



FDHWC NEWSLETTER

Volume 1, Issue 20

December 2001

President's Column

Once more December 2001 has come round very quickly, and as stated before in the December 2000 and June 2001 Newsletters I am still concerned at the lack of support on Day Meets this year.
I again ask these questions:-

What is Wrong?

Do members now prefer to go their own way?

Are the walks not appealing enough?

Are members only doing the walks they want to do?

Why do other clubs attract good turnouts? E. g. Blairgowrie 40-50 and Friocheim, up to 30 on Day meets.

The FDHWC did at one time attract the same numbers! I can remember having to book a seat on the bus, and Stan's slide show on the 5th September 2001 verified the fact that it was a popular club.

As stated in the June 2001 Newsletter as a trial, members voted to use cars for Day Meets. This has not proved to be a success, with once more only the regulars turning up—5 to 6 at the most. A new idea has been suggested—to hire a Mini Bus.

Matt Torrie has made enquiries from his place of work, and details will be discussed at the Wednesday meeting on 5th December 2001. It saddened many in the club when we learned about the death of Jean Gammie on 7th November 2001. Up until Jean became unfit, she was a regular attendee on the Club Meets, and also walks outwith. Lots of us will remember her bright spirit, and cheery chat on the hills. Even after all her operations, she was still determined to get out and about. Her family and all the friends she made over the years will sadly miss her.

On another sad note Margaret will step down from the Secretary's post at the next A.G.M. Much to her and others disappointment, she has been curtailed from being able to do the type of Hill Walking she has so much enjoyed since joining the Club. Margaret has told me she will become an Associate Member, so we will still be in touch. She also has other interests, particularly biking, so look out for Margaret on the roads instead of the hills. On behalf of the Club Margaret, a big Thank You" for all the tireless and unselfish work you carried out, particularly behind the scenes in order to make the FDHWC work.

I will now finish by wishing all Club Members and their Families a Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year.

I would also like to thank the committee members for their contribution to the Club, and for the support they gave me.

Last but not least, I will be standing down at the next A.G.M. and will become an ordinary member. Perhaps someone else out there has a vision (as I had), or better ideas to attract more members on day meets to keep the Club surviving.

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In Brief:

* President to step down at AGM

* Club Secretary to step down at AGM

* Witting volunteers required to take up the reigns from our outgoing committee

* Your items for the next newsletter urgently required - see Page 5 for contact details

* ENJOY THE HILLS IN SAFETY

Recent Weekend Meets

Moidart September 21-23 2001

The Moidart weekend went ahead in September, having been postponed in March due to foot and mouth restrictions. We had booked the Alex McIntyre Memorial Hut at North Ballachullish for about a dozen people but unfortunately only five members turned up. A considerable range of hills were covered nevertheless in what turned out to be an ideal walking weekend.

On the Saturday Tilda was first off the mark, departing for Glen Dessary at the crack of dawn. Alas, the local gamekeeper was not very pleased to see her as stalking was in progress in the area and she had to turn back.

Brian Coull headed for the Corran Ferry to climb two Corbetts in Ardgour and had time to indulge in his other hobby of "tea-room bagging" on the way back.

Peter and Nan Hargraves stayed at a neighbouring bed and breakfast rather than "rough it" at the hut -strange how some people soften with age! After collecting Ray Campbell at the hut they headed for Kinlochleven and the Mamores, climbing three Munros in all.

The weather was ideal for hillwalking with the cloud cover being well above the tops.

The Mamores threesome returned to the hut to find Brian was already inside. This was indeed a surprise as the Mamores group had the only key. How he got in is one of life's great mysteries - suggestions on a postcard please. The day finished with a short walk to the local hotel for a meal and an encounter with the waitress from hell.

Sunday dawned with a cloudless sky. Tilda headed once again for Glen Dessary - she is nothing if not determined! Brian headed for Glen Spean where he met a couple of other club members and walked over the Eassains. Peter, Nan and Ray had a superb day on the Ballachullish horseshoe.

All in all this was an excellent club weekend with a considerable number of hills climbed by such a small number of members. The weather on the Sunday was arguably the best day the club has had this year. This weekend was also notable for the lack of complaints about snoring, presumably due to the fact that we were well spread out at night.

Torridon October 19-21 2001

Eight members arrived at the Youth Hostel on the Friday night. The weather forecast was not too promising and plans to do the whole ridge on Liathach were already being reconsidered before bedtime. Saturday morning revealed the weather forecast to be all too accurate with very strong winds and low cloud. Undeterred, two members headed for the east end of Liathach with the intention of bagging one of the Munros. Three other members headed for Achashellach and Ben Liath Mhor and Sgurr Ruadh. Two intrepid members headed even further afield and climbed Stac Polly. All the groups reached their objectives but it was not a particularly enjoyable experience with much holding on in the face of gale-force winds. Sunday was a much better day, with the wind having abated and the cloudbase being much higher. A full day's hillwalking was planned by most of the crew. The "Liathach Two" returned to do the Munro at the other end without going over the pinnacles (cheating, the connoisseurs will no doubt say) while some of the others headed for the hills at Achnasheen. This was a very lucky day weather-wise as the rest of the country was in the process of being flooded while our walkers had a delightful dry day with good views until late in the afternoon.

This time there were a few comments about snoring in the men's dormitory but no-one was owning up and no-one was willing to name names.

The weekend was only slightly marred for two members by bashed bumpers and speed cameras but the less said about these episodes the better!

Margaret's Farewell

Dear members,

I wish to indicate that I will be standing down as secretary at the A.G.M. in March that I cannot continue walking. I am sad with you as my back problems no longer allow me to do so. I wish to thank everyone for all the

encouragement and help you given me over the past years. I will continue as an associate member as I would not like to lose touch with the club. I hope the club will go on from strength to strength as at the moment we are going through a rough patch with so few members attending

day meets. Thank you for putting up with me and I am sure you will heave a great sigh of relief that you will no longer have me chattering on the hill and bossing you about.

Margaret.

HIGH TEA 13th January 2002



HIGH TEA
Glen Clova Hotel

13-01-02

**High Tea Menu
Glen Clova Hotel**
Sunday 13th January 2002
4.30-5.00pm
Steak & Ale Pie
Deep Fried Haddock
Gammon Steak with Pineapple
Lasagne Verdi
Vegetarian Lasagne Verdi
(all served with peas & chips)
Ham/Chicken /Cheese Salad
Tea, Coffee and Toast
Scione, Jam & Butter
Chef's selection of cakes
£6.95

**Names and choice of menu to Margaret Baird (tel 01356 625680)
as soon as possible but no later than Friday 4th January 2002.**

Weekend Meets 2002

TULLOCH -MARCH 22-24

Roy has provisionally booked 14 places at the station lodge which is in fact the old Tulloch station, near Roy Bridge. A well equipped hostel which can offer licensed evening meals (see enclosed brochure). Places are still available for this meet, so any interested member should contact Roy ASAP with a £10 deposit

KNOYDART MAY 3 -6

Postponed from May 2001 because of foot and mouth, this meet will surely go ahead on the above dates this time! We will be staying at three different venues in the village of Inverie Torrie Shieling (12 beds), Kilchoan Farmhouse (8beds) and Kilchoan Bunkhouse (6 beds), to give us a total of 26 beds. At the time of writing 3 of these beds are still available, so any member still interested should contact Roy ASAP with a £25 deposit. The total cost of accommodation will be £45 per member. The village of Inverie has a pub, restaurant and post office. The committee hope that most of the members going to Knoydart can get to Mallaig in time to catch the afternoon ferry which leaves Mallaig at 2pm. The club are to hire a 12 seater boat to take those members who cannot make the ferry, across to Inverie late on Friday evening.

KNOYDART CHECK LIST

1. Contact Roy by Wed 6th Feb to let him know you are going by afternoon ferry or evening boat.
2. The £20 balance for accommodation should be paid by Wed 6th March. Check with Roy if you are unsure if your balance has been paid or not.
3. Transport for baggage will be provided from the pier at Inverie to each of the hostels.
4. Bed linen is provided at all 3 hostels
5. The village shop is now closed
6. Members who wish to go out for a meal while staying at Inverie should contact Margaret Baird on 01356 625680 NOW as we are advised to book months in advance !!

**"Contact Roy by WED 6th February -
Knoydart 2002"**

SKYE JUNE 7 - 9

Once again Roy has booked the Skywalker Independent Hostel in Portnalong. This will be our third visit to this fine hostel in the last 4 years (see enclosed brochure). Roy has reserved 18 beds for this meet and several of these are already spoken for, so members should contact Roy ASAP with a £10 deposit.

WEEKEND NOTES:-

Deposits for weekend meets should be sent to Roy with cheques made payable to "Forfar and District Hillwalking Club"

Roy can be contacted at:-

Nether Middleton

Glamis

FORFAR DD8 1UP

Tel: 01307 840271

Mob: 0771 9700628

E-mail: roy.rennie@lineone.net

The Wettest Day Ever ?

Saturday 11th August 2001, Isle of Skye. This day saw 6 club members (Dave & Dorothy Adam, Brian Coull, Colin, Linda & David Sinclair) gather at Sligachan Campsite with about 30 others with the intention of accompanying ex-club member Garry Adam on his last Munro - Bla Bheinn. The large group (men, women, children and several dogs) assembled at Sligachan over several days, enjoying fine Skye weather and plentiful midges. Friday saw a group of us scrambling round Coire Lagan - Sgurr Slumain, Sgurr Alasdair, Sgurr Thearlaich and to Sgurr Mhic Coinnich, some by Collie's Ledge and some by King's Chimney. As we descended into a near perfect sunset with extensive views over the Western Isles, we looked forward to another fine day out on Saturday. Garry's friends arrived from all over with some making the trip from London. We sampled a few fine Isle of Skye ales in the bar and retired before the big day.

Oh dear, what a day. Rain was already falling but worse was forecast with a mini-hurricane due over the next few hours. However, the die was cast, people had come from afar and Garry decided that it had to be today. The big group dwindled away to 15 who set off from Loch Slapin. The wind was rising, the rain was heavier, the burns were massive - knee deep and rushing strongly. We headed up to the corrie, three turned back leaving 12 brave souls and 3 dogs to carry on. Oh, I want to turn back too - this is hellish, but I must go on. A brief stop for a bite in the corrie, then a steep climb up the SE ridge into driving rain. It was stinging head and face - a wet hell. We stumbled up to the south top, scrambled down the waterfall of a gully and over to the summit. Garry, of course, arrived last smiling as ever. The cloutie dumpling came out, the champagne cork popped and the malt whisky

warmed the soul. I took 3 photos of Garry, then we abandoned the summit. Because of the very high winds, we decided on a descent by the main gulley - a very loose top section was being quickly eroded by torrential rain. The water was pouring down it in cascades, but only couple of hundred feet down we were at least sheltered from the gale. We decided against the waterfall with its tumbling rocks and diverted north into several steep rocky steps with small gullies. The rock was slimy and saturated - with your hand above you to lower yourself down, the water ran up your sleeve and out the bottom of your cagoule - oh such fun! At one point, the dogs started crying and refused to move. Gradually they were manhandled down some very awkward moves - very impressive as one of them was as big as me. At last we reached the corrie floor and then dropped out of the cloud. What a site, the hillside was white with water. Now the burns were even wider, deeper and faster flowing. We crossed in groups of three, holding on to each other. We walked out to the road, the rain eased and had stopped by the time we reached the cars. By the time we reached Broadford, the sun was out. Sligachan campsite looked like a bombsite - several ruined tents were piled in the bins, Brian's tent was flattened, a caravan had its awning lashed over its roof, and one tent had disappeared towards the sea, never to be seen again. And we went to the top of a hill in that. Mad!

However, a shower, a meal, a few drinks and a good blether and it didn't seem so bad after all - though certainly etched in my mind as a classic. I must admit I've been out in some terrible conditions, but this one beats it all (the others say so too). Well done, Garry. As a past club member of some 10 years standing, his name now ought to be added to the club's Munroist's scroll, as many past members have been already.

Colin



A Climb through history—Bob Railton

Agag's Groove. Buachaille Etive Mor.

19 August 2000.

Lead Climber:- Bob Railton. 2nd Climber Bill McDonald. Members of Forfar and District Hill Walking Club. An early 6.00 am start from Forfar found us at the car park at 0815, however due to the inclement weather we were unable to leave for the climb until 0945, and even then it was decided to do a recce of the route, however nearing the start of Curved Ridge the weather changed to brilliant sunshine, and it was agreed that the climb was on, and after a short break for lunch the climb commenced at 12.00 noon.

The first pitch (90ft / 23m) was found to give most difficulty, although all that happened was the usual not finding the correct route, once this had been achieved the climb up the corner was completed until the 1st block belay was reached.

The 2nd pitch (100ft / 30m) up the groove was completed easily, and it was not necessary to fix any protection, until the 2nd clock belay.

The 3rd pitch (75ft / 23m) continued up the groove until a left turn brings you under the projecting nose of the rock. At this point it was necessary to give way to 2 fellow climbers who were on Grooved Arête climbing past the nose on the left via a narrow groove until another block belay was reached.

The 4th pitch (65ft / 20m) was something that had been the cause of some concern, this was following an encounter some 2 weeks earlier with 2 climbers who were just topping out on Eagle's Ridge on LochNagar, these boys had great delight in informing me that the final pitch on Agag's was extremely exposed, and I can only agree that this pitch is somewhat spectacular, with the weather beginning to take a turn for the worse, this pitch was completed with perhaps double the protection necessary, although I'm sure Bill was not complaining as his climb was completed during heavy driving rain.

Following a quick break for food and drinks, and to put on the rainproofs, a scramble up to the summit of Crowberry Tower was attained, and the retreat was via the Curved Ridge although with the weather worsening it was necessary to abseil twice to complete the descent. The total time including topping out on the CT was 2hrs 45 mins

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A GLIMPSE OF THE FUTURE...?

[RING RING, RING RING....]

Good morning! This is the Royal Air Force Mountain Rescue call centre. Thank you for using the RAF Mountain Rescue Service. If you have a touch telephone, please press the number as instructed, which will take you to the correct team. If you do not have a touch telephone, get lost.

- If you are in northern Scotland, press 1.
- If you are in southern Scotland, press 2.
- If you are in Yorkshire or the Lake District, press 3.
- If you are in North Wales or the Peak District, press 4.
- If you are in South Wales or Cornwall, press 5.
- If you are not in any of these places, press 6.
- If you do not really know where you are, press 7.

[RING RING, RING RING....]

Good morning! Thank you for telling us where you are. You are now through to the correct team. To answer your call correctly, we now need to know the nature of your problem.

- If you are RAF aircrew, press 1.
- If you are European Union military aircrew, press 2.
- If you are USAF aircrew, press 3.
- If you are civilian aircrew or a passenger, press 4.
- If you are a climber injured in a fall, press 5.
- If you are a lost climber or walker, press 6.
- If you are just trying out your mobile, press 7.
- If you do not fall into any of these categories, phone one of the civilian teams, whose number you will find in the telephone directory or from directory enquiries, or hold the line and one of our staff will attend to your query as soon as possible.

[RING RING, RING RING....]

Good morning! Thank you for calling the RAF Mountain Rescue Service and for telling us where you are and what your problem is. We will now put you through to one of our telephone staff who will be able to answer your query. (PAUSE)

We are sorry, but all of our telephone staff are busy at the moment. Please hold the line and we will put you through as soon as possible. You are in a queue at number Please be patient. Have a nice day!

[Fade in VIVALDI'S FOUR SEASONS]