



**MORAY MOUNTAINEERING CLUB
JOURNAL**

JUBILEE EDITION 1931 - 1981

MORAY MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

OFFICE BEARERS 1981/82

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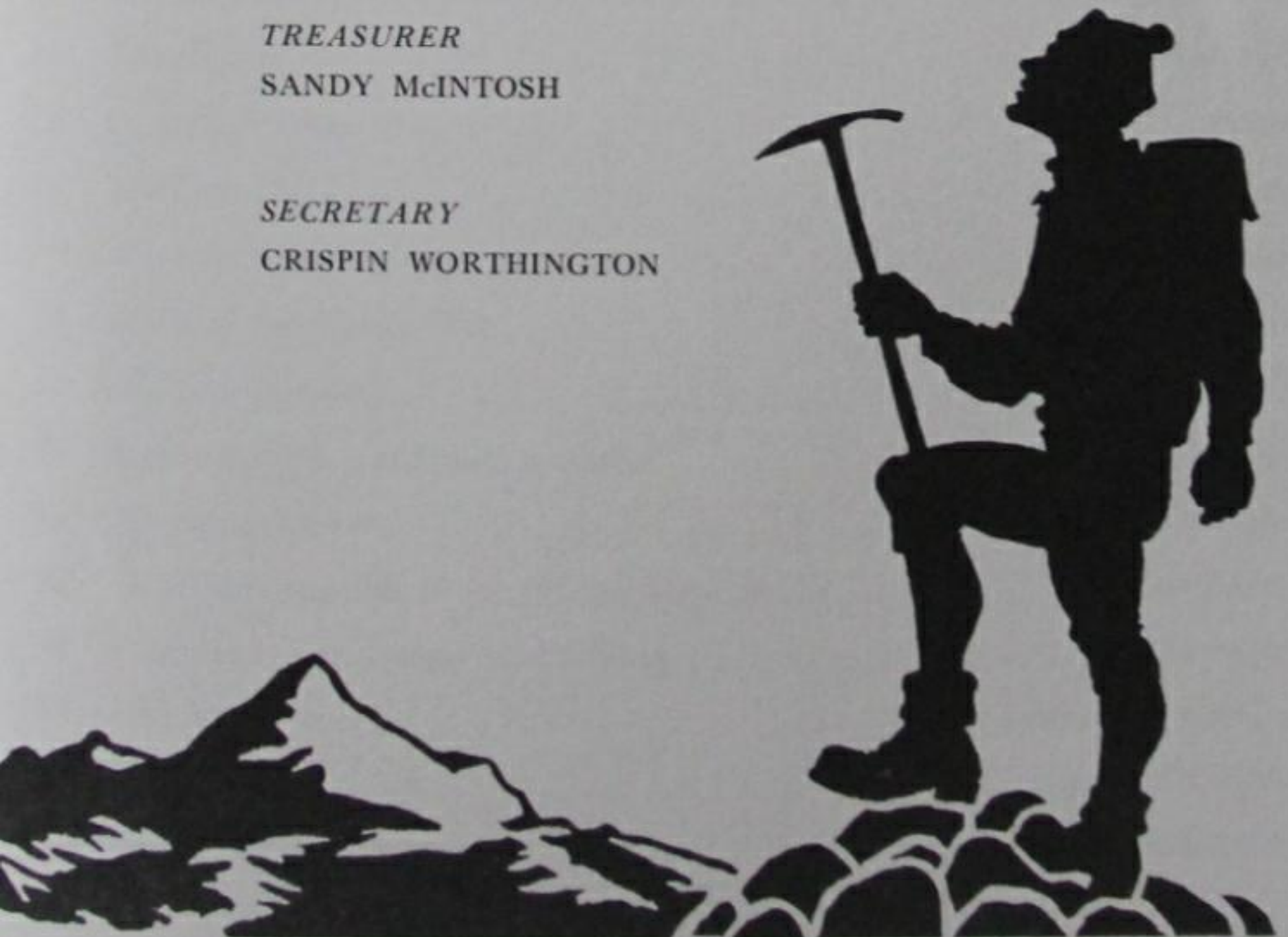
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EDITORIAL

The idea of producing a journal to mark the 50th anniversary of the club was one of those daft ideas mooted on a glorious day last summer, somewhere in the Perthshire hills, when anything seems possible. The task of mustering contributions seemed daunting on cold dark autumn days of 1981 but this was to misjudge the talents, enthusiasm and wit of our members who have produced a varied and interesting compendium of thoughts, description and memories of time spent on the hills.

The M.M.C. has always catered for a wide range of interests, skills and palates; it provides a focus around which many members share their individual ploys and aspirations. The main aim of this Journal is to reflect the many facets of the club. Perusal of the earlier writings in the club illustrate the wide range of endeavour and it is hoped that this edition reflects how this broad base has continued to provide the strength of a very flourishing club. It should reflect, in fact, the stance of the original Moray mountaineer illustrated overleaf; sac on back, boot on cairn, ice-axe in hand and occasionally tongue in cheek.

Thanks are due to many members whose interest has contributed greatly to the success of this project. Crispin Worthington provided endless enthusiasm as well as some very fine drawings; Sandy McIntosh has produced the excellent photographs, including our evocative cover and was a very forbearing Treasurer. We must express our gratitude to the Sports Council for the generous grant – a welcome recognition of our activities.

We dedicate the Journal to all our members, aspiring, retiring or merely perspiring and look forward to the next fifty years.

Sheila Borwick

FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Moray Mountaineering Club was formed in 1931 although the first meet was not held until 21st February, 1932, when the club travelled to the Cabrach with twenty six members to walk in the area of the upper Cabrach. The members taking part in the first meet were Davidson, Humble, Mr & Mrs R. MacKenzie, McBain, Shand, Stevenson, Morrow, Fletcher, MacKenzie, Thomson, Black, Ewen, Wattie, Strachan, Glass, Shand Luckas Giovera, Dobson, Young, Manson, Morrow, White, MacKay and Banks. Some of these members were to play not only an important part in the life of the M.M.C., but also the development of climbing in the Northern Corries of Cairngorm now threatened by ski-development. Routes in Coire An Lochain such as Savage Slit, a classic Scottish rock climb, the Vent, Central Crack Route, No 3 Buttress, Y Gully, No 4 Buttress and Western Route and Aladdin's Couloir, Aladdins Buttress, Jacob's Ladder of Corrie-an-Sneachda were all pioneered by the Moray Mountaineers. These climbs like today were carried out on private forays to the hills while the monthly day meets were mainly hill walking outings.

The Club continued until the war years, meeting regularly every month and also at weekends throughout the year. After the war the club, supported by many of the founder members continued, encouraged by many new faces travelling to many areas of the North and West of Scotland.

Throughout the club's existence the members have been involved in many interesting incidents and like others of their time assisted in Mountain Rescue activities in the area. One of the first rescues was carried out when an M.M.C member was injured in Garabh Corrie on Braeriach breaking both legs and faced

with a stretcher carry of some 12 miles by his friends to Derry Lodge. The club was next called out when two skiers went missing in Northern Corries in April 1960. Thirty five members were involved over three days but after searching on the 13th-17th April it was not until the 19th of June that a body was finally recovered. Again the club was called out by the Chief Constable of Inverness when two Perthshire climbers went missing in the Cairngorms. A total of five teams searched that day and eventually two bodies were found. In more recent years members have assisted official rescue teams as individuals except for one incident at Glen Clova when club members attending a weekend meet went to the assistance of a fellow member with the aid of the rescue team.

In more recent years the M.M.C. have been represented abroad in many mountainous areas such as the Himalayas, Alps, Atlas Mountains, Greenland, Iceland, Pyrenees, Norway and many other interesting areas of the world. Some of the members even took part in the successful Mont Blanc Scottish winter expedition of 1979/80 which saw two of the M.M.C. members on the summit on January 1st. Other members have taken part in expeditions to Iceland and Greenland as well as the Himalayas and Peru.

The Club will celebrate its 50 years on Sunday 15th November when it is hoped both past and present members can recount the successes of the club. The vigour of the club both past and present must surely be represented in the support, enthusiasm and friendship of its members and we will surely be celebrating its centenary in 2031 with equal enthusiasm and pride of past and present achievements.

R. MacDonald.

LOOKING BACK

I have in front of me as I write a faded photograph. It was taken in 1934, a war and a world away, and it depicts men and women of the Moray Mountaineering Club standing beside short, squat cars of the period on the Loch Ness road near Alltsigh. These chaps and girls, most of whom are now grazing higher pastures, were about to start the ascent of Meal-faurvonie. I see my father, George and Mrs Thompson of Elgin and a simpering youth, myself. The rest are simply faces whose owners I have forgotten.

Nor can I remember the climb, apart from the fact that we made the top. It is now, and has been for twenty odd years, my local mountain and innumerable ascents have over-stamped that first one. I see in the yellowing image tiny conifers which have now grown to modest giant-hood and straggling birch which have matured and gone over the top, like I have.

In the years that followed that early meet I grew to know famous men of the M.M.C. such as Edwin Davidson and John Geddes, a president of the Club. Davidson took me to Covesea and showed me intricate traverses and portholes in the sandstone cliffs and pointed out Gow's Castle which we subsequently climbed. John Geddes very kindly wrote a Foreword to a small guide to Inverness rocks which I wrote when I was sixteen and observed that he would watch my career with great interest. I fear it must have proved a sterile viewing, but that is another story, or no story at all!

But it was in 1938's cold early Spring that the M.M.C. gave me and young Geordie Thompson (George's younger son) the opportunity of a lifetime. At a meet in the then unsullied Glenmore we were granted the chance to accompany N.E. Odell, the veteran of Everest in 1924 and fresh from his ascent of Nanda Devi with H.W. Tilman. Elder statesmen of the mountains waived their claims to his

company in favour of the kids, a gracious act. We cut steps up the Vent and left it for Vent Rib half way up. It was a stimulating climb but not half as exciting as the Great Man's company. He went like a bomb throughout and demolished what was obviously chicken feed, but with gentle modesty. He, like others who were with him on Everest, seems to have been given the gift of near eternal youth — I had a postcard from him two years ago which spoke of fresh adventuring. In the old lodge of Glenmore a few nights later I was joined by a friend K.A. Robertson, a guest of The M.M.C., and John Geddes remarked to us that if we were going into Coire an Lochan we might spare a glance at an unclimbed crack in the righthand buttress. The day was opaque with mists and driving snow but the vague outline which emerged from time to time fired our enthusiasm. We came back later in the year and climbed it, and it was named the Savage Slit.

These days I climb mostly on my own for I am of a solitary turn of mind. This makes me unsuitable company for any but my dog, Brutus, who is also a silent, thoughtful, introspective creature. But the years, though one does not dare to believe it, will bring a stiffness to the step, a halt to the upward spring and a fear to the mind. We who have given our hostages to Fortune will soon become the biggest hostages. Masters will give way to other masters and in the end the hills will always win; even now, to me, they are stronger than they were.

I have not been a good Club member. Often I have been half-moved to introduce myself to a generation which I do not know; but the feeling that one would 'come like ghosts to trouble joy' has been so far too strong. As the slope grows steeper, the breath more short, the wind more chill and the sun starts his long slide to the west the time will come to think again.

R.B. Frere

WINTER JOURNEYS IN THE CABRACH: THE FIRST AND THE JUBILEE MEETS OF THE CLUB

Although the Club was formed officially on 15th November 1931, it was not until February of 1932 that the first meet took place, to that austere upland, the Cabrach. Here is the official report from the first journal:

"The first Field Meet of the Club took place on 21st February 1932, when 27 members journeyed by bus to Meikle Balloch on the Cabrach Road, walked across the moor to Scat Hill (1987), Cairn Allt a Chailginn (2035), Cook's Cairn (2478), Carn a Bruar (2240) and

thence down Glen Suidhe to Tomnavoulin — 16 miles and 2000 feet of climbing.

Notwithstanding the cold weather and frequent snow showers the outing was voted a success and afterwards in the Aberlour Hotel, where the party had had tea, Mr. Mackenzie complimented them on their enthusiasm and keenness and hoped that this would be the forerunner of many climbs on the hills.

The cost of the outing was 4s, including tea."

(M.M.C. JOURNAL Vol. 1, no. 1, Sept., 1935, pp. 49–50)

We thought it fitting to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Club with a return to the Cabrach, taking advantage of the amenities of the Grouse Inn. There was a great turnout for the occasion, with 55 senior members and 9 juniors. We had two veterans of the Club as guests — Dr Brewster and Miss Nancy Crichton. The Driver, Mr. Eric Glennie, a good friend to the Club, was also invited to tea after the walk.

The Cabrach, Ladder Hills and Braes of Moray dominated the early days of the Club. As transport improved and ambitions extended, the local hills were largely ousted by the peaks of the north and west, and of course the high Cairngorms. However our current members found the Cabrach quite a handful on a raw November day against a westerly gale..

The main party went over the Buck and tramped the tops of the back country until time and energy expired. Smaller groups went to the Tap o' the North and the Glenfiddich-Blackwater hills — the latter being in fact closer to the country of the first meet, which was a traverse.

With our splendid space age equipment we floundered in the peat hags, mocked

by the white hares who danced before us in the wind. Most of us called it a day on the barren rocks of Creag an Sgor, perched above Glen Buchat. The wind was too strong to allow adequate contemplation of the austere moors and lonely glens, but this country has a dour attraction; greys, browns and hard-won upland parks. Jim Boyd, with great courtesy, provided the company with a dram from his flask: he drew the line at bread and fishes.

On the way back through the narrow defiles of the Alt Deveron we came upon a run of salmon splashing in their spawning grounds. The big fish had travelled up from Banff in the spates of early Autumn, only to be disturbed in their refuge by the inconsiderate Moray Mountaineers.

The day on the hill was completed by a traditional high tea of quality at the hospitable Grouse Inn — it is a great pity that we gave up this practice to go to effete distant places like Torridon. Our distinguished President, Roddy Macdonald, gave a moving address. He was followed by Dr Brewster and Alistair Sword, who intrigued us with tales of the "old days".



At the Laggan Hotel, 1934

Jubilee Meet at the Grouse Inn, 1981



Dr Brewster then presented Don Vass and Jim Boyd with tankards on behalf of the Club, commemorating their completion of the Munros. After further

refreshments we returned home well content. The cost of the outing was £4, including tea.

Bill Shepherd



MAIDEN VOYAGES IN SWITZERLAND

World War II had put a stop to the activities of the M.M.C. but as soon as frontiers in Europe were open again Helen Harrison and the writer set forth on a three week visit to Switzerland, spending one week in Interlaken, one in Zermatt and one in Kandersteg. Not having the experience for guideless climbing nor the cash to employ a guide, (British tourists could then take only £25 out of the country and some of this had to go towards accommodation), we confined ourselves to such ploys as climbs

to huts and as far as I remember one lesser peak at Zermatt thrown in.

Our appetites whetted by the success of this first visit and the beauty of the Alpine scene, we planned our return a couple of years later rather more carefully, when, too, the currency allowance was slightly more generous. We still had no ambitions beyond high level walking and scrambling. We were no alpinists and the idea of being more or less dragged up the Matterhorn by a guide held no appeal even could we have afforded this.

On our previous visit we had seen the pecunious Swiss guides touting for trade beside glaciers and taking parties of well heeled and high heeled American (?) tourists across for a few shillings. Wars have a nasty habit of affecting neutrals as well as belligerents and the Swiss could find none of their preferred British clients because of our currency restrictions.

A 1903 Baedeker, not entirely foolproof as will emerge, was the inspiration. We would do what Baedeker calls 'the Tour of Mont Blanc'. We booked in at a modest hotel in Chamonix for a week, and walked and climbed and became fitter. Our Mont Blanc expedition started tamely with a post bus to Les Houches and a walk to Les Contamines. Our host in our Chamonix hotel had booked us into one of the similar grade here and now it was pointed out to us — a dot on a ridge about 1500 ft. up in the wrong direction. After a phone call and a cancellation we carried on for another two hours and found a more suitable pension higher up the valley at Nant-Borant. Already the easy climbing we had been doing made us realise that carrying all our kit for three weeks in large heavy canvas ex-Army rucksacks was going to be no cinch.

Routes in Switzerland, even off the beaten track, are usually well marked at least on the lower slopes. However, we were equipped with compass and good 1/50000 Alpine maps we had been lent. Both became necessary as we went higher as though it was the month of July the season was late that year and snow covered even passes that normally would have been clear. The second day took us to the Col du Bonhomme (7640 ft.) and a little higher to the Col de la Croix du Bonhomme (8125 ft.) and the Col des Fours (8733 ft.). The going had been quite rough but the views were well worth the effort. From here we were to descend to the village of Les Mottets whose hotel had been highly recommended both by Baedeker and by Mr

Harrison who had spent part of his honeymoon there. The one person we had met all day suggested we glissade. Not both having iceaxes we declined and a little over two hours saw us in the valley where we inquired of madame at a farm the distance to the village. She looked at us in astonishment. The village had disappeared before her time and no, there would be nowhere to stay and no food to be had. So much for Baedeker and Mr. Harrison. It was the hay barn for us but no food. The night was warm and peaceful after we had fended off the amorous farm hand though I wakened in the dark feeling something nibbling my toes. Our torch revealed a ginger kitten and fears of rats receded.

The third day took us to the Col de la Seigne (8242 ft.). The path was quite obliterated by deep snow and a rather lost Frenchman was glad to be directed to the valley we had left. He had muttered something about not being allowed to go on which only made sense to us when, just over the pass, we were intercepted by a posse of Alpini soldiers who came dashing down at tremendous speed from the Glacier des Glaciers demanding to see our passports. The language this evoked was not ladylike, but they apologised and explained they were on a summer exercise. From the col it was a long but perfectly straightforward descent to Courmayeur in blazing sunshine, the last few miles on a tarred road being especially wearisome.

Some days were spent at Courmayeur, at that time (before the road tunnel) a delightful unspoilt village where we recuperated and sent home every ounce we could spare from our packs.

The next part of our journey took us up the Val Ferret and over the col of that name (8340 ft.), the frontier of Italy and Switzerland with a wonderful view of the south side of the Mont Blanc range, the glaciers of the Jorasses, the Aiguille du Geant and the Allée Blanche as far as the Col de la Seigne. From here a strong

walker could no doubt make the Grand St Bernard in a further four hours but since it had already been over six hours from Courmayeur we climbed up to the Col du Fenetre (9095 ft.) and dropped down to the village of Ferret for the night. It meant retracing our steps to the Col du Fenetre in the morning to regain the correct route but split the journey more reasonably for us. That day, a Sunday, we came down to the Grand St. Bernard. Up to this point we had been delightfully free of tourist mobs, in fact had only seen two other climbers and the soldiers apart from the owners of rather isolated pensions at which we had stayed en route. Here in contrast was a car park filled with hundreds of cars and buses. True, the crowds dispersed by nightfall but we liked the Italian hotel and the whole commercial atmosphere so little that we settled our bill before going to bed and just as dawn was breaking let ourselves out and climbed over the Customs barrier and went on our way into Switzerland once more. Believe it or not we walked fully twelve miles before stopping for breakfast.

Our next venture two years later was to be entirely in Switzerland but further east. I think it was Thomas Hardy who described the Alps as like a backbone and its adjoining ribs. The description is apt for the range extending from the Grand St Bernard pass to the Simplon pass. The glens that come down from the backbone on the Swiss side are more or less parallel and flow from south to north. Again we planned to book accommodation for the first night and for this purpose wrote to the hotel in Fionnay in the Val de Bagnes, the most westerly of the Valais glens. The idea was to make our way east by climbing into each parallel valley in turn. Too late we had a reply that work was in progress at a dam at the head of the valley and there was no accommodation to be had. We decided we would have to forego the first intended climb and start in the next valley. We assumed

there would be no difficulty there and at any rate there was no time to write and ask. So it was that one July afternoon we arrived at Pralong in the Val d'Héremence after travelling by train, boat, overnight train again and post bus only to be told the same story. Work was going on at the head of the valley and engineers had taken over all the available rooms. It was too late in the day to get transport back to Sion and twenty fives miles to walk there was too daunting. We had hoped next day to do the Col de Riedmatten (9567) to Arolla but we knew we were not fit for the six hours it would entail. The map showed another simpler, lower pass, the Col de Meina (8878 ft.) which would take us to Evolèna down the valley from Arolla. We had not counted on the debilitating effect of lack of sleep and insufficient food. In spite of the superb views at the head of our valley, in spite of the beautiful carpet of flowers we trod, three hours later and still about a thousand feet below the summit we were all in. To add to our troubles the light was just beginning to fade. Then it was that we came to an alp and a newly built chalet. Too honest or too scared of consequences to break in we scouted round and found a tiny stone-built lean-to which seemed to have been used by the builders. It was only about 5 ft. by 4 ft. by 3 ft. high and there was no means of blocking the doorway but there was a little none too clean straw. The barn with its hay had at least been warm but here as soon as the sun set it was bitterly cold. Even huddled together with all our clothes on and our feet inside our rucksacks our teeth were chattering. Doped with sleeping pills we slept at least for a few hours. Next morning the rest of the climb to the col and the descent to Evolèna was covered in record time. Here we were greeted and feted as heroines, satisfying, but entirely undeserved since our climb had been no more I am sure than on par with climbing Ben Macdhui! Perhaps it is a pointer to the isolation of

these valleys at that time and the barrier that mountains can make that we found the Swiss in Evolèna had no knowledge of the work going on in the westerly valley from which we had come.

It could be boring to continue to detail each day's travel, yet our itinerary may be of interest to others who are content to walk and scramble. From Arolla there was a high level walk to La Sage. From there the route was over the Col de Torrent (9593 ft.) into the Val Moiry and by the Col de Sorebois (9269 ft.) to Zinal. The Val Moiry proved to be the final jinx in our expedition for as we came towards low ground we saw it to be the site of immense engineering activity — yet another dam and literally no sign of any way by which we could safely reach the valley path. The Swiss engineer in charge brusquely ordered us to go back the way we had come — blasting was in progress and so on. We had never been brought up in the M.M.C. to start climbing in the late afternoon so with Scots stubbornness we flatly refused, and of course our inability to understand any language conveniently increased as he grew more wroth. Finally he gave in and we were allowed to walk through the tunnel which was under construction.

An attraction at Zinal was the Mountet Hut. Then it was Zinal to St Luc and from there the Bella Tola (9935 ft.) and the Augstbord Pass (9490 ft.) to Gruben. The last pass of all, the Jung (9822 ft.) leading over to St Niklaus required careful route finding near the summit and had quite the steepest descent over loose rock we had encountered.

It would be quite feasible in 1981 for any strong walker to follow in our footsteps round Mont Blanc, but my guess is that now the whole area may well echo to the shouts of skiers and the rattle of metal from skilifts. The huge constructions at the top of 'our' glens in the Valais may have made the crossings from valley

to valley well nigh impossible at the points we made them, but braver and stronger climbers could be rewarded by taking instead the cols at the very head of the glaciers where, too, access can be had to many good climbs.

I still recall with pleasure the charm of Switzerland we found in her less well-trodden ways. Everywhere there was the profusion of flowers even the most common dandelion or forget-me-not seemingly more vivid than at home; the alpen rose which each day as we reached its level told us that we had made good height since it never seemed to grow in the valleys; the brilliant blue of the gentian and its frequent companion the edelweiss among the line-stone rocks and surely the daintiest and loveliest of all, the violet-blue bells of the soldonella peeping up through the snow. I remember, too, the animals — the small beaver-like marmots, smelt and heard often enough, but only seen when we were sitting very still, and the proud sentinel chamois on his rock on the high pass. I wonder if the people will have changed or if the old villages will have been spoilt and made rich by tunnel and tourist and tarred roads. Will there still be the ten year olds on the high alp to pause in their grooming of goat or cow to murmur a polite, shy 'Gruss Gott'? How many of the old villages with their wooden chalets and painted texts have resisted the inroads of modernity? Are any still to be found with the doo-cot sized extra 'seelen balken', a soul window to be used as passage way for the flight of the soul in the hour of death?

But nostalgia for the past is a fruitless and foolish exercise, and in fact the Swiss are careful to preserve the natural beauties of their country. No doubt other climbers will continue to seek out the less over-crowded places and continue to store up as we did their own worth while memories.

N.J.C.

THE BEINN EIGHE INCIDENT – MARCH 1951

This is the story of the search for a missing aircraft on Ben Eighe over 30 years ago, and involved five members of the Moray M.C., who tried on their own to reach the wreckage after the initial failure of the R.A.F. team.

On March 14 1951 a Lancaster of Coastal Command from Kinloss failed to return after an exercise over the north Atlantic. A large air search was mounted over the next two days without result. Finally, following some late local information the search was concentrated on the Torridon area and the Wreckage was spotted on Beinn Eighe on the lip of Coire Mhicfearchar at an altitude of over 2800 ft.

The R.A.F. Mountain Rescue team arrived at the foot of the mountain on the 18th March. At that time this team consisted of volunteers, many of whom were doing their National Service. They were poorly equipped and largely inexperienced. They had very little if any regular training nor did they have ice axes, nylon ropes or even proper climbing boots. The weather deteriorated during the next two days and after two vain attempts to reach the aircraft and an injury to one of their members they were recalled to Kinloss to await better weather.

On March 21 I telephoned the O.C. at Kinloss and offered the assistance of 5 or 6 experienced climbers for the Moray club. Our offer was refused as was also the offer of help from the S.M.C. I was informed that the R.A.F. team had been withdrawn.

Next day I phoned again and said we were going up on our own, and asked them for the exact location of the wreckage and for an up to date weather forecast. These two requests were immediately granted. The forecast was not encouraging but in spite of that we decided to set out next morning.

Our party consisted of five members of the Moray Mountaineering Club. My companions were David Banks, David Forrester, Charles Ross and Kenneth MacIennan. We all had considerable experience in rock and snow climbing and knew the Torridon area well. We were equipped with proper boots, ice axes and a nylon rope.

We left Forres early in the morning and arrived in Glen Torridon around 10 a.m. The Weather was fair and no snow on the lower slopes. The ground was frozen hard and the temperature below freezing point.

We proceeded up the track which runs between Sail Mhor on the east and Liathach on the west. About a mile or more up the track we left to ascend the Sail Mhor ridge. Our plan was to get on to the Sail Mhor ridge and then to cross comparatively easy ground to the rim of the corrie where the aircraft was lying. At about 1500 ft. we came to the snow line. We continued up the snow. The ascent was getting steeper as we got nearer the crest of the ridge and the weather was deteriorating rapidly. In spite of this we carried on and did eventually reach the ridge, but we got no further. The wind was gale force lashing us with heavy driving snow. In addition visibility was less than 15 yards. It was now obvious that further progress was not possible. To go on in these conditions would not only be foolhardy but it would be impossible to see any wreckage in blizzard conditions. With great regret we therefore turned back, and in due course reported our failure to Kinloss.

Two days later the weather improved and the aircraft was reached by two navy men who were on holiday at Kinlochewe.

The R.A.F. team were sent back with reinforcements and stayed there until their task was completed. Even with improving weather this proved to be a

very long and difficult job as part of the fuselage was lodged in a steep gully running down from the rim of the corrie. Eventually all the eight bodies were brought down. It took a long time – the last one was not down until the month of August.

The entire incident led to the complete reorganisation of the R.A.F. team. For the first time an officer, Fl/Lt Dattner was put in charge. Under his dynamic leadership and that of his successors the team were thoroughly trained and equipped so that now they are probably the finest rescue team in the country.

Although our small expedition did not succeed, we had the satisfaction of

having done all we could to help our many friends at Kinloss. Of the five of us who took part three are in business or retired. Charlie Ross was killed while climbing in Glencoe about 8 years ago and David Banks died about 3 years ago while on holiday.

A very full and detailed account of the entire Beinn Eighe incident has been compiled by Keith Bryers of Inverness and was published earlier this year by the British Aviation Archaeological Council in their magazine "Aviation Archaeologist".

I am indebted to that article for some technical details.

Dr J.M. Brewster

"HARD TIMES AT HOPEMAN"

Tom and Simon were keen club members, both still at school but with a lot of hillwalking experience. They made it very clear that they were mad keen to get into real climbing on rock and ice. By hinting, flattery and subtle bribery they first of all got round Rex Giles (who had been an instructor at Moray Sea School in its day) and then twisted my arm to make up a foursome. Certainly the two pairs were ideal for a training situation.

Hopeman was a mutually convenient venue to suit our various modes of transport. The cliffs are high enough to be taken seriously and there are some recognised routes up to about mild severe standard.

*Two youthful Moray Mountaineers
On bus meets sat with straining ears
To catch the jargon of the rocks
Whatever are hexentric chocks?*

*At Torr House hung on every tale
And gazed at slides by Eric Dale
Between club meets they read of crags
Made famous in the monthly mags.*

*How do you start to gain the skill
to climb on rock like Gary Gill?*

Due to transport problems and personal commitments we had surprising difficulty in arranging times when we could all get together. Our arrangements were very informal, irregular and always a last minute rush. (The following verse is likewise informal, irregular, and a last minute rush). However, when things did click and we all turned up at the same place on the right day that was great and if the sun shone as well it was magic!

In time things came to a natural conclusion Tom left us rather prematurely when he broke his leg (he has now thankfully recovered and is back climbing). Simon went off to Alaska and soon after his return started University.

*Their avid zeal for this requirement
Eventually dragged out from retirement
Two older boys (just past their prime)
And persuaded them to spend some time
To pass on tips and basic rules
– And lend the ropes and other tools!
To Hopeman then we did repair
And in the bracing fresh sea air
They practised long on grassy slopes
The special knots for climbing ropes
With kernmantel your boyscout hitches
We could not trust on rocky pitches*

*Bowlines they learned to tie one-handed
And a double fisherman when demanded
Some knots must never give at all
To hold the climber who may fall
But Prusik, Tarbuck and Pembarthly
Must grip and slip alternately*



*They also learned as apprentices all should
To brew strong tea and bring good food,
First lessons learned they could hardly wait
To check waistloop, krab and fig. of eight
Then top roped in turn soon got the knack
And confidently bombed up Staircase Crack*

*Leepers, Rurps, channel and leaf
And sky hook types beyond belief
In wide cracks "bongs", but in the narrow
You may trust your life on a "lost arrow"
We practised too with nut and chock
But fortunately soft Hopeman rock
Was useless for such barbarous tactics
And forced us back on higher ethics*

*Next lesson then without delay
The technique of a safe belay
Slings and screwgates and at least one glove
Should safely hold a fall above
Too much book reading led them on
To the technicalities of each piton
Cave chimney was climbed and also Zigger
Ambitions now were getting bigger
The start on Trapeze proved just too fickle
But there was a fine V cliff called Slab & Tickle
With skills improving all the while
The time was ripe for an abseil.*

*A good high cliff and safety rope
With overhang to give full scope
To the "classic" method as first turn
Till shoulders ached and bum did burn
A krab and sling lessened the pain
And comfort was improved again
By using harness with thigh straps
Making abseils fun for these young chaps
On future days the climbing done
They always begged an abseil run
Krab brakes were used and Italian Hitch
Plain descendeur and slotted Sticht*

*As climbing improved so their cooking too
Mars bars supplemented Pot-noodle stew
On driftwood fires they baked their beans
And developed addiction to sardines*

*Doddle Diedre fell to them with ease
And finally they cracked Trapeze
Snotty Nose, well named, requires a hanky
Its end is grotty, loose and manky
We moved on then to Elgin quarry
But at that time were very sorry
To hear of one lad's near disaster
Which left him with a leg in plaster
The other tackled quarry ridges
Practiced handjams, laybacks, bridges
And now discovered the greater thrill
Of leading climbs that matched his skill
Then off he went on a better mission
As a member of the Alaskan expedition*

*The party's over — but it was fun
They've learned to walk before they run
I hope the lessons learned now will
Be firm foundations for growing skill
So, Tom Worthington and Simon Steer
May you long enjoy being a mountaineer*

Murray Dunnan

A MEMORABLE DAY ON THE CUILLINS

It might seem strange that with my list of "unbagged" 'Munros' now in single figures, five of the remaining nine peaks should be on the Cuillin Ridge. This reflects partly that I did not set foot on the gabbro of Skye until relatively recently, but also that on my previous visit on the October weekend meets at Glen Brittle the average seemed to be one good day in three!

Jim and I had hoped to improve the odds, however, by arranging to go in early September. The forecast from Kinloss for the first weekend was atrocious so we called off, and for the second "broken cloud and showers" was the most optimistic outlook.

On the grounds that it might be worse if we postponed again, we set off on Friday evening, but as we drove down a gloomy Glen Shiel through a heavy down-pour, it didn't look too promising.

On reaching a wet and windy campsite at Glenbrittle, we had a long chat with the Warden in the warmth of his caravan, but on leaving to set up our tent found that a nearly full harvest moon had risen above the ridge. It seemed a good omen!

We rose early to a fine morning, but a layer of cloud still clung to the tops. However, it was bright to the West and as we set off towards the southern end of the ridge we could see that the Cuillin hills of Rhum were clear.

Our starting point was to be Sgurr nan Eag and as we approached it across the mouth of Coir 'a' Ghrunnda I recalled a previous attempt we had made on this peak, when we had found ourselves in appalling weather on the craggy West side, and finally had packed it in on a shallow groove of steep crumbly rock, which bore a close resemblance at the time, to a waterfall.

Today, however, we kept well to the south of these rocks as we climbed up the broader shoulder of the ridge, which al-

though steep and covered in loose scree was much more straightforward.

We reached a col a little to the North of the summit from where an easy scramble gained us our first peak. We were in cloud, unfortunately, but it had covered only our last few hundred feet of climbing and seemed to be thinning.

The next section was the circuit of the ridge at the head of Coir 'a' Ghrunnda which involved a descent to the Bealach a Garbh-choire at 2614 ft. then the re-ascent to Sgurr Dubh an Da Bheinn.

It was during this stage of the traverse that we came to realise how inappropriate our normal estimates of time were on the Cuillin ridge. We had judged the 'map distance' to be about a kilometer or so – fifteen minutes by usual standards. It took us nearly an hour and fifteen minutes to complete this section!

The major problem was selecting the best route – despite the various small cairns and scratches on the rock from the days of nailed boots (or more recent crampons perhaps) the way was rarely obvious and more than once we retraced our steps to select a better line.

At the col a massive rock tower appears to block the ridge – the guide book description of a "craggy pimple" seems quite inadequate and its full title of "Caisteal 'a' Gharbh Choire" (the castle of the rough Corrie) is much more fitting. It would have been possible to spend the day there, working out possible routes but we by-passed it along a ledge to the left and eventually gained the summit of Sgurr Dubh na Da Bheinn. This "black peak of the two hills" stands at the junction of the main Cuillin ridge and the "Dubhs" ridge rising from Loch Coruisk to the East.

On the traverse of the main ridge, Sgurr Dubh Mor is often omitted, but as we wanted the "Munro" we made the detour. We followed what seemed a pro-

mising traverse towards a niche just below the steep rocky summit, but found ourselves having to lose height on awkward ground, then regain it to the ridge. A hundred feet or so of difficult scrambling took us to the top but, again, no distant views, as the cloud persisted.

We returned more directly to Sgurr Dubh na Da Bheinn and now approached what we knew by repute to be the most difficult section of the main ridge – the Thearlaich-Dubh gap.

You are abruptly upon the vertical south face of the gap which gives you no alternative but to abseil down the 30 ft. into its narrow confines. At this point you are faced with the choice of either a long detour off the ridge on the Coir a' Ghrunnda side or the rather awesome climb up the N. face. This 80 ft. wall is split by a narrow chimney which is now classified as V Diff but looks harder. It certainly seemed harder to me as I had mistakenly tried to climb it with my sac on, and as most of the holds are found in at the back of the groove, I had become quite firmly wedged with little apparent prospect of further progress up or down. It is perhaps sufficient to say that the gap was finally climbed with little elegance of style!

After this, the remainder of the ridge was straightforward to the screes at the top of the famous Stone shoot – the "tourist route" to Sgurr Alasdair.

This, the highest peak on the ridge, is described as "the finest viewpoint on the Cuillins" but as yet we had had no views and it seemed as if the cloud might not clear the ridge as we had hoped.

On returning to our sacs at the head of the Stone shoot, however, we delayed briefly to take the obligatory snap-shot, when, in an instant, the view was transformed as the cloud lifted and we stood gazing at the magnificent sweep of Coire Lagan. The remainder of the traverse was sheer exhilaration! It had been a long-standing ambition to do this circuit, and now to achieve it in such conditions

was an undoubted highlight of my mountain experience.

A short scramble up the other side of the col took us to Sgurr Thearlaich – a fine summit in its own right despite its nearness to Sgurr Alasdair. From here, a narrow descending ridge was one of the most spectacular features of this section – it seemed as if you walked along a steeply pitched roof which ended abruptly on both sides with vertical walls of several hundred feet into Coire Lagan to the left and Coir an Lochain to the right. A difficult problem in route-selection confronted us before we reached the coll below Sgurr Mhic Coinnich. An apparently well-marked line, in fact, led on to a vertical face above Coire Lagan so we had to retrace our steps, before finding an easier route down on the other side.

We approached Sgurr Mhic Coinnich by the famous "Collie's Ledge" – an exposed slanting traverse across the S.W. face of the buttress, which regains the ridge just beyond the summit.

By now we were experiencing the full heat of the afternoon sun and were thankful for our well-filled water bottles – "Rise and Shine" had never tasted so good!

Our sights were now set on that most spectacular of all Scottish mountain summits – the "Innaccessible Pinnacle". A mis-nomer now of course, although it had indeed proved inaccessible for Sir Hugh Munro – compiler of lists and founder of the "peak-bagging" game!. As our approach was from the east it seemed logical to take a long moderate scramble up this side, by which the pinnacle was first ascended by the Pilkington brothers in 1886. Although by climbing standards an easy route, it is nevertheless undoubtably spectacular with considerable exposure.

The panorama from the top was outstanding – southwards round the rim of Coire Lagan to Sgurr Alasdair, and to the North every peak clear to Sgurr nan Gillean. We lingered to take it all in,

before abseiling down the shorter W. face.

We had thought of going further at the outset, but it had been too good a day to rush and we were already more than satisfied with what we had achieved. We chose therefore to descend by the An Stac screes into Coire Lagan where we watched climbers on the Cioch, now clearly visible in the late afternoon sunlight. It had been in such light that the

shadow of this superb buttress on the slabs of Sron na Ciche had first been seen, leading to its discovery early this century.

It was difficult to take our leave of this magnificent prospect and as we descended the well-worn path to Glenbrittle we cast many a backward glance at the corrie.

Certainly we had sampled something of the magic of Skye that day.

AN ENCOUNTER WITH A CROFTER

“Hello, is anybody at home?”

A rain and wind induced soporific doze rudely interrupted. Struggling out of the sleeping bag and a dawn nurtured torpor I poked my head out of the tent to be hailed by the Crofter.

“Aye! Can I help you?”

“I was chust wondering who was camping in the area. The storm is going to worsen and I have a caravan at the croft you can be using.”

“No, no. Our tent is very cosy. Thanks anyway”.

“Would you be going over for the Sunday papers?”

“Sunday Papers? On Mull?”

“Aye. Chust over the hill, about 15 miles.”

“What time do the papers arrive?”

“Och. About half-past twelve but you’ve got to be sharp”.

It immediately registered that opening time on a Sunday was 12.30 and this clinched the trip.

“Aye. O.K. We’ll pick you up around quarter past”.

Sure enough the car had hardly come to rest outside the croft before the Crofter had ensconced himself in the back seat. An overly fast trip over winding, dipping single-track road brought us to Pennyghael and surprisingly to a hotel.

“I do not know what can have happened to the papers. They must be late”.

“We may as well have a pint while we are waiting”.

“Och, do you gentlemen take a dram? Come on away in”.

The Crofter stands the first round! The barman adds up the bill with great difficulty on a piece of paper. The bar tariff lists the price of drink, food, clothing, waterproofs and electronic calculators. When I pointed out that the calculation of drink cost would be greatly speeded up by the use of one of the advertised calculators I was seriously informed that the electronic gadgets did not respond well to the beer and whisky which gummed up the works. I was glad to find out that I was not the only one affected in this way.

Eventually the papers arrived at 2.30 and I had a feeling that we had been duped into providing a lift to to the pub. The Crofter purchased a wee carry out to take back – six cans and a half bottle. A wind buffeted rain lashed drive back over the hill to the Gribun deposited the Crofter at his croft and the campers at their tent. I felt the worse for wear and decided to sleep it off in the tent.

One hour later and approaching dusk I was abruptly awakened with a steady dripping of water on my forehead. A cautiously opened eye revealed the tent ridge rapidly succumbing to the effects of the storm.

"Dash this," I thought "If there is a dry caravan going I will forego the aesthetic delights of a leaking storm bound tent".

A polite enquiry at the croft yielded both a renewed offer to use the caravan and a healthy dram from the dregs of the half bottle.

Needing no further encouragement we collapsed the tent and repaired to the caravan out of the wind and rain.

Having just moved in the Crofter paid us a visit.

"Will you be going over to the pub tonight?"

"Well - We were not going to bother".

Further desultory conversation occupied the next half hour before the Crofter took his leave.

"Did you say you were going over to the pub?"

"Aye. O.K. We'll give you a knock about half past eight after we have had a bite to eat".

It did after all only seem fair to buy the man a half bottle for the use of the accommodation. He had stressed several times that he would not charge us.

Half past eight. Out into the shrieking wind and torrential rain. A quick scurry over to the croft and frantic banging at

the door. No answer. More frantic banging. No answer.

"The old beggar has flaked out".

Back in the caravan a fine bottle of wine is opened and random blethering wastes away the evening. The caravan door opens at quarter past ten and an unsteady bleary eyed Crofter regards us reproachfully.

"Och, I thought you gentlemen were going over to the pub".

"We gave you a knock but there was no answer"

"Och, I must have dropped off for a moment or two. Do you have a dram on you? It's not that I am over fond of the drink but a dram would go down fine".

"I am sorry, but all we have is wine. Would you care for a glass?"

The Crofter seeing that this was the only drink left reluctantly agreed. He sniffed the bouquet, sipped the nectar and visibly winced.

"I'll go and put the kettle on".

The following day the ferry changed to the winter schedule and typically we were eighth in line for the six car boat. The owner of the motorised caravan in front of us had a well stocked drinks cupboard . . . but that's another story.

Anon

HEADLINE !



SOME PEOPLE IN THE MORAY
MOUNTAINEERING CLUB WEAR
SILLY HATS

ONE WAY TO SPEND A WEEKEND!

A period of unusually fine weather was forecast by the Met Office to continue over the approaching weekend. Prospects of a visit to the Loch Mullardoch region in sunshine instead of swirling mist and driving rain prompted myself and two mountaineering colleagues to pack our gear and head for Glen Cannich. Our plan involved canoeing westwards along the loch, camping Friday and Saturday nights and bagging a few of the area's "Munros".

Evening sunlight showed the spring greenery to full advantage as we drove up the glen to the Hydro dam at the eastern end of Loch Mullardoch. Canoes launched and with an almost forgotten toothbrush proudly surmounting the pile of kit in the front seat of my canoe, we paddled off along the loch in high spirits. An hour and a quarter of easy canoeing on a loch surface rippled by a light breeze found us surrounded by mountains still carrying residues of winter snow. Red deer outlined the skyline, sandpipers called along the water's edge, not a midge in sight; an idyllic campsite. Sorting our priorities, a suitable wine was selected from our cellar and immersed in the burn to chill, ready for our evening meal. Tents pitched on a green sward, meal cooked, we settled down to eat as the sun dipped behind the ridge above us. Down the loch, hills reflected from a now still surface turned into deep blue and purple silhouettes. A new moon brightened in a darkening sky to be joined shortly after by a sprinkling of stars. We finished a memorable meal, tidied up, crawled in to our tent and fell asleep to the sound of the burn as it tumbled over rocks into the loch.

Saturday morning saw us looking entranced across a loch glittering in the first rays of sunshine. Mountains graded by increasing distance formed a backcloth of hazy blues and golds. Breakfast was interspersed with bouts of photography

as we attempted to capture some of the magnificent effects created by the sun as it rose above mountain and water.

Boots on and daysacks on our backs, we headed up into the hills accompanied by the Socrach burn. Deep pools broken by waterfalls and overhung by trees made a scenic start to the day, the trees owing their survival to the steep rocky banks where they grew, inaccessible to the marauding intentions of sheep and deer. Reaching the fifteen hundred foot contour, we climbed away from the burn upwards towards the eastern top of An Riabhachan. A herd of some one hundred and fifty red deer moved up over the shoulder to our right, adding interest to the skyline.

The temperature had now soared, a general strip off, liberal applications of suncream, lashings of sweat and considerable puffing helped us reach our first top of the day. On the ridge a light breeze promised ideal conditions for traversing the tops. We sat down to replace our liquid losses and enjoy the vast panorama before us. To the north lay Loch Monar, beyond Lurg Mhor and Bidein a Choire Sheasgaich dominated the scene to the north-west, bringing back memories of a visit to these two hills three weeks earlier. Achnaschellach, Torridon and the Fannich Forest hills filled the distant horizon, remarkably clear, making identification of individual tops easy. To the east lay Sgurr na Lapaich, looking only a stone's throw away. South over Loch Mullardoch, the Glen Affric hills and beyond the Kintail hills spread out below a cloudless sky. An easy stroll took us towards the main top of An Riabhachan. An eagle soared into view; we gazed skywards as the great bird circled higher and higher until a mere speck against the blue sky. It turned and glided away to the west.

Our first Munro of the weekend visited, an enjoyable walk along the long, almost

level ridge brought us to a five hundred foot drop. Beyond the col lay our next top, nameless on the map but listed in Munro's tables as An Socach. The cool breeze enabled us to descend into the col and reach the summit of our second Munro with little real effort. In such perfect conditions we were in no hurry to leave the cairn but lay sunbathing, gloating on our good fortune. A long shoulder curved round the lip of a fine corrie, dropping in the distance right down to the campsite. Obviously, the route down was going to afford pleasant walking. A short distance from the top I almost stepped on a ptarmigan. The bird beautifully camouflaged, had sat tight until my foot was only inches away; only then did she leave her nest of nine eggs. Offering herself as a decoy, she fluttered along the ground, trailing a wing and feigning injury as she attempted to lure us away from the nest. So intent was the bird in her efforts to attract our attention that she fluttered to the edge of the cornice still rimming the edge of the corrie and literally fell off in a flurry of snow, feet and feathers. Somewhat perturbed that our presence had caused the

bird to take such drastic action, we peered over the cornice. To our relief we saw the bird had pulled out of her head-long plunge and was now skimming, far below, across the floor of the corrie to land in a patch of scree. Not being able to emulate the ptarmigan's method of descent, we continued down round the lip of the corrie. Low ground reached, we paused for a rest and there, high above us, an eagle (presumably the same one as we saw earlier) glided into view as if to check on our progress off the hill.

On returning to the campsite, we opened the bar, satisfied our considerable thirst, packed our gear into the canoes and headed westwards. Less than an hour after leaving we paddled into the mouth of a stream wending its way through sandy banks rife with sandpipers and oyster catchers. Tents were pitched overlooking a waterfall tumbling into a deep rocky pool, a perfect campsite. Another sumptuous meal was prepared, eaten and washed down by the last bottle of wine, beautifully cooled below the waterfall.

Rising steeply from the opposite bank of the river deepening in colour as the



The Botly at Maol Bhuide
with Lurg Mhor behind

sun lowered in the sky. Beinn Fhionnlaidh beckoned; we could not resist, the ploy being to climb to the top with a selection from the bar and watch the sun go down. What better way to end a day in the hills?

Our pleasure was hard earned, however, as the steep slope offered no respite, with not a breath of wind to cool us. We toiled up the shimmering hill, upwards ever upwards, urged on by the sun dipping rather too quickly towards the horizon. Victory was ours with ten minutes to spare. We sat down beside the cairn on top of our third Munro of the day. Regaining our composure, we were able to appreciate the sheer splendour of the view before us. Far below, Loch Mullardoch reflected a mirror image of the neighbouring mountains. All round range upon range of hills showing no detail except blue and purple outlines, becoming paler and paler in hue as distance increased. Away to the west the sea, orange in the sunset, outlined the mountain ridges of Rhum and Skye. Minutes later the sun was gone, leaving only fading rays. Below us loch and hill darkened, the air became decidedly chilly; it was time to go.

We bounded down the steep hillside towards our tent in great spirits, stopping only once as a herd of red deer, startled by the sudden appearance of three figures descending into their midst, made a disorganised get-away round the hillside. A quick brew and into our sleeping bags, three Munros ticked off in truly exceptional weather. We reflected that not a single cloud had been seen from dawn to dusk.

Sunday morning we rose early. During the night the temperature had fallen, condensation on the tent had frozen. Brew up speedily accomplished, breakfast finished, we headed off up Gleann a Chailich as the first rays of sunshine caught the highest tops. An old stalking path was followed, making the going easy. Carn Eige and Mam Sodhail towered

above us to the left, whilst the head of the valley was blocked by an undulating ridge, finally leading up to the twin tops of Sgurr nan Ceathreamhnan, our main target of the day. The col was reached along with the sun, once again the temperature soared. We paused to look down into Glen Affric, spread out below us to the south. Five hundred feet of steady climbing gained us the summit of our first top. There followed half a mile of pleasant walking along the rounded back of An Sochach (another An Sochach) to the cairn at the western end, our first Munro of the day. Good progress was made negotiating the ups and downs of the next section, although hot work at times, the cool breeze always seeming to disappear when we needed it most.

Finally, however, we stood at the foot of the last shoulder leading up the Sgurr nan Ceathreamhnan. The heat was almost overpowering as we toiled up the final seven hundred and fifty feet, not stopping lest we should never start again. However, the top was reached to the luxury of a cool breeze and a cairn surrounded by snow. Beer rations were buried in the snow to cool and we settled down to consider the view. To the south-west the long broken ridge of Beinn Fhada dominated, looking quite spectacular from our vantage point. Behind Beinn Fhada the Kintail hills, Ben Sgriol and Ladar Bheinn all looking clear and detailed. Far away to the south-east over the South Cluanie Ridge the distinctive shape of Ben Nevis was clearly visible. Naturally, the second top of our hill had to be visited by those of us who could not use the excuse of a previous visit to opt out. The detour completed, the beer was retrieved from the snow, ice cool; fantastic!

Stretching away to the north-west ran the three-mile long shoulder of Creag a Coir' Ard. The descent to the shoulder followed by a few sections of the ridge where we tended to overheat, we nevertheless arrived on top of our third and

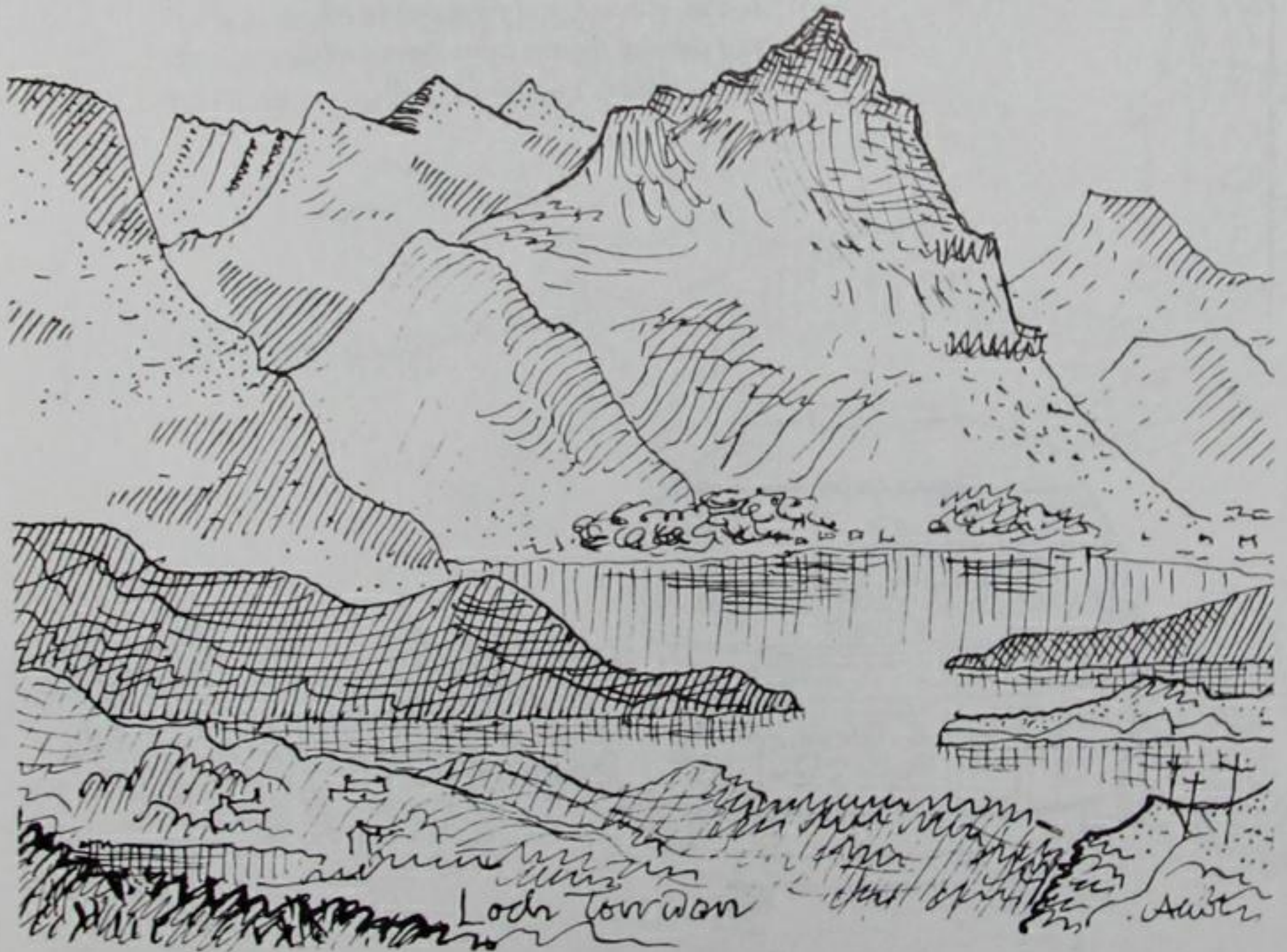
final Munro of the day in reasonable condition. Dehydration was avoided by consuming the last of our liquid refreshment.

As we covered the remaining section of the ridge, an eagle was sighted swooping low down into the glen below us. The last high point on the ridge proved by the proliferation of feathers and pellets to be the eagle's perch. Commanding a magnificent view of the glens on either side, the perch also dominated the whole western end of Loch Mullardoch. Away below us a tiny speck of orange indicated our campsite. Underfoot conditions were uncharacteristically dry. The moss crackled below our feet as we dropped down the

now roasting hillside.

Exhilarated by two days of hillwalking in condition as good as any of us could remember, the canoes were repacked and we paddled off eastwards. Our intrusion into the area over, we left that remote region to the red deer, the sandpipers, dippers and oyster catchers, and, of course, the majestic eagle. Elated at the success of the weekend trip, eight miles of loch was covered with buoyant ease. There was time to take a last look at the surrounding hills still bathed in sunshine and echoing to the haunting call of the cuckoo, a fitting end to a memorable weekend.

Jim Boyd



These high wild hills and rough uneven ways
Draw out our miles and make them wearisome
Shakespeare, Richard II (referring to Gloucestershire!)

Standing with reluctant feet
Where the brook and river meet
Longfellow

*For there will be Mars Bars and Yorkies,
And flasks full of hot Rise and Shine,
Red jelly and dropscones and peanuts
Washed down with some well-travelled wine.*

*And there will be pineapple titbits,
And yogurt (omitting the spoons),
And marzipan, muesli, and popcorn,
Fruit slices and squeezed macaroons.*

*And there will be Export and Kestrel,
And raisins, and tablet with rum,
Sardines, jelly beans, and fruit cocktail,
And three-legged chicken (for some).*

*Then there will be marmalade softies,
And shortbread, and pilchards in oil,
And Granny Smiths (over from Chile),
And yesterday's haggis (in foil).*



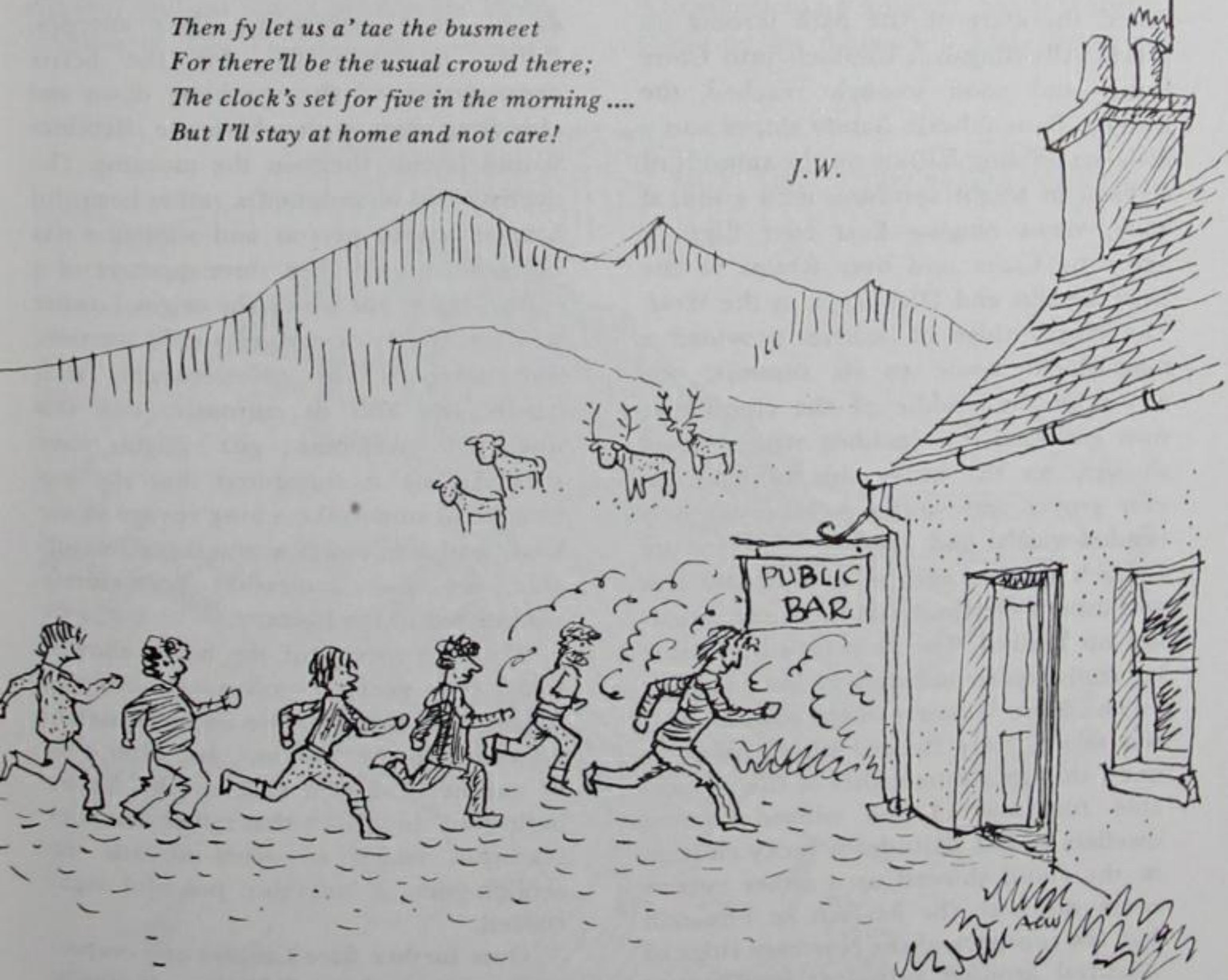
*And there'll be unhappy bananas,
Cup-a-Soup, Paris buns, Bovril cubes,
Confections from Eccles and Kendal,
And cheese spread with shrimp from pink tubes.*

*And then there'll be stockings all soggy
(A 'Handwash — with care' they all seek),
Sweaty shirts to be washed in cold water,
And boots hogging warm spots all week.*

*And there will be rucksacks in doorways,
Rows of breeches hung out on the green,
Sodden Kleenex forgotten in pockets;
Pink bumps where the midges have been.*

*Then fy let us a' tae the busmeet
For there'll be the usual crowd there;
The clock's set for five in the morning
But I'll stay at home and not care!*

J.W.



DE REBUS RHUMIBUS (RHUM DOINGS)

The first day started inauspiciously enough in the Mallaig disco which was vacated about 2.00 a.m. for the alternative and equally dubious delight of a couple of hours sleep in the back seat of the car on the quay side next to the hall, shielded from 50 hertz ultra violet strobe radiation, if not from bursts in more audible frequencies. We boarded the Lochmor at 4.30 a.m. and at 5.00 sailed off West into a bracing grey dawn for Kinloch, via Canna harbour. Arriving in Loch Scresort we were finally transferred to the pier by 9.00 a.m. and shown to our stark and expensive quarters.

Refreshed by Sugar Ricicles and evaporated milk we searched out and found the start of the path leading up beside Allt Slugan a Choilich into Coire Dubh and soon enough reached the Bealach Bairc-mheall. Sandy slopes and a little scrambling had us on the summit of Hallival in bright sunshine with good, if hazy, views ranging East over Eigg to Sgurr na Ciche and over Rhum to the Skye Cuillin and Oigh-Sgeir in the West. The North ridge of Askival provided a magnificent route to its summit, our arrival in the middle of the cloud that now enveloped it coinciding with a snow shower, on the heavy side of light. In ever greyer and wetter weather we descended easily and steeply West to the Bealach an Oir and with markedly less enthusiasm continued in the same direction up Trallval. The twin tops here must be really quite impressive, but standing on the more Westerly of the pair, in what was now a fully fledged spring blizzard, one's thoughts were rather of the remarkable fortitude of the winged burrow dwellers at this altitude. A lucky clearing in the cloud showed us a rather evasive route down to the Bealach an Fhuarain but the prospect of the Northern ridge of Ainsival aroused sufficient indifference to provoke a sodden retreat by the shortest route back to the Bealach Barke-

val and the 'bothy'. Similar decisions by a more resolute party now a little ahead of us provided the necessary mitigating circumstances.

The day ended, rather as it had begun, perhaps more drunkenly but certainly more enjoyably at the Nature Conservancy's Ceilidh.

The traverse of the main ridge of the Rhum Cuillin is ranked as a classic mountain day and on the strength of this acquaintance one can appreciate why.

The second day, known elsewhere in the North West as the Sabbath, saw the ceilidh struggle into a splendid crescendo before the gradual departure of the more sober and optimistic element, who no doubt were conserving their energies, rather unrealistically, for the better appreciation of the sparkling dawn and cloudless skies with which the Hebrides would favour them in the morning. The cyclists had abandoned a rather beautiful blonde haired person and someone was obliged to offer her three-quarters of a can of lager, for which the original owner had apparently developed a mild aversion. She accepted the offer regally, with hardly the hint of curiosity that this unusually welcome gift might have evoked, but it transpired that she was shortly to undertake a long voyage to the East, and was either a practising inscrutable, or else somewhat prematurely committed to her journey.

My own survey of the bothy showed that the most comfortable sleeping quarters consisted of two adjacent matching chairs in the 'parlour', and after a tin of mackerel, and a visit to the 'bothy bathroom' to relieve that rather nauseous sensation which so often attends the ceillidh-goer, a tolerably peaceful night ensued.

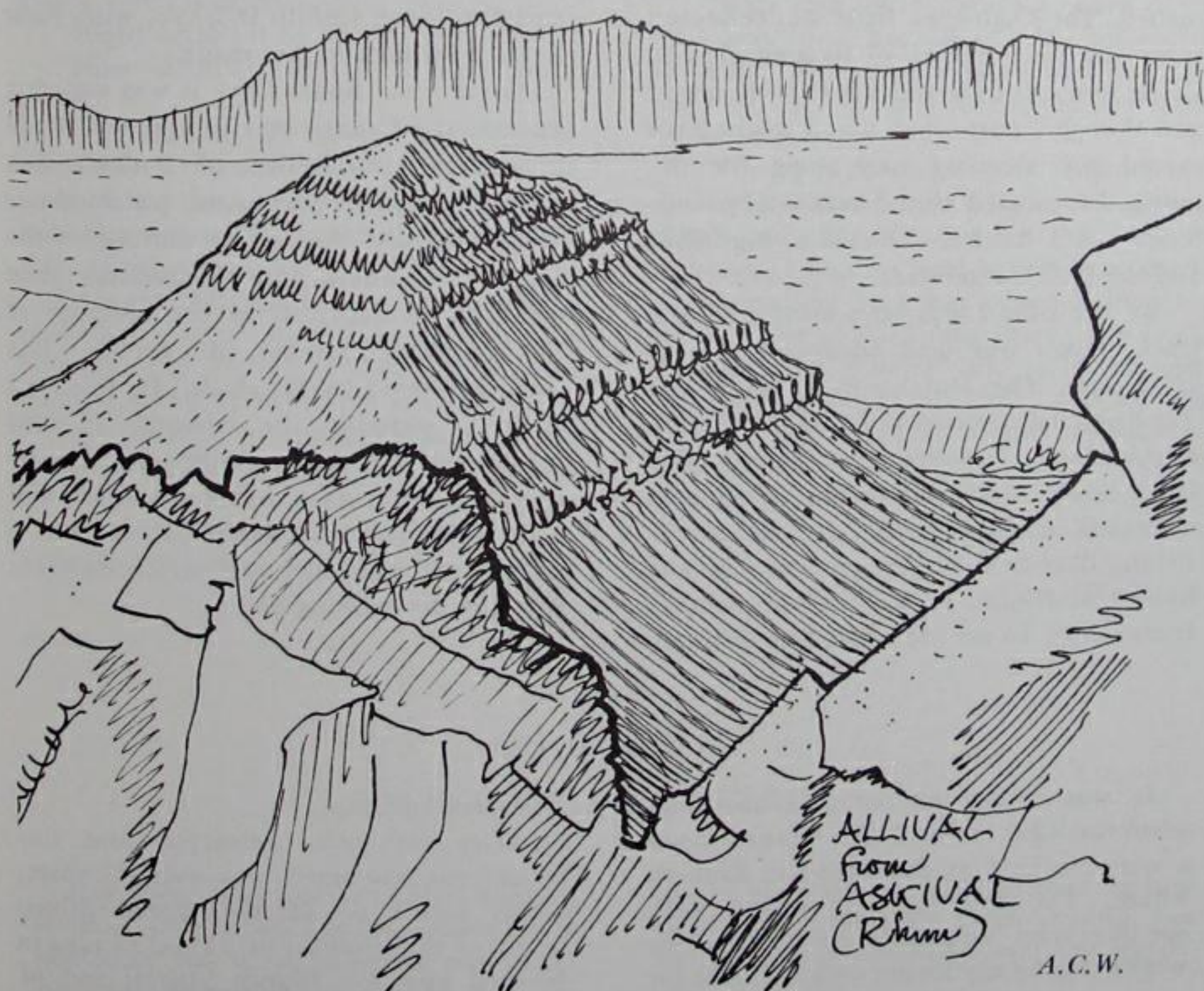
Over further Rice Crispies and evaporated milk at about 7.30 a.m. it slowly dawned that it was still raining and the cloud base was well esconced at around

1200 feet. The only reasonable course seemed to be a closer acquaintance with the emptying 'bedroom' and a postponement of the reckoning with the wetness of the grey outdoors.

Despite my best, though singularly unsuccessful, efforts, the 'bothy' clung to its air of asphyxiating sterility. It was stirred a little by a trickle of visitors intent on making good if surreptitious use of the drying facilities, but by 6.00 p.m. there were no longer any excuses for procrastination. Something had to be done.

We set off up the path on the North side of the Kinloch river. This was rather in the nature of an expedition teething problem, as, despite the £40 repair job effected on my boots by the very efficient and no doubt prosperous Welsh cobblers at The Farmers, they afforded

no barrier to the waters of the river when waded knee deep to regain the Harris track. The day was definitely on the mend though, the deer were rushing about in natty plastic collars and the highland cattle were busy at their licks, placed for their convenience in day-glo alkathene containers. An eagle, aroused on the lower slopes of An Dornabac, glided out over the mausoleum. Just South of Harris the sun slowly sank behind Beinn Mhor in South Uist, fleetingly illuminating the raised beach and the Ruinsival buttresses in a splendid display of crimsons and purples. The traverse from Harris to Papadil is probably best accomplished around the 600 foot contour. This is a fine coastline, perhaps not to be compared to the Wilderness coast on Mull, but it is always tempting to descend a little here and



there to get a closer look at the thundering swell, and, to avoid reascent, get into a slightly more exposed traverse than one might have wished. Loch Papadil, beautifully sheltered, was reached in the last light at about 10.00 p.m., and while I had not really expected to see a Mercedes on the drive, my penlight was only just up to probing a passage through the luxuriant rhododendron jungle which all but surrounded the dilapidated and ruined lodge.

At the beginning of the third day it was distinctly chilly, even some 2000 feet below the snow line. The night was noisy. The shearwaters were whirring back to their cold snow holes. The waves were thumping hollowly into the cliffs. The cranny under the boulder which was providing the bivouac site, not only gave shelter to a whin bush and some brambles, but also some other little denizen which was probably none too happy about its night's activities being so singularly disturbed. The Oigh-sgeir light was reflected from the pale bellies of passing clouds. Dawn was still four and a half hours away and though I suspected that I might have carted my sleeping bag along for the airing, I was glad that I was well provisioned with tablet, chocolate digestives and the M.C.'s cigarettes.

By the time I was high on the Dibidil track, dawn was well advanced. It was clear now. The Dutchman's Cap in the Treshnish Isles stood bold in the Southern horizon. The sea was dotted with light buoys and numerous lighthouses were still flashing, while the van of the fishing fleet beat South-west through the Sound of Rhum. It was a good position from which to do the ridge, but although

it was quite bright, the cloud was still down on Sgurr nan Gillean and the remains of Saturday's rain lingered in the bottoms of my pockets.

The bothy at Dibidil is superbly situated; tremendous views of Eigg and Muck; beautifully reconstructed; spotlessly clean. The first rays of the sun were now lightening the clouds over Eigg and the Eastern slopes of Ainsival and Sgurr nan Gillean shone in a cool sparkling splendour. I dawdled happily back to Kinloch, stopping now and then on a warm slab by a burn just soaking up the day.

Finishing the last of the Super K's with the last of the evaporated milk and setting the alarm for lunch time, I was in bed at Kinloch by 10 a.m. The afternoon passed pleasantly, between eating and dozing in the sun. The cruise back to Mallaig on the Pioneer was a treat. Canna looked green, Rhum looked mountainous and the Black Cuillin in Skye, with their fresh snow looked just magic.

Some four hours later it was snowing outside the Grantown chipper, so despite the small probability of today's fish having arrived before us, we warmed our elbows on the fryer while waiting for the suppers. Gannets and shearwaters alike were to be deprived of the pleasure of this particular morsel. My garden was well plastered with slush. It was not entirely outwith the bounds of cold reason to imagine the fourth, and maybe even the fifth, days, being squandered in a shroud of electric blanket, the better to allow vacuous reality her halting stumble through the echoing halls.

Anon

A RHUM DO

It was a dry encouraging morning, when the 'Club' arrived like refugees from a war-torn land at the bothy in Kinloch, Rhum. For my part, I arrived with ape-like arms through carrying the two weeks rations my loving wife supplied for

this week-end trip.

After my arms retracted and our breakfast-come-lunch was over, Graham, Sandy and I, set off with great enthusiasm for the 'Cuillins of Rhum' to take in Hallival and the Islands highest top of

Askival. The ascent up from Kinloch directly to Hallival is heavy going, with deep heather and spongy grass, that soon had us gasping for breath.

As we approached Hallival, the fine weather gave way to a bitter cold wind heralding the approach of snow. Nevertheless we were cheered with the emergence of the clubs red haired 'Superman', Eric.

"Where are you lads making for?"

"Askival", we replied, "and yourself?"

Well as you've probably guessed, Eric was also heading for Askival and talking of ascending by some 'Wee pinnacle'. What was this 'Wee pinnacle on Askival—could we possibly ascend by this route?

With a shrug of his shoulders Eric replied:—

"Have a look and see for yourselves".

We then set off boldly with Eric leading to the bealach for Askival. As we ascended from the bealach I became aware of a dark obstacle ahead. This was Eric's 'wee Pinnacle!'

"Right what's it to be?" enquired Eric.

"How difficult is it?" I tentatively asked.

"It's classified as barely difficult in standard, with the tricky bit being of some thirty feet, with a moderate climb over the rest to the summit", came back the patient reply.

"Alright! I'll give it a try" I carelessly replied; I then turned round to ask Graham and Sandy if they were also coming along, to see them sensibly skirt-int the pinnacle by the east side, shouting back things like — "sucker"; "It's you're own life" etc.

"Hmm! I'll show them", I thought to myself, following Eric; So far so good-

what was that move Eric made there? Oh no! He's not going up that hold-less looking slab?

He is!. Watch where he placed his hands and feet; How did he do that again?

It was here, that I ground to a halt; standing on a narrow ledge with a great void below me..

"Don't panic!" I reminded myself, looking up to Eric for assistance.

"There's a small crack to the left about two feet up! try your left leg; ... Oh well, go back to the ledge and try the right side, ... No use eh! well go back and try the left side again and take your time, don't use your hands so much, lean back taking care not to move unless your'e sure it's safe to do so." came the advice possibly hiding growing frustration. It was no use. I tried again, failed and retreated back to the narrow ledge.

"What now, Eric?" I asked trying to cover the quaver that was now creeping into my voice.

"Well you could always go back down the way you ascended," he suggested, looking cold with the snow that was now blasting us, making the situation more desperate.

"Go back down" he had advised, so I looked back to where I had started from. That did it! Without further aid or strategy, I was up, beside Eric in seconds!

From here on it was advice all the way, with; "Use a hand jam there; lean back; change your stance;" and so the encouragement came. In no time I was arriving at the summit cairn to the applause of Graham and Sandy with a little bit of pride and praise from Eric, Immediately forgetting the 'Rhum do' on that 'Wee Pinnacle!'

Garry McCreath

PLANE MOUNTAINEERING

Have you ever noticed, when looking at those lovely relief maps, created with such skill and detail, (there is one in the Sligachan Hotel and another in the SMC

hut in Glen Brittle on Skye) that the tops of the mountains are worn smooth, not by glaciers or wind or water but inquisitive finger tips!

It seems that the temptation is common for people to feel with their fingers the braille of such a map almost as though, later, feet would remember contours better for having felt them with fingers.

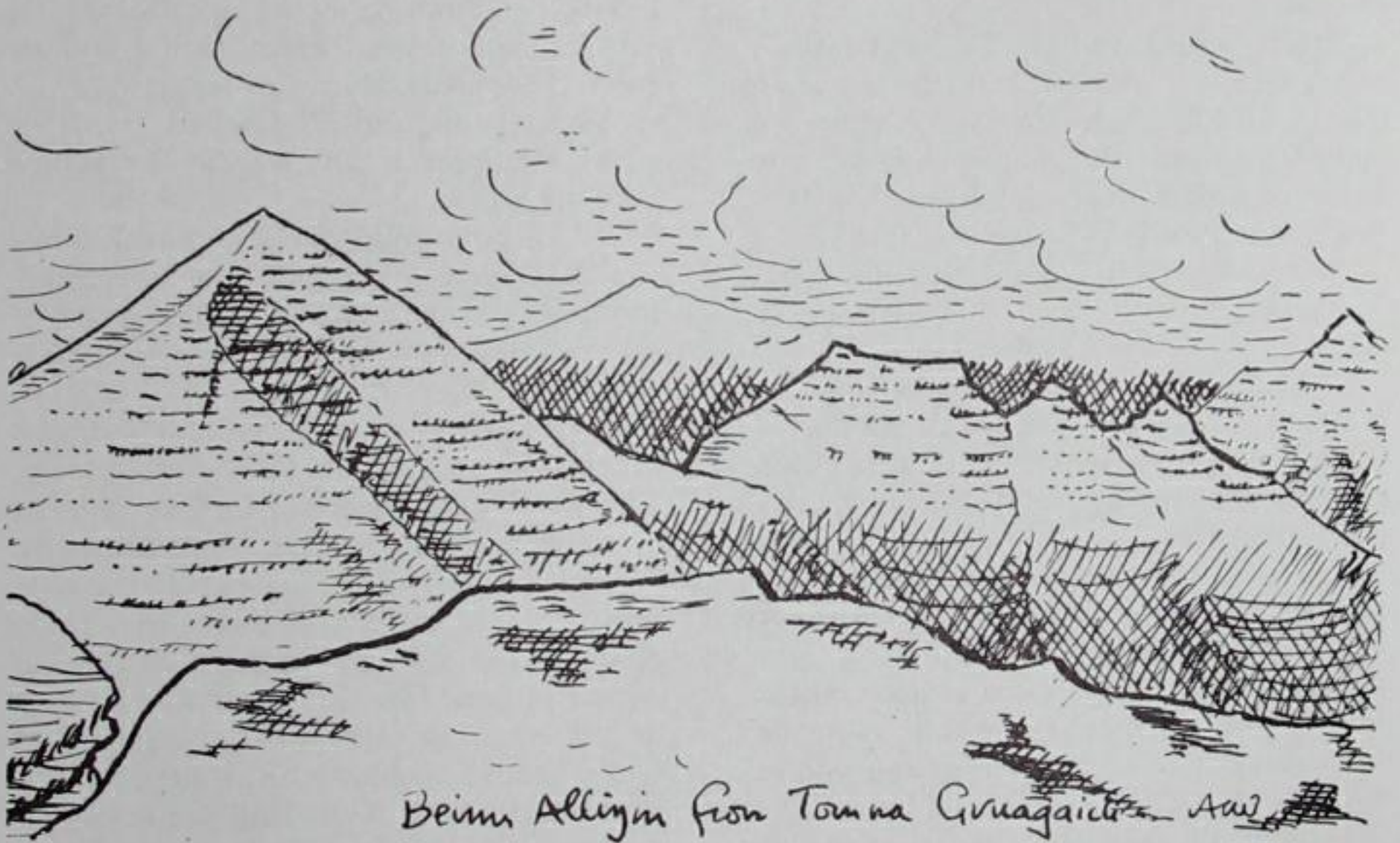
That feeling is part of the privileged pleasure of my job. To fly over mountains is to want to touch them and it was this that drew me back, after an absence of nearly 20 years to active mountaineering.

It is often assumed that to be able to navigate an aeroplane is the key to navigating boots or boats. This is not so and so far the ease with which I can get

lost ranks only with my sloth in going up steep slopes.

From an aeroplane however it is possible to recapitulate on errors and for those who were kept waiting on the 1981 Mamores meet until the wet and exhausted team tottered into the coach nearly an hour late it may be some consolation to know that I know exactly where I went wrong and it can be revealed that you were lucky not to have had to collect the near corpses at Kinlochleven!.

Almost every day the infantile error that turned a walk with the dog into a 26 mile marathon taking almost as much night as it did day haunts me as I pass



Ben Avon and Beinn a Bhuid on the way to Edinburgh.

It has never been my good fortune to climb a hill through cloud and to walk the heights above a sea of cloud but this happens many times in the year when flying and it is truly a lonely and lovely sight which by its unfamiliarity transforms the world into a fairy land.

Navigation above this cloud, with mountains chopped off at a couple of

thousand feet above sea level, is difficult in the air and must be doubly so on foot.

Despite the chance to see a "Glory" nearly every day and to sit in shirt sleeves among the Munros and tops at temperatures below zero the mountains call so forcefully and the ratio of desire to be in an aeroplane instead of walking over the contours on foot is about 2 in 100.

Ian Aitchison

BIRDS OF THE MORAY HILLS

Local government re-organisation added large tracts of hill country to Moray, and some of our most interesting birds may now be found in the Moray hills.

The top bird, altitudinally speaking, is the snow bunting. Visitors begin to arrive from the north by the middle of September, and some spend the winter months in the hills feeding on seeds, or hanging



THE DOTTEREL

around car parks picking up scraps. A very small number stay on through the summer to breed, and may be found in the vicinity of snow fields.

The dotterel is a summer visitor to the

hills and is very thinly distributed above the 1000 metre level. It appears to be restricted to the high tops by inter-specific competition with the golden plover which occupies the lower ground. Another hill

wader is the dunlin which I have seen on Ben Avon, the Cabrach and the Cromdale hills.

The only resident hill bird is the ptarmigan which moults into nearly pure white in the winter, and which resorts to snowholing to keep out of the wind. It can be found down to the heather line where the red grouse takes over. There are sometimes a few on the top of Ben Rinnes.

Golden eagles may be seen soaring over the hills, but their eyries are usually at a much lower level. Eagles have a long breeding season, and the eggs are laid at the beginning of April. Even low level nests are sometimes snowed out, though they may restart if it is not too late. Human interference is a much bigger danger, as eagles are unwelcome on many grouse moors.

Peregrines have a much wider distribution, and may be found on suitable cliffs from the Cairngorms down to the coast. Numbers have increased since the ban on organo-chlorine pesticides, and the Moray population now stands at about a dozen, though half of them have their eggs or

young robbed each year. Two years ago there was a case of climbers being prosecuted for wilful disturbance of a breeding pair of peregrines in Cumbria as a result of which the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds wrote to the British Mountaineers Council with advice how this sort of unfortunate incident could be avoided.

The peregrine's smaller relation, the merlin, breeds on heather moors. Its main prey is the meadow pipit, a bird which also has to put up with the attentions of the cuckoo which lays its egg in their nests. Other small birds breeding on heather moor are the twite, ring ouzel and wheatear. Two predators, the hen harrier and the short-eared owl, prey on these small birds and also on small mammals. These two birds also favour young conifer plantations which provide them with food and shelter.

Hill burns are the habitat for dippers, grey and pied wagtails and, where there is room, goosanders. On the shingle banks may be found sandpipers, oystercatchers and, occasionally, common terns.

John Edelsten

HILL PHOTOGRAPHY

A browse through the club's photographs leaves the viewer with the distinct impression that the club's history goes back a lot further than the 50 years this publication commemorates. Some of the older photographs of groups, in the form of old glass slides, would indicate that some other association of friends existed for the purpose of gregarious hill outings several years before the Moray Mountaineering Club was eventually formed. The Club library includes one old slide called 'Bidean nam Bayan' dated 1893!

This takes us back to a time when mountain photography was only for the very dedicated photographer who was

also an ardent mountaineer. Remember that in those days tarred roads didn't exist in the Highlands and even although there were boats and railways, buses and cars had not come upon the scene.

In these early days cameras were made of wood and brass and were extremely heavy. Because of the slow film emulsions a heavy tripod was needed for support. The pioneers of hill photography had to carry photographic equipment weighing considerably more than that of his modern counterpart with all his paraphernalia. Despite the shortcomings of the quality and portability of the equipment of the day many excellent photographs

exist from the very earliest days of this medium, photographs that are the envy of the modern, well equipped photographer.

Improvements in film emulsions led to improvements in cameras. Early emulsions were slow (i.e. they needed long exposures to light). The first ones were wet and needed to be manufactured on the spot in some form of portable dark-room! They also needed to be processed immediately after the exposure was made. The appearance of the dry plate enabled a camera to hold a magazine with several exposures being possible and no immediate need for development of the exposure.

The marriage of the emulsion with a celluloid film base pioneered by a chap called Eastman, the founder of the great

Kodak Company, enabled the development of the modern roll of film that we know today.

By the end of the Nineteenth Century relatively small simple cameras were available which were considerably lighter and were almost cheap enough for popular use.

About 1925 the Leica 35mm Camera put in its appearance. This revolutionised camera design and led to the geometric progression in the use of the latest technology from which the highly sophisticated 'miniature' marvels of today evolved. Although larger format cameras are in use — some direct descendants from the early giants offering the highest quality in results — they cannot compete with the 35mm camera for convenience on the mountain. For portability over the



*An Teallach
June 1936*

*Early Morning –
Loch Avon*

*(taken from old
glass slide)*



larger formats and quality over the smaller, 35mm reigns supreme.

The basic simplicity of early cameras was an advantage. Today many people are attracted to the shining gadgetry for its own sake and seem to lose sight of the real purpose, that of producing a good picture. The higher the quality and the better the technical merits of equipment, although allowing the making of a picture easier under certain conditions, in no way guarantees an acceptable result. The photographer should certainly 'know' his equipment as well as possible but he needs the 'eye' for it and it's in the composition that the picture is made. Too often the simpler camera produces as good or even better picture because there are no technical distractions to its composition.

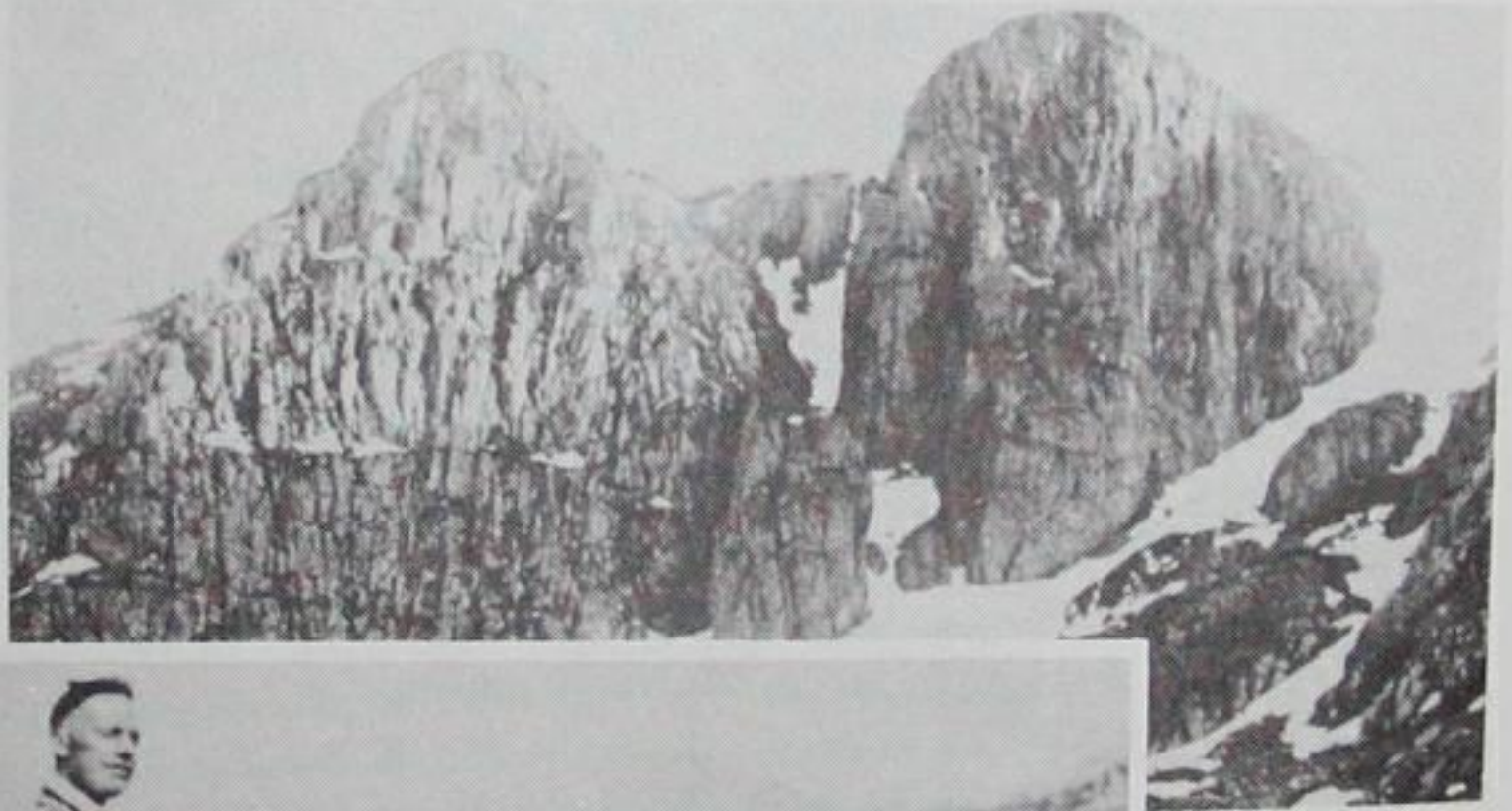
Today there is a trend, through automation, towards simplicity in use of modern cameras. Highly sophisticated as

these cameras may be they offer the advantage that the automation takes care of the technicalities leaving the owner free to concentrate on the picture.

Most mountaineers attempt to capture the magic of the mountains on film at some time or other but how often are they successful? The feeling, the sounds, the wind on the face all contribute to the hill experience and this can lead the unwary into taking a photograph of only part of a scene, a purely visual interpretation of that far greater experience, and the end result is too often a flat uninteresting pictorial record that hardly inspires. Foresight and careful composition can transform such a picture into something worth viewing but in the end no picture can compensate us for that magic mountain quality that draws us to them.

S. McIntosh

*Bidean Nam
Bayan. 1893*



*J. Luckas
Glen Strontian*

*(Prints taken
from old
glass slide)*

ROCHETTA: UP AND DOWN IN ITALY

There is a hill above Riva at the head of Lake Garda called Rochetta. It rises sheer from the Lake for 5000 feet in great crags of white limestone. About half way up stands the chapel of S. Barbara, a monument to Italian piety and ingenuity.

We sat on the beach looking up at S. Barbara, wondering how on earth they got it up there. Consulting the map, we saw there was a trail to the chapel, and indeed to the top of the bluff. Nevertheless we sat back in the sun and ate more apricots: after all we were recovering from a timid tour of the Brenta Dolomites on a low budget with heavy packs. Days of watching large Germans eat huge meals in the huts had made us long for the cheap wine and fleshpots of Riva.

After a couple of days, curiosity overcame relaxation and we headed for Rochetta in the early morning to avoid the worst of the heat. The lower slopes were in pine forest, cool and scented. The ascent to the chapel was simple, but after this it became much steeper. There was a *diretissimo* route to the top engagingly labelled "solo per esperti", but we carefully followed a variation marked "medio". I could normally manage *medios* if Mary went first.

The problem of rounding an exposed corner was solved in true continental style by an iron ladder and handrail. "Jings," I mused, "I could use this on Corrag Buidhe". In fact the trail wound its way up the face in perfect security, aided by the beech forests and scrub.

The Italians specialise in these "Via Ferrata" or iron trails, by which incompetents with a steady head can penetrate the haunts of the ravens. A sad feature of these trails are the shrines to local lads who died cutting them for dudes such as us.

In the exposed sections it was extremely hot, and we had eaten all the apricots. Far below the great lake shimmered deep blue in the heat, while Riva basked like an Arcadian Rothesay. The beech groves were a delight however, and in the shady places we found cyclamen with an exquisite scent. There was of course no surface water on the limestone, and I

started to remember previous vows to avoid Italian foothills in July. Water bottles, previously regarded as effete or "too heavy" seemed suddenly desirable.

On reaching the top of Rochetta all was forgiven, for the trail wandered pleasantly along the ridges with superb views of the Monte Baldo range across the Lake and the Brenta Dolomites to the north. We left the crags and beech forests for the Alpine pastures of the Cima d'Oro and had lunch among the wild flowers. We had by now walked off our map, but it seemed that any trail down the other side would take us to Lake Ledro and the afternoon bus.

All went well, and we even found water at a shepherd's bothy on the way down. There were wild strawberries along the mule track and the big timber gave a pleasant shade. The natural woods here a joy after our barren slopes in Scotland — monuments to man and the great white sheep.

After a beer and a swim in Lake Ledro we caught the bus back to Riva. This run turned out to be far more hazardous than Rochetta. We descended briskly through a gorge to emerge on a terrace hundreds of feet above Lake Garda, meeting huge trucks at every bend above the crags. We were on the outside. After much tooting of horns we reached the town intact. It was now possible to spend the last days of our holiday gazing up at Rochetta from the beach without that itching temptation which afflicts folk confronted with new hills.

The Lake Garda hills and the Dolomite ranges offer superb walking holidays. Obviously rock climbers will be even more at home on the great towers, but modest walkers can wander along the trails and cross the high passes. It is worth taking a rope and an ice axe for the Dolomites. Hills like Rochetta are much quieter than the main climbing areas. The train from Calais to Venice passes along the southern end of Lake Garda. Get off at Desenzano and catch a boat to Riva. It's a fine way to arrive in Italy.

Bill Shepherd

PYRENEAN SUMMER

Two years ago in a heady, uncharacteristic rush of enthusiasm our Club decided that one of the main events of 1981 would be a foreign meet to mark the Jubilee Year of the Club.

Questionnaires were distributed; 35 collected and processed. With few exceptions the Pyrenees were mooted as the ideal venue — unbroken sunshine, big hills, cheap drink.

A preliminary meeting gave an early indication of the rapidly waning enthusiasm — only 7 people turned up, one immediately withdrawing when it was obvious that Eric Glennie's 52 seater was not a viable transport alternative.

In the end four of us decided to make the journey but even this did not mean an end to the defections — the Campbells succumbing to the more obvious fleshly attractions of Cannes en route. It is widely rumoured that Bob's eyesight suffered irreparable damage.

Our crossing was made from Plymouth to Santander in northern Spain which despite the idyllic notion of a sea cruise lasting 24 hours proved to be merely boring — I could not even get near the Space Invaders.

Leaving the docks in Santander, you are suddenly faced with coping with the twin highway nightmares of continental driving — driving on the wrong side of the road and suicidal, horn blowing foreign drivers. A cautious day's drive later found us in Cauterets — the Pyrenees answer to Aviemore. This is an ideal centre for the ascent of Vignemale, at just under 11,000 ft. one of the bigger summits of the Pyrenees. A short chair lift and easy walk to the Oulettes de Gaube leaves you at the foot of the north face of the mountain in a typical glacial valley very similar to a large scale Lost Valley in Glencoe. It seems pointless in the Pyrenees to use the huts when there is so much excellent free camping and settled guaranteed good weather. The

Vignemale offers all standards of climbing from the *voie normale*, a strength sapping scree plod to the north face 1964 route, an extreme. There are glaciers on this side of the mountain and one was chosen as our first route on the mountain. Several interesting ice pitches led to a fissure between two seracs. This crack led to a fairy tale world of delicately poised ice blocks resembling gargantuan animals. Tip-toeing (not easy in crampons) quietly among these tottering ice spires led to a final overhanging ice wall. A quick referendum and we decided to retreat. Creaking and groaning from the depths of the glacier sped our departure. Later that day an awesome roar drew our attention to the icefall we had been climbing. A massive avalanche was in the process of obliterating the route we had been on. Good judgement or good luck — who knows? A few more days, a few more routes later and an unfulfillable craving for bread and potatoes drove us down again to Cauterets and the natural hot spring swimming baths.

Gavarnie, our next destination, is probably the most familiar Pyrenean centre. The Cirque de Gavarnie with its Grande Cascade is a truly magnificent mountain scene — almost on a par with the head of Loch Avon. The village of Gavarnie is revolting, comprising one general store, numerous hotels, countless donkeys and horses. Gift shops as far as the eye can see (which is not far in the donkey generated dust clouds). For a mere £7.50 the manure trail to the Cirque can be followed on horse or donkey back. Following this trail on foot during the day is an unpleasant fly-blown experience resulting in manure covered boots. Even this dreadful experience is however worthwhile to view the Cirque and surrounding mountains. An hour's walk and climb out of Gavarnie leads one to delightful alpine meadows which offer abundant free camping areas if you ignore the 'No

Camping' signs. The climbing and walking possibilities from Gavarnie are limitless and high quality but one route is especially noteworthy — Mont Perdu via the Breche de Roland. A steep exposed but easy path from Cirque de Gavarnie leads in easy zig-zags to the Refuge — a CAF hut. The route from here passes through the Breche de Roland, an unusual cleft in a 200 ft. high wall of rock said to have been formed by the sword of a retreating Spanish general when being hotly pursued by the French, thus enabling him and his men to escape into Spain. There are shallow caves on the Spanish side of the Breche and a comfortable, dry bivouac in one of them adds a fine aesthetic quality to this route. The route itself from the Breche offers a long intricate day at altitude nowhere difficult but requiring care and route finding ability.

From the summit of Mont Perdu the eye is drawn inevitably to the Ordessa Canyon and a visit to this National Park in Northern Spain is a rewarding experience. Unlike the French side of the range the mountain summits offer little challenge but the canyon walls more than make up for this lack of summital interest. Narrow paths traverse the canyon walls in true Dolomite Via Ferrata fashion and the Faja de Pelay follows the entire length of the canyon wall 1000 ft. above the river on the valley floor. At the entrance to Ordessa stands the village of Torla. Its narrow winding streets, donkey riding Spanish peasants and black clad Spanish women are straight from the archetypal spaghetti western. Climbing in the Ordessa Canyon is plentiful but appears sadly neglected, most hillgoers appearing to prefer walking to climbing.

Returning to France from Ordessa it is inevitable that a stop will be made first at the frontier supermarket to stock up with cheap drink (bathtub gin £1.20/litre, Spanish whisky £1.50/litre, superb sweet sherry £0.80/litre) and then at the path to the Pic du Midi d'Ossau — the Matterhorn of the Pyrenees. A leisurely walk and climb soon brings you to ample camping areas around the Refuge de

Pombie. This mountain, probably because of its ease of access and exquisite rock, attracts rock climbers in droves and even the *voie normale*, the easy route to the summit, requires short sections of moderate rock climbing. Definitely a hill not to be missed.

Slightly further down the main valley the car may be conveniently parked for a trip to the Balaitous, a remote mountain of Alpine proportions. Two major ridges must be crossed to reach the hut which because of the glaciated nature of the terrain offers little in the way of camp sites. We were lucky however and an idyllic spot on the shores of a glacial lochan was our home for two nights. A solo outing on the easy route on the Balaitous proved unnecessarily difficult — a route finding error leading onto a steep arrete considerably harder than the easy grade which was anticipated.

It is noteworthy that the standard of proficiency in the Pyrenees does not appear very high, there inevitably being a few people hovering about the bottom of the *voies normales* waiting to follow anyone who even gives the appearance of starting on the right route. One pair of ascensionists on the Pic du Midi used a novel belaying technique. Their main safeguard was a cycle inner tube to which was attached a 12 ft. length of electrical cable. This appliance had a variety of uses. The inner tube could be hooked over a flake and the cable used as a hand rail or the inner tube placed under the arms and the reluctant climber lowered down steep sections. Both these techniques were observed but it is significant that the object was discarded in disgust at the end of the climb. I did not rush to recover it!

There are sufficient big easy walks and summits to satiate the hillwalker, enough rock routes of all grades to satisfy the rock climber and abundant interesting features to amuse the tourist. The variety of interesting alternatives coupled with the guaranteed good weather makes the Pyrenees a much more attractive venue than the more popular Alpine areas. The effort is worth it!

Eric Dale

INTRODUCTION

M.M.C. members present were Bob O'Brien, Leader; Alistair Scott, Botanist; Simon Steer and Ross McLean (both from Forres Academy).

What follows is one expedition member's view of the 4 day walk out from the Brooks Range to the coast during the Grampian Schools North Alaska expedition in Summer 81.

We had been flown in to the Okpilak Valley 23 days before by Gill – he appears later in the account with a friendly tilt of his wings. Walking back to Kaktovik the Eskimo village on Barter Island was like going home because we'd made some good friends on our way out.

GRAMPIAN SCHOOLS NORTH ALASKA EXPEDITION

There was some apprehension about the walk out. It tended to be spoken about little but in capitals. THE WALK OUT. The distance was not intimidating. Allowing for some bending in the route I had measured it as 54 miles from the East Okpilak Lake to the mainland opposite Barter Island. But distance is nothing until you know what is under-foot. It was difficult to interpret from the plane coming in. The tundra looked uninviting but the riverside looked possible. What puts you off is other people sucking their teeth and, eyes big as saucers, talking about being up to the knees in ooze or more exhausted than ever in their lives. Niggerhead meadows were said to be too shallow to swim in, too deep to walk through. Experienced mountaineers and backpackers had not managed better than 12–15 miles per day etc. etc.

So it was good to get going and excellent to realise pretty quickly that, by the standards of cross country through Scotland, there were no problems. In the event the next days were, for me, the best of the trip. Maybe some notes from the journal convey a better sense than recollections from far away.

"Left eventually at 13.10. John, Murray, Davey, Ronnie and Ian with Ian S and myself. No more than ½ mile out couldn't stand walking in wellies and changed back into boots (and stayed in boots throughout). Soon after waded an arm of the river up to my crotch so footwear immaterial. American golden plover calling. Skuas use our putting up Willow

grouse as the opportunity to pounce on the young. Discovered 3 miles out that we had left behind the poles for the second tent and went back with Ronnie to get them; a neat hour out and a neat hour back, very wet going, splashing through *Carex-aquatilis* and cotton grass. Went through an Arctic skua territory. The birds have that curious mixture of anxiety and aggression I remember from Fair Isle. Both played wounded simultaneously. They land, wings up, on both feet; and jump forward both feet together like circus clowns. Ian had a most welcome pint of lemon tea timed for our return.

1½ hour walking, first through some squashy ground then more or less along the edge of moraines, heathy, dry, bouldery and good fast going. Vegetationally boring except for *Delphinium* in flower and rosettes of *Geum glaciale*. But evening grey, misty and not much fun, so everyone happy to pitch down at c 19.30. Slept 3 in a Vango; much lighter than the Arctic Green. Ian S played a few tunes on the mouth organ. A fox barked.

Tuesday. Low cloud at 8.00 but quickly apparent it would lift. Made respectable porridge. Tents broken and on our way by 10.30. Sun beginning to break through. Drooped wet socks over the sack. Contoured along some nice moraines making good going. Lots of golden plover. Major stop on "Mount Ronnie" overlooking the North Slope with the Barter Island reflectors at the far end. They looked less far than they are.

Ground appears to rise towards them. The weather for mirages.

Plunged down the slope into taste of niggerhead meadows and some quite hard going. Each foot has to be placed somewhere positive. Enjoyed riverside flats for their own sake and for realisation that it may not be too bad ahead. There is often a ribbon of willow with heath along the bank; the river bed can be near level heath (with boulders) or more usually and increasingly as we came north willows (*Salix pulchra*, *glabra*, *alaxensis*) to knee height, easier to push through than it looks. Also stretches of lupin in full, heady flower. (Remembered Andrew Marvel's 'stumbling on melons'). There is a continual choice to be made between the easier going along the river bend or the shorter harder route across. We are walking at 3 mph or more but make only 2 miles in the hour.

Ploughed on very content. Sun warm, good breeze, few mosquitoes, Brooks Range behind, tundra enormous, flat, huge arch of sky, shifting distances, good company. The arctic experience. Shaken out of any complacency by a very fresh bear print in the mud. Gill flew over with a friendly tilt of the wings. Finished at an excellent pitch on a bank above the Okpilak. Smoke above the river as the sun lost some warmth. Fell asleep to river noises.

Wednesday. Warm, excellent day. First stretch mainly riverside flats, putting up a bow wave of willow grouse. First stop to renew mossie repellent; second, unplanned, as we rounded a corner below snow banks and trod on a superb patch of purple shooting stars, a new sedge, and white and yellow anemones, all glowing in the sun. I stopped and everyone sat down.

Tried walking on top of the terrace, then along the snow on the bank, and eventually settled for the sploshy but level snow melt along the riverside. Passed a cold inviting plunge bath. Headed uphill, slightly off course, to swim (exhilar-

ating) in Davey's Loch with two offended blackthroats. Next stretch bumpy going trying to assess best place to take off eastwards. Brew up below riverbank and 10 minute sleep with the taste of Yorkie bar in my mouth. Tried to cool the cheese in the icy water.

Decided to cut across from here. Ronnie set off at the rate of knots. Polygon tundra. Plunged briefly into 18ins. of red porridge above permafrost. Red-throat and chick on lochan. Two Dowitchers. Careless bit of map reading. I announced we were home and dry before we were; the celebratory singing died away. Skidoo marks on the tundra. Thought of the tundra as pibroch, infinitely subtle variations on a handful of (vegetational) notes. It is so flat the burn we were making for was discernable only from ½ mile off and then only as an uncertain colour change. Came down to the burn and two bright pools at a gallop, threw down packs, threw up tents, and settled down to a grand banquet of left overs. Boys went in for a squealing bath. Only 10 miles to go.

Thursday. Woke to a sparkling morning. Wind gentle, easterly, enough to keep the mossies to reasonable proportions. Had a swim before breakfast. Water is cold but no colder than many Scottish waters I've been in. Porridge eaten in companionable silence in the sun; each speck scraped mercilessly from the mess tin.

Followed the burn down, compromising as always between straight lines and the look of the vegetation ahead. Nothing really bad. Dryish polygon or sedge willow or on the better drained banks moving to dry tundra. Not true that summer is over yet. Coltsfoot is in seed, but *Dryas* in better shape than in the upper glen: *Rubus chamaemorus* in full flower; massed poppies here and there, *Pedicularis verticillata* and *capitata* in all the wet spots and a new lilac crucifer like Dames Violet.

To begin with the lads were on the

other bank, back lit, pushing on, 4 in front and more or less in step, one behind. The fuel can on David's back banging and glinting in the sun. They looked like an old Bergman movie. Later David and I were far ahead and briefly thought those behind were Bob and Malcolm's party. Distance is so difficult to judge. Spreading on the turn enjoying the sun, the time at our disposal and Orkney smoked cheese.

Skuas everywhere. Arctic, longtailed and Pomarine not distributed to any plan that I could see. Golden plover flying as family groups now; off to Tierra del Fuego in a fortnight. Beginning to encounter Snowy owls again; they sit very still until they lift away silent and resentful. The wings look soft even from a great distance. But the birds are nothing without the tundra; and the tundra is not a flash of poppy or delphinium but a complex, subtly patterned tweed of

greens and greys and blacks with (to return to pibroch) grace notes of water.

Murray was having ligament trouble – not too bad I fancy but slowing him down. John stayed back for company. Came down to a particularly verdant stretch of the burn to wait for them and fell asleep on the grass. Heard Ian, in my dreams, saying something about gentians and woke to find that he had put 2 beside me for identification. Set off with John under a heavy croaking raven going north, perhaps the bird that nested in the Barter Island reflectors; now very plain on the horizon.

Came down to the coast in very good order at 15.00 and settled down to wait for Eddie to take us over to Barter Island. Civilisation round us now in the form of twisted metal, polythene, empty shells, burnt wood and packaging."

Alistair Scott

CYPRUS: AN ISLAND FOR WALKING

When I came to Cyprus for a three-year tour I thought how lucky I was to come to an island where the sun always shines, where the people are pro-British, where the cost of living is cheap, and above all, where I could go hill walking any time I liked. True, there wasn't going to be anything quite like the 22-mile back road from Achnashellach to Achnasheen in seven hours flat. But there are hills, lots of them. I could get lost in the wilds, away from people, "away from it all" for long, happy hours. The mountains are double-munros, and climbing was going to be good. Well, I thought it would be but it wasn't, not exactly.

It didn't take me long to find out that the nearest equivalent to the Moray Mountaineering Club is something called the Akrotiri Rambling Club! This merry band of enthusiasts of all ages periodically get together to stroll along a six or seven mile track. It takes them six hours

or so and they get a tremendous amount of enjoyment out of this. At least they do get out and about and see things. All the same, I felt this somehow wasn't really for me.

I found out pretty quickly too that there isn't any mountaineering club in Cyprus, but it took me a lot longer to understand why this was so. Meanwhile it was suggested that, as I enjoyed long-distance walking so much, I should do the Cyprus Walkabout. This takes place in October with training throughout the year. The word "training" bothered me somewhat, but the fact that it meant long-distance walking encouraged me. The object is to get from Episkopi, where I live, to Troodos, about 30 miles away by foot and 6,000 feet up, and seemed just what I wanted. I lost interest fast when I was told that it is an orienteering competition for teams of three. It is in two stages, one up and one

down, with an overnight stop in between. This year the winning team did it in just over 12 hours — 6 hours each way! I reckoned that this wasn't for me either!

I began to wonder. For one, it seemed the sun doesn't always shine. Of course it gets pretty hot in the summer, with temperatures regularly in the nineties and often in the low hundreds, but in winter it can get cold with frequent rain. In the mountains blizzards can dump 12 feet of snow on everything. Furthermore, I discovered that the Cypriots certainly are not intensely pro-British. In the villages they can't even speak English. But everywhere you go, you meet with generosity and friendliness as only country people can show. And you do meet them everywhere. The Cypriots love their picnics, and wherever you go in the country you're bound to smell the barbecues — cost of living is pretty high too. Having all these illusions modified somewhat, what hillwalking is there, and how good is it?

On my only two visits allowed to the Turkish North of this divided island, it seemed to me that there should be nice climbing and hill-walking. There is good karst country in the Kyrenia mountains, and good views from the 3½ thousand feet tops. But I can't get to it, and even if I could, so much is militarily prohibited area, that its best just to forget about it. I have.

Never mind, I thought, there are always the hills in the Troodos mountains, many hills. Mount Olympus, at 6,401 ft. the highest point on the island, has a good public road all the way to the summit. So getting there is no problem, and if I can get so far up, the rest of the hills should be readily accessible.

Very quickly I came across a major snag. That was when I tried to walk uphill for the first time. (This also gave me the first clue as to why there is no mountaineering club). The ground is too soft and loose for firm footholds, and the hillsides are very steep indeed. There are also extensive areas of scree. It seemed that it is

easier to slide downhill — voluntarily or involuntarily — than to go up. The few rocky outcrops, except at the asbestos or copper mines, are good enough for rock-climbing practice, but there isn't enough to give good mountain climbing. Except for the large areas of scree, pine forests cover the mountains all the way to the top. And there is a lot of scrub. In some places I found it is possible to go up a bit, but nearly always I found myself in the trees, without being able to look at any views. All I could see were trees and the ground before me. This is too boring, too confining, and not what I had in mind at all. I could get fit this way, sure, but there is more to climbing than just toning up your body. At least, that's the way I feel about it. I also discovered that as the area was very mountainous, any bit of level ground was either covered by villages, or cultivated for fruit, or artificially levelled for roads and forest tracks. These followed the contours but at least they went somewhere.

Here, paradoxically, I saw my chance for some sort of hill-walking. Having found out how rarely the forest tracks are used by other people, I began to explore some of these mountain tracks. It is a way to get from A to B fairly easily. I could look at the scenery, because the cuttings are wide enough, and the hill-sides steep enough, for me to look over the top of the trees below. The villages down there are clearly visible and within earshot, so I wouldn't be very far from "civilisation", but I would meet no-one most of the time. As the footing is uncomplicated I could relax and look and listen. The mountain air would be fresh and cool in contrast to the oppressive, smelly heat of high summer below. There is always something to see along the way. The Troodos pines, a sub-species of black pine, have chopped-off tops, some say because the weight of snow breaks them, while others say they are naturally that way. Further down there are variations of Aleppo pines. There are

Greek strawberry trees with rich, pink bark. There are golden oaks, dull-looking endemic trees. But, there are no deer in Cyprus. There haven't been any since pre-history. However I do see the occasional hare, and, if I'm lucky and in the right area, a rare moufflon, a sort of wild sheep — fortunately now a protected species and occasionally hunted only by buffoons. And then there are the birds: crossbills, treecreepers, wrens, chaffinches, jays, and in the height of summer,

hoopoes and spotted flycatchers. As it turns out, it's not bad walking in the hills like this, four or five thousand feet up.

It also turns out to be fun walking in the hills further down. Whereas the Troodos mountains consist of well-weathered plutonic and volcanic rocks, the hills further south are mainly of chalk and limestone, and therefore, well rounded. The aspect is of a plateau gradually rising from the coast to the high hills, a view which is misleading, as I soon



discovered. There are two steep north-facing escarpments between the south coast and the Troodos Range, and the plateaux rising up to them are criss-crossed by deep gorges, and rivers which dry up completely in summer. Virtually the entire land is under cultivation, and where the hill-slopes are steep, there is extensive terracing. No-one can walk anywhere without going through orchards of olives, or carobs, or through vineyards some of the time.

Walking straight across this kind of

country hurts the feet and the muscles because of the stony terrain and the frequent ups and downs. The farmers don't object though; quite the opposite as they are only too willing to detain you with a chat (usually in Greek) or with a bunch of grapes, or if you're lucky, with zivania (a very potent whisky distilled from grapes). Refreshments are, if you wish, easily available, as you are never very far from a coffee-house. However, there are numerous fox tracks, goat tracks, foot-paths and other tracks to make life

easier. You are never very far from habitation which means that it isn't possible to get completely "away from it all", but it is possible sometimes to find little pockets, which make you think that you have managed it for a short while.

These pockets are full of surprises. There is always the chance, when struggling painfully between a rock and a prickly broom on the floor of a deep gorge in November, when there is water in the stream, of coming across a small patch of Cyprus cyclamen. Endemic to Cyprus, these pale, pink flowers, which are fairly rare, bloom a couple of months before the much more common Persian cyclamen, which can be found anywhere including gardens and ancient ruins and buildings. Ancient ruins too are common in this archaeological paradise, where any walk could come up with stone tools of the Neolithic Age, or Mycenaean pottery of the Late Bronze Age, or perhaps even Roman tombs. Surprises come in other forms too, like a dog fox chasing a vixen around the cliffs and finally losing her around a lentisc bush. Or like an adder basking in the sun, or a catsnake killing a magpie in the nest, or a six-foot long, black, Montpellier snake swishing away at incredible speed. One of the superb things about Cyprus is that there is always something in flower throughout the year. Certainly the best time is from late winter to early summer when the ground is covered with wild anemones coloured red, yellow, white or even blue. Wild orchids appear everywhere like the large patches of pink naked man orchids, isolated heads of bee orchids, and numerous, well-scattered maroon bug orchids, smelling, not of squashed bed bugs, as the books say, but of vanilla as they belong to a sub-species. These last remain upright throughout the summer, all dry and golden like ears of wheat. And in late summer there are thistles, like the six-foot high, blue, viscous globe thistles, or the one-inch high, scarlet,

dwarf carline thistles. These splashes of colour make walks, even on a sweaty, dizzy, hot summer's day, fun. To top it off, the pale purple flowers of the thyme are the nearest thing we have to heather on the hills. A light brush against the leaves, and the heady scent assaults the nostrils.

And then there are the birds. There are the winter visitors like the stonechats, the blackbirds, and the robins — rather shy in comparison with those I remember from the UK. There are the summer visitors like the pied wheatears that arrive in superb black and white plumage, and leave streaky black with white rumps. Field guides don't help me on this point. But it doesn't matter very much, because so much else is happening during the summer months. And if you go over certain routes many times, as I do, you will see the changes amongst the birds as they occur. For instance the young of little owls grow up on their rocky ledges and disappear. It's great to go on a walk not too far from my home and see four young kestrels lined up at the mouth of their hole in a cliff-face, like four grey puppets, yelling for their food, while mother stays on the other side of the gorge because I'm around. I leave them to it. Next time they are flying in the area, and then one day, they are gone.

Because Cyprus is on a minor migration route, the best times are in the spring and autumn seasons when uncountable numbers of numerous species pass through. The multi-coloured bee-eaters, bouncy, like kids let out of school, come burbling through in their hundreds. The cranes noisily gronk in flocks of around a thousand, high overhead. In autumn the buzzards rise lazily on the 11 a.m. thermals to join up into groups of a hundred or more. And this is the time to see the rarities, like an occasional short-eared owl, or even a spotted eagle.

Sadly eagles are no longer resident here — no one seems to know why — but there is one marvellous resident, which is a nice

substitute. The griffon vulture is a big bird, but its soaring is so graceful and effortless that to see it slowly, almost nonchalantly, flap that eight-foot wingspan, comes as a wonderful surprise. And that is one reason why walking in Cyprus is so rewarding at anytime of year. Just as you start getting used to one thing, another thing happens to surprise you. It may be an unexpected variation on something already known, or something quite new, a bird, a flower, a view, or just people.

It is good here after all. It doesn't matter that there is no mountaineering club. It doesn't matter that climbing is difficult and boring, or hill-walking is mostly confined to tracks. It doesn't matter that it almost gets unbearably hot

on a summer's day — a quick swig of water helps. It doesn't matter that it often gets very wet in winter and even surprisingly cold. It is still good — if you decide to make it so.

Like the day my companion and I were soaking wet and walking in a vicious thunderstorm with lightning uncomfortably close. As I pointed out a wood daisy he raised his strong Scots voice and recited, "To a Mountain Daisy"! Shortly afterwards he said, "I haven't enjoyed myself so much since I was a boy." Well, it's one way of putting it!

Mind you, there is something about a back road from Achnashellach to Achnasheen ...!

W Van Warmelo

ALLT MHILTICH

*Conceived of high mountains
Out of winter snows
A bleak gestation
With tentative stirrings in pale sun
And sleep again by clear frosty moon
Till Spring sparks birth*

*First unobtrusive
Creeping and seeping
beneath shrinking snowdrifts
Dripping on clean crumbs of granite
Silently searching rock faults and formations*

*Soon chuckling sparkling carefree
Sporting with pebbles
Hiding awhile in peat bogs
Emerging healthy and tanned*

*Adolescently broadening
Laughing with deeper voice
Direct and confident
Latent force to be reckoned with
Refreshed by showers turns to mischief
Grades gravels Moves boulders
In gentle mood sprays mist on mosses
And smiles rainbows to the Sun*

*But high on thunder rain
Numbed by the noise of it
Drugged by its flashing lights
Is tempted to vandalise
To leave litter strewn around
To erode and destroy*

*Suddenly strength sapped
Premature agedness. Th'affliction inherited
From some ancestral glacier which lang syne
Gouged Kitloch Glen to gentle gradient*

*In weakness wanders wearily side to side
Takes rest oft in black unrippled glide
Defers to each obstruction
But there is no convalescence*

*Death's salt taste fills the mouth
In that last reminiscent moment
Supported on the flood tide
Then Life fades unhurried
To gentle oblivion
In the ebbing infinity of Atlantic
*Murray Dunnan**

THE McINNES

*Spare built but teuch
Wi' back stracht and strang
A bunnet like adze blade
An' neb no' ower lang*

*At hame in snaw gullies
Aye, an' vertical ice
Like teuchter wi' fiver
A grip like a vice*

*Born here in Scotland
Brought up on the Ben
(A dour proving ground
for gear and for men)*

*Weel my detailed description
Is to show how began
The confusion twixt ice axe
And synonymous man*

*For our engineer mountaineer
Ye must see fu' well
Just designed terrordactyls
In the spit o' himsel'.*

Murray Dunnan

SOME SILLY QUOTES!

Hath the rain a father?

Job 28 xxxviii

Be jubilant my feet!

Julia Ward Howe

Feet like sunny gems on an English green

Tennyson

The Pyrenees have ceased to exist

(Il n'y a plus de Pyrenees)

Louis XIV

If you could see my legs when I take my boots off, you'd form some idea of what unrequited affection is.

Dickens

THE WEATHER COMES AND GOES

*Grass of Kintail shines silk till hill swoops steep;
Peat fissures hard; boots sound it like a bell.
Star-walk on eyebright and bog asphodel,
Then sink in narcotic bedstraw-heather sleep.*

*A softly blotting rain mops up the view;
Path-burns cascade, impatient for the glen,
Rain-pearl-strung, slip-slide grass meets heels again;
Sundew and moss, wan sedges, shiny-new.*

*Grey grass shines supple to the sun of June,
Burns' stones glow warm, deserted by the flood;
Myrtle and cotton blow on sweet bog-mud.
On eagle's mapped rocks, ravens rasp alone.*

*In season, snow will seethe, obliterate.
Then ice-shine; torrents; snow-fat burns in spate.*

Jenny Worthington

MORAY MOUNTAINEERING CLUB
Founded 1931

M E E T S 1 9 8 1

		<i>Attendance</i>
Jan. 18	Bus Meet Cairngorms	29
Jan. 31/1 Feb.	Kingussie	4
Feb. 15	Bus Meet Fannichs	29
Feb. 28/1 Mar.	Glen Clova	11
Mar. 15	Bus Meet Creag Mergaidh	44
Apr. 4/5	Culra	4
Apr. 19	Bus Meet Coigach	30
May 2/4	Rhum	36
May 17	Bus Meet Mullardoch	47
June 6/7	C.I.C. Hut	3
June 21	Bus Meet Glen Affric Traverse	25
July 4/5	Barrisdale	4
July 19	Bus Meet Lochnagar	34
Aug. 1/2	Glencoe	4
Aug 16	Bus Meet An Teallach	26
Sept. 5/6	Glencoe	4
Sept. 20	Bus Meet Glen Nevis	38
Oct. 3/4/5	Skye	8
Oct. 18	Bus Meet Kintail	34
Nov. 15	Jubilee Meet Cabrach	65
Dec. 20	Christmas Bus Meet Aultguish	45

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* * * *

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