



Forfar & District Hillwalking Club

Newsletter 27 June 2006

www.fdhwc.org.uk

President's Column

"It was twenty years ago today – Sergeant Pepper told the band to play". These immortal lines were written by Lennon and McCartney in 1967. Well, twenty years ago we had a weekend meet to Invergarry – always a popular meet. It was a hot sunny weekend. On Saturday, the Saddle was climbed up the Forcan Ridge from up the glen, and descent right back to Sheil Bridge where some of us dived into the burn to cool off. Linda was heavily pregnant with David – so she wasn't walking. On Sunday we climbed Ben Tee (901m) and then onto Sron a Choire Ghairbh (953m). Much time was spent looking for puddocks to amuse the 10 year Alastair Coull. We eventually descended, all hot and sticky, and so stopped at Corriegour Lodge Hotel on Loch Lochy to cool down with a shandy. The date was Sunday 22nd June 1986. It was the quarter final on the World Cup – Argentina versus England. It was just after half time. We were supping our shandies, and then all hell broke loose. Diego Maradona rose above Shilton and punched the ball into the net to make the score 1-0 : the infamous "hand of God" incident. Brian Coull's tail dropped instantly – the rest of us cheered. Then Argentina scored a quick second, and we drove home in a happy mood. What a weekend!

Twenty years prior to that incident Rita and John Norrie joined the club – one year before the Beatles epoch-making "Sergeant Pepper" album and the summer of love. At the recent June Open Meeting, Rita and John were given honorary membership of the club for outstanding service, loyalty and staying power. Well done both of you.

I must thank the retiring members of the committee for their work, Shirley and Dorothy. Your short spell on the committee was greatly appreciated - obviously to prepare you for a further spells in the future!

Linda and Angus (Spence) have decided not to renew their membership). Both did a great deal of work for the club. Linda served as Press Secretary (1989-1994). Angus served as Secretary (1992-1994 and 2003-2004), as Press Secretary (1998-1999), as Weekend Organiser (2002-2003) and as editor of most of the newsletters. Both helped at numerous White Haugh work parties, barbeques and Halloween Parties. Thank you both. We will miss you.

To all new members, I wish good a big welcome. Have a good summer, wherever your legs will take you.

Colin

Last Corbett

Brian Coull will complete his Corbetts on Saturday July 1st in Glen Etive on Beinn Maol Chaluim (907m). He will become the first club Corbetteer. Brian has booked the Grampian Club hut at Inbhir-Fhaolain (NN158507) is booked for the nights of 20th June and 1st July. A few spaces are still available in the hut and there is plenty camping outside. Brian assures us this is a dry weekend – was he talking about the rain or the alcohol? All are invited.

Corbett Facts

The Corbetts are mountains in Scotland between 2,500 and 3,000 feet in height with a drop of 500 feet all round. They are named after John Rooke Corbett who compiled the original list. The complete list of Corbetts can be found in the Munro Tables published by the Scottish Mountaineering Club (www.smc.org.uk). This list indicates that there are 220 Corbetts. However two of these mountains, located between Glen Shiel and Loch Quoich, are given the same height and the drop between them is less than the stipulated 500 feet. This means in fact that there are only 219 Corbetts. Corbett Tops have the same height criteria as Corbetts but only have a drop of at least 30 metres all round. They include all the Corbetts and therefore there are around 670 Corbetts and Corbett Tops. A person climbing the Corbetts is called a Corbett Bagger while someone who has climbed all the Corbetts is called a Corbetteer.

Last Munro

Willie Mather will complete his Munros on Saturday 29th July on Maol Chean Dearg (933m). The plan is to climb the hill from the south (Glen Carron). Contact Willie if you are interested in attending. All are welcome. Don't worry, Willie has promised not to wear his tight Lycra!

Barbeque

There will be a club barbeque on the afternoon of Saturday 12th August. Venue is as yet undecided. The club will provide burgers and sausages (including vegetarian versions), rolls, sauces. Bring your own liquid refreshments. Bring the family/partners along. Let them see the mad people you walk with! See web site, or contact a committee member, for final arrangements.

New Members

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

Graham Brown, *Brechin*
Scott Cameron, *Forfar*
David Hannigan, *Dundee*
Avril Neilson, *Dundee*
Bill and Sheila Simpson, *Arbroath*
Gill Town, *Dundee*

John and Rita Norrie June 1966 – June 2006

John and Rita joined the club back in June 1966. Then it was a family club with lots of youngsters. They had walked with family of 3 children beforehand, but decided the kids needed more than just being dragged to the top of a hill. Their first meet was a climb to see the sunrise on Lochnagar. This was very popular backing the 1960s with hundreds making the annual pilgrimage, and the club making it a meet. It wasn't long before John and Rita were both involved deeply in the running of the club. Both have contributed enormously to the history and well-being of the club. John has held the post of President (1967-1980), Meet Secretary (1980-1982), Assistant Meet secretary (1982-1984), Press Secretary (1987-1989), Hut Custodian (1990-1995). Rita was secretary (1968-1973), became the first lady President (1982-1986) and held the post of Press Secretary (1994-1996).

To help them celebrate the occasion, Carolyn Smith was commissioned to bake a cake which was wonderfully decorated with boots, sticks, compass, rucksack and a club badge. Thanks Carolyn.



It Can't Be 40 Years!

This is really a letter of thanks to FDHWC for the pleasure (and pain!) of being active members of the club since June 1966.

We joined originally for the sake of our three children as we had heard the club was family orientated and our three were beginning to complain about being expected to climb to the top of a hill, only to come back down again! It was a wise decision – they had plenty of company of their own age plus some of the more mature members who were still boys at heart! We brought with us out two nephews Rod and Malcolm and several school friends so early mornings were a bit

hectic – checking gear, tying boots, providing food then collecting bodies to take to Forfar.

Davidson's Buses provided us with a lot of memories, too many to detail, but it was the club members who made the club what it was, a company of relaxed, happy hill walkers who could cover the miles but still have time to have fun. Characters abounded. Gib Wilkie with his unending store of jokes and unbelievable stories, Dorothy Towns who could speak non-stop while going up the steepest hill, Janet Grant who'd burst into song just because it was a sunny day and she was happy! Sandy Gourlay who had discussions (or arguments) with anyone about anything (especially our Graham), Angus Grewar, Meet Secretary for years, that the club followed en masse trusting his navigation completely. Reg Fawcett with his tall tales (what an imagination!) – I could go on and on – oh and Stan Taylor with his candid cine-camera.

The friends we met over those 40 years were friends indeed – nothing was ever too much trouble – and so many are still our friends today, and it's great to look back and be able to rake up all those days – everyone of which has special memories e.g. walking along the Grey Corries with 6 year old Elaine Adam sucking a lollipop and carrying a windmill - we still did them all on a very long day.

With someone like Colin at the helm the club will go on – having fun but ticking off Munros or just having a good day out. Things and people have changed over the years as is normal, but if the latest members find what we did in the club then it bodes well for the future. We certainly don't regret any of the time we allocated to going out with the club, working at Whitehaugh or organising the annual dances – it's all been part of our lives, so to all members past and present we say thanks – we'd do it all over again if we had the chance!

Rita and John Norrie

New Constitution

You will find a copy of the 3rd draft of this document enclose with your newsletter. There have been a few spelling corrections since draft 2 (thanks Stuart) and a couple of amendments regarding honorary membership. Please review and pass any comments to a member of the committee. The plan is still to vote for adoption of the new constitution at the next AGM

Advice for new members

The sun can cause hill-walkers some problems: - burning and even worse, sun-stroke, can be a problem if protection is not taken. It is highly advised that members use adequate sun-cream and a hat to protect themselves from over-exposure to the sun. One new member (who name shall not be mentioned) obviously does not heed these warnings. He/She attended the recent Linn o' Dee meet to the upper Geldie with a layer of tanning cream applied and liberally applied it during the day. Did you notice? The new member's partner noticed that he/she had a great tan, while other members that were on the meet didn't seem to. Guess who!

The Piano Mystery

From Sheila Simpson

I thought that the Forfar Club members would like to know how the piano got up Ben Nevis. My friend made up this poem, as she was the only person who knew. Anyone else who says that they took the piano up are impostors

Did you see in the papers the other day?
That an old piano had found its way
To the top of Ben Nevis – it's a mystery –
But I can guess its history

Linked with my friend Sheila, it could be
She had piano lessons when she was wee
She loves hill walking too, and might just dare
To push that piano all the way there....

Bur how could she do it? I hear you ask
For a woman so small it's a mammoth task!
But fortified with a hip flask of whisky
She wouldn't even consider it risky...

Maybe she tied it to her bike?
No! No! – up the mountain she'd just hike
Pushing the piano all the way
Never stopping to sit and play...

So what plan did she have in her head?
As over the boulders and heather our heroine sped
To serenade her husband Bill
Once they got to the top of the hill

She'd wheech off all her hill walking gear
Then before his eyes she'd just appear
Clad in gold lame with elbow length gloves
Just to surprise the man she loves....

Sheila – your secret is out!!!

Mel & Ally's Winter Adventure

It was at some point in October when all the weather forecasters were predicting a harsh winter, Arctic blasts, a second ice age, etc that I had an idea (first one that year I believe). I thought it would be a grand idea to book Ally and I onto the MCoS Introduction to Winter Skills course at the Glenmore Lodge in January this year. This was to be a 2 day course from Friday night to Sunday tea time covering all you would need to know to stop yourself -

1. Looking like a pratt in front of others as you pathetically fall over for a third time in a row trying to get your crampons on.
2. Accidentally plugging your ice axe into your cranium because you didn't know how to hold it properly.
3. Tobogganing off at high speed down a hill using your boots as skis because the steps you cut were useless.
4. Setting off on a route that only the bearded and excessively hairy would attempt only in summer.

With myself sporting fresh knuckle injuries from the New Year meet (oh the embarrassment!) we arrived at the lodge to find it full to bursting with not altogether lean and mean Mountain Rescue folk. Teams from all

over Scotland were there to take part in a joint avalanche awareness weekend including RAF Mountain Rescue and SARDA. Things seemed a little daunting but a couple of drinks later and a chat with Brian Laing and we settled in. The evening consisted of a talk from a rep from MCoS about why they offered such courses (see reasons stated above) and this was followed by a short chat from the Lodge manager. After that it was time to unpack, get some munchies and look around, as it was our first visit to the lodge. Day one began bright and early with a fantastic breakfast (all meals were included in the £150 paid for the weekend). All the meals we had were truly excellent and many of you will know how much I love my grub. After gathering together our packed lunch we headed off to meet our instructor who was called Carl and couldn't have been nicer. He explained how things were going to be run, whether we had the right equipment, clothing, etc and the plan for the weekend. There were six in our group and we all introduced ourselves and explained what experience in the hills we had. Carl then gave a brief run down of his experience which seemed to cover everything apart from orchestrating world peace. Then the action begun! We shuffled our way nervously to a waiting minibus, which dropped us off at the ski centre car park. We then made our way to Coire an Sneachda and found a snow patch which Carl got very excited over as apparently it was perfect for what we were about to do. The weather was terrible with stinging snow and gusts of wind threatening to blow us over. We started off with practising walking on steep snow without any assistance and Lo! I was the first to fall over, what a champ. We soon all got the hang of walking on hard snow, kicking steps, cutting steps and ice axe belays. Then the real fun began – ice axe arrests feet first, head first on stomach and head first on back (my speciality!). After a quick bite we set off on a walk to the back of the corrie practising our new techniques as we went. After another quick rest, where we were kept company by plenty of Snow Bunting and Ptarmigan, we headed for a massive pitch of ice. Here we practise crampon use and were soon bunny hopping up and down, spinning around and front pointing. We were all having a great time until one guy in the group fell at the top of the ice. Thank goodness we'd done ice axe arrests first but then I guess that was the point. This was the last exercise for the day and thankfully so as we were all exhausted. We headed back to the minibus and had tea and cake at the lodge to discuss how our day had went and the plan for tomorrow. A shower and meal was followed by a very interesting talk on avalanche awareness by the lodge manager and was followed by more alcohol in the bar. Day two was completely different weather wise. The sky was a perfect blue, hardly a cloud in the sky or a breath of wind with temperatures of around minus 10. Again we were dropped off at the ski car park and we first of all practised pacing. We did this all the way up into Coire Cas and were a little miffed when the Mountain Rescue folk went zooming past in the mountain railway. Talk about lazy! On the way up we stopped so that Carl could show us how to do a quick and easy avalanche test and how to measure the angle of slope using your ice axe. We all got a chance to practise and looked slightly manic as all six of us scraped and hacked away at the snow banks. More pacing was followed by crampon work up the back of the corrie onto the plateau. It was absolutely gorgeous!!! Everyone was blown away by the views with the winter setting. We set off to a popular snow

holing area round about Coire Domhain. The area was full of snow holes it looked like some kind of forgotten winter village for short people. Here we also practised avalanche awareness the way the professionals do it which involved be jumping up and down very apprehensively on a huge chunk of snow while the rest watched waiting for the inevitable to happen while they graded the snow. Next we took a bearing to Cairn Lochan and walked down into Coire an Lochain, Ally ripping his waterproof trouser on his crampons on the way, whoops. Many of you will not be surprised to know that I managed to have a hydration pack incident as I am prone to do. This time it was so cold my tube froze so I had to unscrew the lid of my pack whenever I wanted a drink. Unfortunately I forgot to screw it back on properly after our last break of the day so I ended up with icicles hanging from the bottom of my jacket and ice patches on my bottom as we walked back to the minibus. Luckily no one had noticed so I got away with it.

It was then back to the lodge for tea and cake to discuss how the weekend had gone. We all agreed it had been a great experience and would recommend the course to anyone starting off on winter walking. Ally and I had decided to stay on another night to relax and ended up watching the coming and goings of the Glenmore Mountain Rescue and Royal Navy Rescue teams as they rescued the climber who had fallen 150m from a crag and was dangling on the end of his rope. Thankfully he was ok.

All in all, we had a fantastic time and would certainly go back for any other course. In fact, Dorothy and I are going on an Introduction to Navigation weekend in July so at least I'll have something to write about for the next newsletter!

Project Ptarmigan – Willie Mather

The British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) is calling anyone walking in Scotland's high tops before the end of August to look out for Ptarmigan and report any sightings to them. The information will be fed into *Project Ptarmigan*, BTO Scotland's monitoring study aimed at gathering information on this characteristic bird.

The Rock Ptarmigan *Lagopus mutus* is Britain's only truly resident montane bird and is at the altitudinal and latitudinal limits of its global range in Scotland. As such, it may be particularly susceptible to a number of influences, such as increases in generalist predators, changing in grazing regimes and of course, climate change. Since the Ptarmigan is thought to be sensitive to these changes, it will be a key indicator of the condition of Scottish mountains, habitats that are recognised as a high priority under the *UK Biodiversity Action Plan*.

The results of *Project Ptarmigan* will be used by BTO Scotland to develop a strategy for long-term monitoring of Ptarmigan and potentially other montane *Project Ptarmigan* birds. This would give a clearer picture of the condition of specific mountain areas as well as helping to unravel the effects of changing conditions on Scotland's mountains and its wildlife.

For more information on *Project Ptarmigan*, or if you would like to participate please check the project website

<http://www.bto.org/survey/special/ptarmigan/index.htm>
or contact BTO Scotland on 10786 466 560, email scot.info@bto.org.

BTO Information packs are available. Willie has several to hand out to those interested. Several were handed out at the Dundonnell weekend.

Mountaineering Council of Scotland AGM –Glen More Lodge Saturday 17th June

Colin and Linda represented the club at the AGM, arriving 10 minutes late (as is Sinclair normal). Luckily we turned to complete the necessary quorum for the meeting. The main business was to pass the motion to incorporate the MCoFS, accepting the new Articles of Association and Memorandum and Arts. Well, it was a very heated meeting with the big clubs (in particular, the Cairngorm Club) objecting to the way that the Executive have pushed this hurriedly through. Finally a motion was raised by the Executive to defer acceptance of the incorporation and this was accepted. The block voting system was used. The club had twenty votes. A working group is to be set up to prepare the next draft and a Special General Meeting will be called in the September issue of *The Scottish Mountaineer*. Follow events on <http://www.mountaineering-scotland.org.uk>

Meet Secretary's Reports

Christmas Meet 26 December 2005

Eight members and guests took part in the traditional Boxing Day meet on Monday 26 December. The group made the short journey to Glen Doll by car and then headed for Corrie Fee, the recently constructed footpath making the going very easy, particularly on the final steep section at the back of the corrie. At the top of the steepest section, a sheltered spot was found for a refreshment stop before tackling the gentle incline to the summit of Mayar (928 metres). Another brief refreshment stop was followed by a bracing walk in the chill wind across the plateau and down to Glendoll Forest.

New Year Meet 3 January 2006

The New Year meet was held on Tuesday 3 January and was attended by sixteen members who enjoyed a clear, settled day in the Glenshee hills. Although the walkers drove through a white landscape on the way, the car park at the ski centre was empty and the chairlifts were silent, the snow covering proving to be rather patchy. The group reached the summit of Glas Maol (1,068 metres) after negotiating a few tricky icy sections. The route then veered southwards towards Creag Leacach (987 metres) where a lengthy refreshment stop was enjoyed on the sheltered south-facing side of the summit. On the way down some ice axe braking was practised on a steep snow-covered slope, although one or two members seemed more intent on turning the slope into a bobsleigh run, with a plastic bivvy bag serving as the bobsleigh. Further down the slope the walkers disturbed a group of white mountain hares which were sunning themselves in a sheltered spot and sent around a dozen of them running off in all directions.

Bennachie 15 January 2006 (High Tea Meet)

In a change from the normal arrangements for the high tea meet, a bus was booked to take members from Edzell. This proved very popular and a full bus set off for Bennachie. After a few wrong turnings we finally found the starting point at the west end of the hill and walked over all the tops. The weather was clear but windy. The complex network of paths meant that members got split up on numerous occasions but all made it back to the bus, albeit much later than expected due to the late start and a rather lengthy detour towards the end of the walk. The bus then returned to Edzell for a very enjoyable high tea at the Panmure Arms.

Lochnagar 12 February 2006

The original planned outing to the Northern Corries was changed due to the poor weather forecast. Instead, twelve members headed for Lochnagar and enjoyed surprisingly good weather. The walkers headed by car to Loch Muick and took the traditional route up Lochnagar via "The Ladder", returning by the waterfall to Allt-Ghlas Shiel. On the way back some of the more curious members acquired a dead cat which they took for expert opinion as to whether it was of the wildcat or domestic variety. To their disappointment it turned out to have more of the latter's attributes. Since this meet there have been reports of some members avidly reading that mighty literary tome "101 uses for a dead cat". The deceased moggy's whereabouts are presently unknown.

Glen Lyon 5 March 2006

Twenty-three members and guests of the Forfar and District Hillwalking Club enjoyed a clear but cold winter's day in the Ben Lawers area. The bus comfortably negotiated the single track road up Glen Lyon and dropped the group off near Camusvrachan, where they crossed the river and followed the landrover track up the hillside. The walkers then split into two groups with the more adventurous group heading for Meall Garbh (1,118m) before tackling three further Munros, namely An Stuc, Ben Lawers and Beinn Ghlas. The second group intended to shorten the route by climbing the last three only. Things did not quite go to plan, however, as the second group, in their anxiety to gain height quickly, headed for an easy looking ridge rather than taking the direct route and ended up meeting the first group on the approaches to Meall Garbh. By this time, the going was very difficult in knee-deep powder snow and many did not relish the thought of the steep ascent to Ben Lawers (1,214m) in these conditions. Eleven hardy souls opted to carry on regardless and complete the circuit while the remaining dozen found the prospect of a descent south-west to Loch Tay and a visit to the Lawers Hotel much more appealing! The walkers were reunited at the hotel some time later, with one group being very tired and the others being in an altogether more relaxed mood!

Roy Bridge Weekend 17 - 19 March 2006

Sponsored by "The Macallan" (ask Nan, Bill & Sheila)

Nine members attended the weekend meet to Roybridge. These ranged from the usual crew of "Munro-baggers" to the "old hands" who were either happy to revisit familiar hills or were secretly working their way through the list of Corbetts.

The timing of the meet could not have been better, with the previous week's snow being well clear of the roads but still substantially in evidence on the hills. The weather forecast was also very promising with any cloud expected to be well clear of the tops.

The usual debate on which hills to climb took place on arrival on Friday evening with no conclusion being reached but two groups were quickly formed on Saturday morning. Five members and a guest made their way round to the other side of the River Spean to make the long walk in to Stob Ban, three walkers headed for Chno Dearg and Stob Coire Sgriodan by the side of Loch Treig while the final member opted for a day's skiing at Aonach Mor.

All walkers enjoyed a day of perfect winter conditions and the extensive views of Scotland's snow-clad mountains will remain etched in the memory for many years to come.

Sunday dawned with a few aching limbs and the threat of intermittent drizzle in the air, but nevertheless six hardy souls set off for the hills again, five Munro-bagging around Loch Treig and a sixth heading for the less well-known Corbett of Carn Dearg in Glen Roy.

Ben Vorlich 16 April 2006

The scheduled meet to the Black Mount by bus was cancelled due to lack of numbers – a lesson learned to avoid the Easter weekend in future. Nine members went by car to Ben Vorlich (Loch Earn). Conditions were not good and two members turned back before reaching the summit.

Knoydart Weekend 28 April – 1 May 2006

Nine members made the journey to the remote White House at Barrisdale. The weekend started with the long walk in from Kinloch Hourn to Barrisdale. Thankfully all the gear was taken in by boat, but at a price.

The house has its own generator and getting it started proved troublesome on the club's last visit a few years ago. There was no such problem this time thanks to jack-of-all-trades, John Easson.

The weather was once again fantastic with some members comparing it to the Mediterranean conditions experienced on the club's last Knoydart weekend at Inverie. The three Munros, Lunnie Bheinn, Meal Buidhe and Ladhair Bheinn were all conquered, as was Ben Aden.

Arrochar 21 May 2006

Twenty members went by bus to the Arrochar Alps area. The bus set off at 7 am in heavy rain, many members questioning the sanity of the weather forecasters who had promised a reasonable day in the west. However, by the time we reached Comrie the sun was shining and spirits were lifted.

A choice of two walks was provided. The more arduous of the two routes started at Inveruglas on the banks of Loch Lomond and took in Ben Vane and Beinn Ime before descending to Butterbridge on the Rest-and-be-Thankful road. The second walk was a circular route over Beinn Narnain and the Cobbler starting at the end of Loch Long. The walkers were fairly well divided with 11 choosing the first route and 9 the second.

A few members tailored the routes to their own capabilities, adding or cutting out tops as required. Despite the variety of routes, most walks finished within

a reasonable time of each other and in any case there was a local pub to keep the early finishers entertained. The real drama started on the way home. The bus driver headed south down Loch Lomond rather than return by the narrow, twisting section of the A82 northwards. The road was closed a few miles further on due to an accident. After turning, the bus was involved in a minor bump a little further down the road. After this hold-up, we finally got going towards Stirling, only for the bus to suffer a blow-out and grind to a halt again. The bus hobbled into Stirling Service Station to a rendition of "3 wheels on my wagon". After sampling the wares of Burger King, members reacquainted themselves with the pastimes of "I Spy" and "Hang-the-Man" before a replacement bus arrived. Arrival time home in Forfar was about 11.20pm.

Linn of Dee 11 June 2006

Twenty-three members and bicycles headed for Linn of Dee with the weather threatening to be very summer-like. The car park gave most members their first experience of midges this year, so after hastily dismounting bikes from the cars and applying sun cream and midgie stuff, the members set off on what must have looked like the start of a grand prix. The destination was the two remote Munros of An Sgarsoch and Carn an Fhiddleir, a total of 26 kilometres of cycling and twelve kilometres of walking. The cycling stage ended at Geldie Lodge where the combination of brilliant sunshine and a large grassy area made for a very enjoyable resting point. On foot now, the members climbed the steep slopes of Carn an Fhiddleir first. The weather became quite windy and thundery-looking on the summit, so it was onwards quite quickly to the second Munro of the day, An Sgarsoch. From there the group followed the Allt Coire an t-Seilich back to Geldie Lodge. Two punctures were experienced – not bad out of 23 on such rough terrain. Bill Drysdale's brand new bike was a victim on the way in, and on the return the President had to play the part of "Bicycle Repair Man", cycling back to the aid of his wife. Monday morning saw the shops in Forfar displaying "Cushions Sold Out" signs.

Dundonnell Weekend 23-25 June 2006

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.

Treasurer's Report

The accounts for the year ending 31 January 2006 were presented at the AGM on Monday 6 March,

following approval by our internal auditors John Norrie and Tom Ward.

As your new treasurer this was the first time I had the pleasure (or should I say misfortune?) to prepare your accounts. Beforehand, the prospect did not give me too much concern as I once studied some accounting at college and I had prepared accounts for an Export Club in the North East of England some 20 years previously. I also knew that the books were in good order thanks to the spreadsheets and folders I inherited from Ray Campbell, your previous treasurer and an accountant by profession. I should have known better.

The pressure came from the fact there was a delay in receiving some of the final paperwork and, perhaps due to over confidence in my own accounting ability, I did not start preparing the books quite as soon as I should have. In the end, I would have a mere 12 days to close the books; prepare the accounts; have them verified by the auditors; before presenting them at the AGM. A tall order, but not really a problem, as I knew I could call on Ray to help me with my debits and credits. What I didn't know was that Ray would be *incommunicado* at the vital time – on holiday in Bruges or somewhere like that. Very inconsiderate, given the predicament I found myself in. I was on my own.

Before completing the accounts I had become an avid sudoku puzzler. Since this turmoil in my life I've hardly looked at a puzzle. The reason – they no longer present a numeric challenge after battling with debits and credits for over a week.

In the end, after many late nights and much frustration, all the columns finally balanced. What is more, the figures stood up to my triple checks and inspection by our auditors. Boy – did I enjoy that bottle of wine.

So what do the accounts reveal? Well I am pleased to report we are solvent. Over the course of the year we generated an overall surplus of £290 to give us an accumulated fund of £2,226 at the end of January.

Our 68 membership subscriptions generated income of £1,260 (down from £1,370 in the previous year). The hire of buses returned a loss of £150 while the four weekend meets showed a loss of £58. Our main annual expense remains the fees payable on your behalf to the Mountaineering Council of Scotland. These totalled £632 for last year.

The main area of concern for the Committee is the rising cost of bus hire. Although the bus meets are generally well supported, the rising cost of fuel may make it necessary to increase the fares to members at sometime in the not too distant future. Perhaps this is something that can be discussed amongst the membership?

A copy of the balance sheet and the income and expenditure account is available to members on request. They are simple documents that, as far as I am concerned, don't do justice to the work involved! At least on this first occasion.

Steve Wilson, Treasurer