



Forfar & District Hill Walking Club

Newsletter 37 July 2011

www.fdhwc.org.uk

President's Column

I'm beginning to feel like a minister on a Saturday night. What do I say in my next sermon? I can't believe 6 months have gone by since I last had this dilemma.

Another extensive programme of meets, meetings and events went by with some wonderful participation at some and poor participation at others. The Sauchieburn Hotel seems to have become part of the high tea tradition!

In the greater world of mountaineering, the rescue saga goes on. Are we slowly creeping to a privatised rescue service like in Europe with the need for insurance to cover costs?

Welcome back to the committee Mel and welcome to Jac, our new press secretary.

Lastly, thanks to Bill Dryburgh and Janet Coull, our retiring committee members for their work over the last few years with club organisation.

I hope you like the new programme for the year ahead. It is available on the web site and printed meet calendars will be available soon.

Have a good summer's walking wherever you go.
Colin
President

Girds championships 2011

The annual gird championship took place before the open meeting on Monday 9th May. 17 members attended with 15 taking part. The race was based on an out-the-hat random draw. Each heat consisted of the best of 3 races over a 40m course. The final was a family affair. Linda beating Colin 2-1 in the final.

Mountain Mind Quiz 2011

This annual quiz among the mountaineering clubs in Tayside took place in the Queen's Hotel, Dundee on Wednesday March. As usual the club was represented. Our first team (Colin, John D and Brian) narrowly avoided the final yet again. But it was our reluctant second team (Janet, Linda, Willie M) which starred on the night by winning the veritable Boot award for their gallant performance. Each of them will proudly display the Boot on their mantelpiece for 4 months.

New Munroist

Alec Smith became the club's latest munroist on Sunday 1st May 2011 when he completed on Sgurr nan Gillean, while on the club's Skye weekend. He certainly picked a superb day. Well done Alec. He was presented with his gift from the club (an engraved tankard) at the club meeting on Monday 6th June (Montrose Basin). The club's Munro "scroll of honour" is currently being updated.

Here is a photo of Alec with Sgurr nan Gillean in the background after returning from the hill.



Montrose to Morar

David Sinclair's latest long distance walk started on 16th July. David and friend Neil are walking across the fat part of Scotland over a 15 day period. They are walking on behalf of "The Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland". If you would like to sponsor them, you can do so online at www.justgiving.com/montrosetomorar, where their route and itinerary are described. David has given presentations to the club on his previous long distance walks (2008 - GR11 Pyrenees and 2009 - Oban to Cape Wrath).

Photographic Competition 2011

The club's annual photographic competition was held after the open meeting on Monday January 31st 2011. The judge, once again, was Graham Wilkinson, president of Carnoustie Camera Club. Graham was very impressed by the standard. A total of 34 entries were received from 7 members. The competition was won by Carolyn Smith with her "South Uist from Oligarry, Barra", shown below.

You can see all the entries on the club web site. www.fdhwc.org.uk/photos.aspx



Mountain Mind Quiz changes

This quiz takes place annually amongst the mountaineering clubs in Tayside for over 30 years. It became a tradition that the winning club organised the quiz for the following year. In 2010, this was changed to the club that finished second. However, over the years, the quiz was mainly won by only 2 clubs (Perth Mountaineering Club and the Grampian Club). Other clubs have won occasionally, including our own club who won back in the late 1980s. A proposal was accepted to move to a rota system. Our committee was in favour of the new system. The rota for the next 6 years is :-

2012	Dundee MC
2013	Ancrum MC
2014	Carn Dearg MC
2015	Forfar & District HWC
2016	Perth MC
2017	Breadalbane Rock & Ice
2018	Grampian Club

So the committee of 2014-2015 will have to organise the quiz.

Incident of the year 2010-2011

The 'Far I wi Noo' plaque was awarded to Alec Smith for his impressive vertical dancing (or dangling) on the Inaccessible Pinnacle in June 2010.

Open Meetings Jan-June 2011

January – Our planned speaker was unable to attend, so Colin repeated his presentation on his 1992 ascent of Mount Fuji, by digging out old 35mm slides.

February – Our annual photographic competition. See separate report.

March – the "shipping forecast" presentation was postponed due to lack of time following the AGM, but is scheduled to go ahead in the new programme.

April – David Sinclair returned to give us an illustrated talk on his epic 28 day walk undertaken in the summer of 2009 from Oban to Cape Wrath, involving Corbetts, river crossings, midges, clegs, ticks, whisky and the occasional good day thrown in.

May – Our annual gird championships. See separate report.

June – a good turnout for an evening stroll with bird watching at The Lurgies, Montrose Basin.

New Year Meet 2011

This went to Little Glen Shee, near Bankfoot, a new area for the club. During the walk we came across a strange obelisk on Craig Gibbon. Linda Sinclair's friend at Perth Library researched this for us and information will be published in the next newsletter.

Weekend Meets

Autumn 2011

September	Lake District
October	Glen Clova (social weekend)
November	Glen Coe

The booking form will be available soon on the web site.

Trig Point repainted

A party of 4 repainted this on Sunday 12th June. The club adopted the trig point on the rather remote Corbett, Ben Vuirich (903m), when the OS ran its "Adopt a Trig Point" scheme. Our first choice, "The Crannel", near Edzell was rejected by the landowner. We have been 4 times to paint our trig point. The last visit was on a cold windy day (Sunday 11 November 2007). Previous visits were Sunday 7th December 2003 (a superb temperature inversion), sometime in 1998 by Jim Nicol, and Sunday 9th January 1994 (a High Tea meet). Photos can be found on the club website.

Memories of Ben Sgulaire

By Colin Sinclair

Two recent events stirred memories of previous club meets on Ben Sgulaire. These events were the Angus Glens Walking Festival and our recent weekend meet to Oban.

While guiding on the Angus Glens Walking Festival, I got chatting to Andy Ruxton, a farming neighbour of our secretary. It transpires that his aunt and uncle were members of the club. They were Winnie and Davie Reid, who like Willie and Sheila Simpson, did all their Munros together. The March weekend meet in 1983 was to the MC of S McIntyre Hut at Onich. The winter of 1983 saw huge dumps of snow on the hills. On Saturday 19th March, all the club party climbed Ben Sgulaire on a perfect winter's day – snow everywhere and clear blue skies with no wind. Winnie and Davie completed together that day on a snowy summit. Their names are recorded on the club's Munro scroll of honour.

My 2nd memory of Ben Sgulaire was a club weekend to Appin in March 1999, staying at a cottage owned by a friend of the then president Jim Nicol. Saturday 20th started grey and calm, but bad weather was forecast – wind and rain. A small group set off up Ben Sgulaire to be confronted by horrendous gales. It is the only time that I've been physically lifted off the ground by the wind and dumped several metres away – a frightening experience. Another memory of that day was Nan's sac being ripped open; her piece-box fell out scattering orange segments everywhere and disappeared over the side. We actually crawled to the top that day on hands and knees. A horrible day at the time, but quickly forgotten about in the pub at night.

Luckily my 3rd visit to the hill was with Linda, David and some friends on a beautiful spring day in May 2001. So I can certainly have say that I've sampled that hill in all conditions.

Famous Climbing Quotes

collated by Ray Campbell

Here are a few quotes to inspire or amuse those of us who enjoy our time in the hills.

- *"The secret of reaping the greatest fruitfulness and the greatest enjoyment from life is to live dangerously."*
Friedrich Nietzsche
- *"To those who have struggled with them, the mountains reveal beauties that they will not disclose to those who make no effort. That is the reward the mountains give to effort. And it is because they have so much to give and give it so lavishly to those who will wrestle with them that men love the mountains and go back to them again and again. The mountains reserve their choice gifts for those who stand upon their summits."*
Sir Francis Younghusband
- *"Climb if you will, but remember that courage and strength are naught without prudence, and that a momentary negligence may destroy the happiness of a lifetime. Do nothing in haste; look well to each step; and from the beginning think what may be the end."*
Edward Whymper, Matterhorn 1861
- *"Pissing through 6 inches of clothes with a 3 inch penis !"*
Anonymous Everest summiteer when asked what was the hardest thing about climbing Mt Everest.
- *"If you don't let go, you can't fall off!"*
Jerry Moffatt
- *"The best climber in the world is the one who's having the most fun."*
Alex Lowe
- *"Good judgment comes from experience. Experience comes from bad judgment."*
Evan Hardin
- *"In the mountains there are only two grades: You can either do it, or you can't."*
Rusty Baille
- *"You're f***ed, matey"*
Simon Yates to Joe Simpson, but sadly only thought not spoken.
- *"Should I be tied on to this?"*
Anonymous FDHWC member, Inn-Pinn, May 2011.

OOPS!

by an anonymous poet

One May weekend the club adjourned
To Sligachan on Skye,
A jolly number gathered there
Our president for bye.

The Cuillin beckoned, day on day,
The weather was sublime;
For many the ridge explored again
For some tops yet to climb.

Saturday dawned bright and clear
With many routes discussed -
"A round of Coire Lagan"
Voiced the president - "a must!"

For Scott this meant a cracking day,
To climb with two old timers
Who knew the "ropes", were well respected -
Two VERY savvy climbers.

This traverse, as we all know
Requires some knowledge technical -
Sgurr Dearg's beckoning blade awaits:
The INACCESSIBLE PINNACLE!

Our threesome scrambled to the base,
Scott's fears soon cast aside -
The harness on, what could go wrong
With Colin as his guide?

Perhaps the day was going too well
As guide and rope ascended,
Scott stood waiting at the base -
A group of lads befriended.

He watched as Colin nimbly climbed
With progress swiftly made,
As rope uncoiled upon the ground
Scott's mood began to fade.

With furrowed brow, he scratched his head -
The rope was disappearing;
"I'm not tied on" he feebly cried,
His partners out of hearing.

"Please help me guys and tie me on
Before I'm left here hopeless -
My **EXPERT guide** has b***** off
And left me high and (dry) ropeless!"

As Colin belayed on the stance
Dead chuffed to be Scott's guide:
The mist cleared from his fuggy brain -
His error realised.

But lucky Scott, his new-found chums
Whilst stifling their grins,
Secured him tightly to the rope
Aghast at Colin's sins!

The rest they say is history,
Scott made it to the top.
A few choice words and what on earth
Had happened to his prop?

The bar was full of glee that night
With such a comic tale;
I think our Colin supped a few
And took the stick quite well!

P.S. Apologies to poets everywhere.

Addendum.

I would like it to be known that our esteemed president is a highly experienced and well respected walker and climber and has successfully guided many friends on the Cuillin. This recent incident was totally out of character and was caused by a lapse in concentration due to too much sun (not common.) He was obviously enjoying himself and totally inebriated by his surroundings and company on the day. However, if anyone is keen to climb the Inaccessible Pinnacle or any of the Cuillin there are any number of experienced mountain guides available on Skye.

HAPPY WALKING!

The Witches' Walk.

By the witches

Thanks to Lunar Linda who expressed a desire to retrace a previously enjoyable Duke of Edinburgh walk minus the responsibility of looking after other peoples' weans, fellow walkers Magic Mel and Carlin Carolyn decided to join LL and have an adventure.

With broomsticks packed we arrived at Blair Atholl campsite on Thursday 12th May despite a dire weather forecast for the weekend. A pleasant meal at Meikleour was digesting merrily as we set up camp for the night. Although it was rather damp, campsite spirits were high in anticipation of our stravaig into the wild lands. As the hallowed day of Friday the 13th dawned the Rookery awoke and the Rooks' chorus began at 4am precisely, shattering our sweet slumbers. Bleary eyed, a cooked breakfast was decided upon to set us up for the day as Carolyn had forgotten her cauldron. No breakfast joy in Blair so we just HAD to go to Casa Bruar for a gut busting brekkie. Eventually we reached Dalwhinnie and posed for our witches' photo, much to the consternation of the passing train driver!



Then began the long trail along Loch Ericht. Very long. Too b****y long. The day culminated with a short, steep slabby scramble. There were short showers all day but spirits remained high. Despite the forecast we even had some sunshine.



We were "over the moon" to reach Ben Alder Cottage, nestling in the beautiful Alder Bay. One room was occupied by 3 wizards from Clydebank leaving us the other room to change and cast our spells in. Tents were pitched, witches brew consumed and "ribena" slugged. LL abandoned the coven and was discovered in the wizards' lair "chatting" about this and that. MM and CC soon joined in the craic beside the roaring stove.



A wild, wet, windy night in the tents followed but Saturday dawned dry and sunny, albeit breezy. After a leisurely breakfast the terrible trio started up the lovely stalkers path to the Bealach Cumhann. There were lots of interesting flowers to see, a merlin (of the flying kind) was

spotted and views opened up all around. After the bealach we followed the pleasant glen down to the head of Loch Ossian stopping for a brew on the rocks next to the fast flowing river. There were great views back to the impressive Bealach Dubh and towards Loch Ossian ahead.



The afternoon brought a few short, sharp wintry showers, but it was not until the track along Loch Ossian that the rain started in earnest. It was so dreich our thoughts turned to the possibility of a night in the youth hostel. We worked our magic and lo and behold three beds were made available for us. It was an interesting place as it's the only eco hostel in the UK complete with "ripe" composting toilets, wind turbines, solar panels and a wood burning stove but unfortunately no running water in the kitchen at that time due to plumbing difficulties. We chatted to most of our fellow hostellers who were an interesting mix, in particular John Martin, a volunteer archivist for SYHA (look out for his new book out soon). There were two choice guests from the up-themselves-know-it-all brigade who almost got turned into toads by LL for a distinct lack of good manners and general social skills. We watched them hop off warty to bed (God bless visualisation!). It was a wet horrible night so we were glad to be inside and we all had a good sleep.



Next day (our last) we had a lovely breakfast of food donated by an enthusiastic band of male yuppies on a bonding (bondage?) weekend – Waitrose bacon butties and real milk in our tea. We made a quick exit from the hostel with the trowel as no one could perform in the retch-inducing composting toilets. (Not to mince words – "Jings, crivvens, help ma boab, they'd gie youse the dry boak, so they wid.") The day was dull but dry as we headed towards Loch Treig on route to the Lairig Leacach. The big disappointment on this right of way, and one which made us very cross, was the unsightly vandalism of a bulldozed track in place of the beautiful stalkers path. This left deep boggy scars on the landscape causing difficult walking conditions. (A report has been sent to Scotways by CC). After a reviving brew at the bothy it was best boot forward over the last kilometres to the end of our expedition.



It was a lovely walk passing the edge of the Grey Corries and out to Corriechoille. However there was an unsettling encounter with a minister at the edge of the forestry plantation. A wooden sculpture has been erected by the local tourist group to watch over hill walkers and climbers and bring them good fortune.



A weird, unsettling figure, but MM soon won him over ...?



LL's silicone implants helped too!!

Over our last brew we used our magic powers to summon the transport home in the form of Colin. (Thanks Colin.)



A good time was had by all and a fish tea in Pitlochry rounded off an excellent adventure. There is no shortage of ideas for the wandering witches' future forays into the wilds of Scotland. A great experience indeed.

Distance walked : Day 1 - 23k, Day 2 - 21k, Day 3 - 18k.

This route followed sections of The Thieves' Road which stretches from Strath Nethy to Fort William. Maps - OS 41/42.





Meet Secretary's Reports **(Christmas 2010-July 2011)**

We've had another mixed bag of attendances and weather over the past six months, but the show goes on. Long-time member Alec Smith completed his Munros during the period, finishing with a flourish with the Aonach Eagach Ridge and three Munros on Skye, the final one being Sgurr nan Gillean. Well done Alec.

27 December 2011 **Tentsmuir**

Appalling road conditions (2 inches of slush), saw 3 members venture to Tentsmuir where they ventured out from the Morton Lochs to the seal colony and then eastwards to perform a loop. However, a retreat had to be made due to active forestry operations. It turned out to be a 14km trek through snow and ice covered forestry tracks.

3 January 2011 **Little Glenshee**

Having ventured out to "Big" Glenshee in December, we followed that up with a Festive meet to Little Glenshee for the first meet of the year. This was an ideal little walk for the time of year given the snowy conditions in an area not visited by the club before, so far as I know. The last section of the minor road to the car park was a bit treacherous with frozen snow and ice and the car park was even worse. However, we made it on to the hill without incident and enjoyed a walk over Creag na Criche (456m) and on to Craig Gibbon (384m) with its interesting and unexplained folly. We completed a circular route by returning via Strathhead and Loch Tullybelton, the total distance being 12 kilometres.

9 January 2011 **High Tea Meet**

For the second year running, the High Tea walk was billed as the Fungle path from Deeside to Glen Esk, but once again exceptional snowfalls made the route potentially difficult. This time, eight hardy souls completed the route, reaching the bus just as daylight was fading. Other groups went for shorter afternoon walks along the River North Esk before we all met up at the Sauchieburn Hotel for our traditional High Tea.

13 February 2011 **Ben Lui**

Only three members turned up in heavy rain and after scaling down their ambitions several times as the weather showed no signs of improving, they eventually ventured out for a short walk in Birnam Wood down the banks of the River Tay.

6 March 2011 **Cairngorms, Northern Corries**

Blue skies and an abundance of snow meant that the walkers were heavily outnumbered by

several thousand skiers on the slopes of Cairn Gorm. Ten members turned out with two taking skis with the intention of crossing the plateau to Ben Macdui. The other eight enjoyed a walk round the rim of the corries from Cairn Gorm to Cairn Lochan with tremendous views in the clear, sunny conditions.

18-20 March 2011 Roy Bridge Weekend

We stayed at the Aite Cruinnichidh Hostel just outside Roy Bridge. We had stayed there previously but the feeling this time was that it was a bit run down and a bit cold. Saturday was cold but dry and seven members headed up the Great Glen to Laggan Locks to climb Meall na Teanga and Sron a Choire Ghairbh. It was bitterly cold at the top and three members climbed Meall na Teanga only while the others went on ahead to quickly claim the other peak. Two other members pursued their latest hobby by claiming another Graham while the final member went skiing. The weather deteriorated on the Sunday and only the most determined Corbett-baggers ventured out in Glen Roy with the rest making tracks for home.

9 April 2011 Corrour

This meet was changed to a Saturday to fit in with the trains from Rannoch Station to Corrour. It was more than a decade since the club had last arranged a meet to this area which is inaccessible by car, and many of the fourteen members and guests who turned out were keen to tick off any remote hills they had not done before. As a result, four different routes were undertaken. A group of three raced up and down Bein na Lap in time to catch the mid-day train in a style which would have put the Inverbrow Grouse Beaters to shame, while another three claimed the other two Munros on the south side of Loch Ossian, namely Sgor Ghaibre and Carn Dearg. A group of five headed for the attractive Corbett of Leum Uilleim while a further two enjoyed a low-level walk along the banks of Loch Ossian before heading south on the Road to the Isles Right of Way.

29 April-2 May 2011 Skye Weekend

The fourteen members who made the journey to Skye for the holiday weekend were rewarded with several days of constant sunshine. Four members who had arranged their own accommodation arrived earlier in the week to take advantage of the settled spell while the ten members who were staying at Sligachan Hostel arrived at various times on Friday. On Saturday, three groups were on various parts of the Cuillin Ridge, the largest group doing the round of Coire Lagan and the Inn-Pinn. Another group of three were on the central and arguably narrowest part of the ridge from Sgur na Bannachdich to Sgur a' Mhadiadh while others climbed Am Basteir and Bruach na Frithe.

A fourth group had a more sedate day in the Quiraing Peninsula in the north-east of the island. On Sunday ten members climbed Sgur nan Gillean to celebrate Alec Smith completing his Munros. Congratulations to Alex. Another two headed for Sgur Dubh Mor and Sgur nan Eag while another two had a day on the island of Raasay. Between the whole group we had managed to climb all the Munros on the Cuillin Ridge over the course of the weekend. Most members headed for home on Monday although four stayed on in Skye for another day as the weather was still exceptionally warm and sunny. One climbed a Corbett, Beinn Loinne in Kintail. News was starting to break about heath fires in the Highlands due to the dry weather and some members stopped to watch a helicopter fire-fighting on the slopes of the Five Sisters of Kintail at Glenshiel. Was this weather a sign of things to come this summer? We could only hope...

15 May 2011 Social Meet - Alyth

The object of this walk was to find the dams created by the beavers which had been released into the wild in this area. With many members having other commitments this weekend, only two people turned up. They found the dams and much more evidence of the presence of beavers in the form of destroyed trees which they described as "vandalism". The reintroduction of animals which were once native to this land is being considered in many areas but is not suitable due to changes in land use over the centuries.

22 May 2011 Spittal of Glenshee

This Meet was actually billed as a through walk on the Gaick Pass to An Dun. However, lack of numbers forced us to cancel the bus and look for an alternative route. As the forecast was not too good, we stayed closer to home and headed for Spittal of Glenshee, parking at the top of the private road to the Dalmunzie Hotel. From there we walked up Glen Lochsie to the Lodge before taking to the slopes of Glas Tulaichean. The intermittent showers of sleet and snow meant that it was too cold to stop at the top so we continued down to the north where we had a bite to eat before climbing back up to Carn an Righ. We then headed east to Loch nan Eun before following the track down Gleann Taitneach back to our starting point. Six members attended this walk.

5 June 2011 Dalwhinnie

Another low turnout for this bike meet where there was the opportunity to claim two remote Munros. The forecast was not too promising and members possibly remembered the very wet bike meet from the previous June. Four members set off down the track alongside Loch

Ericht in cold but clear weather. They did not get very far before one member had gear problems. After a bit of impressive mechanical work by Graham (who says gentlemen farmers don't get their hands dirty?) they got going again and arrived at Culra Bothy not too far behind schedule. The group continued on foot to the impressive-looking Lancet edge. The route up does not disappoint, ending with an enjoyable scramble along a fairly narrow ridge to the summit of Sgurr Iutharn where a well-earned break was enjoyed. A long but fairly easy walk across the plateau took the walkers to the first Munro of the day, Geal Charn. Another easy stroll across the plateau was followed by a short but steep descent to the col - where we met a fine group of Hearts supporters making their way to Corroul - before the gentle climb to the summit of Carn Dearg. From there it was a very short descent to Culra to pick up the bikes for the 15 kilometre cycle back to Dalwhinnie. Full marks to Bill for making it look easy with only one gear left on his bike.

12 June 2011

Social Meet – Ben Vuirich

Four members set off from Loch Moraig to climb Ben Vuirich on a fine day. This was an extremely long walk (22km) for a social meet. The Sandtex was duly applied (2 coats). The group ended up in the Moulin Inn for a pub supper (and beer) where they were joined by 4 other members, some of whom had wandered out to Shinigaig to meet the painting party on their return, but the painting party returned by a different route!

17-19 June 2012

Oban weekend

17 members attended at various points during the weekend. 12 stayed in club-booked accommodation (Oban Backpackers) . 2 stayed in a guest house. 1 in a camper van and 2 on Mull in a B&B.

On Saturday, 12 crossed to Mull. on the 7.30 ferry, and then by pre-arranged taxi to the foot of the hill. They climbed A' Chioch first via Gleann na Beinne Fada (one member climbed Beinn Fhada itself) then along a scrambly ridge to Ben More then down the tourist track to Deisig where the taxis picked up in time for the 5pm ferry back. Two others climbed Ben More by the tourist track. Two groups met up on return. 3 others went to the Beinn Bheithir horseshoe.

On Sunday two groups climbed Ben Sgulaird. A group of 4 climbed the Corbett, Creach Beinn (810m) just south of Beinn Sgulaird. One went bird watching on the Isle of Kerrera. The remaining 3 were in holiday mood.

10 July 2011

Lochearnhead

Ten members attended this, the meet secretary's annual mystery meet. This year it

was the turn of the assistant, Carolyn. It was a mystery to the end with Carolyn handing out maps in the Myre car park. The group set off from the "toilets car park" in Lochearnhead and walked SW then NW into Glen Kendrum. Eight climbed to the summit of Meal nan t'Seallaidh (852m) which offered superb views of Loch Voil. On the ascent our gallant farmer rescued a lamb which was trapped in a small hole under a rock. This group then descended to the bealach and climbed Creag Mac Rainaich (809m), but never caught the other two. Descent was made to Glen Ogle.