



Forfar & District Hill Walking Club

Newsletter 7

June 1995

President's Column.

Hello All. Yes, I'm still here. If you want to end this endless trail of drivel in this column, vote with your feet and come along to the next AGM - more about this later. With this newsletter, you will find the new meet calendar, which has some unusual meets planned. I hope you all approve of it. As they say, you can't please all of the people all of the time, but I hope you'll agree that there is enough variation to suit most of the members most of the time. We've added a new weekend meet in early December and have finally managed to add Assynt to the meet calendar. Utopia for our Corbett baggers. In addition, we have an Arrochar weekend in winter conditions (hopefully) and a couple of through walks.

Back to the AGM. What a disappointing turnout. For a club which has a membership of around 90, only 14 of you bothered to turn up. This isn't a one-off. The last few years have seen this decline. There were more people at the open meeting in June (with no speaker!). The committee have set next year's AGM date to coincide with our social night see if this helps, but we want your opinions. Hence the questionnaire which can in your bundle. This is an attempt by your committee to seek your views on the running of the club - specifically open meetings and meets. Please take the time to fill this up and hand it to any committee member.

Another Time, Same Place - Glen Sheep Sh.. At the last meet on June 6th to the Monadhliaths, we walked past the road end in Glen Banchor above Newtonmore and some distant memories were jogged. That very spot was the location of a weekend meet in June 1981. At that time, we were all hard men and women - campers we were. None of your cosy fleeces, Ron Hills and goretex fabrics - no we were a crowd of tinks then - hillwalking was about wearing your old clothes on a Sunday rather than your new ones. Anyway, I digress. A large contingent arrived on Friday night and set up camp down by the burn. Next day was to be Willie Milne's (see article on "The Presidents") last Munro - A' Chailleach. To get into party mood, some members spent a lengthy period in the pubs of Newtonmore, returned late, and proceeded to roll out of the tent into the fresh air in the middle of the night. (Actually there was no fresh air. Hence the title of this paragraph.) Next day, it was a mostly hungover group who set off for the 5 hills (all Munros then - only 3 are now). We all made it and partied on

the top with Willie and his pipers (Willie White was there too - see "The Presidents")

At the last AGM in March, there were a few changes in the committee. I want to take this opportunity to thank those committee members who stood down at the AGM, for their contribution to the club. Thanks to Brian Coull for his 3 year stint as meet secretary - a difficult and tiring job. Thanks to John Norrie for his 5 year stint as hut custodian - another difficult and very tiring job. And thanks to Clare Johnston for being our ordinary committee member for 3 years. Welcome too to their replacements - Dave Murison, Roy Rennie and Ray Campbell.

Thanks to the contributors of articles for this publication. I must say that I considered editing Dave's article - he seems to have a grudge against me! But if you don't turn up for an AGM, who knows what might happen to you! Any budding writers can start now for Newsletter 8.

I hope you all have a good summer.
Colin

Subscriptions

Members are reminded that subscriptions are now due - £10 for adults, £5 for juniors and OAPs. There has been some confusion about when subs are due - they should be paid at or after the AGM in March. Your membership cards have an expiry date marked on them!

Barbeque / Orienteering

This was originally scheduled for Friday 30th June. Due to the July meet moving to Saturday, 1st July, this event has been postponed until Saturday 19th August at 5pm at Whitehaugh following a work party. BRING A COMPASS. The work party will commence in the morning. Contact Dave M. for details. To assist with catering for the BBQ, please get in touch with Colin, stating your preference for hamburgers or vegiburgers !

Next Open Meeting

There are no open meetings in July or August. The next open meeting of the club will be held on Wednesday 7th September at 7.30pm. There will be a guest speaker after the meeting.

Buses

Members are encouraged to phone the meet secretary during the week prior to a walk. This allows him to decide if there are enough people to justify taking a bus. We normally make a loss on the buses, which are subsidised by Whitehaugh, but need to limit these losses.

Mountaincall

Mountaincall is a telephone weather forecasting service specifically geared to mountain areas and conditions. It is heavily subsidised and the Met. Office has stressed that it is in danger of being closed down due to lack of use. The number is : East 0891 500 441 ; West 0891 500 442. Another recorded forecast is Climblin ; East 0891 654 668 ; West 0891 654 669. Note (08 numbers don't need the preceding 1)

Scottish Avalanche Information Service

SAIS produce snow reports daily from mid December to mid April. These are displayed at car parks, some pubs and outdoor shops in Glen Coe, Lochaber and the Northern Cairngorms. The Police Avalanche Information Line is 0463 713 191.

Mountain Accidents

The Mountain Rescue Committee for Scotland has published a report on Scottish Mountain Rescues from 1964 to 1993 . The main conclusions were :

- Most casualties had adequate clothing, but only 76% carried an ice-axe and 59% crampons. It seems that many who did have an ice-axe were not proficient in its use.
- A simple slip or stumble was the contributory cause of 42% of incidents and 53% of fatalities, whilst avalanches contributed to 15% of casualties and 13% of fatalities.
- 50% of all casualties (including walkers) who sustained fatal head injuries were not wearing a helmet.
- Poor navigation was a factor in 14% of all casualties and 24% of fatalities. Companions were often unable to give accurate locations of the injured.

Aggravated Trespass

This is now a criminal offence. The Government and the Scottish Landowners Federation have said this will not be used against hillwalkers but the MCoF S wish to know of any incidents in which the law is mentioned during an access problem and will give legal support to members. Three cases are going through the courts at the moment - 2 canoeists and a horserider.

Affiliated Bodies

The Club is affiliated to the following bodies, some of which newer members may be unfamiliar with. The secretary has newsletters etc. from these organisations.

MOUNTAIN BOTHIES ASSOCIATION

This is a charity founded in 1965 to maintain simple unlocked shelters in remote country for the use of walkers, climbers and other outdoor enthusiasts who love the wild and lonely places. Bothies require some maintenance and Area Organisers arrange workparties as required. The MBA publishes and promotes a code of conduct for those who use such shelters and the surrounding countryside. See Nick for workparty details.

THE SCOTTISH RIGHTS OF WAY SOCIETY

The objects of the SRWS are : 1. The preservation, defence and acquisition of public rights of way in Scotland. 2 The preservation and restoration of such rights of way as may be in danger of being lost.

BOOTS ACROSS SCOTLAND

Boots is a trust fund which was set up by friends of a climber seriously injured in a climbing accident. The fundraising was so successful that the idea has been kept going to support other hillgoers in the future. Boots supports mountain rescue teams, promotes a greater awareness of mountain safety and offers to those injured on the hills support when recovering from injury. Much of their money is raised during the Boots Event when they aim to have walkers on every Munro. The next Boots Event is on 26 May 1996, which is on the meet calendar.

JOHN MUIR TRUST

The John Muir Trust is committed to practical action to preserve Britain's remaining wild places for their own sake, for the wildlife that depends on them, for the benefit of the local communities and for the enjoyment of future generations. It has bought four areas of wild land - In Knoydart, in Skye and in Northwest Sutherland.

Mountain Management

Reproduced by kind permission of Boots Across Scotland

Our informed source at Westminster has revealed the existence of a discussion document on the future Management of the Mountains and those who would choose to climb them. There has been no previous precedent and it has been framed round the conditions set by the Road Traffic Act. A few teething problems are expected but it is hoped that with the cooperation of hillusers it will soon be accepted as being necessary for the future well-being of the Mountain environment.

From the inception date of the new Act all persons who intend to ascend above the 300 metre contour will be required to register with the new authority informing them of their intentions and previous experience, if any. The application should be sent to the Mountain Users National Registration Organisation or Munro for short.

All those registered will be contacted by an inspector from Munro and they will be required to undergo a test of their hill knowledge and correct procedures when indulging in their chosen pursuit. On completion they will be free to apply to the authority for issue of a Hillgoers Licence which must be carried at all times when on the hill. The licence will only be issued when the applicant has successfully completed a rigorous climbing test which lasts for approximately one hour. As with the Driving test the candidate will be required to prove they are competent to be roaming on the hills and the test will begin with an eyesight test which requires the candidate to identify a Guinness source from 250 metres. Seat belts are not required but all rucksack straps must be securely fastened and free from fraying or defect. The route taken will be at the examiners discretion and is designed to test the candidate through a range of situations. At some point on the course you will be asked to perform an emergency stop, this should be done as smoothly as possible and any grabbing of boulders or trees will incur a fail. Do not expect any encouragement from the examiner as his bonus is equated to the number of failures he can produce in a week. After all, your intention is to walk and climb on what is, perhaps, his paymaster's property.

The test concludes with an "awareness" section which will confirm if the candidate has the ability to read the signs which are relevant to safe travel in the hills. A common sign which is often overlooked is the cows lying down, this will tell the experienced eye that it is going to rain. Or what about "Red sky at night shepherds delight, red sky in the morning shepherds roof well alight". It is hoped that someone in the private sector will see the need for alternative hill education literature.

Successful candidates will be presented with their licence immediately but do not think that this gives you carte blanche "Freedom To Roam", no, this is if you remember a registration scheme where as with other schemes the registered get clobbered. There will be Munro Polis who are empowered to stop any person found on the hills and demand inspection of their licence. It does not however end there as other factors pertaining to "safety" are now under their scrutiny- for instance tread depth on both boots must not be less than 2mm over all of the sole area, watch those toes and heels. All visible bodywork must be physically sound and free from defect, this means that varicose veins must now be covered.

Audible warning of approach is now required and a simple "oi you" is not acceptable and a bell will be the minimum standard acceptable. This has been introduced in Switzerland albeit on cows but it is hoped the system will have a big following in this country although caution should taken if you intend walking near to bulls. Lights are now required during the hours of darkness, candles will not be permitted the only exception to this rule will be when dealing with body functions however when lights are out "silent running" rules will then apply and no sound shall be permitted to be heard outwith a 10 metre radius.

A system of yellow lines will be introduced in the more popular areas to ease congestion at narrow ridges etc. Any stopping on a yellow line will incur penalty points which accumulate and could result in its withdrawal. The Munro Polis are aware of the effects of alcohol on hillgoers and will be issued with a bag which tells when you have had too much to drink. Some among you will already be married and have your own. No concessions will be made for "final summiteers" so be warned. You may well ask the name of the author of this document, it is a lad called George Orwell, we hope he got it wrong.

Tayside Mountain Rescue Association

Tayside Mountain Rescue Team are aiming to build up a pool of volunteer casualties in order to make their exercises more realistic. Training on how to react for certain injuries and/or illness will be given.

Volunteers should be reasonably capable of looking after themselves. i.e. be a good navigator and be prepared to bivvy out. At the moment, this scheme is for summer and autumn exercises only. Anyone interested contact John Norrie (01242-876270) or Alf Ingram (01382-668193).

Anyone interested in becoming a member of the Rescue Team (male or female) should also contact Alfie.

Munro Bagging - The First Twenty

by Nick Parsons

My first ever Munro was bagged when I was staying at Kindrogan Field Centre with the Young Ornithologists Club, when I was 13 or 14. We climbed Glas Maol hoping to spot some dotterel. We started out enthusiastically but were soon flagging. It seemed that every time we came up over a rise there was another one waiting - I've had that problem with a few other hills since! We did make it at last up onto the plateau and had an easy walk over to a large cairn and shelter - who climbs hills to build these things? Our efforts were rewarded by several dotterel, ptarmigan and a huge herd of red deer. The memory of this walk is still vivid after more than 20 years.

My second Munro was a year or two later while on a school biology field trip to Glen Doll. As well as learning a little about the plant life, we were introduced to the word Munro on the way up the Kilbo path to Driesh (yes I did my first Munro without knowing it). It was a very hot sunny clear day and the view from the top of Corrie Fee was spectacular.

It was years before I climbed another Munro, having gone to university in Norwich. Norfolk is not renowned for its hills! After graduation I lived in Slough, which is better than it sounds, before going off to Saudi Arabia, which was a bit of an adventure. When I returned from Saudi I had a fair bit of free time in between writing job applications and walked the West Highland Way. Having got to Glen Nevis, Maggie and I naturally decided to do the Ben. We were up bright and early next day and joined the crowds. Runners kept passing us as we plodded on at our own pace. We had lunch by Lochan Meall an t-Suidhe, which was a vivid blue. The summit was covered in people and snow buntings, and the view was like nothing I had ever seen before.

Many months of unemployment resulted in my return to the Middle East, this time to Abu Dhabi. The United Arab Emirates has a range of quite high mountains called the Hajjar Mountains which run for over a thousand miles right across the bottom of the Arabian peninsula. We had some great camping trips driving four-wheel drive vehicles across the desert and up some of the wadis - in the dry season. The scenery was really dramatic with the mountains dropping steeply into the Indian Ocean. Underwater was just as dramatic as we regularly went scuba diving, dropping from a barren sandy world into a world of colour and life, floating down the cliffs as if flying.

Having gotten fed up with a large tax-free salary, free accommodation, guaranteed sunshine, warm clear seas to swim in over teeming coral reefs, I returned to Scotland one freezing cold September, and this time walked straight into a job having sent off one application! The following summer I set out to bag lots of Munros. One hot day I climbed Tom Buidhe, Cairn of Claise and Tolmount. Having walked from Glen Doll to Tom Buidhe I collapsed exhausted on the top minutes before another walker appeared saying how nice it was to have an easy one! A few days later Maggie and me went up Carn an Tuirc. Looking back we could see a walker and a deer on a collision course, both behind small hillocks. Both seemed to get a fright. A few days after this I was on the Mounth again, and in a long day climbed Broad Cairn, Cairn Bannoch, Carn an t-Sagairt Mor and Carn a'Coire Boidheach. It was pleasant to stroll around on top of the hills having done the hard work early on in the day. The walk out from Bachnagairn seemed really long on sore feet. By the following week my feet had recovered and I set out on an easy walk to climb

Mayar. This was another hot day and my energy was soon sapped, but I slowly made it steeply up out of Corrie Fee and on to the summit. While having my sannies I was driven mad by the flies and so didn't linger, descending by the Kilbo path.

Having bagged 12 Munros in fine weather without any problems, I should have realised that number 13 would be difficult! Creag Leacach should have been an easy one. I set out from Cairnwell car park and climbed Glas Maol, reaching the summit shelter as the mist came down. No problem I thought as I took a compass bearing for Creag Leacach. Unfortunately, due to a navigational error I ended up on the slopes of Cairn of Claise instead and got lost. As I hadn't thought to take a torch with me I was a bit snookered when it got dark and spent a very cold night on the hill. In the morning I met the mountain rescue team and had a white knuckle ride in a police landrover from Meall Odhar.

A month later in better weather I had another, successful attempt on Creag Leacach. Following the suggestion in the Munros guide I descended from the SW top down to Meall Gorm and then down to the stream. This gave me a steep walk up the road to the car park

Number 14 was Mount Keen, which I climbed with Maggie one fine October day. This was a pleasant walk from Glen Esk with a stop at Queen's Well. The last part kept going up and up and when we did make it to the top the wind tried to blow us off again. We saw black as well as red grouse. I've not often seen black grouse. We heard stags but couldn't see them.

The next Munro was definitely the quickest. From the Cairnwell car park I went straight up the side of Cairnwell. Whether this was the best route or not I'm not sure, it certainly got steep and was hard work, but didn't take long. I continued over the top, past Loch Vrotachan and on to Carn a'Gheoidh. On the way back the mist came down, so I didn't attempt Carn Aosda, but followed the ski fences down. On the way home I saw a short eared owl sitting on a fence post.

A week later I was again at Cairnwell ski centre and this time took the gravel track up onto the hill and walked over to Loch Vrotachan. From here I picked a route to Loch nan Eun, then up onto Mam nan Carn and finally to Beinn Iutharn Mhor. This is surrounded by steep sided hills and it is an impressive place. On the way back I went up Beinn Iutharn Bheag, as it was there. This was a good walk if long. Getting dark by the time I was back at Loch Vrotachan so I again left Carn Aosda, although I now had a torch, spare batteries, spare bulbs, survival bag etc.

My next Munro involved something I hadn't done before - a through walk. This was a Club trip to Schiehallion. Starting from Braes of Foss we had no difficulty locating the path due to severe erosion. By

the time we reached the summit the great views you are supposed to get had disappeared under snow and mist. We had a coffee at the top and counted heads. It was freezing - this was before I bought my thermal vest! The snow cleared on the way down by turning to rain. I now know that to have had good weather on my first dozen Munros was really lucky! We piled on the bus again at Kinloch Rannoch (once we'd found it).

Cairn Gorm was my 19th Munro. This was while on a winter hillwalking course at Glenmore Lodge. It was January and was really icy. We learned how to use crampons and practiced ice-axe techniques in a corrie before climbing up to the summit. Fortunately I had a thermal vest by this time, this was really cold!

Number 20 was Carn Aosda. Having been so close a couple of times, I had to pick off this easy Munro. I again used the ski company road to gain access to the bealach then followed the ski tow to the top. The wind was incredible and it hurt when spindrift blew in my face. It felt good to look around and know I had climbed quite a few of the other hills around, but there were lots of new ones as well. Which to go for next?

Whitehaugh and a bridge too farfar

By Dave Murison

The telephone rang yet again! Surprise! Surprise! It was for me this time, not my wife or 2 teenage sons. A seductive voice purred into my ear down the line. Hello Cilla I said mistakenly, for it was El Presidente Colin's voice I had failed to recognise for I had never been seduced by his voice before - - - or since I hasten to add.

He broke the news, (he would have broken the weather as well but he had a better grip of that) - John Norrie, after years of quality service, had stepped down as hut custodian for Whitehaugh. The AGM, in a state of shock, had elected yours truly to flounder in his wake. I was to be the new hut custodian. What had I done to deserve this? I thought I had friends in the club.

Newer members may like to know that Whitehaugh is a bothy situated at the head of Glen Clova that FDHWC maintains and lets out to others in exchange for much needed funds. Whitehaugh is our main source of income as membership fees are swallowed up with insurance premiums, MCoS fees and holidays abroad for the committee! This income subsidises the heavy cost of bus hire and keeps fares down for all of us.

So fellow members, please support me, as you did John, when the call goes out for assistance at a workparty, bring your family and friends and enjoy a day working up the glen with social events like a BBQ, bonfire night and orienteering to follow. Please

bring a few hand tools and brushes with you for as Rita said to me one day "Dave you haven't got as much equipment as John", how sad but true!

Stop press: News just in from David (son of Colin) confirming that Colin does regularly break the wind!

This year has already seen some activity at Whitehaugh with three trips to take firewood "up and over" as Eddie Waring used to say when he was over refreshed. Many thanks again to Martin Horn for acquiring the wood for the ravenous furnaces within the afore mentioned bothy. Little wonder the glens have been denuded of tree cover in years gone by.

Future longer term projects besides the usual care and maintenance may or may not include:

1. Bitumen painting the roof felt to prevent cracking.
2. Building a small roofed area outside for firewood.
3. Building a safer stair/fire escape.
4. The bridge - the present setup is narrow road, fine bridge over wide river, winding path to bothy. The river god however has lodged plans for the future to convert this to narrow road, fine but useless bridge over dry land, wide river minus bridge and slightly shorter path to bothy. Does anybody know where we might get some advice on river bank erosion? King Knut failed to keep the water at bay but we must do so or end up moving the bridge sometime in the future. Perhaps Dr Who should be contacted? Club expert in these matters (he already has a bridge named after him over by the Grey Corries), assistant meet secretary Rennie was consulted, unfortunately his lengthy technical comments about five no trumps, though fascinating, was way over my head.

No shortage of work then and obviously the more help turning up for work parties, the more jobs get done and more quickly. Ask not what your club can do for you but what you can do for your club as the caveman said.

I have long preached that if everyone did a little nobody would have to do a lot. With my new duties that message has come home to roost, like playing hide and seek it is my turn to be IT.

We continue to be in debt to Graham and Anna Davie at Clova Hotel who have agreed to continue to act as unpaid booking agents and keyholders, the value of this "on site" help is greatly appreciated. Their ideas, energy and hard work are doing much to revive the upper part of the glen.

Events looming which may affect our bothy are the sell off by the Forestry Commission of woods to the private sector. Whitehaugh is in the middle of such a plantation. Carn Dearg are to purchase and convert a building up at Moulzie into a bunkhouse at great cost. Recouping some of this may siphon off some of our clients. Please come along to the regular monthly meeting in Jarman's Hotel and follow these

and other issues. Your ideas and input would be most welcome.

Finally, the moral of the story:

Attend the AGM or you too, like me, may in your absence, be voted on, to serve on the committee. You have been warned

P.S. Dave would like anyone with unwanted small cooking pots and pans to donate them to Whitehaugh

<p>The Clova Hotel, Glen Clova Tel 01575 550222 Fax 01575 550333 Proprietors: Graham & Anna Davie <i>The Clova Hotel is quietly situated near the head of picturesque Glen Clova. Ideal for walking and climbing in the Southern Grampians. Hill Walking under expert supervision can be arranged. Private fishing for salmon and sea trout 3 miles from hotel. Accommodation in hotel in seven comfortable bedrooms: also a bunkhouse and a climbing bothy offering basic accomodation</i> <i>Bar meals: dining room / restaurant for dinners, etc.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">OPEN ALL YEAR</p>

The Past Presidents (or the Magnificent Seven)

I regard it as a great honour to be president of this club. I'm in my 4th year of office now and during that time, I've always been curious to trace the presidential tree but never quite got round to it. Well thanks to help from my researchers here they are. The figure in brackets give the number of year for which they presided.

1963-1964	(1)	Willie Whyte
1964-1967	(3)	Reg Fawcett
1967-1980	(13)	John Norrie
1980-1982	(2)	Willie Milne
1982-1986	(4)	Rita Norrie
1986-1989	(3)	Stuart Fergusson
1989-1992	(3)	Brian Coull

Willie Whyte : He was "chairman" of the club from its birth on October 18th 1963 until the first AGM in March 1964. The club was an offshot from the Angus Cycle Club. His other main interest was piping. Moved to Inverness in 1967 and returned to Forfar in retirement. Died 3 years ago. Was an honorary member.

Reg Fawcett: An Englishman, but tried not to be. A prolific writer for the Scots Magazine. Also a special constable and a member of the original police

mountain rescue team. Was president during the club's only fatality on a meet.

John Norrie: An incredible 13 year stint. All other 7 presidents including myself have covered the other 20 years between us. What staying power! Changed the weekly business meeting to monthly! Introduced the dance, the winter programme of guest speakers and made the unofficial club camp official. A member of Tayside Mountain Resue Team (TMRT).

Willie Milne: A founder member of the club and a real stalwart of the club, actively involved in the committee until 4 years ago, holding every possible post except hut custodian. Another member of TMRT.

Rita Norrie: The first lady president (after all it was during the Thatcher years). I have a vivid memory of one meet in Glen Lochay in 1983 - a dreadful day. The lady president used her privileges to turn back to the bus after walking half a mile

Stuart Fergusson: instrumental in the MSC project at Whitehaugh and the new bridge to Whitehaugh. Meetings ran to a tight schedule with Stuart in charge! (good to know that ADC don't waste time in meetings). Presided over the club's 25th anniversary celebrations.

Brian Coull: his surname should be called "cool" because of his laid-back nature (an ex-hippee?). Brian spent much of his presidential years doubling up as meet secretary. Introduced the May weekend Meet in 1992. Another member of TMRT.

Did You Know?

Thet meet reports and last minute changes to evening meetings, meets and social events are published in the following local newspapers, usually the week after the previous meet - Kirrie Herald, Forfar Dispatch, Arbroath Herald, Carnoustie Guide & Gazette, Brechin Advertiser.

Stop Press

Workparty at Whitehaugh last night (Wed 14th) was attended by only 4 people - Colin, Roy, Nan and Bill S. Despite this, 9 big pallets were transported over to the bothy before we retired to the hotel for a pint. A grey bearded cyclist appeared but fled before the wind changed direction! Next work Party is Sat. 19th August.