

The Cairngorm Club Journal



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ERRATUM

The caption to the upper photograph on page 68 should read -

Mr. and Mrs. A. Leslie Hay with the Hon. President, the President, the Vice-Presidents and Honorary Member Miss Ruth Jackson.

THE CAIRNGORM CLUB JOURNAL

Volume 19
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Edited by Antony D. Chessell

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Drawings by Ian Strachan

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EDITORIAL

This number of the *Journal* completes Volume 19 and an index is being issued to accompany the Volume.

I wish to thank all the contributors to the last four numbers, for their efforts, their enthusiasm and for the wide range of interesting articles which they have written on mountaineering topics.

This number also provides some record of the events which were arranged to celebrate the Centenary of the Club in 1987. There is no doubt that the success of these events was largely due to the very hard work which was put in by Club Members for many months beforehand, together with great attention to detail.

The year of 1987 might have been an inward-looking year and there might also have been a sense of anti-climax following the Centenary year. However this was not the case and it is an encouraging and healthy sign that during 1987 and 1988 the Club has been very concerned about promoting new projects and activities, as evidenced by such matters as the woodland regeneration project in Glen Ey and the welcome re-introduction of rock climbing and snow and ice climbing on a regular basis at Club meets.

The pressures on the mountain environment continue to grow and the President in her Centenary dinner speech, made reference to the need to establish clear policies on conservation, which are necessary to prevent the recurring struggles between competing recreational and other uses. The pressures have to be recognised and the discussion and compromise referred to by the President are essential in order to ensure that there is an acceptable accommodation of uses. This does not mean that the Club need abandon those strong principles which have helped to maintain the Cairngorms wilderness during the last one hundred and one years.





Figure 1 Fountainhall House, Aberdeen, around 1880, before Blenheim Place was built.

THE HEIGHTS OF THE CAIRNGORMS AND FOUNTAINHALL HOUSE

JAMES FRIEND

Fountainhall House, built in about 1752, is an unusual house tucked into Blenheim Place near Queen's Cross, Aberdeen. Originally built in the country, it was engulfed by the city of Aberdeen in the late 1890s as West Aberdeen was built around it. One of its most distinguished inhabitants was Professor Patrick Copland (1749-1822), who was Professor of Natural Philosophy at Marischal College from 1775 until his death. Patrick Copland bought the house in 1803, by which time he had already acquired wide renown as a teacher, aided by a remarkable collection of working models, many of which still exist in the Physics Department in the University. He was also responsible for setting up the first Astronomical Observatory on the Castlehill in 1781, and with Robert Hamilton, (after whom Hamilton Place was named), devised much needed improvements to Aberdeen's water supply.

The link between Fountainhall House and the Cairngorms may not appear obvious so far, but it is a real one. For in 1810, George Skene Keith (1752-1823) Minister at Keith Hall, cooperated with Patrick Copland in the first attempt at measuring the heights of the Deeside hills and Cairngorms. Patrick Copland himself had already had an interest in mapping, and in 1808 had assisted with a topographical survey of Aberdeen and Banff, nine years before the Ordnance Survey reached this part of Scotland. Skene Keith, on the other hand, had an interest in agriculture, and particularly in distillation, in which he made a number of experiments for the commissioners of excise in Scotland. Sharing between them an interest in things scientific and in measurement, it is understandable that two active scientific workers in the Age of Enlightenment should set themselves the task of measuring the heights of the hills, of which up till then only Mount Battock had been measured, by a William Garden, as being 3465 feet above sea-level.

Skene Keith published an account of his two expeditions as an appendix to his major work, *A General View of the Agriculture of Aberdeenshire*, published in Aberdeen in 1811. Extracts of his article were published in the *Cairngorm Club Journal*, (1968) Vol 93, p238-242, but the whole account makes such fascinating reading that Members might like to have an opportunity to learn more of these pioneering expeditions and the techniques used in the measurements.

"Before I set out, on my first survey, I got a mountain-barometer, made by that excellent artist Mr Thomas Jones, formerly of Mount Street, now of Kenton Street, London. I also got a very good spirit level, made for me by James Cassie, a very ingenious mechanic in my own parish, whose snuff boxes, and other neat trinkets, find a ready sale in all parts of the country, and even in the city of London. And what was of the utmost consequence,

Fig. 11.



Fig. 12.

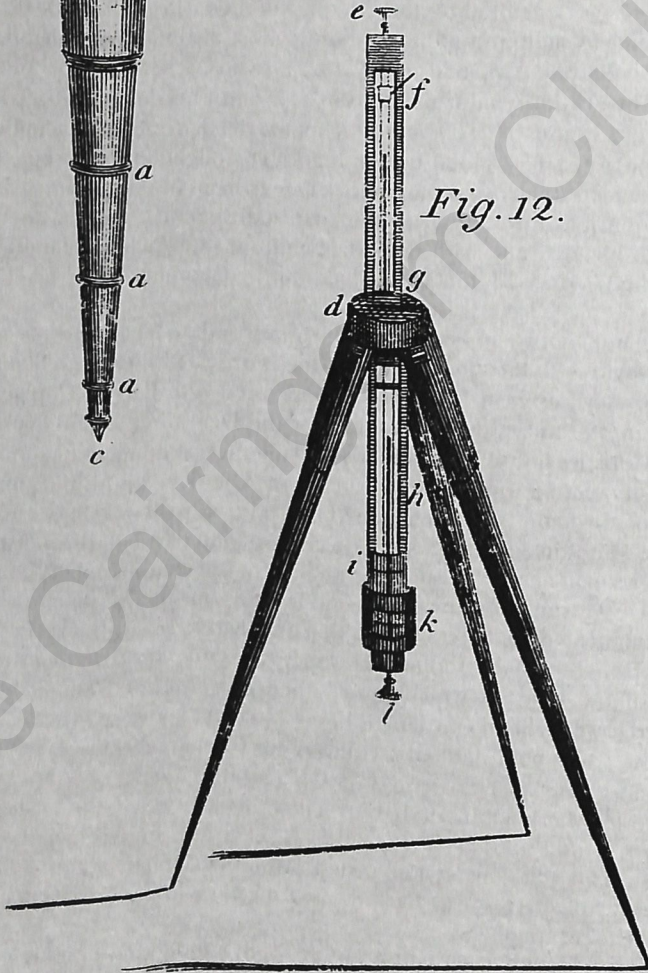


Figure 2

A typical portable mountain barometer of Keith's day, shown in (fig. 11) and open (fig. 12) position. (from *The Philosophical and Mathematical Dictionary*, Charles Hutton, London, 1815.)

Mr Patrick Copland, of Marischal College, had, in the most friendly manner, given me his best advice for carrying on my operations on the mountains, and had very kindly undertaken to mark the heights of the barometer at his house at Fountainhall, by Aberdeen, which is 160 feet above the level of the sea, at half-flood. It is, by comparing the different heights of the barometer at two places, taken at the same hour, that the heights of mountains are calculated, after making allowance for the difference of the temperature of the air, and the expansion of the mercury, indicated by the heat of the attached and detached thermometers”.

Contemporary texts of the time give us more details of the methods which Skene Keith probably used. In Charles Hutton's *Philosophical and Mathematical Dictionary* (London, 1815), the method is attributed to Sir George Shuckburgh-Evelyn and General William Roy. Sir George, M.P. for Warwick, gentleman and scientist, first reported in 1777 on work done with General Roy to the Royal Society as 'Observations made in Savoy to ascertain the Height of Mountains by the Barometer'. In the following year General Roy, originally from Carlisle, an engineer responsible for extending General Wade's roads, reported to the Royal Society on 'Experiments and Observations made in Britain in order to obtain a Rule for measuring Heights with the Barometer'. Using mercury filled barometers, with the mercury contained in a pigskin bag at the base of the glass column, a detached thermometer was used to measure the ambient temperature, and thus compensate for changes of air pressure with temperature. A second thermometer attached to the barometer was used to measure the temperature of the mercury itself, so that correction could be made for the expansion and contraction of the mercury at different temperatures. The formula deduced by Sir George and General Roy is as follows:- 'The difference of the logarithms of the heights of mercury in the barometer, at two stations, when multiplied by 10000, is equal to the altitude in English fathoms, of the one place above the other. That is, when the temperature of the air is about 31 or 32 degrees of Fahrenheit's thermometer'. Further details of the calculations and corrections for temperature are given in Hutton's Dictionary, and summarised in Appendix 1. It seems likely that the type of barometer made by Jones and used by Skene Keith was from a design of Sir Henry Englefield, a member of the Linnean Society, with an attached folding tripod, shown in the accompanying illustration.

We shall continue in Skene Keith's words. "July 9, 1810. - Set out on my first survey of the mountains, and arrived at my friend, the Rev. James Gregory's at Banchory Ternan, where I staid all night. Found, by a medium of three observations taken this evening, and at two subsequent periods, that the surface of the Dee, at this time very low, was only 12 feet higher than Fountainhall, or 172 feet above the level of the sea.....July 12. - Set out for Mount Battock; ascended the mountain and staid an hour on the top of it. Quite disappointed in finding it only 2600 feet. This was verified by an

observation made some months after. (I had formerly suspected that Mr. Garden, who was a most accurate man, had committed some error, when he measured this mountain; and I can account for so great an error no other way, than by supposing that he had either mistaken, or *put a wrong figure in his field book*, for the *angle* which marked the elevation of the Grampians above the flat land called the *How of the Mearns*). Returned to Finzean at 6 o'clock.....left my good friends after breakfast, and rode to Ballater-house, the residence of William Farquharson, Esq., of Monaltry. Found the elevation of the Dee, below the Bridge of Ballater, to be 780 feet. The top of the Craigs of Ballater, a romantic hill close by the house, 1340 feet. After dining, and spending three hours with the hospitable Mr. and Mrs. Farquharson, my public spirited landlord accompanied me to the Manse of Crathie, where we arrived at a late hour, and were kindly received by Mr. and Mrs. McHardy.

July 14. - Breakfasted at 7 o'clock, and set out with Mess. Farquharson and McHardy. On our way we were joined by Mr. Alexander Warren, a very ingenious man, who had measured the estate of Invercauld, consisting of nearly 10,000 Scotch acres, and to whom I was much indebted in my subsequent operations. Three guides took care of our horses, and conducted us in safety to the mountain top, which on the medium of three measures taken on this, and another visit on the 20th, was found to be elevated above the sea almost exactly 3800 feet. Laid my spirit level on the Ca Cuirn, or highest top (of Lochnagar), in order to compare its elevation with the mountains near the source of the Dee. Found, that after making allowance for the curvature, they were considerably higher. Dined, and staid three hours on this interesting mountain, from whence the German Sea, from the Firth of Forth to the Murray Firth, and a great extent of country was distinctly seen for about two hours. The varied scenery would have detained us much longer, had not a thick fog, and every appearance of a great fall of rain, obliged us to descend as quickly as possible. Our descent was accompanied with a number of awkward tumbles, and one of the gentlemen was rolled nearly 100 feet; but no accident happened to any of us, except the loss of my spirit level. After 12 hours absence, we returned to the Manse of Crathie, completely drenched with rain; but we soon got dry clothes, and most hospitable entertainment.

July 15. - Preached at Crathie for my friend Mr. McHardy, but felt a considerable inflammation in the pleura from the great rains, and exertion of yesterday. Dr. Stuart took from me about eight ounces of blood, which gave me relief.

July 16. - Rose at 5 o'clock. Rode ... to Mr. Stuart's at Allanquoich. Here we breakfasted, and our hospitable landlord accompanied us to the mountains of Ben-a-bourd and Benavon. The former ... is an immense mass, without beauty or fertility, extending about three miles in length, and almost flat on the top; and was found to be elevated above the sea 3940 feet. The

latter was more interesting, having greater variety of surface. Its highest peak was 3920 feet, or 20 feet lower than Ben-a-bourd. But the mountain in general was 100 feet lower than the other. Several Scotch topazes and beryls are found in Lochnagar, and in both these mountains. We returned to Allanquoich at 5 o'clock at night, where we were entertained most hospitably, and had a sound sleep after the labours of the day".

On the following day, the party again rose at 5 o'clock, called at Mar Lodge, and set out up the River Dee to the junction of the Guisachan and the Garchary, which they followed 4 miles to the Lairig. "Here we took a luncheon, and as neither my hospitable landlord, nor our guide had ever been at the source of the Dee, we were doubtful what course to pursue, when, fortunately, a man going with provisions from Badenoch to the shealing, came up to us, and pointed out the line that we should follow; for we had no road, nor even a foot-path.

At 2 o'clock, P.M. we set out to climb the mountain, still keeping in sight of the river. In a few minutes we came to the foot of a cataract, whose height we found to be above 1000 feet; and which contained about a fourth part of the water of which the Garchary was now composed. In about half an hour after, we perceived that this cataract came from a lake in the ridge of the mountain of Cairntoul, and, that the summit of the mountain was another 1000 feet above the loch, which is called Loch-na-youn, or the blue lake. A short time after, we saw the Dee, here called the Garchary...tumbling in great majesty over the mountain, down another cataract; or, as we afterwards found it, a chain of natural cascades, above 1300 feet high. It was in flood at this time, from the melting of the snow, and the late rains; and, what was most remarkable, an arch of snow covered the narrow glen from which it tumbled over the rocks. Here our landlord and our guide ascended the mountain by an easier though more circuitous course; but I was determined not to lose sight of the river, and Mr. Warren kindly accompanied me. We approached so near to the cataract as to know that there was no other lake or stream; and then we had to climb among huge rocks, varying from one to ten tons, and to catch hold of the stones of fragments that projected, while we ascended in an angle of 70 or 80 degrees. A little before 4 o'clock, we got to the top of the mountain, which, (by information given me, before I set out, by George Skene, Esq. of Skene,) I knew to be Briiach, or the speckled mountain. Here we found the highest well, which we afterwards learned was called Well Dee, and other five copious fountains, which make a considerable stream, before they fall over the precipice. We sat down, completely exhausted, at 4 o'clock, P.M. and drank of the highest well, which we found to be 4060 feet above the level of the sea; and whose fountain was only 35 degrees of heat, on the 17th of July, or 3 degrees above the freezing point. We mixed some good whisky with this water, and recruited our strength. Then we poured, as a libation, into the fountain, a little of the excellent whisky which our landlord had brought

along with him. After resting half an hour, we ascended to the top of Breriach, at 5 P.M. and found it to be 4280 feet above the level of the sea. We then descended amidst a thick fog, which suddenly overwhelmed us, and attempted next to get to the top of Cairntoul, on the other side of the Garchary. We could not see an object at above 100 yards distance; and at last ascended one of the inferior peaks, but afterwards climbed up the rocks to the highest summit of Cairntoul, which we found to be only 5 feet higher than Breriach, and that *apparent* difference was only occasioned by *the weight of the atmosphere*. On this summit the rain poured out in such torrents, and the wind battered us so much, that two gentlemen, holding umbrellas over my head, could not protect me while I marked the height of the barometer in my journal. We were obliged to leave the index, then draw on the brass cover, and inverting the barometer, to descend the mountain. Unfortunately we had no pocket compass, and afraid of falling over the huge rocks of Poten Duon, which are nearly 1600 feet high, we turned too much to the right hand, and completely lost our way. It was 9 o'clock at night before we found, that a small river, whose course we happily followed, was the Guisachan, or the other source of the Dee. And it was half an hour past 9, when we arrived at the junction of the two streams, and the shealing which we passed at noon. We were now completely exhausted with hunger and exertion; and the shepherds had neither ale, milk, whisky, nor anything, except oatmeal, and bannocks baked of oatmeal, and nearly two inches thick. But hunger gives a better relish for food than the best sauces can do. And the butter, which we had untouched, spread on these bannocks, appeared to me the best meat I had ever tasted; while the stream of the Dee allayed our thirst. Our horses joined us at 10 o'clock, and we mounted, retraced our steps homeward, and arrived at Allanquoich, about half an hour past 1 next morning. There we received the kindest treatment, and afterwards enjoyed a sound sleep, after nearly 19 hours of fatigue".

The next day, Skene Keith returned to Crathie, and then travelled by Abergeldie to 'Altguisach' by Loch Muick, and on July 20th he climbed Lochnagar again, and the White Mounth, taking measurements at several points on the route. With remarkable energy, (he was aged 58 at the time) he tackled Mount Keen the very next day, and as he arrived back at Ballater at 4 P.M., he was able to persuade a guide to escort him to Morven, reaching the top at 6 P.M. It is clear that the lower level parts of this expedition were accomplished on horseback, but not the ascents and descents. That evening he recruited his strength with birch wine at House of Ballater, preached at Glenmuick the following morning, and returned to Aberdeen on July 22nd, measuring the elevations of the Dee at a number of points on the way. Finally, he went to the Quay at Aberdeen at half-flood, to check the Barometric pressure, and then to Fountainhall, where Professor Copland gave him all the recordings from his barometer. He returned home, to make his calculations, with the following reflections - "...concluded my first

expedition to the mountains of Marr; which had taken up two weeks, during which time I had travelled above 330 miles. But though I had left Aberdeen in rather bad health, the pure air, and the kind hospitality which I met with everywhere, not only enabled me to bear the fatigue which I had undergone, but gave me a degree of health and strength, which I had not enjoyed for some months preceding. - At the same time I must remark, that the man must have good stamina, who expects to regain health by measuring mountains”.

Keith still felt the urge to make further measurements, and particularly of Ben Macdui, which he had been unable to measure from Cairntoul because of the fog and rain, and the loss of his spirit level. His Jones Barometer had been sent to London for repair, and unfortunately, on the return journey the master of the ship had forgotten to leave the barometer in Aberdeen, and had returned to London with it! Undaunted, he was able to borrow two barometers from friends, and on September 10th 1810 he left Aberdeen again, and by the 14th he was again on top of Breriach and Cairntoul, from which he decided that, using a new spirit level, the top of Cairngorm was considerably lower, and the top of Ben Macdui considerably higher than Cairntoul. Having set out from Mar Lodge at 7 o'clock that morning, they descended to Aviemore by 10 o'clock that night. For this expedition he also had the help of the Duke of Gordon, who lent him a compass, and arranged to have the low level barometric recordings made at Gordon Castle, by a Mr. Hoy, since Professor Copland was away from home. On September 21st, having met with his son who had just returned from Ben Nevis, which he had found to be 4350 feet, Keith climbed 'Breriach', crossed the Lairig to 'Ben Macdouie', and returned to Glenmore over Cairngorm. He returned to Aberdeen over the next few days by way of Tomintoul, Corgarff, and the valley of the Don, taking measurements as he went. During this journey he had travelled 400 miles, and his son 440 miles, at a time when there were no railways and only the most rudimentary maps and roads. In Appendix 2 some of Keith's measurements are detailed, in comparison with more modern measurements, and it will be seen that they were remarkably accurate. After Keith's time, mercury barometers were replaced by aneroid barometers for mountain use, and later, levelling and trigonometric methods became the norm. Since the 1970's, aerial photography, using stereoscopic pairs, has given heights to an accuracy of about one metre. But George Skene Keith can be credited with a remarkable achievement, in making such accurate first measurements of the heights of the Cairngorms, and perhaps laying some of the foundations for the establishment of the Cairngorm Club some 77 years later. There is little evidence, from his account, that the pleasures and vagaries of walking the hills have changed significantly over the last 178 years!

Acknowledgments: I was encouraged to write this article by the Editor, who discovered on a Cairngorm Club weekend meet of the link between Fountainhall House, in which I live, and these early measurements of the heights of the Cairngorms. I am particularly grateful to Dr. John Reid, of the University Dept. of Physics, and Dr. Jeffrey Stone, of the University Dept. of Geography, for much helpful advice, and to the University and Central Public Libraries for access to books and documents.

APPENDIX 1. An example calculation of height from barometric measurements, from Charles Hutton's *Philosophical and Mathematical Dictionary*, London, 1815.

If D = density of the air in one place, and d = the density of the air in another place, measured by the mercury barometer, then the difference in altitude a = a constant $\times \log D/d$. If the mercury columns are measured in feet, the constant is 63551, or if in fathoms, the constant is 10000 at 55 degrees Fahrenheit. But the altitude will vary by $1/435$ for every degree change in temperature.

Example;	Thermometer readings, degrees F.		Barometer readings, inches.	
	Detached	Attached		
	35	41	29.45	lower
	31	38	26.82	higher
	mean 33	difference 3		

As 9600	:	3	29.45	0.01
Mean 33			0.01	
standard $\frac{31}{2}$			$D=29.44$	$\log 4689378$
difference 2			$d=26.82$	$\log 4284588$
		As 435 : 2,	404.790	: 1.86
		correction added	<u>1.86</u>	
		so the altitude sought is -	406.65 fathoms,	
			or <u>2439.90 feet.</u>	

APPENDIX 2. Heights of the mountains as estimated by George Skene Keith.

Name of Mountain	Date climbed	Height estimated	Modern estimate
Mount Battock	12 July 1810	2600 feet	2555 feet
Lochnagar	14 July 1810	3800 feet	3786 feet
Lochnagar	20 July 1810	3800 feet	3786 feet
Ben-a-Bourd	16 July 1810	3940 feet	3924 feet
Ben avon	16 July 1810	3920 feet	3843 feet
Brieriach	17 July 1810	4280 feet	4248 feet

Breriach	14 Sept. 1810	4220 feet	4248 feet
Breriach	21 Sept. 1810	4220 feet	4248 feet
Cairntoul	17 July 1810	4285 feet	4241 feet
Cairntoul	14 Sept. 1810	4220 feet	4241 feet
Ben Macdui	21 Sept. 1810	4300 feet	4296 feet
Cairngorm	21 Sept. 1810	4050 feet	4084 feet





Kay Ward on Operation Raleigh in Chile, becoming acquainted with the form of transport. (Photograph by Geraldine Prentice).

AN ADVENTURE IN CHILE

KAY WARD

It seems a long time now, since I struggled, on New Year's Day 1986, to Heathrow, heavily laden with rucksack, hand luggage and Operation Raleigh equipment, to join an expedition to Chile. It is even longer since I applied for, and received a generous contribution to my expenses from The Cairngorm Club.

Although principally a British/American run scheme, all nationalities are eligible, if the individual can speak English. Op.R is a 4-year round the world venture but individual venturers spend only 3 months on separate phases. Venturers from each host country are present, but in a country the size of Chile, they were far from local. I selected the S. American phase.

Among the faces peering out of the tiny skylight windows of the 'jumbo', which permitted us our first dusty red, sugar loaf panoramas of S. America, were British, Japanese, Singaporean, Hong Kong Chinese and a sole Italian. We met the Americans, Australasians and the Chileans on our arrival in Santiago, the capital of Chile.

The stated aims of Op. R are three:

- a) medical and scientific research
- b) community tasks
- c) leadership and adventure training.

To those I would add a personal fourth:

d) living, working and playing with 12 people of differing backgrounds and cultures, not all of whom spoke English, learning their different attitudes, prejudices and abilities. My group consisted of 1 Puerton Rican staff member, 5 Chileans, 2 New Zealanders, 4 English and 1 Scot - myself. My stereotypes were adjusted and sometimes reinforced. The 3 Chileans who spoke little or no English were unfortunately younger and less used to team living and had a distinctly mañana attitude to labour!

After a pause to adjust in Santiago, we had a long 65 hours journey in front of us to our first destination - Coyhaique, the main Op. R. base for S. Chile, partly by train - a rather down market orient express, partly by ferry, crowded amongst our bags on the soaking open deck. A further 8 hours by army truck, took our newly formed group to its first destination - La Tapera, about 60 houses nestled in the low Southern Andes. We emerged from our army lorry encrusted with road dust, looking as though we had travelled in a cement mixer. The village is surrounded by dusty, thorn-covered hills and forests past and present. For hundreds of miles, the 50 year old marks of the European pioneers scar the landscape, acres of stark burned woodland - clearance burning became a decade of smouldering destruction. Also, many of the Chileans are surprisingly un-Indian in their appearance - a quite different mark of the European influence!

Our first task was to resite the government owned store, from 3km

beyond the last shoddy wooden house, to a more central position, away from the dangerously potholed track which was the new road to Coyhaique - as distant as Inverness is from Aberdeen - and the nearest shopping centre - by horseback!

There were few tools, no local help and the only new materials supplied were frustratingly soft nails and cement powder. The gravel we shovelled from the river banks. The warped 20 year old wood and rusted corrugated iron we salvaged from the dismantled store, the destruction of which, with two crowbars, 1 pair of pliers, 1 hatchet and 2 buckled shovels, in 1½ days, shows the standard of construction, the state of the materials, or our superhuman strength!

The work continued for three weeks, by which time we certainly knew who the workers were. DIY was the Kiwis' forte. NDIY was the Chileans', with the British somewhere between. But we had to remember that the probable reason behind this was the selection procedure. British and New Zealanders (and other nationalities present) had chosen the challenge to raise £1400, allowing us to join an exciting expedition; we all had to be highly motivated before ever embarking. On the other hand, the Chileans mainly came from affluent families with servants perhaps, were younger, had only to raise £300 and regarded the venture as more of a holiday. The English of three of them was not good and although our Spanish left much to be desired, the fact remained that a 'them' and 'us' situation was arising. Were 'we' encouraging community living and a modicum of discipline, or were 'we' as 'they' thought, taking over without discussing anything? I felt that I had a greater burden to bear with the attentions of one of the most difficult and idle of the local venturers. He had no inclination for work or cooperation and somehow I had to instil in him some sense of pride in his community, to contribute to the common good. None of us were perfect but he had more difficulty than most, and I was faced with a discouraging problem of showing, despite the unsurmountable language barrier, by example, the standard expected. I wonder, did I succeed? Will he now work when he is weary or will he still sleep when he's overslept already? Will you hand round your treasured, really treasured chocolates, knowing that there may be none left for you to savour? It is hard, but so rewarding: that smile. Will you hungrily refuse the last piece and leave it for someone else, the giver? I struggled for two months and I am, I hope, a better person.

We had little time to ourselves - we worked like Trojans once the initial suspicions of the villagers were overcome, setting the wheels of our task in motion. "Who" I expect they thought "are these women without children, doing men's work, these foreigners?" We had occasional sanity-preserving days off, to explore the arid countryside, watched, from frameless, paneless windows and dark doorways by curious eyes as we picked paths through the scrub ... to what? - a lake, a few lonely huts, everything was new, so discovered with joy.

Eventually the store was complete and we rode through the mountain pass to Lago Verde, 50 miles to the north. The main 'road' travelled through Argentina, forbidden to those without visas. Anything military - all our food - was also forbidden, so we hid all our belongings on a tractor trailer, accompanied by one of the Chileans and left on horseback, crossing pebbled rivers, the sparkling waters of which shattered at each clattering step, beneath dark Glen Coe-like cliffs haloed by cloud, up and down rocky faces, dismounting as our saddles neared the horses' ears! I am not a horsey person but I developed quite an affection for my mount over the three days. I, nonetheless found her remarkably uncomfortable and unobliging throughout the long day.

Lago Verde was a very different, friendly little village. Though only 50m from La Tapera, and even more isolated from a shopping centre, it supported vegetable plots and gardens, had fruit trees, which, with careful bargaining and as odd gifts, supplemented our live meat *matté* and manna rations. If the meat was not dried or tinned in oil, it roamed our paddock. When killed usually by our hosts, it was skinned and smoked within one afternoon giving an unfortunately unchewable meal not unlike ageing climbing boots! *Matté* was tolerable if one enjoys tea strong enough to 'trot a mouse on' but for people like me, who give the mug no more than a passing glance at the teabag, it was a drink best avoided. That leaves the manna which was baked on alternate days and varied from bullets to quite pleasant. Even my Chilean friend exerted himself if pressurized and the sweat poured into the long kneading and we enjoyed surprisingly good rolls.

We were shown how to fish, Chilean style, with cans as rods, were entertained by the locals to folk songs and dances. We took to 'the bush' en masse. A few of us went 'solo' facing the horrors of possible wild boars and pumas. Perhaps worst though - one's own company. I challenged myself by going with minimum equipment, no food and no sleeping bag, for 27 hours. The vegetation was lush with thick bamboo which made bivvy building easier, and green parrots could be seen in the tree branches. There were no paths and no maps and all of our exertions ended in blunt machetted retreat from the impenetrable growth.

Our task in Lago Verde was to reroof the gymnasium, a tedious and unenjoyable occupation for us who had no knowledge or skill in this field. The rainbow of this ominously dark cloud was, that through leadership (or badgering) we helped some overcome their fear of heights. Throughout the three months we all managed to make and achieve a goal of personal satisfaction and self confidence. Everywhere there were silver linings - the rewards of endeavour and perseverance.

My final challenge was to return to Coyhaique, not by truck and horse as we came, but walking the 180 miles with rucksack on back. I was the only girl accompanied by 3 boys from New Zealand, Chile and England, one girl to astonish the simple peasants we met along the track: "A girl, and what a

smile!" My foot! - I had made the decision in a rash moment of enthusiasm; there was no retreat so I meant to enjoy myself, once I had conquered the panic of the first lift of my loaded rucksack, visions of days of steep hills rearing in my mind. The twelve days food and sleeping bag constituted the major part of the weight but also, I carried sleeping mat, groundsheet bivvy, evening breeches and jumper, a toothbrush, flannel, waterbottle, mess tin and spoon. There was the pain of blisters but that only lasted about 2 days, the toil of some of those hills, the weary plodding at the end of the day, the rain, the thought of ... three more nights of rough sleeping, yet another meal of dried beef; but I could always appreciate the comfort of a song on a wet day, the beauty of a sunrise when I coldly crawled from the draughty bivvy to light the breakfast fire, even the dry feet till river number 17, protected by new Yeti gaiters (numbers 17-23 were just too wide and deep); I floated on the joy of success, cruising in fifth gear for the final thirty miles, full of life, fitness and well-being.

Though I am now in Britain, working for my living in this 'civilized' society, close to London, I remember still though, that there is always someone who will value some help, which somehow, I can give, or you can give, and that there is always some challenge worth overcoming and that there is always something which is worth stopping to look at - it may be the silver lining for the day, which, if you inattentively blink, will vanish - a beautiful scene, a happy smile, that enlightening sunrise.

Thank you Cairngorm Club, for your help. I have benefited from, and enjoyed my experiences. I hope too, to pass on some of the knowledge I have gained, because it is a valuable which I can both give and share, increase and enjoy, without diminishing, for the rest of my life.



SEVENTEEN CAIRNGORM MUNROS :
a father's log

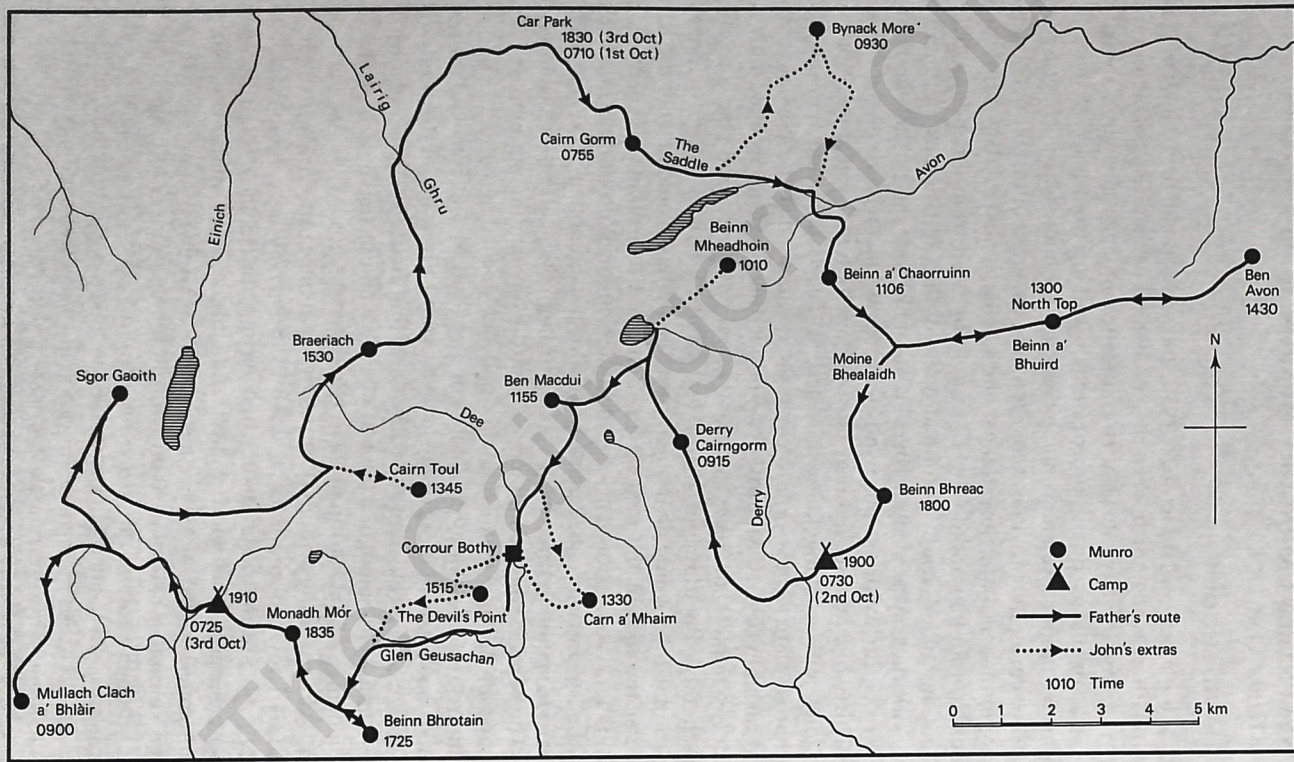
DAVID SUGDEN

Not yet 8 o'clock on 1st October, 1986, and we stood on the summit of Cairn Gorm with a strong north-westerly gale behind us and wisps of cloud racing past. I viewed the days ahead with confidence and mentally patted myself on the back for all my fitness preparations - walking from place to place at a Cambridge conference and running one km back home when delivering a car for a service, all the previous week. It had been one comfortable evening that my common-sense had deserted me and I had accepted my 19-year-old son's request to join him and do the 17 Cairngorm Munros in three days "before you get any older, Dad". John had done all the preparations and there we were with rucksacks, sleeping bags, tent and rations for 3½ days on the top of Cairn Gorm. With a strong wind at our backs I had felt fine on the ascent.

Thirty five minutes later my illusions lay shattered around me. With legs like jelly and creaking knees I rested at The Saddle and quickly made alternative plans. They were to cover the minimum distance possible and to avoid all unnecessary Munros! I would let John dash up isolated hills and sedately complete an easier circuit myself. I put the revised plan into effect immediately! Pointing out that I had climbed Bynack More before, we agreed that John would do it on his own and that we would meet at the River Avon at the foot of the next target, Beinn a' Chaorruinn. The gentle walk down Glen Avon restored my morale and strength. With cloud-capped peaks and the strong wind the scene was wild and humbling. I keenly looked forward to spending three days walking through the heart of such country.

The rendez-vous completed with hardly any waiting on my part (!), we passed over Beinn a' Chaorruinn in cloud and lunched in the shelter of one of the impressive meltwater channels running from Moine Bhealaidh towards Glen Avon. Leaving most of our heavier gear to pick up on the return later that day, we then relied on the compass to find Beinn a' Bhuid's North Top in the cloud. We bemoaned the loss of a view on this fine upland stretch, but the challenge of navigation in thick cloud kept us busy. I say 'us' but I mean John. After coming within 10 m of the summit cairn on his first compass traverse, I relaxed and left the rest of the navigation to him. We found it tricky to locate the ridge linking Ben Avon with Beinn a' Bhuid, largely I suspect because the wind veered suddenly to the south-west and was accompanied by driving rain, but soon we were trying to stand up in the wind on the summit tor of Ben Avon and photograph our most easterly Munro. Dark thoughts about aborting the venture entered my head on many occasions as we headed back into the teeth of the gale and the rain towards our rucksacks, but by the late afternoon the worst was over and the wind was back in the north-west, much colder now.

As darkness struck at 7.30 p.m., we were camped next to a tributary



stream flowing into Glen Derry. We stayed awake long enough to cook a vesta and to discover that we were carrying enough rations for a week! John had allowed as the evening ration for two of us 4 soups, 3 vestas, a large packet of macaroni, a large packet of dried potato and 2 pints of milk pudding! He remembered a former trip to Greenland with me where he had always been hungry and he was determined to get it right this time. We resolved to leave our surplus food in Corrour Bothy the next day.

Early next morning saw us toiling up the long incline to Derry Cairngorm into the teeth of a north-westerly gale punctuated by sharp sleet and snow showers. Repeatedly we found ourselves blown off balance as we crossed boulder fields and, once again, forbidden thoughts were soon to the fore. I was able to staunch these as I rested and ate raisins huddled behind a stone at the edge of Loch Etchachan, while John nipped up Beinn Mheadhoin. Next, Ben Macdui, glorious in its desolation with cloud and a blizzard. But the use of a well-marked track had again raised our morale and the fact that the next leg was down-wind was decisive. We agreed not to abort! I dropped down to Corrour Bothy while John did Carn a' Mhaim. The clouds thinned and out came the sun. How quickly fortunes change! I found myself eating bilberries beside the River Dee and, in an amazing fit of over-reaction, I stripped and bathed in a shallow pool. Fortified with bilberries and relieved of surplus food, we pressed on to the head of Glen Geusachan, John via Devil's Point and me via the low route. I was most impressed by the spectacular evidence of recent snow avalanches in the glen, where gentle, vegetated slopes were strewn with isolated boulders, often with no lichens on them.

Tea time at the head of the glen was the crunch point of the trip. If we could climb Beinn Bhrotain and Monadh Mor and reach Glen Eidart that day, then we had a viable distance left for the last day. If not, we would need to cut the third day short. Four o'clock seemed the latest we could leave Glen Geusachan. John made the rendez-vous at two minutes past four. Half a cup of bilberries and half a cup of raisins later, we started the steep haul to the col at the back of Coire Cath nam Fionn. Resting occasionally, we ground upwards and envied the flocks of geese effortlessly flying above us and across the col. Needing a constant injection of food, we broke out into the sun on the col. Here was a different world. Though still windy, the clouds had cleared and views were magnificent for their clarity. Beinn Bhrotain and Monadh Mor were a joy. Adding to the long views were frequent sightings of deer, hares and an eagle.

We made camp on a small grassy patch in Allt Luineag only metres from the rushing stream. We managed to stay awake for the meal though we just couldn't wait for the dried foods to reconstitute properly. Sleep was absolute by 9.00 p.m. and almost survived the shrill bleep of our alarm the next morning. One look outside in the dawn and thoughts of abortion quickly surfaced. Clammy cloud obscured everything in the valley. The trouble was

that we could not abort without a long walk, so there was nothing for it but to carry on. Boots were difficult to put on now and revealed a surprisingly large number of tender spots on our feet. By dint of compass, stalking tracks and a regular input of food we visited Mullach Clach a' Bhlair. How unfortunate that this distant bump qualifies as one of the Cairngorm Munros! Sgor Gaoith was more exciting in the cloud, but in order to ensure we had climbed it we went some way beyond it! A pause on the summit was made memorable by the bellows of the stags in Glen Einich reverberating up the cliffed couloirs of the glen.

The cloud lifted as we made our way through the hummocky moraine on the plateau south of the head of Glen Einich on our way to Angel's Peak. John popped up Cairn Toul while I decided to examine and photograph the semi-permanent snowbeds of Garbh Choire. (It sounded a convincing excuse at the time!) On round to Braeriach, the last Munro. In celebration the cloud dropped down again as we photographed the scene.

I don't like to remember much of what followed. The descent to the Lairig Ghru seemed interminable, the boulders in the bottom of the Chalamain meltwater gap enormous and the peat path back to the carpark like treacle. A small stream near the car park turned out to be too much and on my last jump of the trip I fell in fair and square. At such a humiliating and wet moment the whole expedition seemed ridiculous. One hour later, however, as we munched haggis and chips in the car, the perspective was different and deeply rewarding. We had gained a feeling of deep exhilaration through moving swiftly and independently through wild country. Frequently we could look to the most distant mountain visible and know that we had been there just a little time before. We could look at deer running effortlessly over the wild slopes and feel for a moment that we were like them. We could talk and think of things which are difficult to fit into an impatient modern life style. Strangely, our sore and aching limbs made the recollections all the more precious.

Postscript: John's full route including all 17 Munros involved a distance of 113 km and 6730 m of climbing. The 'fathers' route involved a distance of 93 km and 5240 m of climbing - and it felt like it!



THE WALKING BUG - PART 2

ANNE F. G. CORDINER

To the readers of 'The Walking Bug' in the last number of the *Journal*, the following year's expedition began in a similar manner, but the party this time consisted of Gwen (Dunkley), Terry (Wallace) and myself and we intended to visit only France and Switzerland.

Terry and I travelled south on the long-distance coach and again Gwen arrived first at Gatwick - fast types these Yorkshire bus drivers!

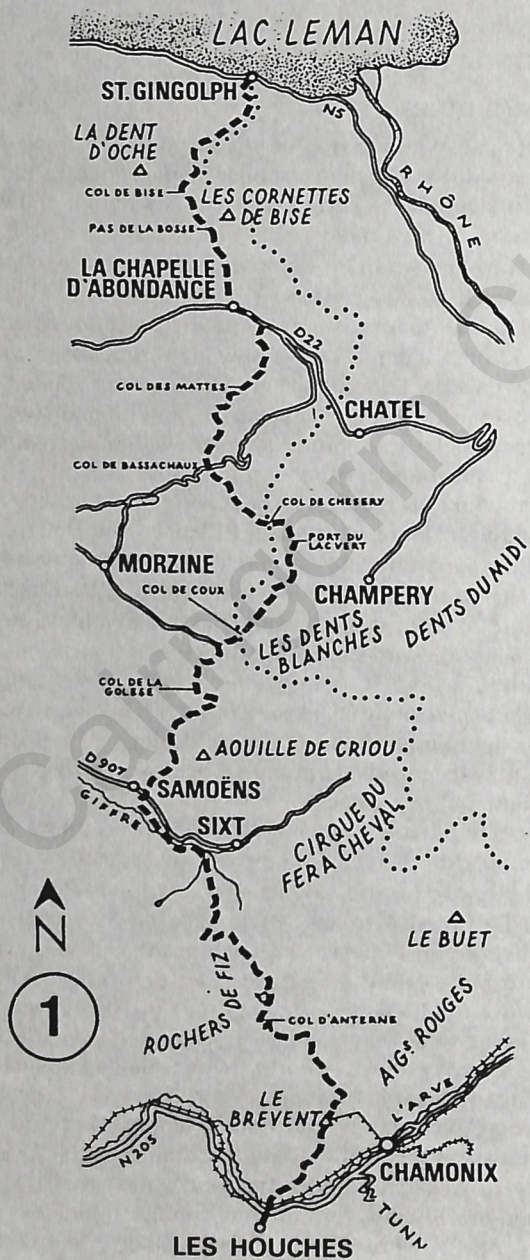
A smooth flight to Geneva and a smooth transition from airport to station to train and once again we were bowling through vineyards en route to Montreux. Down to the lake side where we caught the paddle steamer; it was interesting to see the famous Chateau de Chillon and Vevey from the waterside. The recent elevated motorway may well be a great engineering achievement, but a thing of beauty it is certainly not!

We crossed the lake to the French side and landed at the small border village of St. Gingolph. Here we finally settled on the Bellevue, the only Swiss hotel on the waterfront, old fashioned, even a little dowdy, but very friendly and as it transpired, with good food with 'Le Patron' himself also being the chef. Our adventures had begun and our first meal on the terrace by the lake side complete with swans and ducks, was a pleasant and relaxed setting to start with.

The Customs Post virtually lay in the centre of the village! Walk up from the lakeside, turn right and one was in France dealing in French francs, turn left and one was in Switzerland and prices seemed very reasonable, until one remembered to think in Swiss francs!

Everything sorted out and small bags left for our return we set forth on a hot sunny morning for the 1½ hour walk to Novel. Somehow it wasn't quite as described in the book, Martin Collins' *Walking in the French Alps* and it took longer than indicated to reach Novel. The newly reconstructed road may have been the villain! However at lunch in the village, everything else seemed to fall into place and duly refreshed we enjoyed the climb and the scenery over what we fondly believed was the Col de Bise. It was the descent which brought it home to us that we must have crossed a parallel col, despite local instructions. The day however ended by our making an interesting new friend and spending the night in his spare chalet!

Put on our route next day by our good friend we in future paid much more attention to the so called Grand Randonnée 5 or G.R.5. It was nowhere very well marked and forestry work, new roads and ski area preparations made it difficult to find and follow in many places. The complete Route is one of Europe's grand long distance foot paths, running from the Belgian coast to Nice. We were only interested in the Lac Lemman to Les Houches stretch - then we intended to return to our starting point by a



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route of my choosing, over ground partly seen the previous year. This was an area which I had never covered before and therefore all the more intriguing. We also were to meet up with Ginette (Dallere), a Club member from Paris, at Planachaux above Champéry. Our earlier adventures caused some delay and in order to make up time, we made use of local transport, bus, train and cable car. Our guidebook led us to expect one hut at Planachaux, but it was somewhat perturbing to discover the name extended over a whole 'combe', well supplied with houses, farms, hotels and huts. However, believing that action solves most problems one way or another we got ourselves there and began the process of elimination. We were looked at more than a little disbelievingly, but Ginette had been at work too and lo, in the middle of nowhere - we met! Much excitement, Gallic and Scottish, and reunion accomplished, we exchanged views on where to stay and went back to our 'Hotel' where we spent a very comfortable night in the new dormitory. There was much amusement too for the hotel staff, as they realised we really had been meeting our Paris colleague!

The next four days passed all too quickly, some of Ginette's friends gave us a useful lift down to Samoens, a sumptuous meal and then a ride to the Gite d' Hubert at Sixt. All of which allowed us to escape extremely heavy thunderstorms and to set off next day in watery but clearing weather for the Lac d' Anterne. It did not alas stay dry and fighting up a long stretch of path on steep slippery mud was quite an experience. Terry had a sturdy hazel staff, Ginette her ice-axe, but Gwen and I just had to try and maintain impetus to prevent ourselves sliding backwards! Again we managed to avoid the worst and most spectacular downpour and continued in reasonable if dull weather. From the Col d' Anterne to the Col Brevent we passed through a spectacle of wild flowers, large and small, from the delicate soldanella, to the large crude sow-thistle and the alpine lettuce. It was a long steep climb to the Col Brevent on an excellent path, but calculating the tiring party would become benighted if we carried on to the new Bellachat hut, we dropped down to Plan Praz. It was a mistake as this huge gaunt building now stands dejected and obsolete; apart from drinks to day-tourists, it no longer offers any shelter to travellers. We had one bit of luck however, when Ginette, using her native tongue, managed to delay the cable car long enough for Terry, weary though she was, to break into a trot and make the last cabin down.

So we found ourselves in Chamonix enjoying a reasonable hotel, hot showers and a good supper, a day earlier than expected, while above us the cloud still hung and drifted around the Brevent concealing the top from view.

Next morning was typical of 'Morning has broken', the sun shone, the birds sang and we all in turn rushed to the loo! For photography, it was a loo with a view!

As soon as possible, with help from the cable car, we returned effortlessly to yesterday's 'cut-off' point. We were interested in and tempted

by the passenger flights in hang-gliders, but they landed in Chamonix and we were still upward bound! Terry had a badly bruised toe from an argument with a boulder several days earlier, so we allowed her to take the cabin and our lunch to the top, while we three completed the route in a leisurely manner.

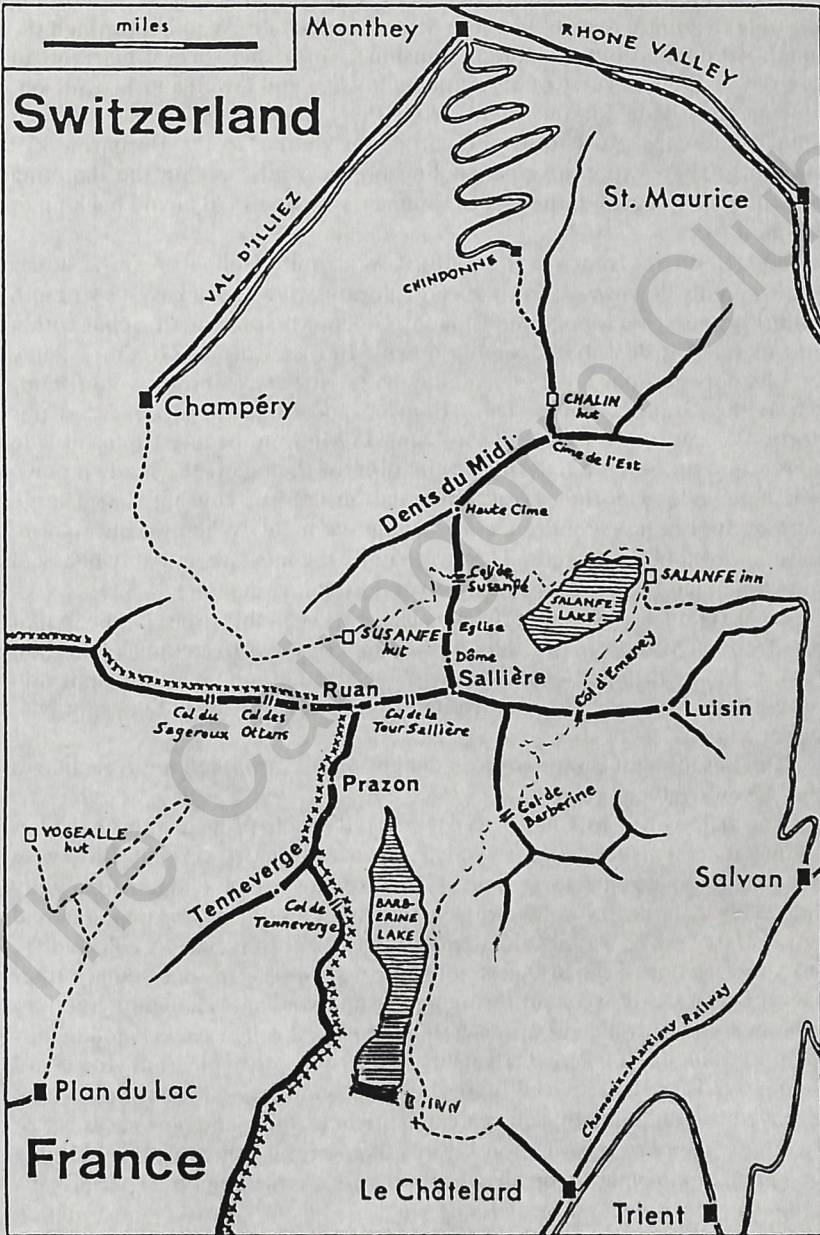
The mist caught up with us and obliterated any sustained spectacular views from the top, leaving us with tantalising glimpses backwards and ahead. We parted again, Terry to the cable car and we to walk down. We passed the pleasant-looking new hut, almost an hour from the top, across the site of a winter avalanche with its pulverised trees, racing past the Merlat animal park, with a distant view of the immense concrete statue of 'Christ Roi'. A dash to the station, where no train was expected, and finally, at considerable risk to life and limb, across the modern high-way to leap aboard the 6 o'clock bus just as the heavens opened and the rain lashed down. The short journey from Les Houches to Chamonix took place in a downpour with thunder reverberating around the mountains. Arriving to find racing gutters about 3 feet wide, we decided to 'run for it' and thus arrived breathless, tumbling through the hotel doorway, to the amusement of sheltering locals.

The next day was a parting of ways, Ginette going south to join her parents, we going back to the mountains to start our return trip. We explored Chamonix further - it seemed greatly improved and cleaner than recalled in past impressions. A farewell lunch and then we were off on the bus to Argentiere. We again spent the night in the spotless dormitory accommodation at 'Le Moulin', making our own supper and breakfast.

These two days we enjoyed quite generous time just sitting around soaking up the sun. A train took us from Montreux to Valloireine, then came a long hot and very steep path up to the E'mosson dam. Lunch below the dam, out of the wind, allowed a close study of the immense concrete structure rearing threateningly above us. Slowly, steeply from 1260 m. to over 2000 m., the path wound upwards gradually revealing its course, until hot and sweaty, we duly found ourselves on an outcrop some distance above and on the opposite side of the dam to our destination, gazing at the beautiful aquamarine Barbarine Lake with its fringe of snowy mountains reflected in the blue waters.

We wandered with 'the tourists' across the top of the dam wall. The very new hotel possessed a clean comfortable dormitory which we had to ourselves.

The Barbarine Lake or E'mosson area as it is now known, is one of the engineering feats of Switzerland. The original dam, built at a narrowing of the valley, was overtaken by modern technology and a new higher and wider dam has more than doubled the length of the impounded lake. A new hotel and new paths now beginning with a mile and a half-long electrically lit tunnel, had to be built and the usual small chapel, tastefully simple, stands on a suitable eminence above a large new car park.



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We had obviously entered a period of settled weather and next morning were able to admire the whole of the Mont Blanc chain. Walking through the tunnel, we popped out into bright sunshine, surprising several marmots at close range. We left Terry photographing flowers and Gwen and I strode on, enjoying the shade for our climb from the lake-side (2124 m.), through Alpine buttercups, rock roses and carpets of gentian to the Barbarine Col (2481 m.). There we enjoyed a cooling breeze whilst eyeing the daunting drop and pull up again to the Col D'Emaney, down to 1970 m and back up to 2463 m.

So well engineered was the path, it went quite well, firm snow slopes took us rapidly downward, fresh tea and glorious views soon gave us strength and in 1¼ hours, we topped the Emaney Col and that included a chat with a party of six British walkers coming down from Le Luisin (2785 m.). They were the only group we had seen all day. A terrific view, showing old friends such as the Grand Combin, Dent Blanche and Matterhorn rewarded our efforts. We saw a new aspect of the Dent du Midi, no beauty from this side and reached the Salanfe hut, our destination for the night. We made a grave error here, taking dormitory accommodation before realising that a large group of Swiss school children were staying the night. When we did realise, we were too stubborn to shift! They were quite the most abominably behaved group that it has been my misfortune to endure for a long time.

So next morning we were up and away early! Climbing the slag-heap that is the Dent du Midi from this side, we had superb views from the Col Susanfe (2494 m.). We dropped quickly out of the wind, found a sunny spot and relaxed in the sun, our picnic enlivened by a close study of the marmot who was studying us!

The Susanfe hut is one of those delightful old-fashioned huts, clean and tidy. We enjoyed our stay.

The path down to Champéry, the Pas d'encel, proved quite exciting, winding its way from ledge to ledge down an almost vertical cliff, with awesome drops into the gorge below. The exciting stretch ended with a gully bridged by a large icy snow-bridge. Watching some lads scamper across above a large cave, we tackled a route below it not fancying a cold plunge into a vast icy hole if the bridge should give way, it proved spectacular rather than difficult! Down we went through pleasant woods, exchanging greetings with week-enders toiling upwards with full packs, through sweet smelling hay fields and along a shaded riverside track into the pleasant resort of Champéry. Terry had arrived before us and found a good 'Pension', where we stayed two nights resting and catching up on washing and post cards.

The Champéry Information Office, like several others we visited, was not a mine of information on anywhere outwith its own region, especially if a border was involved. Several times we were given incorrect information leading to disappointment regarding train or bus times and cable cars or chair lifts not running when expected.

So it was that when we reached Morgin for the climb to the Port du Culet, we had to do it on foot which played havoc with our schedule. Consequently when Terry was offered a lift at Chalet Neuf, we encouraged her to take it and Gwen and I loped off past a sign which stated that Torgon, our destination, was 2 hours away. Still following the maps and signs the next one said Torgon, 5½ hours! We were going the right way and we decided that the 2 hours must have been by road, but that we would be hard pushed to make it now before dark. Almost immediately the route turned steeply uphill and we puffed our way up through herds of curious young cattle, arriving at last on the ridge forming the French/Swiss border. Another storm was brewing and while admiring the views and sky, we fair raced along, not wanting to be caught in an electrical storm in such an exposed situation. We raced from Switzerland into France and back again (just a few large stones marked the border), reached the Col du Criox, took a deep breath and, dodging a lot of avalanche debris, ran down into the Torgon Valley. We were directed to the new ski station and somewhat weary now, had to double back to the old village. A happy ending as Terry had arrived and booked accommodation and amid thunder and lightning we made our entrance dramatically into the excellent hotel.

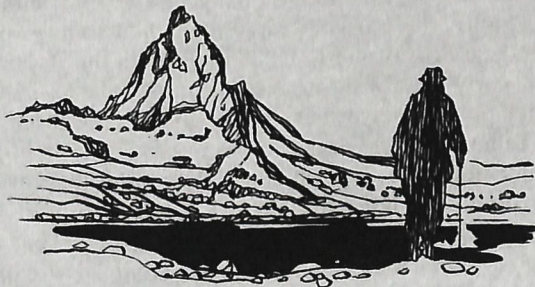
Next morning, storm gone, our ways parted again, Gwen and I enjoying a beautiful walk to Flon and Lake Tanay, an idyllic situation at 1440 m. We stayed the night, to let the afternoon storm disperse and to see the glorious views on our last day's walk.

Alas, there was no doubt about the storm; it rumbled on most of the night, but it was a surprise to wake up to new snow and a white-out!

Our last grand views were not to be! The obvious relief amongst the hotel staff when we emerged garbed in water-proofs to take a low track down, was quite comical. I suppose that as they were used to day-trippers, and as we had been clad in summer shorts they must have feared that their visitors were not mountaineers!

The rain stayed with us for a long way and the snow could still be seen down at St. Gingolph where we all met up for our last day and the trip home.

Those last views and high interesting tracks have escaped us - or have they?



A LONG DAY ON THE CUILLIN RIDGE

PETER BELLARBY

It seemed as we drove through Glen Shiel that once again the weather would frustrate our plans. Cloud shrouded the highest tops and knowing that the Cuillins seem to attract cloud from miles around it didn't look hopeful. Yet there was a glimmer of hope - the sky was slightly brighter to the west and the weatherman had said it was going to be good. But would it?

I remembered my first visit to Skye many years before when a day trip from a mainland holiday had been made. Weather had been good on the mainland but thick mist had enveloped us long before we reached Coire Lagan. Then one of those magical moments occurred when for a minute, no more, the seemingly vertical rock around us was revealed soaring upwards, raw and naked. And we could see - could see the river of stones leading enticingly upwards. We were attempting the infamous Sgurr Alasdair stone shoot. It seemed the only sensible route considering our inexperience and the conditions. So inspired by our surroundings we started eagerly upwards. Never mind that it's something like walking up an escalator that's coming down. The mist was very thick though and we had heard you couldn't trust the compass on the Cuillins. Perhaps we weren't really going the right way. The rocks approached from both sides. It wasn't supposed to be that narrow was it? My companion complained. Vertical scree wasn't climbable and it was overhanging scree above that! Retreat was sounded. The Cuillin weather had won as it so often does. I would be back though and much later I did return to ascend the stone shoot and reach the summit of Sgurr Alasdair. This time the stones were covered with snow and the wind was blowing wild streams of spindrift on the ridge. It's much better so, for in Summer conditions it's a weary plod.

As we reached Loch Duich that slight brightness in the west broadened and then we could see Skye and see the Cuillins. Only small whiffs of cloud skipped along the summits. There was a chance, then, that the long cherished dream might come true. At 11.30pm we pitched the tent at Glen Brittle but it was 12.20 before we made bed. Alarm was 2.50am and we left at 3.30am. We took the path that skirts round the south side of the Cuillin ridge and which eventually goes to Loch Scavaig. Occasionally we strayed from the path as it is not always obvious where it goes especially when some way from Glen Brittle. It seemed a long way and I missed the skip in the step which usually accompanies an early start with an exciting target ahead. Perhaps it was tiredness from the previous day when a 5am rising was necessary because of a business trip to Edinburgh. Or perhaps we were just being slightly too serious and treading out a little fast at an early stage. We really did want to succeed.

From the path we ascended straight up the unremitting slopes of Garsbheinn. It's a mixture of scree and grass and bare ground, but steep all the way. Perhaps we weren't fit enough for the contemplated expedition. It's

certainly a test of will and determination, coming so early in the day. But what a spur to ambition when we reached the ridge slightly to the south east of Gars-bheinn - there to the east lay the fabled sea loch of Loch Scavaig and the even more fabled inland Loch Coruisk. The sparkling sunshine set the shimmering seas alight. Away in the distance the mainland hills showed misty tops, but nearer at hand only a few flimsy fluffy clouds blew gently along the tops. Such joy!

A few minutes and the summit of Gars-bheinn was reached at 6.25am. Consternation! McLaren and Shadbolt had taken 25 minutes less. The aim was to repeat their trip of 1911 when the whole main ridge of the Cuillins was first traversed in one day. We would aim for the same time since although fit we were not in our first youth and not superskilled at rock climbing either. Not for us the super express speed of just over four hours achieved by a few from the first to the last summits.

The extra minutes had been lost by sticking to the Loch Coruisk path for too long before striking uphill. You have to study the skyline carefully to judge the right moment for this. Still we could always cut short some of their rest times we thought.

Now that we were in the skies the steps seemed lighter and speed increased. Sgurr a' Choire Bhig came in no time and then Sgurr nan Eag. We had been here before several times so we knew the descent well and the deviation on the Coir' a' Ghrunnda side which is the normal route. This avoids some more tricky work if the ridge is adhered to absolutely. A delightful scramble. And we were keeping to time.

Then comes Caisteal a Garbh-choire, a curious stack shaped pinnacle according to Shadbolt in his account in the *SMC Journal*. It's not really a pinnacle though, more of a rough loaf of bread with holds everywhere on its steep sides. We climbed slightly on the Coir' a' Ghrunnda side from the col. The north end overhangs and I knew some people abseiled it. I once met Jim Simpson the author of one edition of the Skye rock climbing guide. I wanted to know if my 100 foot rope, of those days, was long enough for abseiling there. He ought to know but all he said was that I could always jump the last bit. Nasty thoughts of dangling at the end of the rope in mid-air with insufficient strength to climb back up are quite a deterrent so I still don't know if 100 feet is enough.

From a previous trip I knew it was possible to descend a little back from the northern extremity and this is the way we went. There is easy scrambling down with a short chimney near the bottom the only difficulty. The traverse of Caisteal a Garbh-choire is rated moderate in rock climbing terms.

The next obstacle is Sgurr Dubh na Da Bheinn. How nice it is to be able to trip this off the tongue and so impress first-time visitors to Skye. I should have known better as I had been here several times before but I went a little too far to the west and made it harder for myself than need be. Precious minutes wasted! Robin was wiser and reached the summit first. Robin was

Robin Howie who was my companion on this trip.

The Thearlaich-Dubh gap was next. There is a nice little scramble to reach the top of the south side. Then the rope came out for the first time in order to abseil into the gap. There are slings in place for this. The first SMC Guide says 'It is recommended that a party of tourists should not all descend into the gap at the same time in case they might have to remain there permanently'. Well we didn't see anyone, dead or alive. Someone must have told them that you can escape downwards by a moderate climb on the Coir' a' Ghrunnda side. Or else they found at least one of them could climb up and out.

The route upwards is 80 feet high and now rated very difficult. Originally it was diff. but with the passage of many climbers it's got rather smooth and is no place to be climbing in wet conditions. A few easy moves to start with are followed by a narrow chimney which you can squirm up inside reaching up for a good hold high up. Alternatively you can go up outside on smallish holds. Here is a jammed stone for a running belay. Above it seems easier. Next the sacks came up, and then Robin. All a little time consuming though. It's the most difficult part and good to have done it relatively early in the day.

A few metres further and there's deviation off the ridge to the col at the head of the Alasdair stone shoot and then a scramble to Sgurr Alasdair itself, the highest summit of the Cuillins at 993m. It's a marvellous viewpoint especially enhanced by the nearness of the sea. We could see the island of Eigg, with its very steep left hand face, Muck, Canna, and Rum, with its own Cuillins, a miniature of those in Skye. We could see some of the outer Hebrides too. We could also see the next section of the ridge, the abrupt prow of Sgurr Mhic Coinnich, and the ridge beyond, which rises from a col up the severely steep An Stac, or so it seems.

But time is flying; we can't spend too much time admiring the wondrous scene, but must hurry. It was back to the col and then a very short descent down the Ghrunnda side. There is a small gap in the steep defences of Sgurr Thearlaich which allows one to scramble to the summit. There follows the delightfully airy ridge towards Sgurr Mhic Coinnich. Nearing the col there's a slight deviation on the Coire Lagan side and then a difficult climb down to the col itself. The relentless rotation of watch hands and previous knowledge of an easier alternative led us to avoid the last bit by descending further on the Lagan side and climbing up a little to gain the col.

From the col a couple of metres up there is the start of Collie's Ledge which enables one to reach Sgurr Mhic Coinnich by a surprisingly easy, but circuitous route. Surprising because it takes you boldly across the precipice above Coire Lagan. But today Robin was to lead the more direct route of King's Chimney. From near the start of Collie's Ledge another scramble slopes off at an angle to reach the base of the chimney. A very competent climb was made by Robin and only afterwards did it transpire that this was his first lead of a difficult grade climb. It's hardly a chimney, more a crack in

an angle with some helpful chockstones in the crack. Near the top a short traverse right is made onto the wall to avoid an overhang, followed by a last little bit straight up. The rucksacks followed Robin and then I.

An Stac wasn't nearly as steep as it seemed. We enjoyed a quick ascent confident of the route as we'd been there before, and not straying too far to the right as I had done on a previous trip. Then the first human beings to be sighted that day were observed. They arrived at the Sgurr Dearg Cairn as we reached the bottom of the east ridge of the In Pin. We would have an admiring audience for the ascent and descent of the Inaccessible Pinnacle. Climbing the long east ridge unroped certainly made you think. At the crux step up you look down a long way. Doesn't one guide book say there's an infinitely deep vertical drop on one side and that the other side is even deeper and steeper? Still it's graded moderate so we shouldn't fall off, should we? On each abseil down the short west side the chattering voices of the audience stopped briefly. They are going to do it also shortly, and now they can see what is involved.

It is 12.45pm. We still have a long way to go, but the next difficulties are some way off so we descend the scree to Bealach Coire na Banachdich at a fast rate, happy that we still had a chance even though we were later than hoped. It's a pleasant scramble along the various tops of Sgurr na Banachdich and Sgurr a' Ghreadaidh. No anxious looking at the watch now - just enjoyment of the fine day with a gentle breeze keeping us from being too hot, and of exciting glimpses down towards Loch Coruisk.

Sgurr a' Mhadaidh main summit is followed by three other tops which require some moderate climbing. I was getting rather tired and glad to follow Robin who had been this way before. I hadn't and must admit to some doubts about the route as Robin climbed a little way up the steep face of the first subsidiary top with great confidence. It's round to the right a bit now he said and so it proved - not at all as difficult as it had first seemed. For the next top there's a steep climb up the face to get to the summit but there are lots of holds. The last top is easy.

Bidein Druim nan Ramh comes next and there was some confusion about the descent route on the central peak. We prospected a little way and thought it was a bit too difficult. We then tried a different line, putting the rope on as this too was getting difficult. We were in fact approaching the overhanging part of the north west side so perhaps it was just as well we had the rope. We returned to the first route which proved not as hard as it had seemed. Lower down we found an abseil sling and abseiled into the gap between the central and north tops. The latter wasn't too difficult, but Bidein Druim nan Ramh had cost us a lot of time. Robin later confessed that it was here that he had some doubts about a successful outcome. My doubts came earlier on Sgurr a Mhadaidh.

An Caisteal has a little surprise in that on the descent to the next col there is a steep drop just at the end. The way seems to go slightly to the west

rather than straight down but it was steep and we couldn't see the bottom and we were tired. Out came the rope but we had chosen the correct way so little time was lost.

It was now mid evening but we knew we could do it. Although tired there seemed to be an increase of speed and a lighter step. Maybe it was psychological or maybe it was because we had drunk every drop of liquid and had less to carry. Sgurr na Bhairnich, Bruach na Frithe and Sgurr a' Fionn Choire sped by and then there was the Basteir Tooth.

"I suppose we'll take Collie's Route shall we?" I said, hoping Robin would solve the problem by agreeing. The problem is Naismith's Route. We had agreed before we started that it was part of the route and would only be excluded if we were too exhausted. We should do it Robin said. So I didn't have any excuses now. It was half past nine as we reached the bottom. My heart quailed at the tremendous steepness. I hadn't been there before. Must have some excuse for not doing it. Can't think of any. Visions of falling off and hanging at the end of the rope didn't help. The full moon did help, though.

Rope up. Gingerly I step along the ledge that goes across the face. "Is this the correct way?" I shout. "Think so", is the semi-encouraging reply. Up a short step on to a slightly higher ledge. Must find a belay. Much poking in imaginary cracks, until a nut was lodged in a rather dubious crack. It would have to do. Robin joined me and there was a further gingerly stepping along to the point where I must go straight up. Seems a little difficult for a difficult grade climb. Much prevarication and then the decision. Grasp of rather small holds and pull up. Higher up it's easier. An easy place for a runner. Surprisingly large holds and then I am just below the top of the climb. Hands on top and a mantleshelf. The top slopes - hands are slipping. Mustn't fall! Undo mantleshelf, edge along a little to the right and I get up easily.

The top of the tooth is an easy stroll from here, but there's a nasty surprise. To climb on to Am Basteir there's an awkward little overhang - very awkward if you are desperately tired. Robin tries without much success. We put a sling on a nut for one foot and the other foot is embedded in my shoulder. I'm about to collapse as Robin gives a final heave and he's up. But I am not. An ungainly climb with a bit of a pull from a rope from Robin and I'm up too. We're too thankful to be bothered that we have left the sling behind.

And so to the west ridge of Sgurr nan Gilleann. The little chimney just before the gendarme seemed light relief after the Basteir Tooth. The gendarme itself was taken round the Lota Corrie side. Even in the gathering dusk it didn't seem difficult as Robin's prior experience of it told us where the holds were.

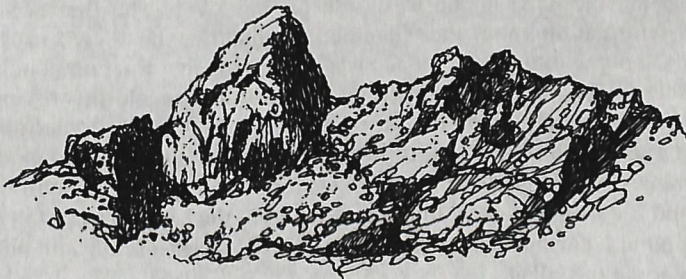
The summit was reached at 11pm. A quick handshake. The champagne would have to wait. We must get off the summit rocks while it was still possible to see. Some discussion about where to leave the ridge but there are

cairns to show us the way. There's a helicopter approaching! Bright light. Maybe it's the mountain rescue. Too tired to differentiate between helicopters, spacecraft, the moon and the planets. We stumble in the dark and lose the path and then regain it. We lose it altogether and the cold touch of slimy bog hits the feet. The Sligachan Hotel can't be far.

We have no bed or transport. We'll have to lie down in the grass - at least it's not raining. It's 2am and we haul our weary bodies the final few steps. A telephone call to prevent the mountain rescue coming out in the morning. There's a light in the Hotel! The manager is still up. Knock on the window. "Can we have beds for the night - what is left of it?" "You must be joking! You want a bed at two o'clock in the morning!?" And he repeats this for five minutes before agreeing to let us in. Much labouring of the part the Slig. has had in the past annals of mountaineering finally prevailed. Then he changed. "Ye'll have a wee dram with me won't you?" Skilfully changed into a beer, that was more welcome at that time and the next half hour's gossiping seemed not at all unbearable.

Breakfast next morning and a little embarrassed amidst the well dressed clientele. One trouser leg covered in mud, two large tears in the behind parts so I try to shuffle round the dining room to the coffee pot trying to look natural even though I am walking sideways. And the manager took us to Glen Brittle in his car. What a nice man!

So we made it - it must stand some chance of a record - for the slowest one day traverse of the Cuillin main ridge 16½ hours from Gars-bheinn to Sgurr nan Gilleann. We were elated. We echoed the words of the SMC Guide. It is one of life's most satisfying mountaineering experiences, Alps and far flung ranges notwithstanding. On June 20th 1986 an ambition of long ago was finally achieved.



INVEREY

GRAHAM EWEN

The origins of the village of Inverey are lost in the past. The lands of Inverey and Glen Ey belonged to the Farquarsons of Inverey. They had a castle in Inverey the remains of which can just be seen, behind, and to the right of Mains of Inverey. It was built around 1640 and was a long narrow building. The best known of the Farquharsons was John Farquharson, a staunch Jacobite, otherwise known as the Black Colonel. He was forced to hide from Government troops after the Battle of Killiecrankie and chose the spot in the gorge of the River Ey which is still called the Colonel's Bed. The Government troops, led by a General McKay destroyed his castle but did not find the Black Colonel. He was later pardoned.

Near the castle was a chapel dedicated to the 'Seven Maidens' but no trace of it remains. Behind the castle and nearer to the bank of the River Ey is found the remains of an old graveyard which has no readable gravestones. Perhaps the chapel was sited here. An original letter from Peter Farquharson stated that his father, 'the Black Colonel' was buried at the chapel of St Maurice, Inverey. It seems likely that the chapel of the Seven Maidens had later been rededicated to this saint.

There was also at the east end of the village a hanging tree, which still survives. The most common reason for hangings was apparently cattle stealing, the last man hanged for this offence being one by the name of Lamont.

The lands of the Farquharsons of Inverey were purchased by the Earl of Fife in the 1780's. His descendants later bought Dalmore, as the lands on the north side of the river were then called. In order to pursue their hunting interests they built a shooting lodge now known as Old Mar Lodge which occupied the site of the present building. Old Mar Lodge was later extensively damaged by the Muckle Spate of 1829, and a new lodge was built on a site just above the road to the west of Corriemulzie Bridge.

The village is divided into two parts, Muckle or Meikle Inverey which is the part lying on the east side of the River Ey and Inverey Beg or Little Inverey, being the part on the west side of that river. The first accurate statistical information about the village is contained in the 1841 census. At that time the population of the village was 137, living in a total of 39 houses, most of these being in Muckle Inverey. At this time Muckle Inverey had a row of houses on both sides of the road. Only 38 of the population are described as being employed and of these 26 were farmers or farm labourers and 6 were wrights. There were also a weaver, a tailor, a dyker, a contractor, a miller and a sawer. The meal mill was situated in the lower part of Glen Ey in between the Knock and the sheep pens. There was also a saw mill nearby but it was not in the village.

The houses were all of the small cottage type with low walls either built



Extract from Ordnance Survey Map based on Survey of 1869

with stone and lime or simply of dry stone with small windows and neatly thatched roofs. There was also a large number of outhouses which were mostly built of dry stone and often roughly thatched. The road through the village was unsurfaced and just wide enough for a horse and cart. Boundaries were either dykes of dry stone, or wooden fences of the post and rail or paling type, no wire being used in their construction. Early photographs show stacks of peat beside the houses indicating the importance of this fuel at the time.

During the next forty years the population of the village declined slowly as the figures below show.

	Population	Houses
1841	137	39
1861	122	33
1871	104	22
1881	98	24

The biggest loss came in Muckle Inverey as by this time there were twelve inhabited houses in each part of the village. There were 50 people living in Muckle Inverey and 48 in Little Inverey and so the two halves of the village were now roughly the same size. Inverey Cottage, now called the Knock is the only house listed as uninhabited. By this time almost all the houses on the south side of the road in Muckle Inverey had fallen into ruin.

The structure of the population shows some signs of depopulation having already started, and with perhaps worse to come. There were 27 children of school age or below, which is perhaps healthy enough, but only 18 in the 15-30 age range, an indication that young adults were leaving the village in some numbers.

In 1851 there were a total of 49 people employed, exactly half the population. The details are as follows.

Employed		Others	
Estate labourers/farm servants	17	School children	18
Farmers/crofters	14	Under school age	9
Domestic servants	7	Wives	9
Gamekeepers	3	No status given	6
Tailors	2	Retired	6
Schoolmaster	1	Pauper	1
Gardener	1		
Taxidermist	1		
Horseman	1		
Carpenter	1		
Sewing Maid	1		

As in 1841 by far the biggest employer was farming, but the growing importance of deer shooting is reflected in the fact that there are now three gamekeepers and a taxidermist. His name was John Lamont and it was said that his showroom with its fine collection of stag's heads was well worth a visit. The farms varied from 1 acre to 15 acres in size, the total arable land for the 14 separate holdings being 86½ acres. There would have been of course a large amount of rough pasture land available but the acreage is not listed. It is recorded that the flat strip of ground in the lower part of Gleney yielded good crops of grain. The same writer also mentions seeing a fair number of cattle grazing slightly further up the glen.

As in 1841 the main language of the village was Gaelic with 87 of the population able to speak it. All the children who were of school age (5-14) are described scholars, a change from 1841 where one child of 7 years old is described as an agricultural labourer. It is however beyond doubt that education was available in Inverey from an early date. It is recorded that John Lamont of Corriemulzie attended a school held there between 1810 and 1817.

As for the glens round about it seems that they were almost as empty in 1881 as they are today. Gleney itself had one inhabited house at Aucherrie occupied by a gamekeeper and two of a family. Altanour Lodge was uninhabited. Glen Derry had two gamekeepers, one with two family, residing at Derry Lodge and Luibeg. The Dee/Geldie valley had two gamekeepers, one listed under Glendee with two lodgers, the other at Geldie with five family. The latter had a visitor at the time of census - a coal miner from Lanarkshire. Geldie Lodge was uninhabited. Bynack Lodge was occupied by a gamekeeper and three family. The glens above Inverey therefore had a total population at this time of 20 people. There is no mention of Corroun in the Census. There is a record that the building was roofed in 1883 so perhaps it was not habitable in 1881, or perhaps it was too remote for the enumerator. There is no doubt that in earlier times there were many more people in these glens as the numerous ruins in Glen Derry, Glen Dee and Glen Ey testify. One of the best examples is a hamlet of 8 houses found on the east bank of the River Ey not far beyond the gorge, where there is a well preserved example of a lime kiln.

Around the time the Club was formed a start was made to improving or rebuilding the houses of Inverey and replacing thatched roofs with slated ones. In 1893 only three or four thatched houses remained in Muckle Inverey and five in Little Inverey.

The whereabouts of the early school mentioned in 1805 are not known but in 1869 the school was certainly on the site now known as the Old Schoolhouse. On November 19th 1883 another school opened in Inverey - Inverey Roman Catholic School. The records of the original school, which then became the Protestant School have been lost, but the school continued in existence until it was closed in 1914, when there were 11 pupils. The

records of the Catholic School survive. The Duke and Duchess of Fife showed considerable interest in the school and visited it annually and distributed sweets to the children. In October 1887 the school was closed for a few days on account of sickness among the children, and in May 1894 for three weeks because of a measles epidemic. Other epidemics followed - a sign of those times I suppose. The school roll slowly declined through the 20th century, until it finally closed on October 30th 1947, when there were only five pupils.

New Mar Lodge at Corriemulzie was destroyed by fire in the summer of 1895 and construction of the present Mar Lodge building commenced in October of that year. Construction was completed in 1898. The suspension bridge between the Lodge and the village was built in 1897 and Victoria Bridge in 1905. The falling population, as we have seen already led also to a drop in the number of houses in the village and it is recorded that houses were demolished in Inverey in 1902, 1905 and 1909.

Muir Cottage, at that time called Moor Cottage, was originally sited on the opposite side of the road to the present site. In 1881 it was described as a farm of six acres arable. This consisted of the triangular field which still exists to the west of the present building, and a square field of similar size on the opposite side of the road. The original cottage had a bench mark on the north-east corner of the building, which gives the exact height above sea-level as 1144 feet. In the 1869 map the hillside opposite is shown as rough pasture, but all the area to the left was wooded. The present enclosure on the north side of the road was already there apparently occupied by outhouses. The original building on the south side of the road was destroyed by fire in May 1911, and the steading or part thereof was converted into a dwelling house. This is the reason for the house 'sitting' gable end to the road, instead of 'front' to the road as all the other houses in the vicinity are.

On the south side of the road in Muckle Inverey is a monument which, as a boy I always thought was a war memorial, but in fact it was erected in memory of the John Lamont mentioned earlier in this article. He was really a native of Coirriemulzie, rather than Inverey, but he did receive his earlier education in the village. In 1817 he went to a Scottish seminary in Ratisbon, Bavaria, and continued his education there. He later became Astronomer Royal of Bavaria and was known there as Johann von Lamont. The memorial was erected by the Deeside Field Club and was unveiled by H.R.H. Duchess of Fife in 1934.

It is not possible to trace the decline in population from 1881 to the present day because the census records are confidential for 100 years. There are however records available for the school roll at the Roman Catholic School which suggest a gradual decline over the period in question. The figures of course include pupils from outwith the village. In 1884 there were 28 pupils and to this figure would need to be added the unknown roll of the Protestant School. By 1928, when it was the only school, the roll was 23. It

was 18 in 1933, 16 in 1939 and only 5 in 1947. The main reason for the decline in population was, no doubt, the break up of the old system of small-holding agriculture, which started in the late nineteenth century and is now complete today.

Maggie Gruer became famous for the hospitality she extended to climbers and hill walkers in the period prior to the Second World War. However many other residents offered accommodation to visitors, and at the turn of the century no fewer than 13 of the houses in Inverey were offering such accommodation. It was only available, however, in the early part of the summer as the villagers were not allowed to take in lodgers during the shooting season.

There was considerable activity in the area during the Second World War. A lumber camp was established on the bank of the River Luibeg, near its confluence with the River Dee. Canadian lumberjacks were brought across to cut down much of the woodland in the locality, to supply timber, much needed for the war effort. Some traces of this activity can still be seen, for example, the remains of a weir across the river, which can be seen from the Derry Road. They built a wooden road bridge across the Dee about a quarter of a mile west of Muir Cottage, which became known as the Canadian Bridge. It survived for many years after the war and provided a useful short cut for walkers going from Inverey to Derry.

At the time the Club acquired Muir in 1950 most of the houses in Inverey were still occupied, and it was with some reluctance that the estate agreed to grant the club a lease of the property. The factor felt that he might need the building to house workers to replant the woods which had been felled during the Second World War. The building was in fact, at that time, temporarily occupied by three men who were working on the construction of the fish-ladder (now defunct) at the falls on the River Luibeg. It seems likely that the population of the village at this time would have been around 20 people. There was still some arable farming practised and it was possible to purchase milk and eggs locally.

When the club acquired Muir there was still no public electricity supply to the village. Lighting was provided by oil wick and tilley lamps. Before long a calor gas lighting system was installed at Muir, to be replaced by electricity when this became available in the mid fifties. Over the years the road from Braemar has been widened and improved and a telephone kiosk was provided in the village. The woodland at Little Inverey was at last replanted in the early sixties.

The last thirty years or so have seen the decline in population continue. In 1986 there were only six people, 4 adults and two children living permanently in the village. There is no longer any arable farming, all the former arable land being left in pasture. Blackburn Cottage is now a youth hostel and the former Catholic School is now an outdoor centre. Most of the other houses are now used as holiday homes. The indigenous population of

Inverey has gone the same way as that of St Kilda - scattered elsewhere. The small number of people living in the village now are not descended from the original inhabitants.

Postscript: For purposes of extracting the statistical information used in this article Inverey is defined as being exclusively on the south bank of the Dee from Mildarroch Cottage westwards.

Footnote - As an appropriate addition to the above article, Graham Ewen approached Betty Lobban for permission to reproduce her poem 'Inverey'. - Editor.

INVEREY

Tak the Deeside road fae Aberdeen,
 And hud oot beyond Braemar
 Till you reach that clachan in the valley, green
 Thats kent both near and far.
 Its steeped in local legends of clansmen lang awa
 Of the 'seat' of the might Farquarsons
 There remains but ae crumblin wa
 A monument stands on a grassy mound
 In memory of a famous man
 By the name of John von Lamont
 Of a local highland clan
 The hangman's tree stands gaunt and bare
 Where gruesome deeds took place
 Noo sightseers often gather there - its a failin
 o the human race
 The school is a climbing centre, for the peaks
 that reach to the sky
 Its a dead end sleepy village, the Clachan o' Inverey

Betty Lobban

1986 ALPINE MEET

JANET ARMSTRONG

The 1986 Alpine meet took place during the last week of July and the first week of August with the proposal being to traverse east to west through the Bernese Oberland in Switzerland. As the crow flies, or Alpine chough, the total distance covered was only about 50km but we were crossing at high altitude over the glaciers. The route started near the Grimselpass, passed south of the Jungfrau, dropped down to the Lotschental for a well earned rest, before finally continuing to Kandersteg.

The trip was organised and led by Peter Bellarby with the remainder of the group consisting of myself, Karin Froebel, Anne Cordiner, Anne Murray, Peg Forster, Nick Boss, Paul Carter, Hal Taylor, Willie Robb and Eddie Bakewell. This was a diverse group of wide age range, varied Alpine experience and mixed character type from the totally unconfident through the infinitely patient to down-right infuriating (at times!).

Before we ever left Aberdeen many thoughts and fears invaded my mind, not the least being whether I would enjoy a walking holiday with such a group. Would I get on with this diverse bunch of people all of whom were at least ten years my senior; could I cope with the physical demands of carrying my gear for a fortnight, especially at altitude, to say nothing of the mental demands of crossing crevasses and scrambling along exposed ridges; would my fair skin burn easily in the rarified air with lots of sun and snow around; had Glenmore Lodge taught me all I needed to know about crampon use? My worries proved not unfounded but added to the excitement and interest of a most memorable trip.

We left Aberdeen on Thursday 23 July to travel to King's Cross and it was here that my impressions started. Paul and I were standing worrying about how much unwanted clobber we had and what we could possibly do without when Hal appeared carrying a sac about half the size of mine. Next morning when we checked our luggage in at Heathrow we watched with interest to see how heavy the sacs were - Hal's was a lightweight at 7kg, Nick's a heavyweight at 16kg, mine about average at 13kg. Here our ice axes had to travel separately, tied together in a bundle, because they were classified as dangerous luggage. Our crampons were well padded and buried inside our sacs.

Nine of us flew from Heathrow to Zurich where we were met by Peg who had flown from Bergen that morning. From Zurich we travelled by train which took us through fertile agricultural land, past blue lakes dotted with yachts and windsurfers, past red tiled houses with their brightly coloured flower boxes to Meringen. Here we found ourselves surrounded by the snow-covered mountains that would be around us and beneath our feet in the days to come. A small tram took us to Innertkirchen where we had the luxury of good food, comfortable bunks, hot water and showers - our last bit of

civilization for some days!

The next morning we all squeezed into a minibus with umpteen rucksacs jammed between us - I was convinced there were more sacs than people but at least this stopped us falling around as the minibus climbed steeply up, round many zig-zag bends to the Grimselpass. While we waited for our turn to travel along the single track road to the Oberaarsee, Peter had a great struggle fitting his new Yeti gaiters to his boots which caused much amusement. And then it was our turn to go along the road, and everywhere butterflies were fluttering; we were nearly at the point of no turning back.

At the Oberaarsee we lost the minibus and gained the final member of the party. Now the moment had come to shoulder our rucksacs and set about the business we had come to do. As we crossed the dam we had a splendid but awe inspiring view of our day's walk. First we would walk alongside the lake, or 'see', then onto the glacier which would take us 900m up to the col where we should find our first hut. The walk alongside the lake was pretty with many flowers but as we approached the snout of the glacier the vegetation diminished, the path became rubbly and we had the odd patch of snow to cross.

Where the glacier ended there was a big arch of blue ice under which a river rushed into the lake. Here we had our first photo call, got out our ice axes, plastered ourselves in suncream and donned snow goggles and sun hats.

Running up the side of the glacier was a path which seemed to be based on the current year's snow. We didn't rope up at this stage but, although I have walked on snow many times in Scotland, this stuff held an unknown quality about it. What was snow and what was glacier, were there any crevasses? Despite these apprehensions I led the way and the party became quite strung out behind. Too strung out for Peter's liking and a 'hoy' from behind brought Nick and I to a halt on a large boulder on a sea of gravel, beneath which the blueness of ice glinted at us. When the troops were all assembled, minus Hal and Eddie who were well ahead, we strapped ourselves into belts and harnesses, tied onto our assigned ropes and attached our prussicks to the rope and ourselves. Hopefully we would never need to use our prussicks as they are a means of climbing out of a crevasse if you are unfortunate enough to fall into one. I had practised prussicking whilst dangling over a cliff near Cove and having found climbing 15ft or so up the rope totally exhausting I could only hope that I would not have to do it for real.

Hal and Eddie, much to Peter's annoyance, were by now well ahead having roped up and making good time across the snow. Knowing that Hal had a lot of Alpine experience and Eddie none, we wondered how they would get on. As we set off from our safe boulder island I was glad to be roped between Anne C. and Peg as I knew they were both experienced. On the 'dry glacier' I felt safe because here no snow covered the ice and the cracks and crevasses were easily seen. As we stepped onto snow covered

glacier I was less happy and resolved to put my feet into Anne's footprints. If she had not gone through nor should I. I learnt to pick out hairline cracks in the snow that could indicate a crevasse and to take a large step across them, but at first it was a large expanse of white, covering up who knows what mischief.

As number two on the rope I was responsible for the leaders's safety and would have to ice-axe break as quickly as possible to prevent her falling too deeply into a crevasse if she should go through. Being in the middle of the rope could be frustrating because you carried coils of rope in one hand and an ice axe in the other and every time we changed direction as we zig-zagged up a slope you had to step over the rope and swap the contents of your hands. After a while I became quite adept at this juggling trick but initially I felt I was tying myself in knots.

As well as the newness of techniques and the worries of what was beneath your feet, all around us were enormous, jagged snow capped peaks which we were cricking our necks to see when we started out, but by the end of the day we were more on a level with them. For the first few days I felt I was walking through a picture postcard; it did not seem quite real.

Our progress up the glacier was slow, which was hardly surprising as we were climbing to over 3200m where the oxygen supply is less. At the col, or 'joch', we could see our hut perched well above us. To reach it we had to climb a fixed ladder and then follow a short rock traverse round to the hut's platform holding onto a fixed chain. At the hut we found an exhausted Eddie whilst Hal, who obviously could not be tired, had gone to climb the Oberaarhorn (3637m) which was above the hut. This was our introduction to a 'hutte', the main type of accommodation of the trip. They are situated high in the mountains and all supplies of food and fuel are helicoptered in. In most cases there was a collection of buildings, a large hut for eating and sleeping in, perhaps secondary dormitory accommodation and the ubiquitous toilet hut. These were primitive and the least pleasant aspect of the trip. I caused much hilarity at our third hut by announcing with great delight, after my visit to this establishment, that this one had a urinal. But not for my own use, rather it meant the chance of a dry seat was greater!

Bedding in the huts was communal, allowing little room for modesty. The beds, or 'mattresslagen', were two tiered, with mattresses laid out alongside each other. At all the other huts we were fortunate to get a room to ourselves which meant women could go upstairs and men down. On this occasion, though, there were nine of us squeezed together on one layer, and the other two tucked in elsewhere.

Food was a focal point of each day, breakfast being huge bowls of coffee with much not-quite-fresh bread, cheese and jam. Supper was never 'haute cuisine' but it was nearly always good and plenty of it.

One's level of personal hygiene dropped considerably on realising the washroom was either a stream or pipe which issued icy water outside the hut.

On the second morning I found the water supply was virtually frozen so no clean teeth that day. On the occasions when we arrived early at a hut and nobody else was around we would have a ladies' and gents' session at the water supply to try and keep ourselves feeling semi-clean. At one place even a shaving session was instigated, with one wise man acquiring a mug of hot water from the warden.

I tend to be an early to bed, early to rise person but not at the extremes of this trip. By the end of the fortnight I was rarely in bed later than 8pm, and we were often on the move by 6am. Twice we rose at the ungodly hour of 4am. The reason for such early starts was to get as much of our walking done before the sun got too high, melting the snow making it soft and heavy going, weakening snow bridges over crevasses and making the risk of avalanches higher.

After our first hut night, when I do not think anybody slept very well, it was exhilarating to stand on the col watching the sun turn the surrounding mountain tops to a golden colour as we got ourselves ready with crampons, ice axes and ropes. We were crossing to a col due west of us but to get there the hut warden had advised making a long sweep into the corrie to avoid the heavily crevassed area we would encounter by crossing directly.

I was rather apprehensive when I realised I was on Hal's rope that morning, after his speeding of the day before, but with Peter's rope leading, this ensured that we walked together, as much as you can walk as a group when you are all strung out on lengths of rope. When we reached the col we abandoned our rucksacs so that we could climb the Finsteraar Rothorn (3530m). Of all the climbs that we did, this was the one I found most terrifying. Whether it was the most difficult or maybe just the newness of everything I do not know. Willie, who was the fourth person on my rope, had a broken crampon so he was left at the col. The rest of us climbed across steep, soft snow before starting the ascent up the exposed ridge. On both sides it was a long way down and underfoot the going never felt very firm, being either ice or loose, crumbly rock. I wondered if I would ever get back down in one piece, assuming I made it to the top, and was thankful for Nick's words of encouragement and the feeling of a rope round my middle. The reward for this nightmare was a bird's eye view of the big Fieschergletscher (a glacier) 700m below us, stunning views of the surrounding mountains and many beyond including the Matterhorn. Someone else was also enjoying this tremendous view for occasionally we would hear a swish above us and a glider would sail overhead.

Most days we were lucky with the weather and walked in lightweight shirts and trousers but if it was necessary to stop for anytime at high altitude we quickly found that the air was cold. With this in mind our rope wasted no time in descending to the col to collect Willie, who was by then shivering. From the col we descended to the glacier down a very steep scree slope and, near the bottom, scree over ice. This allowed no decent belays and there was



Figure 1 Finsteraar Rothorn and Finsteraarhorn from the Oberaarjoch. (Photograph by Janet Armstrong.)



Figure 2 Freschergletscher from summit of Finsteraar Rothorn. (Photograph by Janet Armstrong.)

the constant danger of the person above you sending down a shower of stones. We eventually made it onto the snow but here I found myself in the middle of a tug-o-war with Hal wanting to push on and Willie feeling apprehensive on the snow. When we reached the hut we had been walking for 10hrs and I was glad to find a path to the hut and not more ladders. The rest of the party did not appear for another two hours by which time we were feeling a bit concerned for them.

We spent two nights at the Finsteraarhorn Hutte, which allowed us to climb the Finsteraarhorn (4274m) without full sacs. Not everyone chose to make this ascent, opting for a quieter day near the hut.

The climb to the Breakfast Platz was a fairly straightforward ascent using our crampons to cross hard névé and some ice. At the Breakfast Platz we had a good rest and refuel (a second breakfast perhaps?). From here we were looking into a large crevasse and to the west we could see our path wending its ways between two such crevasses. After passing between these we had a long uphill snow plod to a col at 4094m. Here we removed our crampons as we were about to start a rock scramble. This did not prove too difficult until we reached a steep patch of snow where it was necessary to don our crampons again. The other ropes had some difficulty in crossing this snow and by the time our rope came to move I was cold and nervous, sufficiently so that I felt I would be a liability if I went on. Nick ensured I was firmly belayed to some rock before he and Hal moved on.

I was disappointed not to reach the top with the others but found that the views from my perch were magnificent. Straight ahead, but 3000m lower, was Grindelwald, to one side the Jungfrau, Monch and Eiger, to the other side a 900m drop to a glacier that looked like a motorway with medial moraine for the central reservation. Although I had wrapped myself up in all my layers and the sun was shining on me I was still quite cold, so I was glad when Hal appeared solo to 'rescue' me. We returned uneventfully to the hut except for a short stretch just before the hut and just above an active icefall. Here the ice was deeply runnelled and it was difficult to pick your way through the maze and I was concerned that we might stray too near to the edge of the icefall. Thankfully we got through safely and were welcomed by the resters with lots of tea. Tea became a lifesaver at the end of this and many other days. You could purchase 'teewasser', which was cheaper than tea, add your own teabags, and we consumed it by the gallon at the end of the day. This was essential as we found ourselves quite dehydrated over the first few days, until we got our water table equilibrium right.

Again it was another two hours before the others appeared, making it another 12hr day for them. As Nick had been unwell on the final stages of the ascent we were quite concerned, but it turned out that they had rescued a group of Americans who were stuck above the snow patch that I stalled before. For their pains they were rewarded with a bottle of wine but the latecomers were too exhausted to appreciate it or their supper.

The next day was a rest day by comparison, with the most strenuous part of the day being the climb up 200m of ladders to reach the hut. From this hut we looked down on the Konkordia Platz which is where five glaciers converge. It appeared to be a complete maze of crevasses and moraine which we somehow managed to pick our way through, avoiding the crevasses which could be 2m wide and 3-4m deep, fording rivers and scrambling over heaped moraines.

But this crossing was two days ahead. Before this we spent a day climbing the Gross Grunhorn (4043m) which for me was the most rewarding day. Again two stayed behind whilst the rest of us squelched our way up a glacier (which had a lot of surface water) before striking up the ountain side. This was a straightforward climb up hard snow with a few icy patches until the final few metres up to the ridge. Here we had to climb over obvious avalanche debris, cross a bergshund and climb up through a gap in the cornice where many had obviously been before us. The ridge was initially broad and snow covered but became narrow and predominantly rock. A final steep ascent on hard névé took us to the summit of the Grunegghorn (3860m), which was Anne C. and Eddie's objective.

To reach our summit we first had to descend steeply to a col. This descent was on steep rock and ice making for slow progress. As it was exposed to the cold wind, Hal, who was only wearing a shirt, became cold. Rather than dig a jacket out of the body of his rucksac he borrowed my capou which was more accessible. As we were perched rather precariously he slung this jacket over his rucksac giving him a 'Hunchback of Notre Dame' appearance. At the col we all donned jackets, and even balaclavas, as cloud kept engulfing us. Here we also left our crampons and axes as the remainder of the climb was on rock. Technically the rock scramble was probably the most difficult the majority of us encountered on the trip, but we all got to the top with only one person finding it difficult. The most exposed section was a 'tightrope walk' along a narrow ridge of snow just before the top.

The top was busy, with several groups squeezed into a small space, so after we had eaten we began to retrace our steps. All went well until we came to the drop off the main ridge. Since the previous party had descended, there had been a small avalanche that had swept away a section of the path. Hal and I were leading, so Hal belayed himself firmly to some rock whilst I set out onto what seemed like fairly dodgy ground. As I was crossing above the place where the path had been swept away BOOM! Count to five, yes I was still in one piece and in the same place but with my heart beating at twice its normal rate. The noise had been from a Swiss air force supersonic jet and thankfully it had not triggered another avalanche. We heard several supersonic booms but no other was quite so well timed!

Having reached the bergshund I had doubts about the rigidity of the snow bridge as the sun was obviously melting the snow. With a great deal of apprehension and a sharp intake of breath I leapt across. On touch down I



Figure 3 Ascending the Gross Grunhorn.
(Photograph by Janet Armstrong)



Figure 4 Ascending the Tschingelhorn with the Blumisalhorn range behind. (Photograph by Janet Armstrong)

lost my footing and slid some distance before arresting myself with my ice axe. Everyone else crossed this section uneventfully and we returned safely to the hut. Although Hal was the member of the group who seemed to have boundless energy and enthusiasm I was quite surprised to find him making much slower progress than me up the ladders to the hut even though I was the one carrying the supersaturated rope.

The next day was relatively quiet with the traverse across the Konkordia Platz to reach the Hollandia hut. We spent one night here before some of the group climbed the Ebneflu (3962m) and we all descended 1450m into the Lotschental valley for our rest day. The Ebneflu was supposed to be a fairly straightforward climb and Peter had hoped to get everyone to the top. Unfortunately there was a mutiny, instigated by myself, as the descent from the hut to the valley was going to be great enough without the extra descent from the top of the Ebneflu. This resulted in only half the party reaching the Ebneflu summit. The descent from the hut took us to Fafleralp - a land of green grass and trees and real food, quite a contrast to the landscape we had become used to. We spent two nights here before climbing back into the world of snow and ice, and to the Mutthorn hut. To reach the hut we had to cross a small ridge called appropriately, the Petersgrat which stuck up through the glacier.

Our final climb together was the following day when we ascended the Tschingelhorn (3577m). This was not an entirely uneventful day but we did all reach the top. The climb was technically mixed with snow, rock, ice and a final summit of hard névé. Some had found themselves in a very loose rocky gully and refusing to descend the same way, insisted that we try a snow couloir. This was one occasion when I would have been grateful not to be on Hal's speedy rope, because I ended up exploring this couloir. With Hal belayed above, I front pointed down into the head of the couloir looking for a suitable point to place a 'dead man' belay plate. I could not find anywhere and above, there was a heated debate, so I got myself onto some scree to have a rest. Whilst waiting for a decision from above someone dislodged a rock which came hurtling down the slope narrowly missing me. Peter decided he had better assess the situation himself so he came down to join me. We were discussing the pros and cons of the route when more loose stuff came down. Hal then became insistent that we all returned the way we had successfully come up, before someone was seriously injured or worse. This was my sentiment exactly and I was much relieved when Peter agreed. I was a nervous wreck, and a piece of Kendal mint cake from Paul has never been so gratefully received.

Having expended three days worth of nervous energy in the space of an hour I wanted to get back to the hut with plenty of time for a relaxed lunch before we pushed on. Consequently Hal, Paul and I were making good time. However, when we got round the mountain and saw a large black cloud coming towards us we really started to move. I was leading and I do not think

I have ever covered a mile of snow so quickly. We just made it to the hut when the heavens opened; unfortunately this meant the others were soaked through. This led to the second mutiny of the trip because the plan for the next day was to climb the Gsalptenhorn which was technical rock and Peter reckoned only a few would be successful. I was one of those deemed capable but the thought of pushing on with the threat of soaking rain was not appealing. In the end Peter and Hal went on their own and we were to meet them at the Blumisalp hut the next night.

Peter and Hal successfully climbed the Gsalptenhorn (3437m) but we were unsuccessful in our double hut crossing. A mist engulfed us whilst we were crossing a moraine covered glacier, and not realising how much the glacier had receded since the map was drawn, we were unaware that the path we eventually picked up was not the one we had intended to follow. The end result was that we stayed in an upmarket hayloft on a cow farm, and proceeded straight to Kandersteg the next day. Peter and Hal, who had been more successful in orientating themselves, spent the night in the hut before climbing the Blumisalphorn (3664m) and then descended to Kandersteg to meet us.

I think everyone enjoyed the trip in the end, though there were moments when nerves were fraught. We all reached the top of one mountain together, along with at least one other conquest each. I did not return with third degree sun-burn, nor a broken leg. I rose to the technical and physical challenges that were thrown at me and even enjoyed them to such an extent that I would jump at the chance to participate in a similar trip again.

Thank-you Peter and all the others for making it such a memorable fortnight.



THE BALLATER MOUNTAIN CIRCUIT — A Sponsored Walk for OXFAM

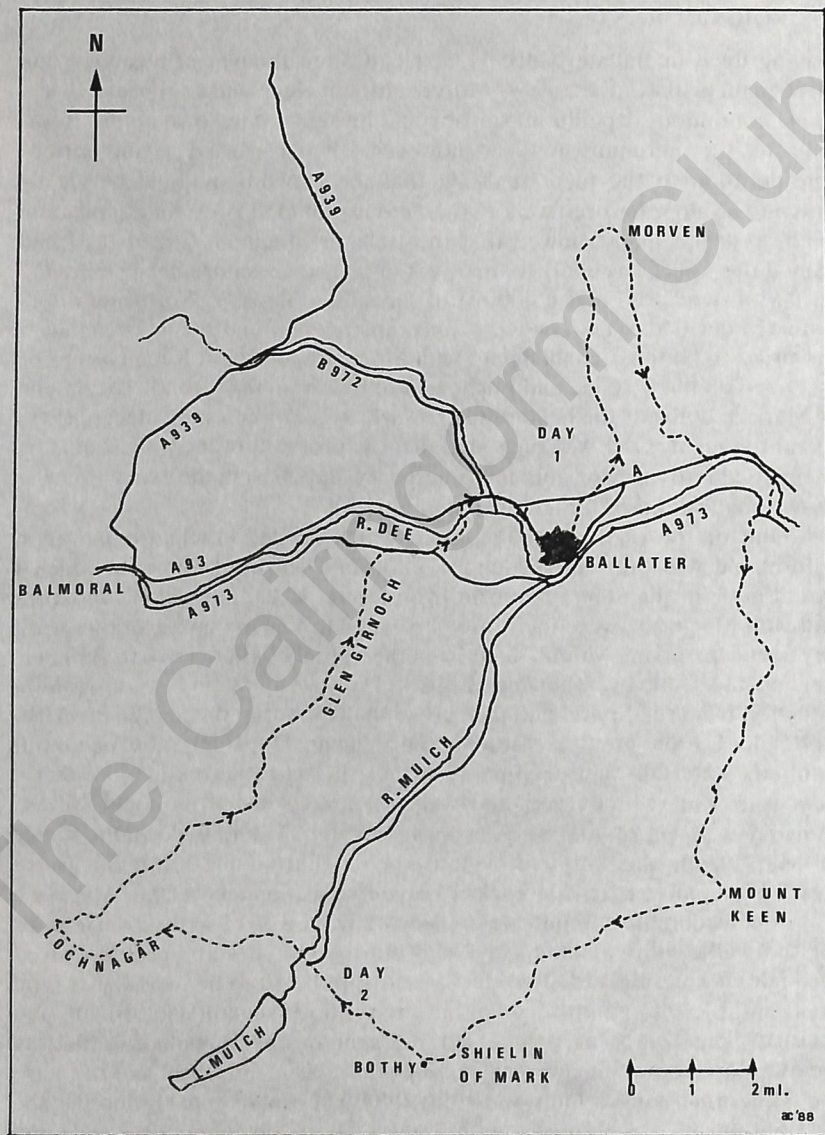
ROBIN J. GRANT

Having lived in Ballater since 1975, I had often thought of ascending the three main peaks in the area — Morven, Mount Keen and Lochnagar — in a single continuous expedition, starting and finishing at my own home. It was only in the autumn of 1986, however, that I started giving serious consideration to the plan, realising that the expedition would be ideally suited to a solo sponsored walk to raise money for OXFAM. An examination of the relevant maps showed that the Ballater Mountain Circuit (as I had named the walk) was likely to involve a total distance of around 45 miles (72 km) with over 8000 feet (2400 m) of ascent and descent. Not being a fell-runner, I decided to take two days to complete the round — and even then it promised to be fairly challenging, with Morven and Mount Keen both to be ascended on the first day and Lochnagar to follow on the second. The Shielin of Mark, a bothy at the head of Glen Mark, was chosen as the ideal place to spend the night. OXFAM suggested that the proceeds of the walk should be channelled into the Mozambique Emergency Appeal, and the expedition was provisionally planned for a weekend in June 1987.

One of the sections of the route which needed detailed exploration beforehand was the remote upper section of Glen Mark, an area which I would pass through on my descent from Mount Keen. Donald Hawksworth and Bob Macintyre were therefore persuaded to join me on a glorious April day spent traversing Mount Keen from the Spittal of Glenmuick to Ballater, starting the walk by following the Allt Darrarie burn in a south-easterly direction from the Spittal and then crossing the moor to the Shielin of Mark. Bob and I took great pleasure in introducing Donald to the delightful tumbling waterfalls and deep pools of the Allt Darrarie, teasing him that a man who had seen Everest and walked round Annapurna could still be shown new places of interest on his own doorstep! The walk down the Water of Mark from the bothy proved to be an enchanting stroll on grassy riverbanks, enlivened by the rockier gorge-like section below Craig Michael.

A considerable amount of clerical work was involved in the preparations for the walk, with circulars to be sent out by post, posters to be displayed throughout Deeside and Donside, sponsorship forms to be issued, and local press and radio to be informed about the venture. Several good friends and relatives generously agreed to act as 'agents' on my behalf, collecting sponsorship from their own particular circle of acquaintances, and this gave the final total a considerable boost. My OXFAM contact was Liz South in the Edinburgh office, who took a great interest in the planning of the walk and provided help and encouragement throughout.

The expedition itself went ahead during the weekend of 20th/21st June, having been postponed from the previous weekend due to very unsettled



THE BALLATER MOUNTAIN CIRCUIT

weather. The Saturday dawned dull and grey, but at least dry, and by 7am I was winding my way up through the trees from the Pass of Ballater to join the Tullich Burn path, the wisps of mist on Morven soon clearing as I gained height. On reaching the summit of this peak at 9am, I noticed that the high Cairngorms were still shrouded in cloud, and I wondered how some of my Cairngorm Club friends would fare later that day as they climbed Ben Macdui and then headed for the Shelter Stone to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Club. As far as my own expedition was concerned, it was one down and two to go — but Mount Keen, my next objective, looked distressingly distant!

I had chosen the valley of the Culsten Burn (parallel to that of the Tullich Burn but further east) as my descent route from Morven, the idea being to cross the Dee by the Cambus o' May suspension bridge before making for Mount Keen. In the lower part of the valley I made my one route-finding error of the whole expedition, failing to locate a gate in the fence which marks the start of an overgrown path leading to the disused quarries below Culblean Hill. After correcting that mistake the rest of the descent went smoothly, and I was soon crossing the Dee and heading through the trees for a rendezvous at noon with Bob Macintyre and my wife Christine near the South Deeside Road. A pleasant picnic lunch followed, but by 1pm it was time to hit the trail again, my rucksack now repacked to include extra food and gear for the overnight stop. This heavier load would need to be carried for the next 16 miles (26 km) or so, over Mount Keen and eventually out to Glen Muick, where I had arranged a further rendezvous with Bob and Christine the next morning.

My route to Mount Keen took me across the Pollagach Burn and up the pleasant path which climbs up past Creag Mullach towards the Black Moss. Thereafter I followed the landrover track down to Glen Tanar, bypassing Etnach before heading for the footbridge at the foot of Mount Keen itself. A short break at this point fortified me for the long ascent ahead, which I had expected to be in many ways the hardest part of the whole walk. In the event it was not as bad as I had feared, and an unexpected encounter half-way up took my mind off the hard work — three hillwalkers, two of whom were being tested on their ability to perform rapid arithmetical calculations in order to study the effects of physical fatigue on the brain! I declined their kind offer of a brew and pressed on to the summit, arriving at 5pm. Although Mount Keen was still clear itself, a shower was passing over Morven and cloud was building up elsewhere, so it seemed that a change in the weather lay ahead.

After a pleasant 20 minutes on the summit chatting to a number of other walkers (and gaining some more sponsorship), I headed west across the peat hags and down the heathery slopes of Little Hill to Glen Mark. By this time a little light rain had started, but I had no complaints, as the morning and afternoon had been completely dry. I followed the river somewhat wearily up

to the bothy, arriving there at 8.15pm. It looked as if I was going to be the only resident that night, but I was interested to find from the bothy book that several parties had been to the bothy since my last visit two weeks earlier, when I had brought some stores across from Glen Muick. One item from the stores was put to immediate use — a can of lager! An evening meal of vegetarian mince and potatoes followed, supplemented by tinned grapefruit segments and strawberries from the stores.

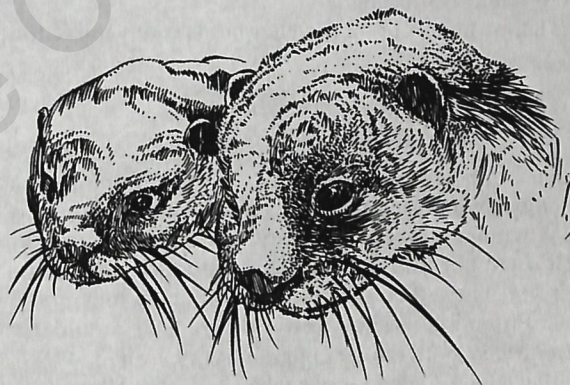
The next morning I was up before 7am, pleased to find the overnight rain had passed over. I left the bothy on schedule at 8am, and was greatly heartened to find Lochnagar crystal clear as I crested the moor and made for the Spittal of Glenmuick. Bob's car was turning into the car park just as I arrived, and a second breakfast was enjoyed before I repacked my rucksack and headed towards Allt-na-giubhsaich with Bob, Christine and our spaniel Sandy, who were to accompany me for the Lochnagar section of the walk. We followed the normal route to the summit via 'The Ladder', but our progress was painfully slow — mainly due to the large number of potential sponsors we kept meeting coming down, most of them having ascended Lochnagar to see the sunrise on the longest day! Altogether I made around £50 in sponsorship from hillwalkers encountered on the expedition itself, most of this on the Lochnagar section.

A prolonged bout of photography at the summit was followed by lunch, but by 2pm it was time to leave. I had opted for the rather rough descent down the ridge to the corrie loch, one of my favourite spots in the Cairngorms, to fit in with my chosen route back to Ballater via Glen Girnock. Just beyond the loch there was a short shower of rain, our first of the day, and we wondered whether the climbers we had spotted high on Eagle Ridge had made it to the top dry. At the landrover track below Conachraig we went our separate ways, Bob and Christine returning to the car at Glen Muick while I crossed the low bealach near Little Conachraig and made for the upper reaches of Glen Girnock. There was some rough walking hereabouts, and it was with a certain amount of relief that I gained the Glen Girnock track near Bovaglie. This section of the walk I had reconnoitred on a beautiful May day on which I had ascended Conachraig and Lochnagar from Littlemill at the foot of Glen Girnock. Though much longer and in places rougher than the approach from Glen Muick, this route to Lochnagar is a particularly rewarding one, with the view of the peak from around Bovaglie on a good day being quite magnificent.

The walk down Glen Girnock was delightful in the early evening, and I was soon cutting along through the trees to the Polhollick suspension bridge, which allowed me to re-cross the Dee to the north side. At this point the heavens opened and I experienced the only really heavy rain of the whole trip, but by the time I had passed the Bridge of Gairn it was slackening off, and the last part of the walk down the Old Line track back into Ballater was mainly dry. I had been extremely fortunate throughout with the weather,

having enjoyed all three summits clear of cloud with only a little rain during the two days.

The end of the walk did not mean the end of the work, and for some considerable time afterwards I found myself involved in duties such as sending out further circulars, collecting sponsorship forms and money, and posting cheques through to OXFAM. The final total raised was over £2500, the success of the venture being entirely due to people's generosity and willingness to help — it may have been a solo walk, but it was certainly not a solo effort. My own memories will be of a most satisfying expedition in the Deeside hills, but more importantly of being able to help in a very modest way the poor people of a country so much less fortunate than our own.



IN MEMORIAM

It is with regret that the Club records the death of the following members and a former member:

Mrs Janet R. Taggart (OL 1939)	Mr John B. Dalby (O 1961)
Mrs Margaret Henderson (A 1977)	Mr James T. Kelman (A 1982)
Mr John J. Gordon (O 1951)	Mrs Edith A. Murray
Miss Helen M.E. Duncan (OL 1931)	Miss Stella M. Alexander (OL 1950)

JANET R. TAGGART

When entering my name for a Club outing, I always hoped that Jan would be there too! She was a very cheerful companion and, although latterly she found the going rather difficult, she never complained.

Jan joined the Cairngorm Club in 1939 and, on Day and Easter Meets, succeeded in climbing many Munros. In recent years, like other octogenarians, she was glad to keep in touch with the Club by attending Indoor Meets and borrowing books from our 'mobile' library.

Her ready kindness and thoughtfulness will be remembered with pleasure by those who knew her, including the young people whom she encouraged to enjoy hill-climbing. Her bravery and independence during her last few years of ill-health were amazing.

Jan had a house facing the Princess Royal and Duke of Fife Memorial Park at Braemar. Club members and other friends were always made welcome there and many were pleased to receive a 'V' sticker from her, for the day of the Braemar Gathering.

Jan leaves happy memories behind her but is sorely missed.

R.K.J.

HELEN M.E. DUNCAN

With the sudden death of Helen Duncan as the result of a road accident, we have lost a member whose family connections with the Club go back to its earliest days. When her father, Dr. George Duncan, first led her up a hill at Braemar, he warned her that she should not stop to pick berries as nobody would wait for her. Since then she has climbed many hills, particularly with her friend Inez Pittendrieh. They were both regular attenders at the New Year and Easter Meets until family obligations intervened.

The fact that Helen owned a car when most of us were dependent on trains and buses, made access to the hills less difficult. She was a very encouraging companion and her knowledge of the Scottish hills was fairly comprehensive. Her friends will miss her very much.

R.K.J.

Footnote - Club members will also be interested in some additional information about Helen Duncan and her family which has been provided by H.M.R.W. In CCJ No 74, facing p.186 there is a group photograph which includes her (Easter Meet 1933 at Kinlochewe); also the frontispiece of the same issue is a reproduction of what is described as 'Liathach: A Composite Photograph' for which she shared responsibility with Miss Agnes M. Pittendriugh. An elder brother, James Lindsay Duncan was also a member of the Club before he died at the age of 49 in 1954. He initiated the idea of a Shelter Stone visitors' book and also implemented and monitored it: see CCJ No 64 p.212, CCJ No 69 p.117, CCJ No 92 p.212. The Duncan family's strong Club connection is filled out in CCJ No 90 p.96 and CCJ No 95 p.118 - Editor.

EDITH AGNES MURRAY

Mrs. Murray, described in The Times as mountaineer, explorer and music teacher, was a member of the Cairngorm Club for over 30 years.

She was born in Glasgow on February 16th 1898 and attended the Girls' Park School, before studying at the Royal Academy of Music in London, where she received her L.R.A.M. Diploma in 1919. As a young woman, she climbed some of the toughest mountains in the Alps and pioneered routes with her sister Maud and became a founder member of the Ladies' Alpine Club in 1927. Two years later, she married George Murray, an equally ardent mountaineer and they climbed the Matterhorn on their honeymoon.

When, in 1932, he was appointed Director of Desert Surveys (later the Topographical Survey) in Egypt, she played a very active part in his work. Together they explored the Egyptian deserts, mapping nearly the whole of Egyptian territory (apart from the Nile Valley) and climbing the mountains of Sinai and the Red Sea coast. For her share in his work, she was later awarded a Life Fellowship of the Royal Geographical Society under the Wilton Bequest in 1966. George Murray wrote 'Dare me to the Desert' on his life's work and the Cairngorm Club Library was presented with a copy.

During the war, Edith served, for a time, in the household of King Farouk, teaching his three daughters to play the piano. She also worked in the Censorship Department and was mentioned in dispatches. After 1945, Edith was on the staff of the Higher Institute of Music in Cairo. When she and her husband had to leave Egypt in 1951, victims of revolutionary nationalism, they came to Aberdeen, where Edith taught in the High School for Girls from 1952 until she retired in 1968. An accomplished pianist, Mrs. Murray gave great pleasure in recitals with her colleagues. She continued to give private lessons to many children and adults in her neighbourhood, until her death.

Her many pupils revealed her skill in teaching and her influence on them was lasting.

Mrs. Murray was so modest and unassuming that few of us knew of her

distinguished and interesting background, except when notable friends like Freya Stark came to visit her in Aberdeen. She proved a most loyal companion, introducing many friends to the mountains and revealing qualities of courage, character and faithfulness, combined with good humour and tolerance and she deserved the affection she gained.

Many of us have very happy memories of Edith with her husband George and a very large Airedale dog!

T.C.W.



PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB

GENERAL MEETINGS

The Ninety-eighth Annual General Meeting was held on 26 November 1986. The office bearers appointed were Hon. President Ralph Gerstenberg, President Anne Cordiner, Vice-Presidents Eddie Martin and Gillian Shirreffs, Secretary Richard Shirreffs, Treasurer Alex Matthewson, Editor Antony Chessell, Librarian Peter Ward, Huts Custodian Eddie Martin, Meets Secretary Graham Ewen and Indoor Meets Secretary Neil Cromar. Tributes were paid to the retiring Treasurer Sandy Reid and retiring Librarian Jean Callander both of whom had served the Club in those offices for many years.

On the same evening a Special General Meeting approved an amendment to the constitution whereby there would no longer be a fixed lower age limit for ordinary membership and the sole criterion would be experience and ability on the hills.

The Ninety-ninth Annual General Meeting was held on 25 November 1987. All of the office bearers appointed the previous year were re-appointed.

ANNUAL DINNERS

The 1986 Annual Dinner was held at the Stakis Tree Tops Hotel, Aberdeen, and the guest speaker, Louis Kass, gave a talk, illustrated with slides and sound, entitled 'Expedition to the Andes'.

The 1987 Dinner, which was the Centenary Dinner, was also held at the Stakis Tree Tops Hotel, Aberdeen. Amongst other special guests Tom Weir was principal guest and proposed the toast to the Club.

At the 1987 Centenary Dinner, the President, Miss Anne F.G. Cordiner called upon the special guest of the evening, Tom Weir, M.B.E., to propose the toast 'The Cairngorm Club', but before doing so, addressed the company in the following terms - Editor:

Guests, Ladies & Gentlemen of heroic spirit, once again welcome to this our most formal event of the Cairngorm Club year and I can only hope at this stage that you are well wined and dined and are therefore prepared to sit back for a little while which I can assure you will assist your digestive processes. It is not given to many individuals nor indeed to all organisations to reach and celebrate their Centenary and thus although this is not our one hundredth dinner we felt that we could scarcely not make our Centenary the focus of tonight. At the Club's first formal dinner in 1890, the Club had grown to 100 and as I look round at you all tonight I cannot fail to be impressed and think that we have reached this great age in a remarkable state of fitness and reasonable health although I admit that some of us are a lot fitter than others, or should I say that some of us are a lot less fit than others, but one hundred years on we have added a good many to our membership for we now number the magical size of 399 if not the actual 400. While I have been a member of the Club which is now for quite a few years, I have always marvelled at the wonderful mix of human nature that is the Cairngorm Club and to me this has always been one of the happiest aspects of the Club.

I know in the early days it was usually only professional people that had the leisure and the money to go to the hills and do their own thing there, but nowadays we don't consider that we are in the least bit snobbish — we embrace a wide spectrum of the human race who share our love of the hills. Many professions are represented though I

do agree we doubtless have more than our fair share of lawyers and doctors but we have some very brilliant academics in our ranks and also thank goodness we have very many practical folk as well. We all have talents and we all have handicaps and if you are wondering where I am leading with all this, it is simply that in a big club like this we need and we can put to good use all those talents and I think this year of our centenary, has seen them harnessed as never before. All your office bearers and your Committee in the Club are volunteers and while I do not usually mention people by name on a night like this, they have this year had some exceptionally hard work to do and, I would just like to recall some of their accomplishments as the year has gone by, and the more so because, as President, I found them all working very vigorously, very enthusiastically, very unselfishly and in whatever has been asked of them they have been unfailingly cheerful in the Club's interests. I'll endeavour to start at the beginning. Without our volume of the Club history, which many of you now will have seen, of which I believe there maybe some copies here tonight if you have not yet bought one, everything else really would have fallen a little flat — it really was the keystone of many of our activities and it can have been no easy task to sort out fact from fiction and hearsay. Sheila worked hard on it for three years at least and I believe that it has been a very great success. They do say Sheila, that the first book that you publish is the worst so I don't know whether you have got any more ambitions or whether any of your friends in the Club have yet thought up any other subject for you but you have worked so long and so hard that the Committee and members of the Club would like to give you a small token of their appreciation — we have here for Sheila some more of the Club glasses engraved with the Club Coat of Arms which we hope Sheila will be happy to accept from us (Applause and Presentation). I am not suggesting that Sheila is a whisky drinker and we have not given her what goes in to them; perhaps some of her friends will do that.

There has been a great deal of paper work to be attended to this year and many extra-long meetings which had to be recorded and our hard-working Secretary, Richard Shirreffs has worked really hard this year.

Muir of Inverey was the focus of our Midsummer Jollity and it received a great deal of preparation. Certainly it was scrubbed down and it was painted up, inside and outside and it had various new fittings installed and it generally had a spring clean such as I think it has never had since it was opened, and all that was masterminded by our hard-working Huts Custodian and Vice-President, Eddie Martin.

Strangely enough our Indoor Meets Secretary does also get around out-of-doors as well and Neil Cromar was very ably assisted and abetted by Robbie Middleton a member of the Club and between them they did nearly all of the organising of the Champagne Buffet and Barbecue which many of you had the pleasure of attending and indeed as you saw if you were there they did much of the actual pouring and much of the cooking on the day in question and they had very many willing helpers among the guests here tonight.

We also owe the delightful sketches in Sheila's history at the end of some of the chapters to another member who unfortunately is not with us tonight, Ian Strachan and we were very pleased to see them there.

The incredibly fine and detailed work in the Scroll to mark our Centenary, (and there are some at the far end of the room which some of you have probably already observed) was done by Norman Shepherd and if you want further proof of his work, it's with you tonight on the table, in the form of the menu — thank you Norman.

And then there were various other things which celebrated the Club's Centenary; there were the glasses with the Coat of Arms on them; there were enamels and brooches which some of you are wearing tonight and there were some badges which I have obtained now for Past Presidents and these were solicitously helped along by Michael Carry, so we were very pleased to have them.

We had a display in James Dun's House in July and August and that was organised

by our very busy Treasurer, Alex Mathewson, and perhaps it was the type of Summer we had, I don't know, but the art gallery staff tell us that a good many people showed a great deal of interest in that display. Some small part of it is at the far end for you to look at later on.

And then of course all those photographs down there as you know now, were organised by Peter Ward, so if you want copies then you can see him afterwards. The list of people involved has really been endless and I am not going to go right through it or I would be here most of the night, so forgive me if you haven't been named, but to our bakers of cakes and our huskers of strawberries and our whippers of cream and decorators of salmon and our makers of that humble cup of tea that kept us all going, our most sincere thanks.

We also had the help of some non-members and we would like Harold to thank his friend Ian Munro, who brought up-to-date the Presidential sketches. I am not entirely certain that I liked his treatment of the lady Presidents but that is very personal. Lt. Col. Craigie Halkett here, very kindly granted us the use of the field adjoining Muir for parking and also saved very many weary feet and allowed the older members of the Club to get to the top of Ben Macdui and to Loch Avon by allowing us the use of some cars up the Derry road and we are very grateful for that. Some of our helpers are indeed unknown to some of us. Fraser Stronach took an army, I think, of Scouts up before the celebrations even started and they carted away a vast amount of rubbish from the Shelter Stone.

I think any organisation that has been around as long as we have has its triumphs and occasionally its tragedies and I think perhaps our History and our Midnight celebrations and buffet and the James Dun's House have been triumphs for us this year. We did unfortunately have a few misfortunes and I hope those members will forgive me if I just mention that I know that on the way home from the celebrations some members had some very expensive accidents to their cars. We were very relieved that none of them were seriously injured in any way, nor did they injure anybody else and I can promise them absolutely, being who they are, we do know that it was not the liquid refreshment that caused the accidents.

We have had our critics also, some who lacking full information were a little bit naughty and rushed into publication without checking their facts. Well that is something for which I guess a Club of this age has a pretty broad back and we can ride it out, but it did make me rather angry that some of those statements which were inaccurate, rebounded very badly on one of our hardest working members in a personal sort of way. On the other hand I suppose there are those who can argue that, alright, our critics certainly didn't remain indifferent to us — there was a response so I guess in a strange sort of way, they flatter us as well — and for our part at least, we are still on speaking terms. If the Cairngorm Club have ably demonstrated their staying power and endurance, perhaps developed a little bit from our proximity with the Granite City and the granite mountains of the Cairngorms, let it also never be accused of a lack of willingness to understand and listen to others. In these modern times there is a great deal of juggling and bandying around and I am sure most of you who read some of the outdoor and the climbing magazines and belong to other organisations know perfectly well that the walkers, the climbers, both the snow and ice variety and the rock climbers, the skiers, the downhill enthusiasts and the cross-country ones, those that want to ride mountain bikes to the top of Ben Macdui and such places, the long distance footpath planners and makers, those who take their hang-gliders to the mountain tops and throw themselves off and those who wish to flourish their four-wheel drive machines around the country, or the motor-cyclists who want to scramble, the conservationists — they are all fighting for their own cause or their own little niche and blame and counter-blame I think is bandied to and fro rather wildly and rather without thought.

I think that it is time that we all need to sit down, get our acts together and decide

what we want to conserve, why we want to conserve it and for whom we want to conserve it. And we need to collect a lot more hard evidence all round, but above all I think that we need to talk; we need to be humble in our demands as we try to thrash out suitable compromises and it will be compromise I have no doubt — and I just say all of this to let people know that we are very aware of what is going on around us; we do know that it will not be easy; we do know that it can't be done in the twinkling of an eye.

But to return to our own Club activities, if I list some of the places which members have been to during the last year, it sounds rather like a travel agent's advert. Last year has seen Cairngorm Club members in Africa, America, Australia, China, Iceland, Russia, Malaya, as well as some of the more usual areas that we consider in Europe, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, France, Crete, Greece and after our members' night, I was struck by the coincidence, having seen another member's slides, that within the last two years, four people in this room tonight, have followed the white dotted line up to the top of Ayer's Rock in Australia and placed the Cairngorm Club names up there. But pride of place tonight must surely go to that very quiet young man, Rick Allen, who has twice now been high on Everest's unclimbed ridge, only to be driven back by the elements. We were very sorry Rick, that you had such an expensive time, not only money-wise but effort-wise and didn't have the satisfaction and the joy of getting to the top, but we are indeed very glad to see you safely back, because we know that it is not an easy task and it is rather a dangerous one, however you shrug it off.

So what do we see as we gaze from our different and many summits? I think that it would be rather presumptuous of me to try and suggest what we see, but do we look back at the past or do we look forward to the future? Can we learn from the lessons of the past and make use of them in the future? But one thing I do know — it is not just the summits that draws so many of us to share this hobby that keeps us in the Club — but it is rather the many small delights that make up the total; the flowers that spring up at our feet; the sparkling, tinkling, running water which sometimes becomes a roaring charging stream; the scudding clouds or the clouds of hailstones that flail us as we fight our way through them; the butterflies, the birds, the insects, the animals, the colours and the scents that we are aware of and I think perhaps many of us appreciate the sense of proportion that the hills always return to us. In the past it has always fallen to the President to propose the toast to the Cairngorm Club, but as I am one of you, it did seem on this very special occasion a little bit, just presumptuous, to toast ourselves in effect. Thus we have asked along tonight, Tom Weir, grand old man of the Scottish hills, to come along and step out of his usual niche of showing us slides and propose the toast to the Club. Tom knows Scotland, its highlands and its lowlands and its many nooks and crannies, I am sure, better than any other person in this land. So Ladies and Gentlemen, I am going to sit down and hand over to Tom —

Tom Weir's address was in his own unique style - Editor:-

Madam President, members of the Club, Guests, well for me it's a very special and Royal occasion and indeed it should have been even more Royal, because Bonnie Prince Charlie and Diana at one time, should have been here and when they couldn't come they said well we'll get the old fellow, he'll do. But I'll tell you this, I think I know why the Aberdeen folk are regarded as careful because your very first dinner held in 1890 cost five bob; there were seven toasts and the next one didn't come until 1920 — beat that if you can! I also like the idea in 1905 — the 'at home' in Kennaway's Rooms — 'Morning Dress 7.30 to 11 o'clock, one lady friend admitted free, one shilling for each extra girl-friend'. The purpose of the meeting I believe was to secure additional members!

Well the first time I saw Cairngorm Club members en-masse was in 1953, and when I heard that it was dress-suit I thought, "my God they must really be behind the

times" and I was very glad that I had a friend exactly the same size as myself — his dress-suit fitted me. Well, I don't remember much about the talk — I know I showed some slides; I had dinner, but the climb next day wasn't done with members of the Cairngorm Club, it was done with Bill Brooker, Mike Taylor — it was a rotten day, there was snow falling and I was led to Eagle Ridge, the noblest ridge in Scotland (didn't J.H.B. Bell say so?) I was wearing vibrams, they were in nails and the sparks were flying literally, I'll tell you — and at the top it was snowing hard and all I could hear was praise of the Cairngorms — these men, 1953; this was the new wave, the men who were opening up the Cairngorms and they were wanting to write a guide book and tell the world things hadn't changed. The good things in life — everybody's got to know them and before time, the last thing you want to see is another person on the mountains, but this is the way climbers have always worked. Now Tom Bourdillon who was on the Everest expedition of 1953, arrived in Aberdeen as I left Aberdeen and he was giving a talk on the climbing of Mount Everest and, what should happen — the following — exactly a week later to Tom Bourdillon; he was taken to Eagle Ridge, by Tom Patey and by jove! Bourdillon ended up by saying — it was the hardest climb he'd ever done in his life, because a foot of powder snow had fallen. And Tom Patey said to me afterwards "You know if I hadn't been up with you the previous weekend, we wouldn't have got up it". He said "I wouldn't have known the route!"

Well it would have been fitting in fact if Diana and her husband had come to this dinner because, think of it, this Club was really formed at the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria, so what could have been better, especially with all the Royal fireworks that have gone on since then. And at the Jubilee dinner (Professor Norman Collie was there) — now, Collie was the man who told the tale of the Fearla Mhor, the Grey Man of Ben Macdhu, but he didn't call it the Grey Man. All he heard as he walked along was a crunch every few steps and there was this other crunch and gradually he became conscious that there was some supernatural presence and he took to his heels and the story is that about four miles later when he was out of breath he stopped and that story has chilled the blood of many a lone bothyer ever since. Not only have they heard the crunch of the approaching feet and the noise of somebody trying to get into their bothy, but one man was so sure that that man was coming to him, and it was a grey man he reckoned he was seeing, and he's in this audience tonight and his name is Sandy Tewnton. Sandy was home on leave from the army and he'd taken his revolver with him. The story he tells is that it was in case he was hungry and he might shoot a ptarmigan. Anyway, here he was in Coire Etchachan when this shape actually came towards him; out came the gun and he fired three bullets into it and he didn't even stop to see if he'd made a kill. Anyway, Sandy's looking down at the moment and I'm trying my best not to look at him.

Well in the early days of this Club of course, it was really a field Club whereas the S.M.C., formed in 1889, alpinism and exploration of gullies and unclimbed ridges were really what it was all about and it must have been wonderful to have been a climber at that time, because so little was known of Scotland; everything was discovery; Munro had just made the tables and in fact inspiration was everywhere in the writings of early climbers because of that discovery. And when the first generation of climbers of my class — I was a humble working-class boy who worked in a grocer's shop, worked until Saturday night, the last bus left Glasgow about a quarter past nine at night and catching that you could be in Loch Lomond just after ten and if you walked for a couple of hours, you could waken up amongst the hills.

And what really was the truth of what these early writers in the *Cairngorm Club Journal* and the *SMC Journal* had to say? Now it has been said that mountaineers may be strong but they are rarely silent and if ever God's truth was spoken, that's it! Because when I started climbing, guide books started to come with monotonous regularity, The Cairngorms by Sir Henry Alexander, The Western Highlands by Parker (two members of the Cairngorm Club), a general guide listing all the Munros

enabling you to tick them off one by one, and a guide to the Isle of Skye. And for us it was a marvellous time because we were the first working-class generation with enough money to get to the hills and enough time because the 48 hour week had come in. Also, there was so much public transport (people didn't have motor cars), that you could go almost anywhere very cheaply — I could spend a week in Skye, I admit that I could get half fare on the train and on the bus, but I could spend a week there for four quid! — and as a worker in a grocer's shop, I even got the messages cheap!

But the great thing about this time was that wee Clubs were springing up; the first was the Ptarmigan; they were enrolled round a camp fire on the outside of Glasgow, twenty four members, the cry was 'Ptarmigan' and when you heard that, you knew one of the real breed was there. And then from the shipyards came the Craig Dhu — Andy Saunders, a great chap, you used to see him in the Campsies — there were only five in the Club when my pal and I got to know them — my pal Matt. And then the Tricouni Club was set up — and Alex Small is in this audience tonight, one of these members and indeed he made the first ascent of Agag's Groove on the Buchaille Etive Mhor and we celebrated that climb two years ago — is that right Alex? And it was great to see these chaps looking so young, considering it was such a long time ago when they did it. They were men when I was a boy! McIntyre's bus was called 'The Mountaineer' and it ran from Glasgow to the Alps; I can't remember if it cost two quid or three quid, but I know it was a tight fit in the bus — so for the first time, chaps I knew were climbing the Matterhorn and other mountains, some of which I'd never heard of. And then of course I talked about the new wave, Tom Patey, Bill Brooker, Mike Taylor, Douglas Sutherland and all that crowd — and following them came another bunch of young men called the Kincorth Club; they'd a doss up in Beinn a' Bhuidr and you had to be in the know to get it. This was built mysteriously — in the dark of night men went up carrying rhone pipes and other pieces of stuff and it really was the finest bothy, and there was a book in it and you had to sign your name and it said something like 'Nudes and how to draw them' and 'Male members leave their names, female members leave their telephone number'. And that was Freddy Balcombe and Sticker Thom and soon-and these were some of the men by the way who rebuilt Bob Scott's bothy recently. And then there came another new wave in the '70's and '80's, men of Andy Nisbet, Rick Allen and that kind who seemed to have more energy than any men that I've ever known had. For example, I was reading Andy Nisbet's and Charlie McLeod's epic. They started on Lochnagar, climbed Eagle Ridge in half an hour, set off at a run for the Mitre Ridge, they then did Snake Ridge, Sphinx Ridge, Robert's Ridge and got to Glenmore having covered 37 miles, 9000 feet of climbing and they didn't keep the kit chap waiting to pick them up — waiting. Isn't that great? — I don't know how they do it.

Well I've written down here a few things, but I'm not going to say them all because I don't want to keep you all night, but it could be said that mountain clubs which survive several generations have obeyed an immutable law, which is not the survival of the fittest but the opposite, the survival of tradition-bearers, to carry forward what made the Club in the first instance, sound — and that is because the mountain will always mean more than the man. For the six men at Loch Avon on the 23rd June 1887, proposed 'to open our ranks to the admission of men and women of heroic spirit and possessed of souls open to the influences and enjoyment of nature', they meant something if you came to analyse them, which is absolutely true. They were appealing to something deep down in all of us, irrespective of our own personal achievements, so I give you a toast knowing that if the world survives, so will the Cairngorm Club! So will you be upstanding and drink a toast to "The Cairngorm Club".

THE
CAIRNGORM CLUB
CENTENARY

1887-1987



THE SHELTER STONE

The Front Cover of the menu for the Centenary Dinner



Office-Bearers and Guests at the Centenary Dinner held at the Stakis Tree Tops Hotel Hotel, Aberdeen.
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SOCIAL EVENTS DURING CENTENARY YEAR

In March, we held our customary Cheese and Wine Party at the Winter Gardens, Duthie Park, Aberdeen, attended by 107 members and friends. The following month, a special dinner was held in honour of Leslie Hay, who had attained the distinction of being a member of the Club for 60 years. The dinner was a pleasant, happy occasion, held in the Atholl Hotel. In June, the Club normally holds a barbecue in Templars' Park, but it was decided instead to hold a 'champagne barbecue' at Muir as part of the Jubilee Celebrations. A large attendance was anticipated so it was arranged to hire a marquee in case of wet weather. Car parking was anticipated as a major problem, so Mar Lodge Estate was approached for permission to use the field immediately to the west of the cottage. The new factor Lt. Col. Charles D. Craigie Halkett proved to be extremely helpful, and permission was very quickly forthcoming (as was permission to take a few cars up the Derry road to Derry Lodge to ferry 'older' club members who were taking part in the Ben Macdhui/Shelter Stone walk). Tables and chairs were organised from the Village Hall in Braemar. A work party spent a week getting Muir into immaculate condition. Two special barbecues were commissioned. The Indoor Activities Sub-Committee met to agree a menu which, even by their customary high standards, would be fitting for a centenary celebration. Invitations were sent out to local people who, over the years, had been associated with the Club and with Muir, and the Sub-Committee were at pains to ensure that as much as possible of the provisions and wine was purchased from local sources. Nothing, but nothing, was left to chance, to the extent that even portable loos were organised for the event! Some of the quantities make interesting reading - e.g. 72 bottles of sparkling wine: 66 litres of boxed wine: 100 venison burgers: 100 pork and apple burgers: 100 sausage slices: 50 black pudding slices: 18 lbs of ham: 24 lbs of turkey: 30 lbs of salmon: 50 lbs of strawberries which had to be husked and individually counted - they amounted to 2,400 — and 300 potatoes which had been pre-baked and wrapped in foil — and countless quantities of different salads, to name but some. The weather was kind and the event was voted a great success by the 265 members and friends who attended. The centenary year's social events culminated with the annual dinner held in the Stakis Treetops Hotel. The customary pre-dinner lecture was dispensed with to allow everybody a better opportunity to mix and socialise. Some of the exhibits from the centenary exhibition held earlier in the year in James Dun's House were on display and provided an interesting focal point. Special menu cards were arranged so that members would have a memento of the dinner to take home with them, and again, special attention was paid to the choice of menu. The absence of pyrotechnics on Ben Macdhui during the June overnight excursion was compensated for in the form of the dessert course named Macdhui Surprise, which, emblazoned with sparklers, was carried into the darkened dining room to great applause. In similar nomenclature vein the starter was Clac Dian Paté and the main course Chicken Glen Derry. A piper played at the hotel door to greet members and guests as they arrived, and he also piped in the top table. Those who wanted it, received a glass of sparkling wine as they entered the function suite. The principal guest was Tom Weir who proposed the toast to the Club, and the other main guests were Mrs. Weir, Captain Ramsay of Mar and The Lady Saltoun, Lt. Col. Charles D. Craigie Halkett and Mrs. Craigie Halkett, and Mr. Derek Petrie and Mrs. Petrie of Invercauld Estate. Mar Estate and Mar Lodge Estate were further represented by Mr. Ian Campbell and Mrs. Campbell, and Mr. Stuart Cumming and Mrs. Cumming respectively. Mr. Sandy Duguid whose company is used for the Club's bus meets was present along with his wife. Mr. Bill Marshall, accompanied by Mrs. Marshall, represented The Braemar Civic Amenities Trust and a special invitation was issued to our own member Mr. Rick Allen who had just returned from The Altos Everest '87 Expedition. He was accompanied by Miss Alison Charmatz (now Mrs. Alison Allen!). Braemar Mountain Rescue Association was



Mr & Mrs A. Leslie Hay with the Hon. President and his wife, the President and the Vice Presidents. (Photograph by Neil Cromar)



A poster for the Club's Centenary Exhibition at James Dun's House and one of the exhibits showing a pre-war Cairngorm Club Member! (Photographs by Neil Cromar)



represented, as was the Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team, and the Scottish climbing fraternity and sorority. It was gratifying that all but two were represented by their current presidents, and the two which were not, were represented by past-presidents. 235 members and guests attended the Dinner, some of whom had travelled from as far as Coventry and London to be there. In conclusion, the Indoor Activities Sub-Committee Convener does not expect to be available for the bi-centenary in 2087 but he hopes that his successor will enjoy the same incredibly high level of support and assistance from his Sub-Committee and from Club members, which the present incumbent has had the good fortune to receive.

N. Cromar

MEETS AND EXCURSIONS 1985-88

The attendance recorded for the period covered by the Journal shows a slight increase, the average being 32 on this occasion, compared with 30 the previous time. (The attendance is given in brackets after each excursion in the list at the end.) The best turn out was 50 for the Linn of Dee to Glen Feshie excursion in 1986, this being the only occasion that some members failed to obtain a seat. The poorest attendance of 17 was shared by the Blair Atholl excursion in 1986 and the Mount Battock excursion in 1987.

The first excursion in this report was to Ben Rinnes in November 1985. It proved to be a day of torrential rain, and although most members set off up the hill, to the best of my knowledge none reached the top. At Glen Lethnot in December it was snowing and the road in the upper part of the glen was very difficult. The bus did reach the end of the road but - memories of what nearly happened in Glen Clova in 1980 - it was thought prudent to have the bus meet us further down the glen on our return.

1986 started as usual with an excursion to Lochnagar, and although there was little snow around on this occasion, the bus got completely stuck in the hollow just beyond the Mill of Sterin turn off, due to icy road conditions. Fortunately a gritter arrived after a time and retrieved us from this situation. The next two excursions to Auchallater and Glen Clova were accompanied by very deep snow which limited the climbing possibilities. Great difficulty was experienced in turning the bus at Glen Clova due to the depth of snow and indiscriminate parking of cars at the quarry and at the farm. The car park, which had been cleared was almost devoid of cars. The next excursion to Blair Atholl was very wet and misty, but nevertheless most of the party climbed Carn Liath and some went on to Braigh Coire Chruinn-bhalgain.

The 1986 Easter Meet was held at the Loch Duich Hotel in Dornie, the same venue as on the previous year. Once again the hotel was very comfortable and the meet attracted around 40 people. A lot of snow on the higher peaks inhibited the amount of climbing done. Nevertheless many of the higher hills were climbed by various parties including the Saddle, most of the South Clunaie Ridge and Beinn Sgrìol. Several parties visited the Falls of Glomach, walking across from Dorusduain, as the driving route via Killilan is no longer open to the public. One party which went to Applecross found the upper part of the Bealach na Ba almost blocked and a snowplough working. They visited the small ruined village of Uags which was reached by a very rough path from Toscaig.

The first two excursions after Easter were rather wet with thick mist on the tops. Much better weather accompanied the Beinn Dearg excursion, although it was misty on top for much of the day. This proved to be a long walk and many members had difficulty in getting back to the hotel in time for tea.

The overnight excursion of 1986 was a very good one in terms of weather. About half the party got off the bus at Loch a Bhraoin and did a traverse of the Fannichs, finishing off at Loch Droma. At least one member climbed all of them. The other half

started from Inverlael and most of them climbed the four Munros in the Beinn Dearg group, also descending to Loch Droma, a descent which proved tricky in places. It was a marvellous night. Sun was seen shining on the top of the Beinn Dearg cliffs until almost midnight. Mist filled the valleys to the east but the west remained clear all night. We had an exceptionally good lunch on the Sunday at the Alltguish Inn. We were delayed for about an hour and a half at Tarvie on the return journey. The road was closed because a lorry carrying formaldehyde for the clean up of Gruinard Island had spilt part of its load.

Good weather accompanied the Monega Pass excursion and the Cairngorm Traverse, where, as usual, a large number of different routes were followed by the various parties. The remainder of the year's excursions had poor weather with rain and high winds. The Cabrach to Glen Buchat excursion was particularly unpleasant with most of the route exposed to a strong southerly wind and frequent heavy showers. The conditions on Bennachie were very little better.

Unfortunately these poor weather conditions were to persist for most of the following year. Our centenary year was not marked by the best of luck as far as weather conditions were concerned. The year started, as usual, with an excursion to Lochnagar. The Glen Muick road was blocked and so the starting point was Invercauld Bridge. A strong wind and deep snow hampered progress and nobody reached Lochnagar. One or two members got as far as the Staic. The rest of the winter excursions were accompanied by mist and snow.

The 1987 Easter Meet was held at the Spean Bridge Hotel which proved to be very comfortable. Around 40 people were present. On Good Friday, in excellent weather, a large party ascended Ben Nevis. Many other Munros were climbed mainly in the Mamores or in Glen Spean. By Sunday the weather had broken down completely and it poured all day. Some members went to church in the morning, no doubt to pray that the weather would improve. By Monday their prayers had been answered and several members went climbing before returning home.

The first excursion after Easter was to Ben Avon and this was a beautiful day with clear views all round and almost all those present reached the top. We did not know it but this was the last clear view we were to get from the main summit in 1987. On the next excursion from Achlean to Coylumbridge soft snow and thick mist on the Carn Ban Mor plateau held up progress to a worrying degree, even for those who had chosen the shortest route, but in the end everyone reached Coylumbridge in time. The Ben Lawers excursion, as so often in the past, was a day of pouring rain. Nevertheless all those present climbed at least Beinn Ghlas and Ben Lawers, followed by high tea at the Lawers Hotel which was not really big enough to accommodate the party.

The overnight excursion of 1987 was planned to be a very special occasion to celebrate the Club's Centenary. The dates chosen (20th/21st June) was the nearest weekend possible to the actual centenary date which would properly have been the 23rd June. It had been decided that it would be most appropriate to retrace, as far as possible the same route as the original six members had taken exactly 100 years before. While only 34 people travelled on the bus, a much larger number attended using their own transport. The weather started off uncertain, but dry, and despite the presence of heavy clouds it was to remain so. The main party set off from the Linn of Dee about 7 p.m. and travelled to the summit of Ben Macdhuì via Glen Derry and Coire Etchachan, reaching the summit just before midnight. It had originally been intended to have a fireworks display on the summit, but this idea was dropped because of environmental considerations. The President said a few words and some members drank a toast to the Club at this point.

Members made their way back from the summit in the direction of the Shelter Stone. Some camped for a time beside Loch Etchachan while others slept out in the open. Three members went via the summit of Cairngorm reaching the Shelter Stone just before the appointed time of 6 a.m. Around 100 people assembled there, were led



The President delivering her speech at the Dairymaid's Field and being recorded by BBC Radio Scotland. (Photograph by Peter Ward)



Club members at the Dairymaid's Field. (Photograph by Richard Shirreffs)

by the President down to the Dairymaid's Field, the place where the Club had originally been formed. Here, in a short speech, the President recalled the events of 100 years before and the company then drank a toast to the Club. A large number of photographs were taken. By this time the heavy cloud cover of the previous night had broken up and the sun was shining. Once the proceedings at the Shelter Stone had finished it was a long trek back to Inverey for the barbecue which took place in the afternoon. I could not help feeling some sympathy for the girl from BBC Radio Scotland, who carried a fairly heavy tape recorder all the way up Ben Macdhui and down to the Shelter Stone. Last seen, travelling very slowly near the Etchachan Hut, she must have got back all right, as a short broadcast covering the event was made a few days later.

The next excursion to Lochnagar was very misty but at least on this occasion most of the party reached the top. The Cairngorm Traverse started off in pouring rain which encouraged most members to follow lower rather than higher routes across. Those who went by the Larig an Laoigh had some difficulty crossing the River Avon at Fords of Avon, and indeed no easier crossing place was found higher up contrary to what was recently mentioned in the press. Between Ballater and Glen Esk we had a reasonably pleasant day with some sunshine but unfortunately the higher parts of Mount Keen remained mist covered all day. Between Glen Isla and Glen Clova, however, the mist was at a much lower level and no worthwhile views were obtained. On the excursion from Strathdon to Lary most members climbed either Cairn Mona Gowan or Scraulac and some climbed both. The northern approach to these hills was covered in deep snow almost down to the main road, while surprisingly there was virtually none on the other side. The excursion to Cat Law started in very promising fashion with some sunshine and at last the main objective was clear of mist. Alas, just as the main party was about to reach the summit mist swept in and spoiled the view. Enough was seen, however, to suggest that this would be a very good viewpoint on a clear day.

1988 started off with a very wet day on Lochnagar. Some members went to the summit while others preferred to stay on lower ground. Although it was January there were only one or two small patches of snow to be seen. It was a different story at Cockbridge three weeks later with the hills covered by at least a foot of soft snow. It was however, a brilliantly clear sunny day and most members climbed Brown Cow Hill, some of them on cross-country skis. Good weather also attended the Carn Bhac and Glen Clova excursions and by this time the snow conditions were better.

Some difficulty was experienced in finding a venue for the 1988 Easter Meet and arrangements had not been finalised in time to be included in the circular. It was held at the Royal Hotel in Ullapool, which proved to be a very large place, but the food was good and the 30 members who attended found it very comfortable. In addition a small number stayed at the nearby campsite. On this occasion the weather was good but there was quite a bit of snow on the higher hills, which was softened by the sunny weather making hard going. Nevertheless most of the Fannichs and the Beinn Dearg group were climbed by one party or another. One party got as far as Seana Bhragh. Other parties were attracted by the lower hills to the north such as Quinag, Cul Mor and Ben More Coigach, which were largely clear of snow. A very good view of the new bridge at Kylesku was obtained from the most northerly top of Quinag.

The excursion to Beinn a Bhuird started off a fine day with a lot of sunshine. There was still a lot of snow on the mountains, but it was melting fast, and the River Quoich proved very difficult to cross. Unfortunately the weather broke down at lunchtime and it rained all afternoon. Good weather was experienced on Jock's Road and most members followed the right of way path throughout but others climbed some of the Munros on the west side of the path. The last excursion in the period covered by this report was to Meall nan Tarmachan. We left Aberdeen in a very overcast day, conditions which persisted all the way to Lix Toll. Between there and Lawers Car Park the weather brightened up and, shortly after we left the bus the mist started to lift from



Past Presidents at the Centenary Champagne Barbecue at Muir.
Back Row:- Eric Johnston; Sandy Black; Harold Watt; Alan Watt; Sheila Murray. Front Row:- Robert Bain; Ralph Gerstenberg; Leslie Hay.
(Photograph by Joan Johnston)



Present and Past Huts Custodians at the Centenary Champagne Barbecue at Muir. Back Row:- Peter Howgate (also P.P.); Denis Hardy; Eddie Martin. Front Row:- Robert Bain; Ken Fraser. (Photograph by Joan Johnston)

the surrounding hills. Members present seemed to thoroughly enjoy the traverse of this hill, which proved very interesting even although the views were impaired by rather hazy conditions.

One of the effects of recent road improvements and the advent of more powerful buses has been a substantial reduction in journey times giving us more time on the hill. The journeys to Cairngorm or Lawers Car Parks, for example, which used to take fully four hours can now be completed in three. This has enabled us to have a later start (7 a.m. instead of 6 a.m.) for the Cairngorm Traverse on the last two occasions, while still giving members plenty of time on the hill. It may be possible to do the same in future for some of the Perthshire excursions, but not for all of them it would seem, as some members seemed to need all their time to complete the recent traverse of Meall nan Tarmachan. Of course, perhaps most members prefer these early starts? Opinions please!

G. Ewen

EXCURSIONS

	1985
9 Nov.	Ben Rinnes (31)
8 Dec.	Glen Lethnot (39)
	1986
12 Jan.	Lochnagar (43)
1 Feb.	Auchallater (28)
23 Feb.	Glen Clova (26)
16 Mar.	Blair Atholl (17)
20 Apr.	Capel Mounth (49)
11 May	Crathie to Auchallater (25)
31 May	Beinn Dearg (24)
21/21 Jun.	Inverlael to Loch Droma (27)
24 Aug.	Monega Pass (33)
6 Sep.	Cairngorm to Linn of Dee (49)
28 Sep.	Linn of Dee to Glenfeshie (50)
18 Oct.	Inverey to Glenshee (33)
9 Nov.	Cabrach to Glen Buchat (45)
7 Dec.	Bennachie (37)
	1987
11 Jan.	Lochnagar (33)
31 Jan.	Mount Battock (17)
22 Feb.	Glen Clunie (24)
22 Mar.	Glas Tulaichean (31)
26 Apr.	Ben Avon (28)
17 May	Achlean to Coylumbridge (32)
30 May	Ben Lawers (35)
20/21 Jun.	Ben Macdhui (34)
23 Aug.	Lochnagar (34)
12 Sep.	Cairngorm to Linn of Dee (34)
4 Oct.	Ballater to Glen Esk (20)
25 Oct.	Glen Isla to Glen Clova (37)
14 Nov.	Strathdon to Lary (32)
6 Dec.	Cat Law (23)

	1988
9 Jan.	Lochnagar (37)
31 Jan.	Cockbridge (23)
21 Feb.	Carn Bhac (32)
19 Mar.	Glen Clova (23)
17 Apr.	Beinn a Bhuird (31)
7 May	Jock's Road (20)
29 May	Meall nan Tarmachan (28)

EASTER MEETS

1986	Dornie
1987	Speanbridge
1988	Ullapool

WEEKEND MEETS

A large crag loomed ahead, magnified once by the mist and again by our imaginations. This must be the south top of the Cobbler to be scrambled up and then down on our way to the main summit. Heavy rucksacks proved awkward, but as we broke through into sunshine we decided we were enjoying a taste of 'rock'. Sitting above a sea of cloud we greeted 'island' friends. Bens Lomond, Narnain and Ime all looked to be within 'swimming' distance.

The last three years of weekend meets have included too many memorable occasions to recount all. This year a new dimension has been added by Peter Bellarby and Fraser Stronach offering to help would-be climbers to get started. To this end the club has bought some new equipment which had its first outing on our first winter weekend meet in February '88. This weekend attracted walkers, climbers and skiers and will hopefully become a regular feature of future programmes. Some of those who went climbing on snow-covered Stob Coire nan Lochan enjoyed the added thrill of a 'Cresta Run' slide down the lower slopes at the end of the day - an excellent form of quick descent.

We have tried to keep a balance of types of accommodation, but with huts being booked up increasingly far in advance, and members being unable to make a firm commitment on the same time-scale, we are relying increasingly on Youth Hostels. With their improved facilities (Torridon has a microwave!) and later lights out time (11.45pm for grade 1) we find them very convenient - although we have still managed to be locked out!

Finding A'Chuil bothy fully booked we tried out-of-season caravans for our Glen Dessary meet. Two fine days of hillwalking gave way to a wet Monday. Having avoided fresh water shrimps in the drinking water with difficulty, ingenuity was now applied to catching brown trout.

A special opening of the Ossian Youth Hostel coincided with the Chernobyl disaster. Drinking 'pure' rain water in ignorance we explored the area from Ben Alder to Leum Uilleum. In the evenings we were welcomed back by Tom Rigg, the warden, with stove hottering and chessboard out. He also hoped we might have energy left to qualify for his 'round the loch in an hour' club, but he let us off with promises to return.

The Outdoor Centre at Elphin attracted members and their families, some of whom preferred pony trekking to walking. As usual we split into groups and individuals, exploring hills from Ben Hope and Klibreck (morning and afternoon) to Ben More Assynt and Quinag. Those of us who opted for the long day to Suilven wished we could have pony trekked in. It is a long way in for so little time on top. It was hard to resist fleeting backward glances towards its unique silhouette as twilight turned to darkness and we had to hurry home.

Boats proved a mixed success as alternative transport on Loch Mullardoch (Cannich '88). As the dam was being repaired the water level was unusually low making sandbanks a major hazard. Add to that the odd mechanical fault and lack of petrol and you might decide to stick to walking!

Who would have thought that the Alex MacIntyre Memorial Hut at Onich was a suitable base for a trip to Ben More in Mull? Those of us with less imagination (or a less pressing need to visit this particular Munro) spent a dramatic day on a variety of Glen Coe hills. Dinnertime Buttress was a worthwhile short day for those late in starting, and, back at the hut, after consuming odd mixtures of 'convenience' and 'health' foods, we all joined in a spirited singsong round a cosy fire. If you know any words beyond the first verses you could be a star!

Our stay at Laggangarbh coincided with a Glen Coe bus meet by the Moray Mountaineering Club. We combined - by a variety of routes - to celebrate Margaret MacLennan's final Munro on Buachaille Etive Mor and then adjourned to the hut until the bus returned. Such forward planning was greatly appreciated on a damp, chilly day!

With keen ornithologists, botanists, climbers and skiers - not to mention Munro baggers - among our regular 'weekenders' suggestions for future venues and accommodation are always welcome. Those who cannot book in advance, or prefer other than the 'official' base, are welcome to camp or find their own accommodation, joining the main group activities as they wish.

	1986	1987	1988
Feb	—	—	Crianlarich YH
May	Ossian YH	Torridan	Cannich
June	Glen Dessary	—	Ardgarden YH
July	Moidart	Crianlarich	Skye
Aug	Glen Affrich YH	Rhum	Knoydart
Sept	Laggangarbh	Elphin	Kintail
Oct	Steal Hut	Onich	Arran

Fiona Cameron



NOTES

MORRONE

Morrone could be described as a massive hill, featureless compared with Lochnagar, but certainly holding more of interest than is at first apparent. The summit, at 2819 feet above sea level, commands a splendid view of the surrounding countryside and distant Cairngorms. Lower down, at 1520 feet, there stands an Indicator erected by the Deeside Field Club and from here too an excellent view may be obtained. Inscribed on this Indicator are these few and appropriate lines by George Stephen, a former Provost of Aberdeen -

“Upon this vantage point I fain would stand,
The prospect with delight my spirit fills.
How oft in glowing rapture have I scanned
The waving outline of the distant hills”

Morrone also presents an area of considerable botanical interest as a belt of crystalline limestone runs through part of the hill. In this area there is a birchwood which has been described as the best example in Britain of a montane wood on calcareous soil. On account of this, the Morrone Birkwood National Nature Reserve was established in 1972. More recently too, at a botanical meeting in Edinburgh, Morrone was mentioned in connection with the finding of pollen from a species of *Cassiope* which had been located in post-glacial material on the hill. *Cassiope* belongs to the Ericaceae (heather family) and is alpine-arctic in distribution. The plant does not now occur in Britain and so it is of much interest to know that it did at one time in the past grow here - and on Morrone!

Ecologically and floristically Morrone has much to offer the botanist due to the soil and the availability of water from the many streams on the hillside. This was recognised a long time ago by several botanists of the past of whom I would mention Professor C.C. Babington of Cambridge who at times used to spend several weeks at Braemar in summer. In 1891 he wrote three articles in the *Scottish Naturalist* (a magazine of Natural Science) concerning plants seen in the valley of Braemar and on Morrone.

In this present article I should like to draw attention to a few of the many plants to be found on this good hill. Thereby, I hope, I may be able to encourage others to find an added interest to climbing and hillwalking in our area.

Setting out from Chapel Brae, Braemar, we shall make our way to the summit of Morrone pausing here and there to look at plants and places of interest. First of all we shall take a look around the lochan at the top of Chapel Brae and the wet moorland to the south. Then we strike up to the track leading to the Deeside Field Indicator and on past the outcrop of rock known as ‘The Knoll’. Beyond and uphill to the right lies the path leading to the summit.

The area around the lochan reveals two of our common insectivorous plants, the butterwort (*Pinguicula vulgaris*) and the small round-leaved sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*). The butterwort is easily recognised by its bright yellow-green star-shaped rosette of glandular leaves which attract and catch small insects. The beautiful flower is violet in colour with a white patch in the throat. The reddish sundew has small rounded leaves with long red glandular hairs by means of which it also catches insects. The white flowers are very small and often do not open at all unless there is a considerable amount of sunlight. Making our way over to the wet moorland in the vicinity of the lochan we come on the yellow saxifrage (*Saxifraga aizoides*) growing in abundance and perhaps early in the season a few salmon-pink marsh orchids (*Dactylorhiza incarnata*). In drier places on the moorland the yellow-flowered petty

whin (*Genista anglica*) can be seen, also the bitter vetch (*Lathyrus montanus*) looking like a miniature sweet pea with crimson to blue coloured flower. On the hillside south of the lochan lies a pleasant area of birchwood and it is worth while taking a look round this woodland where wood anemones (*Anemone nemorosa*) and wood sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*) with its shamrock-like leaves are frequent early in the year. Here and there water avens (*Geum rivale*) are also to be seen with their delicately beautiful salmon-pink flowers. Among the larger and more conspicuous plants is the melancholy thistle (*Cirsium helenioides*) with its handsome purple flower and long green leaves white-felted on the underside. The plant is not strongly spiny like most thistles so perhaps that is why it has been called 'melancholy', or another explanation may be that it was formerly used as a medicine for hypochondria. A graceful inhabitant of the birchwood is the oak fern (*Gymnocarpium dryopteris*) which is local in occurrence, slender in form and somewhat triangular in shape. The common violet (*Viola riviniana*) is also to be seen and may be distinguished from the marsh violet (*Viola palustris*) which has a more rounded leaf and smaller less conspicuous flowers occurring earlier in the season.

Leaving woodland and lochan behind we take to the pathway leading to the Deeside Field Indicator about half way up Morrone. On the way there, and in the vicinity of the Indicator itself, there is much in the vegetation to attract attention - mountain pansies (*Viola lutea*), rockroses (*Helianthemum nummularium*), field gentians (*Gentianella campestris*), wintergreens (*Pyrola* species) etc. just to mention a few. On 'The Knoll' behind the Indicator, growing in rock crevices, are a few small and most attractive ferns called the spleenworts (*Asplenium* species).

Climbing up the hillside on our way to the summit we come on the cloudberry (*Rubus chamaemorus*) growing in the peaty soil. In summer its white flower is frequently seen, but not so often the attractive bright orange fruit regarded as such a delicacy in Scandinavia. Higher up on the windswept ground the mountain azalea (*Loiseleuria procumbens*) makes its appearance, closely appressed to the ground for protection. When the summit is reached the keen eye may discern a small but wiry plant which looks like a slender grass. This is the three-leaved rush (*Juncus trifidus*) which is to be found growing on mountain tops where it is capable of withstanding the rigours of high altitude.

On reaching the summit of Morrone on a good clear day the climber is well rewarded with a superb view of the surrounding mountains, but at all times and in any weather Morrone has much to offer. Plant and animal life are always there to be appreciated and in early summer the small but exquisite flowers of the mountain azalea would surely add a touch of cheer to the gloomiest day.

Alice H. Sommerville

THE CAIRNGORM 'FOUR-THOUSANDERS'

As everyone knows by now, 1987 was the Centenary year of the Cairngorm Club. The annual 'overnighter' was planned as a part of the celebrations in the form of a reconstruction of the expedition of the founders of the Club 100 years ago, with the added attraction of a barbecue at Muir to follow. Pickles and I wanted to be part of that celebration (particularly the barbecue!), but had decided to do something different in the way of the hill-walk to get away from the masses - an ascent of the four, four thousand foot Cairngorm peaks (from Linn of Dee!!).

The details of the planned walk are: ascend the four four thousand foot peaks, Cairn Toul (4241ft.) Braeriach (4248ft.), Cairngorm (4084ft.) and Ben Macdhuì (4296ft.) plus some of the lesser summits, Angel's Peak, Cairn Lochan and Sron na Lairig. This involves some 9000ft. of climbing and a total distance of about 37 miles which translate into a 17 hour stroll!

We set out from the end of the Derry Lodge road (we later learned that some lazy people got a *lift* up to Derry Lodge!!) at 12.30 pm on the Saturday afternoon and followed the 'tourist route' to Corrour Bothy which we reached at about 3.00 pm. The weather had been very good to this point, which was just as well because Pickles was wearing only shorts! After a brief stop, during which we watched another section of the 'masses' on a sponsored walk through the Lairig, we set off for Cairn Toul. Instead of going up by the usual way (up to the Cairn Toul — Devil's Point bealach and turning right) we decided on a direct approach, up what is probably the south-east ridge of Cairn Toul, straight to the summit. The slog up to the ridge was not the most enjoyable 1000ft. of the walk. Higher up the route gives some pretty good scrambling, on massive slabs of granite set at an inviting angle, if the ridge is kept to, and provides much more interest than the conventional approach — highly recommended. 5.00 pm saw the summit of Cairn Toul, the approach of a change in the weather to the north and a considerable drop in the temperature. This was more like the standard hill weather we are used to.

As we set off for Braeriach, its summit was shrouded in cloud. By the time we reached the Wells of Dee, having crossed Angel's Peak and the South Plateau of Braeriach, it was miserably cold for the time of year (midsummer, indeed!) and there was a good bit of snow on this, Britain's largest expanse of land over 4000ft. in altitude. Included in this part of the walk was a short detour to the small rise known as Stob Coire an Lochain. This was a 'demoted' top which I had not climbed - a Munro 'bagger' to the end! The summit of Braeriach was a gey dreich place that evening and I had to put on all the warm clothes I normally save for winter. We left the summit at about 6 pm and headed over Sron na Lairig for the Sinclair Hut where we had a rest, a cup of hot chocolate and a snooze for about an hour.

We changed from our original plan to gain the Cairngorm Plateau by going straight up the nose of Creag an Leth-choin to an easier route up Lurcher's Gully to Lurcher's Meadow (or Faicall an Leth-choin). By now I was getting pretty knackered and the steepish pull up on to Cairn Lochan just about finished me, so I was glad of Pickles' agreement to a rest before the final pull up on to Cairngorm. A few glucose tablets and a lot of effort later we made the third summit of the walk, at about 2.30 am. By now the surrounding peaks were clear and we could even see a lighthouse on the Moray Firth. On the summit we met up with a guy from Inverness who claimed to have done everything possible in the ski-ing world — twice! — plus a fair bit of climbing as well. His idea of a good hillwalk was one where he could yell 'punters!' at all the groups of people he passed. This was good, coming from him, as he was dressed in jet pants, plastic boots and a ski jacket — a punter himself!

We were accompanied by him as far as Ben Macdhui where, in between the flurries of snow, we saw a spectacular sunrise and Pickles finished off his camera film. This summit was the busiest one we had visited so far; we shared the top with two tents, four mountain bikes and about 15 people. Our final descent of the walk took us down the Sron Riach ridge with Pickles racing ahead. (He claims he can't go slowly downhill but I think he's just disgustingly fit). By the time I got to the foot of the ridge in Glen Luibeg he was nearly asleep — so we had our third rest.

An hour or so later, feeling much refreshed, we headed back to Derry Lodge and the landrover track, calling in at the new Luibeg Bothy en route to write our names in the log book. When we got to the road, we couldn't face the walk up to the Linn of Dee bridge so we just waded the Dee and reached Muir at about 8.00 am.

After changing, we climbed into Fraser's car and fell asleep, to be awakened some hours later by the sound of clanking beer cans and the smell of the Cairngorm Club barbecue.

I even got a day off school on Monday!

Stuart Stronach

ORIGINAL ROUTE on SHADOW BUTTRESS A — LOCHNAGAR

'A good route.

Start in the bay near the foot of Shallow Gully. Climb to a gully to reach the spiral terrace, then go right to its upper end. Climb a narrow rib overlooking Shadow Chimney to its top. Start up leftwards, then go right to reach a causeway on the crest leading to a small tower below the plateau'.

Winter Climbs Cairngorms, John Cunningham.

Up till Friday night, our plans for the weekend had been to climb South East Gully on Creag an Dubh Loch. That all changed when Hal phoned. We suggested Parallel A on Lochnagar, he suggested Shadow A. After a two second conference, we agreed.

A 6 am start was not the most enjoyable part of the day, but once we got up and going, it got better. A look out the window made things better still — there was a light dusting of snow on the ground and hardly a cloud in the sky. Hal arrived at ten to seven and after the usual plod of a walk in, we reached the first aid box in the corrie at 10.30 am.

About an hour later, Hal was banging in pitons at the first belay. While he was doing this, dad decided that a rope of three would move too slowly! — see Tom Patey's *The Art of Climbing Down Gracefully* and so it was left to Hal and me. At the first belay Hal showed me the two pitons he had banged in. "This one here's not so good but the other one's a lot better", he said, pulling out the good one with his hands! A quick check round revealed a better placement nearby. A great start!

Here Hal informed me that he'd never led a climb this hard before. "That's O.K." I said, "I've never seconded a climb this hard before!" (Hal was fresh back from Ben Nevis where he'd done Minus 3 Gully and Orion Face Direct with Tony Brindle). He offered me the first lead but I respectfully declined, saying I might lead something a bit further up! The first pitch was a gully with an icy step half way up. Hal cut a nice big step in the ice so it was rather easy for me to follow him up. His belay was a fine snow ledge with two in-situ pegs in the rock above him. Once again I was offered the lead, but this time I said "Yes".

My pitch was a traverse along a snow ledge banked up to 60°. It was just a case of shuffling along, ignoring the exposure that had opened up below my feet. I used a friend (the metal kind) for the first time as a runner before I turned up onto a snow ramp which forms the kink that makes the Spiral Terrace spiral. Half way up this ramp I spotted a good crack and so set up a belay. A hex in the crack was combined with another friend to keep me attached. Hal quickly joined me and after handing over the gear, he led on round a corner. Suddenly he seemed to be moving much slower, indicating to me that he must have hit a hard bit. Not long after, I got the call to come up. Half way up the pitch, Hal shouted down that we were no longer alone — a second party had moved into my recently vacated stance. The hard bit wasn't too bad, just a bit of soft snow on rocks. As I reached Hal, I noticed the crux above us. A five foot overhang up a flat topped block, which was the start of a hundred foot rocky rib, did little for moral. My first reaction was "How the hell am I going to get up that?" I looked for alternatives but crampon scratches on the side of the rib showed that this was the only way. Hal's belay was 20 feet short of the bottom of the rib so he asked me to go on up to an in-situ sling. I also found a good nut placement, making sure that we had a solid belay. Hal was making noises about preferring the chimney to the right but, after putting one of his axes back on his rucksack, he made a couple of half-hearted attempts at the overhang. It was as the second party caught us up that he dropped the bombshell. "Do you want to have a go?" Now I did know that the climb was only Moderate in summer so, casting aside doubt, I said yes — again! My first thought was that I would rock climb my way up, but after an inspection, I decided that if I swapped axes (I was climbing with one long axe and one short) I would be able to hook the long

one behind a flake at the back of the ledge. Using a small foothold Hal had failed to notice, I belly-flopped my way up. No points for style — but it worked.

I was now sitting legs astride a small block. I found a good runner and then realised my next problem — how to stand up. I got as far as my knees before going back to my original position. Then my whole attitude changed. Instead of my usual reaction to leading (which is to get scared and panic!), I got slightly angry with myself. Suddenly the holds appeared and I edged my way onto the face of the rib, thinking that the difficulties were past. Wrong! I was now teetering on the front points of my crampons with the only obvious foothold three feet to my right. Reaching it was easy (I have long legs) but the trick was how to get my weight from my left foot to this new hold. Again using the long axe, I hooked it round the edge of the rib and pulled, pushing on the flat face with my other hand. Then the axe decided to unhook itself. That was not good, but the pushing hand held firm as I replaced the tool and completed the move. From this new foothold, I could reach the snow-ice above and completed the pitch with no more problems. The belay at the top was totally bomb-proof — a massive spike. Safely attached, I brought Hal up. He found the pitch tricky — because he hadn't bothered to retrieve his other axe — and at one point suggested that he might need a pull on the rope. However, he completed the pitch without it.

The next pitch was his. It looked easy as far as I could see, so I was annoyed and cold when Hal took over three quarters of an hour to get up. By the time it was my turn to climb, I had been joined by the other two climbers, and the leader followed me up the pitch hard on my heels. Turning a bend in the groove I was following, I came across the difficulty that had held up Hal. A twenty five foot ice chimney barred the way. However, next to it was what looked like an easy alternative — a snow ramp heading in the same direction with footsteps up it. Reaching the top of this I discovered why Hal opted for the chimney. The way was barred by a three foot blank wall topped by soft snow. Back to the chimney. It was a thrutchy affair which involved swapping axes half way up and ended when I got a placement in some frozen turf. Vegetation may spoil the route in summer but it sure as hell helps in winter.

I joined Hal and led on up a rising ramp with an awkward move half way up. I did this pitch of 100ft. with no runners; on a 30ft. climb at the sea cliffs I may use three or four; strange how attitudes change in different situations. The belay at the top was a reasonable spike, but what made it better was that I was able to cut myself a seat. The top was now in view a couple of hundred feet above, and dad was visible at the top of Parallel Gully B. Hal's next pitch was a continuation of the ramp I followed, but it was noticeably steeper. Fortunately, the good snow seemed to be holding out and the pitch went easily enough, though there was a twisting of ropes when the second party climbed past my belay to one further up. Above loomed the tower — a final sting in the tail.

My lead. A ladder of footsteps up a six foot corner provided the incentive to go. Once up them, I found myself on top of a large boulder which I assumed was well attached. The 'ladder' now went directly up the face of the tower and looked horrendous. Here, the snow deteriorated to three or four inches of hoar frost on top of bare rock with occasional bits of ice, and soft snow on a 'ledge' (a momentary lessening of the steepness) at half way before the tower continued as a short overhang topped by a slab. I felt ever-so-slightly intimidated but there was nothing else to do — I had spotted a rope sling higher up at the top of the overhang. The placement of the short axe on my right was good, but I didn't trust the long axe in softer snow. I stepped on to the first hold, brought my left foot on to the second, and retreated down to my ledge, pulling away some of the precious ice with me. This was more my usual attitude! Then it struck me that if I didn't get up, we were stuck. I went for it again, praying my feet stayed on the steps. They did.

Once established on the ledge, I was just about to shout down to Hal that it was the hardest thing I'd ever led, when I realised that I still had the hard bit to go. I

clipped on to the runner and looked at what lay before me; ten feet of hoar frosted slab, split by a half hidden crack. I took a swing hoping to find something good. All I succeeded in doing was dislodging a load of frost which the wind pelted into my face. It was so cold. It stung like hell and my forehead ached. More swings, with similar results, convinced me that it would take a better climber than me to climb the tower in these conditions.

Looking for alternatives, I spotted steps in Shallow Gully on the left. Forced to abandon a krab, I asked to be lowered down to the belay — it was all I could do to climb up, I could never retreat without top rope protection. I did my best to climb down but came off at one point. Safely back down to the belay, I told Hal what I intended to do and he agreed, commenting that the tower looked like the final crux pitch of Orion Face Direct. The traverse went easily and I ended up on the other side of the gully, on the edge of Central Buttress, with a small cornice only a hundred feet above up a simple snow slope.

Hal came across and carried on to the top. However, his line took him out of sight and sound, and when the rope ran out, I just followed after him, up huge 'bucket' steps. Hal came into view in a small alcove twenty feet short of the top, so I climbed past him and on to the top up a simple snow slope less steep than Black Spout. We agreed not to bother about a belay at the top and Hal emerged as I took in the rope.

The climb was finished. After the usual handshakes and congratulations, Hal volunteered to take the rope on the descent and we hurried down after dad with the setting sun in our backs.

Stuart Stronach

Footnote - It is interesting to compare the above with the article in CCJ No 74 p149 - Shadow Buttress 'A' - Lochnagar, by G. Roy Symmers, which describes a climb with W.A. Ewen on 18th September 1932. The climbing techniques may have changed and the style of the article may not be the same, but the attitudes and feelings of the climbers are revealed as remarkably similar after 56 years - Editor.

TRANSPORT

The footnote to the previous article refers to one of the climbers on Lochnagar in 1932, the late W.A. Ewen, who was editor of the Journal, 1934-1953. Graham Ewen has kindly given permission for the reproduction of the following previously unpublished article, which was amongst his father's papers - Editor.

You will have noticed in Journal 97 a short article on an ascent of Cairngorm last century, the writer having reached Ryvoan from Nethybridge in a horse brake. That's how it was when the Club was founded and so it continued for another 35 years. To get anywhere you had to start really early — 3 am perhaps. Of course you could have completed your sleep in the brake; it was necessary only that the coachman should stay awake!

If you look at the one inch O.S. Map, Sheet 42 (Ballater), you will see marked, just below Inchnabobart in Glen Muick, the word 'Ford' from which a rough track leads up to the public road on the east side of the glen. You might well wonder why there was a ford leading from practically nothing to practically nowhere but, at that time, this was the public road to Allnaguibhsaich, serving a wider public than the handful of residents in upper Glen Muick. The car had hardly arrived on Upper Deeside but one, John F. Harper, Postmaster to H.M. the King, offered for hire horse-drawn brakes, wagonettes and the like to take parties to Lochnagar, or elsewhere, in the summer season. Thus it was that I came to make my first visit to Lochnagar, via the ford at Inchnabobart, in August 1922, with a family party in a two-

horse brake.

It wasn't necessary, of course, to start very early; it is a matter of eight miles and I do not remember the journey being either slow or tedious. Those were more leisurely days and we were fortunate in that the sun shone. It was not only the pre-car age, it was also the pre-plastics age and this was very much a picnic outing. In those days you carried crockery (second best), cutlery, stove, tea-kettle, bottles of liquid refreshments, white tablecloth and sundry other unnecessary refinements. It was also pre-rucksack; my father carried the lot in a leather portmanteau to the Foxes' Well. Prodigious! I don't know what the cost was for hiring the brake — the equivalent in today's terms of two gallons of petrol (plus tip to the coachman pro-rata) I imagine. I remember I was adjured to stay well away from the edge of the cliff lest I be blown over in a sudden gust of wind. There wasn't a breath of wind all day but maybe it instilled in me a suitable respect for those wild, unchancy acres.

That, however was the end of an era; by 1923, certainly by 1924, John F. Harper had abandoned the horses in favour of the charabanc, which proved much less reliable than the horses and, of course, could not cope with the Inchnabobart ford. They may have gone to Spital, I don't know, but the south road was very bad and very narrow then. The charabancs had a short life, being superseded by the bus within a very few years.

In 1924, five of us, all Gordon's Boys, camped for a spell at Maggie Gruer's, Inverey, resolved to walk off the debilitating effects of too much Shakespeare and a lot else. We still had a transport problem, although the situation had eased a little; we had a bicycle — one bicycle. You might think that one bicycle was not of much use in the circumstances, but you would be wrong. If you had walked from Maggie Gruer's to the summit of Lochnagar and back, you would have learned that it is near bliss to take your weight off your feet when your turn of the bicycle comes round again. So we cannot claim to have walked all the way from Inverey to Lochnagar and back, since one fifth of the road journey was accomplished on a pedal cycle. I suppose it is all of thirty miles, say twenty-six or more on foot and three or four by cycle — quite enough for one day certainly. Little remains in my memory except that it was a good day and that, as we rounded Cairn Taggart en route for the Stuic, we came across the remains of a wooden hut. Some years later I came across A.J. McConnachie's book on Lochnagar and discovered the origin of the hut and of its odd history. Apparently the Laird of Invercauld had acquired a number of ex-army huts surplus to requirements in the Crimean War, one being erected on Cairn Taggart to house workmen who were building a fence there. McConnachie implies that it had actually been used in the Crimea as a shelter hut and re-shipped to this country after the conflict. The Army is not as a rule so economically minded. There was nothing else remarkable about the journey, bar one thing. We must have shared the bike pretty equitably, since nobody had any complaints on that score.

In 1925 I attended the inauguration of the Ben Macdhuì Indicator, cycling from Ballater, leaving at 6 am — so as to be sure of being in time! — and getting home around midnight. How the other one hundred and thirty plus people reached the Derry I don't know, since I arrived ahead of them and returned after they had gone. They may have had a bus, or charabanc, and there were a few cars by that time (the bullnosed Morris) but the general transport situation hadn't changed very much.

In my impecunious student days I cycled several times to Lochnagar, often alone, which came near to altering my life. Twice I met an elderly gentleman on or near the summit, a regular visitor to Ballater, who had also cycled to Allt'naguibhsaich. On our second meeting he invited me to consider becoming a tea-planter in Assam when I finished University. He had, apparently, interests or influence or both in a tea garden there. I had only to go and see him. My goodness, there were many times in my later life, faced with a class of near idiots, when I regretted not having gone to Assam.

By 1929 a public bus was running to Braemar and this opened up new possibilities

for us. In April 1929, three of us determined to take the last bus to Braemar, find some sheltering bield for the darkest hours and climb Ben Macdhui the next day. We still had a lot to learn but at least we had discovered the usefulness of a torch. It was a frosty night and the only way to keep tolerably warm was to keep walking. So we arrived, before sun-up, at the summit of the mountain. The moment the sun rose the landscape was transformed; the picture was unforgettable — the blues of the shadow side of Macdhui, the rosy flush on the snow on Cairn Toul, the dark red shadow under the cornices in the Garbh Choire, all set against a pale green sky — exactly the tints of Edward Wilson's Antarctic watercolours. Marvellous, unsurpassed in my experience.

We descended to the Shelter Stone and, as usual, we were late back. Indeed we reached Inverey with one hour left to catch the bus — the last bus out of Braemar that day. Footsore and sun-burned we made the best time we could and just made it. It was late in leaving but we didn't mind — we were sitting down. The bus brought Macdhui a little bit closer but didn't help much with Lochnagar. Occasionally we were flush enough to hire a taxi to Spital but these days were few enough. Still, I liked my bike. Do you know that you can free wheel all the way from Alltnguighsaich to Ballater with no more than three short stretches where you have to pedal? Of course, you have to get up there first!

W.A. Ewen

LETTERS FROM AMERICA

In September 1987, Jeanetta McLeod Ross wrote from New York asking for a copy of CCJ No 100. Unfortunately there were no spare copies, but a copy of No 99 was sent to her. The exchange of correspondence produced an interesting 'exile's view of home' and also some reminiscences which will strike a few chords with those of us who were doing similar things in those days - Editor.

New York,
U.S.A.

October 15, 1987

Dear Cairngorm Club:

In the 50s as teenagers and Cairngorm hikers noting things like the Glen More Center, we lamented the fact that "they'd seen be sellin fishn'chips at the top o' Dhui!" Last year in the bothy visitors' book I affirmed that I would never tell anyone where the bothy was. And between the 50s and the 80s, with a Nature Center on Lochnagar, time-shares in Ballater, nasty bulldozed scars on Ben a Bhuid, two bulldozed roads up Glen Ey, Derry Lodge vandalized, Bob Scott's bothy gone — our dire predictions seem close to actual fact.

And I know I'm being selfish. I suppose I should be willing to share 'my' hills with others but — it bothers me that in a television program HRH Prince Charles stated that "Dark Lochnagar, written by Tennyson..." I'm concerned that statements like that are indicative of a carelessness (or non-caring attitude) being directed at the hills. 'Nagar was obviously meaningful to Byron, I doubt that Tennyson ever knew it existed.

And I know I'm being petty. And in truth I have not even been on Lochnagar since 1959 so maybe the nature reserve is working and it is in fact protecting the owls and deer we used to find on the hill — its just that time-sharing suggests new people every week, and new people trekking the same old path ... well, I guess I worry about erosion (or lack of respect).

When they developed the Aviemore side we thought "aye, aye but skiers are ham

n'eggors" (and soft) "Aberdonians are bothy lads" (and tough), "we'd never let that happen Braemar way". (And now they're time-sharing in Ballater!)

Last year I sat at the Luibeg ruin (faint foundation of charred stone and stick). It amazed me the place was so tiny, it never seemed so from inside. I remember coming through the Lairig alone on my 18th birthday and taking photographs of Bob Scott. I don't remember being afraid to go through the Lairig alone but I do remember being too scared to answer Bob's booming voice as he stood silhouetted in the doorway next morning "Are ye awake girrul?" (I was too chicken to face breakfast with Bob and Mrs. Scott so I sat very still and pretended not to hear). I still don't know why I did that; a group of us had had cups of tea 'in the main hoose' before but this time I was alone, I suppose I thought I'd have to 'talk'.

And as I sat by the ruin I thought "but you **can** take it with you, because if Bob Scott had been here there wouldn't have been a fire". It's not that I'm being vindictive but I thought "O.K. if they can't take care of the hills and the bothies they won't have them, I'll just have to be glad that I had them back then".

But the truth is I want them now and I want them in the future — to be the way they were back then — and I want the hills to be for individual wanderers, or little groups of twos and threes (not bloody bus loads of tourists with video cameras and tape recorders recording the 'sounds of nature' — ("...and here's the cute sound of the sweet little Falls of Muck, gurgling over the stones, and here's a curlew calling below the King's favourite butt".)

And I **know** there are guardians of the hills and I know that there are others, **there**, (not 3,000 miles away), actively working to protect the hills, the ptarmigan, the freedom, the space, the air, the cold, the stoney paths, the barren hills, who will protect this land where you can wander all day and feel that nobody has **ever** been there before. And then, when you're lost and cold and very scared and the mist is low and it starts to rain, to find a little cairn to show "right enough, people have been here before, maybe even a long, long time ago, but there — that's the way home". And you still feel lonely, bone weary and wet, but very connected, to all the wanderers, drovers, soldiers and ghillies who've past this way and loved the hills.

Sincerely,
Jeanetta McLeod Ross

New York,
U.S.A.

November 13, 1987

Dear Mr. Chessell:

I was very happy to receive issue 99. Thank you for letting me have it.

I would be delighted if you printed my letter but if you do will you delete both references to (in the first paragraph) and substitute 'bothy', (so that I can keep my promise).

I don't know what to tell you about myself. I'm nobody important. This year I became Secretary of the New York Caledonian Club and I'm quite pleased about that. I'm an Aberdonian born and bred; married an American in London (he was studying at the London School of Economics), we went home to Los Angeles, eventually divorced and I came to New York. I got my B.A. (sociology) at New York University and now work at NYU School of Law (secretary to a labor lawyer).

I love this city (8 million people from all over the world packed into a few square miles — dynamic and exciting), and the University is a great place to work; (the students are bright, enthusiastic, ambitious, hard working). I live in the neighborhood so can walk to work. The neighborhood also is great, I can go round to the deli. at 2 in the morning and there will still be people in the street — it's fun, exciting, stimulating

and — it's so nice to know that the hills are there, and please God may the 8 million people never find them.

A lot of the experiences from the hills have held me in good stead in New York. One of my first hikes was over Jock's Road with an SYHA group. We'd spent the night at Glendoll and a bus had taken us to one end and would meet us at the other. Instead of leaving my pack on the bus I took the whole weekend load with me. The guys suggested I go back and leave it on the bus, I insisted I'd be fine and they said "great you'll carry it" and through the whole trip none of these big hefty lads ever offered a hand — long slog! Lesson learned: you're an equal, you're capable, you handle your own load.

One Hogmanay I decided at the last minute to go to the hills on my own and caught the last bus from Bon-Accord Street. I'd planned on Braemar, it turned out the terminus that night was Ballater. Problem two, Ballater Hostel was officially closed. The Warden (an older lady) and her son reluctantly and apprehensively let me stay and took me with them to a party. All the young girls were in beautiful party dresses and I was in boots, cords, and torn shirt — but, I'm a very nice dancer. I had a great time. Lesson learned? — I suppose that I could be feminine **and** strong, (or, country people are very accepting). I now dance with the New York Branch of the RSCDS.

Another time I was at Luibeg on my own for a few days and a party of Gordonstoun schoolboys arrived. The masters stayed in the bothy, the boys were camping and for a few days we hiked together. I'm not sure what I learned from that trip. I had fun. I think my being there scared the masters a little, they didn't know what to make of me. The boys' personalities may be the main thing that stuck in my mind, how different they each were — the cheeky lad, charmer, shirker, the one 'on the hill under protest', family historian ... all very sweet, nice kids. (Photo enclosed). Do you know who any of them are?

As far as I know I don't know any Cairngorm Club members. Often I hiked on my own, mainly though with the SYHA group. We took the 3.15 Saturday or the 7.15 Friday night. We danced at Braemar Saturday nights, tried to look grown-up and serious in the Fife Public Bar Sunday evenings and going home sang bothy ballads and hiking songs and in a delicious, exhausted daze watched the black night, the River Dee, the trees, a puckle o' hooses, a bridge, a sleeping town, all roll by. Then the final proud gather-it-all-together-3-abreast march down Union Street to the Queen, grubby, blistered and fair chuft w'oorsels, past the casual strollers comin oot o' the pictures. We didn't care if we were mucky — we'd earned it.

With best regards.

Sincerely,
Jeanetta Ross

encls. photos, then and now.

P.S. I've been back 4 times in the past few years.

THE THREE HIGHEST CAIRNGORMS ON SKI

It was early April and a ridge of high pressure had settled over Scotland. In Aberdeen, Spring was in the air, but I knew the high tops of the Cairngorms would have a good covering of snow, acquired during the long winter of arctic blizzards which had swept across the elevated plateaux ...

The ski tour over the Cairngorm 4000ers is a justifiably, popular outing, involving some fairly challenging descents along with serious navigation problems should the weather close in. Most folk chose to start at Cairngorm (possibly using the chairlift) and continue over Macdui, Cairn Toul and Braeriach in that order, crossing the Lairig Ghru low down near Corroul. It seemed to me however that a more aesthetic trip could be made by starting at the Linn of Dee, thus avoiding any moral dilemmas

concerning the Cairngorm Chairlift Co., and also crossing the Lairig Ghru fairly near the watershed, making a more 'natural' route.

So a plan was devised: I would start at the Linn of Dee and cycle as far up past Derry Lodge as possible, then ski over Macdui and whatever else I could, hopefully returning to my starting point in a fairly comfortable day.

Everything went as planned, once the technical problems of cycling with skis were overcome (beware of low slung branches in Derry woods) and by 9 am I was skinning up the Sron Riach, the bike stowed away down at Robbers' Copse. The day looked promising; the sky was blue and the snow plentiful and in excellent condition, thawing slightly but not too soft yet. One of the great joys of ski-mountaineering is being able to travel long distances comfortably, in snow conditions which would be slow and laborious for the climber on foot — this would certainly be the case, I thought, later in the day.

As I steadily climbed higher, clouds engulfed the ridge from the north, but they were thin and I could make out the pale yellow disc of the sun overhead. Then, on reaching the top of Sron Riach itself, the mists rolled back dramatically to reveal the triangular aspect of Stob Coire Sputan Dearg thrusting out of a turbulent sea of cloud. I became very excited, as the situation was quite superb, and even started singing aloud. Eventually I calmed down and continued up the wide snowfields overlooking the Tailors' Burn, revelling in the sunny, windless conditions. Over in the east, the distant tors of Ben Avon were just protruding through the blanket of cloud, showing the starting point of what must rank as a very satisfying day's ski-mountaineering — the traverse over Beinn a' Bhuird and the four 4000ers — first completed by Adam Watson Jnr. in 1962.

In seemingly no time I had reached the summit cairn of Ben Macdui where I was surprised to be greeted by a mysterious figure, hidden behind mirror specs and sun cream, who apparently recognised me. It turned out to be Sandy Allan who I had first met in a queue on Ben Nevis and since bumped into a couple of times. He had skied up over Cairngorm with a couple of friends and intended continuing round Cairn Toul and Braeriach, so it seemed our paths would cross again, somewhere on the other side of the Lairig Ghru.

Even as I skied northwards off Macdui the thought of getting over to Cairngorm was still in my head but on reaching the col at the head of the Feith Buidhe low clouds appeared from the north, covering the plateau and I made a decision. Rather than navigating back and forth to Cairngorm in the mist I could enjoy 560m of superb skiing down the Allt a'Choire Mhoir, and best of all, the sun. So I made a short traverse back south and was soon making glorious sweeping turns down the wide coire, poised above the Lairig Ghru, gradually degenerating into traverses and kick turns as my legs began to feel the pace and the snow softened drastically. All too soon I was down in the glen, where I sunbathed, had some lunch and contemplated the next long ascent up the east flank of Braeriach.

After a steep initial climb out of the Lairig Ghru the angle eased and soon I reached the sloping floor of Coire Ruadh where I stopped to look at part of an aeroplane engine protruding from the snow. Apparently there are a couple of wartime crash sites in this area — I remembered seeing some wreckage higher up on Sron na Lairige during a previous summer visit. In one of his books, Hamish Brown tells of finding here an old flying boot, complete with bones inside ... I had a wee look for anything as exciting, but was unsuccessful.

As I continued up the narrow shoulder, a short steepening forced me to carry my skis. Floundering on foot through the deep wet snow, cursing and swearing, I fully realised the benefit of skis in the present snow conditions, and was mightily relieved to step once more into the bindings as the ridge levelled.

Unfortunately now, thin clouds had moved up from the Spey Valley, completely obscuring the view, and I skied over Braeriach without even noticing the summit!

Huge cornices on my left testified to the might of the mid-winter storms, and marked the line of my route round the Garbh Coires — Dhaidh and Mor. The mists were thin, as they had been earlier in the day, and I navigated across the plateau using the sun, and another useful technique, following other ski tracks!

At last I trundled down out of the clouds into the sun again, passing Sandy and friends someway west of Sgor an Lochain Uaine. Strangely, the pall of cloud seemed only confined to Braeriach; Cairn Toul was completely clear, and looked magnificent, principally, I think, because it signified the end of the climbing for the day.

I skirted Sgor an Lochain Uaine by its southern slopes and began the final slog up Cairn Toul, probably the most interesting of all the Cairngorm peaks. The terrain here was very rocky and it was only after many zig-zags that I reached the airy summit at 4.30 pm.

The final long descent to Corrou bothy was a worthy end to the day's skiing. It started easily enough, down the broad south slope of Stob Coire an t-Saighdeir, where I experienced an incredible feeling of surrounding space and ease of movement. This contrasted sharply with the confines of Coire Odhar, under the Devil's Point, where I was forced into some testing turns down the headwall — probably the steepest ground of the day, under the threat of a creaking cornice. The angle then eased and the final run down the line of the burn was a relaxing finish — a ribbon of snow leading all the way to the bothy itself.

Resting in the grass enjoying my cherished tin of grapefruit segments, I realised the descent from Cairn Toul, some 700m above, had taken only 20 minutes.

All that remained now, was the long trudge round the never-ending side of Carn a' Mhaim, back to the bike, and the comfort of a seat for the final miles to the Linn of Dee.

Down here it was Spring again ...

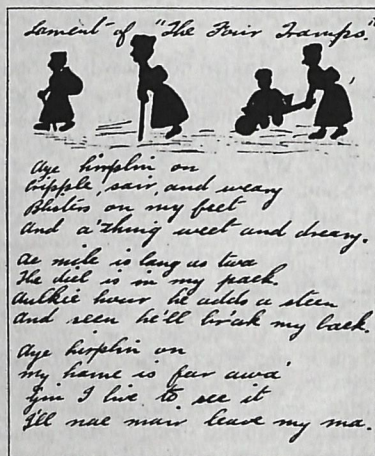
Alastair Matthewson

LAMENT OF 'THE FOUR TRAMPS'

Aye Hirplin on
Cripple, sair and weary
Blisters on my feet
And a' thing weat and dreary.

Ae mile is lang as twa
The deil is in my pack
Aulkie hoor he adds a steen
And seen he'll brak my back.

Aye hirplin on
My hame is far awa'
Gin I live to see it
I'll nae mair leave my Ma.



Written on a postcard (stamp a halfpenny) and sent to 'The Tramps', c/o Post Office, Blair Atholl, The postmark is Aberdeen, dated July 3rd, 1911. I found it in a photograph album given to me by Miss Janet Ross, aged 96.

Jean A. Callander

W. A. POUCHER ON BEN MACDHUI

News of the death in August 1988 at the good age of 96 of W. A. Poucher prompts the suggestion that our *Journal* might record the following story about him, as reported to me by one of his publishers and copied now from notes of its telling at the 1977 Club Dinner:

Everybody knows who Poucher is, the expert photographer he has been of the mountain scene, the practical, helpful, down-to-earth, slightly dogmatic advice his mountain books have provided.

But *not* everybody knows his real-life profession. For most of his life - he must be quite old now - a chemist, on the staff of Yardleys. In that capacity, he became a considerable authority on the scientific 'recipes' for the kinds of thing that company sells. I know, because in my earlier days in my business there came up for production every few years a reprint, or new edition, of one or other of the three volumes in the three-volume work published by Chapman & Hall called Poucher: *Perfumes, Cosmetics & Soaps*, quite a formidable title for quite some textbook.

Well, within Yardleys, in the thirties, forties & fifties I imagine, Poucher was a great protagonist for the idea - quite new then, though almost commonplace now - that if, as was demonstrably the case, there was a vast market for perfumes, cosmetics and soaps among the female of the species, then there must be a potential market for same, at least of some profitable dimension, among *men*. 'Cosmetics for men'. I believe he pressed his view within Yardleys with something like missionary zeal. At any rate, his friends and associates were aware of the fact that he was practising what he was preaching: he was using his *own* preparations.

His friends also knew of his periodic departures from the English scene, on photographic forays, often in the mountains of Scotland. Particular friends one year, without knowledge of where Poucher was at the time, decided to have a holiday on Speyside, and, when there, found their way on to the Ben MacDhui plateau. As sometimes happens, the mist came down, in earnest, and visibility was so bad as to cause them, after a good deal of floundering, just a little apprehension, which was turning into something worse, when - no it wasn't footsteps they were aware of - they *sniffed* something. One of them - with a shout of relief and a whiff of instant identification - called out to the other: "It's Poucher!" And sure enough, in a few moments, the tall, reassuring figure of Poucher, camera round his neck, strode out of the mist towards them. And his sure knowledge of the ground got them safely down the hill.

Harold Watt

THE FOUR PEAKS RECORD

Club Member, Mel Edwards holds the Men's Record for the Four Peaks run, in a time of 4hrs 34mts 08 sec (reported in CCJ Vol. 19 No 98).

On 16th July 1988, Kath Butler, Aberdeen (34 years old) was the first woman to establish a time over the same route, of 6hrs 44mts 58sec. The standard route is: Glenmore Lodge, Braeriach, Cairn Toul, Ben Macdui, Cairngorm, Glenmore Lodge, comprising 25 miles and 7,600 ft of climbing.

The run raised £365 for Aberdeen Sports Council.

BOOK REVIEWS

Shackleton. Roland Huntford, Hodder and Stoughton, 1985, £30.00

The author deals briefly with Shackleton's early life, first of all at Kilkea in Ireland and latterly at Sydenham in London where his father had a doctors' practice. He left school at the age of 16 and joined the Merchant Navy, where he rose to be third officer on a ship of the Union Castle Line.

The book however is mainly concerned with his polar expeditions. The first was with Scott in 1901/03 when he was in the party which set a new record for 'Furthest South' of 82° 17' S, beating that of 78° 58' S set by Borchgrevinck four years earlier. The party endured great hardships and were greatly troubled by scurvy, especially Shackleton, who was, as a result of this invalided home by Scott on the relief ship in 1903.

Shackleton felt disgraced at being invalided home and determined to return to the Antarctic with his own expedition. He became Secretary of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society, but much of his time was spent looking for backers for such an expedition. He finally succeeded in getting his expedition off the ground in 1907, largely thanks to the generosity of William Beardmore, a Dundee industrialist. The expedition was remarkably successful, although they did not succeed in reaching the Pole. They did, however, discover the Beardmore Glacier which they ascended to the Polar Plateau and reached 88° 23' S, only 97 miles from the Pole and that was 360 miles nearer than the achievement of 1903. A party also made the first ascent of Mount Erebus. Shackleton became a national hero on his return, but much of his time was spent travelling and lecturing to raise money to pay off the debts that his expedition had accumulated.

In 1914 he set off on his second expedition, this time with the aim of crossing the Continent from Vahsel Bay on the Weddell Sea to McMurdo Sound on the Ross Sea, via the South Pole. He was however destined never to reach Vahsel Bay. The ship was trapped and finally crushed by the ice of the Weddell Sea. The book describes the story of his incredible escape from this predicament — the patient wait on the ice as it drifted northwards, the journey in the ship's boats from the edge of the ice to Elephant Island, the very hazardous journey across the Southern Ocean to South Georgia and finally the first crossing of the mountains of South Georgia to get help from the whaling station at Stromness Bay. Then the remainder of the crew had to be rescued from Elephant Island, and after that it was across to the Ross Sea to go to the assistance of his back up party who had also got into difficulties.

Shackleton organised one more expedition, which set off in 1921, but unfortunately he died at Grytviken in South Georgia the night after they got there. Shackleton was buried at Grytviken. The expedition went on under the command of Frank Wild, who had been deputy leader, but little was achieved.

Roland Huntford's previous book about Scott and Amundsen proved rather controversial with his exposure of what he saw as the failings of Scott's expeditions. He does not spare Shackleton some of the same criticisms — the hasty way in which the expeditions were organised, the haphazard way in which he chose the personnel and the complete lack of suitable training prior to the expeditions. He clearly sees Shackleton as a better leader than Scott. Of necessity this book repeats a lot that has been written before but there is quite a lot of new material and it is a very readable book despite its considerable length.

G.E.

Ben Nevis: Britain's Highest Mountain. Ken Crocket. Scottish Mountaineering Trust, 1986, £14.95.

We are all familiar with the District Guide Books published by the Scottish Mountaineering Trust, and perhaps with their Climber's Guide Books, including one to the cliffs of Ben Nevis. This book is the first of what I understand will be a series of comprehensive descriptions of single mountains or small mountain groups. It is appropriate that the first is of Britain's highest mountain and one that has played such a dominating role in the development of Scottish climbing.

The major part of the book describes in some detail the history of climbing on the Ben from the 1880's to the present day. The first recorded ascent seems to have been a winter ascent of no.3 gully by unnamed climbers in the mid-1880's. The first rock climbs on the North Face and its ridges were made by Englishmen, the Hopkinson brothers, in 1892, but the members of the recently formed SMC started serious exploration of the cliffs in 1894. After that, as they say, the rest is history. It is a history involving the greatest names in Scottish climbing, and some of the great names from south of the border as well. The mountain has attracted its share of 'characters', all described with a wealth of anecdotes. Graham MacPhee, in 1931, was given the task of editing the new climber's guide and regularly motored from Liverpool in his Bentley for a week-end's climbing on the Ben picking up a companion in Glasgow on the way. A strange character was Brian Kellett who, whilst a forestry worker at Torlundy, made a number of first ascents in 1942 and 1943, often solo, before being killed on the mountain. The personalities of the climbers come through vividly in the telling, complete with the rivalries and animosities — sometimes trivial. Crocket describes the climbs and climbers in detail with many quotations from contemporary accounts in journals and books and the narrative makes fascinating and often exciting reading.

Though the book naturally is weighted towards a history of climbing on the North Face other aspects of the mountain are included. There are accounts of early visitors and of other modes and types of ascents. The Ben, because it is the highest point in Britain has attracted some very eccentric stunts — ascents by car or with various impediments like bedsteads and pianos — and of course it is the venue of the famous Ben Nevis race. There is a summary of the history of the observatory that was operated on the summit from 1883 - 1904 and there are appendices on Gaelic place-names, the geology, the flora and fauna, and on the mapping of the Ben.

The book is required reading for those interested in the development and history of Scottish climbing and I would recommend it to anyone interested in Scottish mountains because it is such a marvellous portrait of Ben Nevis written enthusiastically by some one who knows it well.

P.H.

Landscapes of Mallorca. Valerie Crespi-Green. Sunflower Books, 1984. £4.95.

Walking in Mallorca. June Parker. Cicerone Press, 1986. £4.95.

Mallorca, away from the beach resorts, is a beautiful island with fine mountains up to 4740 feet, a scale familiar to members. We have been several times for walking holidays on this island, but as in many Mediterranean countries, maps suitable for walking are difficult to obtain and not of the standard we are used to in Britain. Good road maps are readily available: Firestone 1:125,000, RV Reise 1:150,000 and Clyde 1:163,000. These are some help but the topographical detail and footpath marks are insufficient. It was therefore a great pleasure when the Sunflower 'Landscapes of ...' series began to appear. These admirable pocket books cover many Mediterranean islands and the near-Mediterranean Atlantic islands. As well as Mallorca they include: Corfu, Crete, Cyprus, Gran Canaria, Madeira, Rhodes and Tenerife. Guides to The Dolomites and South Tyrol are on the way.

These guides give a few car tours; and indeed in Mallorca, car hire is cheap and gives good access to the round walks. More important, 25 walks, some being open-ended; are given in great detail with accurate descriptions and sketch maps. As an example I quote Route 3, "The guard dog here is extremely menacing, and his chain is long; you can squeeze by just to the left of him". We, and another group from the Club on another occasion, found this just so! The walking routes are graded in difficulty — easy, strenuous, difficult, inadvisable in winter, only for experts and so on; but should present no problems for Club members. Advice is given on when and where to stay, and on using public transport, necessary for open-ended routes. Bus timetables are provided (which you are advised to check on arrival), there are line drawings, colour photographs, a fold-out colour map of the island, language hints and notes on items of interest en route.

All roads radiate from the attractive city of Palma, with its restaurants and services, and you need never visit the 'Ere we go' resorts such as Magaluf and Palma Nova. Advice is given on rights of way, and we have had no problems in this respect, though some members have had trouble with local farmers on Route 15. This is a first-class series and fulfils a great need for hill-walking holidays. We cannot praise them too highly.

June Parker's book is broadly similar, but for walkers only; and includes no car tours. It contains useful incidental information on language, food and local services. There is a good bibliography and sections on geology, natural history and rural industries. Walks are graded C to A + and reasonably accurately timed, as are Valerie's routes. The routes are within the capabilities of all experienced walkers. Sketch maps are more detailed topographically than Valerie's but no more informative.

In both books there are some minor inaccuracies which should not deter one, and sometimes new building can be confusing, as at the beginning of Valerie's walk 5 to El Teix (3500') and El Camino del Archiduque. The only tiresome inaccuracy we discovered was in June's book where the wrong KM stone was given as the starting point of route 27 to S'Alcadena (It should be K18). There are black and white photographs only.

We have used others of the 'Landscapes of ...' series with equal enjoyment, and recommend any members desirous of a relaxing hill-walking holiday away from the rigours of the Scottish weather, to take both these little books to Mallorca at Almond Blossom time. Don't forget your compass and sun-hat!

R. & P. W.

100 Best Routes on Scottish Mountains. Ralph Storar. David & Charles, 1987, £14.95

Typeset in Exmouth; printed in Hong Kong; published in Newton Abbot; the author an Englishman forbye. The critical faculties of the Scots-born reviewer, one who thinks he knows something both about book production and about the Scottish hills, are well honed.

He found the book totally recommendable, both for its form and for its content. Meticulous care has been taken with its presentation, it is beautifully illustrated, the sketch maps are immaculately clear and to the point, no misprint was seen, and the book is well printed and bound. (There is a headline oddity on pp.194-5, and a few page openings have no page numbers).

The contents of the book are nicely structured. Each of the 100 routes is accompanied by all relevant, and no irrelevant, information. The narrative about each uses economy of words but the facts essential for route following are in each case preceded by a paragraph of more general description of the location, in language that is never extravagant, usually just right. The English author almost justifies the label,

given him on the blurb, of 'Scottish Walker' when he invites enjoyment of a 'glorious stravaig' on the Grey Corries ridge. Another ridge, on Beinn Dearg Bheag, is, on the other hand, interestingly described — in his native idiom? — as exhilarating narrow!!

The author's inevitably personal choice of just '100 best' particular walking/scrambling routes needs no defence. Nor do the parameters for his choice: all the routes go over 2000 feet; involve no climbing with a rope; start and finish at the same (accessible by car) place; are encompassible within a single day; and are 'rated' for grade, terrain, degree of navigational challenge and line-of-escape potential. They cover all the hill areas of Scotland (7 are in the Cairngorms).

Greatly daring, but with advice and most usefully, our English author gives the meaning, and simple phonetic guidance to the pronunciation, of all Gaelic names relevant to his routes. (But most Club members would hesitate over Storer's Stoochke before cross-referring to Adam Watson and then finding with some relief that the stuaic is 'commonly' called the *Stooie!*)

The book was planned not for the rucksack but for 'whiling away many an hour in planning, anticipation and reflection'. It will do just that, affording pleasure and instruction to all ages and stages of Scottish-hill lover — not best perhaps to Munro baggers because of the 22 out of the '100' best routes being on hills *under* 3000 feet.

H.M.R.W.

Footnote: H.M.R.W. also provides a modicum of comfort to those who might have been dissuaded from attempting the traverse from Corroul to Dalwhinnie, not as described in Ralph Storer's book, but based on the following information - Editor:-

In at least the first edition of Wilson and Gilbert *The Big Walks*, the magnificent traverse that takes in the four Munros immediately to the north of Ben Alder (Walk 22 in the book) is described as 'an exceptionally long and serious walk over remote mountainous country' and the distance is stated to be 28 miles. That sounds forbidding. But no one need be unduly daunted by the distance, which one of the book's compilers, with friendly grace, acknowledges to be only between 24 and 25 miles. "The walk is across three of my old one-inch maps and this is probably where the error arose".

Speyside Railways. Rosemary Burgess and Robert Kinghorn. Aberdeen University Press 1988, £6.50.

This book is an interesting guide to the railway lines and stations along the valleys of the Rivers Spey, Fiddich and Isla. The routes covered — from Boat of Garten northwards to Craigellachie, and there branching to Elgin and Lossiemouth and to Keith Junction — were the preserves of the old Great North of Scotland Railway, but some Highland Railway Stations on the periphery, such as Fochabers Town, Burghead and Hopeman, are also dealt with. While the work does not basically deal with hill-walking, it will be of interest especially to older members of the Club, many of whom will have travelled on those scenic lines *en route* from Aberdeen to the Aviemore area, to traverse the Cairngorm tops, or go through the passes, to Braemar. (One may still go by rail to Aviemore from Aberdeen by the longer route *via* Inverness, but, with some good connections there, the current time-table shows a remarkably frequent and speedy service). It might be recalled that James A. Parker, a prominent Club member and author of the earlier editions of the *SMC Guide to the Western Highlands*, was from 1906 until 1922, the Engineer to the Great North of Scotland Railway.

The stations and other facilities are described in great detail with information given about the present use of such buildings as remain, after closure of the lines. The

only section of line still in use as such is of course that between Keith Junction and Dufftown, along which travel occasional 'tourist' trains such as the 'Northern Belle' from Aberdeen and others from further afield. The Speyside Walkway, formed out of parts of these lines, is usefully described, as are interesting features — historical and otherwise — of various towns which the lines served. There are no fewer than 126 photographic illustrations, and 17 maps.

Inevitably there is the occasional slip, such as the photograph (No 50) of Knockando Station with a train in it, captioned as 'November 1986'. I suspect that this should read 'November 1968' and that the train is an excursion ran in that month by the G.N.S.R. Association. Moreover, as sometimes seems to happen in local histories, there is some over-simplified criticism of a modern public authority — for example the statement on page 30 dealing with the Craigellachie to Boat of Garten section that 'by the 1960s it was obvious that BR was trying to close the line'. In fact, in 1959 several new passenger halts were opened, and in the line's last years the diesel rail-bus which then worked the service had some of its journeys extended south to Aviemore and north to Elgin from Craigellachie, all this presumably to suit the convenience of passengers and gain additional traffic. But that said, the book remains a most attractive and valuable account of Speyside's railways.

L.McA.

CONTRIBUTIONS

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



THE CAIRNGORM CLUB LIBRARY

Catalogue of Books Arranged by Bookcases at May 1988

The Cairngorm Club Library is in the basement of 24, Albyn Place, Aberdeen. Full sets of keys can be obtained from either the librarian Peter Ward, or from Eddie Martin. Keys to the large bookcase I (upper) are kept by the receptionist at Mr Matthewson's dental surgery next door (22, Albyn Place) and are available during practice hours only. Books should be returned within two months, and can only be borrowed by members.

Compiled by Peter Ward
and Frances Trainer

BOOKCASE 1 (LARGE)

UPPER SECTION

TIER 1:

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|----------------------------------|---|
| ABRAHAM, George D. | British Mountain Climbs
Modern Mountaineering |
| AMERY, Rt. Hon. L.S. | Days of Fresh Air |
| ANDERSON, R.L. | High Mountains and Cold Seas |
| ATKINSON, Tom | The Empty Lands |
| ANG, Tom and POLLARD,
Michael | Walking the Scottish Highlands |
| BAILLIES OF BENNACHIE | The Book of Bennachie
Bennachie Again |
| BARFORD, J.E.Q. | Climbing in Britain |
| BALSILLIE and WESTWOOD | Mid Moor and Mountain |
| BANKS, Mike | Mountaineering for Beginners
Rakaposhi
Commando Climber |
| BAKER, Ernest A. | The British Highlands with Rope and Rucksack |
| BARKER, Ralph | The Last Blue Mountain |
| BAUER, Paul | Kanchenjunga Challenge |
| BELL, J.H.B. | Bell's Scottish Climbs |
| BELL, William | Mountains Beneath the Horizon |
| BELL and BOZMAN | British Hills and Mountains |
| BELLAMY, Rex | Walking the Tops |
| BENNET, Donald | Scottish Mountain Climbs
The Munros |
| BENNET and WALLACE | Ski Mountaineering in Scotland |
| BENNUZZI, Felice | No Picnic on Mount Kenya |
| BICKNELL, Peter | British Hills and Mountains |
| BLUM, Arlene | A Woman's Place |

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| BOARDMAN, Peter | Sacred Summits |
| | The Shining Mountain |
| BOELL, Jacques | High Heaven |
| BONATTI, Walter | The Great Days |
| BORTHWICK, Alistair | Always a Little Further |
| BOWKER, Tom | Mountain Lakeland |
| BROWN and de BEER | The First Ascent of Mount Blanc |
| BONINGTON, Chris | Everest, S.W. Face |
| | Annapurna S. Face |
| | Everest The Hard Way |
| | Kongur |
| | I Chose to Climb |
| | The Everest Years, a Climber's Life |
| | The Next Horizon |
| BONINGTON, et al. | Changabang |
| BONINGTON and CLARKE | Everest. The Unclimbed Ridge |
| BOURDILLON, Jennifer | Visit to the Sherpas |
| BOWMAN, W.E. | The Ascent of Rum Doodle |
| BROWN, Hamish | Hamish's Mountain Walk |
| | Speak to the Hills |
| | Time Gentlemen |
| | Hamish's Groats End Walk |
| | Poems of the Scottish Hills |
| | The Hard Years |
| BROWN, Joe | High Level, The Alps from End to End |
| BRETT, David | Rock Climbing and Mountaineering |
| BRUNNING, C. | |
| BURGESS, R. and | Speyside Railways |
| KINGHORN, R. | Delectable Mountains |
| BUSK, Douglas | The High Mountains |
| BUTTERFIELD, Irvine | Living on the Edge. The Winter Ascent of |
| BREMER-KAMP, Cherie | Kanchenjunga |
| | Smythe's Mountains |
| CALVERT, Harry | The Mountains of Snowdonia |
| CARR and LISTER | 50 years of Alpinism |
| CASSINI, Riccardo | Memoirs of a Mountaineer |
| CHAPMAN, F. Spencer | Subterranean Climbers |
| CHEVALIER, Pierre | Hills and Highways |
| CHORLEY, Katherine C. | Balmoral, Queen Victoria's Highland Home |
| CLARK, R.W. | The Victorian Mountaineer |
| CLARK, Ronald | |
| CLARK, R.W and | Mountaineering in Britain |
| PYATT, E.C. | An Eccentric in the Alps |
| CLARK, R.W. | Mountains |
| CLEAR, John | Sea Cliff Climbing in Britain |
| COLLOMB, Cleare | A Dictionary of Mountaineering |
| COLLOMB, R.G. | |
| CONWAY of ALLINGTON, | The Autobiography of a Mountaineer |
| Lord | |

- CLIFF, Peter
CRAIG, David
CRESPI-GREEN, Valerie
CROCKET, Ken
CROUCHER, Norman
CURRAN, Jim
COWAN, W.

CUTHBERTSON, D.C.

DARLING, F. Fraser
DESIO, Archito
DIEMBERGER, Kurt
DODDERIDGE, M.
DRUMMOND, Robert J.
DUTTON, G.J.F.

EGGLER, C.G. and de
BOOY, T.
EGGLER, Albert
EISELIN, Max
ENGEL, Claire Elaine

EVANS, Charles

EYRE, Donald

FIENNES (TWISTLETON-
WYKEHAM-FIENNES)
FIRSOFF, V.A.

FRESHFIELD, Douglas W.

FAUX, Ronald

FIELD, A.E. and
SPENCER, Sydney
FRISON-ROCHE and
TAIRRAZ
FRASER, Colin
FUCHS and HILLARY

GARDNER, Arthur

GIBSON, Colin
GILBERT, Richard
- Mountain Navigation
The Native Stones. A book about Climbing
Landscapes of Mallorca. A guide
Ben Nevis
A man and His Mountains
Trango, the Nameless Tower
Rambles through Scotland among the Bens and
Glen:
In Scotland Now

Natural History in the Highlands and Islands
Ascent of K2
Summits and Secrets
Man on the Matterhorn
Forgotten Scotland
The Ridiculous Mountain

The Untrodden Andes
The Everest Lhotse Adventure
The Ascent of Dhaulagiri
Mountaineering in the Alps
A History of Mountaineering
They Came to the Hills
On Climbing
Kanchenjunga, the Untrodden Peak
John Sikander

Ice Fall in Norway
The Cairngorms on Foot and Ski
The Tatra Mountains
Below the Snow Line
Italian Alps
High Ambition
Everest Goddess of the Wind

Peaks, Passes and Glaciers

Mount Blanc and the 7 Valleys
The Avalanche Enigma
The Crossing of Antarctica

Sun, Cloud and Snow in the Western Highlands
Britain's Mountain Heritage
Western Highlands
Highland Deerstalker
Memorable Munros
Classic Walks

- GILL, Michael
GORDON, Seton
GRAY, Affleck
GRAY, Dennis
GRIFFIN, A.H.
GREIG, A.
HABELER, Peter
HAGEN, Toni et al.
HALL, Tom S.
HALLBERG F. and
MUCKENBRUNN
HARKER, Alfred
HARRER, Heinrich
HASTON, Dougal
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HECKMAN, Anderl
HERRLINGKOFFER, Karl M.
HERZOG, Maurice
HILLARY, Sir Edmund
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HOLZEL and SALKELD
HOLMES, W. Kersley
HORNBEAM, Thomas F.
HUBER and ROGERS
HUMBLE, B.H.
HUNT, Sir John
HUNT, J. and BRASHER C.
HUNTER, Tom
HUNTER, R. and WICKER D.
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- Mountaineering Midsummer
Highlands of Scotland
Highways and Byways in the Western Highlands
The Charm of Skye
The Charm of the Hills
Highland Days
A Foot in the Wild Places
The Big Grey man of Ben Macdhui
Legends of the Cairngorms
Rope Boy
Long Days in the Hills
Kingdoms of Experience
Everest, Impossible Victory
Mount Everest
Tramping in Scotland
The Complete book of Ski-ing
The Western Highlands and the Hebrides. A
Geologist's Guide
The White Spider
Seven Years in Tibet
In High Places
Across the Top of the World
British Trans-artic Expedition
My life as a Mountaineer
Nanga Parbat
Annapurna 8000m
Schoolhouse in the Clouds
High Adventure
A Sunny Day in the Himalayas
Plant Life in the Scottish Highlands
The Mystery of Mallory and Irvine
Tramping Scottish Hills
Everest, the W Ridge
The Complete Ski Manual
Tramping in Skye
The Song of Skye
Wayfaring around Scotland
The Ascent of Everest
My Favourite Mountaineering Stories
The Red Snows
A Guide to the West Highland Way
Classic Walks in France
Shackleton

- IRVING, R.L.G. The Alps
The Romance of Mountaineering
A History of British Mountaineering
The Mountain Way. An Anthology
- JACKSON and STARK Tent in the Clouds
JEROME, John On the Mountains
- KILGOOR, Wm. T. Twenty Years on Ben Nevis
KING, Clarence Mountaineering in the Sierra Nevada
KING, Tom In the Shadow of the Giants
KIRKUS, C.F. Lets go Climbing
KUGY, Julius Alpine Pilgrimage
- LAMBERT and KOGAN White Fury
LANGMUIR, Eric Mountaincraft and Leadership
LAW, Donald Starting Mountaineering and Rock Climbing
LOVELOCK, James Climbing
LUNN, Sir Arnold Mountains of Memory
Oxford Mountaineering Essays
A Century of Mountaineering
The Kandahar Story
Mountain Jubilee
- MacINNES, Hamish Sweep Search
Call Out
Look Behind the Ranges
High Drama
West Highlands Walks Vol 1
West Highlands Walks Vol 2
West Highlands Walks Vol 3
Highland Walks Vol 4 (Cairngorm)
Beyond the Ranges
Climb to the Lost World
- MacINNES, David and
Kathleen Walking through Scotland
MacKENZIE, Osgood A Hundred Years in the Highlands
McMORRIS, William B. Mountaineering
MacROW and ADAM Speyside to Deeside
MASON, Kenneth Abode of Snow
MAZEAUD, Pierre Naked Before the Mountain
MESSNER, Reinhold K2
Everest, Expedition to the Ultimate
- MILBURN, Geoff Helyg
MILL, Christine Norman Collie, a Biography
MILNER, C. Douglas Mountain Photography
Mont Blanc and the Aiguilles
- MONTGOMERY, Michael All out for Everest
MORRIS, James Coronation Everest

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|---------------------------------|---|
| MOFFAT, Gwen | Space Below My Feet |
| MORAN, Martin | The Munros in Winter |
| MULHOLLAND, H. | Guide to Eire's 3000 foot Mountains |
| | Guide to Lakelands's 3000 foot Mountains |
| | Guide to Wales' 3000 foot Mountains |
| MURRAY, W.H. | Mountaineering in Scotland |
| | The Story of Everest |
| | Five Frontiers |
| | The Scottish Himalayan Expedition |
| | Scotland's Mountains |
| MURRAY, G.W. | Dare me to the Desert |
| MURRAY, Sheila | The Cairngorm Club History 1887-1987 |
| NEATE, W.R. | Mountaineering and its Literature |
| NETHERSOLE-THOMPSON
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| PERRIN, Jim | Mirrors in the Cliffs. A Hundred Mountaineering
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| PIERRE, Bernard | A Mountain Called Nun Kun |
| PILLEY, Dorothy | Climbing Days |
| PINE, L.G. | The Story of Heraldry |
| PLUMB, Charles | Walking in the Grampians |
| POUCHER, W.A. | The Scottish Peaks |
| | The Lakeland Peaks |
| PYATT, E.C. and NOYCE, W. | British Crags and Climbers |
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| REBUFFAT, Gaston | Starlight and Storm |
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- RODAHL, Kare
ROTH, Arthur
RUSSELL, Scott
RUTTLEDGE, Hugh
- SCOTT, Alastair
SANDEMAN, R.G.
SCOTT, Doug
SHEPHERD, Nan
SHIPTON, Eric
- SIMPSON, Myrtle
SLESSER, Malcolm
- SLINGSBY, W.C.
SMITH, Adam Janet
SMITH, Roger
- TIER 3:*
- SMYTHE, F.S.
- SNAITH, Stanley
- SOMERVELL, T. Howard
SPENCER, Sydney et al.
STEPHEN, Leslie
STORER, Ralph
STEVEN, Campbell
- STOTT, Louis
STYLES, Showell
- SUTTON, Geoffrey
SYMONDS, H.H.
- The Ice-capped Island - Greenland
Eiger Wall of Death
Mountain Prospect
Everest 1933
- Scot Free
A Mountaineer's Journal
Big Wall Climbing
The Living Mountain
Nanda Devi
Upon that Mountain
Land of Tempest
The Untravelled World
Due North
The Andes are Prickly
Red Peak
Norway the Northern Playground
Mountain Holidays
Walking in Scotland
- British Mountaineers
The Adventures of a Mountaineer
Camp 6
The Spirits of the Hills
Climbs and Ski Runs
Over Tyrolese Hills
Mountaineering Holiday
Everest 1933
Karmet Conquered
The Kanchenjunga Adventure
The Mountain Vision
Again Switzerland
Alpine Adventure
At Grips With Everest
After Everest
Mountaineering
The Playground of Europe
100 Best Routes on Scottish Mountains
The Island Hills
The Story of Scotland's Hills
The Waterfalls of Scotland
The Moated Mountain
Mountain of the Midnight Sun
Shadow Buttress
Introduction to Mountaineering
Artificial Aids in Mountaineering
Walking in the Lake District

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| SWISS ALPINE CLUB | Mountaineering Handbook |
| TASKER, Joe | Everest the Cruel Way
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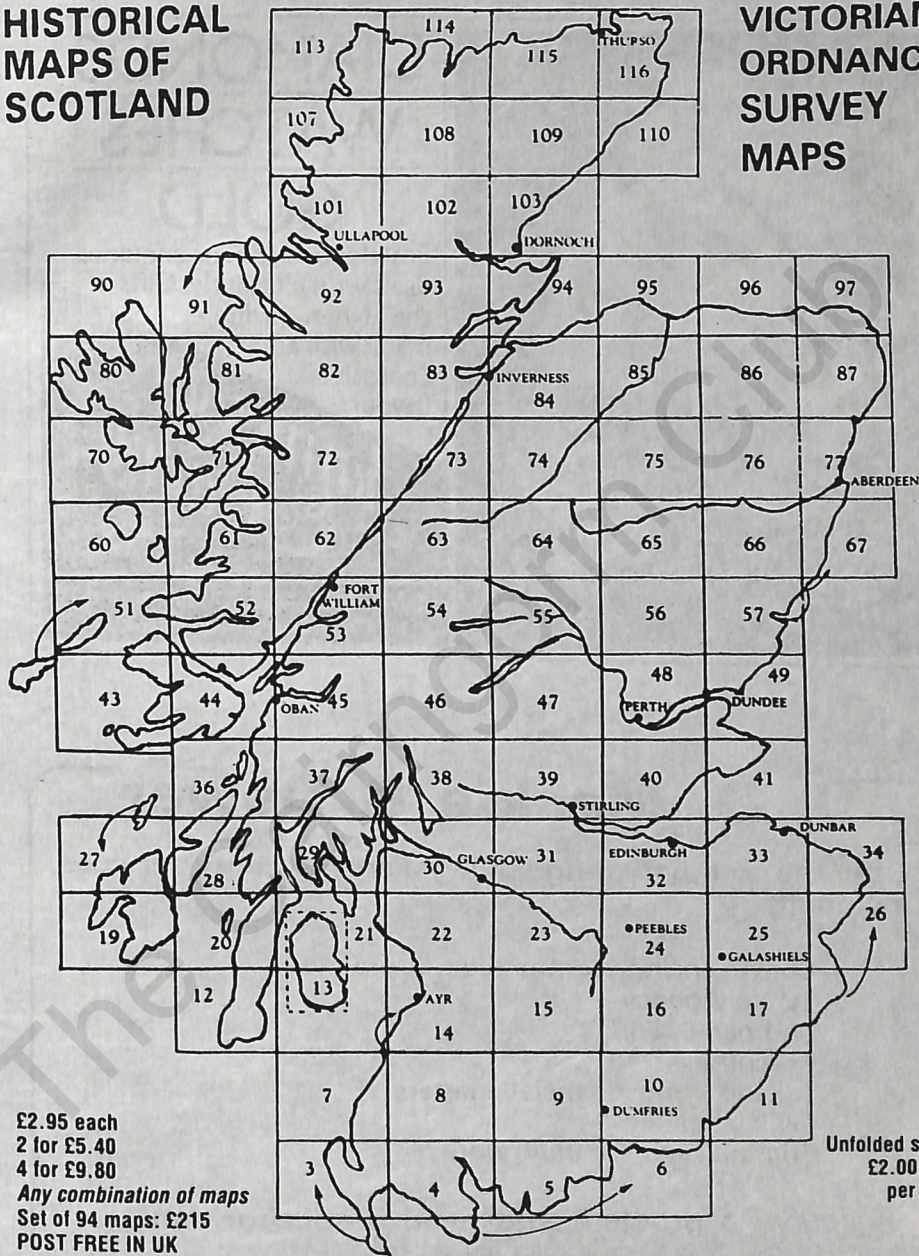
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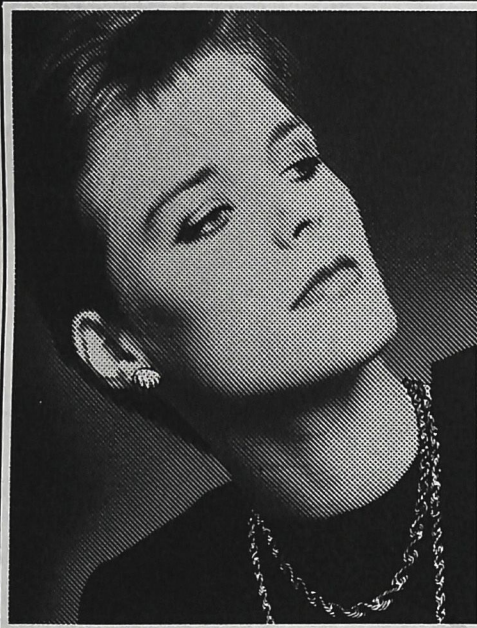


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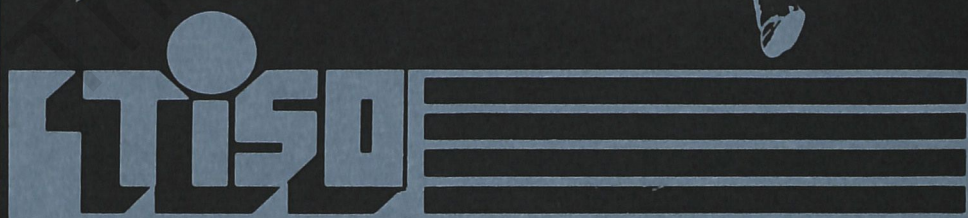
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