

Forfar & District Hill Walking Club

Newsletter 49 January 2018

President's Column

Greetings to you all.

I hope that you are enjoying our good start to winter this year. Attending the December meet at Linn of Dee, we experiencing temperatures of -12C in the car park which reminded more than one of us of what winters used to be like back in our halcyon days!

It's a recurring theme with myself and the meet secretaries, of the need to be well equipped and well prepared before we venture out in winter. The requirement to have proper winter boots, compatible crampons, ice axe and extra warm layers is vitally important, also the knowledge of how to use these winter tools. Experienced members of the club are usually on hand to lend advice, but my recommendation is to go on a winter skills course. I went on one when I was a student and it enhanced my love of winter walking no end, there is however, a school of thought that says there is no such thing as winter walking, it's winter mountaineering! I'm tempted to agree. Earlier on this month a party of us were on the Tarmachan ridge in proper winter conditions and it was no walk! Anyway, after a couple of months of snow, ice and sub-zero temperatures, thoughts will turn to spring and summer. There's a season for everything and something to be enjoyed each season, skiing and winter mountaineering now, biking and hiking later.

The club has some very fine day and weekend meets planned until the end of June. As usual, the highlights for me are the two long summer weekends. I'm not sure which one I'm the most excited about. I love the far north having explored up there the past three years. The trip into Knoydart has echoes of last year's visit to Rum, ferry from Mallaig, remote hills and the west coast atmosphere.

I'm looking forward sharing our times on the hills together in the next few months. Stay safe this winter.

Your President Graham

New Munroists

We have another two members who have cured their affliction and compleated the Munros. First up was Alison Stewart, who compleated her round on 13th August 2017 on Aonach Mor. It was a somewhat misty day by all accounts. Alison was presented with the club scroll and engraved goblet at the September open meeting.

Sadly for Alison, she didn't have stewardship of the scroll for long, as Bill Dryburgh was being chased up his final Munros by Frank (the enforcer) Low and he finished on Beinn Sgritheall on the 23rd September 2017. This coincided with the club weekend to Kintail. Congratulations to you both, we hope that you can now go to the hills and enjoy them, there's a whole new world of exploration waiting for you!

Frank Low is now looking for another project to manage, so get in touch if you want motivated for your final flurry.

A visit

by Bob Railton

My visit to the "The Great Polish Map of Scotland" near the village of Eddleston by Peebles is located within the grounds of the Barony Castle Hotel. The map 50 m x 40 m is a three dimensional concrete model of Scotland. The map was the brainchild of Jan Tomasik and built in 1974-1979. The detail is quite remarkable with the mountains, lochs, and the islands clearly visible.

There is no charge although donations boxes are located nearby. Check out the web site for full details.

A 2 course lunch in the hotel is highly recommended at £9-95.

New Members

Welcome to the following new members, who have joined since the last newsletter was published:-

Kenny Cruikshank

A round up of events

Monday 7th August 2017 - Outdoor Meeting - Nathro

13 members, a guest and 3 dogs attended. We met near Blairno Farm, then drove up through Craigendownie to the bridge. We then walked past Nathro Farm, to see the plaque to Peter Grant, who hid here (staying with his daughter) from government troops for many years after Culloden in 1746. He was eventually pardoned by George IV in 1822. Walk was 5.5km in total. A pleasant stroll on a dry and bright evening.

Monday 4th September 2017 - Open Meeting

Forfar Fire Station, 19:30. The meeting was chaired by Colin, in the absence of Graham. The last item of the agenda was to present a gift to a new Munroist, Alison Stewart, who compleated on Aonach Mor on Sunday 13th August. Alison was presented with an engraved goblet as a memento from the club, and the club's Munroists' scroll which has been updated with her name. The meeting was followed by an illustrated talk by Willie Mather on his recent adventure to Alaska.

Monday 2nd October 2017 - Open Meeting

Forfar Fire Station, 19:30. Prior to the meeting, Gavin Hunter gave an illustrated talk entitled "Southesk to Saskatchewan". This turned out to be an absolute gem of a talk, with great illustrations of the Earl Southesk's sojourn through North America in the 19th century.

Monday 6th November 2017 - Open Meeting Forfar Fire Station, 19:30. 19 attended the open meeting. At the end of the meeting, Bill Dryburgh was presented with the Munroist's scroll. Afterwards, 18 took part in a quiz organized by John Dawson, who unfortunately couldn't be present. 6 teams of 3 were drawn, and they tried to find answers to 30 photographic questions. The scores were all fairly close ranging from 20 to 26. The winning team was Penny, Bill D and Colin.

Friday 27th - Sunday 29th October 2017 Social Meet / Weekend Meet : Carn Dearg Hut, Glen Clova.

20 attended (19 members and a guest). The main events took place on Saturday commencing in the late afternoon:The 2017 Boules Tournament was keenly contested by 8 pairs. It was played in 2 round robin pools, then semi-finals and a final. Graham B. and Colin narrowly beat Carolyn & Penny 3-2 in the final.

This was followed by an excellent Halloween feast (prepared by the committee with contributions from all)

Fraser Rae (our young guest) guessed the correct number of bat poo's in the jar. There were 4 entrants to the fancy dress competition. The judges selected John Norrie as Guy Fawkes to be the winner.

There were 4 entries in the neep lantern competition (no pumpkins were allowed). The judges selected Colin's neep as the winner. Then a few games followed: "Guess who I am" (stickers on backs with a name); blinded-folded "feelies" into containers with various slimey and revolting contents; Halloween Bingo; make a set of teeth from plasticine & peanuts!; blind-folded "pin the spider into its web".

Then the club pyromaniac treated everyone to a spectacular firework display - two big boxes from Lidl. Very impressive!

6 stayed over - 2 in a campervan & 4 in the hut (2 of whom had forgotten their sleeping bags!) Sunday was a good day - cold and fresh. A group of 3 tackled a round of Broad Cairn, Cairn Bannoch, Carn an t'Saigart Mor, Fafernie returning by Jock's Road. Returned at 16:45. Clear with some snow.

Monday 4th December 2017 - Open Meeting

Forfar Fire Station, 19:30. 16 attended.
Afterwards, all took part in an indoor games night. They played Jenga, Uno, Guess Who? and Connect4. Everyone enjoyed it. Although there were some uncharitable and uncalled for remarks on the photos which were posted on Facebook!

Monday 8th January 2018 - Open Meeting

Forfar Fire Station 19:30 26 members and 4 guests attended. The meeting was preceded by an entertaining and informative illustrated talk by Graham Brown and Nicola Hay on their recent trip to Nepal – "A Return to the Greater Ranges"

Another visit

by Bob Railton

Hadrian's Wall Northumberland.

The Sill national landscape discovery centre is located on the wall near the Twice Brewed Hotel. This is worth a visit and accommodation and the YHA is first class (a possible venue for one of our weekends away), there is no charge for entry although there is a charge for the car park. The Sill takes its name from the stone that built the wall. Further info is available on their Web Site. The food at the Twice Brewed Hotel was very good.

Deaths of former members

The following former members have passed away recently:-

Fraser Simpson (1970's – 1980s) Roy Hebenton (2009-2011)

A Solution to our cupboards full of gear?

by Graham Brown

I was recently contacted by the parent of a former member who had sadly passed away. He was wondering if the club would take his gear or add it to our gear store. After explaining that we didn't actually have such a thing , it got me thinking about what to do with all this spare gear that floats about within the club .

A member also came up to me at a recent open meeting explaining that he would be interested in donating his old gear to any such group that finds good homes for pre-loved and pre-used gear, indicating that some of his peers would do the same .

The monthly sales corner is one way of reducing the contents of our gear cupboards. eBay is another, but it's not for everyone as it's time consuming and it's ok if what you're selling is fairly current (& an 'in brand')

I had read in The Scottish Mountaineer about organisations who take used gear and distribute it to groups who are trying to encourage people of limited means to take part in outdoor activities, so I did some searching.

<u>Gift Your Gear</u> supports community organizations, youth groups and charities working in the outdoors.

The outdoor gear you donate makes a real difference to local community organizations, youth groups and charities, enabling others to benefit from life changing experiences in the great outdoors, regardless of their circumstance. I contacted them recently to find out how we could get gear to them. It would appear that if we centrally collected all our spare gear and packed it into boxes, they would arrange collection. Also at the moment Rohan shops are hosting a "Gift your Gear" collection all through March 2018. There is a Rohan shop in Perth, so this might suit.

I don't mind co-ordinating this, as I'm a big fan of decluttering in general and I'm also an advocate of encouraging people to enjoy the great outdoors. If we could help those less affluent to experience the benefits of getting out on the hills, safely clad and at no cost to them, then everyone's a winner.

I intend to bring up this subject at the open meeting prior to the AGM in March, so you have time to gather your thoughts and opinions, or get in touch.

Graham Brown gab@totalise.co.uk

Previous Newsletters

All previous newsletters are available online at http://www.fdhwc.org.uk/newsletters.

Kinloch Castle Hostel, Rum

by Sheila Mather

Sheila is a member of the Kinloch Castle Friends Association. She reports that it is looking increasingly likely that the castle hostel will reopen, but there is a lot of work to do before then. The timescale is still to be determined, but hopefully this year.

She asks the following of the club:

- If you have the contact details for other clubs in Scotland e.g. Carn Dearg, but others too, would you be willing to pass that information to her, so that the Kinloch Castle Friends Association can send out updates to hillwalking clubs?
- If any member was willing to give assistance of any sort? Anyone willing to help with joinery, painting and decorating, gardening, as well as general cleaning up, would be very welcome. There is a work party going out the last full weekend in March and we anticipate that the work parties will become more frequent. (Members are out there very frequently now in any case.)
- Do any members of FDHWC have photographs of the hostel area of the castle and the public areas of the castle, that they could send to her, or that she can get copies made of? The older the better.
- Any help and spreading of the word, is greatly appreciated.

There is a KCFA website,

<u>www.kinlochcastlefriends.org</u>, where you can get more information and where there are details of how to join. Membership is very reasonably priced.

For Sale

- Ladies Salomon walking boots, size 6. Very good condition. £35.
- 2 walking poles, as new, surplus to requirements (Leki double adjustable) £30

Telephone Marion, 01241 873991

Blair House, Glen Clova

By Bob Railton

This is the new outdoor Centre being built at Acharn, at the head of Glen Clova. The structure is up so it's really possible to see what it will look like - and fortunately it looks great! There are more photos and a short film on Eleanor Harris's blog http://eleanormharris.co.uk/blair-house/.

In with the Old, and out with the New

by Carolyn Smith

Traditionally, New Year is the time for resolutions with sorts of good intentions made around self-improvement. In early January this year, after some considerable thought, I once again established that, in my case, there were no areas of improvement required and settled back to use my time more productively on philosophical meanderings hither and yon. During the course of my metaphorical perambulations, I recalled a recent media article on the subject of outdoor clothing and sustainability which caused some further pause for thought, probably due to a recent quite terrifying nightmare - of which more later..... Much is spoken nowadays of the ecological footprint of us humanoids and the need to be mindful when purchasing goods. Two of the leading manufacturers of outdoor clothing, Paramo and Patagonia are doing their bit to encourage a cultural shift away from overconsumption. Paramo has a well-publicised repair scheme no doubt used by many of us. Patagonia has adopted the same principle of repair rather than replace through their Worn Wear scheme (currently touring parts of Scotland) which teaches folk how to carry out their own clothing repairs - all brands included. There is no doubt that both companies would not last very long if we all stopped buying but they seem to do very nicely thank you without the need for e.g. TV advertising. Credit where due, they are, at least, making a fair pass at getting us to think about whether we really need yet another jacket/base layer/pair of trousers or could we act differently and grow to cherish the repairs on a garment and the story they tell. For safety reasons, appropriate gear is a prerequisite if heading for the hills but I bet if many of us donned even one quarter of our gear in preparation for an expedition, we'd be wedged in our front doors before we left the house and have to be levered out by the emergency services. I confess to being guilty in this regard and have been known to be seduced by the latest updates to Paramo's collection. These braw new colours and technical tweaks won't keep me safer but they sure as hell make a difference to my bank balance. Howsoever, tiddly pom, ho hum and all that. Just some of my own reflections for your delectation (I'll bring cake next time). Happy and safe walking whatever you're wearing. Ah yes, back to my nightmare..... Picture this if you will dear reader; the house went up in smoke and for insurance purposes I had to provide a list of items, including outdoor clothing and equipment. Panic ensued - I couldn't remember exactly how many or the description of the numerous jackets residing in the hall cupboard. Point of this tale?

For me, definitely a moral in there somewhere – if only I could get to the back of the cupboard to find it!

A very Happy, Healthy and Sustainable 2018 to all.

P.S. On no account show this to Alec Runciman!!!! I'd still like to be allowed over the door.

Meet Reports

Sunday 13th August 2017 - Day Meet - Glen Feshie to Sugar Bowl Carpark

10 members and 1 guest attended. By minibus. The weather was a bit showery until they reached the top of Braeriach then it was a fine late afternoon's walk back to the bus at the Sugar Bowl car park. At times the midges were intolerable as it was quite mild. The ground was incredibly rough and complex between the Glen Feshie plateau and the foot of Braeriach which took a bit of time. Started at 09:40 finished 18:30, so a long day, but enjoyable, great views from the top across to Cairn Toul group and beyond. Thanks to Richard Lockwood for his driving and stopping for tasty chips at House of Bruar. We were back at the Myre at 2130, a long day!

Sunday 10th September 2017 - Day Meet - Glen Queich - Glen Moy

2 members attended. The scheduled meet to Creag Meagaidh was cancelled due to a very bad weather forecast. Instead, a local meet took place. Started at Midtown, Glen Queich, walked to Buckies, then over to Hillside and Glen Moy. Climbed from Glack, over to Horniehaugh and back to Midtown. 10km, 325m ascent, 3 hours. Walk finished at 13:45.

Friday 22nd - Sunday 24th September 2017 - Weekend Meet - Kintail

19 members and 5 guests attended, with 22 staying in Ratagan YH, and 2 in a campervan. One guest was from Ukraine, 4 guests from France.

Friday: 2 members climbed Beinn Fhada. Saturday: a group of 26 climbed Beinn Sgritheall (974m) via the west ridge - the extra two being Willie who drove up for the day and Bas (a Dutchman who was staying in the hostel, and tagged along). Why so many? To celebrate Bill Dryburgh's last Munro. A wee dram was provided on top, and Bill was presented with an engraved hip flask as a memento from the club. For two French guests and Bas, it was their first Munro. Weather clear, high clouds, but windy. Most carried on to descend to Arnisdale. 7km, ascent 1025m. In the evening, the group went to Kintail Lodge Hotel for a celebratory dinner. Sunday: weather was not so good - all went home.

Sunday 8th October 2017 - Day Meet - Glen Lyon

12 attended (10 members and 2 quests), 10 left in 3 cars from Forfar, meeting up with two "city" members at Invervar. Walk started at 9:15, and at that time, the cloud was only rolling around the tops. The route followed an anti-clockwise circuit of the Cairn Mairg horseshoe, climbing a good stalkers's path onto Meal na Aighean (971m) then onto Carn Mairg (1042m). By that time the cloud had really rolled in and the group split into two. One group of 6 headed along the ridge to Meall a' Bharr then dropped back to Inverar, arriving back at 16:45 (12.5km, 1100m ascent). The other of 6 headed for the remaining 2 Munros (Meall Garbh and Carn Gorm) arriving back at 17:30. (18km, 1520m ascent). Most members stopped at Dunkeld for fish & chips, except that there was no fish! The owner had been given only half a delivery from the fish merchant.

Friday 27th - Sunday 29th October 2017 - Social Meet / Weekend Meet : Carn Dearg Hut, Glen Clova

The social events are reported in a separate section above.

Sunday was a good day - cold and fresh. A group of 3 tackled a round of Broad Cairn, Cairn Bannoch, Carn an t'Saigart Mor, Fafernie returning by Jock's Road. Returned at 16:45. Clear with some snow showers.

Sunday 12th November 2017 - Day Meet - Glen Esk

11 attended. 9 members were joined by 2 exmembers (Kate Fewell & John Beales, over from Australia). The group left Edzell at 07:45 and were walking from Invermark at 08:30. There was a very strong north wind which made it bitterly cold. The walk took the track through Auchronie Farm, and climbed to Hill of Kirny and then onto Hill of Saughs. Here one member set off for lunch in Edzell (under his wife's orders). The remainder carried on northwards straight into the wind. By this time snow showers were coming through, blowing horizontally into their faces. Just before Hill of Gairney, another member called it guits and headed back to the cars. The group reached Hill of Gairney (756m) at 11:05. They decided to carry on, now walking westwards with the gale force wind hitting them side on. They reached the boundary stone on Naked Hill (see photo). At this point several of the lighter members were being blown off their feet, so it was decided to abandon the original walk (Braid Cairn and Mount Keen were to be next). The group headed cross country for the path used for their ascent. Lunch was had in a sheltered hollow and the cars were reached at 14:00. Total distance walked was 18.2km, with ascent of 590m. A very testing day, that left everyone with glowing cheeks. Most of the group stopped in the Panmure Arms, Edzell for a welcome coffee/tea (and 3 had gigantic scones!).

Friday 17th - Sunday 18th November 2017 - Weekend Meet - The Borders

11 attended, staying at Kailzie Bunkhouse, near Peebles, which we shared with a group of Northern Irish mountain bikers.

<u>Saturday</u>: A fine clear day, but a strong westerly wind. There were 3 groups out.

A group of 4 stayed local and tackled the longest walk of the day: - the Dun Rig horseshoe from Peebles. Left from Peebles at 09:30 and climbed Kirkhope Law, Birkscairn Hill, Dun Rig (744m), Glenrath Heights, Hundleshope Heights and descended by Preston Law to Newby Kipps. That included 3 "Donalds". One of the group even had a detour to climb another Donald, Stob Law, managing to catch up with the others on the descent. They got back to Peebles at 17:00. (20.5km, 940m, 7.5 hours). Before returning to the bunkhouse, the group headed to Sainsbury's where one of the group made a navigational error and went out the wrong door! The rest headed south on the A708.

A group of 5 climbed past the Grey Mare's Tail to Loch Skeen, onto Firthybrig Head, Firthope Rig and onto White Coomb (821m). They retraced their steps to Firthope Rig, and dropped into Rotten Bottom (Google "Longbow" for some history), making their way to Saddle Yoke and dropped to the car at Capplegill. (15km, 920m, 6 hours).

A group of 2 completed the classic Black Hope Round starting from Capplegill. They climbed to Swatte Fell, then out to Hart Fell (808m), rounded to HartFell Riggs and then returned via Saddle Yoke, where they met up with the White Coomb group. (13.5km, 940m, 5.5 hours). Sunday: A fine frosty morning with brilliant visibility. A group of 7 headed to Yarrowford. They passed the old Broadmeadows youth hostel, and climbed to the Three Brethren (3 massive cairns). This is on the Southern Upland Way. The Tweed Valley Ultra running event was being held that day and the group observed some of the competitors tackle the 40 mile route as they passed the Brethren. The group's route then went west following the Way until Brown Knowe (523m). They descended by Wallace's Trench (historical – google it) to the Minchmoor Road (an ancient road) and followed this back to Yarrowford. (13.8km, 550m, 4.5 hours). Meanwhile, a group of 4 headed up the Tweed from Peebles. They crossed an old arched railway bridge after investigating a long and very dark railway tunnel. They returned down the north bank under the precarious looking Neidpath Castle. (5km).

Sunday 10th December 2017 - Day Meet - Sgor Mor, Linn o' Dee

11 attended (10 members and a guest). After leaving the Myre car park in Forfar at 07:05 we made for the Spittal of Glenshee (at 08:15) to find the snow gates open, and made our way to Linn of Dee where the temperature was registered on a car at -12c. We left from the car park at 09:25 and made our way up through

deep heather and powdery snow to Carn an 'lc Duihhe (630m). From there, we crossed a very wet area of ground with a few members getting wet feet, to Sgor Dubh (741m) where lunch was enjoyed with fantastic views all round but especially the Cairngorms to our north. It was then a ridge walk to the summit, Sgor Mor (813m). After a short break there, we made our way down to meet the Glen Dee path which led us past the Chest of Dee where we saw the tracks of an otter, then on to White Bridge and back to the cars at 16:45. Although the air temperature was well below freezing all day because of the windless conditions and unbroken sunshine it was very pleasant day to be out.

Tuesday 26th December 2017 - Christmas Meet - Glen Prosen

11 attended (9 members, one ex-member and a guest). We gathered at Dykehead car park at 09:00, and travelled in 3 cars to the top of Glen Prosen, just beyond Glen Prosen Lodge. The walk started at 09:35 and headed north on a forest track for 4k, with the mighty Dreish looming overhead. Much of the forest has been cleared recently. After leaving the forest, there was a steep climb up to the Hill of Strone (850m), through the snowline (about 3-4 cm of very dry soft snow), where the strong northerly wind was blowing sprindrift, and providing significant windchill. We turned SE towards Cairn Inks (769m) and found a relatively sheltered spot for a short lunch (too cold to hang around). We continued onto Cairn Inks which gave good views of the Clova Hotel just below. There, we turned south to climb Mount Bouie (585m) and below that, we dropped into the forest again. A very sheltered sunny spot gave us the opportunity for a 2nd lunch break. A forest track then led to Cramie Farm and back to the cars at 14:35. Distance 14.1km, ascent 636m, time 5 hours. We headed back to Dykehead and there was no appropriate place to stop for refreshments, so we all headed home.

Tuesday 2nd January 2018 - New Year Meet Cancelled because of poor weather.

Sunday 21st January 2018 – High Tea Meet – Angus Glens

38 attended in total. 35 for high tea (33 members and 2 guests), and 3 others (2 members and a guest) who did part of the main walk. 28 out walking (21+5+2)

Main Walk

The main walk was arranged to be from Bridge of Dye to Glen Esk via Clachnaben and Mount Battock, but was rearranged because of the dire weather forecast. 18 people (17 members and a guest) were on the bus at Sauchieburn Hotel at 08:00. The bus headed to Afflochie, where the group were met by 3 others, leaving at 08:55. The walk took us to the top of Pinderachy (514m) - a first ascent for all. Then we dropped steeply into Glen Ogil, where the reservoir was found to be frozen. We descended to Redheugh,

where we split up. 18 carried up over St. Arnolds Seat (494m), where they climbed the massive cairn. They carried onto to Naked Tam, before dropping into Glen Queich and has a break at Buckies (an old water mill). The 3 who broke off (Penny, Jamie, Tash) at Redheugh joined up with the others there. All carried on over into Glen Moy, where the group of 3 separated and walked down the public road hoping for a lift back to their car at Afflochie. Penny's husband picked them up and returned them to the car at Afflochie. Meanwhile, the other 18 were led through a frozen bog to Kinrive Farm where they dropped into Glen Clova. A short trek north saw them reach Gella Bridge to meet the bus at 15:25. It took them back to Sauchieburn Hotel, arriving at 16:20. Full walk: 18.3km, ascent 796m, Duration: 6.5 hours (with 2 stops).

Shorter Walk

A group of 5 had gathered at Edzell at 11:00 for a shorter walk. Distance 10km in good conditions. They visited the wiggly bridge then entered through the blue gate, and then a walk up the banks of the North Esk to the Rocks of Solitude. Afterwards they retreated to the Panmure Arms where they met members an Aberdeen-based hillwalking club, who had turned back from a reverse of our original route!! (ho ho).

Another shorter walk

Another 2 members took themselves out on the Airlie Ridge to work up an appetite. High Tea

The groups gathered for aperitifs in the bar of the Sauchieburn Hotel, before being served with yet another marvellous meal. 35 attended :- 33 members and 2 guests. The club president was unfortunately unable to attend, due to illness. However he did manage to send his "speech", which was read out to the assembled masses!

Weekend Meets Feb-Jun 2018

16-18 February - Lochgoilhead Activity Centre, Arrochar

Our 3rd club visit here. All 16 places booked -booking closed.

16-18 March - Mill Cottage - Glen Feshie A favourite haunt of the club in the past. Places

still available.

4-7 May - Tongue Youth Hostel

3 nights, as it's a long trip. Places still available.

22-25 June - Inverie bunkhouse

3 nights at the tame side of Knoydart. Places still available.

See www.fdhwc.org.uk for further details.