



Question

Do you know who designed the club badge and where did the motto come from? (For answer read on)

Tayside Mountain Rescue

The AGM of the Tayside mountain rescue Association will be held in the Dundee University Tower building on the 15th February 1999 at 7.00pm. Membership is £5 upwards.

Far I Wi Noo?

According to a readers letter in Decembers 'Trail' magazine be careful when buying a new compass. Apparently, when passing the item through a bar code scanner (which contains a strong magnet) it can demagnetize rendering the compass useless.

For Sale

Sleeping Bag 'Freeline Outdoor' 2/3 seasons, very good condition - contact John Norrie.



Welcome to the 14th issue of the Forfar and District Hillwalking Club's Newsletter
Many thanks to all who contributed to this issue.



President's Column

Hello, everyone - Jim here! It's been a long time since I wrote in the newsletter, therefore I should have a lot to say. However, it's a different thing when it comes to putting it in print. Anyway, here goes.

I will begin by thanking those members of the last Committee, namely, Nick Parsons, for all the sterling work he did while he was Secretary and especially for the guidance he gave me personally (I don't mean on the hill); Stuart Fergusson, who, in his years as Meet Secretary, pulled out quite a few stops in arranging transport and planning routes and still managed his porridge before going on the hill; to David Murison who, I know, was intending to relinquish his post at the last A.G.M. - a big thank-you for all the extra miles put in to ensure that the Club Hut was kept in good order and fuel supplies delivered when needed. I'm sure I speak for all of the Members when I say "It's great to see you back at the indoor meets, Dave, and we look forward to your return to the hills".

To the existing Committee Members, I would like to extend my thanks for your efforts in ensuring that the functions and aims of the Club are being met in the majority. I say this advisedly as, over the year, I have had a few letters from members raising points which they feel had to be said regarding the running of the Club and with suggestions for improvement.

Sometimes, I am initially taken aback by some of the comments and feel that some of them are unjustified but, after giving them a good deal of thought, I can see scope for a lot of them. For those who have taken the time to write, I'm sure you will have seen some of your requests and suggestions already in operation and recognise that they are acted upon. The Club can only continue, and improve, with input from the Members and this is not always happening at the indoor meets as there is always a limited turnout. Part of the reason for this may be because the Members are feeling that these evenings are a waste of time as no discussion and participation takes place. This obviously has to be addressed and the meetings should be more informal with everybody getting involved. However, where Members are unable to attend these evenings and wish certain points to be raised, please contact a Member of the Committee to raise the point for you.

If you feel strongly enough about any part of the running of the Club but are reluctant to raise it openly at a meeting, please feel free to contact me either by phone or letter and I assure you it will be acted upon. One other thing I can promise you is that the matter will be attended to but the name of the person who raised it will not be divulged. I have raised various points already at Committee meetings this year and no one knows from whence the suggestions came.



There is an Ordinary Member on the Committee as well but he is ordinary in name only. Roy Rennie has brought a new dimension to the organising of weekend meets and again I'm sure you will join me in saying a big thank-you to Roy. I know he is already well ahead with the booking of accommodation for next winter and it would be so easy to take all this for granted when we go off on weekends. One thing that does show is the excellent turnout for the majority of weekends and this also provides a pointer to what the members want from the Club.

To all the new Members who have joined us recently, I am delighted to welcome you to the Club and look forward to meeting you on the hill. It's always encouraging to see new faces, especially if they come back again, and they will, provided we maintain all the levels of walking/climbing which have always been associated with the F&D.H.W.C.

We have some exciting meetings for the coming year and also some excellent Speakers at the evening meets and, of course, High Tea on the 10th January when I hope to meet you all.

If you managed to get this length, all that remains for me to say is a very Merry Christmas and a Happy 1999 with lots of good walks with good company.
Jim Nicol.

Meet Secretary

Bennachie High Tea Meet This takes place on 10th January. Meet in the Myre car park at 9am. We'll share cars if possible. For those not walking, the high tea will be served in the Sauchieburn Hotel at 5pm. Cost £6.50. The hotel is situated on the B974 about 2km north of the A90 (Refer to the map, below).

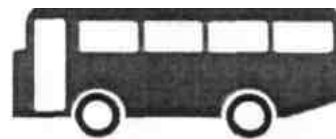


Names for high tea to Colin or John as soon as possible.

Festive Meets. As usual, there will be a couple of unofficial meets during the Festive period. These are usually very local. It all depends on the weather, but probable dates are Sunday 27th December and Sunday 3rd January. It's a good chance to use up the turkey on sandwiches and to show off the trendy gear that Santa brought you! Keep in touch with your meet secretaries, Colin and John.

Day Meet Attendances

March (Lochearnhead) 17
April (Ben Lui) 7
May (Ben Lomond) 27
June (Larig & Laoigh) 16
July (Blair Atholl) 3



August (Arrochar) 17
Sept (Creag Meagaidh) 19
October (Glen Coe) 11
November (Schiehallion) 25
December (Glen Clova) 21

Weekend Meet Attendances

March (Roybridge) 10
May (Rum) 20
June (Skye) 25
September (Galloways) 14
October (Torridon) 14

FDHWC Weekend Meets 1999 (Courtesy of Roy Rennie)

Appin

When: Friday 19th, Saturday 20th and Sunday 21st March 1999.

Which Nights: 2 nights (Friday and Saturday)

Where: The club has booked a converted croft called "Dalnatrat" which can be found on most large scale maps. It is situated on the Ballachulish to Oban road.

Accommodation: There are beds for at least 10 persons, with floor space for at least another 4. Please refer to the attached info sheet which provides information on facilities plus a list of chores to be conducted on arrival and departure. Status: Anyone interested in this meet should contact Roy Rennie as soon as possible as there are only a few places left.



Dundonnell

When: Friday 30th April, Saturday 1st, 2nd and 3rd May 1999.

Which Nights: 3 nights (Friday, Saturday and Sunday) **Where:** The Sail Mhor Croft Hostel, situated in Camusnagail approximately 2 miles WNW of Dundonnell. Entrance to the hostel is from the right hand side of the building (if you walk in the front door you will have just entered the owners house).

Accommodation: There is central heating, showers, a lounge, drying room, cookers, cutlery, crockery etc.

Status: Any member wishing to pay a deposit to book a place should do so ASAP as Roy says he is almost fully booked. Also members still to pay a deposit for this meet should do so now or risk losing their place.

Arran

When: Friday 18th, Saturday 19th, and possibly the 20th June 1999.

Which Nights: 2 or 3 nights (Friday, Saturday and possibly Sunday)

Where: As reported in the last newsletter Roy has booked the private bunkhouse in the village of Corrie for the Friday and Saturday nights with an option for the Sunday night. The proposal, adopted at the last committee meeting is to travel by cars to Ardrossan (cars may be left in a secure compound over the weekend) take the 8.30am ferry to Brodick and then use public transport from Brodick to Corrie.

Accommodation: An information sheet is included along with the newsletter.

Status: The committee have decided to charge members a deposit of £10 for 2 nights and £15 for 3 nights for the bunkhouse. Roy would like the deposits paid before the AGM in March. Any members with views or ideas with respect to the Arran trip contact a member of the committee.

Skye

When: Friday 22nd, Saturday 23rd, and Sunday 24th October 1999.

Which Nights: 3 nights (Friday, Saturday and Sunday) **Where:** The Skywalker Independent Hostel at the old school in Portnalong.

Accommodation: 1 room with 6 bunks, 1 room with 4 bunks and 1 room with 2 bunks.

Status: Names with a £10 deposit can be given to Roy from now onwards.

There are still a number of club members endangering other persons eyes because they have no plugs/protectors on the end of their axes.

Suggest that the Meet secretary purchase a couple of dozen plugs and sell them to guilty at a fiver a piece. Anon.

It won't happen to me (by Allan Coutts)

Have you ever read those mountain rescue stories in the papers or listened and watched the reports on the news of some foolish soul who required to be rescued after getting lost and spending the night stuck on the hill and thought to yourself "that would not happen to me", well hopefully not.

The most common cause of accidents are slips or a trip. In

Footnote

As a result of the heavy financial loss sustained at the Galloway weekend, the committee has decided that names will only be accepted for weekend meets provided they are accompanied with the required deposit.

Summit of Ben Aligin



Suggestion Box

Winter has arrived and the ice axes are coming out of cupboards, but where are the plugs that should be covering the spikes?

many instances, this is associated with inadequate footwear, such as wellies, flat soled fashion boots or trainers. Every one who has been up the tourist path on the Ben would have seen examples of this. Navigational errors are also common and contribute as a single or multiple factor of incidents. Statistics

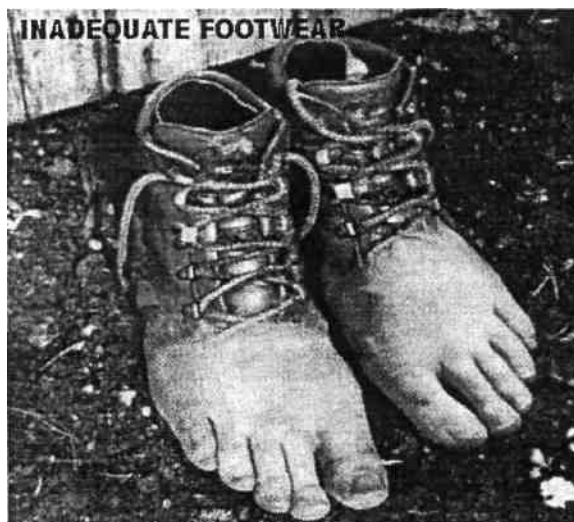


show that technical climbing and belay failures are uncommon, that is not a very comforting thought for me, which will become clear once you have read this story.

I've been involved a number of times in minor incidents when the casualty has needed a bit of first aid or a bit of help in getting off the hill. A few years ago I spent a night on the Mamores with a group when one member's crampon broke and he slid down the slope and careered into rocks and suffered concussion and a badly cut head. The outcome was that he was airlifted off in the morning by the RAF and taken to Bellford hospital in Fort William. I'm glad to say he made a full recovery. Anybody who spends a lot of time in the hills walking and climbing all year round must accept that there are risks involved. Fortunately fatalities from mountaineering in Scotland are low compared to high altitude Himalayan climbing, but the risks are always present. The idea is to minimise the risks by wearing the proper clothing and using the appropriate equipment for the activity and weather. Go with a club and learn from the experienced members or attend a course and learn the new skills from an experienced instructor before attempting anything new yourself. There is a saying that you learn by your mistakes and it's also true that experience is gained by numerous close calls and incidents.

The beginning of this year I was looking forward to a good winter, loads of skiing and winter mountaineering, I had just bought myself some new telemark skiing equipment. The winter started off all right, skiing

twice at Aonach Mor and once at Glenshee, Snow and Ice climbing in Glencoe and a couple of winter Munros ticked off. In February I had a few days winter climbing planned. We had a day doing skills on Aonach Mor then the next day had a wet day in Glencoe, where we retreated off a climb, then we decided to travel to the Cairngorms and the Northern Corries as the forecast looked



better.

The conditions on the day looked good, the walk into Core an t-Sneachda I enjoyed and was looking forward to a good day. I was in a group of three and we selected a climb, Mirror Direct Grade IV. The Corrie was busy, climbers could be seen on most of the routes, people like us hoping to make the most of the cold and dry weather. The first pitch was a steep snow slope and my partner belayed at the top below the next pitch, which was a steep grade IV ice pitch. At the belay I had a good look and decided to take the lead and set off. I proceeded to

climb, front pointing and using my two axes to gain height and managed to place two ice screws as I got further from the belay. The ice was vertical, harder than I had expected and I realised I was somewhere I shouldn't have been. I was now thirty foot above the belay and tiring rapidly, and about ten foot above my last ice screw and my confidence was disappearing quicker than a rat up a drain

pipe. Another ice screw was required rapidly but with the strength draining quickly from my arms and the quality of ice less than perfect, it was proving to be a fruitless exercise. Then it happened, my axes pulled out of their placements and gravity took over. As I fell passed my last ice screw protection my

crampon front points both caught on an ice bulge and a sharp pain was felt in both ankles. Catching my crampons resulted in me being flipped upside down. I was then held on the rope by my belayer and the ice screw and I came to rest upside down about fifteen foot from where I came off, lying on my back with two useless legs sticking in the air knowing I was not going to be going anywhere quick.

Once the belayer and my other friend realised what had happened they proceeded to lower me down to the corrie floor with me sliding down the steep snow slope on my behind trying to keep my feet clear,



every time they caught, sharp pains shot up my legs. After about three hundred foot the corrie floor was reached. Those who have been to Coirre an t-Sneachda might have seen the mountain rescue box next to the large toblerone stone, so if I had to fall off anywhere I had picked the best place, maybe it was my lucky day. My friends got me on the Macinnes stretcher, splinted my legs and put me in a cas bag to keep me warm and waited till our other friends came down off their climbs to assist in carrying me back to the Coire Cas car park at the ski slopes. Once at the car park I was lifted in to a car and driven to hospital. I spent five days in Raigmore hospital in Inverness. The damage was a badly broken Tibia on the right leg and a broken Talus, the big bone in my left ankle. I spent six weeks in a wheel chair and then a few months on crutches. After three months the doctors replaced the plaster cast on my right leg with a metal frame to align the break properly. The frame came off after a further three months and now I am busy trying to regain fitness after eight months of inactivity. I've been back up Glen Clova a couple of times now and had a few days rock climbing. In the New Year I am about to embark on a new career. Always being the optimist, I wasn't inactive mentally all those months and I have taken over a business called Tayside Hill-tours, some of you will know it and know the old owner Gordon Snedden. I will be leading guided hillwalks next year and teaching a bit of climbing and abseiling. I will

be intending to take clients starting in the new year and will be available for anybody wishing to learn the winter skills for winter walking or just a refresher on old skills. Transport and all equipment supplied. I am fully qualified and insured to teach winter skills and promise not to go on any steep ice slopes. You will not find anyone cheaper. Minimum size of group is two so if you have not been put off by this story and are interested call me on 01307 465376, or Email hilltours@sol.co.uk. As I said, we always think it happens to someone else but we all make mistakes, some we walk



away from, some we need to be carried away from. There is always something to be learnt from our mistakes, maybe somebody is telling me I'm not twenty any more. While I was sitting in the stretcher in the corrie my friends saw a climber take a fifty foot fall from another climb, he was unhurt and brushed himself off and carried on to finish the climb. Hope you all have a good year in 1999 and manage those routes you have been studying while hunched over a map on the kitchen table on a wet, cold, dark winter's night. Take care and I look forward to seeing you on the hill and at future club meets.

Allan Coutts

The Prodigal Axe

In the winter of 1963 two members from a 'nearby' Mountaineering Club decided to be-night themselves while on a long climb on Ben Nevis. They thought it safer to do this rather than continue to climb. Unfortunately their predicament got to the ears of the press and a full-scale media onslaught and subsequent rescue was launched. After the rescue one of the grateful men handed his ice axe to one of the rescue team as a token of thanks. They remain good friends to this day. As time went on the axe saw a fair degree of use, being used by members of our club for a period of twenty years or so. Many years later, while retreating of the hill on a typical wet day in Skye, the axe became a topic of conversation and it was decided that, if it could be located, the axe would be duly handed back to its original owner. The axe was subsequently retrieved, but it had been converted from a 60's traditional shape, to a modern version, with a short shaft and a curved pick. However the intrepid ex-rescuer had luckily purchased a 60's style axe at a local rroup for the princely sum of £2 and set about replacing the traditional shaft and carefully forging the curved pick to a straight shape. And so the restored axe was proudly handed back to its original owner thirty-one years later for the price of a good many drams.

Anon.



Answers to Question on page 1

The badge was thought out by Jim Nicol (president) around 1967/68. It was the centrepiece of a shield presented to the late Reg Fawcett for telling the most lies (ghosters) on club meets. The motto was simply the question asked automatically by certain members i.e. Sandy Gourlay, Gibb Wilkie whenever the party stopped, be it at the top of the hill or not.

From the Archives

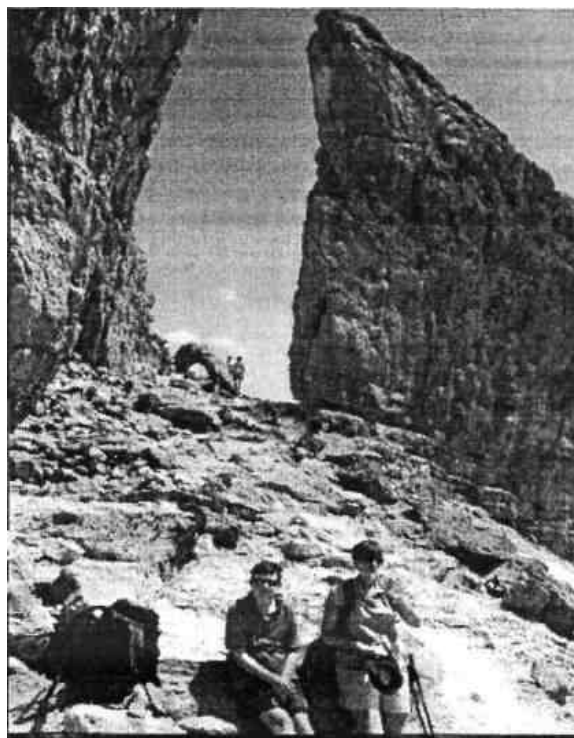
Taken from an article called "The Heart of the Braes of Angus" (from 1944). A steep ridge known as the Snub separates Loch Brandy from the Corrie of Clova. This corrie is finer than either Brandy or Wharral, although it contains no loch, the smooth floor merely accentuating the steep, rough walls, which almost completely enclose it. There is one smooth, grassy exit up a sharp slope to Ben Reid, up which one may walk without difficulty. Once the climb has been made, the ground is reasonably level, and long walks can be made over excellent ground without undue exertion. It is an exhilarating experience to stride along, apparently on the roof of the world, mile after mile, without the exertion of climbing. It was on a part of these smooth uplands, known locally as the Billiard Table, that games were held each year within living memory Unfortunately the old custom has been allowed to lapse, although nobody seems to know the reason why.

3000 of the Bigger Kind

France, early July 98. "Allez! Allez! les Bleus". Here we are in the French Pyrenees just 2 days after France have won the World Cup. The country is still buzzing with the chants of "Les Champions". Our two Vangos are pitched in a campsite almost in the heart of the picturesque town of Luz St. Saveur, 700m up in the Pyrenees, about 50km south of Lourdes. It's hot! very hot! 35°+ There is a wee tree for shade - but only for one at a time. We set off at 8.30 am, driving up through the narrow gorge to Gavarnie (1425m) - very pretty (and interesting when the driver takes his eyes off the road!). On the previous day, we'd been up here to join the hordes walking the smelly (horse poo) 5km trek into the famous Cirque de Gavarnie, an impressive amphitheatre of rock and snow reaching 1300m into the sky. We could start walking from here but David forces us up the ski road to the Col de Lents at 2208m.

It's busy - the big car park is almost full at 9.30am. The sun is already high - another beautiful roasting day in prospect. We walk up the abandoned road (because of rock falls) to the Spanish border at Port de Bouchara (2270m). Here the road stops. Looking down into Spain, there is a good footpath through beautiful unspoiled

wilderness. On the French side we look down to Gavarnie 800m below. The country side is scarred with unnecessary ski roads. What a contrast.



There's a good path striking out east below the north face of Le Tallion, our target for the day. It looks very snowy up there! We're not kitted out for winter conditions! The path is rocky and it's below the snow line. Where the icy cold burns sweep off the mountainside, there are lush green patches of grass covered in the deep blue of gentians. The occasional sheep is heard, rather than seen by its jingling bell. After an hour or so, the path swings south and climbs through the snow over a waterfall. A short sharp climb and we're over into another valley and arrive at a mountain hut, the Refuge des Sarradets at 2687m. It's busy. It resembles a ski resort.

December 1998



There's a queue for the loo. Linda waits, David and I set off and colour the snow yellow further up. There are big snowfields which are very easy. It's so hot, even at this time, that the snow is slushy and a deep trench is followed. We head for a gap in the border ridge called La Breche de Roland (2807m). Legend has it that the Breche was cut by Roland when chased to the border by the Muslims when they occupied Spain. Although cornered with his army, he vowed that they would not take his sword. He turned to break his sword on the rock and found he had cut a way through for his army to escape. The Breche is busy. It's the goal for many walking from Gavarnie who have climbed almost 1400m to reach here (Ben Nevis!) The border ridge here consists of a very narrow rock spine with 100m cliffs on all sides. It's crumbling and will eventually all fall in. We head west on the Spanish side of the border keeping high up below the vertical rock band. The views south are different. The Pyrenees not only form a border between two countries, they form a boundary between two weather systems. To the north is France, with its cool moist air from the Atlantic and so the countryside is very green. To the south is Spain with its almost African weather system, its much drier and that shows because the countryside is almost desert-like. We see a Hoopoe, our first ever sighting of this rare bird. Unfortunately it doesn't stay in sight for long. After ½km, we climb back to the crest of the ridge to a pinnacle called "Le doigt de la fausse

breche" (2925m). There's a sling on top so obviously some purist has been over it. We looking north down huge snowfields into a hanging corrie protected by massive cliffs below. The rock is loose. This resembles a slag heap.

We start off up the final climb to the summit of Le Tallion. The ridge is clear of snow but what is this approaching us. My god, these people have on big jackets, gloves, hats. We're in



shorts and T-shirts. It must be cold up there! We carry on climbing through different coloured rock bands, grey and red. The folds of rock are clearly seen. We reach the summit of Le Tallion (3114m). Again it's busy. It's like Ben Lomond on a summer's day. There are French and Spanish walkers. There is no high level road on the Spanish side, so they've had to climb almost 2000m from the valleys to reach here. A cheery group of Spanish Scouts (boys and girls) are clicking away. We sit down (still in T-shirts and shorts) and admire the views. To the west is the peak of Vignemale with its big glacier. To the north are the green lands of France. It looks cloudy out on the plains. To the south are the barren

rolling hills of Spain. We can just see the edge of the Ordesa Gorge. (One of the recent Wilderness Walks series featured Cameron McNeish and Nicholas Crane climbing from Ga-varnie to the Breche de Roland, then dropping into the Ordesa Gorge.) To the east is the Cirque de Gavarnie with its 423m waterfall. Beyond that Monte Perdido in Spain shows. We get a couple of Spaniards to take our photo. We're

reluctant to leave but it's late in the afternoon now and we've been warned of the fearsome afternoon thunderstorms that develop quickly on the ridges. We set off down to the Breche and are passed by the column of singing Spanish scouts. The descent from the Breche is easy. A few glistades are possible. The descent from the Refuge des Sarradets is more problematical because the snow bridges over the waterfall had collapsed so it is now a matter of finding any dry route possible.

We were back at the car at 6pm and stop for a welcome beer and ice-cream at the village of Gedre. Back in the campsite, the temperatures were still very high. David and I take off for the local swimming pool which we reach 10 minutes before time. Pretending that we don't know any French, we are eventually waved through for a free swim. The water sizzles as we dive in!

What a lovely day. 4000m next year?
Colin Sinclair



When Did it All Start?

Forfar and District Hillwalking Club was formed in Angus Cycling Club Hall, Forfar on Friday the 18th October 1963. The first club meet went from Glen Doll to Loch Muick via the Capel Mounth, returning via Bachnagairn.

Fawcett and Mrs Low picnicked with the bairns in the Moulzie woods.

Finally a very Merry Xmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year to all members.

The Ed

All Our Yesterdays

Back to 16th May 1964 Pictured here at Kirrie are members of the Forfar and District Hillwalking Club before boarding which took them the easy part of their Sunday walk. The walk for the regulars started at Braedownie, via Moulzie, Bachnagairn, down the "Streak of Lightning" where lunch was taken at Glas-Alt-Shiel, Loch Muick. Continuing up Glas-Alt to Lochnagar, a second break was taken at Broad Cairn, before returning down Bachnagairn and Moulzie track to Braedownie. The alternative walk for the beginners, under the supervision of Ian Reith was Bachnagairn, over to the "Streak of Lightning", along the south bank of Loch Muick, returning to Braedownie over the Capel Mounth route. Among the "old campaigners" who made the Lochnagar heights were eight year old William Whyte and twelve year old Michael Fawcett. For Michael it was one up on Dad Fawcett, who wrenched his knee and did only part of the walk. Said President Fawcett: " I discovered that I could not keep up with the rest, but it was a grand walk, though the wind was blowing gale force, high up in the hill. Showers of sleet stung the walkers like pellets" Until the party returned Mrs

