

ONLINE APPENDICES TO THE SUNLIT SUMMIT

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CONTENTS

Introduction

- A A note on how climbs are graded in Britain – the grading systems for rock climbing and for winter snow and ice climbing.
- B The Campaign in the Western Desert 1940-42 – covering the period of Rommel's main victories and Murray's capture.
- C About Captain Herbert Buck – including his activities behind enemy lines and his daring escape.
- D Mountains and mysticism – a look at the possible causes of mystical experiences in mountains.
- E Further notes on the Perennial Philosophy, mysticism and meditation – as relevant to Murray's beliefs and the kind of meditation he practised.
- F Full text of Murray's 1975 Presidential Address to the Mountaineering Council of Scotland - includes his views on access, preservation, mountain rescue and outdoor education.
- G Recipients of the Mungo Park Medal – an interesting list of explorers and adventurers.
- H Full text of John Randall's Appreciation of *The Islands of Western Scotland* – John Randall, Cairman of the Islands Book Trust, discusses Murray's book in the context of other books about the Western Isles.
- I Full text of the obituaries of W.H. Murray by (i) Robert Aitken; (ii) Robin Campbell – these two obituaries are the most comprehensive of the many obituaries which appeared.
- J An anthology of Murray's special places – a list of places mentioned by Murray in his books, articles and other writings as having especially impressed him in some way.
- K *Rocks and Realities: A Chronology of Murray's Climbs 1935-45* by Michael Cocker – tells us when, where and with whom and provides a well-informed commentary. Includes 60 illustrations, some of the seldom seen and notes on all Murray's main climbing companions. This is an on-going work which will be updated from time to time.

INTRODUCTION

The Sunlit Summit (Sandstone Press, 2013) is the biography of W. H. Murray (1913-1996). Murray was a much respected mountaineer, writer and conservationist. As explained in the Introduction to the book I was aware that there was probably not enough detail in the biography to satisfy either mountaineers or conservationists, and that more background information was also needed for matters related to Murray's philosophy and meditation. At the same time, to go into too much detail on any of these aspects would not best serve the majority of readers. I have tried to overcome this by putting additional detail into appendices. However, to place these appendices in the book itself would have added both to its bulk and to its cost. Therefore, the decision was made jointly by the publisher and the author to put a major part of the book's appendices online.

APPENDIX A: A NOTE ON HOW CLIMBS ARE GRADED IN BRITAIN

Summer Grades

A system of grading has been standardised throughout Britain.

Grades of rock climbs range from Easy, Moderate, Difficult (Diff), Very Difficult (VDiff), Severe, Hard Severe, Very Severe (VS) and Hard Very Severe (HVS), to Extremely Severe (E).

The HVS grade was introduced in Scotland in the late 1960s and the E grade was introduced in the late 1970s. The E grade is further subdivided into E1, E2, E3, E4 and so on up to E9.

Technical grades are also provided, showing the level of athletic skill required, these are given for routes of VS and above. The normal technical grades to be expected on routes are as follows (from 4a up to a maximum of 7c):

VS – 4b, 4c, 5a

HVS – 4c, 5a, 5b

E1 – 5a, 5b, 5c

E2 – 5b, 5c, 6a

E3 – 5c, 6a

E4 – 5c, 6a, 6b

E5 – 6a, 6b

Winter Grades

- Grade I

Simple snow slopes with possible corniced exits

- Grade II

Gullies with individual or minor pitches

High angled snow with difficult cornices

Easier buttress routes

- Grade III

Gullies containing ice or mixed pitches up to 75 degrees

Normally with one substantial pitch or several lesser ones

Buttress climbs without great technical difficulty

- Grade IV

Gullies and icefalls with sections of 75 degree to near vertical ice

Buttresses with reasonably technical sections

- Grade V

Vertical ice for longer sections

Steeper buttresses with technical difficulties

- Grade VI

Long sections of vertical and near vertical ice with less resting places

Vertical buttresses with technical difficulty

- Grade VII

Thin vertical ice, fragile freestanding pillars and icicles

Steeper buttresses with high technical difficulty

- Grade VIII

Extremely serious vertical and overhanging, very thin, ice for long pitches

Very sustained and technical buttresses for long pitches

Winter grades, like summer grades also have an additional technical grade. For example:

V5 – a classic ice route with adequate protection

V6 – a classic mixed route

V7 – technically difficult but well protected

APPENDIX B: THE CAMPAIGN IN THE WESTERN DESERT 1940-42

This Appendix deals only with the period 1940-42, the years when Murray was involved. Later, the tide of war turned in favour of the Allied forces.

The Western Desert Campaign began in June 1940, shifting three times across the Libyan desert - territory described as 'a tactician's paradise and a quartermaster's hell' because tanks and armoured vehicles fought fluid battles in the open desert like warships at sea, but supplies and fuel were always a problem to both sides. The Desert War began with an Italian offensive, advancing eastwards from Cyrenaica in northern Libya (at that time, Libya was an Italian colony). Although heavily outnumbered, the British then mounted a counter-offensive and pushed the Italian divisions back, taking 150,000 prisoners and capturing Tobruk on Libya's Mediterranean coast. Tobruk was a major base and port, vital to supplying whichever army held it with the necessary equipment, fuel, ammunition and reinforcements. Furthermore, the topography of the land was such that Tobruk commanded the easiest East-West route. As Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden put it, parodying Churchill's famous speech: 'Never has so much been surrendered by so many to so few.' Following this disaster, Hitler stiffened the Axis forces in North Africa with the recently formed Afrika Korps and put General Erwin Rommel in command. The Afrika Korps was better equipped than either the Italian or the British forces, particularly and crucially in its armoured Panzer divisions whose tanks were bigger, had thicker armoured plating and guns of longer range and greater penetrating power. By this time, the British Eighth Army had been formed and was the overall force opposing Rommel. It was composed of British, Indian, New Zealand, South African and Free French units. Amongst the Indian units was the 10th Indian Infantry Brigade, part of the 5th Indian Division. One of the British units attached to the 10th Indian Brigade was the 2nd Battalion of the Highland Light Infantry in which Murray was a junior officer. Shortly before Murray arrived on the scene with the HLI, Lieutenant General Alan Cunningham had been replaced as commander of the Eighth Army by Major General Neil Ritchie.

Rommel, 'the Desert Fox,' drove the British and Commonwealth forces back again, leaving Tobruk isolated and under siege. The desert war ebbed and flowed with attack and counter-attack, followed by several months when both sides refitted, recouped their losses and built up supplies. Then, in May 1942, Rommel launched his second offensive. One of the greatest battles of this phase was the battle of Gazala, west of Tobruk - a series of engagements over a period of about six weeks. The most decisive of these engagements took place at 'The Cauldron' where the German Panzer divisions destroyed or captured 230 of Ritchie's 300 tanks. Shortly after this, Ritchie was removed from command and General Sir Claude Auchinleck took over. Auchinleck was, at the time, Commander-in-Chief for the whole of the Middle East, but thought the Western Desert Campaign sufficiently important to take personal charge at a time of crisis. The Eighth Army retreated eastwards along the coast. After a siege of 240 days, in which the defenders endured heavy air attack by Stuka dive-bombers, Rommel's tanks and infantry broke into Tobruk and occupied it on June 20th 1942. He captured two and a half million gallons of petrol, over 5,000 tons of supplies, 2,000 serviceable military vehicles and took 33,000 prisoners of war.

Following the fall of Tobruk, Rommel swept into Egypt, taking the strategically important Mersa Matruh, where Murray was taken prisoner. The Eighth Army fell back to heavily defended positions at El Alamein where, in August 1942, General Bernard Montgomery took command.

APPENDIX C: ABOUT CAPTAIN HERBERT BUCK

Herbert Buck was born in 1916 and would have been 27 when Murray first met him, not twenty-four, as Murray guessed. He was the son of an Indian Army officer and had been born and brought up in India. He studied German at St Peter's Hall, Oxford, fenced for the university and was a lover of opera. He graduated in 1938, after which he followed in his father's footsteps by joining the Indian Army with the rank of 2nd Lieutenant in the 1st Punjab Regiment, being later promoted to Captain. Early in 1942 Captain Buck formed the Special Interrogation Group (SIG). The name was chosen to mislead the Germans. The real purpose of the SIG was to operate behind enemy lines in the Western Desert. The unit consisted mainly of anti-Nazi Germans, and Jews of German origin. They posed as a unit of the German Afrika Korps, using captured uniforms and equipment. In one of these actions Buck was captured, but made a daring escape. The report, dated April 1942, recommending (successfully) that he be awarded the Military Cross, states: 'Captain Buck's escape is remarkable as an example of gallant, consistent, ingenious efforts to get away in spite of tremendous odds, supported by some extremely quick thinking. He showed unselfishness in not escaping immediately after capture but in waiting to help others. His powers of leadership were amply displayed when he afterwards led his little band of escapers back so gallantly to British territory.' In the summer of 1942 the SIG was placed under the command of the Special Air Service. The Commander of the SAS, David Stirling, planned to use the unit to destroy airfields in North Africa from which German aircraft were attacking convoys bound for Malta. A traitor within SIG alerted the Germans to the proposed attack on the airfields in the Derna area. Most of those who took part in this raid were either killed, wounded or captured. Later, David Stirling was also captured and ended up at Mahrish Trubau along with Buck and Murray.

APPENDIX D: MOUNTAINS AND MYSTICISM

In her book *Ecstasy* (1) Marghanita Laski reports research findings indicating that the most frequent trigger for mystical experiences is nature. The author, Stephen Graham describes his own mystical response to nature: 'As you sit on the hillside, or lie prone under the trees of the forest, or sprawl wet-legged by a mountain stream, the great door that does not look like a door, opens.' (2). Other researchers (3) draw attention to the fact that the fundamental revelations to the founders of the three monotheistic religions (Moses, Jesus and Mohammed) occurred on a mountain. They cite many other mystical experiences which have taken place on mountains and point out that nearly always these experiences happen in solitude. Murray did sometimes go into the mountains alone, but even when climbing as part of a team solitude could be found when waiting on some airy belay point, or leading with a long run-out of rope and his companions out of sight. These researchers suggest that intense physical activity, combined with stress, fear and a heightened emotional state, to which the magnificence and grandeur of the surroundings is a contributory factor, cause the release of endorphins. Endorphins are a category of morphine-like biochemicals released within the body during exercise, excitement, love and orgasm. They suppress pain and can induce feelings of well-being, happiness and euphoria and may also evoke revelations and mystic experiences. Altitude is also known to produce visions in some people, although at this point in Murray's climbing career, this would not have been a consideration.

Doug Robinson (4) adds a climber's point of view to this discussion in an article, *The Climber as Visionary* (5). The climbing day, he says, goes through the climb-belay-climb-belay cycle by a regular series of intense concentrations and relaxations. 'To climb with intense concentration is to shut out the world, which, when it reappears, will be as a fresh experience, strange and wonderful in its newness.' Gaining the summit, with its release of tension and visual richness provides particularly strong inner experiences, as does reaching the valley again after a hard descent. 'We are suffused with oceanic feelings of clarity, distance, union, oneness.' Robinson agrees with the research previously mentioned - that much of the visionary/mystic experience has a biochemical basis, caused by oxygen debt and the build-up of carbon dioxide, and by the release of adrenalin, the waste products of which stimulate the brain in special ways. He and others have also pointed out that physical deprivation and ordeals of various kinds, rhythmic movement, intense concentration and fasting – experiences common to many mountaineers – have been accepted mind-opening techniques, used by both western and oriental mystics and by tribal shamans the world over.

NOTES

1. *Ecstasy: a Study of Some Secular and Religious Experiences* by Marghanita Laski (Crescent Press, 1961)
2. *The Gentle Art of Tramping*, by Stephen Graham (Robert Holden, 1927)
3. For example, Arzy, Idel, Landis, Blanke, Eliade, Eck., Brugger.
4. Doug Robinson was an American climber who was part of the golden age of Yosemite rock climbing in the 1960s and 70s.
5. *Ascent*, 1969. This was a journal published by the Sierra Club in the 1960s and 70s.

APPENDIX E: FURTHER NOTES ON THE PERENNIAL PHILOSOPHY, MYSTICISM & MEDITATION, AS PRACTISED BY MURRAY

1 Notes on some of the religions and philosophies Murray was studying

The Vedanta Sutras are a collection of commentaries on the Vedas (Sanskrit for 'Knowledge') – the ancient Hindu scriptures which are well over three thousand years old. Owing to the cryptic nature of the Vedas, they are open to different interpretations. Parts of the Vedas (the Upanishads) elaborate on the nature of the Ultimate. Brahman is seen as the underlying, unitary and universal Being who is one with Atman, the equivalent of the human soul.

Lao Tse (or Laozi, Lao Tzu and other variations) - The name means 'Old Master' and is now thought to be not one person, but several Chinese philosophers who lived in the 6th century BC and, collectively, were the founders of Taoism. Tao (pronounced Dow) literally translates as 'path.' It is a force which flows through all life and is the first cause of everything. *The Tao Te Ching* (Dow De Jing) is the first great classic of the Chinese school of philosophy. Taoist thought generally focuses on nature, the relationship between humanity and the cosmos, health and longevity, and action through inaction, which is thought to produce harmony with the Universe.

Buddha – Siddhartha Gautama was a spiritual teacher in India, c. 563-411 BC, regarded as the Supreme Buddha (meaning 'Awakened One' or 'Enlightened One'). His teachings and sayings were perpetuated by oral tradition, until committed to writing some 400 years later. Buddha taught the Noble Eightfold Path – right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration. Zen Buddhism, which is what interested Murray most, emerged in the 7th century AD in China and spread throughout South East Asia. It places greater emphasis on meditation and on closeness to nature.

2. What Murray was reading

In addition to the texts mentioned above and the texts discussed in Chapters Twelve and Thirteen, Murray certainly read Goethe and Coleridge, both Neoplatonists. During his captivity he is also known to have read *Bible of the World* (Balhu); Muller's *Theosophy*, *Diagnosis of Man* (Walker), *Signature of All Things* (Boehme), *The Way of Initiation* (Steiner), and the writings of Meister Eckhart. In listing, for his sister, the books he was reading, Murray ended with 'etc.' What was included in that 'etc.' is a matter for conjecture. Strong candidates would be Kant, Ralph Waldo Emerson and the American transcendentalists ('The happiest man is he who learns from nature the lesson of worship'); possibly, Thoreau, who wrote in *Walden* of his debt to Vedic thought concerning the inner, spiritual essence of man. Huxley's book *The Perennial Philosophy* was not published until 1946. In view of his interest both in *Grey Eminence* and in the Perennial Philosophy it seems very likely that he would have read it at the first opportunity. It is an anthology of writings about the Perennial Philosophy and contains extracts from Eckhart and Underhill as well as many Eastern sources.

In his letter of June 1945 to Douglas Scott, Murray said his studies in relation to the Perennial Philosophy (or the Ideal Philosophy as he called it in the letter) included modern science. It

seems likely that he studied the aspects of science which supported his new-found philosophy - for example, *The Mysterious Universe* (1930) by Sir James Jeans, the astronomer and mathematical physicist, a man who 'saw the universe with the eye of a poet.' Jeans declared that 'the universe begins to look more like a great thought than a great machine.' And maybe Murray studied those works which showed that the laws of nature are universal, that all natural phenomena obey the same laws of flow and growth and are shaped by the same fundamental principles of engineering and mathematics, producing remarkable similarities of design, albeit on completely different scales. Thus, the skeletal structures of leaves and insects' wings look alike and the patterns made by a river delta, an electrical discharge and the root system of a tree are clearly following the same natural laws, displaying the underlying unity of all things.

Murray makes no mention of Jewish or Islamic sources. Possibly the former were banned by the camp authorities. The Quran says: 'God is the light of the heavens and the earth. The parable of His light is, as it were, that of a niche containing a lamp, the lamp is enclosed in glass, the glass shining like a radiant star: a lamp lit from a blessed tree – an olive-tree that is neither of the east nor of the west.' (Surah 24.35). Commentaries on this text suggest that the lamp has panels of different coloured glass and that the light emanating from the lamp is different on each side, although the light inside is the same. This message is very much in line with the Perennial Philosophy and with Murray's beliefs. It seems very likely that he read this text since his own words so closely resemble it: 'All these were charged with a beauty that did not belong to them, but poured through them as light pours through the glass of a ruby and blue window.' (*Undiscovered Scotland*, page 7).

3. Notes on the kind of meditation practiced by Murray

The nature of Murray's meditation was shaped by Herbert Buck and the Perennial Philosophy and by his own studies. Some types of meditation consist of deliberate concentration upon and deep thought about some aspect of God. Other types of meditation consist of emptying the mind so that connection between the soul and the Divine Essence is unimpeded. This is transcendental meditation in that it goes beyond earth-bound thoughts to reach a higher power. Writing about *The Cloud of Unknowing* in *Grey Eminence*, Huxley says: 'All thoughts and feelings, even the holiest, must be counted as distractions if they hold back the higher will from its blind beating against the cloud. Like Eckhart, like St. John of the Cross, and indeed like all the great mystics of the Dionysian tradition, our author is emphatic on that point.' The correct answer to the question, 'What were you thinking about?' is not 'Nothing,' because even to think of nothing, and to be focusing on dispelling wayward thoughts and distractions, is to be thinking of something. The mind has to be emptied until the self vanishes. Initially, distractions are held at bay by the repetition of what the Indian Vedanta school called a 'mantra' – a single word or simple phrase. *The Cloud of Unknowing* advocates the repetition of a single-syllable 'prayer word' such as 'god' or 'love.' This centres the mind until it reaches a place of rest. A similar technique is breath control, for example, saying a short prayer all in one breath while breathing out, and then repeating it while breathing in until the self and the conscious mind disappear.

Murray – and the Perennial Philosophy as taught by Herbert Buck – used both methods of meditation – the intense focus on an aspect of God and the transcendental type - seeing the former as an essential step to achieving the latter. Murray makes this clear in 'The Approach Route to Beauty,' an article written for the SM CJ in 1948. The very title tells us that he is

dealing only here with the lower slopes, that the heights are gained in a different way. Of the initial stage involving highly focused thought, he says: 'Growth may be given to the spiritual faculty as simply as growth and health may be given to the body – by awakening it from slumber, by providing nourishment and then by giving hard exercise.' He tells us that he tries to be as aware as possible of the beauty around him and to observe things for later and more effective use in privacy. Once the necessary quiet and undisturbed surroundings are obtained, 'We should then recall in chosen order of degree the several forms that display beauty, visualising each until its beauty arouses our love for it, and ending with the greatest beauty known to us.' This gives rise to 'a growing awareness that all the degrees of beauty in the myriad forms are, in fact, one Beauty, the changeless and formless Beauty of eternal reality.' He then goes on to say that he tries to apply the same method to gain an appreciation of the beauty in people's characters and souls and to the Beauty within oneself. Then comes the second stage of meditation, the higher slopes: In *The Evidence of Things Not Seen* (page 98) Murray explains that meditation, with full use of the reasoning process, has to give way at long last to 'an alert stillness of mind that allows its conclusive leap into the spiritual realm beyond time and space. There are no short cuts, no easy ways, no let-offs, but many falls and defeats, therefore a need of over-riding commitment.'

APPENDIX F: MURRAY'S 1975 PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS TO THE MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL OF SCOTLAND

My term of office ends today. While I've been president, I've taken note of some of the trends in the Scottish mountain scene which are bound to concern this Council in the future. It might be helpful if I gave you my opinion of these, at least in brief.

I pass over as common knowledge the great increase in numbers of people climbing, the effect this has had on standards, and the recent dramatic change in ice-climbing techniques.

During the last decade we have seen the most remarkable changes, not only in mountaineering proper, but in the development of other mountain activities – rescue, commercial deer stalking, the involvement of Education Authorities, and proliferation of Training Centres.

Rescue has become more and more highly specialised. (A recent feature has been the increasing use of helicopters and dogs.) In its origins the Rescue Committee in Scotland was founded by the mountaineering clubs, but the links with mountaineering are nowadays tenuous, except perhaps in the Cairngorms. If this trend continues, it will become potentially dangerous. For example, rescue facilities may well be promoted, as they have in the past, to the detriment of the environment, especially in wilderness areas – I think of roads, bridges, shelters, mechanical transport, and so on. Those reduce the already shrinking wilderness experience. The idea that rescue must take precedence over the conservation of wilderness will have to be resisted. And that is a strongly-held idea, especially in the minds of the police. The opposing idea, that danger is inherent in mountaineering and is a positively desirable element that we need to retain, must be stated openly.

Commercial deer-stalking I mention only for its recent phenomena: the large-scale bulldozing of roads at high and low levels. This already has had a far worse effect on the mountain environment than anything I yet conceive as coming from uncontrolled rescue facilities. Our only hope of controlling that is by new legislation under the proposed 'park system'.

All good things carried to excess can produce bad. An outstanding example may be seen in the growth of adventure and training centres, and the thinking on this subject by Education Authorities and The Scottish Sports Council. That P.E., or P.T., should be done in the open air is obviously good. On mountains, that statement has to be qualified according to circumstances. There are now 80 adventure and training centres in Scotland, most of them run by the Education Authorities; and the most important, Glenmore, by the Sports Council. The mountain professionalism, incidentally bred, is excellent in its efficiency, discipline, good methods. But some professionals, perhaps on the admin side, come to believe that real development means promotion in terms of the numbers of people put through the school sausage machine. That promotes more jobs, and the statistics needed to get more money out of Government. Expansion is then conceived as 'Good'.

Mountaineering is a highly personal experience. It allows the greatest scope for individual response and development. But that can be achieved by only very small parties of personal friends. It is for this basic reason that the Clubs have flourished. It is for this reason that they flourish best, not in size of membership but in number of clubs. The clubs are the essential backbone to mountaineering because they provide the simple conditions in which men can meet and get to know each other, and form small climbing parties. The whole development of climbing, of skills, technique and exploration, has sprung from this simple basis. True development in mountaineering arises out of development of the individual over a long period. This is not produced by training schools running courses. The schools have real value, but a limited value.

Mountaineering, as distinct from physical training, is a good thing so long as it's voluntary, and enjoyed for its mountain environment. It is a waste of resources to turn people out on to the hills in large numbers regardless of their natural inclinations. That is not development, except in the bad sense of development. Yet that appears to be the criterion on which the Sports Council in Scotland judges development, and on which Education Authorities are tending to judge development. To my mind, their premise is false. If you agree that that is so, then you should resist it.

My thanks to the office-bearers and Executive Committee for their work.

APPENDIX G: RECIPIENTS OF THE MUNGO PARK MEDAL

The Mungo Park Medal is awarded by the Royal Scottish Geographical Society in recognition of outstanding contributions to geographical knowledge through exploration and/or research, and/or work of a practical nature of benefit to humanity in potentially hazardous physical and/or social environments. It was founded in honour of the Scottish explorer Mungo Park.

1929 Sergeant Thomas Anderson

1930 Captain Angus Buchanan

1931 F.S. Smythe

1934 Isobel W. Hutchison FRSGS

1935 Freya Stark

1936 Lawrence R. Wager MA FGS, Lecturer in Geology, University of Reading

1939 Dr. E.B. Worthington MA PhD, for his share in the work of the African Research Survey

1944 Frank Fraser Darling

1948 F. Spencer Chapman and Mary Gibson Henry, Pennsylvania, USA

1950 Thor Heyerdahl

1952 W.H. Murray

1953 Count Eigil Knuth

1954 Dr. Alain Bombard

1955 George Christopher Band and Thomas Dempster Mackinnon

1961 Marjory Penham

1962 C.G. Malcolm Slesser

1969 Dr. Hugh Simpson and Myrtle Simpson

1975 Haroun Tazieff

1981 Professor Keith L. Miller

1987 John Ridgway

1988 Dr. John Hemming

1989 Christina Dodwell

1990 Charles Swithinbank

1991 Professor Andrew Goudie

1992 Nicholas Crane & Richard Crane

1993 Professor David Sugden

1994 Michael Buerk

1995 Nigel Winser & Shane Winser, RGS

1996 Michael Asher

1997 Professor Chalmers M. Clapperton

1998 Julian Pettifer, journalist and broadcaster

1999 Kate Adie

2000 Colin Thubron

2001 Robin Hanbury-Tenison

2002 William Dalrymple

2003 John Simpson CBE, World Affairs Editor, BBC

2004 Norma and Maurice Joseph

2005 Professor Jean Malaurie

2006 John Hare

2007 Norman E. Hallendy

2010 Jacob Milroy, Pharmacologist

APPENDIX H: FULL TEXT OF JOHN RANDALL'S APPRECIATION OF 'THE ISLANDS OF WESTERN SCOTLAND'

There has been no shortage of books written about the Hebrides over the centuries, many of them it has to be said superficial or partial, but W.H. Murray's 'The Islands of Western Scotland', first published in 1973, stands out as one of the very best. It is good for two main reasons: (i) the geographical scope of the book takes in both the Inner and Outer Hebrides, which enables the history of particular islands to be placed in a wider context, and for the forces shaping the whole region to be identified; and (ii) it considers the physical features of the landscape, breathtakingly beautiful by any standards, alongside the human and cultural history of the islands, including an assessment of current economic and social changes and future policy.

In these respects, the book brings to mind earlier classics such as Martin Martin's 'A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland' (1703) which also had an ambitious and far-reaching agenda, combining detailed observation and insights into past and present customs with prescriptions for economic policy. As knowledge has advanced, and specialisation has developed, it has become increasingly rare for authors to attempt such a synthesis – we seem caught between the innumerable publications about the detail of particular islands, or about one dimension of their interest, written by specialists or local historians, on the one hand; and the most generalised, superficial, and frequently inaccurate, journalistic overviews written mainly for the tourist industry, on the other.

And the reason why books like W.H. Murray's are rare is easy to understand – it is extremely difficult to cover such a diverse geographical area and such a range of topics in 300 pages without descending into banalities and superficialities. Murray's book, for example, extends to the physical background of the islands, climate, wildlife, human history from prehistoric times to the twentieth century, architecture, and cultural and artistic matters. A successful synthesis of this kind requires deep knowledge and experience of the islands, garnered over many years, and also a mind which has sifted and pondered the many questions and issues which arise. It also then requires an ability to write well, conveying complex ideas in a readily understandable form for a lay audience. These are all qualities which W.H. Murray was triumphantly able to bring to bear.

Many of his conclusions about current policy issues set out in the final three pages of the book remain relevant today. For example, Murray believes that proper government of the islands cannot be achieved by remote control from the mainland, and that islanders should be granted as much autonomy as possible. There can be no doubt that Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, the first local authority to cover the whole of the Outer Hebrides, established shortly after Murray's book was published, has made enormous strides in integrating and improving conditions in what was previously a disparate group of islands run from Dingwall and Inverness. The Inner Hebrides are however still part of mainland authorities, but their population size and geographical spread make a single unit of local government less realistic.

Overall, W.H.Murray's book is one of those rare works which is simultaneously instructive and thought-provoking, detailed and wide-ranging, serious yet entertaining, and worthy of the deepest study and reflection by both the Hebridean and the visitor to this remarkable region.

John Randall, Chairman, The Islands Book Trust

APPENDIX I: FULL TEXT OF THE OBITUARIES OF W.H.MURRAY BY ROBERT AITKEN AND ROBIN CAMPBELL.

(i) By Robert Aitken (Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal, 1996):

Bill Murray's work in mountain conservation

‘Choice words, and measured phrase, above the reach of ordinary men...’

Wordsworth, *Resolution and Independence*.

BILL MURRAY stands alongside James Bryce and Frank Fraser Darling in the pantheon of Scottish conservation. He made a major contribution to the protection of highland landscape through his writing, through his work in voluntary and official bodies, but also through the inspiration he provided by his writing and his example. This may yet prove to be his greatest legacy to Scotland.

Bill's commitment to mountain landscape of course is self-evident, if latent, in his earliest mountain writing – though it is intriguing to note as a fiery young tiger in the 1930s, he felt no qualms over the impact of the new Glen Coe road, a source of huge dismay to older and more Salvationist observers. The transcendental vision of *Mountaineering in Scotland* and *Undiscovered Scotland* has come to colour many of our attitudes to our mountain landscapes in the same way as it has informed our view of Scottish climbing. But it was not until 1960, when the National Trust for Scotland in an inspired moment commissioned Bill to undertake the survey ultimately published as *Highland Landscape*, that he was brought up sharp against the need to protect these landscapes against the further ravages of hydro development and afforestation. The authority of and conviction of that book (the more remarkable because, as Bill admitted, the fieldwork was carried out over a period of six weeks' campaigning in filthy weather, doubling as a honeymoon) has ensured that its impact, modest at first, has been long lasting and pervasive. *Highland Landscape*, published in 1962, provided much of the basis for our current, still inadequate, system of landscape protection through the designation of National Scenic Areas. Its superb characterisations of our diverse topography, often close in quality to blank verse, are endlessly quoted in area studies such as that from the recent Cairngorms Working Party, proving – if proof were needed – that no one has yet improved on them. As with the writings of Sir Walter Scott, Bill's articulation of the essential qualities of Highland landscape has permanently enhanced our perceptions.

After *Highland Landscape*, Bill had a long relationship with NTS as the Trust's mountain adviser. Ultimately, however, he found his position increasingly untenable with successive conflicts over the interpretation of Unna's instructions and related matters; he finally resigned from the post in 1982. I cherish a memory from one of an apparently endless and inconclusive series of meetings in Glen Coe with the Trust in the Seventies and Eighties to discuss Those Bridges, when (the rest of the group having dwindled, distantly debating, into the Hidden Valley) Bill and I rested companionably on a knoll above the Coire Gabhail gorge. In reminiscent vein Bill described how in the thirties he and JMCS friends would cross the river below Coire nan Lochan, boulder-hopping under heavy packs. ‘I was good at it,’ he said; ‘the others quite often fell in.’ This with his most endearing wry grin, abashed at his

own small vanity. With Bill you had to wait patiently for such moments, but you waited willingly.

Bill became actively involved in countryside conservation and its politics in the later 1960s. As a result of the Countryside in 1970 Conference (in which Bob Grieve and Tom Weir played a major part within the Scottish Study Group) the Countryside Commission for Scotland was established in late 1967. Bill was appointed as one of the founding Commissioners, serving three terms from 1968 to 1980, a stint in which he was exceeded only by Duncan Ross. Over the years the Commission involved Bill in a huge amount of unpaid work, and much tedious time-consuming travel across the grain of the country from Loch Goil to monthly meetings at Perth.

To his credit, Bill was no politician. He probably lacked even the guile to be a reasonably effective committee operator, finding it difficult to make common cause with fellow Commissioners of very disparate interests to form or join any kind of power bloc. A man always as precise in his own utterances as in his carefully crafted writing – indeed, sometimes meticulous to a fault in that regard – Bill found it hard to thole the less-inhibited approach of ‘commissioners who had no intimate knowledge of the countryside ...whose awareness was strictly confined, yet who could all express strongly confident opinions on subjects of which they were quite profoundly ignorant.’ Unfortunately, that capacity remains virtually one of the prime criteria for membership of public bodies. Bill’s own standards of judgement and integrity were of the very highest, while pretension was entirely absent from his character. Usually humorously tolerant of human foibles, he was scathing of what he saw as arrogance, wilful ignorance, underhand dealing, or naked selfishness.

What Bill did bring to the Commission was his total commitment to mountain recreation and mountain landscape, a field knowledge of Scotland virtually unmatched (especially in the early days) by staff or other members, and quiet authority. The commission was to draw heavily on these assets when it formulated its system of scenery protection in *Scotland’s Scenic Heritage* in 1978. After a valiant but ultimately unsuccessful struggle to pioneer a system of objective landscape classification, Commission staff fell back on a largely subjective evaluation in which their debt to *Highland Landscape* is often self-evident.

However, both Bill and the Commission were sorely tested by the furious wrangle which erupted over the Coruisk track and bridges only a few months into the life of the CCS (for younger members of the club, the fullest published account of this seminal event can be found in (SMCJXXIX, 111-120). I know that Bill himself agonised as to whether or not he should have resigned from the commission over its inept and unpropitious handling of this first key issue. He had strongly advocated the protection of wild country for its own sake (at that time a novel concept in Scotland) as one of the key roles for the new commission in a powerful personal credo which he published in the *Scots Magazine* at the time of the CCS’s creation. He put a huge amount of work into resisting both the initial proposals and to build the track and the bridges, and subsequent plans to bring the track into a usable state and to replace the bridge at Scavaig after it was destroyed by a ‘storm’.

At almost the same time as he became a Commissioner, Bill became Chairman of the Scottish Countryside Activities Council. SCAC originated in a conference convened by the Ramblers’ Association in 1967 to assemble recreation interest group to advance their cause with the new CCS. It drew on a wide range of countryside interests, especially from the West

of Scotland grass-roots of rambling and cycling, youth hostelling and camping, but also from the senior climbing clubs. Recognising the crucial role of strength in diversity, Bill fostered and directed SCAC from 1968 to 1982 with understated authority and sagacity. He commanded immense respect and affection from the members. SCAC was never intended as a radical lobbying force – the varied interests of its members organisations have always acted as a constraint on the more exuberant factions - but it became, and has survived as, a useful consultative and representative forum, a respected moderate voice. Under Bill's chairmanship SCAC actively promoted the conservation of wild land in Scotland, drew on Adam Watson's survey work on bulldozed tracks in the Cairngorms to badger CCS and the Scottish Office into limiting further damage, led the campaign against the Grampian Way long distance footpath proposal, and carried out useful surveys on topics ranging from rights of way in Central Scotland to camping and caravanning problems in the Highlands.

I suspect that Bill derived minimal enjoyment from his long involvement in Commissions, Councils and Committees – he chaired about 100 SCAC meetings in all – but he probably regarded them as a necessary evil to which concerned individuals must contribute time and mental energy, which in his case might have been more profitably directed to writing. He conducted meetings of SCAC Council with his invariable courtesy, gravity and careful expression, but in executive meetings he would occasionally come out with flashes of the puckish humour that he kept for comfortable company – humour as dry, as smooth, as the finest *fino muy seco*. When in 1981 SCAC aligned itself with the Mountaineering Council of Scotland and other conservation bodies against the Lurcher's Gully proposals for ski development at Cairn Gorm, Bill gave evidence at the Public Inquiry in Kingussie. Diffident as he was, he manifestly did not relish any part of that experience, but the sincerity and passion of his evidence clearly carried much weight with the Reporter.

In his seventieth year, Bill appeared to resolve to shed most of these larger and more demanding commitments. His handing over of the mantle of the SCAC in 1982 was implemented with characteristic decision and directness. Having decided it was time to go, he assiduously phoned round all the member bodies, informed them that he was retiring, and gave them a firm directive that I would succeed him. Then he told me. By the way of revenge I persuaded a very willing SCAC to create the role of Honorary President for him, and picked his brains mercilessly for years thereafter.

However, Bill also took on a great fistful of other roles. He was president of the Scottish Area of Ramblers' Association from 1966 to 1982. Having identified (with Donald Bennet, Sandy Cousins and others) the need after the Coruisk fiasco to reform the doddering association of Scottish Climbing Clubs as the Mountaineering Council of Scotland, he served a term as the second president of MCS (1972-75). He said himself that it seemed appropriate that he should follow Bill Mackenzie in the role, though he did not anticipate the enjoyment he had derived from following Bill in earlier days. He was a founder member of the Friends of Loch Lomond when that group was set up in 1978, and served on its Council until 1988. The Friends' Newsletter for Autumn 1992 includes a nostalgic panegyric on 'The old Loch Lomond road' which shows to perfection the Murray capacity, undimmed by age, to blend acute perception of landscape with vivid and precise expression. In such writing he forces us to recognise that which we had seen, but never truly perceived.

Even in his seventies Bill lent his support to the new bodies that sprang up to pursue the vision he had articulated for the protection of wild country. He took an advisory role in the formation of the Scottish Wild Land Group in 1982. He was a founding trustee of the John Muir Trust (1984-86), helping to provide the Trust with the springboard of solid credibility from which it has gone on to achieve great things within a remarkably short time span. He was a patron of the Scottish Council for National Parks from its reconstitution in December 1990. In all these roles he not only gave freely of his time and experience, but contributed inspirational articles for newsletters and campaigning publications. The last of these, a foreword for a booklet on Scotland's mountains for Scottish Wildlife and Country-side Link written only a few days before he died, is a fitting epitome of his view of the relationship between climbing and conservation.

In his concern for the protection of mountain landscape and wild land, Bill Murray has exerted a powerful influence that has extended well beyond Scotland. US Vice-President Al Gore, in his highly-regarded conservation treatise *Earth in the Balance*, quotes Bill with obvious respect and admiration. The inspirational quality of Bill's writing, with its flame-like intensity and clarity, is such that in future years he may well be recognised and esteemed more in that conservation role even than for his contribution to mountaineering.

In our age of flexible morality and uncertain conviction, Bill Murray came closer than anyone I have known to the model of a man *sans peur et sans reproche*. On casual acquaintance he could appear distant, but to those to whom he extended his friendship he showed absolute loyalty, infinite kindness, and touches of wicked humour. We who had the privilege of knowing and working with him over the many years strive to emulate and to carry forward the quietly passionate commitment of this most humane of mountain conservationists.

(ii) By Robin Campbell (Alpine Journal, 1997):

William Hutchison Murray OBE 1913-1996

Bill Murray was a key member of a group of climbers, mostly Glasgow-based, who resuscitated Scottish rock and ice climbing from a more or less moribund state in the period between the two World Wars. The deeds of this group were stirringly recorded by him in his book *Mountaineering in Scotland*, mostly written while a prisoner of war and eventually published by Dent in 1947. The climbs themselves were remarkable, amounting to little more than the recovery of the technical standards achieved a generation before by John Bell, Willie Naismith, Harold Raeburn and other pioneers. However, besides the handicap of having to set their own standards, Murray's group enjoyed much more limited means and less leisure than the Victorians: perhaps because of this, their pioneering efforts were concentrated in the Glencoe district, with only occasional forays to Ben Nevis and elsewhere. The principal new climbs achieved by Murray were Clachaig Gully (with Archie MacAlpine, Kenneth Dunn and George Marskell) and winter ascents of Garrick's Shelf (Buachaille Etive Mor) and Deep-Cut Chimney (Stob Coire nam Beith), both with Bill Mackenzie; after the war, his fine routes on the pleasant East Face of Aonach Dubh (with Donald McIntyre and Trevor

Ransley) were a significant discovery. His thorough knowledge of Glencoe climbing made him a natural choice as author of the first SMC Climber's Guide to Glencoe & Ardgour in 1949. However, although Murray's climbing contribution was modest in scope, his influence on Scottish climbing was fundamental. His first book and its sequel *Undiscovered Scotland* (Dent, 1951) are inspirational writings – the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* of Scottish mountain writing. It is impossible for any young person to read them without experiencing strong exploratory urges. Climbing is depicted as an endless joyous round of invigorating battles with high crags, moonlit escapades on iron-hard névé, bold unprotected leads by tight lipped strongmen and good-humoured camaraderie at the belays and campsites. The mountains themselves are characterised in a way which makes them seem even more bewitching than we know them to be. The emphasis on snow and ice climbing was a Scottish tradition originally born of necessity (because of landowner attitudes), but it was transformed by Murray into a characteristic and distinctive virtue. So Murray's books led hundreds of climbers in the fifties to on to the crags, told them how to behave when they got there and explained to them why they liked it so much.

It was this latter aspect of Murray's writing which attracted attention outside mountaineering circles and which formed the basis of a second more substantial and lasting influence. While his prose style was very effective and finely wrought, what was truly remarkable about it was a rare and peculiar relent for capturing mountain landscape in a way that compellingly exposed its character and beauty. This talent was seized on by the National Trust for Scotland, who appointed Murray as their Mountain Properties Advisor and commissioned a survey of *Highland Landscape*, published in 1962, and by the Countryside Commission for Scotland, who appointed him as a commissioner for three successive terms from 1968 to 1980. As well as these posts, Murray held the offices of SMC President (1962-64), Ramblers Association Scotland President (1966-82), Scottish Countryside Activities Council Chairman (1967-82), Vice-President of the Alpine Club (1971-72), Mountaineering Council of Scotland President (1972-75) and SMC Honorary President (from 1989).

This was a long and gruelling period of voluntary work, entailing heroically many taxing journeys from his remote heronry at Lochgoilhead, endured without complaint or adequate recompense. Throughout it, Murray used his best efforts to persuade others that the character and beauty of mountain landscape was a thing well worth preserving and, while he would use almost any instrument available in a cause he thought sufficiently worthy, his most effective instrument was always the unique talent he possessed for the delineation of mountain character and beauty. That instrument preserved in his writings, survives his death and will be a mainstay of mountain conservation foreseeable future. Indeed, so powerful was Murray's eye and pen, that – much as a lucid and authoritative art historian can add or remove value from a painting – he could increase the aesthetic value of a landscape by writing about it. Sometimes this power must have dismayed him: as it did, for example, when the world beat a nasty path to Coire Gabhail – the 'Lost Valley of Bidean nam Bian' of his books, assisted, of course, by the National Trust for Scotland's controversial access bridge. However, Murray's integrity was so absolute that the validity of his mountain testimony was never doubted.

This aspect of Murray's life and work has been described and praised at greater length by Robert Aitken in the 1996 SMC Journal (pp 155-8). Aitken's tribute could hardly be

improved in short compass, and deserves close study. Nor could his claim be reasonably disputed that 'Bill Murray stands alongside James Bryce and Frank Fraser Darling in the pantheon of Scottish conservation', although some might wish to include Percy Unna in this very short list of gods. No one has done more than Murray to expose and preserve what is truly valuable in our mountain landscapes; and while there are many now to offer leadership in the fiefdoms of Bryce, Darling and Unna – access, wildlife conservation and mountain management – there is no one who approaches Murray's authority in discerning and delineating value. We flounder in the wake of a loss which seems irreplaceable.

APPENDIX J: AN ANTHOLOGY OF MURRAY'S SPECIAL PLACES

This is a far from definitive list of places mentioned by Murray in his books, articles and other writings as having especially impressed him in some way.

HL – Highland Landscape

MS – Mountaineering in Scotland

WHS – The Companion Guide to The West Highlands of Scotland

E – The Evidence of Things Not Seen

H – The Hebrides

SHE – The Scottish Himalayan Expedition

SE – The Story of Everest

An Teallach: (The Forge) 3473 feet, is one of the half dozen most splendid mountains in Scotland, Its summit ridge of a rock, a twisting and pinnacled knife-edge, is the sharpest of the mainland, without match except on the Black Cuillin. (HL 43)

Atlantic coast of Scotland and its sea lochs: Of all the mountain settings the most brilliant, matched in none of the twenty foreign lands I have seen for myself. (MS 228)

Ben Nevis at New Year: We put on our boots and went out to the open snowfields – out into such a splendour of moonlight as one sees but rarely in a lifetime. (MS 170)

Ben Resipol: Has one of the best views on the west coast. (Letter to Bob Aitken, Jan. 1966)

Bidean nam Bian: one of the most interesting mountains in Britain. Its structure is complex and one can walk 12 miles on its high ridges. All three corries are remarkable for their cliff scenery but Coire Gabhail, pronounced Gyle, is unique.... It is a true mountain sanctuary (HL 65)

Cioch of Applecross: One of the most perfect climbs in the country. (Letter to Bob Aitken, July 1968)

Clachaig Gully, Glencoe: the unique downward vista, the like of which may not be seen on any other British mountain. (MS 88)

Coire Leis: Between Ben Nevis and Carn Mor Dearg lies the most splendid of all Scottish corries. (HL 23)

Coire Mhic Fhearchair: It is one of the half-dozen most magnificent corries of the Highlands. In the North-West its only possible rival is the Coire Toll an Lochain on an Teallach.(WHS 297)

Corran: Best of all is the seaward view from Corran which is one of the most beautiful clachans on the west coast of Scotland. The peaks of the Black Cuillin are seen to better advantage from here than from anywhere else on the Scottish coast. (HL 30)

Crowberry Gully: We have never seen the fantastic grandeur of its winter rock scenery matched by any other gully in Scotland (MS 75)

Cuillin ridge, Skye: (i) On every hand the mist was sinking, and slowly, one by one, each peak of the Cuillin reared a black tip through snow-white vapour. Never again in Summer have I seen a sight so magnificent. (MS 3). (ii) The greatest day in mountaineering, the traverse of the Cuillin main ridge. The most enchanting views of corrie and peak, loch and sky, sea and islands, change throughout that epic day with a rapidity unequalled on other ranges. (MS 240)

Eilean Donan and its castle: [at sunset] there is nothing in all Kintail to match the scene. (WHS 276)

Githri Gorge (Lampak region, Himalayas): The Githri passage had been the most wonderful journey we had ever had. (E 204)

Glen Affric: The river widened and opened out to the shores of Loch Beinn a Mheadhoin. Its wide flat banks bore well grown Caledonian pines all in bottle green clusters well spaced with plenty of room to walk between the trunks. Through the clearings the glow of sunstruck hills was reflected in calm water to rich colour glowing like an ancient stained-glass window. The scene was the finest of all the Scottish glens or indeed of any I have since seen in the Alps or Himalaya. (E 128)

Glencoe: It does have majesty of the wildest kind. The eye lifts from the glen to rock-peaks packed in close array, trenched by ravines and towering bluntly. Of its kind, it is unrivalled. (HL 64)

Glen Nevis Gorge: The slope from here to the summit of Ben Nevis is the longest and steepest in Britain, 4000 feet at an angle of 35 degrees. Down this slope falls the Allt Coire Eoghainn, one of the most spectacular waterslides in Scotland. (HL 23)

Glen Torridon: Its loch, and the mountains to either side, exhibit more of mountain beauty than any other district of Scotland, including Skye. (HL 39)

Hebrides: In the Isles there is something for everyone, but before and above and surrounding all is the extraordinary quality of light. (H 4)

Himalayas: Himalayan climbing did not seem to us to be better than Alpine, for the altitude is against full enjoyment. But the travel *among* the mountains – surely it can have no equal in the world! (*Scottish Kumaon Expedition*, Himalayan Journal, 1950-51)

Inverpolly and Glencanisp Forests: The two forests comprise five well-known mountains: in the south or Inverpolly Forest, Stac Pollaidh (2009 feet), Cul Beag, 2523 feet, and Cul Mor 2786 feet; in the north or Glencanisp Forest, Suilven, 2399 feet, and Canisp 2779 feet. In the wide area between two groups lie chains of lochs that take a serpentine form rare even in the Highlands, and which, within a framework of peaks that take most unusual shapes on the vertical plane, together make a mountain landscape unique in the whole Scottish scene. (HL 45)

Landhar Bheinn (pronounced Larven), Knoydart: the most westerly Munro in Scotland and offers one of the best viewpoints of the whole coast-line. (HL 28)

Liathach and Beinn Eighe: Two of the finest mountain ranges of Scotland. Each has seven or eight tops linked by narrow ridges extending nearly 5 miles on Liathach and 7 miles on Beinn Eigh. (HL 38)

Loch Alsh: Ranks among the three finest sea lochs in Scotland (with Nevis and Hourn). (HL 32)

Loch Avon: It has no match in Scotland, save only at Coruisk, for utter remoteness and the sense of loneliness imparted. (HL 51)

Loch Goil: Is the most beautiful sea loch of Cowal or the Clyde coast (WHS 25)

Loch Maree: One of the two most excellent of Scotland's big inland waters. Its only possible rival is Loch Lomond. Maree exhibits the wilder and rougher form of mountain beauty, Loch Lomond the gentler. (HL 41)

Loch Moidart: An excursion, excelling all others on the Scottish west coast, is the walk from Loch Moidart across the hill pass to Glenuig and thence to Kinlochailort. (HL 21)

Panch Chuli, Kumaon, India:The basin surrounded by five peaks: Truly that was the Abode of the Gods and the Five Brothers, worth much sacrifice of the flesh. (SHE 254)

Rannoch Moor: The one perfect specimen of a Highland moor. (HL 63)

Shelf of Crowberry Ridge: In March 1937 it was Scotland's biggest ice-climb – a ribbon of continuous ice five hundred and fifty feet long. Mackenzie and I had seen nothing like it before, nor have we since. (US 97)

Steall waterfall, Glen Nevis: Its immense surge of 350 feet down the lower cliffs of Sgurr a Mhaim makes it the best waterfall of its kind in the Highlands. (The falls of Glomach give a bigger single leap but are largely hidden from sight, and the much longer Eoghainn slide is not a true waterfall.) (HL 24)

Thyanboche, Nepal: The most beautiful place we had ever seen. At the farthest fringes of the meadow a screen of silver fir, pine, and juniper-trees sloped down north-east into the valley of the Imja Khola, which ran straight to the South face of the Everest massif.(SE 150)

Tower Ridge, Nevis: Then we came to the brink of the Gap. It made the most savage cleft I had seen on Scottish mountains. (MS 130)