

THE  
MORAY  
MOUNTAINEERING  
CLUB



JOURNAL

MARCH, 1968





MORAY MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT:

This miniature Club Journal is a substitute for the quarterly News-letters, and covers the activities of the Club over the past year.

The Club has had a very successful year with meets well attended and I would like to take this opportunity to thank members for their loyal support, and also the committee who have been a hard working body, striving to get the best for the Club.

Because of being on a long holiday to Australia, Miss Garrow has been missing from the front seat of the bus. I hope that it will not be long before this popular figure will be standing at Wiseman's Corner waiting to join the club bus on its safari to the hills.

Mr. Alex Hay, who has provided a very efficient bus service to the Club for many years, has decided to call it a day, and we wish him a long and happy retirement. I am sure that Mr. Fraser, who has taken over the business, will continue the good service in the future.

Bad news for the Treasurer is that Mr. Tom Hay, who has supplied Club equipment at a generous discount, has also decided to retire.

I sign off with the reminder to keep the 19th of March free for the A.G.M.

A. McKenzie, President

CLUB MEETS - 1967/68

26th March - Loch Laggan (27 attended)

A reasonable morning when the bus left Elgin, but after Newtonmore the landscape was blanketed in white and, apart from brief glimpses of sunshine, conditions remained stormy all day. The first party left the bus to climb Geal Charn and were the only party to gain a summit that day. A large party went into Coire Ardair on Creag Meagaidh but having reached the loch, numbers began to dwindle and at the end of the day it took Bill Brooker and Bob Smith all their time to battle their way up Easy (!) Gully. Conditions defeated the party which, went to Fersit to attempt the Loch Treig Hills, but our veterans Miss Garrow and Mrs. Peterkin declared that they spent a pleasant day in Glen Roy.

22nd/23rd April - Derry Lodge (18 attended)

(Week-end Meet)

The party began to assemble in good spirits on Friday night, but reports came in, however, of a missing climber, Brian Goring, in the Cairngorm Macdui area. Early on Saturday morning search parties were assembled and traversed Ben Macdhui by Sron Riach returning by Loch Etchachan, weather conditions remaining good all day.

Sunday was a superb day with excellent snow conditions and parties were out on Carn na Mhaim; Cairn Toul and Devil's Point and Carn Cloich Mhuillin and Ben Bhrotain.

7th May - Torridon (24 attended)

Nineteen stalwarts set off to traverse the Liathach ridge. The mist which shrouded the 'great bear' in the morning cleared by mid-day and all completed the traverse in fine weather - a large number going over the Fasarinen Pinnacles. A small "independent" party climbed Ben Alligin.

20th/21st May - Glen Lichd (12 attended)

(Week-end Meet)

Conditions were very wet both underfoot and overhead when the party assembled on Friday night. The main expedition on Saturday went to the Falls of Glomach, which were very impressive under the prevailing conditions, and returned over the summit of A'Ghlas Bheinn. On Sunday members were active on the Five Sisters and Ben Attow.

11th June - Glencoe (23 attended)

(Overnight Meet)

A motley collection of humanity arrived in Glencoe about 4 a.m. Wits were slowly (very) gathered and parties gradually made their way into the cloud which hung over the Glen. All came through the cloud in the early morning into a clear blue sky, and the views across the clouds swirling over Rannoch Moor will long be remembered. Two parties traversed the Aonach Eagach ridge, another went over Bidean nam Bian, (which still carried a considerable quantity of snow)

and the remaining two parties climbed Buachaille Etive Mor, one by Croberry Ridge and the other by the Curved Ridge. The mist slowly cleared before <sup>the</sup> morning sun and it was a day where long sleeps on warm rocks alternated with spells of furious activity.

High Tea at Glencoe Hotel finished a very successful Meet.

### 1st/2nd/3rd July - Glenbrittle (18 attended)

The first week-end in July saw the M.M.C. encampment appear once again on Glenbrittle Beach. Saturday was cloudy but the President nevertheless shepherded a party up the Inaccessible Pinnacle. Sunday saw greater activity on Sgurr Alasdair and Sgurr Mhic Coinnich with others completing a traverse of Sgurr a' Ghreadaidh, Thormaid, Sgurr a' Banachdich and Sgurr Dearg (ending with an ascent of the Inaccessible Pinnacle). Conditions were cloudy but there were many dramatic glimpses of fantastic rock features of the Cuillin Ridge through the veils of mist. Those who had enough of cloud on Saturday walked to the Point (an off day!) and investigated the Pictish remains.

### 16th July - Lairig Ghru (41 attended)

While the Club went through the Lairig Ghru in force from Coylum Bridge to Linn of Dee, a number took full opportunity of making a high level traverse of the Cairngorms from Speyside to Deeside, one party climbed Macdhui and Derry Cairngorm en route, a second went via the Shelter

Stone and Loch Etchachan, while a third was as far afield as Ben Mheadhoin. Conditions were misty but all parties managed to rendezvous without incident, although it is believed that cairn of Ben Macdui was encountered by one party more than once!

20th August - Glen Nevis (18 attended)

A day which was cloudy in the glens but sunny on the tops. The President was in excellent form and along with Bill Gall, Bob Smith, and Ivor Philips climbed the North East Buttress of the Ben. A number enjoyed the airy approach to the summit by the Carn Mor Dearg Arete and the others were not among the first to discover that the tourist track is probably the most wearisome ascent of any mountain.

17th September - Achnashellach (27 attended)

The weather was dry and with reasonable visibility a good day was had by all. The bus emptied its entire complement into Coire Lair but within a short time several parties were strung out along the track into this fine mountain area. Sgurr Ruadh was climbed by Academy Buttress and also by more pedestrian routes. Ben Liath Mor was climbed and two parties completed the traverse of both peaks.



30th September/1st October - Steall (11 attended)  
(Week-end Meet)

A very wet weekend. A well equipped expedition set out on Saturday morning to visit the waterfall. It was indeed a fine sight as tons of water plunged down in a great cloud of spray. The object attained, the expedition returned to its base!

A second expedition set off on Sunday morning for Sgurr a' Mhaim up a very squelchy hillside in weather conditions which were atrocious. The party thinned out as it climbed, but five managed to reach the summit - drenched to the skin in the teeth of a howling gale.

22nd October - Braemore Fork (25 attended)

Activity was divided between the Fannichs and the Braemore Hills. The morning was sunny and warm, and one party penetrated into the Braemore Forest as far as Loch Prille and climbed Cona' Mheall by the north east ridge. Two other parties reached the summit by different routes. In the Fannichs the peaks of Ben Liath Mor Fannich, Sgurr Mor, Meall a'Grasgaidh, Sgurr nan Clach Geala, Sgurr. nan Each, A'Chail-leach and Sgurr Breac, were all climbed.

19th November - Laggan Locks (19 attended)

Members were well scattered over the Loch Lochy Hills and Meall na Teanga and Sron na Coire Garbh were both climbed. Low cloud hung in the valleys all day, but above 1,000 ft sun

shone out of a clear blue sky and there were magnificent views of Ben Nevis and countless other peaks jutting through the clouds. In the evening as the parties made their way down, this great sea of cloud shone like gold before turning to a delicate hue of pink.

The December Meet to Garve had to be cancelled due to the outbreak of foot and mouth disease.

16th January, 1968 - Cairngorms (26 attended)

Despite a stormy day the parties which set out were in the Gullies in Coire an't Sneachda, a party went over the summit of Cairngorm and descended by the north ridge, while another went over the plateau, down Coire Raibart and across the frozen stretches of Loch Avon to the Shelter Stone.

#### A TRIBUTE

I should like to express my heartfelt thanks to Harry Younie for his prompt action and untiring help after my accident in Skye last summer. I shall never forget what he did and shall always be indebted to him.

I would also like to thank Mr. Pete Thomas and the Skye Mountain Rescue Service for their speedy and very efficient service.

ALAN M. FORBES

## THE SAGA OF STEALL

Visualise a cold wet Friday in October in the car park at Polldhu in Glen Nevis. Six heavily clad and booted figures reluctantly emerge from the warmth of the cars, in which they have travelled for many hours, into the cold night air. Shouldering bulging rucksacks, filled with an assortment of ropes, slings, pitons, and other assorted climbing gear, they set off up the notorious and dangerous Nevis Gorge.

If you have pictured this and are of the opinion that this was how the Moray Mountaineering Club ventured up to Steall Hut in October of last year, you could not be more wrong. We emerged slowly from the warm cars into the chill night air it is true, but there the similarity ends. We shouldered rucksacks bursting at the seams with food and set off at a rapid snails pace up the aforementioned notorious and dangerous gorge. Notoriously damp (because of the river running through it) and dangerous as was proved by the sudden demise, of a year previously, of a beer bottle (fortunately empty, although the loss of the 3d. deposit was mourned for many weeks).

Emerging at last from the gorge onto the relative flat plain on which the hut stands we, with our usual infallible route finding ability, lost a perfectly good path and blundered knee deep through a bog. However, we arrived at last, spirits (not the alcoholic sort) and feet somewhat dampened, at that well known edifice The Steall Bridge. This world renowned rival of the Forth and Tay road bridges is constructed from a basically simple design - as are all works of genius. It consists of three wires suspended above the river forming a 'V' and the general idea

is to walk on the lowest wire and to use the other two as panel rails. This is the essence of simplicity in theory but on a wet dark night with a huge rucksack on one's back it becomes a hair raising feat and provides a source of innocent amusement to people standing on either bank. This was proved when the one female member of the party was effecting the crossing to a veritable chorus of ribald comments and facetious advice. The crossing was, however, accomplished without fatality or loss of anything but sweat and the expedition made for the hut with all due haste.

Some short time after arrival one of the more mature members produced a bottle of patent 70° Proof cold excluder and urged us all to join him in waging war against the common cold. This I need not say was greeted with joy and the potions were consumed with alacrity (This is a long winded way of saying we were chuffed as ten and all swigged dirty great drams). Thus fortified we all adjourned to bed, and to kill any rumours which may arise I will state here that the female had a room to herself.

Saturday dawned in the usual manner for the Moray Mountaineering Club i.e. Pouring rain and low cloud, but nothing daunted we set to in demolishing the veritable banquet the Moray Club call breakfast. This was followed by an intellectual discussion (telling jokes and organising a trip to Fort William for much needed supplies of beer).

After some time the weather/cleared somewhat (from pouring rain to merely heavy rain) and we set off on the perilous journey to the waterfall 200 yards away. Naturally when we reached it the torrential downpour recommenced, forcing us to retreat to the hut. Shelter being regained our

thoughts turned once more to Fort William and beer, so that, undaunted by the rain, four intrepid mountaineers set off with a will and empty rucksacks.

On returning to the car park, heavily laden with the newly purchased refreshments, we discovered that another car, bearing two more members, had arrived. One of these sterling fellows was found to be in possession of large quantities of a famous brand of canned soup, which he donated to the expedition for general use. This most munificent gesture banished for all time certain malicious rumours that he was of Eastern Mediterranean descent. The soup was loaded into rucksacks, already overflowing with beer, and the now enlarged expedition set off once more, with a Will (Chalmers by name) for Steall.

After a marvellous dinner (everything from curried prawns to tinned mince and peas, with synthetic spuds) it was felt that some of the beer should be consumed and this thought was soon translated into action. Some short time later the party was in excellent spirits (alcoholic this time) and any chance passer by would have had his ears assaulted by the mellifluous tones of the 'Steall Male Voice Choir' singing in full discord. However, the supplies of liquid refreshment were all too soon consumed and everyone retired to bed to prepare themselves for the exertions of the next day.

Sunday dawned as had Saturday, with torrential rain but, despite this, after breakfast it became apparent that most of the party was more than slightly insane. All but two, (and let it be known that the author was one of the sane ones) and including three more who had arrived overnight, set off with the intentions of conquering the vast bulk of Sgurr a' Mhaim.

The rain, however, appeared to have a deterrent effect on most of those who had set off so lightheartedly. After only five minutes one of the party succumbed to the rain and returned, his example being followed at intervals by several more. Only five of the nine who set out arrived at the summit to feast their eyes on an uninterrupted vista of rain identical to that which could be viewed from the comfort of the hut.

The intrepid, bedraggled, insane five returned eventually and set to helping the others to consume the remaining food and clean up the hut. During this cleaning up a noise like the hammer of Thor beating 'seven bells' out of a tin roof was heard from the stairs, followed by a string of muted curses. One of the victorious party had fallen down stairs and, when asked if he had missed a step, he explained in simple (if uncouth) terms that he had made contact (violently) with every one.

At about this time the rain ceased for the first time throughout the weekend, allowing us to return to the cars in relative comfort.

So we left Steal for another year bearing memories of rain, rain, and yet more rain.

Al. K. O'Holic.

### SKI-ING AND THE MOUNTAINEER

With the development of the Glenmore area into a highly successful ski resort, there has also been an equally rapid development in the vocabulary of climbers who come to the area! Certain disreputable members of the Moray Mountaineering Club have often made the Cairngorms ring

out with phrases such as "Filthy Ski-ing Trash!". Speaking as one of the trash, all I can say is that members deserve all that they can get if they decide to do a Grade 5 ice climb up the middle of Goire Cls!

Having skied with Forres Academy for the last three seasons and having been in many a climbing versus ski-ing argument, I feel that I must state my feelings on the subject.

As climbers we must admit that the new ski road has saved us a great deal of time in reaching the walking and climbing areas of the Cairngorms as well as allowing many people to get so far into the mountains when they could not have done so before. Talk of skiers spoiling the Cairngorms is nonsense when one considers that they occupy one small corner of Britain's biggest wilderness, and a corner that has no great appeal to the climber. As for the Aviemore Centre, I believe that it has greatly enhanced the appeal of the area by providing entertainment when we cannot climb.

More climbers should learn to ski because it can make them extremely fit, it can provide great enjoyment and it can also cut out long laborious marches through deep snow for those intending to climb in the more remote parts of the Cairngorms.

Inexperienced skiers are, of course, less well equipped and in greater danger of getting lost in the hills than are inexperienced climbers due to the very nature of the sport, but the great majority stick to the ski-ing areas and safety.

I can only hope that climbing and ski-ing can flourish in harmony and that more climbers take up ski-mountaineering which is surely the

key to success in exploring the more remote parts of the Cairngorms.

Alan M. Forbes.

#### OTHER CLUB ACTIVITIES:

Tom Weir drew an audience of over 300 to the Town Hall in Elgin for a 'New Look at Scotland'. As before we discovered interesting little-known corners of our own country, unusual aspects of well known places, all held together by his unique gift of description and an eye for a good picture.

We held a Film Night in October and drew a capacity audience of over 100, to the Gordon Arms Hotel, Elgin. The films showed climbing in Switzerland, Canada, and New Zealand, and were of interest to both the "dedicated" and the merely "curious".

The attendance at the Annual Dinner was slightly less - 36; nevertheless it was a good night and the proceeds of the Film Night enabled us to engage a band for the first time in a number of years.

The Members' Slide Show brought forth a good crop of slides of a creditable standard. There were, of course, the Meets which provided everyone with an "opportunity", which in each case proved surprisingly similar, but there was nevertheless a considerable variety in the slides shown which made the evening an interesting one.

As last year, every Wednesday evening during the summer found a group of enthusiasts gathering down by the sea cliffs at Hopeman, where much



useful experience was gained.

AONACH EAGACH RIDGE - FIRST IMPRESSIONS -  
June 1967.

Having calmly expressed my wish to join the Aonach Eagach Party, Alex McKenzie looked at me, a little surprised I thought, and replied "Aye, good for you." This should have made me think again. However, 4 a.m. is no time to look a "pro or con" in the face, let alone weigh them together, and half an hour later I was off up the track from Altnafeadh.

The young tigers were already forging ahead, a fast receding blob of pounding limbs, swaying packs and steaming breath, while four of us brought up the rear at a staid pace more suited to my mature years. At 2,000 ft as we negotiated the steep zig zag of the Devil's Staircase, the sun emerged. A pearly mist lay around our feet and soon cameras and light meters were being brandished to record the peaks of Rannoch which floated in the East. Six o'clock of a perfect June morning high up in Glencoe, that overnight bus journey from Elgin seemed almost worthwhile now.

The youngsters were still visible heading North, perhaps a mile ahead. A study of the map suggested that if we now struck North West over the gentle eminence of Stob Mhic Mhartuin it was possible to reach the main north ridge ahead of them. An hour later we lay steaming on top. The shortcut had not been as easy as it looked on paper, but the unbelieving gaze of the youngsters when they encountered us reclining in attitude of studied nonchalance was our ample reward. A few ribald pleasantries were exchanged and they were off again.

Making our leisurely way along the wide ridge, we picked our faraway land marks like Cruachan, and studied the intriguing folds and hollows of the South side of the glen. We ate a little and slept rather long in the warm sun, waking to consider the Am Bodach feature ahead, where the ridge narrows somewhat and takes a leap upward. Near the summit we enjoyed 200 ft. of easy rock scrambling.

We could see the Chancellor before us, an inspiring pinnacle, easily climbed but requiring some care in the descent. This was successfully accomplished by carefully following the holds used by our number one, and I congratulated myself as we strode forward ready for whatever lay beyond. This consisted of the Aonach Eagach ridge proper, and the sight of it stopped me in my tracks. Here the ridge consists of a mile long series of crazy pinicles, each from 60 - 120 ft. high, joined together by a narrow track which seems to disappear in places. This together with the dramatic vertical views on both sides recalled to me once more Alex McKenzie's quizzical glance. However, there was no turning back. The next two hours provided for me a crash course in basic climbing technique. I followed Alister Sword very closely and came to know by heart every ridge of his ample corduroyed bottom. At perhaps one point only did I falter. This was a 20 ft. face, with, to my mind, far too few holds. There was only one thing to do. I flew up it, not climbing, simply defying the law of gravity, another instance of mind overcoming reluctant matter.

On we sweated in shirt sleeve order from pinnacle to pinnacle, and the ridge finished as abruptly as it had begun. Looking back along its length I was again struck by the facility with which the Gael describes a natural feature

when he puts a name to it - a set of jagged teeth, and complete to the very curve of the jaw.

It was now 3 o'clock, leaving us an hour to reach Clachaig. Why not, I suggested, come straight off the ridge and down towards Loch Achtriochtan? The latter lying in the floor of the glen looked deceptively close, tilted up by that peculiar illusion with which altitude affects the eye. There followed an exhausting, almost undignified, descent, with large scree moving uncomfortably under my wobbling pins. Alister Sword forged ahead and flagged down the bus. I finally staggered across the tarmac, and there was Alex McKenzie grinning hugely and extending to me a can of the most glorious cold beer. I forgave him all in that blissful moment!

R. J. M. Gillies.

### HE WENT

I remember a time, Oh very long ago, when a young fella used to keep a regular look out (any time he was passing) for the great V shaped opening in the rampart which is arrayed before one on passing under a certain railway bridge on the "A9" twixt Carrbridge and Aviemore. Sometimes dark and full of cloud, other times, as in the winter sun, glaring white, it gained a third dimension and one could see that the cleft went back into the hills in a gentle right hand curve out of sight.

Being a bright, gay, inquiring youth he hied him to the A.A. Book one day and hopefully thumbed the Scottish maps: Alas, no go, merely a stack of wee red triangles marked Cairngorm Mountains, Huh!!! he thought.

His dander now up, he sought out and

engaged in conversation a gentleman whose younger days had been misspent amongst the hills. "'V' Shaped Cleft" he said "surely you mean the Lairig Ghru". "Larry Groo?" queried the young man "whit manner o' man is he?" "No, befuddled one, it is from the Gaelic, Lairig meaning Pass, and Ghrumach something like Gloomy." "Ah!" said the young man, and left.

The following Sunday, as if by way of an omen, the H.O.N. Man, writing in a certain Sunday Broad sheet, told of a crossing from Speyside to Deeside through this "Groo" thing, describing eighteen foot snow drifts, and bogs of colossal depth, also huge grey men were supposed to confine their activities to the summit of Ben Macdhui, but who, from time to time, ventured down into the Lairig for a quick constitutional trot up and doon, and to fleg anybody who happened to be passing. All this only added spice to the undertaking our hero proposed, and all that was required now was a map of the area, and a date upon which to make the trip.

The map was obtained from a tall, slim, purveyor of maps, who grinned across the counter at the youth and said he was sure that the Lairig would not disappoint his customer. Somewhat rattled by this cryptic remark but still undeterred, the youth went off to plan the next stage.

On spreading out the map, and getting for the first time a clear picture of what lay ahead of him, his vim and vigour packed up and went home; the thing was vast, from Aviemore station to the Hotel in Braemar was close on twenty-eight miles. A wee while back he had gone nine miles on a hike thing with five others in farming country, dotted with houses, and had come back fair dropping, and here he was blithely going to

tackle twenty-eight miles of unfriendly territory on his own. "Am daft" he thought, and dumped the idea.

Now all this happened in the early part of the year, and all summer the lad was pursuing his other pursuits. Occasionally a twinge of conscience would disturb his placid demeanour, but it would be swiftly dispatched to where such things are dispatched to, so that come September and holidays, the back of his mind was littered with twinges, and something had to be done.

So it was that one clear morning with just the faintest nip of frost in the air the rash cretur left Aviemore behind and set out for Braemar. The less said about the journey the better. Progress seemed painfully slow, having set off up the road at 9 o'clock, it was not until 1 p.m. that the entrance to the pass was reached. Thereafter, time and feet dragged on until a flat rock somewhere opposite Corrour Bothy afforded a long sought resting place. Some forty minutes passed in a flash and just as he was rising to press on something in his right thigh went ping, and from then until two days later, he walked with a pronounced limp, L - Y - M - P, pronounced limp.

The rest, as they say in history, the lift from Linn of Dee into Braemar, was the greatest thing since the coming of sliced bread, and he duly presented himself at the Reception Desk of one of the hotels in Braemar. The girl behind the desk looked at him in a queer sort of way when he requested bed and breakfast for one, and informed him that she was sorry but the Inn had no room. Huh!!! he thought, again; and staggered across the square to the other hostelry where the clerk fella said "Sure man, come in and kip ye, dinner is at seven forty-five p.m. Has sir got a

jacket sir can wear?" Sir didn't have, and so he was politely ushered to a corner table, on his own, with personal service, more or less out of sight of the other guests. And no wonder really, mud from the knees down, limping like mad, and smelling delicately of peat, bog myrtle, and other things, our now victorious hero cut rather a wild figure among the claw-hammers and bow ties. A night's sleep and an 8 a.m. bus to Aberdeen completed the action.

Home once more with time for thought, it seemed to him on the whole a worthwhile exercise, even if the pleasure was chiefly retrospective.

A. Nony-Mus, Esq.  
1879 - ?

### YOUTHFUL DAYS

On bicycles costing £3 19s. 6d. and £4 19s 6d. respectively two brothers left their slightly anxious parents in the summer of 1935 and started a ten day tour round the Hostels.

The starting point was Glasgow, and the first stop was to be Crianlaraich, one of the larger Youth Hostels, about 55 miles away.

Since it was a Monday and not a local holiday, the lads rode two abreast out the Boulevard, leaving the North West of the city and in 50 minutes reached Balloch.

One stage of the journey over, they remembered the father's warning "If you McBraynes bus comes behind you round the Loch Road, remember single file with the biggest boy at the back, and wave them on at the corners."

Well, after Balloch the traffic was mainly the odd group of four or five private cars, and sometimes a bus or caravan. The elder brother of the "Big one", as we shall call him, on a lightweight Hercules could "beast up" some of the hills behind the odd Albion Lorry and with a yank at his Villiers 3-speed gear, could hare down hill at nearly 24 m.p.h. "ningeing in" behind the lorry's slipstream, thus leaving the younger member behind a bit. The latter had a Raleigh upright machine which at 35 lbs. was heavier by 12 lbs. than the bigger boy's racer which, however, had loaded panniers with about 30 lbs. or so of food and clothing etc. 30/- each was considered ample cash with £1 for emergency Bed and Breakfast, if required.

Not much can be remembered by the lads about the first Hostel, they were too tired to do much else than note a hitch hiker whom they had seen at Luss, seated in the common room, already chesting into a tin of McConnachie's Sausage-Stew, while they heated up all of mother's soup ("Should do you two days"). After trying to join in a part song started by a French boy, the two washed in cold water and went to bed. The elder one slept like a top, the younger one used his school phrases with the French lad - and arranged to see him again at Fort William.

They rose at 9.00 a.m. as did the majority of the Men's Dorm. and the elder brother soon got room on the stove by edging in with his canteen full of pease-brose; mysterious, dull brown, and volcanic. The younger one didn't want any of the muddy plasticine he said, he would like an egg. Big brother lowered one into the cauldron of spluttering brose, reasoning that if it was boiling, the egg would be doing fine. Since there was still a good selection of mother's sandwiches left the boys had the mid-day meal

more or less made and were able to leave the hostel by 10.15 a.m., cards stamped and some sticks gathered for the warden, and off into a sunny morning with the prospect of yesterday South-west breeze to help them over the Black Mount. Father had said "For that day's post-card, see and get a view looking from Tyndrum down Glen Dochart." The daily P.C. sent was a view of "Glen Orchy's Proud Mountains".

In spite of clouds the weather continued kind, and apart from McBraynes Bus and a very few caravans, the lads were able to go two abreast easily and stopped opposite Ben Dorain for a sandwich lunch, plus a 2d. bar of chocolate each. This and the 1/- each for the hostel bed was the first money they had spent.

As they enjoyed the scenery, so different from their home town, they recognised a passing cyclist as a German from the hostel. He had an emblem YUTGANG on the shoulder of his shirt. "He was interested in my brose" said the big one "but your French pal said it was powdered snails, so he didn't take any." "No but you did" said the younger brother, "took the whole lot."

After Glencoe and 1/6d. to cross the ferry at Ballachulish the boys and their foreign friends duly met at Fort William.

The German was there first. "Big ane" discovered that the French lad had an older sister. The young ane made a fine tea from Libby's Corn Beef and a tomato and lettuce from a wee shop, and introduced the French lad and two Dutch lassies to the remains of mother's shortbread.

Glen Nevis was the last word in hostels. The boys had booked two nights. There were lots of cooking utensils and a huge stove, so big that



nobody noticed the brose except those who got splashes on their eggs and bacon. The cycle shed was over-flowing and two Englishmen were on a motor-cycle which, in theory, was not allowed at hostels. The brothers meant to climb the Ben but it misted over and the younger member went into Fort William with the French pair, and the older one pottered about with the bikes. He had found that the French lad referred to his companion as 'Ma Mere'.

The Thursday was a hot day and with a late start the boys set off for Buntait. They were on their own now as the Continentals were mostly keen to see the Grampians and made for Aviemore.

All the tourists had cycles and all had maps but the lads noticed that quite a few British hitch hikers had no guide except the Youth Hostel Booklet. Some students they met at Glen Nevis were spending most of the summer going round the Scottish Hostels, it was so cheap they said, and what a country. Could manage on 25/- a week, 7/- for hostel nights and the rest for grub; only cissies considered fares.

At Buntait the lads found the very antithesis of Glen Nevis, at least, hostel wise. An old highland cottage and just the bare essentials. No warden in attendance and the But-an-Ben choke-full of Lancashire mill lads and lassies.

They didn't get to bed early that night. But when the warden did appear he presented the boys with a surprise parcel from home. "Oh food" said the Big Boy. His persistent brose had been christened "that there rusty Porridge" so he repaid the Lancashire acquaintances with some of the shortbread from the parcel. When the morning came, no one knew the time. Two did have watches

but with the fun of being with young people of different countries and backgrounds, they had forgotten to wind them. Outside it was determined West Coast Rain. When the warden called, the Lancashire group said could they stay another day. The brothers did also, and when the big one asked the time, the Highlander, who could have told him to within about fifteen minutes by just looking at the light, said, whatever did he want to bother about that for. But when a Lancashire lass said they were short of butter the warden came back with a big pat newly churned to do the lot of them. It was more than  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. but he would take no more than 9d. for it. The mill workers had never tasted the like. The day ended with more cooking and a sing-song, in which "Ilkley Moor" was sung in the original twang: and so to bed.

Aviemore and Tomintoul were the names that followed on the boys' Hostel Cards. They passed Crathie on a Sunday and watched the Royal Family walk into church through a crowd of about 100. They spotted the German cyclist again and this time he spoke to them. "Was this the British Royal House, yes?" "Sure" said the lads. "But why you have no guards, no soldiers, no protection?" "Well they are on holiday" said the older brother. "They get that all year round in London". The German was round-eyed and departed without another word. At home, he could not have reached forward and touched the Feuhrer on his public appearances.

Before they got back to Glasgow via Doune and Fintry, the brothers met many other visitors, even a big black man all smiling ebony, from the Gold Coast, on a very expensive British bicycle.

So they came home, safe and sound, bronzed and happy, with the younger lad suddenly seeming taller to the mother, and they told their tales and answered questions about a holiday that would last everyone well into the winter.

D. B.

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