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Forfar & District Hill Walking Club

Newsletter 31 June 2008

President's Column

Well surprise surprise, despite a brave attempt at standing down at the AGM, I'm still here! So you'll have to suffer me for another year.

One of the issues that I raised at the AGM (or slightly before) was the terminal decline of the club. From a decade after its birth in 1963 until now, the average age of the club has steadily increased. OK, there is always a stream of new members, but none could be described as very young. So if the trend continues, in the end, the club will die of old age. For the current membership, this isn't a problem. In fact at any snap-shot in time, it isn't a problem for anyone. And maybe there isn't really a problem at all, if the club exists to just cater for the membership at any point in time. But from the club's point of view (and I am the current leader of the club) it does make sense to think about it. I spend a fair amount of time working with younger people, albeit in badminton and Duke of Edinburgh circles. They are interesting, enthusiastic, keen to learn and have lots to offer us old ones. So I propose that we tackle our aging problem by trying somehow to get more young people (age 30 or less) involved with the club. There are obstacles to overcome with under 18's:- The Protection of Children Act for example. But these have been overcome in these other areas that I'm involved in. Is this a way to solve the dwindling numbers on the buses? These are thoughts for the day - thoughts for the committee to ponder.

Wasn't it good to see snow on the hills again? It has been years since it's lain for so long. Still a far cry from the mini ice-age of the 80's but good none the less.

A big welcome to all of the new members that have joined recently. I'm sure I've spoken to most of you, but if not then we'll meet up sometime in the year. I hope you have enjoyed your first few meets with the club. We have been blessed with uncharacteristically good weather over the past few meets, so be prepared for a few customary soakings.

A couple of committee members retired at the AGM in March after several years' good service. Thanks Willie Mather and Mat Torrie. Rookies

(Graham Brown and Bill Dryburgh) were voted onto the committee and are already hard at work.

Have a great summer. I will either see you on some of the forthcoming meets or might even bump into you in the North West Highlands during the first 3 weeks in July. My wish - may the midgies, clegs and ticks die in their millions!

Best Wishes
Colin

'Far I wi Noo' plaque

The last newsletter (no. 30) described the finding of the old piece of club history and the story behind it. It can be found on the web site. The committee decided to use the plaque as a trophy of the "Event of the Year", to be decided at the AGM. After some debate the trophy was awarded to a certain gentleman (name withheld because of acute embarrassment) who went swimming, not just paddling, on one of the 2007 meets. This truly soaking event only just beat an event later on the same day - being caught in the scud by some non-club members after removing his soaking underpants on top of Carn Bhac. At the moment, the leading contender for this year's prize is our meet secretary Ray, who during the long tramp in soft snow from Beinn Bhreac to Beinn a' Choarrain in April, suddenly veered off at right angles and was intent on climbing Beinn a Bhuid instead, before being brought back to his senses. It was definitely a "I may be gone for some time" moment.

Bridge Plaques

The committee decided to have these replaced on the White Haugh Bridge. This will take place on Sunday 24 August, the same day as the Bourach Work Party (further details below). Photographs have been taken (by Graham Chalmers) and these and various newspaper cuttings are being prepared for a presentation to the Angus Glens Museum in Kirriemuir.

Bourach Window

The top panel of the door has been removed and replaced with a perspex window, by John Norrie and Bob Greenhill. John reports that it lets in a good amount of light.

Bourach Work Party

During the window replacement, John reported that the roof needs more divots. Colin has checked with the Angus Ranger Service, who have confirmed that it is OK to dig out divots but not to take them all at the same place. The work party will take place on August 24. Members are requested to meet at Glen Doll car park at 9.30. Bring a spade. Bring an old sack or a new sack with a plastic liner for carrying divots from afar. If you are interested then please contact Mel, further details will be available at the time. Carolyn, please bring cake like the last time!!!!

Data protection

Remember if you did not receive a club address list, it is because you have not signed a Data Protection form. You can opt out from having your details available to other club members but if you do, you will not receive a copy of the address list. If you wish to opt in, see form on club web site. Complete it and send to the secretary. This is also true if you want to opt out.

Dance

A very successful club dance was held on 23 February in Kingsmuir village hall. Music was provided by Deirdre Adamson. A stovie supper was served. Thanks to everyone who donated prizes for the raffle, especially to Basecamp for the two very generous vouchers. These were won by Mel and Jerry F. Profits for the night were donated to the John Muir Trust.

Durness Cancellation

The committee would like to apologise for the late change of arrangements for the Durness weekend. The Lazy Crofter cancelled our booking even though it was made 12 months in advance. The committee is currently following this up. Alternative accommodation was taken at the Durness Youth Hostel, which proved to be very comfortable despite having only one shower for the whole hostel. The group who attended had 3 great days walking (see meet reports).

Ex-member - Anne-Marie Robertson

She has gone home to her native Brittany taking her husband and the yacht. Here is her goodbye email.

From: "Steve & Anne-Marie"

<robertsonsj@tiscali.co.uk>

To: <colin.sinclair@btinternet.com>

Subject: Au revoir

Date: 29 January 2008 16:22

Bonjour Colin, Linda et tout le club,

Just a few words to let you know that Stephen is dragging me back to my roots where the sailing

and socializing around boats is better for him. How dare he take me away from the hills and all those things and people I have enjoyed for 30years!!!

I shall not forget the FDHWC as it provided me with some of the happiest memories of my life in Scotland, not least thanks to the camaraderie of the club. Thank you Colin for "holding my hand" (and my poles) when I was feeling a bit fretful especially on Ben McDui 2 or 3 years ago! I shall never forget!

I loved the club and wished I could have done more walks but we all have to share ourselves and our time. Please give John Easton a kiss for me!!! I loved his sense of humour and his knowledge of the land.

I shall think about you all on the coastal paths of Brittany and will regale my fellow walkers about the joys of bonnie Scotland.

Toutes mes amitiés. Anne-Marie.

Moving on Feb 8th.

Ex-member – Andy Grant

We have also lost member Andy Grant who has gone to pastures new. Andy works in the oil industry and has moved to Abu Dhabi to work. Andy was a keen member and a regular attendee on meets over the past few years whenever his work commitments allowed. One of his first outings with the club was on a weekend meet to Kinlochleven a few years ago. Members who were there will doubtless remember his dogged determination to complete what was a big hill day, even by our standards, in the Mamores when lesser mortals might have called it a day long before the last top.

High Tea 2008 – January

Because of the conditions on the day, this was probably one of the toughest walks in the past 12 months. Deep soft snow on Morven had everyone panting and glad to get off. There was a rare sighting of waxwings as we waited for the bus. What a high tea afterwards at the Hotel :- both in quality and quantity. Even big Al was struggling. Must go back.

Photographic Competition 2008

Held on 4 February. It was keenly contested with a large number of entries. Judge Stan Farrow. Judging was made on the prints (from any source :- digital, negative film or positive film). Twelve members entered, many entering up to the maximum of 5 prints. Results were 1. Willie Mather (Peru) 2. Carolyn Smith (Pap o' Glen Coe) 3. equal John Dawson (Ringed Plover on a stone), Jim Nicol (Moulzie from high).

Gird Championships 2008

Held on the 14 April. Poor turn out. It was won for the second year running by that nimble athlete Scott Cameron. Well done.

Running team revival

It's some number of years since we entered a club team in the Clova Half Marathon. The president wants a sixth commemorative mug to complete the collection. Any other takers?

Upland Tree Survey

You should have received a survey card with the latest edition of The Scottish Mountaineer. This is a survey on dwarf mountain trees. Don't forget to report sightings of small trees over 600m by sending in the card.

Web site changes

The current web site (our 3rd revision) brought frame based pages and our own domain name. It is mainly text based – fast download. Work has now started on the 4th revision. One of the problems about the current host is space for images, especially high quality images like the photographic competition. There are many free image sites around the web. So, all images are being ported to free web space on an experimental basis. The one chosen is Picasa (even though it is part of the Google “big brother” empire). There is 1GB of free space available which is 100 times bigger than the space for the whole web site itself. Pictures are not stored in ultra high resolution but they appear to be good enough. Since the webmaster never receives any photographs, it is hoped to allow members to upload photographs themselves. There is a link to the new image location from the web site. However it can be reached directly on <http://picasaweb.google.com/fdhwcalbums>. The revision 4 web site will be non-framed based, include blog (really a bulletin-board for weekend walking partners, with appropriate log-in for data protection purposes). For the geeks, the web site is hosted by a server running the Microsoft Windows 2003 Server operating system. ASP.NET is available but not currently used, but will be used in the 4th revision in order to store data in a database on the server. Cost remains at £19 hosting per year (for 100MB) plus £5 for domain name (www.fdhwc.org.uk) rental.

Emergency 999 or 112

Most members will probably have heard that we had an emergency evacuation on the May meet to the Black Mount. Roy Hebenton fell ill on that meet. Ian Hadden, a new member with medical experience and Linda dealt with the casualty as

Ray and Colin went separate ways for help. The O2 emergency number (112) didn't work but luckily Colin met a lady with a Vodaphone mobile which also showed Emergency Only. He dialled 112 and the Scottish Air Ambulance Service helicopter was there an hour later. Roy was treated on the hill and then flown to the Southern General in Glasgow. Roy is recovering well, and hopes to be back with us when he has fully recovered. By that time, Ray, Colin, Linda and Ian had no chance of completing the walk and retreated to Inveroran Hotel, joining Steve who had walked off earlier, where they were interviewed by the Police. The hotel provided soup, tea and biscuits. The club has sent a donation to the Mountain Rescue team for that area. Two other groups that helped that day have been thanked by a note on the web site. The last incident of this kind was in March 2000 in Glen Etive, late on a snowy winter's day when Nick Parsons broke his leg. Colin and Ray were both involved that day too, so if you want to avoid rescues, keep away from them!

Tablet wars : latest

A fragile truce has been declared. Not only do Fife football teams consistently finish above Brechin, but Fifers also make the best tablet!

New Members

We are pleased to welcome the following new members to the Club:

Kate Fewell, Kinfauns
Jerry Forteach, Carnoustie (a returner)
Ian Hadden, Arbroath

Outdoor Meetings

Outdoor meetings were held during the spring. In May the meeting was a walk along Arbroath Cliffs to the Gaylet Pot. John and Rita provided supper afterwards in Elliot afterwards to the survivors. Thank you both. In June, There was a cycle and ramble through the trees in Montreatmont Forest. Thanks Margaret for the use of your yard and for guiding the walk. Lots of plants but few birds on the trek.

An invitation to all members - Mel's 30th Birthday BBQ

You are all invited to my 30th Birthday BBQ at 25 Lochbank Road at 2pm on 30th August (although I'm officially 30 on the 31st but I need the Sunday to nurse my sore head!). If you are coming please let me know so I know what numbers to expect.

Mel's New Phone Number (a special deal for the elderly, perhaps?)

Mel has a new mobile number, it's 07882783082.

Harry Potter and the Two Corbetteers

A short story by Rowling A Bout Laughing

The train chugged on to the viaduct and came to a halt. A chill came over Harry as he looked out of the window and saw two strange creatures on wheels coming down the hill. "It's the Dementors", he said. "They're coming after me again". "It can't be", retorted Hermione, "I cast a spell to keep them away". "Then it must be Voldemort coming to get you" said Ron, ever the pessimist. "Naw", replied Hermione, "It's just a couple of eejits from Forfar & District Hillwalking Club coming back from a Corbett-bagging expedition".

The characters in this story are fictitious. Any resemblance to club members with initials WS or SS is purely coincidental.

Treasurer's Report

On this occasion I prepared accounts for the 11 months up to 31 December 2007, as agreed at the previous AGM. The 'short year' was to allow more time to prepare the paperwork and have it checked before presenting the accounts at this year's AGM.

I can confirm that Ray Campbell, he's the accountant and your former Treasurer, checked the sums before the books were handed over to our internal auditors. On this occasion it was Stuart Fergusson who aided John Norrie in the verification of the books and the final accounts. I'm pleased to report the records were found to be in order. It sounds so simple, but as ever there is occasional doubt in my mind as to whether the figure should go in the credit or debit column. It is a relief when the checks confirm the figures balance!

Overall, the credit rating of the Club remains A*. We ended 2007 with an accumulated fund of £1,803. This is an increase of £243 on the figure declared in the last accounts.

Our membership numbers dropped slightly in 2007. At the end of the year we had 65 members and this generated income of £1,200 (down from £1,330 in the previous year). The hire of buses returned a loss of £156 and the weekend meets also returned a small loss of £24. The main annual expense remains the fees payable on your behalf to the Mountaineering Council of Scotland. These totalled £602 for the year.

Obviously we are now looking at the rising cost of fuel and the impact this will have on bus hire costs. There is no great cause for concern at present but the situation will have to be monitored. The bus fares will remain at £12 per passenger for the time being.

At the AGM it was also agreed to retain the membership fees at £20 for a full member and £10 for an associate member.

For those members interested, a copy of the balance sheet and the income and expenditure account is available on request.

Steve Wilson, Treasurer

Meet Secretary's Report

27 December 2007 Glenshee

Sixteen members turned up for the traditional Christmas meet on a fine, if windy, winter's day. Not for the first time, we headed to Glenshee but on this occasion we made for the hills on the west side of the road. A further variation on normal practice saw us tackling the Cairnwell from the south, thus avoiding the unsightly ski lifts even if this meant a longer climb. We completed the round of all the tops, namely Cairnwell, Carn Nan Sac, Carn a' Gheoidh and Carn Bhinnein. We rounded off the day with a festive drink in the Spittal of Glenshee Hotel. Estimated distance walked was around 14 kilometres.

January 2008 Auchnafree Hill

Due to dreadful weather this walk over a popular Corbett was cancelled.

13 January 2008 High Tea Meet Ballater

Twenty-one walkers waited patiently on the bus at Luthermuir for a sleepy secretary who obviously did not get an alarm clock for her Christmas. After she joined us the bus took us to Bridgefoot where the walkers ventured onto the open hillside in light snow and climbed Morven, descending via Peter's Hill to the Pass of Ballater. It was another day of low cloud and poor visibility, making members wonder if 2008 could possibly be as bad weather-wise as 2007. The walk covered a distance of 13 kilometres. Thirty members then enjoyed a very good high tea at the Sauchieburn Hotel.

10 February 2008
Ben Vorlich

Eleven members went by car and met on the south Loch Earn Road, squeezing into a small parking area next to the loch. After some height was gained, members once again found themselves in the familiar surroundings of a grey curtain of hill fog. Most members continued to Stuc a'Chroin with the poor visibility making it difficult to find the appropriate starting point for the final assault on the summit. The walk was notable for the complete lack of snow on Ben Vorlich in February, although Stuc a' Chroin had a reasonable covering. Distance covered on this walk was 14 kilometres.

9 March 2008
Drumochter

The walkers split into 2 groups, with ten opting for the hills on the east side and four on the west side. The east-siders covered 16 kilometres and took in the Munros of A' Bhuidheanach Bheag and Carn na Caim in steadily improving weather conditions. The group on the other side of the road were not so lucky and cut their walk short, climbing A Mharconnich and Geal Carn before turning back in the poor conditions. The day was completed with a refreshment stop at Dunkeld.

21-23 March 2008
Mamores Weekend

We were booked into the Blackwater Hostel in Kinlochleven, which was being run by a young lad of about sixteen while his parents were holidaying in Australia. Most of the twelve members present enjoyed a day of classic winter conditions in the Mamores on Saturday, with a few others going further afield to bag Corbetts. A downpour on the Saturday night did not bode well for Sunday, but thankfully it had cleared up by the morning. Could our luck with the weather be turning? Five members climbed Stob Dhubh, a very steep-sided Corbett in Glen Etive, while another group climbed Ben Challum on the way home.

20 April 2008
Linn of Dee

With the longer daylight hours now being with us, more adventurous walks were planned for this meet, with a choice of a 28 kilometre walk over Beinn Bhreac and Beinn a Chaorainn or a cycle and walk totalling 35 kilometres to Cairn Toul. Eight members plus a guest opted for the former and six chose the latter. The weather was favourable for once, with excellent views of the snow-covered Cairngorms all around us. The underfoot conditions were also very kind, at least for the nine walkers, who experienced a carpet of snow on top of frozen ground on what can often

be a very boggy walk. The cyclists left their bikes at Derry Lodge and found the going very hard with deep snow by the time they reached the col between Devil's Point and Cairn Toul. Four members turned back after reaching Cairn Toul but two intrepid members managed the round of Cairn Toul, Angel's Peak and Devil's Point. The day ended with a visit to the Spittal of Glenshee Hotel.

2-5 May 2008
Durness Weekend

After being badly let down by our first choice of accommodation, we eventually secured lodgings at the Youth Hostel. Saturday saw a unanimous vote for a traverse of Foinaven. On Sunday and Monday different groups headed in various directions, with some opting for the northerly Munros and others Corbett-bagging.

18 May 2008
Black Mount

This was the first bus meet since January and a rather disappointing fourteen members and guests turned up for what is a classic through walk from Inveroran to Glencoe over four Munros. The walkers set off from Victoria Bridge and by the time the steep ascent to the summit of Stob a' Choir Odhair was completed, the party was well split up. One walker then took seriously ill on the bealach between Stob a' Choir Odhair and Stob Ghabhar. It was our good fortune to have a guest with us for the first time who has a medical qualification. The patient was airlifted from the hill and taken to Southern General Hospital, Glasgow. He was discharged later the same night and thankfully is making a good recovery. After giving statements to the police, a very subdued busload of walkers made a belated return to Forfar. The Club is very grateful for the assistance given by our guest, Ian Hadden, who took charge of the situation on the hill in a very professional manner.

8 June 2008
Ben Cruachan

Another rather disappointing turnout of fifteen for a bus meet to a very popular mountain. All members of the party reached the main summit with a few making a detour to take in the Taynuilt Peak. The meet was notable for the appearance of John Easson to notch up another Munro and edge ever closer.....only four to go on Skye and then his secret last Munro, which I believe is on an island, but not Skye. John decided to go back down after reaching the top and was accompanied by Ray, while the rest made their way round the ridge to Stob Diamh. Two members went on to climb Beinn a' Bhuiridh before rejoining the others on the path down from

the dam. Once again we were blessed with clear, sunny weather.

20-22 June 2008 Kintail Weekend

Seventeen members and guests stayed at the National Trust Outdoor Centre at Morvich with a further two staying at the camp site across the road – the best turnout for some time. Saturday was an ideal day of sunshine with a cooling breeze. Most members did the entire South Glen Shiel Ridge, with others climbing Carn Ghulasaid and its two neighbours, Sgurr Gaorsaic, A' Ghlas Beinn and Beinn Fhada. Sunday provided a stark contrast with low cloud, high winds and driving rain. A coastal walk for some or an early return home were the order of the day for most.

Mystery Meet

The mystery meet this year will be on Sunday 6 July and will be organized by Mel and Bill Dryburgh. Please give your names to them beforehand if you intend to go.

Social Walks

Your Committee has responded to requests from a number of members to introduce additional Club walks. These could probably be best described as more local, slightly shorter or less strenuous 'social walks' – with a bit more time to '*blether*'.

The plan is to trial this idea with the following two walks:

Sunday 31 August 2008 – The Airlie Ridge

Starting at Dykehead, the plan is to walk the length of the ridge, picking up the Minister's Path before finishing at the Glen Clova Hotel. This will obviously involve planning to leave a car at the hotel to ferry drivers back to the start. (c11 miles/17km, ascent 500m)

Sunday 26 October 2008 – Glen Isla

Starting at the head of Glen Isla, the plan is to follow the tracks and footpaths to Little Glas Maol before completing a loop back to the start. (c10 miles/16km, ascent 650m)

For both walks meet at the Myre car park, Forfar at 8.30am.

Please register your interest in these walks in advance with:

Steve Wilson, tel: 01575 575654, email: steve.wilson36@btinternet.com

Should these walks prove popular, some additional such walks will be added to the

programme in 2009. Suggestions for walks are welcome as is your feedback on these proposals.

Those members who like more of a challenge on hills in other areas need not worry. The Club will continue to provide a full programme of walks to meet your needs.

New Meet Calendar

You should now have your meet calendar. Please use the booking form (available on the website) to book for weekends. Please book early to avoid disappointment. For day meets, we will firm up routes two or three weeks in advance subject to weather, and let members know by e-mail. We will always have two alternative walks with one being a little less strenuous. It would be appreciated if members could let the Meet Secretary or Assistant Meet Secretary know in advance which walk they would prefer.

Annual Membership Subscriptions

Subscriptions were payable at the AGM in March. Any members who have not yet paid and do not want their membership to lapse, please send your subscription to the Treasurer, Steve Wilson. Full membership costs £20 and Associate membership costs £10.

Contact Details

A list of members and their contact details will be included with your newsletter if you have previously signed the Data Protection statement ie given us permission to record and circulate your details. If you would like to be added to the list and receive a copy please contact Steve Wilson tel: 01575 575654
email: steve.wilson36@btinternet.com

Could those members on the list please check their details are correct - particularly the email address. Please notify Steve Wilson of any changes

Communications

The latest Club news is regularly updated on the Club website: www.fdhwc.org.uk
You are encouraged to look at this to check for the latest information.

The Committee is keen to communicate with the membership as much as possible by electronic means. This not only allows more information to be circulated but it is greener (less printing and use of paper) and more cost effective.

Where possible, we will in future communicate electronically ie newsletters. Please let us know if

you would prefer to continue to receive information in hard copy.

We will continue to send information in hard copy to those members who have not provided an email address or do not have access to a computer.

Items For Sale

Sportiva Goretex 4 season boots size 41 in excellent condition, hardly worn. Grab yourself a bargain! Contact Jerry Husband on 07973155929

The Wonderful World Wide Web

Many of you will know that the internet is a fantastic and vast source of information for your average hill walker. There are sites that tell you the weather, offer you cheap gear and what beer festivals are on in your local area! Below is a list of some sites I wanted to share that I use either from time to time or almost everyday. I'm sure you have your own favourites that I haven't listed so let me know and I'll maybe do Part 2 in the next newsletter.

Weather (whether you'll get p**d on)**

www.mwis.org.uk
www.metcheck.com

Beer! (whether you'll get p**d)**

www.camra.org
www.clova.com (Clova Hotel Beer Festival 2 and 3 August)

Walking & Film Festivals (whether you'll get enlightened)

www.walklochaber.com
www.dundemountainfilm.org
www.walkingfestival.org

Routes/Guides (whether you'll get lost)

www.munromagic.com
www.scottishsport.co.uk

Gear/Shopping (whether you'll get dressed)

www.cave-crag.co.uk
www.fieldandtrek.com
www.gear-zone.co.uk
www.hikebikeandride.com
www.scotlandtees.com
www.alpkit.com