



Forfar & District Hill Walking Club

Newsletter 47 July 2016

www.fdhwc.org.uk

President's Column

I am writing this after a very successful and enjoyable weekend meet to Dundonnell, the weather was kind and the hills excellent, a very special area.

The last month has seen some very hot days on the hill, in contrast to the late arrival of winter on the Skye weekend! A common theme of these President's Columns has been the weather and the unseasonable conditions we have to put up with!

It won't have escaped your notice that there has been a change at the top recently with Colin standing down after an incredible 18 years as president (4 year and 14 year stints) I would like to thank him on behalf of the club for his sterling work over the years. The committee is much the same as last year with Willie Mather coming back on board and Neil Sangster being promoted to Meet Secretary.

Next year's meet calendar is now available and I hope there is something there for all tastes I look forward to seeing you all sometime throughout the coming year and whatever hills you decide to walk, I hope you get as much out of them as I do.

Kindest regards
Graham Brown
President

Incident of the Year 2015

Unfortunately Willie Mather was unable to complete a hat trick of victories in this competition, no one came close to emulating the idiocy of Messrs Neil & Conor Sangster and Ms Diane Bryning.

This dynamic threesome decided to attempt 3 Munros from Corrou station, and were guilty of over ambition/gross miscalculation and contrived to miss the train home. A salutary lesson in Munro bagging greed!

Someone will have to do something fairly ridiculous to beat that! Although a story has emerged regarding a club member partaking in some naturist rambling alongside the A835 at the recent Dundonnell meet!

Former President, Colin Sinclair

by Graham Brown

After 4 years at the helm of the club 1992-1996, Colin answered the call to rescue the club from disaster in 2002. Under his careful stewardship the club is restored to the strong position we enjoy today. Colin is known for many things including

1. his love of tablet
2. swimming in cold water (Sinclair's Leap)
3. inelegant cross country ski technique
4. his salsa moves
5. being a canny Fifer
6. impeccable time keeping

Colin has kept this club together for the last 14 years and drove it forward into its healthy position we enjoy today. Mere words cannot express our gratitude for all the hours of effort that he has put in for our benefit. Colin has set a fantastic example and set the standard for us to follow. I can only hope that the new committee and I can conserve Colin's excellent work and continue to preserve the best traditions of Forfar and District Hill Walking Club and move it forward into the future.

On behalf of the club, many thanks, Colin and very best wishes on your retirement from office and from your employment at NCR. We hope you have a great time exploring!

Trophies

There will now be two new trophies to be contested for at the annual photographic competition. Willie Mather has very kindly donated a trophy in memory of Brian Coull which will be for the overall winner and John & Rita Norrie have donated a trophy for the best group of photos entry. Many thanks to you all for your generosity.

The Annual Boules Competition which is contested at the Halloween party will also now have something tangible to play for thanks to the generosity of Colin & Linda Sinclair.

Whitehaugh

by Helen Whamond

At one of last year's meetings, I reported that Helen Whamond had been in touch with me about trying to reach Whitehaugh with a Canadian relative who had connections with our former club hut (which we had from 1970-2002). It had been impossible to reach the cottage from the bridge because the old path is now blocked. Recently, I met Helen on an Angus Glens Walking Festival walk, and persuaded her to write down a few details about the connection. Here they are. Colin

The family who lived at Whitehaugh, emigrated to Canada in the 1930s. Dave Shaw was a shepherd there and his wife was a Whamond, sister to my grandad, one of 13 who were born in Kirriemuir. They had 3 children, Dave, May and a baby Elizabeth when they left Scotland. Unfortunately the mother and baby died shortly after arriving in Canada. The daughter May was brought up by another branch of the Whamond family who had already emigrated to Canada, and her name was changed to Mary as they already had a daughter called May, to save confusion! She was 6 years old then and when she visited Scotland nearly 30 years ago she was able to lead us to the cottage at Whitehaugh as she could remember clearly the track from the road and over the burn. She would have been in her 70s then and brought her son to see the place.

On a recent visit to Scotland Dave's daughter Barbara came to visit me. Once I had made the connection that Whitehaugh was the birthplace of her father I told her I could take her to see the cottage. I could remember clearly the track having visited quite a few times since Mary's trip (though not recently it has to be said!). Sadly we found the track has become completely overgrown with trees and is impassable. I was so determined to find it that after wet muddy feet I remembered the plaque on the door for Forfar and District Hillwalking group, and eventually tracked you down!

The family are all in Alberta now, in Calgary, Big Valley and Red Deer.

Meeting & Events Reports

Monday 10th January

Willie Mather gave a talk on his latest trip to Patagonia with Graham Brown (who was absent and couldn't give his side of the story) There was a large turnout to hear what this popular club member had to say for himself.

Monday 7th February

There were 65 photos submitted by 13 members Annual photographic competition was won by Willie Mather for his picture of Cerro Torre, the best group of 5 was won by Elaine Leong, well done to you both. The judge was Graham Wilkinson of Carnoustie Camera Club, many

thanks again to Graham for his helpful hints and his time and effort which is much appreciated.

Monday 6th March

AGM, Colin's retirement and Graham's promotion. The AGM was followed by a presentation by Mhairi Ferrier, a pupil of Forfar Academy, on a trip to Annapurna, Nepal, she recently made with her school.

Wednesday 6th & Thursday 21st April

We had two abseiling nights at Legaston quarry, expertly led by the Sangster Boys, Neil and Connor. They were both well attended and many thanks to Neil and Connor.

Monday 11th April

Members Night. An enjoyable evening of members photos, maximum of 10 each.

Monday 9th May

Annual Girds and sports. The unstoppable force that is Neil Sangster won the girds again for the fifth year in a row! Well done. The gird race was then followed by a game of rounders expertly umpired by Jerry Husband, otherwise it would have descended into fisticuffs as the game was played in a highly competitive spirit. The following day most of the participants were nursing some sort of sports injury. Note for next year, compulsory warm up / cool down and written rules agreed and understood by both teams.

Sunday 15th May

Hampers and Champers/ It had been 4 years since our first Hampers and Champers. This time, the chosen picnic spot was the open bothy at Loch Wharral. 27 members and 4 guests attended. 18 members elected for a pre-luncheon walk over White Hill and round to Ben Tirran, meeting the others at the hut at 14:15. Many thanks to Carolyn and Aileen, our cooks, and Ali who provided the transport of the goodies. It was a special 86th birthday for Rita Norrie, one of our honorary members. She was given a lift up in a highly decorated Landrover. The bothy was decorated with streamers in her honour, and a clootie dumpling with candles was presented. A highly successful social meet.

Monday 6th June

A great evening's walk up Kinpurney Hill, organised and led by Clare Stewart. A fine summer's evening with good views.

Club News

A warm welcome to the following new members, we hope that you enjoy your time in the club!

Claire Richardson
Adrian Patterson
Sheila Mather
Lee Jamieson

Water of Saughs

by Graham Brown

The June social meet involved a visit to the Shielling of Saughs via the Shank of Donald Young. Now being of a curious nature and an interest in history I decided to find out a bit more about Donald Young and what his shank was doing in the upper reaches of Glen Lethnot. Back in the 17th century there was a band of CATERAN raiders led by a gentleman who revelled in the name of MacGregor the Hawkitt Stirk. Now Mr MacGregor (or Mr H. Stirk, history does not reveal his preference) decided to plunder the bountiful parish of Fern. In Fern there were cattle and maidens a plenty and these love hungry caterans were looking for both. Now, the men of Fern don't like anybody plundering their livestock (or their womenfolk) apart from themselves and were most displeased with these events, so the rosy cheeked yeomen of Fern gave chase.

The CATERAN raiders were pursued over the hill into Glen Lethnot and up the water of Saughs and a savage battle followed which left all the raiders dead. Legend has it, that one Donald Young had been mortally wounded through his leg and crawled up onto a small hill and died. In the early 20th century some human bones were found in the burn at the bottom of the Shank of Donald Young, which gives credence to this story.

I also unearthed this poem about the Battle of Saughs

"Raid of Fearn"

By

Alexander Laing.

*Calm was the morn, and close the mist,
Hung o'er St. Arnold's Seat,
As Fearn's sons gaed out to Saughs
McGregor there to meet,*

*Lang time they faucht in doubtfu' strife,
Till Peathaugh, stealthfully,
Hamstrung McGregor unawares,
And drave him on his knee.*

*Thus on his knees, or on his stumps,
He hash'd and smash'd around;
But Ledenhendry pierce'd him through,
And laid him on the ground.*

*So ceas'd the strife, and a' was still,
And silent in the glen,
Save glaid and corbies i' the air,
That hover'd o'er the slain.*

*Whase mangled bodies i' their gore,
Lay reekin' o'er the green;
A sight o'er sick'nin' for the saul,
O'er painfu for the een.*

Previous Dundonnell Visits

by Colin Sinclair

At the recent (June) weekend meet to Dundonnell, there was much discussion about previous weekend meets there, and epic stories of various walks – on the great hills in that area. There have been 7 weekend meets there. Here are some details.

30 April- 3 May 1993

The club's first use of Sail Mhor. Unfortunately, the newsletter doesn't have the meet report. I remember sharing it with some divers, so we couldn't have booked the whole bunkhouse.

29 April- 2 May 1994

From Newsletter 5: The May weekend meet was to Dundonnell for the second year running. There were 22 members in all, mostly staying in the Sail Mhor Croft. A good number of Munros and several Corbetts were climbed. Ice axes and crampons were needed for most hills. The weather on Sunday was fantastic.

30 April – 3 May 1999

No meet report, but I think this was the weekend of the frayed tow rope and the bum-pushing of the ladies on the bad step on An Teallach.

13-15 September 2002

Boiling hot weekend. Ran out of water on An Teallach traverse. On descent, drank the first burn dry!

23-25 June 2006

Scott & Steve drove off with Mel's car keys on the Sunday! Just managed to get in touch with them at Braemore junction.

From newsletter 27 :17 attended. 16 stayed at Sail Mhor Bunkhouse. Weather : showery on Saturday morning, rest of weekend fine. High tops occasionally covered on Saturday, clear on Sunday.

Friday: One on the Fannaichs - A Chailleach (997m) & Sgurr Breac (999m).

Saturday: Six on the Beinn Dearg "round of 4 Munros", one on the Fannaichs (Meal a Chrasgaidh (934m), Sgurr nan Clach Geala (1093m), Sgurr nan Each (923m), two on An Teallach ridge, three to climb Beinn a Chlaideimh (916m) in Fisherfied, Two on a remote Corbett, Creag Rainnich (807m). Three on the spectacular Corbett near Shenaval, Beinn Dearg Mor (909m) – very protected, steep and a 12 hour jaunt.

Sunday : Seven decided not to walk. Two went north to Suilven, One on the Fannaichs - A Chailleach (997m) & Sgurr Breac (999m). Two on An Teallach from the Hotel, five on Little Wyvis (764m), where a family of ptarmigan were spotted, the first for the survey.

24-26 September 2010

From Newsletter 36: A late flurry of bookings resulted in all 16 places at the Sail Mhor Hostel being taken (13 members and 3 guests). Saturday saw the majority heading for the iconic An Teallach ridge on a cold but clear day.

Others headed for the Fannaichs and to other less well-known (to the Meet secretary at least) Grahams in the area. The Dundonnell Hotel was the scene for a good meal and a few beers that night. After a frosty night, a beautiful clear sunrise welcomed the party with the low sun shining the length of Little Loch Broom. It was a day of cloudless skies, if a little cold in the northerly breeze. Most walkers headed for home, some stopping off to climb Eididh na Clach Geala in the Ben Dearg group, and some on the Corbett, Beinn Liath Mhor a' Ghuibhais Li near Altguish. Three stayed another night at Sail Mhor, spending Sunday again on the Fannaichs and Graham-bagging near Braemore, while another two walked into Shenavall with a new broom (long story) and stayed overnight. Monday was another day of splendid sunshine which provided a third consecutive day of memorable hillwalking in the area for the remaining five before finally heading for home.

24-26 June 2016

Just been. Surprised it took us almost 6 years to get back to this wonderful spot. See meet reports.

Tony Smith – Marlyner no. 6

by Colin Sinclair

The long May weekend of 2005 was to the Blackwater Hostel in Kinlochleven. There we were joined by a guest from Montrose's Black Dog club, by the name of Tony Smith. On the Sunday, Tony accompanied me to Glas Bheinn, a Corbett above Loch Eilde Mor. While on the summit, he suggested that we take in a smaller bump somewhere to the north east – either Beinn na Cloiche (644m) or Meall a Bhainne (633m). I can't remember which one, but the latter, I think. I asked why and he told me it was a Marilyn that he hadn't climbed yet. So I set off with him. For me, it was the first time to deliberately climb a Marilyn. I remember the way back along the side of Blackwater Reservoir being hellish – deep peat hags and several big river crossings.

Anyway on the first day of my retirement (June 1st 2016), Jerry Husband invited me to Forfar Golf Club to play in a seniors' tournament. To my surprise, one of the pair we were playing with was Tony Smith. When asked about his progress on Marilyn bagging, he explained that he'd just recently completed all of them in May on Ben Stack, to become only the 6th person to do so. The term appears to be "Marlyner". Tony sent me the following information regarding his exploits. The video of the climbing of Stac Lee is really worth watching.

From Tony

The "Relative Hills of Britain" original website is www.rhb.org.uk. At its recent AGM, it was announced that, in view of the retirement of the

original editor(s), in future the society would become The Relative Hills Society and a new site is underway at www.rhsoc.uk. A quite separate site (probably already familiar to you) www.hill-bagging.co.uk and the background database are used by the group as a source of up to date hill data (and who has done what).

Anyone who has done over 600 Marilyns is entitled to be registered in MARHOF (Marilyn Hall of Fame) which is updated annually and currently on both sites.

Personally I became specifically interested in Marilyns in 2003 (after completing the Munros in 2001) although by then I had already climbed around 350 of the list (200 of the Munros count for a start). My first was actually in Yorkshire in 1966 - on the day a new stamp was issued to commemorate a certain England footballing triumph, if I dare mention that. Since then I have managed an average of close to 100 per year (living in Scotland, 1218 Marilyns, and retirement help!) except for the hiatus associated with a broken leg.

Most (but definitely not all) of the hills are reasonably straightforward although there's a lot of travelling to otherwise unvisited places between Cornwall and Shetland and some challenging access issues (private estates, military ranges and uninhabited islands) to overcome. I reckon my round involved 7500 miles of walking and close to 700,000m ascent, in other words equivalent to between 3 and 4 Munro rounds. I could also mention 130 ferries, 34 legs by charter boat, flights to and from Fair Isle and Foula and well over 100,000 miles in several cars (who said walking was green?). I completed on Ben Stack on 14th May this year, thus becoming the sixth person, and the first resident of Scotland, on the list.

The crux of the round is St Kilda and specifically the two sea stacs, Stac an Armin and Stac Lee. These were first summited by Marilyners in October 2014 and by a second group, of which I was part, in October 2015. I'm not a climber but the stacs didn't seem particularly technically difficult. The issues are weather, sea swell for landing and birds (no access in breeding season and ever present guano). Basically we got very lucky last year! This link should be to a 15min video of Stac Lee if you're interested:-

<https://youtu.be/jyBs5Fbjyxw>

Meet Reports : Jan- July 2016

3rd January – New Year meet

Cancelled due to very poor weather

Sunday 17th January 2016 - High Tea Meet - Traverse of the Angus Glens

By bus, leaving Sauchieburn Hotel at 08:30. 26 on the bus to the top of Glen Moy. 23 members took a high level route via Shank Hill, Rough Craig, Hill of Glansie (highest point, 726m), Mount Sned, Hill of Garbet, Laidwinley, Old Man, Craig of Trusta to meet the bus at Afflochie (17km, 600m ascent). The other group of 3 took at lower level route to Shank, Craig Mou, Glen Ogil reservoir, Craig Corrie, to Afflochie. (13km, 430m ascent). A total of 37 members and guests took high tea in Sauchieburn Hotel afterwards, which was delicious, as usual. After the president's ramblings, Carolyn read out two of her poems, one about the president and the other about the Sauchieburn Hotel. Superb.

Sunday 7th February 2016 – Day Meet - Deuchary Hill and Loch Ordie

11 members attended. This was a change of plan from the Crianlarich Hills due to the high winds and snow showers. Instead the group of 11 travelled in 4 cars to Loch of Craiglush. The route took the group up to Mill Dam, then to the top of Deuchary Hill, down to Loch Ordie Lodge for lunch and back by Raor Lodge. 16km. 6 hours out. Weather was mixed but required waterproofs all day. There was a brief glimpse of sunshine on the top (with good views) and also over lunch at Loch Ordie. However, the walk out to the cars was pretty wet with heavy rain. No refreshment stop as all headed home.

19-21 February 2016 - Weekend Meet - Cairngorms

9 members and 1 guest attended. Stayed at Cairngorm Lodge Youth Hostel, Glen More, near Aviemore. Weather was not kind. On Saturday, the group walked into Ryovan bothy then up onto Meall a' Bhuachaille. They were driven back nearer the top due to high winds, poor visibility and spindrift. Sunday saw 3 groups out, 4 (in 2 groups) headed east to the Lecht area. The other 6 did a 10k circular walk from Coylumbridge to Loch an Eilein and back, still in poor weather conditions.

Sunday 13th March – Day Meet - Laggan

11 members turned out for the walk to Beinn Teallach and Beinn a Chaorainn going in an anti-clockwise direction. We had a bit of a slog up to Beinn a Chaorainn in soft snow but the new president took his responsibilities seriously and broke trail. The group descended along the ridge to discover the warm and clear weather had resulted in snow melt and the crossing of the river looked uninviting. A route was found through the forest to join the main road without any difficulties, avoiding a few wet feet.

18-20 March 2016 - Weekend Meet - Great Glen Hostel

9 members attended the weekend, staying in the Great Glen hostel which was a new venue for most and was well received. On Saturday, 7 climbed Gleouraich and Spidean Mialach and were treated to a marvellous cloud inversion. The other 2 members did a 12 mile low level walk.

On Sunday, 4 members returned to Loch Quoich to climb Gairich. The higher tops were now in cloud but Gairich was clear. It was with some reluctance that we left our cars at the dam due to the dodgiest looking blokes possible fishing at the dam and it was a relief to find our cars were still where we had left them when we returned. 2 others opted to climb Meal Chuaich at Drumochter on the way home, one went on a low level walk and one headed home.

Sunday 10th April 2016 - Day Meet - Dalmally

11 members attended. This meet was planned for a bus from Glen Feshie to Linn o'Dee, but was changed to a car meet to a different area because of the weather. The group travelled to Beinn a' Chochuill and Bein Eunaich. Good weather with fresh snow on the ground, but warm sunshine most of the day with any clouds above the tops. Fabulous views of Ben Cruachan. 2 new members were in attendance – Lee Jamieson and Jamie Lockwood.

29th April to 2nd May 2016 - Weekend Meet - Skye

Carbost bunkhouse. 19 members attended, 17 in bunkhouse and 2 in Inn.

Friday: 2 on Beinn Dearg Mhor and 2 on Sgurr na Banachdich, 3 headed to the Fairy pools and 2 went to the Old Man of Storr.

Saturday: Deep soft snow on tops. 5 on Belig (2 carried on to Garb-Bheinn). 2 on ridge with guide Sgurr Bannachdaich, Sgurr a' Ghreadaidh, Sgurr Mhadaidh. Rest walked into Coire Lagan/Coire Grunda without climbing onto ridge.

Sunday: Better weather. 3 on Glamaig & Beinn Dearg Mhor. 1 on Beinn Dearg Mhor. 3 to McLeod's Maidens, 2 on Ridge with guide to Sgurr Alasdair, 8 followed path from Sligathan to Coruisk (turning back on high point), 2 in pub for lunchtime pint.

Monday: 9 in the Talisker distillery for a tour. All headed home in heavy showers with ridge covered with cloud.

Sunday 15th May 2016 – Social Meet - Hampers and Changers, Glen Clova

It had been 4 years since our first Hampers and Changers. This time, the chosen picnic spot was the open bothy at Loch Wharral. 27 members and 4 guests attended. 18 members elected for a pre-luncheon walk over White Hill and round to Ben Tirran, meeting the others at the hut at 14:15. Many thanks to Carolyn and Aileen, our cooks, and Ali who provided the transport of the

goodies. It was a special 86th birthday for Rita Norrie, one of our honorary members. She was given a lift up in a highly decorated Landrover. The bothy was decorated with streamers in her honour, and a clottie dumpling with candles was presented. A highly successful social meet.

Sunday 22nd May 16 – Day Meet – Ben Lawyers area

9 members attended on a fine day with clear views all around for the whole day. We split into two groups with 4 heading up to do a traverse of the Tarmachan ridge. The other 5 opted to climb Meall Corranaich and Meall a Core Leith. A new member Adrian Patterson opted for the second walk and thoroughly enjoyed the day.

Sunday 12th June 2016 – Day Meet -Fersit

9 members attended. 07:00 from Myre car park by shared car. Meet changed from Cairngorms because of low cloud. Instead, travelled to climb both the Easains at Fersit. Weather dry but cloud over the tops.

Sunday 19th June 2016 – Social Meet Glen Lethnot, Sheiling of Saughs

8 members and 1 guest attended. The route left from Waterhead, Glen Lethnot at 0930. All climbed to the summit of the Shank of Donald Young. 7 continued to the Sheiling of Saugh, the other 2 returning to the cars. 7 members joined Mel/Iain/Briar for a meal at the Panmuir Arms in Edzell afterwards.

24th June to 26th June 2016 Weekend Meet - Dundonnell

14 members attended a meet staying at one of our favourite locations, Sail Mhor bunkhouse. Saturday: 5 on An Teallach, 3 on the Fannaichs, 2 on Beinn Dearg Mhor/Beag, 2 on Meal Airigh Charr, 2 walked into Shenavall.

Sunday: 4 on An Faochagach (including one incident of the year contender), 4 on Sail Mhor, 1 on a low level walk and 5 returned home. Weather: dry on Saturday but cloud drifting out & in of the summits. Sunday had a good start, but wet and cloud by 13:00.

Sunday 10th July – Day Meet – Meet Secretary's Mystery Meet

Still a mystery as the meet was cancelled due to bad weather. Most folk watched Andy Murray win Wimbledon instead.

Angus Glens Walking Festival 2016

This was held on Thursday 2nd to Sunday 5th June. The event is now run by Angus Alive, a trust broken off from Angus Council. Three members (Colin, Janey, Mel) acted as leaders for various walks during the festival. The weather was kind this year. Apparently the walks were 60% full and that guarantees that it will run again in 2017. Colin has already attended a planning meeting for the 2017 festival, where many new ideas and walks were discussed.

Faindouran Bothy

This is a remote MBA bothy well up Glen Avon, under the northern slopes of Beinn a Bhuird. Those members (Linda, Mel, Colin) who have been involved with Gold DoE expeditions in the area have used it over many years. One visit 4 years ago coincided with a MBA work party, who seemed to have more alcohol than work tools with them (and they had vehicle access, so much booze). It was their first night, Friday, and well they got tanked up, so much so, that the kids were ushered away for safety! Next day they set to work (must have been with giant hangovers) to demolish and rebuild the gable wall that included the chimney. A year later the entire gable wall collapsed and Faindouran was out of commission. A recent MBA magazine has reported that the bothy is now open again – presumably a sober work party were sent to rebuild the gable wall again. For those interested, Faindouran can be visited in a day with a mountain bike – it's a 22k trip from Tomintoul into the bothy up the River Avon (and of course a 22k trip back out again).

P.S. The bothy book is interesting. There are obviously many DoE groups pass this way. One group wrote about days of constant rain, and one depressed member of that group added the line "Who the f... is the Duke of Edinburgh anyway?"

Previous Newsletters

All previous newsletters are available online at <http://www.fdhwc.org.uk/newsletters>.