



Forfar & District Hill Walking Club

Newsletter 33

June 2009

www.fdhwc.org.uk

President's Column

Hello all. Get ready for a good summer! After the disasters of the last 2 summers, we are due some days of decent weather on the hills.

Firstly, congratulations to the club's two latest Munroists :- Carolyn Smith and Bob Railton. Well done. See report later on.

I'd like to thank Janet for her work on the committee over the last few years. Much appreciated. Carolyn has taken over from Janet on the committee. Mel and Graham have exchanged jobs but otherwise it's business as usual.

So I'll start on the gloomy side. So far this year, the attendance at club events has been OK, but numbers at meets are still dropping away. There is an average of 12 members per meet on day meets since February, which is lower than last year and proves that the downward trend continues year after year. For this reason the club committee has undertaken an urgent action to seek new members by advertising and promoting the club in as many places as possible. Please encourage anyone interested to get in touch. Shorter (and later starting) social meets have continued but the two held this year have had disappointing turn-outs.

On a positive note, we've just finished one the busiest programme of meetings and events ever in the club's history. taking us from the Mystery meet in July 2008 to the social meet to Mount Battock at the end of June. I counted 12 day meets, 5 weekend meets, 11 open meetings, 5 social meets, 2 festive meets, 3 bourach work parties, and a "completion" making it 39 in total. If you add the 6 committee meetings to that, it's a fair number of events. Well done everyone for attending what you can. I know that it's impossible to attend everything!

I hope you enjoy the new meet and meetings calendars. Many of the meet locations were chosen by you, the members. We've kept some buses and there is another bike meet (though much shorter in length than those of the previous 3 years).

By popular demand the high tea has returned to the Sauchieburn Hotel and will follow a bus meet over the Fungle Path.

I hope everyone enjoys the summer. As usual at this time of year, I may bump into you somewhere up in the North West.

Best wishes to all
Colin,
President

New Munroists

Congratulations to the club's two new munroists. Bob Railton and Carolyn Smith "completed" together on Seana Bhragh on Saturday 20th June. They become the club's 31st and 32nd Munroists. The scroll is currently being updated and will be presented at the open meeting in September at the Queen Street Tavern. Bob and Carolyn were also present with engraved tankards from the club, as is the tradition.

Email from Bob follows

*Hi fellow Munroist,
What a great day was had by all, 14 on the walk and 16 for the evenings dinner. We met at the Oykel Bridge Hotel for coffee, and then the 6 mile drive on a very good track to the walkers' car park. Left car park at 1005, the local ghillie gave us permission to take the 4 x 4 vehicle nearer the loch, this certainly helped the guys who had not walked before and Marion Ferguson and some of the girls. I walked the full track from the car park and timed it at 1-40. The route up the NE ridge was spectacular giving views over Assynt and beyond. We all reached the summit at 1350 and had great 360 degree views and the wee dram, tablet, dumpling supplied by you know who. The arrival back at the car park was 1700hrs giving us a 7 hour walk. I must admit that I was really pleased that Seana Bhragh turned out to be our last as it is a most beautiful mountain, although I'll need to return to do the full ridge. The dinner in the evening was also terrific with everyone having a good time.
Regards,
Bob.*

'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.

Drugs Raid at Elliot?

Rumours are circulating about a Tayside Police raid on a house in Elliot near Arbroath. It is thought that the Drugs Squad questioned an elderly lady for several hours. Neighbours tell us that the lady in question (name withheld) took part in a sporting event in Victoria Park in April against much younger fancied opposition and came out on top, taking away the winner's trophy. The lady denies any allegation of drug-taking, but puts her performance down to her good diet, clean living and keeping a hard-working house-husband.

Tayside Mountain Rescue Association Annual Sponsored Walk

Sunday 13th September. The location as yet unknown. Unfortunately, this clashes with the club meet over Jock's Road.

New Members

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

Jane Andrews
George Roberts
Alan Shepherd
Barbara Thompson

Congratulations to the Carn Dearg Mountanerring Club.

The club has just celebrated its 60th birthday. Our club sent a card expressing our delight on this occasion. More in next newsletter.

Dorothy Towns remembered

- by John Norrie

Dorothy Towns joined the club in the late 1960s. She was living in Perth at the time, and despite not being a car owner she somehow managed to get on the club bus for almost every meet. When her husband Ron went to work for Glacier Metals, they had to move to Irvine, but that still didn't deter her. While living in Ayrshire, she also joined a local hillwalking group, and during her time with them. On separate occasions, she successfully broke both ankles on ice much to her companions' disbelief. As well as the day meets, she would make a lot of effort to come on the weekend meets and that had to be by means of public transport. When the summer camps took place, no matter where :- Ardgour, Cannich, Glen Lichd, Kishorn, she would somehow get there, complete with tent, sleeping bag, food, whisky (she liked Bells) and the multi-coloured swim suit. Her constant companion on the hill was Gib Wilkie with arguments in abundance, and she was the only club member I knew who could talk non-stop on even the steepest hills. Whitehaugh (the club hut in past days) was a favourite place of Dorothy's. Ron and she would often spend a week's holiday there. It was probably the only time the place good a good clean: - she was very fussy that way. After her husband died, Dorothy came back to Forfar to live, and to walk in the hills with a "mature" group from Kirriemuir, led (?) by ex-club member Sandy Gourlay. In attendance at her funeral service on March 23rd 2009 was a small group of past and present

members of the club who have so many happy memories of Dorothy.

Footnote by Colin: My memories of Dorothy include the celebration of her 25 years with the club on a meet from Butterstone to Ballinluig (over Deuchary Hill) on April 9th 1992. We finished a bottle of whisky (presumably Bells) on the bus home. This is reported in Newsletter 1 (www.fdhwc.org.uk/newsletters/nl1.pdf)

Annual Accounts - Treasurer's Report

The accounts for the year ending 31 December 2008 were prepared in the early part of 2009. On completion they were given to the auditors John Norrie and Stuart Fergusson for checking. I am pleased to report they found them to be in order. The accounts were then presented and approved at the AGM held in March.

Unfortunately, the Club lost £139 during 2008, reducing our accumulated fund to £1,664 at the year end. The loss was primarily a result of the losses incurred in the hire of buses for the day meets. These losses totalled £296 (up from a loss of £148 in 2007) and were due to a fall in income received from fare paying passengers rather than rising costs.

Our membership numbers continue to fall. From the information we have, this is in line with most other Clubs. This resulted in income received dropping to £1,040 (down from £1,200 in 2007). Our main annual expense continues to be the fees payable on your behalf to the Mountaineering Council of Scotland. They totalled £611 for the year.

At the AGM it was 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

Heritage Paths Web Site Launched

In May, the Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society (ScotWays), launched a new website: www.heritagepaths.co.uk

This provides internet users with the tools to find out information about over 200 old paths throughout Scotland. The site brings together carefully researched images, maps and information about traditional routes and long distance paths used down the generations. ScotWays own website can be found at: www.scotways.com.

As required in our constitution, the Club remains a member and supporter of ScotWays.

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 i.e. 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. The form is also available online on our website with delivery instructions. Just print, complete, sign and post it. Notice this procedure should also be followed if you wish to remove yourself from the list.

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

Keep snapping

The club's next annual photographic competition will be held after the open meeting on February 2010. So keep taking these photos. Last year's winner will defend his title. He says that the next winning photograph has already been taken on the February meet. Strange, does he know the judge well?

Piping to the Summit

Letter to the editor, The Munro Society, Newsletter No, 15 April 2009

I have been privileged to have attended 12 *compleations*, and so far, I have played the pipes on nine of these occasions. It all began in 1987 when Dave Adam and I piped Dave to his final Munro - Ben Attow, accompanied by about forty friends and family, including two grandchildren and a supply of nappies!

Munroists piped to the summit to date are

Dave Adam	1987	Ben Attow
Bill Redford	1991	Ben Chonzie
Barbara Redford	1992	Stob Binnien
Rita Norrie	1993	Sgurr na Ualadh
Colin Sinclair	1995	Meal Cuaich
Dorothy Adam	1997	Gairich
Brian Clark	1998	Ben Lomond
John Dawson	2003	Beinn na Lap
Willie Mather	2006	Maol Chean Dearg
Corbetteer		
Brian Coull	2006	Beinn Maol Challum
Wainwrighter		
Michael English	1988	Rossett Pike

(All Forfar and District Hillwalking Club, except Brian Clark, of the Carn Dearg Mountaineering Club / SMC).

I wonder if this is a record?

My own *compleation* was on Sgurr nan Gillean in 1990, but with a host of forty-odd friends, we celebrated later by a re-run of my first Munro - Broad Cairn. Dave Adam piped me to the top. One evening in June 2007, while on a boat trip to St. Kilda, I was playing my pipes at the stern of the boat when something swam towards us. I thought I had lured a mermaid, and shouted to the others on board. But alas, it turned out to be a diver from another boat, but at least a female diver - disappointing nonetheless! (2 photographs of John and Dave Adam on Ben Attow/Fhada Willie Mather and John on Maol Chean Dearg are in the original article)

The Linderis Diary

The Munro Society, Newsletter No, 15 April 2009

MUNRO BAGPIPING - John Norrie's article in this issue would tend to suggest that a *compleation* is celebrated to the accompaniment of the skirl o' the pipes, and indeed he respectfully declined the offer of a free advertisement for montane piping services in our Newsletter, lest he be overwhelmed with requests for a high altitude blast on the chanter. "With the number of compleations these days, I'd never be off the hills" was his measured response.

As an aside, the more perceptive of our readership will have observed that all but one of the cited celebrants proclaim membership of the Forfar and District Hillwalking Club, of which John is also a member. The club's motto, as many may know, and many more may not, is "Far I' wi' noo?" which is inscribed for posterity on the door of Davie's Bourach, at the Clova end of Jock's Road. Loosely translated, for the benefit of those domiciled furth of the Firth of Forth, it means "It would appear that our current whereabouts have not been ascertained with certainty". Members who attended The Annual Dinner in Blair Atholl in 2005 may be reminded of Dermot Somers' concept of "wherelessness".....<continued>

Social Meets

Two more of these shorter, easier, slower, later starts, less travelling meets are planned for the late summer/autumn. See Meetings and Events calendar for dates, rather than Meet Calendar for these. Glen Uig (Prosen) and Glen Lethnot are the planned destinations. These walks are intended for those that don't come along to the main meets yet still want to participate in club events.

Over the last year, there have been 5 social meets

August 2008	Airlie Ridge
October 2008	Monega Hill
April 2009	Dreish from Prosen
May 2009	Clachaben
June 2009	Mount Battock

Colin Gibson Article on the club – published March 1968

This is reproduced with the kind permission of Gillian Zealand, Colin Gibson's daughter.

THE HILL WALKERS OF FORFAR

COLIN GIBSON writes of a club with members of all ages, drawn from many different occupations.

Photographs by members of the Club



Members of Forfar and District Hill-walking Club at the start of an outing.
Several interested "hill-walkers-to-be" are there to see them off

SHOEMAKER, a store clerk, a motor-engineer, a male nurse, a tractor-stores manager, a clerkess, a typist, a postman—what had they all in common, these folk, when they held a meeting one autumn evening in Forfar ?

The answer is simple enough— they all had a love for the hills. They were, in fact, along with some others, the founder-members of the now well-known Forfar and District Hill-walking Club.

Before that first meeting, these enthusiasts had all been keen cyclists (Will Whyte, for instance, was President of the Angus Cycling Club) but they were all cyclists with a difference. Given the chance, their wheels had a curious habit of turning from the main roads and highways towards the hills and the glens, and ultimately to diverge from the glen roads to the hill tracks.

Sometimes these "cyclists" even took to the open hill. One day they crossed the Capel Mounth from Glen Clova to Glen Muick, and another day they traversed Tolmount's cloudy plateau from Glen Doll to Braemar. But, on adventures like these, I need hardly add that there were times when the bikes had to be pushed, pulled, and even carried over bog and boulder. It was often obvious that their steeds were at times more of a liability than an asset!

Some of the cyclists began to toy with the idea of covering the low-land part of the week-end trip by bus, then doing the highland part on foot, and bussing home again. It sounded feasible—if they had enough members to pay for the private bus. So that first meeting was held, and it was agreed to form a hill-walking club. Someone suggested it should be called the Forfar Hill-walking Club, but it was decided to add "and District" in order to widen the appeal.

This was wise, for members began coming in from many places besides the county town. Indeed, it is interesting to note that Jack Norrie, the club president, lives and teaches in Arbroath; the secretary, Alec Scott, lives in Montrose; and as for past-president Reg Fawcett, a great worker for the club, his home is in Kirriemuir, and he came to these parts from the North of England!

I might add that inquiries about membership and about projected hill walks have come from as far away as Glasgow. That word "district" apparently covers a fair bit of ground, and, in truth, that initial love for the hills which I mentioned, seems to be the only real requirement for membership.

A beginning was made with a walk over the Capel Mounth. The Club went by bus to the head of Glen Clova, walked to Spittal of Glen-Muick, and returned across the hills by way of Sandy Hillock and Bachnagairn to their starting point. A good day—everybody enjoyed it. Other early climbs included a hill traverse from Glen Prosen to Glen Clova, a crossing from Glenesk to Glen Clova, and another from Glen-shee to Inverey, Deeside, by way of Loch nan Eun.

Of course, the Scottish climate being what it is, the walkers sometimes found themselves sweltering in far too many clothes, or, as on Mount Keen, when they encountered driving snow, they could have done with more, for the hilltop winds could be "fair perish in'." Suitable footwear, too, was a matter of learning by experience. Even yet, some of the ladies who join the Club at midsummer to take part in a "Lochnagar sunrise" walk, arrive in high heels and plimsolls, and foot-wear of this sort is all too apt to disintegrate among the rocks and the peat-hags !

Anyway, the Club got away to a good start, and Forfar folk being couthie and friendly, good-fellowship has been the keynote of all meetings and outings. There is much else besides. Many people have an instinctive longing to get away from "civilisation" for a spell— and these outings provide the chance to do so. Further, there are parents who want their children to see Scotland's hills and corries, and to learn to love them, and as members of the Club they can visit wild, remote places in safety.

The President, Jack Norrie, told me that he and his wife joined because they felt that their three children would enjoy the company of other walkers of their own age, and enter into hill-climbing expeditions with more enthusiasm. Mrs Norrie explained that she liked going with the Club because of the companionship. By moving back and forward in the line of walkers, you met and had a chat with everyone present.

The Club has always catered for young members. Alasdair Smith, of Glen Doll Youth Hostel, was quite a seasoned campaigner when he was eight. Graham McCallum, auburn-haired and sun-freckled, was but twelve when he walked the twenty-two miles through Glen Feshie to Deeside. At the other end of the scale was a keen, and very capable, walker of over sixty, and a lady walker who joined the Club recently confessed she was a granny!

At first some doubt was cast on the advisability of taking youngsters on these hill walks. Yet time and again it was noticed that the young ones finished fresher than most of the adults, and when the older ones were glad of a halt for a breather, the children played around and showed no sign of fatigue at all.

"Faar i' wi'
noo ?"

Club
members
take stock of
the
landscape
after
encountering
a blizzard on
the hills of
Glen Mark.



Longer walks included that twenty-two mile trek through Glen Feshie, and a crossing of the Corrieyairack. Eighteen members, plus Dino (an Alsatian dog) travelled by bus to Kingussie on the Saturday evening, staying overnight in the Speyside village. The bus then took them as far as Feshie Bridge, and after that it was "Shanks's mare".

Other visitors in the vicinity rubbed their eyes when they saw the file of walkers departing glen-wards with a four-foot-tall eight-year-old in the lead. But, after all, Alasdair Smith was the smallest and youngest, and it was right he should set the pace. Most of the walkers were seeing Glen Feshie for the first time, and they were very impressed by its woods and craggy slopes. Later, the route took them past that wild hill torrent, Allt Eindart, then through Glen Geldie to the Chest of Dee, and ultimately to the Linn of Dee, where they found a cup of tea and their bus waiting for them.

The choice of week-end walks is sometimes influenced by current events. For instance, the *Dr Finlay's Casebook* series on TV inspired a visit to Tannochbrae (Callander) and nearby Ben Ledi. Another walk, across the Lomonds, was inspired by an article of my own, dealing with this fascinating range, which appeared in this magazine

Starting from Falkland the Club climbed East Lomond, then after a halt for lunch at the Tyndall Bruce Memorial, trekked across the upland moors to West Lomond, which they found an entrancing viewpoint. (They could even see the Catlaw behind Forfar and Kirrie). Then they descended into Glenvale (The Covenanters' Glen) and inspected the grotto called John Knox's Pulpit, before making for Kinnesswood over the slopes of the Bishop's Hill.

A memorable occasion for the Club was in 1965, when they carried Forfar's burgh flag to the summit of Glas Maol (3502 ft.) the highest mountain in Angus, during Forfar's ter-centenary celebrations.

Thirty-seven adults and children took part in the climb. Before they set off, Provost Renilson presented the flag to the Club officials with his blessing. And being a canny provost of Forfar he added that he expected the flag back, and said he was parting with it only on the assurance that it came down the mountain with them!

Members have always shown a willingness to take part in any worth-while and adventurous ploy. Davy Glen's "bourach" at the head of Glen Doll was an instance. Davy is well known in Angus and Aberdeenshire as a hill-walker, and often goes with the club. He is good company, and expert in the delicate art of the "mouth music"— the Gaelic *peurt a' beul*.

Davy had decided to build this shelter after a group of Glasgow climbers died in a blizzard that overwhelmed them at this very exposed part of Jock's Road, in 1959. And every week-end over a long spell he had trudged up the four rough miles from Glen Doll and worked at this shelter, rebuilding a ruined shepherd's hut.

Davy Glen is a dyker by trade, and eventually he had the walls all complete and the timber-work installed. All that was needed now was the roof. This was to be of corrugated-iron, but how to get these cumbersome sheets of iron to the site was a problem. He decided to ask for help from the Hill-walking Club.

Each member was given his "iron rations"—a sheet measuring 6 feet by 3 feet—and left to his own devices. Some tried a "poised on the head" method; some, "broadwise over the back", while others struggled onwards like Roman centurions with outsize shields. One lady fastened her sheet to her rucksack.

At last the freight train reached the hut safely, and later the roof was well and truly laid on. Then they all got inside and hanelled the bourach with a hot mug of bothy-brewed tea.



"Something accomplished, something done ..." Club members hansen a hill-shelter after helping to roof it. The Club try to leave all " bothies " in good tidy order.



Mrs Nancy Smith, Warden of Glen Doll Youth Hostel, helps with the transport of roofing for a shelter-hut, built high up on Jock's Road.

A Mountain Rescue exercise, held in late autumn in the Clova and Glen Doll hills, provided another notable outing. In this, the club members were joined by police, teams from the R.A.F. (Leuchars,) H.M.S. Condor (Arbroath), and mountaineering groups from Dundee, Angus, and Fife. Altogether over a hundred took part in this mock rescue. The object of the search was to find a girl who had supposedly left the hostel to climb to the west corries of Craig Mellon. To add verisimilitude, Danny Smith, of Glen Doll, had carried a dummy uphill, and left her—somewhere! Possibly he hid her too well, for none of the search parties found her. Eventually a flesh and blood young lady was persuaded to impersonate the dummy, and she was brought down by the stretcher bearers!

Though things hardly went according to plan in the exercise, quite a lot was learnt in the way of quartering rugged ground, first-aid, direction-finding in hill fog and so forth. As for the dummy—Danny eventually went and rescued her himself!

Sometimes a "split walk" is arranged with small groups taking off on their own and rejoining the main party later. I should add that the Club makes it a rule that climbing groups diverging from the main party must number at least four—a safety-first rule well worth noting by all who venture into the Scottish hills.

Winter brings an increase in clubroom meetings, with talks on first-aid and mountain rescue work, showings of members' cine films and colour slides of the club in action.

New walks are also discussed and planned at these meetings. Being centred on Forfar, most of the Club's outings cover parts of the Grampians and the Cairngorms. But a list of recent walks show that the club has frequently ventured far afield. Ben Nevis, Carn Mairg (Glen Lyon), Ben Vorlich (Loch Earn), Ben Lawers, and Meall nan Tarmachan (Loch Tay), Glencoe, Glen Artney (Comrie), the Ochils, Ben Gulabin (Glenshee), Ben Chonzie (Crieff)—all these "goals" have either been reached, or will be attempted in the near future.

Other serious discussions centre on good manners and responsibilities, right-of-way, litter, outdoor fires, and the country code in general. And at a time when signs of vandalism and irresponsible behaviour are all too common, even in out-of-the-way Highland places, it is something to find a group of people who act in a wholly responsible way and are thoughtful of others.

Climbers have told me of coming to a mountain bothy, expecting to find it left by those before them in the usual mess. Instead, they found the whole place spruced up, the floor swept, and a number of polythene bags lying at one side, filled with bracken and heather, and bearing a notice—"Please use these for bedding, and keep the place tidy. Forfar and District Hill-walking Club."

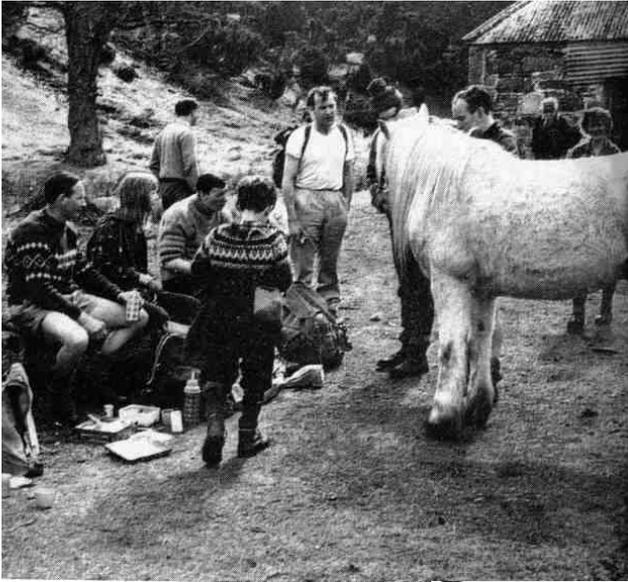
In doing this sort of thing, the club not only shows it is capable of doing a good deed, but sets an example to others.

Various reasons might be given for the success of the Club. Friendliness and a real enthusiasm for the hills— these are probably the things that have counted most.

Plus, one might add, the ability to make mistakes, and to take the consequences in good humour. Bad weather, wrong direction — these things happen. But what hill-walking club except the Forfar one would suggest as their own motto—"Faar i' wi' noo?"



' Boots, boots, boots...' Climbing can be a family affair. These are the boots of President Jack Norrie and his family.



A halt for refreshment during a walk through Glen Feshie. One of the garrons at Glenfeshie Lodge senses the friendly atmosphere and joins the party

Back to road level in Glencoe. A climbing group return to join the main party after a climb



Davy Glen brings up the rear in a Club crossing of the Corrieyairack. Middle man of the trio is Kirriemuir shoemaker Jack Low, an early member of the Club, and former President of Dundee Thistle Road Club.

Traps and Snares

On the last social meet, during the descent of Mount Battock via Hill of Turrett, the group came across several snares and traps. Here are the photographs. Much discussion took place amongst the group concerning the legality and cruel nature of these.



Colin contacted the Angus Council Ranger Service at Crombie and sent on the photographs. Lisa King, the ranger at Crombie then contacted Alan Stewart the Wildlife Crime Officer with Tayside Police. Alan's reply is below.

"Both are legal. The trap is a Fenn MkIV set to catch stoats, weasels, rats or grey squirrels. The restrictions on the end (two nails at either end) are border line in being sufficient to keep out non-target species. They would keep out an otter but not a pine marten for instance. The snare is not a locking snare and it is legal per se. Had it been set there would be a requirement to check it at least once a day and at intervals of no more than 24 hours and to remove anything caught at each inspection."

The snare is for foxes.

Alan sent some documentation that was handed out at the recent Scottish Game Fair at Scone. These will be placed on the web site. His comments on the photographs were *"Happy to discuss any other suspicions. In this instance everything was OK but that's not always the case"*

Alan's phone numbers are 07808 899113 and 01738 892650.

Note: It is a criminal offence to tamper with a legally set trap or snare.