



Forfar & District Hill Walking Club

Newsletter 36 December 2010

www.fdhwc.org.uk

President's Column

As I wrote this column a year ago, the big freeze was just starting. Already we've had a big freeze, and it continues to snow again today. Is this a side-effect of global warming? I haven't seen as much hard packed snow on the hills this early for many a year. Hopefully this leads to some cracking winter walking over the coming months.

One thing still worries me and that's the drop-off in meet attendance figures. See the graphs inside to illustrate this. For the last 2 years, the club has healthy meet attendances in the first part of the year, then for some reason it drops away. August, September, October, November and December all had single figure attendances. Obviously something is wrong here. OK, some of the dates we picked were in prime holiday periods – lesson learned for the next committee.

On a positive note, the advertising poster for the club is ready. Hopefully this will encourage an influx of new members.

In my last column (Newsletter 35, June 2010), I spoke about long term members mentioning a few names but forgot to mention Bill Redford. Please accept my sincere apologies, Bill.

Best wishes to all. Hope to see you at one of the festive meets.
Colin,
President

New Corbetteers

Congratulations to the club's newest Corbetteers – Willie and Sheila Simpson completed the Corbetts on Saturday 28th August 2010 on Stob a'Bhealach an Scriogain (NM 875 277), near Glenfinnan. This was exactly 5 years to the day since they completed their last Munro together on Ben Lomond. The weather on the last Corbett wasn't much different from the weather on Ben Lomond - wet. Bill and Sheila would thank everyone for their encouragement over the years. Many congratulations to them from all club members. Bill & Sheila provided a nip of Bowmore, cake and shortie, to all those who attended the outdoor meeting at Airlie Monument on Monday 30th August, while watching the sunset.

Festive Meets

The traditional festive period walks will be held on Monday 27 December and Monday 3 January. They are usually quite local. These meets are weather dependent. Please see web site (or phone meet secretary) for latest details of proposed locations and times. One walk being considered takes in a Marilyn but no Munros or Corbetts (sorry, baggers!).

High Tea Meet Sunday 9th January

This meet will be a crossing of a Mounth hill track, "The Fungle Path" (Aboyne to Tarfside) by bus leaving from Sauchieburn Hotel at 08:00. High tea will be taken at the Sauchieburn Hotel at 17:00. Please contact the meet secretary if you require a bus seat and/or coming for high tea. If coming for high tea, please state your choice of main course by Wednesday 5th January.

Note that this meet was scheduled for January 2010, but was altered because of the poor weather conditions at that time.

Menu, £12.75 per person

- *Steak and Kidney Pie*
- *Fried Breaded Haddock*
- *Chicken Breast in a Mushroom and Wine Sauce*
- *Cajun Salmon Salad*
- *Braised Steak with Herb Dumpling*
- *Smoked Haddock in a Cheese and Prawn Sauce*
- *Chick Pea and Mixed Bean Curry with Basmati Rice*

Served with fresh vegetables of the day, potatoes or chips.

Followed by Homemade Cakes, Tea or Coffee Scone, Jam and Clotted Cream

'Far I wi Noo' plaque

Remember to note any worthy events for "incident of the year". Previous winners are Sinclair's Leap (2008); Ray's "I may be gone some time" (2009). Please forward news of any worthy incident to a committee member. It is hoped to present this at the AGM on 28th February.

Photographic Competition

The club's annual photographic competition will be held after the open meeting on Monday January 31st 2011. For the 3rd year running, the judge is Graham Wilkinson, president of Carnoustie Camera Club. Entries are to be handed to a committee member no later than Sunday 23rd January. Although entries should be made on paper (i.e. a print), Graham would also like to receive a digital image or negative, in order to help with his summary and to suggest any improvements to the photographs.

Extract from constitution

LIST OF RULES FOR PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

1. The photos entered must have some connection with hill walking (the club preferred) and be taken not earlier than 1 year prior to the competition.
2. There will be one class of entries. An entry can be one of the following: - a slide, a print from a film negative or a print from a digital image. Any size of print can be submitted.
3. All entries to be handed to a committee member by the published closing date.
4. A member can submit no more than 5 entries.
5. The competition to be judged by an independent judge, appointed by the committee.

Photographic Competition 2010 – Judge's comments

For those interested, here are Graham's notes from last year's competition. 1st and runners-up (2=) are identified. The 'B' is the best of each of the other photographers' images. You can see the entries on the club web site.

<http://www.fdhwc.org.uk/photographs.htm>

A1		Print a bit murky in bottom left. Needs something for the eye to rest on.
A2		Interesting light. Lacks foreground detail.
A3		Plover. Is it possible to be closer and a little less central? Like out of focus hill - not distracting.
A4		Lacks detail in foreground and something in middle ground
A5	2=	Nice picture - good composition with sweep of ridge. People set scale.
B1		Where title from? Nice rainbow but not much else happening
B2		Well set up picture with good detail front to back. Nice sky too - everything there.
B3		Again nice image tho' perhaps a bit central.
B4	2=	Nice colours from a beautiful part of the world. Foreground rocks fill the space well.
D1		Tricky exposure - camera coped well but subject needs to be closer - bit spread out.

D2	2=	Very dynamic with sense of movement and the cold.
D3		Nice view but needs something in the central area. Little less exposure would have lifted the colours.
D4		Eye needs point of attention - red anorak? Road provides good lead in but to what?
D5		Similarly path provides lead to figure but need point of attention.
E1		Good record short but lacks punch for competition.
E2		Nice winter shot with foreground detail. Little tree to the right is important in leading up to the corrie.
E3	B	Water draws viewer in. Nice sky. Line of trees in lower third helps composition.
E4		As with the first image good record shot but needs a bit of drama for competition. Sky is a bit overexposed - grad filter would help.
E5		Similarly good record of visit. Needs something to set scale and detailed sky.
F1	B	Path leads in well, some interest in sky. Figures better closer to photographer with perhaps some colour detail to catch the eye.
F2		Bank of cloud on horizon is distracting in middle of picture. Try lower view point and lose the upper clouds?
F3		Need focal point. Footprints lead in and then out.
F4		Tighter shot would be better but red anorak good!
F5		Nice colours but under exposed. Tricky to get right.
G1		Nice lead in but big dynamic range. Tricky. Needs some foreground interest.
G2		Nice shot, exposure not bad but need something on the bridge to draw the eye.
G3	B	Nice shot well exposed and pristine snow on rails!
H1	1	Well structured picture. Print not as good as digital image - cropped badly. Colourful enough to add interest.
H2		Good idea but jumbled rocks distract too much. People could be framed better and used to give scale to the shot.
H3		Nice try. Might be better as monochrome with high contrast.

**ODE TO HILLWALKING..... ON
COMPARATIVELY WEE LEGS**
by "Guess who?"

This is an ode, a small rendition
To all you walkers such as me,
Who suffer from the same affliction –
Legs that are considered wee.

Wee, that is, compared to others,
Especially my beloved man
Whose legs go on and on forever.
Keep up with him? D'you think I can?

As he strides easily through the heather,
Along rough paths and up he climbs,
Looking like it's just a doddle,
While I'm left peching, far behind.

When he stops to have a breather,
That's not *really* why he'll stop.
It's to give me time to catch up
And rest on some convenient rock.

At my moment of arrival,
He announces, "Right! Let's go!"
This trick never fails to amuse him.
Do I think it's funny? No!
(Not any more!)

When we reach a rocky scramble,
His long arms and legs can reach.
"The holds are good," he reassures me,
As I cling on in fear, and screech.

You begin to get the picture
Of when we in the hills stravaig.
Right from when we both were courting
It has always been this way.

And it really doesn't matter,
As the scenery is so fine.
I just love the hills of Scotland,
Amongst them all to walk and climb.

Memorable times we've had together,
Far too many here to tell.
Some of them have been fantastic,
Some, in truth, were utter hell.

And yet, my wee legs bring one plus,
So I hope for many walks to come.
As well as loving all the scenery,
I *do* love Colin's sexy bum.

New club advertising poster

This is the final version of the new poster which will be plastered everywhere in Angus in the New Year.



FANCY THIS?
Would you like to safely experience walking Scotland's Hills,
Glens and Mountains in a fun, friendly and sociable way?

WHY NOT COME AND JOIN US ON OUR NEXT OUTING

NEW MEMBERS VERY WELCOME.
A FULL PROGRAMME OF VARIED DAY AND WEEKEND MEETS TO SUIT
ALL ABILITIES, LOCALLY AND FURTHER AFIELD.
DEVELOP MOUNTAIN SKILLS.

If you would like to know more about us, including details of how to join,
please have a look at our club website: www.fdhwc.org.uk

**FORFAR AND DISTRICT
HILL WALKING CLUB**
ESTABLISHED 1963

Weekend Meets
Spring/Summer 2011

March Roybridge
May Skye
June Oban (+ trip to Mull)

The booking form will be available soon on the
web site.

For Sale

Millet Sherpa rucsac (red) approx. 25litre good
condition £25 ono

Gents Scarpa Fitzroy winter boots, size 44
(10uk), rigid sole leather uppers £15 ono

Phone Stuart Fergusson on 01241 873991.

Meet Secretary's Reports **(July-Dec 2010)**

The meets during the second half of 2010 have proved to be a mixed bag, both in terms of the weather and numbers attending. There were some very low attendances over the summer and early autumn. This follows a similar pattern to last year. I don't know if it's due to holidays or the poor weather, or perhaps a bit of both.

4 July 2010

Meet Secretary's Mystery Meet

The Assistant Meet Secretary arranged this walk and wisely abandoned it quickly due to very unseasonal weather. The intended destination was Glen Lyon. Four brave souls turned up..

15 August 2010

Glen Lochay

At last, a promising weather forecast! Seven members turned up, some giving their shorts (or rather their legs) an airing. It was a very misty morning and headlights were needed all the way to Killin. Just as we were beginning to think the weatherman had got it wrong, the sun broke through. Within about half an hour of the walk starting, the complaints began. about it being too hot! Creag Mhor was the destination. It was a day for lingering on the summit and admiring the view. Ben Cruachan and Ben Nevis were easily identified amongst others. A steep descent was then followed by a very hot climb up the south-facing slopes of Beinn Heasgarnich. A pleasant walk along the summit ridge to the cairn was followed by another long stop in the sunshine before heading down to the cars at the end of the glen. Seven members attended this meet.

29 August 2010

Glen Esk

This social meet was another victim of the weather. The objective of this walk was to find Balnamoon's cave. Its location remains a secret from FDHWC.

5 September 2010

Monadh Liaths

The bus was cancelled as only five members put their names down for the walk. The plan for a through walk had to be changed and a more traditional round of the three Munros from Glen Banchoir was agreed on. This was a long walk of around 24 kilometres in dry but windy conditions. All three Munros, namely A' Chailleach, Carn Slugain and Carn Dearg were completed by all five walkers.

18/19 September 2010

Glen Clova

Nine members attended this social meet with seven staying the night at the Carn Dearg hut. The evening kicked off with a game of boules which finished abruptly thanks to an invasion of midges. After a fantastic meal provided by Colin, Linda and Carolyn everyone took part in a very

competitive game of Yahtzee, followed by a few(?) drinks and a blether into the wee small hours. The following morning, heads were cleared with a walk up to Bachnagairn. On the way back no less than three golden eagles were spotted circling above the cliffs.

25-26 September 2010

Weekend – Dundonnell

A late flurry of bookings resulted in all 16 places at the Sail Mhor Hostel being taken (13 members and 3 guests). Saturday saw the majority heading for the iconic An Teallach ridge on a cold but clear day. Others headed for the Fannaichs and to other less well-known (to the Meet secretary at least) Grahams in the area. The Dundonnell Hotel was the scene for a good meal and a few beers that night. After a frosty night, a beautiful clear sunrise welcomed the party with the low sun shining the length of Little Loch Broom. It was a day of cloudless skies, if a little cold in the northerly breeze. Most walkers headed for home, some stopping off to climb Eididh na Clach Geala in the Ben Dearg group, and some on the Corbett, Beinn Liath Mhor a' Ghuibhais Li near Altguish. Three stayed another night at Sail Mhor, spending Sunday again on the Fannaichs and Graham-bagging near Braemore, while another two walked into Sheneval with a new broom (long story) and stayed overnight. Monday was another day of splendid sunshine which provided a third consecutive day of memorable hillwalking in the area for the remaining five before finally heading for home.

10 October 2010

Linn o' Dee

Five walkers plus bikes turned up for this meet. The Meet Secretary was chaperoned for much of the cycling part of the day by members who did not want a repeat of his nosedive over the handlebars on the previous outing to Linn o' Dee. All five members climbed Carn a' Mhaim and walked over the long narrow ridge in cloud. After a short descent, the bouldery slopes of Ben Macdui were tackled. On approaching the summit plateau, the walkers broke through the cloud into brilliant sunshine. Two very keen members of the party continued to Beinn Mheadoinn while the other three took a different way down via Sron Riach to the Luibeg Burn. The two intrepid Munro baggers who had gone on to Beinn Mheadoinn reached the car park at 7pm just as darkness was setting in.

24 October 2010

Mount Blair

Twelve members attended this Social Meet, taking a route from Borland Farm near Blacklunans via Coire Goibhre and Over Craig to the top of Mount Blair (744m). Some snow was encountered on top and the top proved to be a superb viewpoint on a clear and sunny day.

7 November 2010

Loch Lubnaig – Glen Ample

Thirteen members attended which was just enough to justify taking the bus and proceeding with the planned through walk. It was a very cold but sunny morning, and the walkers were glad of the steep climb up the path from the lochside to warm them up quickly. The Right of Way was well marked with signposts, one of which very considerably pointed the way off the path to our first destination, Ben Each. The views from the summit were excellent, with neighbouring Ben Ledi and the distant Ben Lomond looking prominent with a covering of snow. The ground was frozen and a bit slippery in places. The undulating ridge was followed before dropping steeply to the col under Stuc a' Chroin. Two members descended from here, rejoining the right of way while the other eleven made for the summit of Stuc a' Chroin. With the weather closing in, any thoughts of continuing to Ben Vorlich were abandoned and the party followed the ridge down to Glen Ample. From there the party followed the path alongside the river to Loch Earn and the waiting bus.

19-21 November 2010

Glenfinnan

The accommodation for this weekend meet was booked in the rather novel setting of a railway carriage. Eight members attended and, in contrast to some expectations, it turned out to be very cosy. The only concern about the accommodation was a lack of security. Most members were there to climb the local Munros with the Glenfinnan Horseshoe being the walk of choice on Saturday, taking in the Munros of Sgurr Thuilm and Sgurr nan Coireachan.

5 December 2010

Ben Chonzie, Auchnafree Hill

Due to one of the biggest snowfalls in many years and the treacherous condition of the roads, this walk was postponed.

12 December 2010

Glenshee

The main roads were clear by this time although there was still plenty of snow on the hills. A change of destination from the previous week's plan was agreed to make allowance for the conditions. A clear frosty morning saw five members make their way to the ski slope car park at Glenshee. The chilly wind at the car park ensured that the walkers set off very quickly. At the foot of the ski runs a stop had to be made to put on crampons before climbing to the summit of Glas Maol. The walkers were in bright sunshine by this time and it was warm enough to stop for a while to admire the views of the snow-covered hills. The party proceeded onwards to Creag Leacach where they enjoyed a lunch stop before retracing their steps, contouring Glas Maol just below the summit and were then entertained by the skiers and snow

boarders on the way down. One member slept in and headed to Ben Tirran himself.

January Open Meeting

Monday 10th January

After the open meeting, an illustrated talk will take place. Final arrangements are being made with the speaker.

Open Meetings

August-December 2010

August – Airlie Monument walk on a beautiful evening. The new Corbetteers provide the drams. Short meeting in the Drovers at Memus followed.

October – Willie Mather presented an illustrated talk on his recent circuit of Mont Blanc.

November – Colin took over as quiz master supplying both questions and photographs. Willie M, Graham and Brian won the quiz.

December - Brian finally presented his illustrated talk on his and Janet's trip to New Zealand.

How to die in the hills

(found on the wall in the Carn Dearg hut at the social meet, September 2010)

*Seek no wisdom, leave no word
Common sense is too absurd.*

*Take no extra food or gear,
You'll not need them, never fear.*

*Do not fret if you've no skill,
People like you are hard to kill.*

*We beg of you before you die,
Pick a place that's not too high.*

The Bings of Fife

by a Fifer

At any point in time, we always have a few members bagging Munros and a couple or so exploring the Corbetts. But now we have members with a new goal - The Grahams. This set me wondering about various lists.

When growing up in Markinch in central Fife, I was lucky to be within walking distance of the Lomonds. They were our playground. It was an 8k tramp through Balbirnie estate, and up

through the farm tracks to the top of Falkland Hill (East Lomond). But the Leven-Stirling bus ran through Scotlandwell at one end of the ridge and the Perth-Kirkcaldy bus passed through Falkland itself. So traverses of the Lomonds in both directions were possible, and many a grand day out was had in these hills. There was always something new – climbing at Craigengaw, scrambling on the Devil’s Burdens and exploring caves in the Covenanter’s Glen (where John Knox was said to have preached during the Reformation). Then there was Bishop hill with its pinnacle called Carlin Maggie – a witch turned to stone. The top part of the pinnacle has toppled off now, but back in the sixties it was still at full height and I remember staring in awe at the wooden wedge and tape near its very top (first climbed it 1951 – quite a feat). The three Lomond tops are only classified as Marilyns.

Did you know there are 1215 Marilyns in Scotland? Only 204 of the 283 Munros are Marilyns. All 221 Corbetts and all 224 Grahams are Marilyns. The nearest Marilyn to Forfar is Turin Hill.

However there were other hills in Fife too. Markinch lay just to the north and east of the coalfields. There were mines at Thornton, Kirkcaldy, Dysart and then right through the

central strip – Ballingry, Cowdenbeath, Lochgelly. Some of the mines were huge – the Frances and Seafield mines at Kirkcaldy were mining under the Forth. The spoil from the mines were piled up in huge conical heaps. The Scots word for such a spoil-heap is a “bing”. (I find it strange that Microsoft’s web search engine is called Bing). Bings of course were not just found in Fife, but all over Central Scotland, where mining took place for coal or shale. Coal still drove UK industry, 150 years after the industrial revolution. I guess it wasn’t a pretty site, but as a boy I found it fascinating. Bings were all colours: - black, orange, red. Many bings were obviously old, and nature had reclaimed some of them, plants and even trees grew on them. They covered a huge area. It was wild land.

I wonder how many bings there were in Fife. Wouldn’t it have been fun to name them all? Names like Muckle Heap, Mount Slag, Red Mound etc., and to catalogue them into a list and bag them like we do with the lists previously mentioned. Well, we can’t now, because the bings have disappeared – mostly used as bottoming for new roads. Some returned to farmland, some were planted with Forestry Commission plantations, some were landscaped like Loch Ore Country Park.

Would you be a bing bagger?

Trend in Meet Attendances 2009-2010

