



Forfar & District Hill Walking Club

Newsletter 45 July 2015

www.fdhwc.org.uk

President's Column

Sorry for the delay in the publication of this newsletter.

The new committee spent several evenings in the Osnaburg pub in Forfar formulating your new club calendar. I hope to enjoy it.

We're now well into summer and unfortunately, it looks like another poor one from a hill-walking point of view. The weather just hasn't settled down over the past few months.

I'm writing this on Mull, where the hills have been capped or blotted out for the last few days. So it's on the bike round the coasts.

There were several changes on the committee at the March 2015 AGM and just after. I have to thank three long serving members for their contributions over many years. Ray retired as meet secretary after 10 years in the job (and he was treasurer before that), Steve stood down as treasurer just after the AGM, after 10 years in the job, and Mel stood down as ordinary member (she's previously been secretary and press secretary). Thank you all, and no doubt, some or all of you might take up further committee roles in the future. Also, welcome to our new committee members. Carolyn is back and this time as secretary. Clare has taken over the treasurer's role and Debbie becomes our new ordinary member.

Best Wishes,

Colin,
President

P.S. Sorry it was delayed again.

Brian Coull

As most of you probably know one of our members, Brian Coull, died on 22nd July after a short illness. Many past and present members of the club attended Brian's funeral at Parkview Crematorium on 29th July. Colin spoke on behalf of the club and its members at the funeral, but was restricted to 500 words, not enough to describe this man and his effect on those who knew him. The next newsletter will include a special article on Brian, but in the meantime, here is the original unedited version of Colin's words.

I speak on behalf of the past and present members of Forfar & District Hill Walking Club.

Brian Coull. Where do I start?

A mountaineer, hillwalker, scrambler, cyclist, cross-word fanatic, part-time shepherd, husband, father, grandfather, friend. And a gentleman. I first met Brian in April 1980 when Linda and I joined Forfar & District Hill-Walking Club, and it was through the club that we got to know the Coull family. Laura and Alastair were quite young then and on club weekends, each parent was allowed a day out on the hills. I remember a June weekend wild-camping at the power station at Cannich. Big bonfires. Lots of midges. Brian went out walking on Saturday and Janet on Sunday. Sunday was boiling hot and Brian spent all day with the kids in a burn waiting for us to return – I think he moaned a little.

Brian joined the club in 1977, and has been an active member right to the end. He was at the May weekend meet to Lochinver and climbed Stac Pollaidh (to the very top), and then cycled back to Lochinver. He was meet secretary for several years and president from 1989 to 1992.

I'm sure each of us can recount some times we've had with Brian. I'll share some of mine with you.

On one March day meet, a group of us tackled the classic central gully on Ben Lui, with its steep snow slopes overhung by a cornice. Brian, of course, led the way. He had a great spirit of adventure. That day Brian drew blood. I remember stopping to look up when a large chunk of ice clattered me on the head. What a day! We cut through the cornice. This is what mountaineering is all about, and in Brian we had a fearless leader.

A few years later, and a June weekend meet, camping at Roy Bridge – a midgy hell. Brian, 10-year old Alastair and I set off for Tower Ridge on Ben Nevis. A hot sunny day and another classic. Great memories of Alastair crossing the Tower Gap with ropes from both sides. And Janet and Laura watching from above.

Many more memories. An Teallach – using a frayed tow-rope on the bad step. Aonach Eagach – with a gran, a dog, a 5 year old and another tow rope. Brian loved these adventures.

Brian loved teasing and playing tricks too. Young or old – you weren't spared. Saturday's

news about the World Cup draw with England, reminded us of the last confrontation in the Euro-2000 qualifying playoffs in November 1999. A crowd of us headed off to Glen Coe to climb Sgurr na Ulaidh with Bill McDonald for his last Munro. I was feeling a bit rough on the way through, but on arriving I showed the others my Sony Walkman and my plan to listen to the football commentary on the descent. Still feeling fragile, I sped off to the woods. Unknown to me, Brian was straight into my rucksack and removed the batteries from my Walkman. We proceeded to the top and celebrated with Bill in the usual way. As we set off for the descent I checked my Walkman – completely dead, no lights. I opened it up – no batteries. How strange – I used it the week before. Quick as a flash, Brian said he had spares and I could use them. Gratefully, I took them and started listening to the football, being careful to switch off now and again to save Brian's batteries. Halfway down, John Norrie informed me of Brian's dastardly deed. Brian was 200 feet or so lower than me at the time, so the corrie boomed with the words "BRIAN COULL!". He had another laugh too because England beat us 2-0.

One of the great routes on the Scottish Hills is a round of Coire Lagan on Skye. I've been round it many times now, but the first time was with Brian. He took us on a new way of dropping from Sgurr Thealaidh to the bealach below Collie's Ledge. All the books say to go left past a knoll, which leads to steep ground where many accidents have occurred. Brian instead took us right of the knoll and down a series of ledges and scrambles to end up at the same bealach. I call this Coull's Route. And whenever I do the round now, I always take Coull's Route to Collie's Ledge.

Brian was an early Munroist (No.441 in 1981), and a Corbeteer in 2006. Many here today attended Brian's last Corbett in Glen Etive. It was a great occasion – apart from his bagpipe playing! He never did master these. What a superb banquet laid on afterwards in the Grampian Club Hut. He really got into the Corbetts when he retired and did most on his own.

Retirement also found him as a grouse beater, shepherd and even a combine harvester driver. A man with a real spirit of adventure.

Those adventures also led him abroad to many places, all over the world to tackle long distance treks and expeditions. Janet and Brian would mostly go together, and the club members have enjoyed the illustrated talks of their many trips.

Willie Mather was with Brian on one trip to Patagonia. This was another occasion where Brian decided to tease someone. Their flights home had been delayed due to a pilots' strike, so they were forced to stay in Buenos Aires for

several days. During one conversation with an American, Brian stated that he was employed as a shepherd working for his posh bunnet-wearing landowner, Willie, and that they were in Argentina looking to buy a sheep farm. Ah, Brian, you were such a tease!

Brian was a member of Tayside Mountain Rescue Team for many years. I've heard of many stories and incidents in that part of his life too.

So many stories. I'm sure you all have your own that you'd like to tell us about this very likeable man.

I'm going to tell just one more. As you know, Brian's love of hillwalking was matched by his love of cycling. He's taken a bike to many far flung parts of the country and ridden home. For a while, club weekend meets for him were a walk on the Saturday and then starting to cycle home on the Sunday. One particular weekend meet at Mill Cottage, in Glen Feshie, his plan was to cycle home through the Feshie to Geldie Lodge, then Linn o' Dee and back to Forfar by Glen Shee and Glen Isla. However there was a hitch, his bike was on his car roof-rack, secured by a heavy duty motor-bike chain. Brian had lost the key! Lesser mortals might have just gone home, but not our Brian. Four of us lifted the roof rack (still with bike attached) to the ground. After careful manipulation of the security chain and a chopping log, out came the Mill Cottage big chopping axe. Brian swung, the chain held. Brian swung again, a great crack and the security chain broke. Bike freed, Brian pedalled off happily in the direction of Forfar.

But that's enough – the stories can go on. And we'll still be telling them for years to come.

Brian, it was a pleasure for me to have known you and to have been able to share some of your life with you. You were an inspiration to me (and many others, including your children). You were a real gentleman, a good friend. You were a loving husband and father. Both you and Janet brought up Laura and Alastair with your same spirit of adventure and they've gone on to do their own things. Great to see.

We will miss you. That is certain. But you brought great joy to us and shared with us some of life's magical moments.

You will not be forgotten - on all these hills, ridges and scrambles, we will remember you fondly. Coull's route soon, I hope.

Goodbye, my friend.

'Far I wi noo' plaque

A vote was taken at the AGM, and the 2014 award went to Willie Mather and Nicola Hay for "A brief encounter". This involved a pair of lady's underpants in the boot of Willie's car. The editor refuses to elaborate further for fear of receiving a legal suit for libel.

Remember to forward news of any worthy incident for 2015 to a committee member. The editor has already heard about the train (or lack of it) at Corrou Halt.

Curling 2015 cancelled

The club tried to arrange another curling night – to be held on Sat 21st March and to be shared with Carnoustie Panbride Badminton Club. Unfortunately, due to a poor response from both clubs, the event had to be cancelled.

Photographic Competition 2015

The club's annual photographic competition was held on Monday February 2nd 2015. Graham Wilkinson from Carnoustie Camera Club was once again our judge. All entries were in purely digital format. 12 members entered a total of 57 photos. All were submitted in digital format, though other formats are still allowed. All entries, plus David's winning entry of Glenshee can be viewed on the club's photo pages.

<http://picasaweb.google.com/fdhwcalbums>

Bike Maintenance

12 members attended. Held at Graham's farm, Reidhall, near Edzell. Graham demonstrated basic maintenance of a bike. He said most mountain bikes are "hailed out o' the nettles" just before they are used. i.e. not very well maintained. The bike maintenance night had been planned to take place just before the annual cycle meet. (this year 14th June to Culra). This is because of various mishaps in the past, some due to poor maintenance of members' bikes. Graham started by showing the tools and spares that he takes on a trip. He then moved onto transmission, cleaning up a chain with a cleaning tool and cleaning fluid. Later he showed how to lubricate a chain. Next was puncture repair - how to remove from front and back. Back is trickier to remove wheel. Unfortunately the president's spare tube also had a puncture itself. Then onto brakes :- caliper (older), V-brakes and disc brakes. Various adjustments were demonstrated. Tightening cables was demonstrated (brakes and gears). Graham reckoned fine-tuning of gear adjustment should be left to the bike-shop. Lastly chain splitting was shown with a tool. If

going out in a party, at least one should carry a chain splitter tool. The evening was concluded with a cup of tea/coffee and one of Carolyn's fabulous cakes. Thanks to Graham for hosting and demonstrating. And thanks to Carolyn for the lovely cake.

Unscheduled events to come

The new club calendar is now available online. You should have received, or will receive soon, printed copies. In addition to those scheduled events, other events are planned. These include

- Abseiling
- Wild Camping
- Curling

Dates will be published in due course.

Gnomes spotted in Glen Moy

Reports of sinister goings on near Aileen's house, as gnomes roam the glen by night. More in next newsletter.

Limericks

The president has been slagging off his good golfing buddy, Jerry, at the High Tea for several years with several tasty (and sometimes nasty) limericks, and in the last 3 years Jerry has even dared to counter-attack with some of his own. The president challenged others to take part and it was Ray who stole the show with the following verses. Well done, Ray!

*There was a President cam' frae Carnoustie
When he passed 60 years his legs went a bit
rusty
Heels, ankles and knees
He screams "No more of this please,
'Cos these Sundays by the fireplace I cannae get
used tae!"*

*There was a club member called Mel
Noticed her tummy beginning to swell
She said "Ian my lad,
You'll soon be a Dad"
To which Ian replied "Bloody Hell!"*

*A Tweedle found hills rather steep
So he goes out on his bike every week
He goes down to the farm
And chances his arm
With Balmadity's best-looking sheep!*

*With weather we're oft' out of luck
We come home all covered in muck
You'd think we'd be sad
Or even quite mad
But in truth we couldn't care less.*

Meeting Reports

Jan 2015 – 23 members and 2 guests attended. The meeting was followed by an excellent presentation by Blair Wilkie, Tayside Wildlife Officer, Police Scotland, Blair presented the role of her job and the various areas that her role tackled, in a illustrative manner, involving lots of interaction with the audience. An excellent talk.

Feb 2015 - Annual photographic competition. See separate article.

March 2015 – Open Meeting, AGM.

April 2015– Our 3rd annual "Members Night". Each member was allowed to bring 10 photos each (on paper or on CD/DVD, or camera card, or USB memory stick). They were given 10 minutes to talk about their photos. 10 members presented photographs, and one member presented a soundtrack of frogs at the pond at the entrance to Glen Prosen. A good night was had by all.

May 2015– Girds 2015. (See separate article), followed by a gentle game of cricket.

June 2015 – Treasure Hunt
13 members (and Clare's parents) met at the Myre car park at 7:30pm, on a dreadful night of wind and rain. Sarah (Mel's sister) was the organiser and was ready with her team (consisting of her partner, her friend and her parents). We decided to go ahead, despite possible flooding on the roads. What followed was an extremely interesting and challenging hunt - several A4 pages of challenges and questions. The route took us out to the east and north-east of Forfar and ended up in the Stag Inn. The event was won by "Debbie's Nightmares". A great night. Thanks to Sarah and her team. We think it's the 3rd treasure hunt that she's organised for us.

Girds 2015 – The Invincible Man

Held in the Reid Park Forfar on 11th May - a knockout competition with each match being the best of 3 ends. Neil is 2015 Champion, beating Linda in the final. Four (4) in a row – is the man invincible? We reckon the only way to beat him is to start the competition 5 minutes early. We know his timekeeping is dubious, especially if we ask him to catch the train. ;-)

Mountain Mind Quiz 2015

Wednesday 11th March 2015, at the Plough Inn, Forfar. 2015 was our turn on the rota to organise the event, so there was no chance for 4 victories in a row, after our wins in 2012, 2013

and 2014. The club committee had the job of arranging this and looked for help from members both in preparing for the event and running the event. We decided to take the event away from Dundee to Forfar to try to encourage some of the Aberdeenshire clubs to enter a team – Forfar is only an hour from Aberdeen. However no one came from the north.

The committee were joined by Carolyn, Linda, Ray, Brian C, John N, and Mel in preparing the quiz. It took 5 meetings to get to a final version.

Then further folk helped on the night, as we had various jobs to do from collecting entrance money, running the raffle, registering teams, showing slides, being the quizmaster, handling out and collecting sheets, marking and collating answers and scores, and presenting the answers.

Well done to all. I think it was the following. The old committee (Colin, Graham, Ray, Steve, Neil, Mel) plus Linda, Carolyn, Nicola, Aileen, Debbie, Willie, John D, Brian C, Clare, John N, Rita, Bob. If I missed anyone, sorry, but your help was appreciated.

It all ran smoothly, apart from a little glitch with the slides at the start. We received several compliments from various folk about the slick organisation and the varied content of the questions. They all greatly enjoyed it. It was hard work to organise and run, but I think you have done the club proud.

Thanks to everyone who supplied raffle prizes. The entrance fees and the raffle money were presented to Tayside Mountain Rescue Association.

More Constitution Changes – AGM 2015

With approval at the AGM on March 2nd, there were changes accepted that alter the club constitution. This involved the photographic competition whose rules are written down in the constitution. A discussion took place as to whether the rules were to be written down like this and not decided by the committee on the day. The meeting was in favour of a fixed set of rules. The proposal involved adding a new category, "best group of 3 photographs from a collection", which may or may not contain the winning photograph. The proposal was adopted and the constitution updated. See http://www.fdhwc.org.uk/docs/FDHWC_Constitution.pdf

This document, and all previous 44 newsletters can be found online at <http://www.fdhwc.org.uk/newsletters.aspx>

Meet Reports Jan – July 2015

Sunday 18th January 2015 - High Tea day meet

18 travelled by bus to Glen Tanar Lodge and walked over the Firmounth Path, in real wintry conditions of snow and a strong north wind, to be met by 2 others on their descent. They left Sauchieburn Hotel at 07:00. 6 folk took a walk from Edzell to the Rocks of Solitude and back (swelled to 8 on the return). 4 other members did part of the Brechin walks network. In total 38 members and guests attended high tea at Sauchieburn Hotel, Luthermuir at 07:00, including young Briar at 5 weeks old.

Sunday 8th February 2015 - Ben Chonzie / Achnafree Hill

Attendance 15, by shared car. A clear winter's day, but with a strong wind. Hard snow in places, so crampons used.

20-22 February 2015 Weekend Meet : Arrochar Area

8 attended (9 on Friday night). Stayed at the Scout Association's Lochgoilhead Outdoor Centre (12 places). Saturday: 1 cycled down near Carrick Castle The other 7 climbed "The Brack" from the Centre. Climbed up through the forest into a snowy world. Deep at times, but soft ground underneath. Strong wind, a couple of showers, and lots of spindrift on top. Good views. Dropped to the bealach below Beinn Donich and returned to the centre via a forestry track. Sunday: Everyone headed home in dreadful weather.

Regime change!

The Forfar & District Hillwalking Club's day meets are under new management as of the AGM the dynamic duo of Graham Brown ably assisted by Neil Sangster!

The new regime didn't get off to the most auspicious of starts on the **6th March** when the club visited an old favourite, the Tarmachan Ridge. Eight members turned out on a fairly mixed day of weather, culminating in an abandonment of our intended route after we had gained the summit due to strong winds and poor visibility. The day was redeemed by a visit to the Highland Chocolatier for coffee and cake.

There then followed the **March weekend** at the Glennfinnan Railway Carriage Bunkhouse on the **13-15 March**. Nine members and two guests attended. On the Saturday a party of 8 were on the Corryhully horseshoe, one biker and two on a low level walk up Glenfinnan. On the Sunday 2 members went to the Ice Factor and some people went exploring.

The April day meet was to Beinn a Ghlo on **Sunday 12th April**, 11 members were out, overnight snow made quite a wintry scene! The

whole group climbed Cairn Laith then a splinter group of six carried on over the other two hills in the group, while the remaining five continued at a slower pace to Braigh Coire Chruinn Bhalgain then retraced their steps back to Carn Liath and back to the car. There was low cloud to begin the day, but by 1300hrs the weather changed with clear skies but a strong, chilly NW wind, great views were enjoyed and a grand day was had by all.

May weekend (1st – 4th)

was celebrated at the Lochinver Mission Bunkhouse on 1st May - 4th May. 19 members attended, with 14 in the bunkhouse (excellent accommodation), 2 in a camper van, one in a tent and 2 in Bed and Breakfast. Saturday was breezy, but sunny with high cloud and great visibility. 6 different groups were out:- 2 walked locally near Lochinver, 4 on Beinn More Assynt and Conival, 4 on Quinag (all 3 tops), 3 on Cul Mhor, 1 on Canisp (from the west!), 2 on Stac Pollaidh (with 1 cycling back), 3 wandered near Suilven.

Sunday was very windy so no-one on the tops: - 15 went to Sandwood Bay for a sand-blast, 2 went to Inverkirkaig and Achmelvick, 2 went to Achmelvich.

Monday was equally windy and wet to start with - 2 walked into Glendhu bothy. 2 walked some way along that track. Others went home. A good weekend with good accommodation, good food, good company.

On **17th May**, the **first social walk** of the year were well attended local hills, the Wirrens, near Edzell.

Eleven members and two guests attended, an anticlockwise round of the Wirrens were taken via Craigangower, Hill of Wirren, East Wirren, Hill of Coratho and The Crannel. Very windy in places, but dry and clear, fantastic views of the lowlands of Angus. A great day finished off in style at the Panmuir Arms in Edzell for a bar supper, very convivial indeed.

For the **May day meet on 23rd May**, the club planned to go to Corrou Station, a place with some recent history of controversy, it wasn't going to disappoint on this visit either!! 10 members and 2 guests attended. Left Forfar at 06:00 to catch 08:46 train to Corrou. There were 3 walks. A group of 2 climbed Beinn na Lap. A group of 3 climbed Beinn na Lap, Chno Dearg and Stob Coire Sgrìodain (missed the 18:26 train by 5 minutes) and walked back out to the cars, reaching them at 23:00. The remaining group of 7 climbed Carn Dearg, Sgor Gaibhre and Beinn Pharlagain, and walked out to the cars by 1700hrs. A salutary lesson in the blind, greedy obsession of Munro bagging, next time keep moving and have an extended sleep on the last hill of the day, within sight of the public transport terminus, would be my advice. An event which is a shoe in for Incident of the Year 2015, unless there is some further insanity visited upon members of our esteemed club!

Business as usual on the Culra bike/hike meet on **Sunday 14th June**, thankfully no bike incidents. Nine members were out on a very fine, but long day out on Ben Alder and its neighbour Beinn Bheoil. A good scramble up both the long and short Leachas was taken due to a split in the group due to a perilous river crossing! We then regrouped at the top of Ben Alder with the weather improving all the time as we completed our route.

The **second social walk** of the summer was on **Sunday 21st June**, 3 members attended. This meet was rearranged with 24-hour notice. The original tripoint tramp to Beinn Vuirich was not possible because of the weather (the whitewash would be washed off). Instead the 10km walk left from Midtown, up to the ruined watermill at Buckies, over to Glen Moy, and then back via a forest trail to Horniehaugh and then a track back to the car at Midtown. Lots of wild life: - 6 black grouse, a pair of long eared owls, a kite as well as roe deer, lapwing, curlew, mistle-thrush and cuckoo. Some heavy showers.

The **June weekend of 27th-29th** took us to Morvich outdoor Centre in Kintail and it was thoroughly enjoyed by all 16 members who attended a very popular area for hill enthusiasts. Saturday started off gloomy, showery and overcast but by mid-afternoon it turned out a glorious day. There were parties out on the Five Sisters, the bottom half of the South Shiel ridge, exploration of a remote Corbett (Sgurr Gaorsic), A Glas Bhienn, two biking (although one was cheating with his electric bike) and one member went for a low level walk around Ratagan. The weather forecast for Sunday wasn't so good and it duly delivered, everyone went home, some 6 people in 5 cars partook in the trans-Scotland eat-athon rally on their way home!

The **Meet Secretary's Mystery meet on the 5th of July** was a resounding success and the select group of six members who turned out for it voted it the best walk in the meet calendar so far! The esteemed Meet Secretary decreed that we visit Carn Dearg Mor in Glen Feshie and we were blessed with lovely summer weather with the majority of the party walking in shorts all day! Great views were enjoyed to all parts and the day was rounded off perfectly with a fish tea at Blair Atholl chippy.

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the meet secretaries to thank all of you for turning out for the meets and we look forward to seeing you all back out in the hills with the club in the near future!

Graham Brown

Carn Dearg hut appeal

Since we use the hut every year, we decided to support the Carn Dearg in their quest to collect enough money to finish it off. If they can finish it off this summer, our October event will be held in the new hut. 9 members attended their pub quiz in the Fort Hotel, Broughty Ferry on Monday 27th April. The Norries and the Simpsons formed one team. The Sinclairs, Carolyn, Graham and Nicola formed a team, that managed to finish 3rd out of 13. Not bad! If only we watched more soaps!

Angus Glens Walking Festival 2015

This was held on 4 days - Thursday 4th to Sunday 7th June 2015. Both Colin and Janey took roles as leaders on various walks.

Permanent snow fields 2015?

In the 1970s, 1980s and 1990, I remember snow lying all year round in various locations - Garbh Coire between Cairn Toull and Braeriach, being the one most likely to hold the snow. Over the past few years even this has melted. However, what about 2015? It's been a bad summer. Will the snow stay all year round? The editor would be interested to hear your reports.