

The Aonach Eagach, (A Ridge Too Far)

(John Currie, PHC Journal 1993)

Will I be able to do it? I wanted to know,
The Aonach Eagach Ridge in Glen Coe.
Will I manfully stride with confident feet?
Or cling to a rock and whimper and greet?

Though some folk regaled me with tales of horror,
John Courtney and Tommy said "You'll dae it nae bother.
If auld yins like us can do it with ease,
A man like yourself will find it a breeze."

I decided to put on a fairly brave face,
As we set off up am Bodach at a leisurely pace.
We got to the cairn at the top 'Easy, Peasy'.
But the next bit made me feel decidedly queasy.

'23-metre scramble.' It says in the book,
'On polished but good holds.' I scarcely could look.
As I stood there pretending to admire the view,
A voice from behind shouts "C'moan, there's a queue."

I managed to get down with a thinly veiled curse,
I said, "That wasn't too bad." John said, "It gets worse."
I could see myself fall into a yawning abyss,
And fervently hoped he was taking the piss.

Up on the ridge to Meall Dearg (*pronounced Myowl D-yerrack*)
Where we were joined by Jim and Derek.
I'm happy to say they both shared my fears,
Of being grown men reduced to tears.

Katy and Sandra appeared quite soon after,
And put us to shame with the sound of their laughter.
'Isn't this great.' They joyfully cried.
'A walk in the park.' I skilfully lied.

The crazy Pinnacles were the next trial to be faced.
Would I manage to traverse them without being disgraced?
Would I scale them with ease or perhaps come a cropper.
Ignominiously lifted off by an RAF Chopper?

With cat like grace the girls leaped ahead.
For them the Pinnacles held no dread.
As they climbed up and down and gave joyful shrieks,
I wished I had worn my brown corduroy breeks.

I tried to be nonchalant like misses Kelly and Weetch,
As I clung to the cliff like a super-glued leech.
'Why am I here? I've got to be barmy.
I hope they don't hear when I shout for my mammy.'

We eventually reached the final plateau.
That's Sgurr nan Fiannaidh, then we headed below.
Safely delivered from the Toothed Ridge of Hell.
To murder a pint at the Glencoe Hotel.

We sat in the bar and joined in a song.
A guitar and accordion both played along.
I thought back upon the thrills of the day,
And the scary bits faded further away.

The scenery was stunning, the weather was sunny.
The company was great, the patter was funny.
'Would you do it again?' Katy asked me that night.
'Of course.' I replied. (*Aye that'll be right.*)

