



www.fdhwc.org.uk

Forfar & District Hill Walking Club

Newsletter 29 June 2007

President's Column

Greetings fellow hill walkers. I hope you enjoy the latest newsletter. Thanks to Mel for taking on the role of editor.

The big talking point in the hill walking press has been the commissioning of the re-measurement of two hills, Foinaven and Beinn Dearg by the Munro Society. There was the possibility of 2 new Munros, bringing about much cash to some in the way of reprinting various maps and books.

Fortunately the results of the Foinaven expedition have proved that it is not a Munro, merely a Corbett. The actual height was some 12 feet less than previously thought. It makes you wonder how accurate some of the other measurements are. Anyway what are a few metres either way? It's still a great hill. It's a bit like watching the downhill ski racing when you fail if you are 2 hundredths of a seconds short! Fortunately both hills are within easy striking distance of two meets within the next year. As I write this, we are bound for Torridon in 2 days time where Beinn Dearg is a possibility. And next May weekend is the furthest we've ever ventured for a weekend. The trip to Durness will allow a traverse of Foinaven to be achieved.

I hope you also enjoy the new meet calendar. It is made up mostly from the suggestions of members. The weather of late on the day meets has been dire, so surely we are due for some good weather. Yes, it is true that some of us enjoy getting more wet than most. I'm a proud member of the wet wet wet section. Hopefully we're in for a good summer where skinning dipping in the heat would be better than that cold bath!

Good walking to all wherever you may roam.
Colin

Club mentioned in Sunday Herald

The club met Cameron McNeish on the Inverie to Spittal of Glenshee walk on Sunday

20th May. Cameron wrote an article for the Sunday Herald of the route for his walk up Carn Bhac where he met us. We were described as a cheery bunch, but he suggested most of Forfar must have been out on the hill!

Club supports MCofS incorporation

The club voted in favour of the recent incorporation of the MC of S.

Treasurer's Report

The draft accounts for the year ending 31 January 2007 were presented at the AGM on Monday 5 March. The finalised accounts were later forwarded to our internal auditors John Norrie and Tom Ward and received their approval.

Once again I am pleased to report a relatively healthy financial position. We ended the year with an accumulated fund of £1,560. This is despite an overall loss of £666 for the year.

Under normal circumstances such a loss would have given rise for concern but on this occasion the deficit can be accounted for by one exceptional item. In late summer 2007, the decision was taken to use Club funds to undertake some much needed restoration to the stonework around the doorway of 'Davy's Bourach'. After liaison with Angus Council and the Council agreeing to part fund the cost, the work was professionally undertaken by the contractor working on the adjacent footpath. The cost to the Club was £705. For those new to the club, I should perhaps explain that the Club is the self-appointed guardian of this shelter located on Jock's Road.

Our membership numbers continue to remain relatively static. The 69 membership subscriptions generated income of £1,330 (up from £1,260 in the previous year). The hire of buses returned a loss of £155, while the four weekend meets generated a small surplus of £28. The main annual expense

remains the fees payable on your behalf to the Mountaineering Council of Scotland. These totalled £687 for the year.

Looking forward, the main area of concern for the Committee remains the rising cost of bus hire. The decision was therefore taken at the AGM to increase the fares from £10 to £12 per person with immediate effect. This should allow the Club to continue with its programme, assuming the walks with buses remain well supported. At the AGM it was also agreed to retain the membership fees at £20 for a full member and £10 for an associate member.

For those members interested, a copy of the balance sheet and the income and expenditure account is available on request.

Steve Wilson, Treasurer

New Members

We are pleased to welcome the following new members to the Club:

Elaine Wilson, Kirriemuir
Colin Dell, Arbroath

Debutante takes the 2007 Gird Title

Blustery but dry conditions greeted the competitors as they gathered at Cullow market, near Dykehead on Monday 16 April to compete for the much coveted title of 'Club Gird Champion'.

Despite three members failing late fitness tests and the confusing non-arrival of Club President Colin Sinclair* a total of thirteen entered the head-to-head, winner take all competition.

The five qualifying races for quarter final berths generally saw youth and speed prevails. This first round also produced the race of the night when Mel Henderson demonstrated great speed and determination to claw back a 20 metre deficit from Bob Railton to win in a photo finish. But that proved to be her only victory as she struggled to maintain her form in the next round.

John Dawson, a past Champion and one of the pre-race favourites, demonstrated good technique in his early rounds but he unexpectedly lost out in the first semi-final to Bill Dryburgh. The second semi-final saw Scott Cameron take on Willie Mather, with Scott cruising home effortlessly and able to reserve some of his energy for the final.

In almost all of the races a good start proved crucial – whoever had the ring running first generally made it to the finishing line first. This also proved to be the case in the final. Both Bill and Scott stuttered at the start, but then Scott romped away, relatively unchallenged, to take the title on his first appearance in the Championships.

Congratulations to Scott Cameron, Gird Champion 2007.

** Editors Note*

Our President Colin Sinclair has asked for it to be put on record that there is absolutely no truth in the rumour that he missed the Championships because he was taking a private lesson in river crossings and water survival techniques. He is however comfortable for the rumours relating to golf and badminton to persist. Some members who watched Colin submerge himself in the freezing waters of Glen Ey shortly after the Championships can testify that on that day he did not look like someone who had recently benefited from training in river crossings or for that matter simple burn crossings.

Car Treasure Hunt

This was held on 4 June with all cars starting at the Myre car park. The rules and instructions were handed out and the teams decided. 12 members took part with 3 in each car. The teams were –

Dumb, Dumber and Dumberer (Brain & Janet Coull, Scott Cameron)

Peugeot (John Easson, Bill Dryburgh, Christine Bailey)

Smudge (Willie Mather, Graham Brown, Malcolm)

The Forfar Loons (John & Rita Norrie, Nan Hargreaves).

Mel and her sister Sarah organised the hunt and spent the evening following everyone around and chucking evilly at the confused

faces and wrong turns. At one point, all cars had to stop at a specified phone box, call the organisers and sing them a Queen song. Bill, you really let yourself down on this! Much fun was (hopefully) had by all with all cars ending up at The Drovers. Here the points were added up and the "shopping lists" judged.

The results were –

- 1st Dumb, Dumber and Dumberer
- 2nd Smudge
- 3rd Forfar Loons
- 4th Peugeot

First place won chocolates and poor Peugeot won wooden spoons (remember John, wooden spoons = team that lost).

New Constitution

Draft 5 was voted in at the AGM in March.

Photographic Competition

This was judged by Graham Chalmers who also provided a very detailed talk on Photo Shop and how it can be used to enhance pictures. Brian Coull won (again) with a beautiful picture of Liathach.

For Sale

Free to good home – brand new cheap and cheerful navy sunhat size large. If it fits your head you can have it. See Mel for details.

Brand new Nexcare Breath-o-prene knee brace size medium. See Mel for details.

One pair bike racks £25. See John Norrie

Meet Secretary's Reports (Dec 2006 – July 2007)

26 December 2006

Mount Keen

Twelve members walked off the Christmas pudding by climbing Mount Keen from Glen Esk. It was a very frosty morning with the lower stretches of the path being frozen solid. The cloud base stayed clear of the tops all day. At the summit, the president presented each member attending with a gold sovereign – incentive for the Christmas couch potatoes next year!

2 January 2007

Glen Ogil

The New Year meet saw eleven members again venturing out in the local hills, this time in the Glen Ogil area. The weather was kind once more, but this was to be the last time for a few meets....

14 January 2007

Dollar (High Tea Meet)

A large number of brave hardy souls turned out for the traditional High Tea meet despite the atrocious weather. The exact number is not known as pen and paper ceased to function in the deluge. The plan had been to take in some of the highest tops in the Ochills but it quickly became apparent that the strong westerly wind and driving rain would make this pretty unpleasant. Most members therefore elected to take a lower level walk east towards the Sma' Glen while one or two other groups did shorter walks or went shopping! We all met in the Castle Campbell Hotel for high tea and a few drinks beside a roaring log fire.

11 February 2007

Drumochter

The weather forecast was once again awful. As a result, very few members put their names down and most of those cancelled later. Two intrepid members (Munro baggers!) ventured out and climbed Meall Chuiche and enjoyed slightly better weather as a result of heading a bit further north.

11 March 2007

Glenshee to Glen Doll

The plan according to the Meet Calendar had been to go to Creag Meagaidh but once again the weather was threatening to be very unkind to us. The decision was therefore taken to stay further east and the bus was redirected to Glenshee. Members walked over Glas Maol, Cairn of Claise and Tom Bhuide in very windy conditions and descended to Glen Doll car park via Jock's Road. Twenty one members attended.

23-25 March 2007

Nethy Station Weekend

Twelve people attended this weekend, with one or two calling off due to unforeseen circumstances. Six members enjoyed classic winter conditions on Braeriach on the Saturday with others climbing Bynack More and a local Corbett the name of which escapes me. The good weather encouraged most members to go walking again on Sunday with Ben Macdui and Geal Charn being among the hills climbed as members made their way home.

22 April 2007

Inverey to Spittal of Glenshee (The President's Looney Dook meet)

Seventeen members attended this through walk in very good, clear conditions. At least one Munro had been promised to keep the Munro-baggers happy but in the end both Carn Bhac and Ben Lutharn Mhor were climbed by everyone. A small party then broke off to climb Glas Tuilachan while the others made their way down to Loch nan Eun and down Glen Taitneach to the Dalmunzie Hotel where the bus was waiting, thanks to some polite negotiating by the driver to gain access up the private road. This was the first dry meet for several months, a fact which the President found difficult to accept and set about changing in his own inimitable style. Enough has been said about this incident already, so suffice it to say that a combination of no bridge, slippery rock and a very deep pool meant that the soundtrack for the rest of the day consisted of "Slip-Slidin' Away" and "River Deep, Mountain High."

4-7 May 2007

Skye

Unpredictable Skye showed its bad side again weather wise for the May holiday weekend. All available places were booked but for those hoping to bag Munros, it was a disappointing weekend. It was too windy to spend much time on the Cuillin and on Sunday the main group headed west to McLeod's Table, a flat-topped hill with much less chance of being blown off.

20 May 2007

Lairig an Laoigh

A good attendance of twenty members turned out for this through walk. Two walks were provided, with eight members opting to follow the Lairig an Laoigh from Glenmore Lodge and the others taking a higher level route from the Ski Lift car park over Ben Macdui and Derry Cairngorm. Both walks ended at Linn of Dee with the high-level walkers arriving about half an hour before the others. There were frequent showers during the day turning to snow on the tops but these were very short-lived.

10 June 2007

Ben Lui

Fifteen members took part in this meet with many turning up in shorts in anticipation of some summer weather. They were to be disappointed as the tops remained in cloud all day. To make matters worse, midges made their presence felt, even at the top of Ben Lui. After an uneventful river crossing in Glen Lochy and a boggy walk through the forest, nine members tackled the rather vertiginous-looking Beinn a'Chleibh direct while the others headed for the bealach between the two mountains. We all met up again at the summit and then headed for Ben Lui. To cap a big Munro-bagging day we continued to Ben Oss and Ben Dubhcraig before finally walking out to Dalrigh.

Forthcoming Meets

The new Meet Calendar has now been printed. Highlights include a meet by train to Corroul and a bike meet.

The meet to Corroul will probably involve a long walk in from Loch Rannoch and a return by train to Rannoch Station.

For the bike meet to Beinn Dearg there will be an alternative for those not wanting to take bikes. This will be discussed at the indoor meeting prior to the walk and members interested in an alternative should let the Meet Secretary know by then.

The traditional Meet Secretary's mystery meet will take place on 8 July, leaving the Myre car park at 7am as usual. At the time of going to press, the destination is still a mystery, even to the Meet Secretary.

Editor Wanted

We're missing Angus Spence. He was the editor of the newsletters for many years. Does anyone fancy the job? It doesn't have to be a committee member?

Open Meetings

January- Mick Pawley provided an unusual but interesting slide show on his time spent working in Antarctica using slides and music.

February - the Photographic Competition was judged by Graham Chalmers and won, yet again, by Brian Coull. The committee are thinking about banning Brian from entering!
March - AGM

April - won by Scott Cameron and followed by a short meeting at the Dykehead Hotel.

May – Micro-navigation in Glen Clova. Unfortunately this was rained off after only 20 minutes.

June – Car Treasure Hunt

30th Anniversary of club's first foreign meet by John Norrie

In July 1977, 10 members of the club set off by train from Arbroath (with a box of Bridies) for St. Anton in the Vorarlberg region of Austria. The journey to London was uneventful and a representative of the travel company took care of our luggage and assured us that we would rejoin it at St. Anton.

The speed of the train from London to Folkestone was such that we all felt that we wouldn't need the boat from Calais, there was enough momentum in the train that we could clear the Channel no bother.

Standing in the corridor of the slow moving train at Calais station we noticed a pile of luggage abandoned on the platform. – it was ours – so short of pulling the communication cord some of us jumped out onto the platform and formed a chain gang and retrieved our mountain of luggage while the train was in motion. So much for the assurances of the company rep.

Mid-morning, a steward came along with a trolley selling food and drinks. After checking out the prices, we said "no thank you", pulled down the compartment blinds, got out the gas

stoves and made our own breakfasts in relays.

For the first two days in Austria, it snowed in the higher Alps so a low level walk in the rain occupied one day and a trip to Innsbruck by train used up another (complete with more rail based misunderstandings).

The local hill, Valluga (2811m), was our first objective but halfway up we aborted it because of the rain and sleet and cold.

On the first sunny day, we reached the top of the Hocken Spitze after a hard slog and were amazed at the size of the wooden cross on the summit. We hoped to get some ice climbing on a glacier but that ended disastrously.

As we were there for two weeks, sight seeing was mixed with days on the hill. On a trip to Lech we saw the genuine St. Nicolas lying in a tomb. We went over to Italy for the day. Joined in the local firemen's beer festival, and swam for a very short time in the local open air pool, and of course went to see the lederhosen, slapping, wood chopping, and yodelling locals.

We successfully climbed the Kuchenspitze at 3170m, while in contrast another day while ridge walking between huts in the rain and murk, someone remarked it was reminiscent of Glenshee on a November day.

On our second last day, we took the cable car to the halfway station and walked/scrambled to the summit of the Valluga 2811m, with a mini rescue in between. Looking down the valley from Valluga at the two tops of the Hoher Riffler we decided to attempt it on the next (our last) day.

Hiring a mini bus, six of us set off down the valley to the start of the track to the Edmund Graf hut (3 hours); arriving at a beautiful high oasis two hours later, the scenery was too much (including a nude swimmer) and two of the party reneged. An hour or more later, scrambling through very steep mud and loose boulders, the four of us reached the top at 3168m. The top is about 5m by 5m and we joined 20 others on this small perch overlooking the Pettneuer Glacier which lies between the Kleine on Hoher Riffler. The

descent was a bit hectic to meet with the mini-bus for the return to St. Anton.

Despite strong protests from railway staff, we kept hold of our luggage all the way back to Arbroath.

Pictures from Austria meet 1977



Cross at the top of the Hichen Spitze



Dave and Winnie Reid at the Edmund Graf hut



From the village, Rita Norrie looking towards the Hoffer Riffler



"Just another November day in Glenshee"



Looking towards the Pettneuer Glacier from Hoffer Riffler



On the snow slopes of the Kuchen Spitze