



Forfar & District Hill Walking Club

NEWSLETTER 6

December 1994

The President's column

As the year draws to a close, it does one good to think back to those long walking days of summer - shorts, dried burns and lots of flies. However there is something special about these short winter days. I'm writing this just a few hours after the wonderful December Meet to Schiehallion - what views and the first snow of the winter, for me anyway. Just a few weeks ago, I took a Tuesday off work to coincide with a school in-service day and took David on a hillwalk. We drove to Glen Prosen Lodge, then cycled up to Kilbo against a gale force wind and wandered up the Kilbo path to Mayar. On the way up a huge (several hundred) herd of deer crossed our route, then we saw the biggest flock of ptarmigan that I've ever seen - 30 or so - all in winter plumage. We reached our bikes in the daylight and cycled back to Glen Prosen Lodge, arriving in the dusk with a beautiful sunset. I was shaken to bits - must buy a mountain bike one of these days - but a good day out.

What a good response to our appeal for articles for this newsletter. Very encouraging. Keep it going.

There were no entries for the challenge which I set in the last newsletter for songs associated with the hills- so no prizes! Here are a few possible answers - "Loch Lomond" (Trad.), "The Sound of Music" (Julie Andrews), Jack and Jill (Trad.), "Rocky Mountain High" (John Denver), "The blue mountains of Virginia" (Laurel & Hardy).....

I hope you enjoy this newsletter. Many thanks to all the contributors. May I take this opportunity on behalf of the committee to wish you all a Happy Christmas and a Guid New Year.

Colin

January Meeting

Note that this takes place on the 2nd Wednesday of the month (January 11th). After the open meeting Rachel Benvie, will give a talk on Archeology and Castles of Angus.

The Secretary Has Moved

Nick has moved to 3 Ullapool Cr., Dundee DD2 4TT
Phone 0382 641603.

Please change the details in your meet calendar.

Winter Fun Day

This is mentioned in your winter calendar. The provisional date is Sunday 22nd January. This event needs snow so obviously it is dependent on the weather. If it can not take place on that date then the following dates will be tried (in this order) - Sun 12 February, Sunday 19th February. The following activities will be attempted :- sledging, snow-holing, polybagging, snowman building, snow ball fights and anything else you can do in the snow. As well as the fun, we will take some time to train newcomers in winter techniques if the conditions permit. It was intended to try X-C skiing. Some of us have these. Instead of hiring these for a day (quite expensive), we hope to let you try it out on the day. We might even have a race - handicapped of course!

January Meet

The next official meet takes place on January 8th to Glen Clova. We will meet at 9.30 at the Clova Hotel (not at the Myre as stated in the papers) See Meet Calendar for details. We will be taking High Tea afterwards at the Clova Hotel. Names for High Tea to Nick as soon as possible. The club gird championship will also take place during the evening. It's been several years since this was last run.

Halloween Party

This was held on Saturday 29th October in Whitehaugh after a very wet and unproductive work party. It was well attended - good to see so many youngsters. The participants were treated to fireworks in the rain before indulging in the usual dooking for apples and treacle scones.

The 15th Great Outdoors Challenge

(coast-to-coast)

The Micro-tape diary of Jim Douglas -

Part 1

The preparation for this walk has taken me 2 months or more. The walk must be started anywhere between Torridon and Oban; must finish between Peterhead and Arbroath and take 14 days or less. Each person must plan their own route and every route is vetted by the Challenge committee. When each person starts the walk in May, this year it is Friday 13th May which has been chosen as the earliest date for starting, a special book must be signed and then it is necessary to telephone control every 2/3 days ending the walk by signing off in the Park Hotel in Montrose no later than Thursday 26th May.

As my original pack weighed 70 lbs, I have had to resort to weighing each article for weight on the kitchen scales and have managed to reduce the total weight to 43 lbs.

Friday 13th May: it's 10 a.m. when I sign the book in the Kintail Lodge Hotel, Glensheil. There are about 20 names in the book, most of these walkers going via Glen Affric, the others like myself going up Glen Sheil. The sun is just beating down and when I get to the quarry, I will change into shorts and T-shirt. There are 2 bealachs over the south Glen Shiel ridge into Glen Quoich, one starts at Mhalagain Bridge, follow the Allt Mhalagain up to the bealach Duibh Leac, the other one which I choose starts at Eas-nan-arne Bridge, through a wood then follow the Allt an Fhraoch-choire right up the choire. The path is very good to start with then just disappears. In the distance, I see a beautiful waterfall, quite high up in the choire. 2 hours later and I crossing the burn about 200 ft downstream from the falls. By this time I have found a zigzag path which, after a steep climb disappears into the snow fields which are vast and slippery with the sun. Eventually, I reach the top, Bealach Fraoch Choire, where I can see a number of figures climbing Creag na Damh. I've stopped beside their rucksacks which are just at the top of the stalker's path which zigzags down into Glen. It has taken me 6 hours to get here from Sheilbridge and I'm totally exhausted. I'm finding it very difficult, especially with the weight I'm carrying. I'm staying here for an hour or so. The scenery is breathtaking and will speak to some Munro-baggers. Heading off down Wester Glen Quoich to a ruin 2 miles away where I will camp for the night. The time is about 8 p.m. and I've walked only 12 miles. Is it my imagination? I keep hearing the first cuckoo of spring!

Saturday 14th May: The sun is still shining and there is a cool wind. Have my first and last bath in the river - it was freezing and the mosquitoes are certainly friendly. Last

night it took me 15 minutes to pitch tent but this morning 3/4 hour to repack everything. I've put feet pads on my feet which are badly blistered. Now walking down a path to Alltbeithe farm on to a landrover track, down an arm of Loch Quoich to a bridge (built by the Hydro Board who also own the fishing rights to the loch) which is part of the unclassified road from Tomdoun to Kinloch Hourn. I'm having a morning break and the sun is just beating down. For a road that is at the back of beyond, it is very busy with cars parked and owned by fishermen making use of the fishing rights on the loch. I have planned to walk about 11 miles today on fairly flat roads. From where I am sitting the views are absolutely tremendous. Everything is crystal clear. Behind me Sgurr a' Mhaoraich, in front of me Gleouraich and across Loch Quoich is Gairich and Sgurr Mor. I've changed into my canvas boots now and feeling it much cannier on feet. Tea-time at Quoich dam then on past Coille Mhorgil which is the start of Glen Garry and afforestation. Heading for Tomdoun Hotel. It is 5 p.m. and finding it easier walking now. After booking in at the hotel, ran a bath which filled up with hot brown peaty water, took off my boots, climbed in and washed socks, underwear, shorts, shirt and myself all at the same time. What a lovely feeling!. At dinner this evening, I sat at the same table as a woman and a man (who are not related). The man started off by saying that he had done all the Munros and was halfway to doing them a second time, then the woman stated that she had done all the Munros and the Corbetts and has recently fulfilled her ambition by doing Mount Keen on horseback. I knew they were waiting for me to say something but I was at a loss for words. The "Munros" which I had climbed on South Georgia Island in 1947, I don't think would have counted, so I excused myself!! I went to the bar which by this time was full of walkers and anglers and by the late evening, I don't know who was telling the biggest whoppers but a great night was had by all. I met a lad who has passed me when I was camping the other morning who told me he has come up from Glasgow to Sheilbridge by bus and when he booked his digs, he realised that he'd lost his wallet and credit card holder containing £300 money. The landlady gave him board on trust, someone lent him £20 for food etc. and he telephoned the police. Late that night the police contacted him to say that all had been found on the bus and would be sent next morning by bus. He was over the moon. Today has been a much better day. I managed 2 mph. Yesterday which tried me to my limit was just over 1 mph. Now for a good sleep.

(Continued on page 5)

SLEEPLESS NIGHTS

by Dorothy Adam

I never thought that one day I'd be climbing the 'IN PIN', the Inaccessible Pinnacle in Skye, even though I had been dragged over lots of Munros for years when Dave was Munro-bagging. I had no real ambition to climb all the Munros; as always, at the back of my mind, was the dreaded In Pin, a definite no-go or so I thought.

Anyway, my son Garry had another ambition and that was to take me up the In Pin when he came home from Hong Kong.

The First Expedition - So, this summer, when Dave and I were on holiday in the caravan at Sligachan Campsite, we were joined by Garry, his wife Doreen and their four month old son Arran. I then had my first abseiling lesson in a quarry and, after *lots* of instruction, I was highly praised for my attempts. After this, we were all set to 'conquer' the In Pin the next day. Boy, did I have a sleepless night that night; I think I climbed the pinnacle several times in my dreams!

However, much to my simultaneous relief and disappointment, the weather scuppered our intentions, with a day of high wind, bucketing rain and midgies in abundance. Unfortunately, after a few such days and no sign of any improvement, the 'conquest' had to be called off.

Garry made it quite clear that we would be back to do it sometime soon. I can assure you, I lost a lot of sleep over it but I knew that I wasn't going to get out of it that easily. Anyway, by this time, I did really want to do it; just to get it over and done with.

My next abseiling lesson was in a quarry outside Kirkintilloch, on *huge* rocks and, boy, was I nervous then! However, thankfully, Garry was again really patient with me which restored my confidence. Our next date was set for September for returning to Skye and, this time, my daughter Elaine and her fiancé Paul were also to join us.

The Conquest - The day being a Saturday and the weather being absolutely perfect, a blue sky, the sun shining brightly, the air fresh and crisp, there was no way of backing out. We set off, over the river, along its banks and up the western ridge towards the summit, stopping for a cuppy to satisfy our appetites soak up the sun and admire the stunning island views out to the Atlantic and along the Cuillin Ridge; it really was a spectacular and awesome sight.

After a wee scramble along the narrow summit ridge towards the top, we could see the pinnacle in its full and frightening splendour; sharp as a razor blade, pretty high up and with massive, steep drops on either side. However, I was not to be deterred, having just bought a postcard the day before, which had revealed the true nature of both routes up and down this very exposed, much fabled 'rock'; I knew only too well what I

was letting myself in for, in the name of Munro-bagging.

Having reached the top by early afternoon, we were slightly perturbed to find dozens of other people milling about the pinnacle; they too had obviously decided to make full use of this very rare, spectacular day on Skye to climb Scotland's ultimate Munro. We actually had to queue for hours, literally, to climb the pinnacle; it was just unbelievable! There was a hill-walking club from Paisley, plus one from Aberdeen, with experienced rock climbers in each taking everyone up in penny numbers. Garry had a quick count and soon had it all figured out that it would be dark by the time everyone got up the pinnacle.

The Climb - Garry went off solo, up the long route to the pinnacle; a climb of about 150 feet. He asked Doreen, an experienced climber, to climb up the short, virtually vertical, route, a 50 feet climb, to see whether it was advisable for me to climb up that way and hence skip the long queue for the other route. Meanwhile, Elaine and Paul looked after little Arran, the wee gem, as Doreen made her ascent. However, as that route was in the shade, with her hands going numb from the freezing rock, and the climb very steep and difficult for an inexperienced climber, Doreen didn't recommend that I climb up that way.

Garry and Doreen abseiled off and we went back down to re-join the still very long queue, almost three hours after having first reached the top! By this time, I think I was past feeling nervous, I just wanted to get on with the job; it really was a 'now or never' occasion, with the weather being perfect and everyone gathered together for the special day.

I put my harness and crash helmet on, was given a good old lecture from Dave about how exposed it was up there and a well versed ticking-off from Garry about standing on the rope. We jumped the queue and set off. Garry went up ahead of me to put in the runners, whilst I waited for the tugs on the rope to follow him. I then came up attached to his rope, with Dave close on my heels to give me a shove and yet another ticking-off for going on my knees when I couldn't reach the hand-holes. Elaine was roped up to Dave and took up the rear, taking out the runners as she climbed up.

Boy, was I relieved when I finally saw Garry at the top! I think he was even more relieved when he saw the white crash hat appearing on the horizon. The exposure didn't really bother me in the end, as I kept my eyes firmly glued to the next step ahead and didn't dare let my eyes gaze around. I can honestly say, all the way up, I thought about all the people I had watched go up before me; exposure was the least of my worries, after the ordeal of the actual climb. We had quite a long wait at the top of the pinnacle, as there were a lot of people coming up the short side, given that time was racing on and darkness about to fall. Once again, I had all my harness and ropes checked by Garry before my abseil and

I must say, I actually enjoyed that bit, despite all my earlier sleepless nights worrying about it and dreams of climbing it with a few falls off it along the way. The thing was, I never really knew much about the steep climb up, although I had heard a few rumblings from Dave about the fact that I would be on a rope going up but I didn't ask too many questions, as I already had a bad enough picture in my mind. Elaine, being smaller than I am, found some of the leg stretches quite difficult, plus had no-one behind her to give her a shove up, as I had with Dave. Still, she really enjoyed the experience of doing it, plus the tremendous sense of achievement having climbed it.

With time marching on, Paul was the last one to go up; he had no choice but to climb up the short, steep route, even though he had never done any rock climbing or abseiling before. However, climb it he did; so impressed us all with his speed and expertise, or should I say lack of it!

After we had all abseiled off the pinnacle, we had to set off with haste back down the ridge, as the sun sank lower and lower in the cloudless sky; it was a beautiful sunset to watch as we hurried along, the brightly coloured sky reflecting on the sea. We decided to descend quickly down a stone chute, itself a bit of a hairy experience but nothing to dent our bravado, in comparison with the In Pin. Poor wee Arran, who had been so content all day up at the top, was none too happy with the speedy clatter down the scree.

At the bottom of the scree chute, by the wee lochan, the sky was getting really dark and there were a few falls in the peat hags as we made our way over the boggy terrain; whatever happened to 'King of the Bog'? I could certainly make a few nominations for that one, eh Paul? Dave totally bemused fellow pinnacle climbers with his 'diddle dum de de' singing in the dark, as he strode out apparently on his own, unbeknown to the onlookers and listeners carrying a now more content little Arran on his back enjoying his Granddad's singing. At last, we all crossed the burn, with no-one falling in, and gratefully sank into the car seats, exhausted but elated.

It was a really strenuous day for all of us, particularly for Garry and Dave, but it was well worth all the effort. As you can imagine, we chased quite a few nips and pints in the Sligachan Hotel that night as we celebrated our joint achievement. Arran was a wee star at the top of the hill, a true wee gem, being kept amused by all the people wearing all the colourful climbing gear.

The Future - As for me, I now have no excuse for not going on to complete my last 37 Munros, with my navigator to guide me. Perhaps there are still a few epics to come but hopefully no more sleepless nights for myself or Dave, my ally at arms, or should that be on a rope!

So, the moral of this little story is, if you haven't already

'conquered' the In Pin and would like to but fear your ability to climb up and abseil off it, have faith and fear no more; if I, a woman in my mid-fifties, overcame my anxiety, plucked up the courage and managed to 'conquer' it, so too can you. Happy Munro-bagging of the In Pin!

The Edge - a Quiz by John Norrie

Did you recently see on television a series entitled "The Edge", telling part of the story of Scottish Mountaineering? Here are a few questions to see how well you were paying attention.

Episode 1 : Skye

- (a) Allan Kimber played Prof.Collie. Who played the guide John M^cKenzie?
- (b) Where did Collie spend his last few months?
- (c) Where are Collie and M^cKenzie Buried?

Episode 2 : Ben Nevis

- (a) The first winter ascent of Tower Ridge was made by a trio of Bell, Murray and..... ?
- (b) The story of this ascent was written by Murray under unusual circumstances. What?
- (c) Ken Crockett and Andy Nisbet climbed "Smith's Route" in this episode. Who was Smith?

Episode 3: Glen Coe

- (a) How old was Jimmy Marshall when this episode was being made?
- (b) Jimmy Marshall and John M^cLean are both members of what climbing club?
- (c) What is the their club hut?

Episode 4 : Creag Meagaidh, Old Man of Stoer

- (a) Mick Tighe portrayed whom, climbing the "Girdle Traverse" on Creag Meagaidh?
- (b) How many climbers got to the top of the Old Man of Stoer at the first attempt?
- (c) Who was he? Where was he killed?

Episode 5 : Ben Dearg, Cairngorms

- (a) How many successive weekends did Mike Fowler drive up from London to climb?
- (b) What is his occupation?
- (c) For this type of mixed climbing, Graham Ettles used one of "how many" pairs of crampons in his possession?

Short of Answers? Well watch the repeats and the second series. And Oh! Who was the producer? He gave a talk in Dundee recently and we even circulated details in the bus on the Tanar-Esk meet in October!

See answers on back page

The Micro-tape diary of Jim Douglas -

Part 2

(continued from page 2)

Sunday 15th May: Slept like a log last night and after a full Scottish breakfast am on my way although a bit later than planned. A dull day, cool wind at my back but dry. Yesterday the last two miles before Tomdoun had been like walking through a rhododendron wood with a few Scots pines, silver birches and alders, but today it's all spruce and larch. I've left the road and crossed Loch Garry by bridge to Greenfield. It's lovely and quiet again. That's the first 4 miles over. Four challengers and then another two passed as I was resting in Garry woods. One of them was a girl called Elizabeth who was "Bed and Breakfasting" it, following Hamish Browr's coast-to-coast walk. Her ruck-sack weighed 12 lbs. She laughed when I told her that she could have put it in her handbag. After leaving the Cluanie Inn, she had put on her dry-walkers to cross the River Loyne which was deeper than she thought and had got her bum wet! I'm nearly in Invergarry now. The last mile or so the woods have been full of primroses, bluebells and more rhododendrons. I've completed another 8 miles and the day is much brighter, the mist having lifted from about 1000 ft to 2500 ft. Now and again I'm getting some wonderful views of the hills. Invergarry Hotel for lunch and a pint. The challengers who had passed me earlier were having their lunch there and then going on to Aberchalder and up Glen Buck to join the Corrieyairack Pass. For me, the next 3 miles along the A82 are proving terrible - the slowest car is doing 70 mph and I've lost count of the number of times I've had to jump onto the verge. At last the Caledonian Canal, peace and tranquillity again with a stop at Kyltra Lock. The keeper planted hundreds of spring bulbs and they are all in bloom. I asked him about the traffic on the canal. He told me that over 80% is tourist traffic with 6 fishing boats a week using it and at that moment, 3 of them came into view. "P.L." was painted on them - whatever

port that is. Fort Augustus at last. I've been on the go for 9 hours today and walked 19 miles.

Monday 16th May: The B&B I had last night was very good - charge £10 with full breakfast and as a bonus the British Legion Club next door. I've replenished my Mars bars and Snickers pack and with a light heart and heavy pack have started up the Corrieyairack Pass. About 'A mile up the track, I've had to divert on to a newly made path through a farmer's field on my right as the old Wade road has been completely washed away to a depth of 6 feet for about a mile. The sun has appeared and having walked 4 miles with a head-cold and sore back, have stopped beside a bridge for lunch where 4 other walkers were resting as well. Now at the Hydro hut at the top of the pass. It's snow-capped about 300 ft from the top

although the sun is shining. It is very cold and I'll not sit for long. The views are spectacular, from sighting of the long necked fish in Loch Ness to the snow-capped hills of the Creag Meagaidh group. I was heading for the Garva Bridge but after about 1 mile past Melarve Bothy have decided to camp by the River Spey. It's shepherds pie tonight, one of the Raven dried food packs. No matter what is in the packet, they all taste the same - roll on dessert- a Mars Bar!! Have walked about 16 miles today, taking 10 hours.

Tuesday 17th May: Woke up with a start - someone was trying to get into the tent. Looked out to see 6 deer who shot right across the river as I came out. I felt a bit cold during the night for the first time. Muesli and a cup of tea then on the road to Kingussie. It's a fine dry morning, cool wind from the west. Notice that there are a few tents still up a Garva Bridge. In a field at Spey Dam, there is a Wade bridge with no river under it - I wonder if the Spey ran under it before the Hydro Board diverted the river. Laggan at last, where I bought a pie and a can of Coke which tasted really good. Now rested the feet for 20 minutes at a table outside the "Wee Shoppie". Onward yet again onward. The next town is Newtonmore which is 7 miles away. Have stopped again at a lay-by to chat to a lady and her father who are having a picnic. After sharing a flask of coffee very kindly offered, I set off again and guess what! I was offered my first lift by the couple, who were on their way to Braemar. What a temptation! "Who would know?" she said when I declined. "I would" I said. At Newtonmore have found a nice pub. Going to have lunch and a couple of ice-cold pints - also remove the boots. 3 miles later arriving at Kingussie refreshed but exhausted, I've found a laundrette. Everything going into the machine except myself and the boots. There are 20 or so challengers in Kingussie in various types of accommodation. At night have arranged to go to town - ended up on the malts and neats! I had walked about 21 miles today. Kingussie is nearly 80 miles from Glensheil. So I still hear that cuckoo!.

Wednesday 18th May: Today I have planned to have a rest-day (no walking whatsoever) and have taken the bus to Aviemore then a taxi to Coylumbridge Hotel for a swim, sauna lunch which has really revived me, A taxi ride back to Aviemore where I am enjoying a cup of coffee at the Red M^cGregor and being told that the new swim, sauna lunch complex opened today here. Bus back to Kingussie Hostel hoping I have timed correctly that it's open for the evening. In bed for an early night after enjoying a lovely fish supper at one of the local chip shops. On the way up to Ratagan Youth Hostel where I spent my first night before starting the walk, I had left a food sack and gas cylinder at Kingussie Hostel. My pack tomorrow is going to be deadweight again - now for a good sleep. 6 down and 6 to go!

Thursday 19th May: A lovely sunny day. Have said good-bye to a few walkers I had met previously and now heading towards the Feshie. I've caught up with Keith Grant from the south of England and we are walking towards Braemar. After passing through a beautiful hamlet, Drumguish, consisting of six old cottages, six new bungalows and a telephone kiosk, we are walking through the forest until we have come to a river and sign saying 'Lambing - do not cross by the bridge, wade the stream 200 yards down at the ford - that is the right of way'. Our control had told us about this. The 'stream', the Allt Chronhraig is about 9 inches deep. Keith put on his drywalkers, crossing in 5 minutes. He then put a stone in each one and threw them back to me. They are made of a strong reinforced plastic, fit any boot-size and are leg length. Cost is approx. £10, weight only 8oz. "Santa! they are top of my Christmas list". That little hurdle over, we have passed Corarnstilmore house then joined the main Feshie road down at the Memorial bridge. Stopped at Ruigh-aiteachain bothy for tea where 3 lads have a good fire on the go. They are going up to Cairn Toul and down the Lairig Ghru to Braemar. After crossing the Eidart bridge we are both feeling the strain. My pack weighs over 40 lbs and when we are now see the tents just opposite Geldie Lodge, have decided to keep them company. Keith has got camping food from America, has asked if I would like to try a packet of what is called WildTime Turkey - grains of brown rice, turkey, vegetables, wild rice in a tandoori sour cream sauce - enough for two persons. Well with the portions the Americans eat, there is enough to feed 4 persons and it is delicious. Tonight is the coldest yet (I found out later it was -10°C). I've put on all my clothes as my sleeping bag is a 3-season. Today I've walked 18 miles. **Friday 20th May:** Today there is 1/2 inch of snow and it is very frosty. The tent is covered in frost and the water in my bottles is frozen. We have decided not to hang around and are off at the crack of dawn with snow still falling. Our next main stop was at the Linn o' Dee where the temperature was 70°F and there are lots of challengers having lunch. As we are heading for Braemar, Jim Maison of Forfar and member of the Mountain Bothies Association called us into Inverey Hostel for a chinwag and a few cups of tea. Heading for the Fyfe Arms - have arrived there only to be told they closed 10 mins before - typical Scottish hospitality! Keith and I part company here. He is bed and breakfasting. I'm off to the hostel where I'm informed that tomorrow there could be 100-150 challengers in Braemar and most will try to drinking the town dry, some eventually going for a swim in the Dee. Tomorrow I'm heading for Jock's Road. Ended up buying a tin of sausages and beans and rustled up a meal at the hostel. Have walked 15 miles today.

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MAGNIFICENT MUNROS by Dave Muirison

What are your favourite Munros? The Great Outdoors (May 94) published lists of the top 20 Munros and Hamish Brown's 1989 list. What would the FDHWC members' list look like? Who should be asked? The people who had been there, done that and had the webbed feet to prove it!

I sent out questionnaires to the elite of the FDHWC - That is the 10 Munroists who are currently members. The spread of ages, sex (7&3), completion dates ('81 to '94), time taken etc. would give a fairly representative sample, but how to decide the considerations for inclusion :- the weather, season, view, size of blisters, height etc., etc. I chickened out and left it entirely to the individual. I asked for a list of their top 20 in no particular order but indicating a preferred 1, 2, 3. First choice was credited with 2 nominations, second and third with 1& 1/2 and the remainder with 1 nomination. When totaled, I hoped this would give a true lie of the land.

In came the replies. The sense of anticipation rising within me with each arrival. I could feel their love for the subject, devotion, joy, sacrifice, sheer dogged determination, nostalgia, yes and relief dripping through the envelopes off the page. (Sorry but I've slipped into Barbara Cartland mode for a moment, he wrote pretentiously). Back to business. The total number of mountains nominated was 75. The final list includes only those receiving 3 or more nominations, 25 in number. Here is the list.

9	Sgurr nan Gillean
9	Ladhar Bheinn
6	Ben Cruachan
4½	An Teallach
4½	Mam Sodhail
4½	Mam Sodhail
4½	Bidean a'Choire Sheasgaith
4	Aonach Eagach
4	Sgurr Dearg (In. Pinn.)
4	Seana Bhraigh
4	Beinn Dearg (Ross-Shire)
4	Ben Lui
4	Ben Alder
3½	Beinn Alligin
3½	Lochnagar
3½	Schiehallion
3	Sgurr na Ciche
3	Blaven
3	The Saddle
3	Liathach
3	Beinn Eighe
3	Beinn Fhada
3	Gleouraich

So there we have it. A few surprise inclusions and omissions, but quality from car park to cairn. The tourist Munros did not do very well. Skye, Torridon and the rough, tough and distant being the favourite tipples. First Munros were shared widely over the local hills. Last Munros were scattered all over Scotland as were the favourite non-Munros. Local favourite was Lochnagar. Sincere thanks to Winnie, Davie, Rita, John, Barbara, Bill, Dave and Brian for indulging my parasitic enquiries and taking the time and trouble to search their hearts and minds for the article. Your replies will be returned and copies retained for the club scrap book if you are agreeable.

Open Meeting Summary

For those who don't attend the open meetings, we've had a full programme restarting in September. Twenty or so people attended the two-part navigation classes in September and October run by John and Colin and helped by many experienced navigators. This was mainly staged for new members but was open to all. In November, Miki Dales from Methven, came to talk about walking in Ecuador (great slides) and John Rogers from Perth came in December to talk about the John Muir Trail in the Sierra Nevada, California. Full details of forthcoming events are in your winter programme calendar.

The Micro-tape diary of Jim Douglas -Part 3

(continued from page 6)

Saturday 21st May: I've set off for Glen Doll Hostel at 8 a.m. in a cool but dry morning. I had previously arranged to leave all my camping gear and surplus items in the hostel to be collected later. Now my pack weighs about 20 lbs and I feel great. My first stop is at Loch Callater, the sun shining but the wind is cool at my back. On climbing up the corrie out of Glen Callater, I feel I am making very good progress when suddenly 4 people with wings on their feet pass me in seconds and are going on to climb Tolmount and Tom Buidhe. The snow is quite deep around the Crow Craigies (the highest point in the whole walk for me) and the wind has strengthened so I'll shelter for a while at the end of the crags for a light lunch - well deserved. 30 minutes later the sun has come out again and once again continuing to the hostel. The 4 winged messengers who had overtaken me earlier plus 6 other challengers are in the hostel. We've made a sort of hot-pot with all the surplus spare food and all had a really good meal. That's 15 miles I've walked today but not feeling so tired. I've got a long day tomorrow.

Sunday 22nd May: A beautiful day and I'm really excited about heading for Forfar and home. I can hear that bird again. It has followed me from Glensheil - its nest must be in Montrose! Cuckoos all day! Trying to get down the road before all the Sunday drivers appear. I've stopped at the Dykehead Hotel where I've enjoyed lunch. Phoned home from the kiosk where the glens road crosses the B957 - only 3 1/2 miles to go. Have been offered my second lift by a hired taxi, again refused. After receiving the telephone call, my wife Jean sets off from Taylor Street to meet me just in time to witness my refusal! We both sat for a wee while to enjoy some tea and home-made cake - delicious. It's good to have a walking companion for the last mile or two - feel I'm in good shape today after walking 22 miles. Home to a lovely, warm, long bath and glad to get into my own **bed**.

Monday 23rd May: When planning my route, I had decided to have a rest day in Forfar. It's good to have a relaxed day and able to properly change the felt dressings on my feet. I've found the thick feet pads put on the balls of my feet were the best. Early to bed and really enjoyed the luxury of all mod cons.

Tuesday 24th May???: Woke from a deep sleep and made an early start for Montrose. As I'm crossing the Montrose bridge, the streets are lined with cheering crowds, the band is playing and the provost has come to lead me into the Park Hotel where I receive my certificate of merit, a gold medal, cheque for £1000 and just as I was about to speak to Grampian T.V., I woke up. That cuckoo has followed me!!

Tuesday 24th May: The sun is shining, a cold wind blowing, but Jean and I have set off together with my ultra-light pack. I have decided to wear my canvas boots to lighten the load even more. Jean kept me company until the pavement ended in the Montrose Road just outside Forfar. It's 9.30 a.m. and the traffic has died down. The road walking is quite pleasant and have been passed by a group of cyclists from Noranside Open Prison wondering if I wanted a lift! This happened beside the Brechin cross-roads near Friockheim. Have stopped for lunch with 8 miles to go. I can now see the Montrose Basin. - a great sight to behold. The road sign says 1 mile. Have arrived at the Park Hotel to receive my certificate. It is very busy with Challenge walkers, many of whom I'd met en route, including Keith Grant. Plenty to talk about. A friend is coming to drive me back to Forfar but will manage to have a refreshment before leaving for home. An official dinner is to be held on Friday 27th May at the Park Hotel but I've decided not to attend. Glad to be home but feeling very pleased with my effort. Yes I would do it again! Next Time I wouldn't camp, I would use Bed and Breakfast and bothies. Also I would reduce the weight to be carried. On hindsight, I

might have even managed to reduce the weight I did carry to 35 lbs. It was a marvelous experience of endurance and friendliness. The highlight of my 165 mile walk was crossing the south Glen Sheil ridge - Shangri-la for me!

Reflections on the Clova Half Marathon (or The Elusive Raith Rovers Woolly Hat)

By John Norrie

Going up the glen, the rain water is already halfway across the road in places. Ah well, it might go off within the next 2/3 hours. Yes its only 9.30 a.m., and the race doesn't start until 12 noon. Why am I here? I've got the registration staff in my car. Perhaps I'll get a prize for the first competitor to register.

11.30, no let up in the weather, reports of flooding on the road. Met Andy Clark, "Hell o' a day - seen Colin?" "Not yet, ach he's aye late".

12 noon, can hardly hear the start gun going off because of the rain. 292 runners/swimmers set off. I'm at the back of the group so I should see the Raith Rovers Woolly Hat. No. 100 yards into the run - first flood -everybody dances. End of the 1st mile, and the uphill bit starts. My fellow Footer leaves me. What with a facing wind, persistent rain, flooded roads - who cares. Caddam Farm, Phyllis from the hotel is recording this on video, daft besom's getting soaked. Alas a downhill bit then up, up and up.

3 miles - a watering station! on a day like this! 4 miles -I can see ahead now, but no sign of the Raith Rovers Woolly Hat. At this point, I start to have problems with my overtrousers - they've decided that they're tired and keep falling down, which means 9 miles of holding them up.

5 miles, I can now see the lead runners across the glen, maybe a sighting of a Raith Rovers Woolly Hat. "No!"

Downhill at the Gella brig, good, now the wind and rain are driving into my back. Meet Martin Horn (sitting in his car - he's dry]. "Hi Martin, seen Colin?" "No" " Not wish you were running again?" "No". Uphill to the 8 mile mark and Glasslet Farm, my back is getting awfully cold. Caught up with Gordon Sneddon. We blether about the hills and the Mountain Film Festival.

It's now impossible to jump over the puddles. Will we be able to get over the bridge at Rottal? 9 Miles -another watering station, manned by two inmates from

Noranside. The rain is horizontal. They'd be better off absconding than standing there. Had they seen a runner with a beard and a Raith Rovers Woolly Hat? No. Passing the Wheen, no Jim Edwards to shout at now. The place is deserted. 11 mile marker, only two "undulating" miles to go, Caught a couple of lads, it's not getting any warmer. Caught by a bloke wearing only vest and shorts. He must be worse off than me. My overtrousers are still slipping down. 12 miles - March burn cottage, ah but there's a lot of sneaky braes within the next mile yet. Met a bloke running towards me, "Had he seen a guy with a Raith Rovers Woolly hat", "No".

13th mile, there's the hotel, there's the finish, 200 yards to go. Will Colin be waiting to cheer me on? Will he wave the Raith Rovers Woolly Hat to encourage me on?

Well no, because Colin didn't turn up to the race. It transpired that he had a throat infection, probably caused by shouting for a certain football team at various stages of a cup competition, and by not wearing his Raith Rovers Woolly hat to keep his head warm.

Congratulations to Andy Clark, the only surviving member of the club's team to be press-ganged into running and completing the race.

President's comments. *OK I get the message -I was a complete wimp. I was actually suffering from a momentary lapse into sanity that weekend. The Raith Rovers Woolly Hat was well used at the final though! Congratulations to Andy and John. Well Done.*

For Sale

Going to a good home. Moneys raised will be donated to a local charity.

- The president's old winter boots – Galibrier Super-Pro, leather, stiff sole, size 43.
- The president's ballet suite (so tight they feel like one - just can't go on squealing like this!) - Rohan salopettes - full length - lots of zips - size - smaller than me, probably a 38. Requires some needlework to redo the seams but in good condition.

Meet Report 1994

4th Jan Ben Gulabin

A few keen members went up this Corbett just after New Year, with a few even making it to the top on a wild day.

9th Jan "Trig Point Tramp" The Crannel Glen Esk.

22 members met at Edzell Muir car park, then moved on to Dalbog Farm. We proceeded to the Crannel via Meikle Tullo (had a "chat" with a gamekeeper about pheasant feeding habits). Then we went to East Wirren and Hill of Wirren - lots of snow on the top - returned via Cornescorn Farm. We finished with high tea at the Panmure Arms.

6th Feb Ben Vrackie

17 members attended, assistant meet secretary Stuart Fergusson in charge. The party walked from the Moulin Moor road over Ben Vrackie and down to Killiekrankie. Weather wild - crampons needed at the top.

6th March Ben Vorlich

9 members went by car. It was very windy and wet, but one group made it to the top. All descended safely by the north ridge and abandoned plans to also climb Stuc a'Chroin. All were back in Forfar by 4.00pm.

20th - 21st March Roybridge , Grey Corries Lodge

18 members attended. Saturday was a fine cold day with little wind. Alan C, Colin S and Noel J set off in deep snow to climb Stob Ban and the entire Grey Corries ridge. Noel had crampon problems and retired, but the other two completed a very hard day. Brian, Janet, Jane and Dave also spent the day on the Grey Corries ridge. A larger group with Dave A and Angus S failed to find a way up onto the Easains. The "A" team - Tilda, Martin and Nancy had an "easy" day on Gulvain (only one Munro, must be getting near the end). Emma and Neil spent the day on Craig Pitridh and Geal Charn.

Sunday saw groups back on the Easains, up Glen Roy on a Corbett and the "A" team in action on Meal na Teanga and Sron a'Choire Ghairbh - a hard day. A great weekend - in all 10 Munros were climbed, either on hard snow with crampons or in deep new snow.

17th April Ben Challum

15 members went from Glen Lochay to Kirkton Farm on the road between Crianlarich and Tyndrum over the top of Ben Challum. A fine day with extensive views. A party of 6 went on a low level route via Bealach Ghlas Leathaid.

30th April - 2nd May Dundonnell - Sail Mhor Croft

Excellent weather on both the Saturday and the Sunday. 22 members attended and between them climbed Ben Mor Assynt, Conival, Ben Dearg plus its three satellites, 5 Fannichs, An Teallach, Sail Mhor, Ben Dearg Mhor and Beag, and Fion Beinn. We all met up for a meal together at the Dundonnell Hotel on Saturday evening.

22nd May Lochnagar from Brig o'Dee

30 people took part - a number of new faces - the bus made a profit of £8!!!! The route followed a good stalker's path to Cam an t-Sagairt Mhor then onto Lochnagar via White Mount. A fine bright day - good chip shop in Ballater, also a fairly reasonable pub. Back in Forfar by 8.30 pm.

5th June Beinn a'Bhuird and Ben Avon

16 went by bus and 3 by car. The party set off at 9.30, three cycling (Rita and the McDonalds). All met up at the ford. Just before then Moira McDonald fell cutting her face badly. She was patched up and went back with Rita and Annette. The rest of the group went on to the top of Beinn a'Bhuird, 5 returned from there and the other 11 carried on to Ben Avon arriving at 3.30pm A long walk out over another hill - however the walkers were back before the bikers! The weather was sunny spells with the cloud level high and a strong cool west wind.

18-19th June Bridge of Orchy

12 members stayed at the Glencoe Ski Club hut. A very wet day on Saturday. Nancy and Martin walked up the Nevis Gorge after getting their car exhaust fixed in Fort William. The rest visited shops and museums. Sunday was better, 2 went to Ben Cruachan and most of the rest did the 3 easterly Mamores.

3rd July Stuchd an Lochain (John Muir Trust Summit Sweep)

The group left the Myre car park at 8.00am in three cars. They met up at Giorra Dam in Glen Lyon and set off walking at 10.45. One group - Tilda, Roy and Andy, the Munro baggers - set off for Meall Bhuidhe, the rest for Stuchd an Lochain. Clouds just above dam level. Reached the summit about 1 pm and after lunch proceeded to clean up the hill. One aluminium can, several tea bags and one or two cigarette ends were all that was found- good choice- a clean summit. On the descent odd bits of fence wire were picked up and a couple of paper tissues. Met another group who had also climbed Stuchd an Lochain. Found 5 grouse chicks on the way back to the dam. The cloud level had risen by 100 feet or so! Spent 20 minutes tidying up in the vicinity of the dam. In the end 3 bags of rubbish were taken home to a bin. Light refreshments were taken

during a stop at Coshville.

14th August Glas Tulaichean/ Cam an Rìgh

23 attended this walk. Most of the group went to Cam an Rìgh and back over Glas Tulaichean. A smaller group went to Beinn Iutharn Mhor and Cam Bhac. As this group was later getting back, the rest were forced to spend longer in the pub!

3rd-4th September Feshiebridge (Mill Cottage)

Only 6 members on this weekend. Saturday started clear. We left the cars at Achlean and walked to Cairn Toul via Einich Cairn. Heavy rain on the way back. On the Sunday 2 cycled to Blackburn of Pattock and the other 4 climbed Meall a'Bhuachaille to the north of Loch Morlich.

11th September Glen Feshie

All 26 people did the same walk through Glen Feshie. There was a problem turning the bus, which ended up reversing up the road! We started out at 10.00 am and reached the bothy for the first stop at 12.00. We carried on through the forest and stopped again on open ground at 2.00pm near the Eidart Bridge, where we at last saw some wildlife - a German fisherman! Next stop was at 4.00pm near Geldie Lodge, then White Bridge at 5.30pm and the bus at 6.30pm. The weather was mostly cloudy but with good visibility and with fresh snow on the higher Cairngorm tops. Martin produced a bottle of whisky to celebrate his "completion" last month of his Munros. We stopped at the Fife arms and reached Forfar at 9.30pm.

16th October Glen Tanar to Glen Esk

A large group of 34 or 35 people walked from Glen Tanar to Glen Esk via Mount Keen and enjoyed a clear, bright day. A pub stop in Edzell was also enjoyed by the party.

6th November An Socach

25 -30 members set out from south of Braemar to climb An Socach. It was a good clear day but cold and misty on the top. The party continued over the summit and descended steeply into Glen Ey then walked up the glen to Inverey.

4th December Schiehallion

24 members including 3 juveniles enjoyed a fine day on Schiehallion. Good views. A dusting of snow. Quite slippery.

The Edge - answers

1 (a) John Lyall (b) Sligachan Hotel (c) beside each other in Struan Cemetery, Skye.

2 (a) Laidlaw (b) While he was a POW (c) Robin Smith, Edinburgh

3 (a) 60 (b) Creag Dhu (c) Jacksonville

4 (a) Tom Patey (b) 1 (c) Tom Patey. Whitenhead

5 (a) 7 (b) Taxman (c) 5

Producer - Richard Else.

Seasonal meets

The "traditional" (we are 31 years old so we have traditions) seasonal meets will take place on Monday 26th December and Mon 2nd or Tues 3rd January. Weather permitting. Local hills. Last year we were on Burnt Hill, Glen Esk and Ben Gulabin. Turkey sandwiches are mandatory! Contact Brian or Stuart.

Club Clothing

A selection of T shirts, sweat shirts and polo shirts is available. Prices to be advised. The club logo **is** available in the left hand chest pocket area and the motto can be printed on the back. There is a catalogue showing the variety of colours and styles. Cloth and metal badges are also available. Neil is taking orders for these.