rail on the upstream side of the Luibeg Bridge. It appears likely that this was caused by someone trying to take a horse over the bridge.

On two excursions problems cropped up as a result of developments being carried out by estates. On the Bulig Mounth about a mile of the path had been ploughed up to make way for a forestry development just to the north of the summit. This led to very rough going or a long detour, whichever one preferred. Clachnaben has been surrounded by an electrified deer fence. It turned out that it was not switched on yet but this may prove to be an awkward obstacle in future. On the Clachnaben excursion there was the usual difficulty of getting the bus parked at the entrance to Glen Dye Lodge. This problem may be solved shortly as the road is being realigned at this point in connection with the construction of a new bridge. It may be possible to park on the old road when this is finished.

EXCURSIONS

1983

- 24 Apr. Glen Muick to Glen Clova (37)
- 14 May Cairnwell to Spital of Glenshee (17)
- 5 Jun. Cockbridge to Invercauld (24)
- 25/26 Jun. Ben Lui (23)
- 21 Aug. Ben Lawers (22)
- 10 Sep. Cairngorm to Linn of Dee (43)
- 2 Oct. Jock's Road (27)
- 22 Oct. Crathie to Spital of Glen Muick (42)
- 13 Nov. Ochil Hills (13)
- 4 Dec. Bulig Mounth (27)

1984

- 15 Jan. Lochnagar (34)
- 4 Feb. Glen Clunie (31)
- 26 Feb. Glen Clova (28)
- 18 Mar. Glas Tulaichean (28)
- 29 Apr. Alltdourie (28)
- 19 May Schiehallion (16)
- 3 Jun. Tower of Ess to Invermark (25)
- 23/24 Jun. Rannoch Station to Fersit (31)
- 25 Aug. Linn of Dee to Blair Atholl (38)
- 16 Sep. Cairngorm to Linn of Dee (29)
- 7 Oct. Auchallater to Glen Muick (27)
- 27 Oct. Cairnwell to Inverey (40)
- 18 Nov. Boultenstone to Lary (28)
- 9 Dec. Clachnaben (42)

1985

- 12 Jan. Inverey (38)
- 3 Feb. Glen Esk (27)
- 23 Feb. Lochnagar (36)
- 17 Mar. Cockbridge (21)
- 21 Apr. Cairngorm (41)
- 11 May Ben Vorlich (16)
- 2 Jun. Cairnwell to Glen Clova (28)
- 22/23 Jun. Corroul to Dalwhinnie (27)
- 25 Aug. Lochnagar (30)
- 8 Sep. Corrieyairack Pass (27)
- 28 Sep. Cairngorm to Linn of Dee (41)
- 20 Oct. Beinn a Bhuid (45)

EASTER MEETS

- 1984 Ballachulish
- 1985 Dornie
- 1986 Dornie



WEEKEND MEETS

A Landrover trundled its way along the shoreline to meet our boat as it approached the jetty. Luggage was loaded up and we were soon being welcomed at Glaschoille House. For three days the sun shone as we started along the primrose lined track beside the shore. We clambered up onto the ridges to savour unimpeded views of hills, lochs, sea and islands. Was this really the same route which had tested our navigational skills and fortitude so thoroughly on a previous trip to Knoydart? Then we had floundered thigh deep in a bog. Now the grass crunched drily underfoot. Of course that previous visit had its moments – grass of parnassus in a corrie, a fleeting glimpse of an expected ridge (both beautiful and comforting in such conditions) and the welcome back at the bothy at Barisdale. Those who had sensibly opted for a ‘fester’ day had done anything but . . .! After a low level walk (this included the rebuilding of a cairn which had been the victim of another bog) they had returned to light the stove and spring-clean the bothy including a bath! Never was a hot dip so unexpected or so much appreciated. This time there was an immersion heater and several bathrooms. Furthermore, since we hadn’t had to lug all our provisions seven miles, we had dinner in style each evening.

One advantage of weekend meets is the variety of venues within reach. We have gathered from Lairg to the Lake District, Skye to Ben Alder. We cannot guarantee good weather – indeed some organisers have been accused of doubling as rain gods – but we do try to cater for all tastes and pockets. Accommodation varies from hotels and lodges to hostels, bothies and campsites. Where possible we concentrate on a focal point for socialising and laying plans. Suggestions and information for future meets would be most welcome.

With no bus deadline to worry about, longer expeditions can be planned. Sgurr nan Ceathreamhnan and Creag a’Choire Aird from Cannich, for instance. Transport can usually be arranged to minimise walking on tracks and roads – often a problem with a one car group. The weekend meets provide an excellent introduction to new areas and often afford the opportunity to achieve ambitions not possible within our usual groups. May of this year – warm and dry – saw a large party, joined by friends from the Moray Mountaineering Club, scaling the Inaccessible Pinnacle.



BEAM ME UP, SCOTTIE!

The weekends have offered so much that it isn't easy to pick out highlights. Perhaps we might select the following: Tomdoun '83 where the promised outboard motor lay in bits the whole weekend so Sgur Mor was done the hard way after all: Crianlarich in July of the same year where the temperatures reached the 90's and, as we stripped off and plunged into a burn an American visitor remarked "I was told how formal the Scots are, but you-all don't seem that formal to me!": Torridon in September '84 when the rainfall was exceptional even for Applecross: Bridge of Orchy that same autumn where the mist contrived to reveal all the tops of Stob Ghabhar to some while others didn't see a thing, and finally Dundonnell, where in August '84 the sun shone on Seana Braigh and in August '85, despite the wettest summer for many years, the sun still shone all day on Conival and Ben More Assynt.

One of the many pleasures of hillwalking is talking about it later . . . and later . . . and later. The tales mix and merge, events become distorted, identities confused, but memories flood back and are recounted with a mixture of pleasure and relief as we build and defend our reputations (sometimes at the expense of others!)

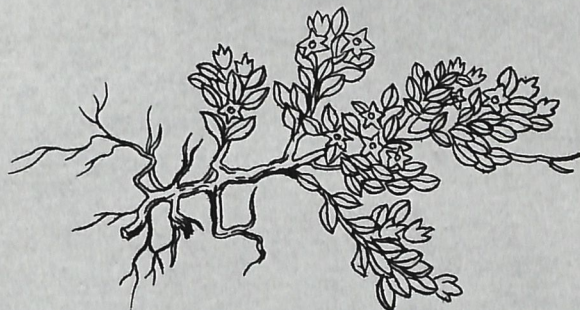
Do I detect a wince at the mention of someone climbing the wrong hill, or walking off the map? How many of us have given no heed to a small burn in the morning only to be delayed as nightfall approaches by that same burn now swollen to a torrent? Have you also experienced the shortlived satisfaction of bagging a new Munro in thick mist only to discover later that the real summit was a little further on? (It has even been suggested that such hills should form the basis of another set of tables – The Barlows. No, he doesn't still have some to do and we're learning to check our facts before we set out!)

WEEKEND MEETS

	1983	1984	1985
May	Tomdoun	Knoydart	Skye
July	Crianlarich	Cannich	Invershin
August	Dundonnell	Kintail	Dundonnell
September	Skye	Torridon	Glen Etive
October	Dura/Appin	Bridge of Orchy	Lake District

Frances Macrae-Gibson
Fiona Cameron

Footnote – Thankyou to Ian Stuart for the humorous drawing from an idea by Fiona Cameron – Editor.



BEN MACDHUI INDICATOR

A piece of Club history was remembered on 1st August 1985 when the President and three Past Presidents with five other members climbed Ben Macdhui from the Linn of Dee to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the inauguration of the Ben Macdhui indicator.

The indicator, designed by James Parker and dedicated to the memory of a Past President, Alexander Copland, is still in pretty good shape, a tribute to the lasting quality of Doulton ware. Its building in 1925 was quite an enterprise and the dial indicating 77 view points has been a source of much pleasure and information over the years. A bottle is lodged in the central cavity with a record of the building and the names of the builders, not forgetting 'Bob' the pony who transported the material.

There was a party of no less than 136 at the ceremony in 1925 – including a troop of Boy Scouts – on a day with 'a smell of moisture in the air'. The 1985 group enjoyed an overcast but dry day which was chilly enough to make the summit toasts welcome. It is interesting to compare photographs taken on the two occasions. Apart from the differing sartorial styles, from long raincoats and plus-fours to contemporary Gortex, the snowfields of Cairntoul and Braeriach were much larger in 1925.

The 1985 party rounded off an excellent day with a meal in Braemar.

E.F. Johnston



NOTES

93 YEARS AGO – JULY 1893
CCJ, VOL. I, No. 1, p. 1 (Reduced)

THE
Cairngorm Club Journal.

Vol. I.

JULY, 1893.

No. 1.

SOME STRAY THOUGHTS ON MOUNTAIN-
CLIMBING.

By THE RIGHT HON. JAMES BRYCE, D.C.L., M.P., *President*.

THERE is no despotism like that of the zealous and energetic editor who, by his own devotion to his project, acquires the right to hold to their word those who, in a moment of unguarded sympathy, have promised to enlist under his banner. The editor of the Cairngorm Journal bids me write, and so, though I have little to say, and no time to say it, I throw together at his bidding some scattered remarks on a pursuit which has always been a passion with me.

Those in whose breasts no such passion burns often ask—In what does the pleasure of mountain-climbing consist? "It is fatiguing", they say; "it exposes you to cold, and wet, and hunger, and a variety of risks to health, including those which arise from bad food, from chills up to apoplexy. If pursued in steep or rocky places it involves the risk of breaking your neck, or at least your leg. The pleasure of striving with an antagonist, which makes the charm of so many games, is wanting; while as for beauty, artists agree that the views from the lower slopes of a hill are better than those from the top."

Those who love the mountains, and have from childhood been wont to range over them, find their delight so natural and obvious that they hardly know how to discriminate the elements that go to make it up. However, I will try.

One of these elements is simple enough, for we perceive it in other forms. It is that same enjoyment of physical

L. A.

EXCURSIONS AND NOTES.

was held in the Café, Aberdeen, on 28th February—
OUR FOURTH ANNUAL MEETING Mr. Alexander Copland, ex-Chairman, presiding. The Treasurer's statement showed a balance at the credit of the Club of £37 2s. 2d. Office-bearers for 1893-94 were elected as follows:—*President*, The Right Hon. James Bryce, D.C.L., M.P.; *Vice-Presidents*, Alexander Cruickshank, LL.D., and Rev. Robert Lippe; *Chairman*, Rev. Professor George Cameron, D.D.; *Secretary*, Alex. Inskop McConnochie; *Treasurer*, T. R. Gillies; *Committee*—Robert Anderson, Alexander Copland, Robert Harvey, W. J. Jamieson, Charles M'Hardy, Alexander Macphail, John M'Gregor, William Porter, John Roy, LL.D., Charles Ruxton, Rev. A. M. Scott, and Rev. Robert Semple.

The following excursions were fixed for the current season:—Spring—Hill of Fare and Barmekin; Summer—(1) Beinn a' Ghlo and (2) the Benchinnans; Autumn—Bennachie.

The Committee's Report suggested the publication of a Club Journal, a matter which was referred back with powers. The Committee thereafter resolved on a Journal, and the Secretary was appointed Editor. It will be issued, meantime, twice a year—on 1st July and 1st January.

Mr. Charles Ruxton, the retiring Chairman, who wrote apologising for his absence, was thanked for his services during the past two years.

The following gentlemen have been admitted members since the annual meeting:—James C. Barnett, Robert Aitken, G. M. F. Foggo, W. Milne Gibson, William Anderson, Harry A. Holmes, Ranald R. Macdonald, Thomas Milne, M.D., W. A. MacKenzie.

93 YEARS AGO – JULY 1893

CCJ, VOL. I, No. 1 – In the EXCURSIONS AND NOTES. (Reduced).

In the last number of the Journal, the Editor's pen was unintentionally severe, removing almost half the article submitted by Peter Bellarby. Perhaps some readers thought that, for the first time, a serialised story was being printed in the Journal. This was not the case and this time the article is printed in full—Editor.

NUMBER ONE HUNDRED

Peering through the window in the early morning it seemed as if it were snowing. Yet this was May 1st 1982 at Roy Bridge and Roy Bridge is 90m above sea level. It couldn't be snow but a further look showed that it really was snowing. After much discussion it was agreed to attempt some of the eastern Mamores. Perhaps I would be able to ascend the three at the east end.

Back in January it had seemed an easy task. Casually I said I would celebrate number one hundred at the Roy Bridge meet. Some people climb mountains for enjoyment and some people climb 276 of them, or is it 279? Somehow I had been inveigled into joining the latter group and was now in sight of a landmark on the way. Indolence and bad weather combined to make it three short on arrival at Roy Bridge. Never mind, it shouldn't be too difficult to do three in one day and meet my commitment.

So we travelled to Kinlochleven and at 10.20 began to ascend. There was much uncertainty even from the start as to whether we were on the correct route. After much peering through mist, attempting to estimate the extent of the forestry and consulting of maps, the mist lifted enough to show we were on the path intended. We dropped down slightly and met the broad track from Mamore Lodge. A little backwards movement along the track, and off we went up the path to Coire an Lochain. The mist had descended again and the snow became deeper so each burn reached was carefully checked against the map. The mist lifted momentarily to show us Loch Eilde Mor far below, just where expected – a reassuring sight indeed.

The snow began to fall more persistently and it became ever deeper under foot. The wind rose and at Coire an Lochain my companions decided to call it a day and returned to Kinlochleven. I was glad. It's not that I dislike their company but I could not ask them to endure the conditions as they were now developing.

Sgurr Eilde Mor was the first objective and so began the ascent of the steep boulder strewn slopes leading to its summit. The wind grew in ferocity as each upward step was made. A map case was hanging on a cord round my neck. It had seemed a good idea since I had to be very careful with navigation. The wind buffeted and tore at the case – it must be put in a pocket or I would be strangled by the cord. I had never realised this danger before so now the map goes in a pocket with the compass tied to the zip of another pocket.

Higher up another problem, of iced rocks covered with soft snow, made progress slow but eventually the summit was reached. In reward the mist lifted for a time and I could make out the next objective, Binnein Beag. So it was down the north west slopes in more mist and ever deepening snow, waist deep in places. I climbed up to join the path which wanders between Binnein Mor and Beag. It must be a well defined path for it showed up clearly and provided a useful route forward in spite of the large amount of snow.

Just below the bealach between Binnein Mor and Beag there is a small loch which was the signal to strike up Binnein Beag. It was a steep ascent on snow and I thought I would have it a little easier on the descent by following my own footprints. A forlorn hope as after a few metres they were obliterated by falling snow and the gusting wind.

As I reached the bealach again the mist lifted and I saw before me the north east ridge of Binnein Mor, which I proposed to ascend. It looked impregnable, a tremendously steep alpine ridge with a mixture of rock and snow. I looked to the right – could I climb up the head of the Coire instead? The map indicated that the average gradient of the ridge

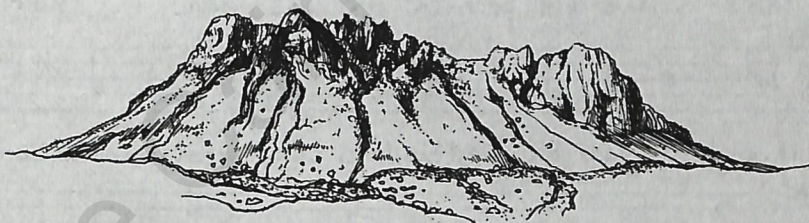
was not as steep as it seemed and so the ridge was ascended. A flanking movement to the north was made initially to avoid some rather steep rocks, and then the crest of the ridge followed. Doubt turned to joy as I realised I was going to succeed and so number one hundred was reached.

To match my mood of celebration the mist cleared to show a vast vista of snow covered peaks. I stood for a few moments admiring the glorious view and reflecting that the somewhat arduous ascent had been enjoyable. So perhaps it is impossible to enjoy one's mountaineering and reach the top of 276 of them after all.

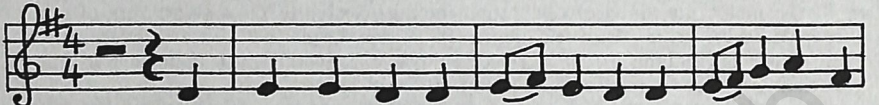
A quick romp along a very snowy ridge brought me to the south top, and then down to Sgurr Eilde Beag. At ten past eight I reached Kinlochleven, tired but happy. Back at Roy Bridge someone kindly made some soup and another provided champagne to celebrate.

Some would say it is foolish to go into the mountains alone under such conditions. Most of the time I prefer to be with friends but occasionally it is good to be alone and to depend only on one's self. It wasn't very difficult. I did have some experience. I did carry survival gear and I did enjoy it.

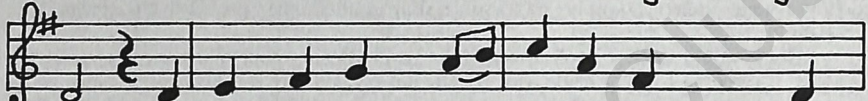
Peter Bellarby



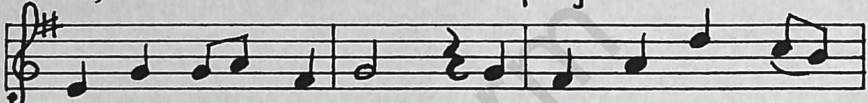
NORTH STORM
Words and music by Lewis McAllan




Said Ben-na-chie tae Clach-na-ben "ye'll hae a grancock



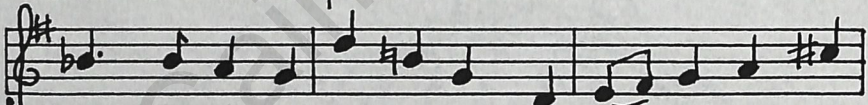
-tail, o sna an sleet - a perfect treat - A'll



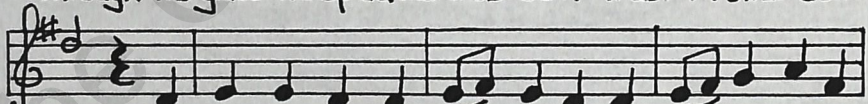
sent wi mor-nin mail" Noo Past-ie Bla wi's



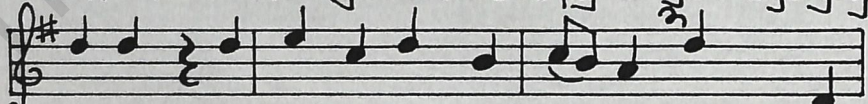
load o' sna wis pech-in on his leen, Fan



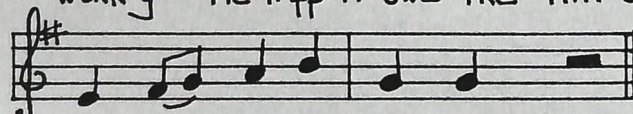
through his glass he spied his lass cam wast-in ower Com-



-een. He cried oot high and Jean's re-ply Fair gart his gait gang



wonk-y He tripp-it over the Hill o' Fare (oh!) And



skaitt the lot on Ban-chory!

FIRST TIME IN FRONT

Interest in hills came rather late. A Royal Wedding and a beautiful summer's day in 1981 led to the summit of Beinn a' Bhuid and the discovery of 'Munros'. Addiction was immediate and a boggy tramp to Beinn Bhrac was undertaken. Numerous outings that summer saw involvement grow to where 'doing the Munros' couldn't be ignored. Then came winter ascents; a 'wander' up Black Spout not really knowing what was involved, weekends in the Mamores, Glencoe, Glen Affric and the Cairngorms gave the usual mixture of crag and breathtaking beauty. I was totally hooked.

At this stage it was all walking rather than climbing, but eventually thoughts of scrambling and Skye began to surface. Vague recollections of exposure shown some years ago on a T.V. programme about the Cuillin ridge were not encouraging. However, Stuart's keenness and enthusiasm were infectious. We set off for the gabbro. What was a very tentative start on Sgurr nan Gobhar, eventually became a romp along a large part of the main ridge, taking full advantage of a week of glorious weather.

Later, an enquiry about doing some rock climbing on the Altens sea cliffs culminated in Martin, Peter and I climbing Green Recess Chimney on White Slab in Coir' a' Ghrunnada and on to the summit of Sgumain, Alasdair (via the 'bad step') and Thearlaich. The others continued on up King's Chimney to Mhic Choinnich; I was ready for the pub but made for the lochan in Coire Laggan instead. More sea-cliff climbing followed, with the first 'Journey into Space' (falling off! not the Grade 6 on the Orion face of the Ben.) and a developing interest in winter climbing. Membership of the Cairngorm Club gave the opportunity to attend a weekend 'Winter Skills' course at Glenmore Lodge (a course which can be thoroughly recommended) and a 'bus meet' ascent of Central Buttress on Lochnagar with Peter. Here I discovered the other form of Cairngorm granite – frozen turf!

All this climbing had been as second (or last) man on the rope which, although giving some sense of achievement, did create the feeling of being something of a 'tourist', leaving the hard work and decision-making to someone else.

Then one day, during some day-dream climbing, the phone rang. "Do you want to do a bit of winter climbing?" enquired Hal. "Yes!" "How about Ben Nevis?" "Eh . . . O.K.!" A new climbing partnership had been formed. That first weekend, our plans for climbs on Ben Nevis didn't quite materialise – Tower Ridge looked too big and Cresta Climb was too noisy! However a Grade 2 on Sron na Lairig (Glencoe) gave an interesting day and on the second a 'wander up on to the arete' from Coire Leis had its moments.

The following Sunday morning saw a six o'clock start for Cairngorm – an attempt to beat the skiers who didn't materialise in their usual numbers. We had selected 'The Vent' in Coire an Lochain, but it's strange how planned climbs end up being ignored. By mid-morning we were at the foot of 'Red Gully' in Coire an t'Sneachda (it was easier to get at), soon to be joined by seven others. One rope decided to have a go at 'Goat Track Gully', which was next door, but eventually gave up and 'set off for the pub'; another rope of three were more determined and made a successful ascent. This left two ropes intending to climb Red Gully. The other rope seemed more capable than us so we offered them first 'go' and we were not greatly encouraged by calls of 'That was a hard bit' and 'This is good grade 3 stuff'.

Finally it was our turn to set off – Hal, leading as usual, overcame the 'hard-bit' and reached the belay stance at the top of the first pitch. 'Climb when ready' came the call. 'Climbing' came the reply and I was off – up, not down! The ice was superb, crampons and ice picks biting with confidence-giving 'clicks'. The 'hard-bit', just below the belay, was reached and after a few moments of huffing and puffing, together with a slightly taut rope, was surmounted. I stood up beside Hal but before I had time to 'tie-on' he enquired if I would like to lead the next 'bit'. The next few seconds passed in a confusion of thought; having previously turned down the offer to lead a pitch in Skye

and ever since wondering if I could have; feeling like a tourist at the end of a climb having seconded; the improbability of me ever leading anything; the inviting nature of the next ten feet of ice and a good-looking belay about fifteen feet up; I did have to give it a go sometime – didn't I? It's only fifteen feet, then I can give up and become a tourist again. Click – click – click. The picks and crampons bit the ice and I was on the way up – in front! – without ever having made a conscious decision. The fifteen feet to the belay disappeared in a flash – so did the belay! Where was it? That good-looking piece of rock just wasn't there, only a black bulge sticking through the ice. What happens now? What am I doing here?

There seemed only to be two options. Falling off is not particularly attractive, so think positively and climb up. So up I went. Another thirty feet of ice and snow clicked by. My God, this is tiring. Tension, and a style and technique which are not good at the best of times, had created aching limbs. What about a runner? Do I waste energy putting in protection or do I go for that other good-looking belay about fifty feet further up? Will it be like the last one? That steep ice step just above it will be impossible. It has to be a good belay. Thoughts of falling are relegated to the background. The rock is finally reached – it's a beauty – a real 'Thank God' one. A sling is draped round it and quickly I'm tied on. A shuffle of feet to create a bit of a platform and that's it. 'On-belay'. It's over.

The feelings were a strange mixture – physically absolutely shattered; mentally switching between elation and concern for our total dependence on the belay; it had been my choice – was it a good one? – was I properly tied on?; the sense of achievement and satisfaction; the thoughts of the two hundred feet still to go. But then back to the immediate problem – 'Taking in' – 'That's me' – 'Climb when ready' – 'Climbing' – and soon Hal was belayed alongside me.

He took the lead again on the next ice step which ran out to a nice gentle snow slope with huge bucket steps (letting the other rope go first had been a good idea!) A couple more rope lengths and we were on the plateau – it was all over. We shook hands, congratulated each other, stuffed the gear into the sacks and set off for the car.

The feeling was, and still is, of having done a 'real' climb. When will I lead another pitch? I don't know. There is a certain security in tourism. When I do, it will be a 'go-for-it' decision at the time but I'm sure it will not bring the satisfaction of the first time in front.

Fraser Stronach

ON ATTENDING A CLUB MEET

There are no great difficulties about this. You merely contract in advance and then all you have to do is to keep your promise.

In my early days I was lucky to get a run into Aberdeen from a Post Office engineer on an early shift. When that arrangement fell through I got out my cycle and went to Queen's Cross where I left the cycle at a nearby garage. Then came the day when an emergency arose. I think it must have been when double Summer Time coincided with a 6.30 am start, for I was suddenly faced one morning with complete darkness and no working lights. Not wishing to lose time arguing with the Police, I set out to run the four and a half miles to Queen's Cross. My hob nailed boots made a clatter which broke the peace of Aberdeen's West End, but I caught the bus.

We had a good day on Lochnagar by the Danzig Shiel Bridge (The Glen Muick Road was blocked with snow) and returned mission completed to the rendezvous. We had time on our hands and I think it was Hugh Welsh (no one else would have dared) who suggested that we might as well walk the four and a half miles to the Invercauld at Braemar instead of hanging around waiting on the rest of the party. All in all it was a fairly active day for me.

Then I discovered that the Swallow Bus came up from Old Aberdeen and picked up one or two, at Kittybrewster; so this method was used for some time but I have no idea how I got there. I can only presume that I ran or walked or did a mixture of both methods.

I had no other problems for many years but ran into trouble at the end of my term as President. There was one meet left and since I had attended all the others I was especially anxious not to miss this one. The difficulty was that I had undertaken to represent the Club at the Seventieth Anniversary Dinner of the Yorkshire Rambler's Club to be held at Harrogate the previous day.

A plan of action was drawn up. I would leave Harrogate as early as possible and catch the early train for Aberdeen at Edinburgh Waverley. My son would meet me at Stonehaven with the car and we would cut across country to the Ballater Morven area, where I would meet up with and join the main party at tea. A simple plan indeed, but the way it actually turned out had its complications.

I cannot remember whether I travelled to York overnight or left Aberdeen first thing in the morning, but I know I had a lot of time in York and managed to see a bit of the city before getting a bus for Harrogate. I remember being a bit surprised at its condition and thinking that it showed up in a very poor light when compared with Aberdeen's Suburban Service.

In due course I joined the main stream of guests as we entered what seemed to be a very large foyer. Slap in the middle of the arena sat a man at a small writing table. The main stream split, one branch swinging to the right, the other round on the left, but each keeping a very respectful distance from the solitary writer in the middle. A whisper, sponsored by the knowing ones, indicated with due awe and reverence that, "that was Jack preparing his speech". The dinner proceeded as most dinners do, and in due course Jack gave his speech which was suitably acclaimed. Following some others I was called. I had had no information that I was expected to speak. I do not like speaking and need time for consideration. I started to prepare my first Presidential Speech immediately after the previous year's dinner!

I did what I could but I have to say that it was not very good and that I was annoyed at myself. However there was some consolation in the later reflection that perhaps the other diners had reached the stage when they did not care very much what was said.

The diners were breaking up into groups so I started to enquire as to the possibility of getting a lift back to York. In due course I was introduced to Jim who would gladly take me to Darlington. Since this was forty miles nearer Edinburgh I was happy to accept his offer.

Jim was seated at a table in a side room. There were two bottles of whisky and he and some of his friends were chatting. In due course the last of his friends drifted away and the second bottle was almost empty. It soon was, and he suggested that perhaps we should get going. I controlled my growing anxiety and agreed. Not long after starting snow began to fall quite heavily, reducing visibility and lying on the road. At Scotch Corner a 'Road Blocked' sign had been expected, but Jim still pushed his big Jaguar on at a steady 60 mph and doing rather well, I hopefully thought. Shortly after the road swung right but Jim just carried straight on down what turned out to be a farm road. He eventually dropped a very relieved me at Darlington Station.

Darlington Station after midnight was a revelation. The place was shining with lights. There was a great blazing fire in an extended restaurant and groups of people were moving in and out. The whole scene seemed to be a happy, joyful one but this perhaps was influenced by the thought that stage one of my journey was over and I was glad to be on my way home.

Then came the contrast of Edinburgh Waverley where we were welcomed by the occasional dim light. It was freezingly cold as another passenger and myself sought out the waiting room. We found it to be a small room with benches around its perimeter and a travesty of a fire at one end. The room was almost fully occupied by some of the un-

fortunate inhabitants of Edinburgh, so we had no recourse but to spend the next few hours walking around the central square of the station. It was that or freeze.

In due course the Aberdeen train came and we were on our way. There was snow everywhere and as it seemed to be very deep, I began to wonder about the position at Stonehaven. The line takes a bit of a curve coming into that station and since there was no car awaiting in the station square I decided to stay on till Aberdeen; where my son was in fact waiting.

He had been unable to get to Stonehaven direct, and had come round via Aberdeen, got a puncture, broke my jack when changing the wheel, broke another borrowed from a farmer (that cost me £15) but got back to Aberdeen. I took over as driver since the entrance to my own drive was steepish, a turn and with a side slope, so in the circumstances had to be taken faster than usual. I took it too fast, skidded and pranged the car against a gate post which was demolished. There goes the master plan I thought, as I went home for a bath and breakfast.

I then noticed that the Deeside buses were running, and found I could get one which would take me to Ballater by mid-afternoon, so I duly attended my last official meet. The day was not yet over however. The cold was intense and on the way home, the frozen fuel pump in the Swallow Bus blew up a mile or so out of Ballater. Jim Duguid phoned for a replacement to be sent out by the last bus to Ballater. Some hours later, after another freezing wait we were on our way again.

More recently I made a private arrangement with the Meets Secretary that I would join the Club Party for tea at Coshieville after the Schiehallion excursion. I gaily set off for this appointment but fifty yards up the road, the exhaust pipe on my car fell off!

I started this note by suggesting that it was easy to attend a Club Meet but seem to have ended it by proving conclusively that it is not always easy.

Robert Bain

A SCRAMBLERS' TRAVERSE OF THE CUILLIN OF SKYE

In the 'Notes' section of the 1983 *Journal*, I wrote about an abortive attempt on the Cuillin ridge with Robin Grant. The Editor added a footnote referring to an account by Robin, of a subsequent successful traverse which he had hoped to include in this number. Robin and I have recently revised and enlarged the story of our adventures and it is this version which follows.

In spite of our earlier defeat, we were undeterred and came back to try again. This time we decided firstly not to employ a guide but to circumvent any rock climbing sections we felt we could not confidently tackle. Secondly, we would traverse from Sgurr nan Gillean to Gars-bheinn, partly so as to avoid the wearisome climb up the screes to Gars-bheinn, and also because this would enable us to get most of the difficult sections over while we were fairly fresh on the first day. We were also determined not to be hurried as we wanted to savour the delights of the scenery. I understand that the record time for the traverse now stands at just over four hours! We were quite prepared to take 40 hours, and intended to make a leisurely two day expedition with a bivouac half way.

Accordingly, we pitched camp in Glen Brittle and, the following day, we climbed through mist to leave bivouac equipment and food and drink for the second day at the spectacularly situated ledge we had used the previous year near Bealach Coire na Banachdich. This time we took a small tent with us, which we established would fit onto our not over large ledge, by a trial pitching. Our gear was safely cached away in a shallow cave, and then we stayed awhile admiring the subtle effects of mist and cloud on the peaks of the ridge. We had left behind our cameras as a concession to the considerable weight of our packs, but, as so often happens, regretted this, because, although cloud was hanging heavy over Glen Brittle, the Coruisk side was practically clear, and the views were superb.

The following day dawned damp and misty, so we delayed our departure for another 24 hours. This time the ridge was clear of cloud, and, after driving to Sligachan, our adventure started at about 7 a.m. as we trudged, warm and midge-ridden, across the moor to Coire Riabhach and up the Tourist Route to Sgurr nan Gillean. About three hours later we were at the summit. The weather did not look completely settled and cloud covered parts of the ridge, but we set out along Gillean's west ridge and were soon at grips with the famous Gendarme, that vertical pinnacle which effectively bars the way to further progress. After embracing its rough form and vainly trying to lasso a protective sling round the top, I climbed (firmly belayed by my companion) down the slab to the left and found a fairly straight-forward way to the neck beyond, thus avoiding the more sensationally exposed swing round to the right. We soon reached the foot of the chimney which leads down to the screes, where we took our first short cut by traversing below the cliffs of the Am Basteir complex, thus avoiding the horrors (to the mere scrambler) of the Bhasteir Tooth. We lunched near Bruach na Frithe and then continued towards An Caisteal. There's a short pitch of climbing to negotiate before reaching this peak which I assured Robin looked perfectly easy. What was all the fuss about? It did prove rather off-balance when I embarked upon it, and I was grateful for the comfort of the rope. It was on reaching the top that we had the only fall of our expedition – Robin tripped and fell flat on his face, but fortunately onto one of the few grassy summits of the Cuillin!

After An Caisteal, the non-rock-climber might be well advised to avoid the Bidein Druim nan Ramh peaks by traversing, as we did, the scree slopes on the Glen Brittle side to reach the Bealach na Glaiè Moire. We did, in fact, return last year to climb Sgurr an Fheadain and the Druim nan Ramh group, but in a leisurely, unhurried way. And so in the late afternoon we came to the four peaks of Sgurr a'Mhadaidh, a part of the ridge almost impossible to bypass. Although I had climbed the highest peak before, I had not traversed all four, and I was duly impressed by the sudden and sheer drop down from the second top we reached. I plucked up enough courage to abseil down into the depths, followed by Robin who proved that it was really quite easy by climbing down, protected by the main rope which he threaded through a sling at the top. We met two climbers here who were trying to find a way down to Glen Brittle thinking that they had already reached the Bealach na Glaiè Moire. We soon enlightened them as to their true whereabouts, and then found our way down the next top by a descent on the Coruisk side.

Time had slipped by, and it was now 7.30 in the evening as we left Sgurr a'Mhadaidh to negotiate the narrow ridge of Sgurr a' Ghreadaidh, and we began to wonder if we would reach our bivouac before dark. As we came down the rocks of Sgurr Thormaid, we linked up with our previous attempt, but to say that this time the weather conditions were better would be an understatement. The mountains were bathed in the rosy glow of sunset and out to the west the Hebrides floated on a wonderful sea of varied and subtle shades of aquamarine. Such a sight took the weariness from our limbs as we came over Sgurr na Banachdich and, at long last, to our home for the night just as darkness fell.

We pitched our tent and prepared supper, and, in spite of the considerable vertical drop down to Coruisk just outside our front door, we had a fairly comfortable night.

We greeted the following misty but not unpromising morning by jodelling across the abyss below our camp so as to savour the fine echo. Breakfast, striking camp, and packing our gear took quite some time, so it was mid morning when we finally set out on the second stage of our Odyssey. Noon found us descending from Sgurr Mhic Dearg round the base of the Inaccessible Pinnacle and on towards Sgurr Mhic Choinneach, Mackenzie's Peak. It seems particularly fitting that some Skye peaks are named after the early climbing pioneers who first explored the ridge – others are Thormaid (Norman of Norman Collie), Alasdair (Sherriff Alexander Nicolson), and Thearlaich (Charles of Charles Pilkington). We met hereabouts a young solo climber of whom I feel sure these great men of the past would heartily approve. Starting from Camasunary, he had reached the ridge by traversing the Dubhs, and then gone back to Gars-bheinn to start a full traverse of the entire ridge – we hope he made it! Collie's ledge led us to Bealach Mhic

Choinnich where we lunched, making rather heavy weather of the great pile of peanut butter sandwiches we had prepared, our main need being liquid for our insatiable thirst. We climbed Sgurr Thearlaich by a zig-zag route which Gerry Ackroyd had shown us the previous year.

Then on to Sgurr Alasdair, Skye's highest mountain, where Gars-bheinn, our destination, came into view – surely we were going to make it this time! By descending below the peak's south west ridge and locating the crucial chimney avoiding the tricky 'Mauvais Pas', it is possible to traverse to beyond the Thearlaich Dubh Gap. By the time we had done this, the weather had become superb, and in warm sunshine we slowly climbed Sgurr Dubh na da Bheinn and onto Sgurr nan Eag, the last 'Munro' on our route. It was now 7 p.m. and the view to the west was marvellous as we strolled along the pleasant ridge towards Gars-bheinn, where we just had enough orange juice left for a toast to our success.

The return to Glen Brittle turned into rather an epic. Dusk was falling as we descended the seemingly endless scree and it was getting quite dark by the time we reached the path to Glen Brittle. Out came the torches, but mine flickered then faded, leaving us with only Robin's as a source of illumination with which to find our way through the boggy wilderness. At times, we lost the path completely and almost had to face another bivouac. We floundered on however, eventually reaching camp at 1.30 a.m. We were roused later that morning by the warden of the camp site who came to enquire how we had fared. He gave us the camp log book and asked us to record our traverse in it. We collected the car we had left at Sligachan, then sweated our way up to the ridge again to recover our bivouac gear. It was again warm and sunny and we just had time on returning to camp for a short dip in the sea before driving again to Sligachan for an enjoyable celebratory dinner, during which we drank to the success of our expedition, coupling this with the memory of Professor Norman Collie, that grand old man of Cuillin mountaineering.

Donald Hawksworth

Footnote – The route taken by Donald Hawksworth and Robin Grant can be followed in detail on the SMC map of the Black Cuillin which is primarily intended for use in conjunction with the SMC Guide to Skye – Editor.

SOUTH GEORGIA, 1985

The last issue of the *Journal* contained an article entitled 'Landforms in the Falkland Islands and South Georgia' by Dr. David Sugden, Senior Lecturer in Geography, University of Aberdeen. Club members will be interested to know that Dr. Sugden was back in South Georgia with 3 colleagues in January and February 1985, with the aid of a grant from the Natural Environmental Research Council, in order to study glacier fluctuations and climatic change. The party flew direct to the Falkland Islands from Ascension Island by Hercules transport plane and were based for one week on H.M.S. Endurance and for the remainder of the time, near Grytviken on South Georgia. Dr. Sugden and his colleagues were in daily contact with the British garrison and received great assistance from them with the carrying of equipment. During their stay, the party from Aberdeen saw the raising of the former Argentinian submarine, the Santa Fe, from the harbour at Grytviken. The submarine was towed down the fjord and scuttled in deep water. Figure 1 shows Sugartop mountain and the Hamberg Lakes Valley in February 1985 and in the middle distance it can be seen how the glacier falls over the top of the cliffs and lands at the bottom. Sugartop is in the Allardyce range, the highest peak of which is Mount Paget, 2960 m (9709 ft). Figure 2 shows the Harker Glacier with its medial moraines.



Figure 1 Sugartop Mountain, South Georgia
(Photograph by David Sugden)



Figure 2 Harker Glacier, South Georgia
(Photograph by David Sugden)

BOOK REVIEWS

Isolation Shepherd. Ian R. Thomson. Bidean Books, 1984. £5.95.

Ian Thomson provides the reader with a fascinating account of life as a shepherd at the western end of Loch Morar from 1956 until 1960. The life which he and his family led in this isolated place, was a hard and lonely one. There were none of the modern comforts which most people expected at that time; their lives must have been very similar to the lives led by many previous generations of shepherds.

We learn not only how the family lived but also what shepherding involved during the seasons. The author describes the characters of his various sheep-dogs – some having more desirable traits than others! His knowledge of the hills in this area naturally became considerable, geographically and historically and he recounts a number of interesting stories of past events.

Not only was Ian Thomson a shepherd, he was also a ghillie during the stalking season and again, his accounts of the tactics used to locate the deer and then select, shoot and bring down the quarry, makes extremely interesting reading.

This book is an excellent acquisition for the Club library and is well worth reading, whether or not the reader is familiar with the area.

G.M.S.

The Ridiculous Mountains. G.J.F. Dutton. Diadem Books, 1984. £7.95.

As the title suggests, this book is for those who want some light reading. It is certainly one of the funniest books I have read for a long time. It is also an excellent book for 'dipping into'. Each chapter is self contained – the book being a collection of articles written for the S.M.C. and indeed, some for our own *Journal*.

I am sure that many of the trips that the author and his friends embark upon, will sound very familiar to us, particularly his account of the problems created by sudden Summer mist on a Munro with a summit only marginally higher than a nearby 'top'. The trip up the final Munro by a Minister, his congregation and friends, was one of the most amusing accounts, especially when this tee-total expedition 'back-fired'.

G.M.S.

Beyond the Ranges. 5 years in the life of Hamish MacInnes. Hamish MacInnes. Gollancz, 1984. £9.95.

Hamish MacInnes provides the reader of this book with a most interesting collection of experiences, from several trips deep into the Amazonian Jungle on the trail of Inca Gold, to taking off in a hot air balloon from the top of Ben Nevis.

I must confess to not normally being an enthusiast for travel books, but the account of his 'Inca' trips became more fascinating as one read on. Mr. MacInnes spares us few details of the trials and discomforts which he and his party had to endure. This makes a refreshing change from the glowing descriptive accounts one normally reads. We learn of the difficulties of obtaining help from the apparently truculent local Indians; the regular attacks from a wide variety of not particularly pleasant insect life; the problems of making a trail through dense Amazonian jungle. Whether they find their Inca Gold and what else they did find, I'll leave to those who read the book to learn.

These experiences form the larger part of the book, but the following chapters I found to be equally interesting, but in an entirely different setting. Much of these chapters are imbued with Mr. MacInnes' experiences with film and television crews.

It is obvious from his writing that he enjoys the challenge of organising and co-ordinating an Outside Broadcast film. He provides the reader with a very clear picture of the problems faced by the camera and production teams. He gives some hilarious accounts of his exploits, particularly his one (and only?) trip in a hot air balloon. He is ready to describe and praise the skill of the helicopter pilots about whom one otherwise hears so little.

He describes at length his role as chief mountaineering adviser to a film starring Sean Connery. His account would certainly influence our viewing of the film, if we managed to see it now.

This is a very readable book, written by a top class mountaineer about his many exploits. He spares us nothing and gives us an insight into many aspects of the climbing world, of which many of us would otherwise remain in ignorance.

G.M.S.

Speak to the Hills: an Anthology of Twentieth Century British and Irish Mountain Verse. Ed. Hamish Brown and Martyn Berry. Aberdeen University Press, 1985. £14.50.

Upwards of six hundred short poems, all related to hills or mountains in one way or another, if sometimes rather loosely (Mull has mountains, but that is hardly enough to make any poem about Mull a 'Mountain poem'). What is a reviewer to do? This is absolutely a book to dip into, and an attempt to read consecutively brings quick indigestion, yet I could dip and dip until my copy deadline was long past and still no doubt have missed many things that would have delighted or moved me.

What will you find if you dip? It could be a poem by a well-known name. Masfield's 'Up on the Downs', perhaps, and the sudden shock when 'the gods came', and that 'something' in the last stanza that acquires the poetic charge of everything before it, bringing the whole life-story of the downs together in one moment of perception before the lengthened last line leads back to the 'bare' today-life of one-thing-at-a-time; or perhaps MacNeice's fierce warning to those who seek answers in the hills of the questions that their answers must meet in this same world of back-down ('Under the Mountain'). If you light on one of these you had best withdraw for a little before dipping again, for they set too hard a test for much of the verse that here seeks to live beside them. On the other hand you could encounter MacDiarmid on an off-day, an encouragement to any who feel they could do as well as he.

Or you might plunge into the section 'In Lighter Mood', where nobody is trying to live with the giants, and rollick through the tale of John Christopher Brown, a climber so dedicated to the extremer reaches of his sport that 'The Very Severes nearly bored him to tears — and he felt about girls much the same', and how he fell for the beautiful Mary, 'as fair as a jug-handle hold at the top of a hundred-foot lead', and won her in a singular climbing competition whose details it would be unfair to give away. Mind you, you might instead find yourself plodding lugubriously through the laboured humour and halting metre of — whichever item it is I'm thinking about. No matter; nobody will make you drag on to the end, and now would be the time to move, or move back, to the more serious sections of the book.

Look there for the sudden moment of engagement, when your own store of mountain memory will be touched and illuminated by the poet's vision: Joanne Weeks as she lies lazily, listening to 'the loud/Drip, drip, dripping/Of time, as it slips/Down a slate-green waterfall', or the terrible finality of William Bell's 'there's nothing we can do to help him now'. Not every writer who achieves such a moment can sustain the intensity though a whole poem, and you may have to pass over places where the mere cutting up a sentence by lines into rhetorical sections, or wanton distortion of its syntax, is thought to make it poetry. You may be distressed to find you have been made poignantly conscious of the writer's profound emotion but are shut out from sharing it — in Hamish

Brown's long love-affair with Brandon of the blessed what oath was it, and why now goodbye? You may be unhappily aware that a writer is trying to share with you an emotion which was real and deep to him, but which he lacks words magic enough to raise from an appearance of banality. Yet again and again you will find true poetic moments, truly conveyed, and now and then, aside from the great names, a whole poem that holds its charge clear through, like David Watkin Price's 'Up Paths Which Scrawl', pursuing the image of a path as written on the hill by some great but shaking hand through a tightly-wrought structure in which it sets a question to which on the achieved summit there is a glimpse of an answer that will restore what the shaking hand has broken, such a poem as is not unworthy to sit at the feet of Masefield or MacNeice.

It is good to have a book in which such things may be found.

D.M-G

Smythe's Mountains – The Climbs of F.S. Smythe. Harry Calvert. Gollancz, 1985. £14.95.

In the preface to this book it is claimed that Smythe's writings expressed a simple delight in mountaineering of the modest type such as anyone may seek. He is also depicted in the book as one who 'exhorted the masses to savour the bouquet of mountain experience', but at the same time was frequently castigating trippers and tourists and anyone who dared to rob him of his solitary enjoyment of the hills.

The author gives in this book a record of Smythe's brilliant career as a climber, rather than writing a biography. However some account of his life, activities, and character are inevitably included.

Smythe was a delicate child with an over-protective mother. He appears to have been no good at games while at school, and is even described as a misfit and a 'loner'. Chronic ill-health had much to do with this.

At 8 years of age he climbed a 6000 foot hill in the Alps and this was his introduction to the sport.

The author gives us the history of his early attempts at various rock faces in Wales and in the Alps. He was often by choice a solitary climber, but teamed up with Longland, Bell, and others to pioneer much British rock climbing. He is described as liking simple mountain wandering as much as celebrated ascents. He was apparently more of an ice and snow expert than an expert on rock faces.

Smythe and Graham Brown's famous climb on the Brenva Face is described, as is also the deplorable quarrel and controversy which followed. Smythe obviously had tremendous skill in seeing and picking out unknown routes when difficulties were encountered. The book also shows that he knew when to accept defeat, and that had his advice been taken on various occasions it would have been a help to those he was with. He is also described as one of the greatest of mountaineering photographers.

The author discusses at length Smythe's claims to be selected by the Everest Committee and apparently considers he should have been chosen rather than Irvine for the 1924 attempt, and that he should have been chosen as leader in subsequent expeditions. It seems that Smythe's activities as a 'professional' mountaineering journalist also counted against him. I think many readers might disagree with some of the author's arguments here, and possibly support the Everest Committee's choice.

One must remember that that in most of the period covered by the book, high altitude climbing was done without oxygen. Smythe himself scorned all artificial aids, and would not use pitons.

The book teaches us how often climbing skills can be nullified by the chance encounter of terrible weather (sometimes tying down men at high altitudes for a day or more), by small miscalculations in planning of portage and supplies; and also shows how many a day of skilled and dangerous work can end up in discovering that the route

chosen was impossible. It also shows how hazardous can be the descent after an objective has been achieved or nearly achieved.

Smythe died at the early age of 49. He had more than once been left to go on alone when even experts like Shipton had been halted. His 'final triumph of judgement' is described as the occasion when he turned back on Everest when he was within 1000 feet of the summit. He only just managed to get back alive.

Calvert's book is well worth reading.

S.A.B.B.

Walking the Tops – Mountain Treks in Britain. Rex Bellamy. David & Charles, 1984. £9.95.

The author describes a round-dozen day walks in the hills from Dartmoor to Canisp. He has an easy readable style, and he manages to surround each walk with sufficient anecdote and background information to make them come alive. This is not a detailed guide, but should serve as a stimulus, particularly to the Scots, to do some walking south of the Border.

Incorporated in the text are words of advice on hill-walking, mostly good advice, but to say that 'hill-walkers should not need ice-axes' is hardly good sense. His experience on the Five Sisters, described with disarming candour, would suggest that he has not learned all his own lessons.

The book is nicely laid out, but it is a pity that the photograph purporting to show the Five Sisters shows only Ben Attow.

Nevertheless, an enjoyable book for a long winter evening.

J.M.C.G.

Walking through Scotland. David and Kathleen MacInnes. David and Charles, 1981 (Second impression 1984). £6.95.

This work describes eighteen walking tours in Scotland, varying in duration from two to eight days. The walks are reasonably spread, with three in the Southern Uplands, six in the Grampians, four in the North-West Highlands and two on islands – Arran and Mull. Each tour is divided into sections which can be accomplished in one day, with some indication about availability of overnight accommodation and public transport.

Interestingly, each section is described twice in detail – once in each direction, so that the walker may more readily assimilate the guidance given as he plans, or proceeds on, his journey in the chosen direction.

In connection with many of the routes, the authors mention the main historical and geographical features of the places involved. The routes are of course largely hill-tracks, but some parts are pathless, and warning is carefully given about sections where the terrain might cause problems for inexperienced walkers. Generally the walks are over saddles or passes rather than summits, but in several cases, including Ben Venue, routes over tops are described in detail, and where hills of interest are close to a route, they are usually mentioned.

At the end there are notes of advice on various matters, such as Public Transport and Accommodation, Route Finding, Countryside Manners and Safety. This book makes interesting reading and gives much useful information for those planning to sample the pleasures of the Scottish hill-country.

L.McA.

Mountain Lakeland. Tom Bowker. Robert Hale, 1984. £8.95.

The Lake District, that pearl of the English countryside, which has brightened up the lives of many a hard working man or woman from industrial Lancashire and been written about so often – is there anything further that can be said about it? Is there some small corner that has escaped an author's attention? Yet somehow this small area with a few comparatively insignificant mountains continues to inspire attempts at putting pen to paper. Tom Bowker's attempts clearly stem from deep affection for Lakeland and much knowledge of its mountain scene.

He has written a descriptive account of the principal fells with anecdotes thrown in. There are suggestions and comments about routes, but it is not a guide book in the sense of Wainwright. You are expected to have your own maps and use your initiative. It is not in the least comprehensive and cannot be said to give enough topographical and descriptive information to encourage the aspiring walker, scrambler and perhaps even climber, as is claimed in the introduction to the book. The ascent of Scafell Pike from Wasdale is advocated but which route from Wasdale does he mean? There is not much description here either.

As for the aspiring climber there is even less help. Mostly it is negative – descriptions of climbs he did not succeed in climbing. It is enough to put an aspiring climber off the game altogether. It is a great pity as Lakeland was one of the birth places of rock climbing and has much to offer the newcomer to climbing.

This is no literary masterpiece and the photographs are entirely black and white. But the enthusiasm of the author does show through to provide nostalgic reminders for those who know the Lakes, and some encouragement to the newcomer to get out the maps and study them in detail.

P.W.B.

Climber's Guide to the Cairngorms. Allen Fyffe and Andrew Nisbet. SMT, 1985. £7.95.

North-east Outcrops. D. Dinwoodie. SMT, 1984. £5.95.

Both of these rock climbing guides are long overdue and very welcome. The Cairngorms volume covers the whole of the Cairngorms which at one time were to be covered by five volumes. One volume never appeared and the rest date from some years ago.

In the new guide individual pitch technical grades are given for very severe and harder climbs. This will be welcomed by the hard climber and brings the area into line with climbing areas elsewhere. For the more modest climber, the guide is less helpful than it might be.

On a recent trip, a climb on Dividing Buttress of Beinn a' Bhuird was sought. Sentinel route is mentioned in the new volume but it tells us nothing about the grade, or length or much about where the route is. We are referred back to volume II of the old series of guide books. The new guide is not, therefore, truly a comprehensive guide as its sub-title suggests. The modest climber or the novice climber will have a hard time finding suitable routes in this guide. This is a pity as it brings a gulf between the hard rock climber and the more general mountaineer.

In a national climbing magazine, a reviewer of the North-east Outcrops volume dismissed it disparagingly for the multiplicity of short climbs at modest grades which it contains. I disagree. There is a comprehensive guide which includes the hard climbs, as well as the easier ones. There are some good hard climbs in the area and the publication of this guide has stimulated much activity so that already a supplement has been published. There are climbs in this guide to suit all tastes and of that I am glad.

It is a good guide with enough detail to identify the climbs. Let's get out the rope and go down to the sea cliffs!

P.W.B.

The High Mountains of Britain and Ireland: A Guide for Mountain Walkers.

Irvine Butterfield. Diadem Books, 1986. £16.95.

This lovely book describes all the 3,000 ft mountains of Scotland, England, Wales and Ireland by dividing them into 133 one-day excursions. Twenty-seven of its thirty chapters deal with Scotland and the remaining three chapters are devoted respectively to England, Wales and Ireland.

Each chapter describes one particular area. Each area is subdivided into groups of mountains usually centred on one valley which will give the most convenient access. Each group of mountains is listed and described briefly at the start of each chapter. Useful information is also given on rail and bus services, accommodation, stalking, lengths of walk and suggested times for covering itineraries. Two times are suggested for each itinerary; one for fast walkers and one for the more leisurely. One or two routes are described for each hill and each mountain group is accompanied by a detailed map marked with the route(s).

The book is lavishly and beautifully illustrated with photographs which emphasise the most attractive features of each hill. Many of these photographs come from the cameras of well-known hill-men. The book includes the now customary warning on safety and appendices give details of shelters, refuges and howffs with map references, estates on which they are found and stalking dates for each estate.

One of the main aims of the book is to suggest helpful and economical routes for gaining 'Munros' and because of this the most enjoyable and interesting routes are not always featured. It can be seen as a useful complement to Munro's tables and to the recent illustrated Munro guide. Like these, its emphasis is firmly on the highest hills, which limits its appeal for the more general mountain lover. However, it is still a delightful browse. Its size and price dictate that this is a 'fireside' book, to be enjoyed at leisure before or after a day on the hill. Its weight certainly disqualifies it from a place in the rucksack but its content and presentation justify the higher than usual outlay for a climbing guide.

G.S.J.C.

CONTRIBUTIONS

The Editor welcomes a constant supply of material for the *Journal*. The main articles, by tradition, should be from 1500 words to 3000 words in length. However, smaller articles would be appreciated, particularly for the Notes section. Good quality black and white photographs, together with maps and drawings would also be welcome provided that there is no infringement of copyright. All contributions must if possible be typewritten 'fair copies'. The Editor reserves the right to edit, abridge or omit material submitted for publication.

WHICH

BANK

can sign and seal
a personal loan
in 20 minutes?



You will have taken time to decide what you want to buy.

It may be a large item like a car or new furniture, or it may be that you wish to make some improvement to your home.

A TSB personal loan could be the answer.

Once you know what it costs to buy, and how much you can afford to borrow and repay, the next step is simple.

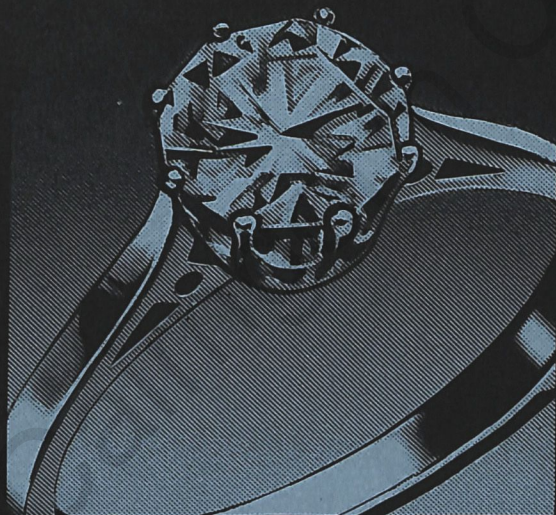
Just call into your local TSB, fill in a simple form and you will have an answer usually within 20 minutes.

The Bank that likes to say Yes

For full written details please contact your nearest TSB or write to: TSB Scotland, FREEPOST, Edinburgh EH4 0HX

SETTING THE DATE

You've set the date.
Now make sure, that the ring you choose
is a ring you'll both cherish,
now and forever.



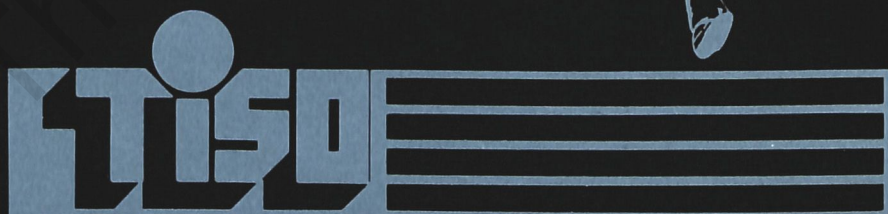
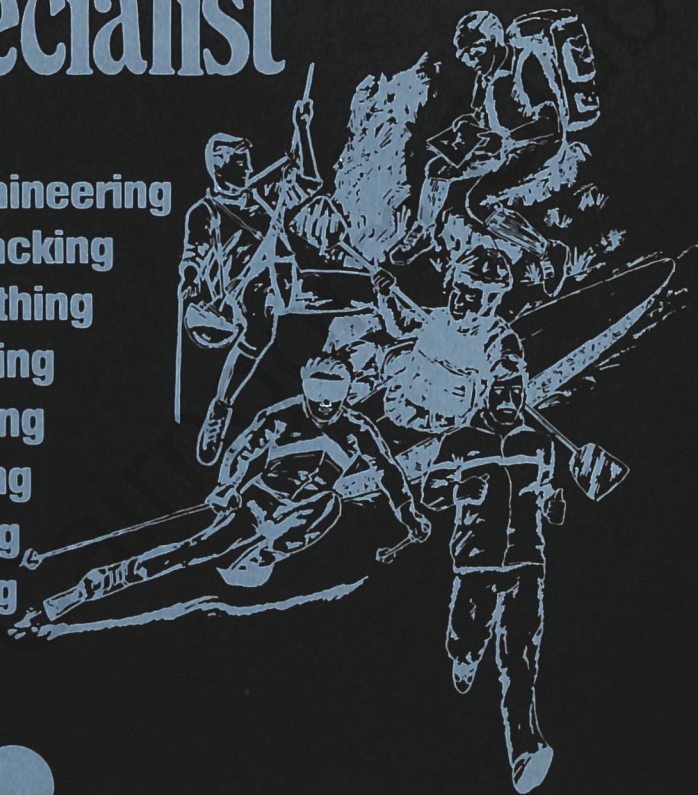
*Jamieson
& Carry*

Choose from Jamieson & Carry.
the diamond experts
with a wealth of experience in Aberdeen.

JEWELLERS IN ABERDEEN SINCE 1733
142 Union Street, Aberdeen 641219

The Great Outdoor Specialist

Mountaineering
Backpacking
Ski-clothing
Travelling
Canoeing
Climbing
Running
Jogging



THISTLE CENTRE, STIRLING ● ROSE STREET PRECINCT, EDINBURGH ●
WELLINGTON PLACE, LEITH, EDINBURGH ● NETHERKIRK GATE, ABERDEEN