

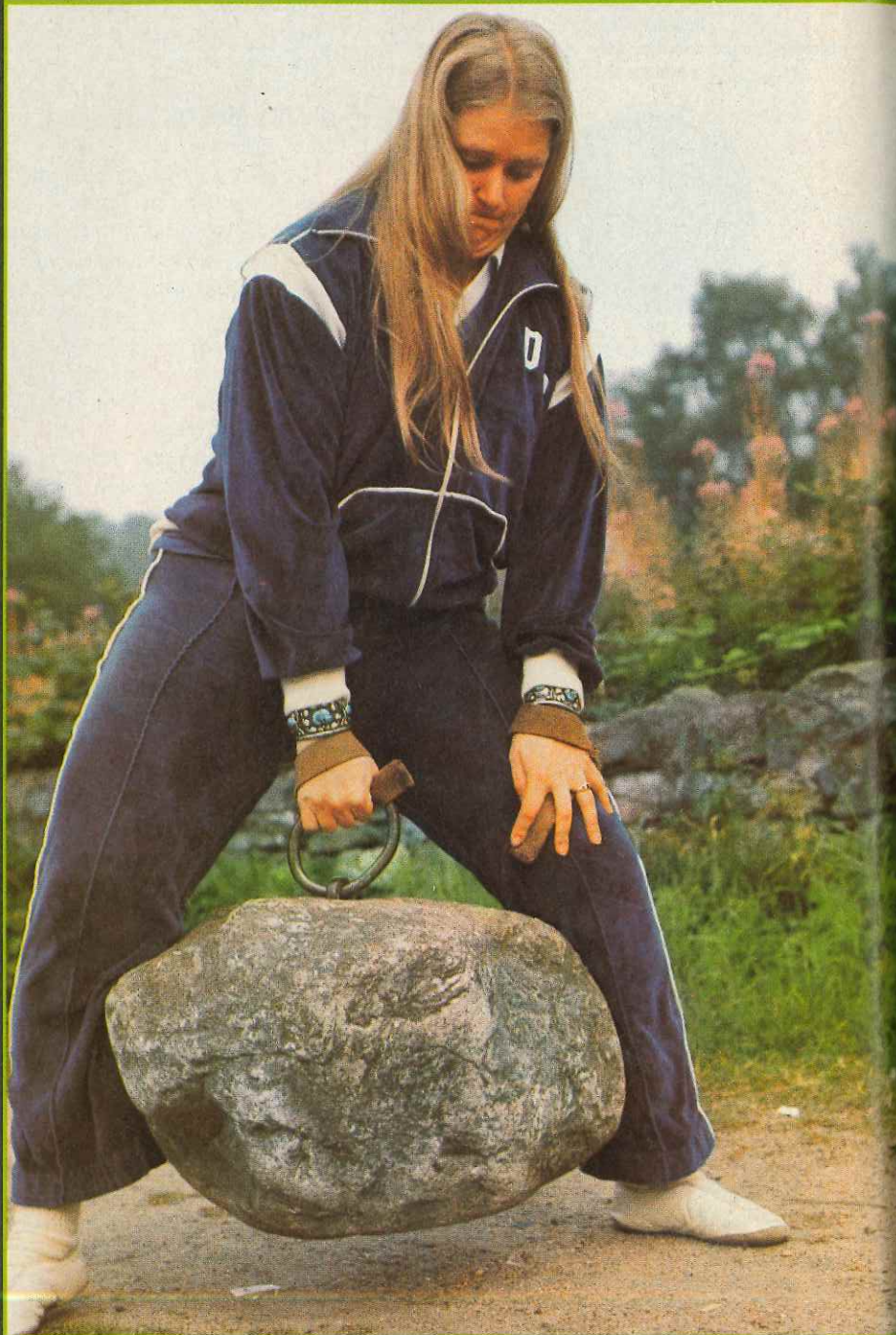
A LEGEND IN

Three Americans, one a woman, journeyed to the Highlands to try some ancient Scottish

Almost 80 years ago, in the valley of the River Dee, Alexander Anthony Cameron of Dochanassie came to the village of Inver, where rested a stone of great fame—a *clach cuid fir*, or manhood stone, which up till then had resisted the efforts of every stout Scot who had tried to lift it. The Inver Stone was, and for that matter still is, a smooth, gray granite boulder shaped through the centuries by the watery nudgings of the Dee into an almost geometrically perfect sphere weighing 268 pounds. It was—and is—the largest manhood stone in Scotland, and Cameron had come 130 miles with the firm intention of raising it from the ground and placing it on a waist-high wall.

For hundreds of years young Highlanders had tested themselves in this fashion on these stones, most of which weighed between 175 and 225 pounds, and it was part of the rite of passage from boyhood for a lad to go to the home of his chieftain or laird and lift the local stone onto a wall. The Inver Stone, though, was a bit different. So much larger and smoother was it than an average manhood stone that it had become widely known not as a challenge through which a postpubescent boy might become a man but as a challenge through which a man might become a legend.

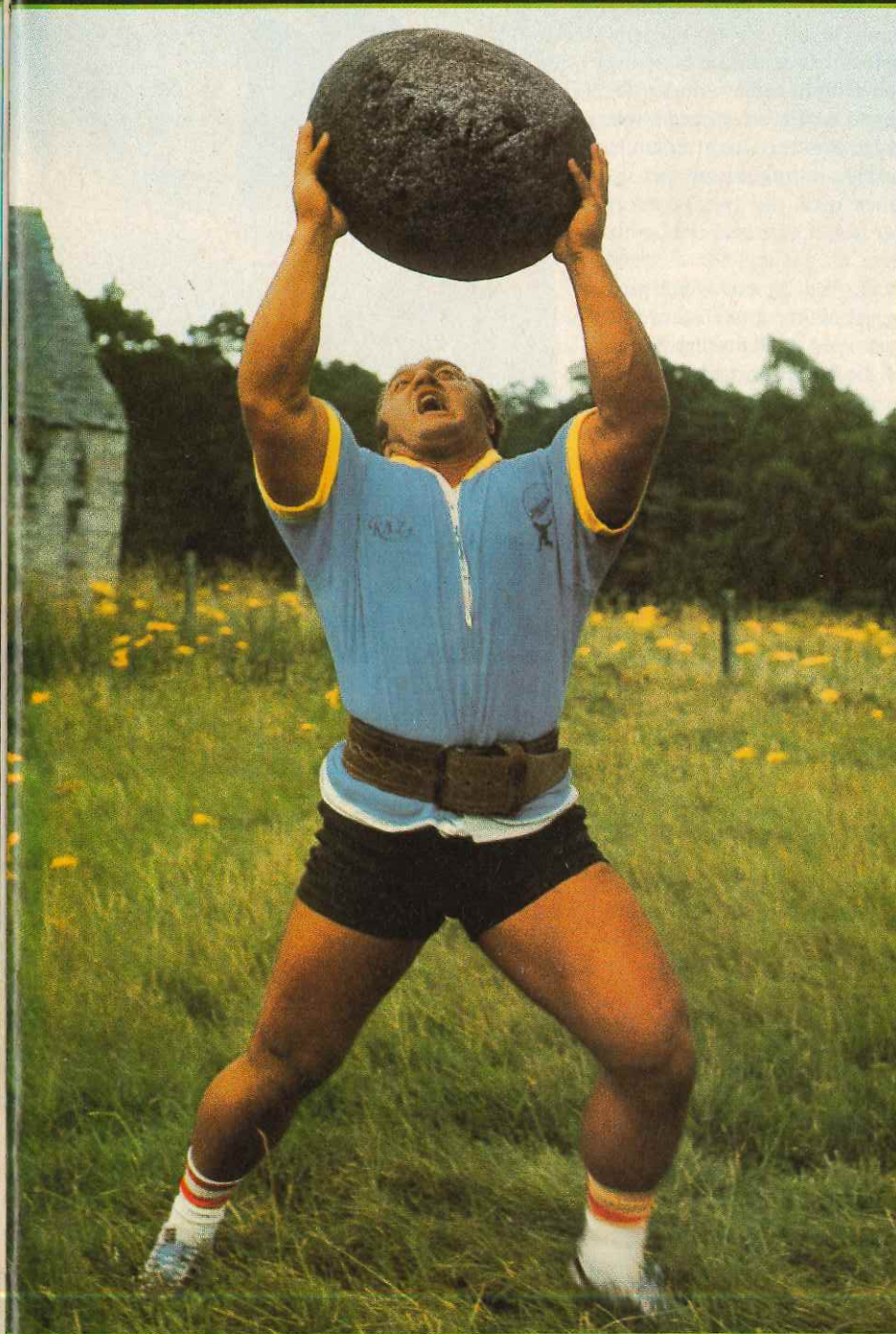
As for Cameron, he had the initial advantage of coming from legendary stock. His mother was a MacMillan, a clan renowned for such powerful ancestors as the great-uncle who was casting peat one day when his horse and cart became well and truly mired in the bog. "Hold on, horse," he said, "I'll gie ye a hand," whereupon he unhooked the hamestraps, freed the animal and with a mighty heave pulled the terrified horse onto higher ground. Then, going back to the cart and muttering under his breath, he carefully selected his footing and after a titanic struggle managed to place the wheels of the cart back on the track. Gasping for breath, he climbed back up, patted his



Jan Todd lifts the smaller of the two Dinnie Stones—a mere 340 pounds.

THE MAKING

tests of manhood. They rocked the Scots
with truly hefty attainments by **TERRY TODD**



Here with the Inver Stone, Bill Kazmaier moves past manhood into legend.

horse gently on the neck and said, "I dinna wonder ye couldna pull it oot, horse. It was a struggle even for me."

With that sort of forebear, Cameron could hardly help being successful in his attempt to raise the Inver Stone to his waist and thus become a part of the strength lore of Scotland, lore that enralls strong men from around the world, stoking their imaginations with thoughts of kilts and competition. One of those strong men was me.

From the time I began training with weights I read everything I could about strength and the cultures in which it flourished, and in all my reading nothing seemed quite so wonderful as the tales of brawny Scots hauling huge stones from the heather, tossing long and heavy logs called cabers and in general disporting themselves in a manner appropriate to strength athletes. Gradually, as my own size and strength began to approximate my imagination, I also began more and more often to dream of going to Scotland, and by the time I weighed over 300 pounds and had won my first national championship in powerlifting, I felt I was ready.

By then I had been corresponding for several years with David Webster, a Scot whose knowledge of the strength sports of his country is unexcelled, and together we made plans for my first visit across the water. But then the marvelous line concerning the ease with which plans "gang aft agley" began to have real meaning in my life; I learned that the trip to Scotland would conflict with my defense of the national powerlifting championship. What to do? Finally, I decided to defend and forgo the trip to the Highlands.

Of the many decisions I have made in my life that seem in retrospect to have been wrong, none has bothered me quite as much as this apparently trivial one. By not going when I was in my Jean Brodie years, I lost, or so I reasoned in later years when I weighed far less, not the

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chance to see the boulders and logs of the Highlands, because anyone with Freddie Laker's business address and a little patience can see these things at no great expense, but the chance to *engage* them, to participate. It bothers me still.

Often I had spoken to my wife of my fascination with Scotland's stones of strength and of my regret at not having gone across to try them when the main chance came. She understood. We share an interest in strength, and, though I have long since retired as a competitor, Jan is still very active (SI, Nov. 14, 1977), holding three of the four heavyweight records for women in powerlifting (480 in the squat, 463 in the deadlift and 1,127 in the total).

One evening earlier this year we were looking through a new and much enlarged version of David Webster's *Scottish Highland Games* when we came to a section devoted to a pair of stones even more famous than the Inver Stone—the Dinnie Stones. Some of the information in the section was new even to me, and I was reading slowly, savoring each bit, when Jan spoke suddenly: "Listen to this. 'Maybe one day as athletic standards go higher still, we will have women attempting to lift the stones of strength!' How about that? Old Dave even used an exclamation point."

Until then, the thought that Jan, or any other woman, might someday attempt one or more of Scotland's famous stones had never intruded on my feeling-sorry-for-myself reveries, but the moment she read and I heard those words from Webster's book I think we both knew she was one day going to try.

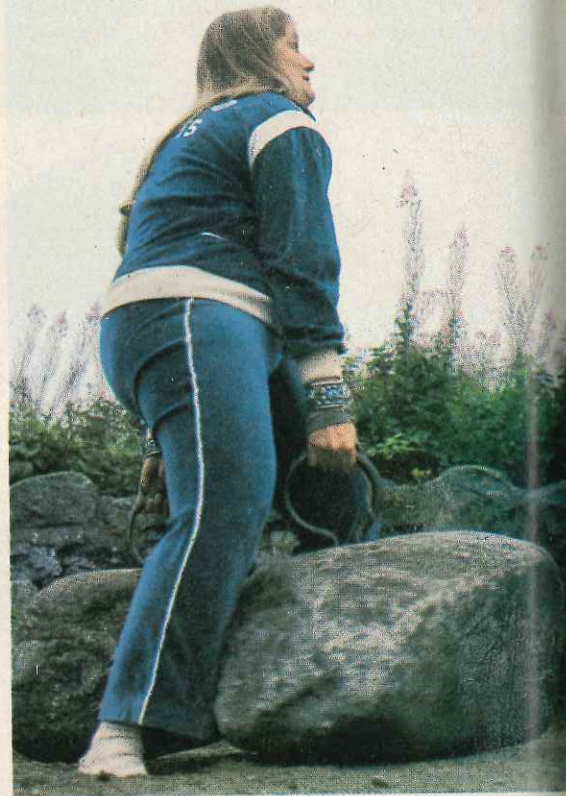
As it turned out, that day wasn't long in coming, because shortly thereafter CBS bought the rights to telecast the most famous of all the Highland Games, those held in Braemar in late summer, and the network asked me to do the color commentary. At that point Jan began to train for the assault on the Dinnie Stones. For 100 years or so they had lain near the inn at Potarch beside the River Dee, only a few miles from Braemar.

Known throughout the world of strength, the Dinnie Stones were named for Donald Dinnie, a wonderful all-rounder of the last half of the 19th century who dominated the Highland Games as no one had ever done before or likely will again. So awesome was Dinnie, and so long-lived athletically, that he was the subject of many writers, even poets.

*He's springy, elastic and
light when he's
running,
Comes up to the mark in
time and to spare,
His opponents can't beat
him or match him in
cunning,
They say we were beat
because Dinnie was
there.*

History has it that as a young man Dinnie came with his father to repair the arched stone bridge over the Dee at Potarch, and that during this project his father used the two boulders that would later bear the family name as anchors for a roped plank. As long as anyone even then could remember, they had been used as tethering stones for the horses of the patrons of the inn. Each of the stones has a solid shaft embedded deep inside, with an iron ring attached to the outside end, allowing for a decent, though uncomfort-

*Jan Todd's lift of the Dinnie Stones
and Bill Kazmaier's heave of the 56-
pound weight were record breakers.*



PHOTOGRAPHS BY TERENCE SPENCER



able, handgrip, and, unlike the Inver Stone, each is rough and irregularly shaped. Together the two weigh 788 pounds—448 the heavier and 340 the lighter—and, according to the stories connecting them to Donald Dinnie, he was the first person able to stand astride the two and lift them both from the ground at the same time. A larger and older workman on the bridge at Potarch supposedly lifted the larger of the stones, whereupon Donald is said to have responded by not only lifting the two together but also carrying and dragging them across the five-yard width of the bridge.

To hear some of the locals tell it now, though, especially if someone comes from far away to attempt the stones, Dinnie not only carried them across the bridge but also 1) carried them the length of the bridge; 2) carried them down one riverbank, through the river and up the other side; 3) threw them over the river; or 4) all of the above. In any case, the stones are well named, and through the years since Dinnie first lifted them, thousands of men have tried to duplicate his effort. Only a handful have succeeded, and more than a few have injured themselves because of the awkward and unbalanced nature of the lift.

Nevertheless, Jan laid into her training with a will. She continued her usual heavy lifting, and she began her special preparations for the stones by placing a barbell just above her knees and then lifting it with the muscles of her hips, thighs and back until she stood erect with the barbell resting across the front of her thighs. The first week she used 600 pounds in this exercise, called a partial deadlift, and as the weeks passed and her strength and grip increased, she lifted more and more until six weeks or so later she pulled 900 pounds.

At that point she added another lift to her routine, the Jefferson lift, which approximated as nearly as was possible in the gym the position required to lift the stones. This was done by placing the bar on boxes or on a rack so that it was 18 inches or so off the ground. She then straddled the bar, gripping it with one hand in front of her body and the other behind, and pulled it up by straightening her legs until they were locked.

Starting with 500 pounds, she kept adding weight until she was able to pull 805 pounds, almost 20 pounds more than the weight of the stones. Meanwhile, dur-

ing the buildup in the Jefferson lift, she also continued to push herself to the limit in the partial deadlift in an attempt to further strengthen the major muscles, tendons and ligaments she would use against the stones. Finally, about three weeks before we were to leave for Scotland, she made a partial deadlift in a training session at the Texas Athletic Club in Austin with what was to me the amazing weight of 1,100 pounds. She was ready.

Then, after several months of almost literally backbreaking work, we received the disappointing news that CBS had decided against doing the Highland Games show. But by that time it didn't matter. We were going. We did, after all, have Mr. Laker's address.

We had been living and training all summer in Auburn, Ala., having moved down from Canada to help direct a project called the National Strength Research Center at Auburn University, and when we knew we would be going to Scotland on our own we asked a friend who was to be a colleague at the Center, Bill Kazmaier, to go along. Bill is a newcomer to the iron game, having trained seriously for only 2½ years, but what he lacks in experience he more than makes up for in raw natural talent. In the past 20 years I have known all of the top performers in the strength sports, and in terms of genetic gift he takes pride of place. At 6' 2½" and 320 pounds he is perfectly, though massively, proportioned, rather like the fourth-century B.C. statue called the Farnese Hercules. By way of comparison with another big man, Kazmaier is 2½ inches shorter and approximately 40 pounds heavier than Lou Ferrigno, television's Incredible Hulk. Yet with all his phenomenal muscling Kaz is not a bodybuilder but a powerlifter, although Joe Weider, bodybuilding's Godfather, said after seeing Kaz that he could have a great future in the former field as well. Already he holds the world superheavyweight record of 617 pounds in the bench press, and most experts feel he will surpass the other three powerlifting records within the next year. So apparent is his talent that members of the U.S. Olympic Weight Lifting Committee have tried to shore up their sagging program by urging him to abandon powerlifting and concentrate on the overhead, Olympic lifts. He is, in short, a nonpareil.

We asked him to come with us because

we felt he would enjoy Scotland and the challenges there as much as the Scots would enjoy seeing him accept those challenges. Thus it was that we three—the self-styled Chub Club—found ourselves late last summer strolling through Gatwick airport, Kaz drawing unbelieving stares, Jan organizing our baggage for transport to a connecting train and I wondering if the wonderfully named "Chubb Alarm" would sound if I were to stick my hand and forearm through the hole in the glass through which I was receiving my meager handful of British currency in exchange for my non-Kazmaier-like U.S. dollars.

Onward then to Irvine, Scotland, to the home of our excited host, David Webster himself, who during our first evening took us around to the home of a whisky distributor who had heard of our planned assault on Scotland's hallowed stones. After the usual small talk we were ushered into another room for the presentation of gifts. Besides Jan, Kaz, Webster and me, our party now included Tony Fitton, another member of the Strength Research Center, who was home in Britain on holiday and tagging along. First our host gave a bottle of Scotch whisky each to Tony, Kaz and me. But no whisky for Jan. Next, he launched into an explanation of the many bloody uses to which the blunt little scabbard knife called a *sgian dubh* could be put—brisket splittings, kidney thrustings and the like—and then, as with the Scotch, gave a *sgian dubh* each to Fitton, Kazmaier and me, again excluding Jan. We soon left, realizing as we did so that perhaps everyone in Scotland wasn't as pleased about our primary business there as was Webster. Little did the whisky man know that he was hoisting himself with his own petard, as we shall shortly see.

Next morning early we were away for Braemar, packed into the back of a rented, windowless van, sitting in some lawn chairs for which no sane underwriter would have predicted long life. One chair went just after lunch when Kaz dozed off and leaned back, but the others held, and well before the end of a dreary day we checked into our hotel and decided that although it was misting we should hurry to the inn at Potarch and turn Jan loose on the stones.

Delightfully enough, the photographer engaged by SI to cover our Highland doings was Terence Spencer, who shared

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with Jan the only minimally dubious distinction of inclusion in the *Guinness Book of World Records*, she, of course, for her lifting, he for having parachuted from a fighter plane falling into the Baltic in the closing days of World War II from a height of between 30 and 40 feet. As for Kazmaier, little Billy will have to wait until next year's edition is issued to see his bench record or records (and perhaps others) listed, because the only other achievement for which he could be included is among the ones Guinness has eliminated as being potentially dangerous. The thing the big guy did that God knows would have to be a world record was to eat, in California in 1978, in two hours, in front of several hundred people, on what other occasion than a Fourth of July celebration, 1,000 (count 'em, 1,000) live goldfish. "It was easy," Kaz recalls. "They gave 'em to us in paper cartons of 50 fish apiece and I just drained the water and knocked 'em back."

Let's just say it was an interesting group that unloaded from the van at the inn at Potarch and crowded around the stones under the lowering sky. The two brutal-looking rocks were chained together, and as I looked at them closely I began to fear, for the first time since Jan did 900 in the partial deadlift, that she might fail to lift them. They were much larger than photographs had made them seem, and I knew this would force Jan to take a wider stance than would provide ideal, or even reasonably good, leverage.

The innkeeper knew of the attempt, and soon we had the stones unchained and in place. Because of the cool, damp day, and because there was no other way to warm up for the two stones together, she first lifted the 340-pound stone twice with her right hand and twice with her left. Then her blood began to move and she stood astride the seemingly intractable 448-pounder and raised it twice each with her right and her left hand. But in order to straddle the huge stone she was forced, as I had feared, to take too wide a stance. All the men who have lifted both stones have been taller than Jan, who stands 5' 7" and weighs 195. In fact, the first man after Dinnie acknowledged to have raised the stones successfully was 6' 7", 273-pound David Prowse, who hoisted them in 1963 and then went on to a career in television and films, including *A Clockwork Orange* and *Star Wars*, in which he had the role of Darth Vader.

But Jan hadn't trained all summer and

traveled overseas to back away from the two stones just because her leverage was less than that of Lord Vader, so we moved the boulders together until they touched each other and would, we hoped, lock as she raised them, rather than swing against her legs. Once they were together she moved quickly to them, swung her right leg over and grasped the iron rings as Kaz and I helped her adjust and tighten her wrist straps. And then she pulled, her face drawing downward as she leaned back to apply her leg and back strength against the stones. The small one did swing clear, but though she pulled for several seconds the big stone failed to move. As she released the iron rings and moved a few feet back, people crowded around, consoling her and offering advice, but she walked away and stood alone, trying to prepare her mind to overcome the obvious limitations of her body.

Again she stepped across the stones, positioned her feet, secured her grip and began to pull, moaning with the effort, and again the small stone swung free of the ground. But as before, the large stone stayed put. She came to me then, shaking her head. "They're so heavy. So heavy." We left the crowd and walked together, past the lovely pink-flecked field of Rose Bay Willow herbs that led down to the Dee, and stood awhile without talking, looking at the flowers and the Dee and the bridge across which Dinnie had carried the stones almost 100 years ago. "Perhaps you should give it up," I remember saying. "The lifting of them isn't worth a serious injury."

"Not yet," she said. "I want to try just once more."

As we walked back to the stones and the crowd, I said the usual words about bearing down and positioning her feet properly and leaning back so that the heavier stone, which was in front of her, would come up. But I had said those words before, and though I knew they were true, I had little confidence in them. Finally, for what I knew would be the last time, she stood again over the stones, placing her feet as well as she could, and we began to tighten her wrist straps. As we did so I leaned close against her and whispered, "Let's see you pull this one for the whisky man."

I saw her face flush as she lowered her hips and began to pull, and I shouted along with everyone else as the smaller

stone came up quickly, much higher than before, and I shouted again as she leaned back and at long last the larger stone swung clear. It came off the ground neither very far nor for very long, but by God it came, and although Jan was disappointed at not standing erect with the stones, she was assured over several pints of bitter inside the inn that as the years passed, the height she had lifted the stones would no doubt enjoy the increase usual in such matters.

The following morning Jan was lame but happy as we piled into the van to pay a visit to the Inver Stone on the way to the Braemar Games. Her work was done, but Kaz was feeling his porridge and wanted to try the smooth, round boulder that had resisted the efforts of so many men. As Dave had said it would be, the stone was resting in deep grass under a tree across from the inn, and as I rolled it around it was easy to see why many strong men had failed not only to hoist it to their waists but also to lift it even an inch from the ground. It was like the King Kong of bowling balls, but for what I thought might really be the life of me, I couldn't help but try it.

One of the miracles of modern technology is the marvelous restorative effect a camera has on aging, debilitated muscles. How else is it to be explained that when Terence Spencer, our low-level parachutist, focused his expensive machine on me, the Inver Stone wound up at the required waist height? But just as I was catching my breath to do a little crowing, I heard Kaz ask Dave if anyone had ever lifted the stone to arms' length overhead.

"Are ye daft, man!" Webster replied with a shocked look. "Ye'll hae trouble enough matching your auld bearded friend there." Then, turning to me, "Todd is a Scottish name, is it not?"

Whereupon Kaz started growling and rolling the stone around like a bear with a pumpkin. Finally he found a grasp that suited him, and in one sweeping motion he pulled the boulder not just to his waist but to his chest. Then he carefully moved his hands under the stone and, wonder of wonders, pressed it easily overhead, prompting Dave to remark, "Och, but I've seen it all now. Yesterday the Dinnie Stones conquered by a woman, and now the Inver Stone handled as if it were a wee pebble!"

A few dozen photographs later we were on our way to Braemar to don our

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kilts and participate as best we could in the games. Once there, we Americans were not prepared for the pomp and majesty of the affair, or for the beauty of the valley setting, the formal Highland dress and the skirling bagpipes, but we were pleased to see the center of the arena devoted to the hammer throw, the caber toss, the stone put and the many other events in which we and the other "heavies" would take part.

As the day progressed and as we competed in a few of the activities, we began to sense a lack of excitement about the games, and when I asked Dave he confirmed my suspicions that the murder of Lord Mountbatten, which had caused the Queen to forgo one of the few Braemar gatherings missed by the royal family in this century, had also taken a bit of life out of the games.

After a minute of silence to remember Mountbatten, the final heavy event of the day began—the 56-pound-weight throw for height, in which the object is to throw a solid iron weight with a ring in the han-

dle over a crossbar placed on a set of pole-vault standards, using only one hand. Until that afternoon Kazmaier had never even seen a 56-pound weight, much less tried to throw one, but what he was nonetheless able to do brought the crowd of 20,000 to its feet and lifted the spirit of the entire games.

The bar was set at 11 feet as we began to throw, and from the very beginning it was apparent that Kaz had found his event. Most of the other men would gauge their power and apply only enough to clear the bar, but on his first throw Kaz cleared it by at least four feet. The crowd roared, and the rest of us heavies simply looked at each other and shook our heads. And it continued. The bar was raised six inches at a time and some of the men began to miss, but at every height Kaz' throw surged far over the bar.

Finally, the three other remaining competitors and I missed at between 13' 6" and 14' and Kaz was told that the Braemar record stood at 15' 1". So the bar was raised to 15' 2", and *again* he

sailed it over, high and easily, at which point several retired heavies who were judging the event walked over and announced that the world record was 16' 1". "Will the wee laddie have a try at 16' 2"?" one asked me with a wink, then signaled for the bar to be raised without waiting for my answer.

On Bill's first try the weight hit the bar on the way up, but on the second the huge, explosive athlete hefted the weight, swung it back between his legs once, twice, then erupted and sent it at least two feet over the standard, beating the best of many good men, including such U.S. stalwarts as Brian Oldfield.

As the crowd thronged around the quiet, easy-natured giant, talking to him, touching him and asking for his autograph, I thought to myself that if a man isn't still in shape to lift the Dinnie Stones himself, or press the Inver Stone, or throw the 56-pound weight a record height, the next-best thing is to have a wife and big pal who can. It's not the best of all possible worlds, but it will do. **END**

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