

FORFAR AND DISTRICT HILL-WALKING CLUB

NEWSLETTER 4

DECEMBER 1993

PRESIDENTS COLUMN

A big hello to all members, especially to any new members that I have yet to meet.

Well, the end of another year approaches. How time flies! Looking back, despite a miserable summer, it has been a good year for the club. Some great days out since we published newsletter 3 in June - like Drummocher - Rannoch in August, Broad Law and Dollar Law in September. Some awful days - the Tilt in September and Cairnwell-Clova in November. The peach of them all was our 30th anniversary meet to Creag Meagaigh in October - with two clottie dumplings on the top. There was quite a turn-out including a founder member, Finlay Taylor, as well as other ex-members - Jim Convery and Ken White.

Membership continues to rise. However attendances at meets and at open meetings still fluctuate wildly (depending on the weather forecast or film on TV). Come on you all! support your club.

Enough of this wittering, I hope you enjoy this our 4th Newsletter and lastly, may I take this opportunity to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Guid New Year.

COLIN

CHANGES IN ORGANISATION

This is old news for those who attend open meetings. The committee have re-arranged their duties - the secretary is now in charge of all membership affairs, including the collection of subscriptions and the issue of membership cards. The change will enable us to keep an up-to-date membership list and should sort out the mailing problems we experienced over the last year. Sorry to those affected. The meet secretary will assume the responsibility for the booking of accommodation for weekend meets.

GLEN CLOVA ROAD RACE

This was held on Saturday 13 November in sunny but freezing conditions. Unfortunately, we were unable to field a club team this year. Two members did however complete the course. Colin, representing the club, clocked a time of 1hr36mins and John Norrie, representing Arbroath Footers, a time of 1hr 49mins. As usual the event was well organised and a good time was had by all. Next year we must organise a team. A challenge! - I'm sure our A-team could walk it faster than the last runner!

Isobel English trained hard to enter the race but unfortunately was unable to compete due to illness. We wish her well for next year's season.

SOCIAL EVENTS

There was no Hallowe'en party at Whitehaugh this year. Its replacement was to be the weekend meet on November 20/21, which did not go ahead. However to make up for these disappointments, why don't you come to the club's annual high tea on Sunday 9th January. Names to Angus as soon as possible on Forfar 465644. After last year's near miss with blizzards in Glen Isla, we travel east to inspect our very own trig point and then take high tea in the Panmure Arms in Edzel afterwards. Cost is £5.80 per head. Just in-case there is a repeat of last years weather, bring shovel, snow chains, blankets etc!. Would the Norries also put some decent tyres on their car!! Menu is as follows:-

Fried Fillet of Haddock & Lemon

Beef Steak Pie

Roast Turkey & Oatmeal Stuffing

Grilled Chipsteak & Onions

Ham & Pineapple Salad

Tea/Coffee

Scones & Jam

Cakes

(vegetarian choice to be requested from the hotel)

FESTIVE SEASON MEETS

There are plans afoot to partake in our usual dose of post-festive exercise - if only to guess what everyone brings on their pieces! Likely dates are Boxing Day and January 2nd or 3rd. We don't go very far - somewhere fairly local. If interested get in touch with Brian or Stuart.

WINTER GAMES

You are sure to have seen this event on the recently distributed winter calendar. We plan to have a meet into the Glen Isla

forest in January or February on a Saturday or Sunday. This would include cross-country skiing, snowman-building, polybag racing etc. Come on! Work off all these extra pounds and have some fun. We can hire X-C skis from the skiing centre for a day. (cost £8 per person) PLEASE let us know in plenty of time if you are interested (contact Colin) The date will be arranged at fairly short notice and well phone around everyone who wants to go.

IT WAS 30ish YEARS AGO TODAY

Extract from "The Climber" magazine of June 1965

MAKING WALKING A GAME

by Margaret Norrie

To take our three children for a day in the hills is now a pleasure indeed - compared to what it was five years ago.

In our younger days my husband and I went cycle-touring from hostel to hostel like so many others, but when our family arrived we had to have a sport which would take us out and about yet in which we could all share. So we bought an old car and turned our eyes to the hills. The children (two girls and a boy) were then aged six, four and two, and on our first few rambles we discovered that walking consisted of rests, sweets, collecting (fir cones, pebbles and odd insects) and throwing stones into streams. Gradually however, they managed to go a little further and a little higher. We had the hills on our doorstep and we made full use of this fact by camping and walking at weekends and, when on holiday in Arran, we spent alternate days on the beach and in the hills. That year, our six-year-old girl, the eldest, got to the summit of Goat Fell completely under her own steam. Two years later we all reached the top, a walk of about six miles. Of course this took a whole day, but with the wonderful views over the Clyde, close-ups of Arran deer herds (via telescope), feeding the gulls, etc., the time passed quickly.

You must be in no hurry when taking children up a hill. Whenever they feel they are being hustled tempers fray and a sit-down strike occurs. The secret is to keep them interested, and here my husband comes in useful by imparting to them his own interest and knowledge of the birds and animals of the district. You must also be prepared to have a stop for a few minutes - but try, too, to keep a steady pace while on the move, or you really will get nowhere.

We have spent many hours coaxing, sympathising, prodding, playing "I-Spy", and singing our way up and down mountain paths, and it always seems worth the effort when we reach the summit cairn at last, to sometimes lie in the sunshine on our back and watch and listen to a lark sing its heart out above; sometimes to huddle in the shelter of the cairn to keep out the wind while reviving tea is poured.

Children are resilient creatures and however tired they may appear to be on the way up they soon recover. Last year our boy, then six years old, would drag behind on a long ascent, but the moment we gained the top and were once more on level ground, a pounding of boots would be heard and there he'd be - streaking out in front, running, after climbing to 2,000 feet. Sharing this pastime of ours with our children requires lots of patience on our part, but it is worth it. They are learning so much and now enjoying so much. They now keep a good, slow but steady pace up a hill - and face it with determination. The thought of another Munro to their bag (they have all been up Cairn Gorm) is a spur. They carry their own plastic coat and spare clothes in a small rucksack. They know what to do when caught in mist, and that the only thing to do when it starts to rain is to get into a raincoat and keep on walking! Last April we were caught out on a mountain in a snowstorm at 3,000 feet, but there were no complaints - they thought it was marvellous to have to get on snow goggles to see their way down! The most expensive item in our equipment list are boots. Every year we have to replace either one or two pairs - not because they are worn out but because they have been outgrown. And this will go on, of course, until either feet stop growing, or they decide they've had enough of this hill-walking game!

TECHNOLOGY AND THE NEWSLETTER

Unfortunately we do not yet have the resources available to us to be able to print the photographs missing from the last newsletter. We may be able to solve the problem by newsletter 5, if anyone has access to a high quality laser printer with resolution of 600 dpi or better! Then we could produce high quality black and white reproductions of photographs for inclusion in the newsletter. Any offers to Colin or Angus.

A REVIEW OF 1993 MEETS **by Brian Coull**

The first meet of the year was our usual walk followed by a meal once again at Glen Isla Hotel. The meet calendar said "meet at Auchavan 9.30 am". However most of the club were still sliding up the glen at that time. The late arrivals began to meet early retreaters round about 9.45am. A small party reached the top of Finally Hill in worsening weather. If we had known about the weather just 24 hours away we would have been more concerned. The low level group and the gourmets met up at the Hotel for an excellent meal followed by winter sports on the way home! March was a rather wet and misty tour round AN CAISTEL & BEINN A' CHROIN. Dundonnell for the long weekend in May. One of the best meets of the year. Jim Douglas had already climbed SLIOCH before most of us arrived. Tilda, Martin and Dave M greeted us complaining about their sun burn from several days in the hills.

On Saturday most of the party went over AN TEALLACH enduring mist, cold and then some sun. Sunday saw two main groups, one on BEINN DEARG and the other in the FANNICHS. Monday was supposed to be a short day so one party went to AN FAOCHAHACH, the place of the shells, nothing to do with smoking. The other group became temporarily misplaced somewhere near SEANA BHRAIGH. Some of the younger members enjoyed games with rocks and toothbrushes during the weekend.

I missed the May meet to BEINN BHROTAIN but I heard they the walk was extended to include MONADH MOR and the challenge was enjoyed by most.

June was the meet to celebrate Rita Nome's last munro. Alastair Coull also came along for what was to be his last climb up a munro! A large party took a leisurely day to reach the top of SGOR NA H ULaidh, all enjoying the traditional celebrations. It was a great sight to see John 'N' piping Rita onto the last top. We all know that there were times when she thought that the 'inn pin' would stop her joining the Munroists. The weekend at Shiel Bridge was rather broken up as we were all staying at different places and the weather was rather disappointing for June.

The August weather behaved for the Drummochter to Rannoch meet. A beautiful day slightly marred by the President's party reaching the road at the wrong place! It was really the meet secretary's fault that the President got lost

September took us to the Borders to meet up with Jane Fraser. Jim Douglas used his local knowledge to recommend hills and he seemed to know about other 'locals' as well! We all met up for an excellent meal on Saturday evening at the suggestion of Stuart F. Sorry you missed it Stuart.

The meet calendar for September said "go through Glen Tilt" – so we did. Enough said!

The 30th anniversary meet took us to CRAEG MEAGaidh. It was a marvellous cold clear day with views right across Scotland. Dorothy Adam made 2 clottie dumplings, they were carried up by Colin and Dave. A good turn out for one of the most photogenic days of the year, I left my camera at home! November saw us back to normal walking in the mist from Glemshee to Glen Clova. We were glad to see Jim Nicol back in action after his illness.

By the time you read this we should have visited BEINN A CHUALLAICH if anyone can tell me where it is??!

BRIAN

HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

by Rita Norrie

Little did we think when we, Barbara, Bill, John and I flew from Glasgow for our holiday in Majorca that we would be trying a very different method of flight before we arrived home again.

The inside of an Air2000 jet with all its comforts and safety features did nothing to prepare us for riding pillion on a

Microflight plane, powered by one small engine and controlled by two pedals and a stranger into whose hands we placed ourselves.

The holiday was full of highlights such as aajplking in the Boguer Valley and on the Sierra del Cavaffiernat ridge where rocks were sharp and noduled and the vegetation consisted of sharp grass and shrubs with inch long thorns which tore at us as we passed. We also had adventures on bikes and trains, visited the caves at Campanet and the Nature Park at S'Albufira walking through reeds at least eight feet high. However it was the flight in the Microflight which gave the most memorable moments on a great holiday. We made all the arrangements with the owner of the plane by telephone and at 9.10 am one morning a battered, dirty Ford Fiesta arrived driven by a handsome smiling young man. We liked him on sight but hoped his plane was in better condition than his car! The airfield was a strip of hard earth long enough for taking off and landing with a small hanger at one end, an umbrella covered table and chairs and a hammock slung up inside the shade. We chose which route we wanted to take, then went over to the plane where he answered many questions. The engine was made in Austria and derived from the original Volkswagen Beetle engine. There were two foot controls and it was steered manually by the pilot through a bar attached to the wing structure. Only one waistband held the passenger in place but we could contact the pilot through head phones in the helmet we were given to wear. John was first to go, then Bill, and they both returned obviously delighted by the experience. Then it was my turn. It was like riding pillion on a motor bike (or a witch's broomstick) for there was nothing on either side to give any sense of security. I could look straight down to the ground or sea below, while the tiny engine at my back worked hard driving the propeller. It was like being a bird. Sometimes we glided effortlessly but as the wind freshened we were affected by thermals rising from the mountains which made the plane twist and turn and do little dives which made the adrenalin flow even faster. The yachts looked tiny on the green water and the views were spectacular along the Tormentor Ridge and over the plains to Tornir, the fifth highest mountain on Majorca which we were to climb later that week. At one point the winds made the plane hover for some time, quite motionless just over the ridge, and I began to wonder if this was normal - just to sit in mid air going nowhere, taking photographs and enjoying the scenery, but it was an experience I'll never forget. At last we were released from the wind trap and all too soon were gliding in to land. Barbara had an even more exciting flight as the wind had freshened, but she returned to ground glowing, and totally captivated by the flight, as we all were. We thoroughly enjoyed the rest of our time in Majorca, but those minutes spent in the sky above Puerto Pollensa were undoubtedly the thrilling highlight of an action packed and strenuous holiday.

A MOMENT OF FUN

THE CLIMBERS CLEMENTINE

Air: "Clementine"

Chorus:-

O' my darling, O' my darling,
O' my darling Clementine
Thou art lost and gone for ever.
Dreadful sorry, Clementine.

In a crevice on Ben Nevis
Where the clouded cliffs incline.
Clung a climber, fine old timer,
And his daughter, Clementine.

She was leading, like a fairy,
On a hundred feet of line.
Whilst her father, nervous rather,
Fast belayed his Clementine.

From the cliff top I was watching.
Thinking: O' That she were mine!
She's so lovely from above,
Is my climbing Clementine.

Saw her groping, vainly hoping,
for a handhold mighty fine.
But alack, there was no crack there,
To support my Clementine.

Then the climber, fine old timer,
Anxious for his Clementine,
Shouted ' Hi, Sir! You up there. Sir!
Cant you drop my girl a line.

Quick as thought I hitched my nylon
To a belay crystalline,
Standing firm as any pylon,
Dropped the rope to Clementine.

And she grasped it, swiftly clasped it,
Round her slender waist diving.
Up I drew her quite secu-er,
So I saved my Clementine.

Then she rose up, cocked her nose up,
With a glance that chilled my spine,
I'd no need, Sir, on that lead, Sir,
Of your help, said Clementine.

So I parted, broken hearted,
From the dreams that once were mine,
Gave all hope up, coiled the rope up,
Said good-bye to Clementine.

Then the climber, fine old timer,
Stood me lots and lots of wine -
Now I'd rather climb with father,
Than his daughter Clementine.

FINIS

Other Events for your diary

Tayside Mountain Rescue - AGM will be held on the 21 Feb 1994.

Tayside Mountain Rescue sponsored walk will be held on 12 June 1994.

WHENSOEVER 50 years of RAF Mountain Rescue by Frank Card

To commemorate the 50th anniversary of Royal Air Force Mountain rescue Service, The Ernest Press is pleased to announce the publication of 'Whensoever'. The book traces the history of the Royal Air Force Mountain Rescue Teams from 1943 to 1993. Excellent maps and illustrations are complimented by Pat Donovan's irresistible drawings. The last book written to tell the story of the RAF Mountain Rescue Teams was published 30 years ago and basically sketched the first 20 years of mountain rescue/ Frank Card's new book now retells those 20 years with some interesting new facts and then covers the next thirty years to bring the story up to date. Publication September 20th 1993.

The book retails at £ 17.95 and can be obtained from:

The Ernest Press | Thomas Street Holyhead
Gwynedd LL65 1RP

Tel: 0407- 760988

ACHIEVEMENTS IN 1993

MUNROISTS: 1. Rita Nome - 6th June 1993, Presented with gift from the club on top of her chosen hill. Rita now holds the club roll of honour until the next munroist claims it

FIRST FIFTY AWARD: 1. Scott MacDonald for completing his first fifty munros, Scott was presented with a copy of Munro's tables. Scott is one of our youngest members. Well done.

FIRST THIRTY: The Club was thirty years old in September 1993. A tribute to past and current members and officials. With continued support the Club can continue to advance and prosper over the next thirty years.

REMEMBER REMEMBER

January's open meeting takes place on the second Wednesday of the month - January 12th.

Thanks to all who contributed to this and past newsletters. Keep your articles rolling in. The more the better! So take up your pen and get scribing for the next newsletter.

ALL THE BEST FOR 1994 Ed.

FOOTNOTE:-

The Editor accepts the limitations of decoding handwriting and apologises for any errors in transcription. ---ANGUS