



Forfar & District Hill Walking Club

Newsletter 43 July 2014

www.fdhwc.org.uk

President's Column

The 50th anniversary seems to have already faded into the distance, and we're well into our 51st year of activities, with the weather improving all the time.

I'm back in action after a 6 month layoff due to an Achilles tendon injury. It was definitely hard being an armchair walker for that lengthy period. Mind you, I didn't miss some of the appalling weather that you had to endure during my absence – especially at the high tea meet.

I hope you enjoy the programme for the next 12 months which the committee has prepared for you. Details are on the web site. Printed copies will be distributed soon.

Before the next newsletter is published, we'll have a referendum on the future of Scotland to consider. The important thing is to exercise our democratic rights, so get out there and vote one way or the other.

There was a change on the committee at the March 2014 AGM. Neil Sangster took over from Carolyn Smith as assistant meet secretary. I'd like to thank Carolyn for her splendid work over the past few years as assistant meet secretary, including dealing with press reports.

Best Wishes,
Colin,
President

'Far I wi noo' plaque - 2013

A vote was taken at the AGM, and the 2013 award went to Willie Mather for his missing boots incident on the November meet to Ben Challum. The plaque has been engraved with "Them boots are made for walking, Willie Mather 2013", and was presented to Willie at the Members Night in April.

Please forward news of any worthy incident for 2014 to a committee member.

Congratulations – wedding bells

Many congratulations to Richard Meeson who was married last month in Londonderry.

Snapper of 2014

The club's annual photographic competition was held on Monday February 3rd 2014. For the 6th year running, the judge was Graham Wilkinson from Carnoustie Camera Club. Graham looks forward to this and is just amazed that we keep asking him back. All entries were in purely digital format. A total of 8 entries with 40 photographs in total were received. All were submitted in digital format, though other formats are still allowed. All entries, plus Carolyn's winning entry of Liathach can be viewed on the club's photo pages.

<http://picasaweb.google.com/fdhwcalbums>

Congratulations – baby due

Many congratulations to Mel Henderson and Ian Shand who are expecting their first baby on 16th December. They've taken the drive to find younger club members seriously. The baby has already been up a few hills!

Unscheduled events

The new club calendar is now available online. You will receive printed copies over the next few weeks. In addition to those scheduled events, other events are planned. These include

- Bike Maintenance
- Abseiling
- Wild Camping
- Curling

Dates will be published in due course.

Curling 2014

Once again, Bob Railton organised a curling night at Forfar Ice Rink, and once again, we shared the rinks with Carnoustie Panbride Badminton Club. Both groups were mixed up according to ability and experience. Tuition was provided by volunteers from the Curling Club, and some semi-serious matches were played. Most stayed for a meal afterwards. The badminton club are already asking about next year's event.

Danger in the hills **by Neil Sangster**

We all know (or should know) about the various dangers that hill walkers can be exposed to such as ticks, not being tied to a rope when climbing the Inn-Pinn, dangling upside down on a rope on the Inn-Pinn, annoying Carolyn, tripping over when carrying someone else bag, over consumption of alcohol, falling into rivers etc. However, enough about the club and on to the real subject.

I was slightly concerned when a new health issue was mentioned to me one day when I was walking. Mel looked at me and said I had a bad case of "bagging fever". Not wanting to appear ignorant in the company of more knowledgeable peers, I said nothing but went home to look up this condition. I felt fine and was showing no symptoms of any fever (the profuse sweating is normal for me).

Strangely, a search of the internet for this condition yielded nothing and I took it upon myself to find out what this condition was. I set about getting more information through research and observations of other club members who appeared to be also suffering from this mysterious condition.

Following extensive research, I have compiled a list of relevant observations and symptoms -

You don't generally know you have this condition until it is too late. It not clear whether this infection is spread through contact with others who have caught bagging fever. You're lulled into a false sense of security by other members with the fever around you. Their abnormal behaviour starts to appear normal to you.

Most commonly the symptoms relate to a desire to climb hills known as the Munros. Generally once these have been "completed" the person is cured but some feel that they must continue to feed the fever by moving on to Corbett's.

Most who move on to Corbett's seem to be embarrassed (and so they should be) that they have not managed to overcome the condition and they become more furtive in their movements. I know of one particularly sad case where the person in question is so ashamed of the condition that he has convinced himself he is merely going exploring.

Denial is common with the comments, I'm not bothered if I do them all, I don't know how many I've climbed, I don't keep count all being frequently overheard.

You find you have a need to get up at 05.00, drive for 4 hours on a claggy day, climb a fairly undistinguished hill, drive home and be pleased with yourself. I will not name and shame those who have driven up to Ben Hope and back in

one day or the couple who went on a wee day trip to Knoydart.

You join the walking club committee so that you can influence where the club goes to maximise your bagging potential.

You dream of the big one, the ultimate, the pinnacle of your bagging career - The South Clunie ridge - 7 Munros in a day - life doesn't get much better than this.

You drive 15 miles up a single track road to go to a new Munro. The other person in the car then says "I've already done this one". In the company of other baggers it is perfectly acceptable to completely change your plans at this point and go elsewhere.

You shun others who just want to enjoy the walk (quite often these are compleaters who have forgotten they ever had bagging fever). I've even heard the words "We can cut the walk short and we should turn back muttered".

You panic when you see the names list for the weekend meets and see that it's mostly "explorers" who are going, with few or any other baggers attending.

The social aspect of walking with others is ignored and you go it alone on hills nobody else wants to go up that day (or probably ever would go up if they didn't have bagging fever). You miss out lovely summits on the walk because they are only tops and not Munros.

You hear rumours of rebel tours, organised by a renegade group of baggers who can't feed their addiction through normal club activities.

Tea on a Sunday is a pint and then the chip-shop (in that order of priority), assuming the pub is still open.

And finally, I have heard talk of doing the Grahams. I was scared to ask what this involved and whether it was even related to hillwalking. The conversation immediately previously had related to the book 50 Shades of Grey, so I thought it best to leave well alone. I am after all young and naïve.

You have been warned!

Scottish Mountaineer article

Did you see the special article featuring the club and its 50th anniversary in the Scottish Mountaineer? If not, it can be viewed online on the Mountaineering Council of Scotland website. See issue 62 (Feb 2014), starting at page 64.

<http://www.mcofs.org.uk/magazine-archive.asp>

Limericks required?

The president has been slagging off his good golfing buddy, Jerry, at the High Tea for several years with several tasty (and sometimes nasty) limericks, and in the last 2 years Jerry has even dared to counter-attack with some of his own. Let's see who can prepare one for the next high tea. We can allow a couple each. That won't take too long.

Meeting Reports

Jan 2014 – "Travels of a fermer wi a bunnet". Willie Mather presented us with his 2013 trip to Colorado including various National Parks and rafting on the Colorado river.

Feb 2014 - Annual photographic competition. See separate article.

March 2014 – AGM, then a short film (20 minutes), "Dovedale Groove", featuring Chris Bonnington and Don Whillans in 1986 repeating a route first climbed by Whillans and Joe Brown in 1953.

April 2014 – Our 2nd annual Members Night. Each member was allowed to bring 10 photos each (on paper or on CD/DVD, or camera card, or USB memory stick). They were given 10 minutes to talk about their photos. 7 members submitted photos and a good night was had by all.

May 2014 – Girds 2014 and Boules 2013. See separate articles.

June 2015 – Geocaching Revisited! Except it wasn't due to missing grid references. Actually no one had worked out how to use their GPS anyway! Walk round the Balnashanner area instead.

Meet Reports Jan – June 2014

3 January 2014

Craig Mellon

The year started with a day of poor visibility on this local hill. From the Glen Doll car park the group of ten took the track past Moulzie and then climbed steeply on to the snow-covered summit. The top proved difficult to find in the gloom, but find it we did before taking a direct descent towards the car park.

19 January 2014

High Tea, Glen Lethnot to Glen Esk

The High Tea meet took place in some of the wettest weather we have experienced for some time. Because of the conditions, a lower-level through-walk was decided upon rather than the original plan of a round of the Wirren tops. The rain rarely let up on the route from Glen Lethnot

to Glen Esk, with a tricky crossing of what would normally be a minor stream providing a foretaste for the grand finale, a crossing of the raging River North Esk over a very rickety and slippery footbridge. A very drookit bunch were glad to see the bus at Tarfside and then enjoyed the traditional High Tea at the Sauchieburn Hotel. It was remarkable that twenty turned out for this meeting with only about three call-offs. I take my hat off to you all (and get my head soaked for my trouble).

9 February 2014

Head of Glen Lyon

By the time the group of nine reached Loch Lyon dam, a covering of snow was starting to lie on the road. This provided a warning of what was to come, as the walkers quickly found themselves wading through deep, fresh snow. It became obvious that the original intention of climbing both Meall Bhuide and Sron a Choire Chnapanich on the south side of Loch an Daimh was not going to be possible. With one kilometre to go to the summit of Meall Bhuide, and the group struggling in knee-deep snow with strong winds and spindrift creating a virtual white-out, the decision was made to turn back. An escape route down a valley to Loch Lyon was identified, but the prevailing wind had dumped a good metre of snow on this west-facing slope, and it was a very exhausted group who stumbled down to the lochside, by which time the snow had turned to rain.

21-23 February 2013

Corran Bunkhouse

Another unforgiving weekend of weather reduced the turnout for this weekend meet. Only 3 attended because of the poor weather forecast. Saturday - three went to Sgurr Eilde Mor, with one member reaching the summit. Sunday – a low level walk at Victoria Bridge.

9 March 2014

Bridge of Orchy

A modest turnout of five intended to climb both Beinn an Dothaidh and Beinn Dorain, weather permitting. The weather did not permit, so in poor visibility the group meandered around the broad plateau of Beinn an Dothaidh, eventually locating the summit before calling it a day. On the way down towards Bridge of Orchy, the cloud dramatically lifted, giving excellent views across to the Black Mount. Looking back, the group could see the cloud lifting up the mountainside. If only the walk could have been delayed by a few hours.....

21-23 March 2014

Torridon

Due to the weather everyone called off on this weekend. Happily, Torridon Youth Hostel agreed to let us carry the deposit over to another weekend later in the year, and this has been rearranged for September 2014.

13 April 2014

Lochnagar from Balmoral

This was an unusual direction from which to approach Lochnagar, but our long-serving President (or should that be long-suffering) assured us that the club had done a similar walk before. The eleven members and three guests were dropped off by the bus at Lochnagar Distillery. After a period of wandering about the distillery grounds, ostensibly looking for the path but probably looking for the warehouse entrance, the group set off in the correct direction and soon joined the track to Lochnagar. Three members opted for a low-level through walk to Spittal of Glenmuick while the rest headed up the slopes in strengthening winds. Only three reached the summit, with the rest turning back when some of the walkers were getting blown off their feet. All walkers reached the bus at the Spittal safely, the only casualty of the day being the Meet Secretary's hat, which disappeared in the direction of the North Sea.

2-5 May 2014

Knoydart

The club returned to Barrisdale for the holiday weekend, all twelve available places being eagerly taken. 6 members took advantage of the good weather on the Saturday to climb Ladhar Beinn from the picturesque Coire Dhorcaill side. 5 members explored one of the highest Corbetts, Sgurr a Choire Bheithe (913m) and Bob looked after base camp and gathered mussels. The weather was not so kind on the Sunday but the ever-determined Munro-Baggers in the group managed to claim the other two Munros, with the others pottering around on smaller trips in the incessant rain. The club apparently now has a good cargo custodian who dealt with the shipping of the luggage very efficiently.

18 May 2014

Largo Law

Nine members enjoyed this Social Meet which started at Lower Largo on a leisurely coastal path before the short steep climb to the summit. We were beaten to the summit by a procession of vintage tractors. A very strong wind at the summit made it difficult to stand there for long, but it was well worth it for the view over the Firth of Forth to Berwick Law and the Bass Rock.

25 May 2014

Braeriach

Fourteen members went by bus to the northern Cairngorms. Because of the low cloud the original through walk from Glen Feshie to Coylumbridge via Braeriach was changed to a direct ascent of Braeriach from the Sugar Bowl car park. This proved to be a wise decision as the cloud was down all day. The return route was via the Lairig Ghru to Coylumbridge.

15 June 2014

Stob an Aonaich Mhoir

A good turnout of fifteen members ventured out to the Loch Rannoch area to climb this rarely

visited Corbett. A good surfaced track to the foot of the hill meant that this was more of a cycling meet than a walk, although the majority dismounted well short of the hill and took the longer walk up to the south ridge, enjoying views of Loch Ericht and Ben Alder. This was a real nature-watch day, with a new-born fawn, a leveret, ptarmigan, a young meadow pipit and a young family of grouse being stumbled on by the walkers.

20-22 June 2014

Cannich Weekend

All twelve places reserved at the popular Bearnock Hostel were taken on this weekend meet with a further two members bringing the total to fourteen. The main attraction on Saturday was a round of the four Munros on the north side of Loch Affric. This involved the advance booking of a boat by eight members, thus avoiding the long eight-kilometre trek along the shore. A few of the group had difficulty sticking to the appropriate route but all eight completed the walk successfully nevertheless. A further five members went exploring, successfully locating the Glen Doe Eagle, a bronze statue with an impressive twelve-foot wing span which occupies a commanding spot on the hillside high above the dam. The route to the eagle fortuitously also took in the Corbett of Carn a' Chuilin, a point not missed by one or two in the group. The remaining member spent the day cycling in Glen Affric.

With a poor weather forecast for the west on Sunday, many members went home but a few dedicated baggers remained in the area and some went seeking better weather on the hills in Drumochter.

29 June 2014

Ben Vrackie

Eleven members turned out for this Social Meet. The good spell of weather was still holding out although it was rather cool for the time of year – ideal walking conditions. After the walk a well-deserved meal was enjoyed at the Moulin Inn.

Cricket 2015 !!!!

The Committee decided that Girds 2015 should be followed by a genteel cricket match. Get your whites washed and ironed.

Boules 2013

Why was this held in 2014? Because it wasn't played in 2013 due to the 50th anniversary celebrations. Held in the Reid Park Forfar on 7th April, after the Girds.

5 teams of two in a round-robin, Bob/ Neil and Colin/Steve both won 3 matches each, but Bob/Neil had the best points difference and are therefore crowned 2013 champions. The 2014 tournament will be held in October on the social weekend in Glen Clova.

A President's short **By Cos Trouble**

We are all aware that Colin Sinclair, our esteemed and well respected President has been at the forefront of steering the club in the right direction for many years. When someone new joins the club, he recounts stories of past adventures, most of which have resulted in nominations for incident of the year.

One such incident was the year Colin won the award for Sinclair's leap. Walking towards Carn Bhac, a river presented itself in front of Colin and after much pondering he said, "It's quite wide, I'm not sure I'm going to make it". He then proceeded to jump most of the river, the end result being a good dooking.

As you would expect, Colin continued on the walk. Being still rather wet by the time he got to the top of the hill, he announced in his poshest Fife accent that his underpants were chaffing and he was going to take them off.

He disappeared behind the cairn and on removing his pants was confronted by someone appearing from the mist. There in front of Colin was none other than Cameron McNeish who probably thought he was out for a quiet, enjoyable and uneventful walk. Cameron said to Colin "What are you doing" and quick as a flash (pardon the pun), Colin responded "I'm removing my underpants"

I've heard the story several times and in the archives of club history it would remain, bringing amusement to new members when the story was recounted for years to come. However, I recently read a walk report in Scottish Walks by Cameron McNeish. He was climbing the Corbett, Streat and I quote "already tired from climbing the Munro's, I had stripped to my underpants and literally crawled up".

Given the similarities between the two people (love of walking, Corbett's, stripping off on hilltops, articulate writers) maybe the club is just a stepping stone to a future career in the media for Colin. Possibly a show on BBC Alba (if it still exists) with my suggested titles being "The Explorations of a Fifer" / "Corbett Bagging - A bee keepers guide" / "Things to do when you're no good at golf".

I eagerly await Cameron's article when he recounts the story of the day he met a man removing his underpants on the top of a mountain. Colin's show on the other hand, I can't wait!

P.S. The editor has an inkling as to who "Cos" is! The editor would also like to point out that although Cameron McNeish was present that day, it was a young couple who spotted the president's bare back side! The editor would also like to point out that the president scored 10/10 for style following his 5m breast stroke to shallower water, and that no one had snapped a shot of the event, so it may all just be an auld wife's tale passed down through the generations.

Girds 2014

Held in the Reid Park Forfar on 7th April. A knockout competition with each match being the best of 3 ends. Neil is 2014 Champion, beating Colin in the final. Three in a row - what an athlete!

Mountain Mind Quiz 2014

The team of Carolyn, Colin and Graham formed the club team for the annual quiz involving hill walking and mountaineering clubs from Tayside and Fife. It was held in the Queens Hotel, Dundee and organised by the Carn Deag MC. We actually finished 3rd after 2 rounds with the top 3 being somewhat ahead of the rest. For some bizarre reason, the Carn Dearg club decided that there should be a tie-break. The question was: - name the island Corbetts, and the first team back with the answer sheet will win. This played into our hands - we rattled off the names of the 11 island Corbetts, handed in the sheet and were handed the trophy for the 3rd year in a row (and our 4th title in total)

Mountain Mind Quiz 2015

Unfortunately 2015 is our turn on the rota to organise the event, so no chance for 4 in a row. The club committee have the job of arranging this and will be looking for much help from members both in preparing for the event and running the event. Already we've decided to take the event away from Dundee to Forfar to try to encourage some of the Aberdeenshire clubs to enter a team - Forfar is only an hour from Aberdeen. One thought is that we could try out the format and maybe some trial questions at the club's own quiz night in November - obviously only our club members would be involved if that were the case, so Kenny Wright would be given the red card.

Constitution Changes - AGM 2014

With approval at the AGM on March 3rd, there were changes accepted that alter the club constitution. The change limits the number of consecutive years that one member can hold a particular committee post to 4 years. This is normal practice in most constitutions today - it has two aims - (1) keep new blood flowing into the committee, and (2) to assure those standing for a particular post that they won't be locked into it forever. The changes are effective from March 2014. Any retiring member (after a maximum service of 4 years in a particular post) is not allowed to stand for that post for a period of one year, but can stand for any other post immediately. See club web site for latest constitution.