

# SUPPLEMENT TO NEW ROUTES PUBLISHED IN SMCJ 2014

*The following routes were late additions to the print version and are included here to maintain the digital record.*

## SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

### **MEALL DHAMH (near Cruach Ardain):**

Note: Correction to note in SMCJ 2013. The Grade I gully at NN 3982 1720, climbed by Anne Craig, Andy Willie & Willie Jeffrey in 2011, is situated 20m right of *Meall Damh Ramp* (not *Stollen Grooves*).

## SKYE

### **BLÀBHEINN:**

Alastair Matthewson has submitted the extended notes below.

The crag known as *Eastern Slabs* in *Skye Scrambles* (2011) is called *South-East Buttress* in the *Cuillin Climbers' Guide* (2011). The crag is dismissed in the latter as offering an infinite number of scrambling routes. There is no denying its laid back angle, major half-way ledge and rambling nature of the upper section as it fades into screes under the summit. However, the rock is by no means 'climb anywhere', and the routes described below are defined lines. The crag was first climbed on in 1907, but the original description is much too vague for the route to be identified with certainty. A note appeared at the time in the *Sligachan Climbers' Book*: Blaven Climbed buttress on East face nearest great Central Gully over slabby rocks 2½ hours. This buttress starts somewhat higher than the more northerly ones but finishes just short of summit. R. A. Brown, W. A. Morrison, H. MacRobert June 1907.

It then appeared in the 1923 SMC *Skye Guide* (Steeple, Barlow, MacRobert and Bell). See the diagram at the foot of the previous page. South-Eastern Buttress. This is the buttress (M in fig. 17) on the north side of the great scree-filled gully referred to above which separates the

two tops of Blaven. It was climbed in 1907 by H. MacRobert, R. A. Brown and W. A. Morrison. The route, which was rather indefinite, lay over easy slabby rocks and up trap dykes. In the most recent Cuillin Climbers' Guide (2011), a scramble is described up the left-hand side of the buttress and is also named South-East Buttress, though this may not be the same as the original route.

*South-East Buttress* 300m Grade 3 \*\*\*. H. MacRobert, R. A. Brown and W. A. Morrison. 1907.

*Note change from existing FA details in the guide.*

The best and longest line stays on the left edge of the buttress. Start left of the small pool, cross the obvious left-slanting chimney line then pass three broad terraces with slabs gradually easing in angle to the summit slopes. Superb! Since this route is described as crossing the obvious left-slanting chimney line (*K Route*) it is a little misleading to say that it stays on the left edge of the buttress.

The following lines have been climbed on the crag in the last few years by AM. The routes are described from L to R.

*Original Route* Grade 3

Probably the same as the scramble called *South-East Buttress* in the recent Cuillin Climbers' Guide. AM soloed this route on 21/07/2011 (first visit to crag; I chose the natural line, unaware of any routes other than *Dyke Route*). This route climbs the left edge of the lower slabs, left of the diagonal chimney/ gully, before moving rightwards to climb the upper slabs by the easiest line. Start a few metres left of a pool at the base of the cliff. Slabs lead straight up to a scree-covered ledge at the base of the cliff proper. Climb the slabby narrowing buttress above, a bulge above a cone sheet provides the short crux. The upper tier is easier. Take the wide scree ledge rightwards, crossing the diagonal gully. Aim to pass just left of an obvious large square block/overhang low down (right of two offset gullies). Much higher up, after a section of easy scree, there is an optional but highly entertaining subterranean excursion. Enter a wide slot with a huge chockstone which is passed under. A number of possibilities unfold. The daylight option is to move right and continue up the wide horizontal fissure above, leading to screes. Alternatively, descend leftwards into a cave. A vertical chimney with chockstones looms above. Ignore this and

keep crawling leftwards towards a daylight hole. This leads into a gully overlooking Great Scree Gully. Climb the slabby left wall to easier ground. NB: This fissured section of cliff is a potentially active area of landslip. The objective dangers from rockfall or catastrophic cliff collapse are high.

### *Left-hand Finish* Grade 3

At the main terrace, instead of traversing a long way right, climb good rock midway between the gully of *K Route* and a left-facing corner further right. Before the wall becomes too steep, traverse left along a cone sheet. Cross the gully of *K Route* and scramble up a pleasant buttress parallel to the gully. Eventually curve rightwards to finish as for *K Route*. Climbed by Noel Williams on 6/6/2014.

### *K Route* Difficult

The left-slanting chimney/gully line seems to have been expunged from the 2011 Cuillin Climbers' Guide. It was first described in the MacInnes guidebook (Constable, 1971): 'A route of Diff/V.Diff standard up chimney and face to top.' It is assumed that MacInnes probably climbed this himself, possibly circa 1967? Climbed by AM solo on 22/03/2012. Climb slabs straight up into the narrow slanting gully which is wet and easy at the start. At the first steepening move 3m right on a cone sheet then delicately back left on an impeccable slab (crux). The second steep section is avoided by a groove in the left wall and an awkward step down back right into the gully. Continue up to terrace. The upper gully is easier, the chockstones are taken on left or right (drier). Where the gully runs out, climb the upper of two left-slanting corners to an orange cone sheet ledge. Follow this for a few metres, then climb up to an overhanging prow on the left (with a steep corner on the right). Move left under the prow, and slant round left, overlooking big gully to easier ground at another cone sheet ledge. Climb this rightwards to where the angle relents.

### *Nathair Dubh* Difficult

This route finds a wandering but natural way up the lower tier between *K Route* and *Dyke Route Left-hand*, then ascends the upper cliff more directly by way of a sinuous crack. Ascent by AM solo: Lower tier 19/10/2011 (Moderate); Upper tier 15/10/2013 (Difficult). Start down and

left of *Dyke Route Left-hand*, below the lower tier of slab, some 20m up and right of the small pool at a thin dyke. Slabs lead straight up to a scree-covered ledge at the base of the steeper cliff. Climb the shallower righthand of two gully lines containing a 1m-wide dyke (the left-hand gully is *K Route*). Higher up, pass an obvious rock boss and keep following the dyke up clean slabs to a heather alcove below a steepening of darker wetter rock. Ignore the ledge leading right. Instead, scramble up and right on pale rock aiming for a block on a rib. At the block, step right round the rib and traverse hard right to the base of a short grassy gully. Easier rocks right of the gully lead to less steep ground and the wide scree-covered ledge below the upper tier. Above, a thin recessed black dyke snakes up the face. Climb this, the crux is a steep section at the start, but above the angle soon relents. Move right onto a buttress of rough rock to join the upper section of *Dyke Route Left-Hand*.

*Dyke Route Left-Hand* Moderate

Ascent by AM solo: Lower Tier 15/10/2013; Upper Tier 19/10/2011.

This fine route climbs a thinner dyke left of *Dyke Route*. In the lower tier its very upper part looks like twin right-slanting cracks; the lower section is black with lichen. Follow the dyke with a minor deviation on the right to avoid a steepening above a cone sheet. Higher up, the twin cracks are taken direct on clean rough black rock. Above the terrace the dyke continues up the easier slab staying left of the scab-like overlap of *Dyke Route*, eventually joining this route below the small tower.

*Dyke Route* Moderate

See Skye Scrambles for description.