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Forfar & District Hillwalking Club

Newsletter 26 December 2005

President's Column

It's almost the winter solstice as I write this and the festive period again. To walkers like us, these are short dark days that offer us little time on the hills. However there is also something special about walking at this time of year. We can have pleasant still sunny days with long shadows, a touch of snow and fantastic sunsets. We can also have wild days with howling cold winds and driving rain, or worse. After a wild day, once we get into warm dry clothes, our rosy cheeks tell us that we had a good time too. I think it's great to feel the power of the forces of nature and to survive them. Some of my non-walking workmates just can't appreciate the wildness of some of these days. Their Sunday adventure is a walk to the pub to watch the football on Sky TV in the afternoon. It's amazing difficult to express "being blown off one's feet", "hail stones like rivets", "a bottomless bog", "white hares everywhere" etc. to people that haven't experienced that sort of environment. We are just so lucky to be out there on any day at this time of year, or at any time of the year.

Thank you for your continuing support of the club. Participation remains steady and good. May I take this opportunity to wish you and your families a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year.

Festive Meets

Usual unofficial meets at Christmas and New Year are planned. Please keep in touch with the committee and web site for latest details. Tuesday 27th is the planned date for the Christmas meet. Bring your pressies to show the crowd. Two years ago it was Slioch underwear that stole the show. Last year it was Paramo gear. But what will be the in-thing this year? Maybe Farmer Willie bunnets?

Brian Laing

Many congratulations to Brian. He has just been accepted as a full member of the Tayside Mountain Rescue Team, having been on training over the last year.

High Tea Meet – Sunday 15th January

Note that the bus leaves Edzell Common at 9am for Bennachie. High Tea is to be taken in the Panmure Arms. Please phone Ray or Willie if you are going to the walk and/or High Tea. A menu is included with this newsletter. Cost is £8.75 per head. It would help if you knew roughly what you wanted to give the hotel a hint as to what is required. Our last visit to Bennachie was on a snowy High Tea day in January 1999 (High Tea was in Luthermuir). Our last High Tea in the Panmure Hotel was in January 2003 after a meet to Mount Battock, when 33 walked and 43 ate!

Late-breaking news: rumours of the FDHWC going tee total?

Due to the slumbering of the Meet Secretary and the resultant communication breakdown, the bus went straight through Dunkeld without the traditional refreshment stop, much to the consternation of several thirsty members. News of redundancies among the bar staff in the Royal Dunkeld Hotel is greatly exaggerated.

New Membership contact list

After the appeal in the last newsletter, we have received back a fair number of completed forms with membership details. Under the Data Protection Act (1998), we were obliged to ask you if the club could hold your address, telephone and email details and whether you would mind sharing them with other club members. From this the club has generated an updated club membership list. Note that the details of those who have not responded have not been placed onto the contact list – only their names are provided. Likewise, those who have not responded have not been sent a contact list at all, only a form requesting contact details. This list will not be supplied to any other organisation and you as members of the club should not distribute it to any other individuals or organisations.

Walk Shetland Week – by John Norrie

If anyone is going to Shetland to walk, then don't look for any high hills to climb, but instead expect to see spectacular scenery, wild life a plenty, loads of local history and very friendly people. (Ronas Hill, 420m, is the highest point on Shetland).

The "Walk Shetland Week" is only two years in existence. Each day's walking is guided by local people who have great enthusiasm for their particular subject. The whole programme is free of charge except for ferry and flight costs and there is a choice of two walks each day. So on the whole; it seemed a good excuse to go back to Shetland.

We boarded HROSSEY, one of the new Northlink boats, at Aberdeen and sailed at 17:00 for Orkney and Shetland. These Northlink boats are a vast improvement on the old P&O boats, being more like floating hotels, having three restaurants, a cinema and a games room, and the cabin accommodation is of a typical Scandinavian standard, but there is a lack of deck space for sight seeing.

Arriving at Lerwick at 7.30 am, we drove to Sandwick to stay with friends for one night before moving into a rented cottage for the week.

Our choice of walk for the first day (Saturday) was the island of Noss. After a brief talk about the history of Noss and its ponies, and the ongoing work of S.N.H. on the island, the group (11) set off with a guide, Howard

Towll, round the periphery of the island. It takes about 5 hours to walk round Noss which is renowned for its birdlife and cliff scenery. As it was late in the season, the bird population had diminished and the great skuas (bonxies) were not so aggressive, although they gave the occasional inquisitive flight. During the day, the wind speed had increased and this made the return trip to Bressay by inflatable somewhat interesting.

Sunday was wet and dreich. However a few of us gathered at the tourist office in Lerwick and boarded a "Geo Tours" minibus. This company is run by Allan Fraser, a retired meteorologist from Sullom Voe, whose hobby is geology. After a seeming long drive, we arrived at the road end at Culswick then across the causeway to the Broch of Culswick which was the most strategically situated broch on Shetland. Then we followed the dramatic coastline of the Burga Stacks and the remains of a monastery.

Then next morning we were meant to fly to Fair Isle but (a) we slept in (b) got the flight times wrong (c) couldn't contact Loganair by phone :- anyway it didn't matter as it was blowing a force 10 SW gale and no small aeroplanes could fly. So we decided to go to Scatness in the south end to see the new archaeological dig, but when we arrived, the staff had been told to go home as it was too dangerous for anybody to be on site because of the gale. The seas were spectacular and everything was saturated with sea spray and walking was extremely difficult. However, leaving the car at Quendale Mill, we struggled out to the old army radio station at Garth's Ness and back, then crossed over the fields to Fithful Head where the tanker BREAR sank 7 years ago.

Weather-wise, Tuesday was quite peaceful and we drove up to Fladdabister to meet our guide for the day : Robin Hunter, who had a day off work from Sullom Voe and whose passion is for local history and genealogy. From there we drove to Muckle Roe where our group swelled to six. Passing through old townships and deserted crofts, robin was unstoppable with his knowledge of the area and the people who had lived there. Reaching the Bat of North Hams, the red sandstone cliff scenery is dramatic with its arches and sea stacks.. Although not a great distance, the walk still takes 5 hours.

Our guide for the next day's walk was Agnes Leask – a 71 year old crofter , and Agnes' life is crafting. We were walking over her "hillground" and she was explaining en route the history of crafting on Stromness, the role of the laird and his powers. She took us over to the west side of the ness to see an old otter trap.

Thursday, we were supposed to go north to Fethaland, but visibility was about 10 metres and I didn't relish driving 50 in these conditions so we festered in Lerwick.

Friday morning, with the help of 3 alarm clocks, we were awake as we flying to Foula, and the sun was shining. The 15 minute flight was perfect and the visibility was superb. About half the island's population come to meet the plane and we were welcomed by Isobel from the island's heritage trust. She introduced us to Tony who would be our guide for the day, once the aircraft had taken off and he had removed his fireman's uniform. The group of six then set off across the middle of the island to a deep ravine called the Sneck o Smallie then climbed to the highest point at 418m, the Sneug, which provided great views of the Kame, the second highest sea cliffs in Britain. We then made our way across the moor to the school where free refreshments were laid on, then walked back to the

airstrip (and Tony became a fireman again) for the return flight to Tingwall via the seas stacks at the back of the island.

As we had to tidy up the cottage on Saturday morning, it was not possible to be at Collafirth Radio station by 10.30am. We therefore had to forego the walk to Ronas Hill (again) but we went to explore the old village and broch at Burrland instead.

So it looks as if the flight to Fair Isle, and the tramp to Ronas Hill, and the boat to Out Skerries will just be an excuse to go back again to the North Isles.

Climbing Night

The 2nd club climbing night took place in Avertical World, Dundee in late October. Six members spent two hours at the centre, learning tying on, belaying, and falling off! A good night was had by all. Unfortunately the 3rd night had to be cancelled due to lack of numbers.

Next Foreign Meet?

In the last newsletter, we asked what the membership thought about a foreign meet in October 2006 (previous meets were Mallorca 2000, Madeira 2003)

Several members have expressed an interest. A form has been supplied. If you are interested, please complete and return to any club member. Alternatively, scan the complete form to a digital image and send the image by email to a committee member. The deadline is 31st January. If there is sufficient interest, an extra meeting will be arranged to discuss the findings of the survey.

Roddy McIntosh

In 1963 Roddy McIntosh arrived in Scotland from Canada when he was 3½ years old. He climbed his first Munro (Bein Glas) 6 months later, and at 5 years of age he joined the club and was a member for the next 10 years. In that space of time, he attended almost every day meet, weekend meets, club camps and dances. He was probably the youngest (and smallest) person to walk/cycle through the Lairig Ghru, and celebrated this 50th Munro at the same time as Morag and Graeme Redford on a miserable day on Beinn Heasgarnich aged 9. At every opportunity, Rod would be up at Whitehaugh (the ex club hut) and it was almost his second home. Unfortunately 5 years ago Rod was diagnosed as having M.S. and died last October aged 45.

Bert MacLaren

Died October 2005. Bert was an early member of the club in the 60's. He held post of Meet Secretary. He was a keen biker and once biked back from Stornaway. He had no family of his own, but was always encouraged the youngsters of the club. He is survived by his wife Jessie. Seven members (or ex-members) of the club attended his funeral.

Meetings Calendar – Spring 2003

A card should be attached. Get in touch if you didn't receive one or see the web site

Meet Secretary's reports

24/26th June 2005

Kintail Weekend

Attendance 17 (cars)

There were three different walks on the Saturday. One group of 3 headed for Beinn Fhada and A' Glas-Bheinn, a second group of 6 tackled the Five Sisters and another eight members climbed the Saddle via the Forcan Ridge. On Sunday a group of six tackled Ciste Dubh, three opted to climb A'Chralig and Mullach Fraoch-Coire, two climbed Sgurr na Signe and two bagged a Corbett in Applecross. Four members had a day off hillwalking and went walkabout in Glenelg.

10th July 2005

Mystery Meet - Carn a'Mhaim

Attendance 4 (cars)

The July meet is often poorly attended due to holidays and this one did not prove to be any different.

The group parked at Linn of Dee and walked up Carn a'Mhaim. A fantastic day, rather hot.

21st August 2006

Northern Corries, Cairngorms.

Attendance 21 (bus)

Weather :Sunny am, cloud & rain later

Distance 18km. Ascent 1650 m (walk1) 1000 m (walk 2)

All 21 members and guests started from the ski car park and climbed the Fiachail ridge to reach the plateau. After a refreshment stop we split into 2 groups with one member opting to go back due to problems with blisters. Walk 1 : Seven members opted for the more strenuous route down to Loch Avon, a beautiful secluded spot, where they stopped to explore the shelter stone and sign the visitors book. A sharp re-ascent then followed to the summit of Beinn Mheadoinn. The group then retraced their steps back to Loch Avon and back up onto the Cairngorm plateau before descending via the goat track.

Walk2 : The remaining members headed along the plateau to Ben MacDui, returning to the car park via Lurchers Gully. They got back to the bus about an hour before the other party and managed to miss the late afternoon rain.

11th September 2005

Larig Ghru

Attendance 16 : 13 members – 3 guests (bus)

Weather: sunny

Distance 30km, Ascent 800m

The party started in Coylumbridge, near Aviemore and spent the first hour or so, climbing gently through the pines of the Rothiemurchus Forest which has extensive clearings full of juniper bushes. This is the mushroom season and they were plentiful in the forest. One member trailed behind picking them. The path drops into Glen Dee and one of Scotland's permanent snowfields in Garbh Coire on Braeriach was spotted. The path then climbs over the shoulder of Carn a' Mhaim into Glen Luibeg. The party crossed the Luibeg Burn here and while searching for a sheltered spot, one member came across an adder coiled up and basking in the sun. Unusually for adders, it didn't slip away but stayed put and allowed many members to take a close photograph. After a brief stop, the party continued to

Derry Lodge and then continued down Glen Derry to reach the bus at the Linn o' Dee. The usual post-walk refreshments and discussions took place in the Fife Arms, Braemar.

23rd-25th September 2005

Cannich Weekend

No club accommodation booked

Attendance 6 (cars)

The group met at the road junction in Cannich on Saturday morning to decide the route for the day, having all made their own accommodation arrangements in a variety of places. The weather looked promising and spirits were high as an overambitious plan was hatched to tackle four Munros (Carn nan Gobhar, Sgurr na Lapaich, An Riabhachan and An Socach). After a false start which saw the group going the wrong way, they eventually headed briskly up the first Munro of the day, Carn nan Gobhar (992m). A steep ascent through knee-deep, peaty heather soon slowed the pace and, by the time the summit was reached, one member was feeling the worse for wear and had to turn back accompanied by another member. At this point, the wind started to whip itself into a decidedly chilly frenzy and the remaining four headed for Sgurr na Lapaich (1150m). Leaving the summit shelter to battle again with the icy wind, a decision was made to take the quick way home. A route was chosen down a "straightforward" looking ridge from the summit of Sgurr na Lapaich ("Peak of the Bog"). Bog after unrelenting bog all the way down and, if that wasn't enough, a stream crossing that turned out to be a raging torrent.. A round trip of eight hours, 15km, two Munros, and enough bog to keep the proverbial hog happy. Grand plans were made to meet again on the Sunday morning. All duly arrived at the meeting place, some still a whiter shade of pale, others nursing old injuries and most clad in jeans and other decidedly un-hill-walking gear! Those who had faintly intended to fight another day soon convinced themselves that the weather did not look at all promising and tourists' maps were quickly checked to find the location of the nearest tea shop.

23rd October 2005

Beinn a' Ghlo

Attendance: 13 (cars)

Weather: snow, fog

Distance: 20km, Ascent: 1300m

The group drove through heavy rain on the way to Blair Atholl, but with conditions improving, they agreed to go ahead with the original plan and headed for Beinn a' Ghlo. Snow was falling most of the way up Carn Liath and was lying at Munro level. The cold wind did not encourage anyone to hang around and so it was on to Braigh Coire Chruinn Bhalgain in poor visibility. Two members decided to descend from the bealach before the climb to the third Munro, Carn nan Gobhar. The remaining 11 completed the round before a rather boggy descent to the landrover track. We were back at the cars by 4.45, a quick pint at the Atholl Arms Hotel and home by 7pm.

13th November 2005

Glen Esk to Glen Clova

Attendance: 23 (bus)

Weather: clear, frosty

Distance 18km, Ascent 750m

It was a fine winter's day, with clear blue skies and crunchy frost underfoot as we set off from the car park at the end of Glen Esk following a good path round the north side of Loch Lee. We then headed south up the Shank of Inchgrundle up to the summit of Muckle Cairn (826m), stopping on the way to observe 2 minute's silence at 11am. After a lunch stop the party split in two with one group heading for Ben Tirran and the others making for White Hill before taking a more direct route to Loch Brandy and the Clova Hotel. The first group enjoyed a slightly longer route round the cliffs above Loch Wharral and Loch Brandy. Large herds of deer were seen and numerous white hares were sent sprinting across the hillside as we approached.

11th December 2005

Beinn a' Chuallaich

Attendance: 19 (bus)

Distance: 18km Ascent: 650m

A fairly short winter's day walk over Beinn a' Chuallaich. The forecast was for rain later so the group did not waste any time in setting off up the eastern slopes of the hill. The cloudbase appeared to be fairly high early on, with only the top of Schiehallion hidden from view. It was a different story after an hour of walking as the mist closed in and the wind became very strong and cold. We found a reasonably sheltered spot for a lunch stop between the North Top and the main summit. The weather did not encourage anyone to hang about at the summit, which had a surprisingly large cairn for a mere Corbett. A slight change of plan saw us descending south before heading west towards the path which would take us down to Kinloch Rannoch for an early 2.45 finish. No pub stop see late breaking news.

Items for sale

- Roof bars (Halfords) for a medium size car with no gutter, very good condition £40. John Norrie 01241-876270.
- Plastic Winter Boots (green). Asolo Super Soft Size 43. Too small for me. £30. Colin 01241 852928

Quiz Night 2005

This was held after the meeting in November. Many thanks to John Dawson for providing the picture part of the quiz. It unfortunate that this event is not better attended. You even missed the uproar when the winners were announced. Next year, the rules will be clearly written down!! For those who didn't manage, here is the non-picture part of the quiz.. Answers from Colin if you are interested. Note that the annual Mountain Mind Quiz is coming up in March. The club enters 2 teams. You might be selected – beware!

Round 1: Lodges

1. What significant event occurred near Gaick Lodge in January 1800?
2. Fealar Lodge is incredibly remote – name the nearest Munro to it?
3. Lodge at top of Glen Isla
4. Which glen is Forest Lodge in?
5. GlenLochsie Lodge had a special feature. What was it?
6. Bruar lodge is located on what old hill path?
7. Who owns Mar Lodge
8. Name the ruined lodge at the top of Glen Ey?
9. Hunthill Lodge lies in what Angus Glen?

10. Milden Lodge is the starting place to visit a Corbett. Which one?

Round 2: Bridges

1. Cairngorm Club Bridge – crossed recently on a club meet. Where?
2. Roy Tait Memorial Bridge/ Where and When (2 points)
3. New Whitehaugh Bridge. When was it built?
4. Victoria Bridge. Name the nearest hostelry.
5. What river does the Bedford Bridge cross?
6. The Eidart Bridge was built in 1957 by SRWS. Which bigger river does the Eidart join?
7. CarrBridge and Dulnain Bridge have bridges that cross the same river. Which one?
8. What happened recently on a hill near Laxford Bridge and what is the hill?
9. Garva Bridge – what river does it cross.
10. What colour is White Bridge?

Round 3: Mountain literature

1. 1960/70s classic guidebook called "The Scottish Peaks". Who was the author?
2. The book "Touching the Void" by Joe Simpson has been made into a film. Who was his companion on that epic adventure?
3. Classic mountain book : "Savage Arena". Author?
4. Which Scottish Climber wrote classic book "In High Places"
5. Who wrote the "The Shining Mountain" and "Sacred Summits". There is a literature award named partially after him
6. Hamish Brown wrote "Hamish's Mountain Walk" describing the first continuous climbing of all the Munros. When did take place?
7. Name the fairly local author of "The High Mountains of Britain and Ireland"
8. Who wrote "The first 50" and had a television series to accompany it.
9. Who writes and publishes "Heading for the Scottish Hills"?
10. Classic Mountain Leadership bible for 30 years called "Mountain Leadership". Who wrote it?

Round 4: Directions

1. If I head downhill in the riverbed of Glen Coe, which direction am I going in? (use 8 points of the compass)
2. What hill is furthest north/south, order them? : Beinn a' Ghlo, Ben Nevis, Glas Maol
3. What hill is furthest north/south, order them? : CairnGorm, Ladhar Bheinn the Saddle,
4. Furthest East/West , order them: Beinn Alder, Ben Lawers, Craig Megaidh
5. Furthest East/West, order them? Head of sea lochs – Etive, Fynne, Leven
6. Bridge of Orchy is any interesting area regarding watersheds. Where does the water passing under the bridge reach the sea?
7. So is Tyndrum. Where does the water following past the Green Welly café reach the sea?
8. Where does the water running off Beinn a'Chroin reach the sea?
9. Altbeithe youth hostel to Cannich – what direction? (8 points of compass)
10. Mayar and Dreish are the 2 nearest Munros from here. The next nearest can be any number – all within 1or 2 km of each other

Round 5: Estates, Forests and burns

1. The Forest of Birse is crossed by a named drove road. Which one?
2. The Forest of Tanar has two hill paths through it?
3. Shennaval bothy lies in what forest
4. There are 3 estates covering Glen Esk – what are they?
5. Moulzie in Glen Clova lies in what estate
6. The summit of Ben Avon is the boundary between what estates
7. Queen Elizabeth forest park was enlarged and turned into a National Park. Which one
8. The South Esk rises in Loch Esk. What tributary joins the South Esk from the direction of Jock's road.
9. The South Esk reaches the sea in Montrose Basin, the North Esk reaches the sea north of Montrose. What about the west water?
10. Montreathment Forest is reckoned to be the home of what rare bird?

Round 6: Miscellaneous

1. Take the number of Munros, subtract the number of degrees representing west and add the number of the OS sheet covering Glen Clova – what number do we get?

2. A few weeks ago, our club just passed its what anniversary
3. For the Meet Secretary. They had a top 10 hit in 1967 called "See Emily Play", recorded music called "Several species of furry animal gathered in a cave and grooving with a Pict" in 1969 and had a top ten hit with "Another brick in the wall" in 1976. Name the band.
4. The hills are alive with the sound of Music. Who sang this?
5. About 10 years ago, a French man was found dead at the summit of a hill with a bullet through his head. What hill?
6. Which range of hills has a feature called Murder Hole?
7. Scotland has one arête. Where is it?
8. What is pass is higher – Drummochter or Cairn o' mount?
9. What is the height of Bachnagairm
10. The observatory on Ben Nevis was abandoned in 1904. How many years was it manned for?

Why not write an article for the next newsletter. Any topic though preferably hill walking. Send it any committee member (email address are on the web site).



Photographic Competition 2006

To be judged at meeting on Feb 6th. Entries to the secretary by 31st January

Rules (as stated in current constitution)

LIST OF RULES FOR PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

- 1 *The photos entered must have some connection with hillwalking (the Club preferred).*
- 2 *There will be three classes:-*
 - (a) *colour transparencies*
 - (b) *colour prints*
 - (c) *black and white prints (at least postcard size).*
- 3 *All entries to be in by the date decided by the committee each year.*
- 4 *The competition to be judged by an independent judge, appointed by the Committee each year*

Because of the popularity of digital photography, there will be a 4th category for printed digital images.

Please make sure your photographs are clearly marked in an envelope with your name. Give a title if you like. Describe the time of year and the location if possible.