

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB.

### MOUNT KEEN EXCURSION.

THE Club climbed Mount Keen on the May holiday.

Some thirty members left Aberdeen by the 8.45 train and drove from Aboyne to the stables, at the top of Glen Tana, kindly put at the disposal of the Club by Mr. Coats.

The day was misty, but the mist fortunately lifted as the top was reached, and a fairly good view was obtained. Ben Avon and Beinn a' Bhuid, with parts of Ben Muich Dhui were fairly distinct, and other points of interest were Lochnagar, Mount Battock, and the Glen Doll hills.

The majority of the party descended straight to the Tana, but a few members took the Braid Cairn on the way down.

The drive along Glen Tanar was most enjoyable, many trees being in blossom, and all showing their foliage to the very best advantage. The Club had dinner at Aboyne and returned to Aberdeen by the 7.53 train.

The following took part in the excursion:—Mr. and Mrs. Robert Anderson, Miss L. Anderson and Miss Hellen M. Anderson, Mr. John Clarke, Chairman of the Club; Mr. James Conner and Mr. F. Conner, Dr. and Mrs. W. F. Croll, Dr. W. J. Dilling, Mr. J. A. Hadden and Miss Hadden, Mr. and Miss Iverach, Mr. W. Macpherson, Mr. J. M. Gregor, Mr. George M'Intyre, Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Nicol, Mr. J. Rennie, Mr. and Mrs. John Rust and Miss Rust, Mr. R. T. Sellar, Mr. and Mrs. R. M. Williamson and the Secretary.

A special interest attaches to Mount Keen as being the objective of the first Spring Excursion of the Club, on 5th May, 1890, two-and-twenty years ago. That excursion, besides, remains in a way "famous" in the annals of the Club for the number of those present—a number never since equalled, or even approached. The Club was practically newly-founded, having been in existence only a year, and mountaineering was then something of a novelty, so



that the excursion attracted a large concourse of members and their friends, female as well as male; and possibly the drive up and down Glentanner (designated Glen Tana in those days) proved an additional attraction. At any rate, the party numbered 162, of whom 45 were ladies. The local newspapers of the time had more elaborate reports of the outing than is now customary. Three of these reports at least, were contributed by members of the Club; and it may be of interest to reproduce an extract or two from them.

The ascent and descent were thus described in what was the most elaborate and detailed of the reports—

The ascent of Mount Keen was made from Coirebhruach, and was participated in by most of the company, from a boy of six to a man of seventy-six. The mountain, particularly graceful in outline, by the way, with a conical top, and a large, deep corrie on the northern side, is not very difficult of ascent, except towards the top; and for three-fourths of the ascent there is a fairly well-defined track. The summit is 3077 feet high, the mountain standing on the boundary-line between Aberdeenshire and Forfarshire—the track, in fact, is a public road to Brechin, and leads over the mountain by “the ladder” to Glenmark and Glenesk. The time taken in the ascent varied, of course, but it is perhaps worthy of note that one of the earliest arrivals at the cairn was a young lady. The day was unfortunately unfavourable for a fine view from the peak. Bennachie, Tap o’ Noth, the Buck of the Cabrach, Morven, and Lochnagar were readily observed from the lower slopes of the mountain, but haze and mist obscured the view from the summit and the various branches of the Cairngorm range—Ben Muich Dhui, Cairntoul, Braeriach, Ben Avon, and Beinn a’ Bhuird—were dimly indicated by members of the Club familiar with their whereabouts rather than distinctly observed by their “stranger friends”; the corries and precipices were draped in snow. The party having in various detachments, sometimes singly, reached the top, grouped themselves picturesquely on the west side of the cairn (the sheltered side, for it blew fiercely and bitterly on the east side), and were photographed. Then a formal meeting of the Club was held in close proximity to a suitable stone—Mr. Alexander Copland, the chairman, presiding—and Mr. Alexander Forbes, headmaster, Marywell Street School, was, on application, duly admitted a member and as duly “douted,” “as use and wont is.” This initiatory rite was then performed upon Mr. William Ronald, leather merchant, and ten other aspirants for membership of the Club, the ascent of 3000 feet being sufficient to qualify for admission. The party then straggled down the hill in the same happy, independent, “Go-as-you-please” fashion as that in which they straggled up, though in most cases with a slightly accelerated speed; a capital *al fresco* luncheon was served at Coirebhruach, comprising soup which some wag dubbed, “Bouilli *a la* Mount Keen”; and a pleasant drive down Glen Tana in the fading daylight brought a pleasant day’s outing to an end.



### According to another account—

On arriving at Coirebhruach, the party were served with sandwiches and milk, the better to fortify them for the climb that was before them. As the crow flies, the distance from this Lodge to the summit of Mount Keen is something under two miles. By the hill-path it is probably, however, nearer three miles. One hour and thirty-five minutes was the time estimated to overtake this part of the journey, and within that period the most laggard of the mountaineers had crossed the comparatively gentle slopes at the base of the mountain, passed the snow banks glistening in the sun half-way up, and used their last ounce of breath in taking the steep mound that leads abruptly to the top. There were cheers for the late-comers and the faint-hearted, and none were given more lustily than for Mr. William Ronald, leather merchant, the oldest member of the party, who, at four or five years past the threescore-and-ten, accomplished a physical feat that would not have shamed a man of younger years and good mettle.

About half-a-dozen gentlemen at the summit, we are told, were over seventy years of age. The boy of six already mentioned was a son of Mr. Alexander Taylor, manager of the coal department, Northern Co-operative Company; and two or three other young folks, it is said, did the climbing and descending without assistance. Among the party were (according to various of the reports)—

Mr. Alexander Copland, Mr. Robert Harvey, and Mr. A. I. M'Connochie, Chairman, Treasurer, and Secretary of the Club respectively; Baillies Lyon and Rust; Treasurer Morgan; the Rev. Robert Semple, Ruthrieston Free Church; the Rev. James Anderson, Dyce; Mr. J. S. Smith, Northern Agricultural Company; Mr. Thomas Kyd, Northern Assurance Company; Mr. John Fleming, wood merchant; Mr. Charles Shepherd, Aberdeen Steam Navigation Company; Mr. Thomas Jamieson, Fellow of the Institute of Chemistry; Mr. T. R. Gillies, advocate; Mr. Henry Peterkin, solicitor; Mr. A. Keith, grain merchant; Mr. G. R. Gowans, artist; Mr. W. J. Jamieson, "*Aberdeen Journal*"; Mr. Wilson, solicitor; Mr. Charles M'Hardy (Ellis and M'Hardy); Mr. Charles Stewart, Gordon's College; Mr. Arnold Christen; Mr. W. P. Robertson, dentist; Mr. James Rose, teacher; Mr. J. R. Grant, banker; Mr. Alexander Macphail.

The ceremony of initiation of members is thus elaborated in one of the reports—

One interesting event of the day's trip was not photographed—namely, the admission of several members to the Club by the time-honoured ceremony of "douping," well-known in Aberdeen through the records of burgess-making at the riding at the marches. In imitation of the methods adopted at the "marches," a candidate for membership presented a petition for admission, and the reading of the document, which was quaintly and humorously worded, caused as much amusement as did the manner in which its request was complied with.



Other incidents of the day's proceedings are thus narrated—

It has been objected that this [the outing] is "pic-nicking," not mountaineering; so it may be well to record the fact that two members of the Club, accompanied by a candidate for admission, started from Aboyne at half-past eight, scorned the delights of the Glen-Tana tea-table, and pushed steadily on for the head of the glen at a vigorous "four miles an hour" pace. They had the satisfaction of reaching Coirebhruach long before a vehicle hove in sight, and, along with an Aberdeen gentleman who crossed over from Dinnet and overtook them on the mountain slope, they were the first to reach the summit—a good twenty minutes before anybody else. (How did they get to Aboyne before the train? was freely asked in the course of the day. They belonged to a party of five who walked from Alford to Colquhony on Saturday and crossed over from Colquhony—on foot—to Aboyne on Sunday). Three of the four, it should be added, walked back to Aboyne in time to catch the train to Aberdeen. Near the summit of Mount Keen the pedestrians met a party of six Aberdonians who had come up from Tarfside by "the ladder"; and at the well at the top of the corrie they found a note recording the passage to Tarfside on Saturday of a different party of Aberdonians, who playfully designated themselves the "Junior Cairngorm Club." So long as incidents like these can be recorded, the proper function of the Cairngorm Club is not in danger of being neglected.

It should be explained, perhaps, that on their way up, the party halted at the mansion-house, the Forest of Glen Tana, on the special invitation of Sir William C. Brooks, Bart., and made a tour of inspection of the house and grounds, being also served with tea. Sir William himself, however, was not in residence at the time.

In connection with this excursion the Club issued a very complete monograph on Glen Tanner and Mount Keen, prepared by Mr. M'Connochie.

No fewer than four times since, the spring excursion of the Club has been to Mount Keen—on 7th May, 1894, 7th May, 1900, 7th May, 1906, and (now) 6th May, 1912. Seldom, however, has a good view been obtained. In 1894, according to the record in the "Excursions and Notes" in the "Journal," "the weather was propitious on the whole, but the atmospheric conditions did not permit of a distant view." In 1900, "mist had possession of the mountain-tops all morning, and as the summit of Mount Keen was neared, it became very dense, and rain fell; there was, of course, no view to be had." And in 1906, "haze prevented a good distant prospect, but never-



theless the view was good." On the first two of these excursions, the parties, on the return journey, were hospitably entertained at the mansion-house by Sir William and Lady Brooks, who in 1894 was elected an honorary member.

It may be added that at the recent excursion three members were present who were present at the first excursion in 1890—Messrs. Robert Anderson, John M'Gregor, and John Rust.

#### THE CLUB AT EASTER.

THE third official Easter Meet was held at Clova, on the upper waters of the South Esk, where the headquarters were the Ogilvy Arms at Milton of Clova.

There were present at the meet: Miss M. Angus, Mr. P. A. Cooper with guest, Mr. J. M. Ellis, Mr. D. R. Macdonald, Mr. A. P. Milne, Miss Tarbet, Mr. and Mrs. R. M. Williamson with two guests, Miss A. Wilson and guest, Mr. A. M. Wilson, and the Secretary.

The first party arrived on the evening of Thursday, 4th April, and had a full day on Friday. Leaving the hotel about 9, they made up the Glen to the junction of the White Water and the Esk, here they held up the White Water to the foot of Jock's Road, and from this point ascended Craig Mellon with the valuable assistance of a strong west wind in rear. A large number of deer were seen on the lower ground in Glen Doll. A descent was made down the steep eastern face of Craig Mellon to the river Esk, where lunch was enjoyed in the shelter of one of the immense boulders lying at the foot of the hill. The strong wind blowing down the Glen was raising small waterpouts from the surface of the river.

After lunch the more energetic members of the party decided to cross the Esk and climb Boustie Ley, taking Red Craig on the way. The small footbridge which at one time existed near this point having apparently disappeared, they had perforce to ford the river, and the remainder of the party were interested spectators of this performance. Having divested themselves of shoes and stockings and selected a promising spot, the waders gingerly



entered the icy water and progressed very well till within a yard or two of the farther bank where, taking an innocent looking eddy too boldly, they were all soaked well up to the waist. A sharp ascent of the long hillside beyond the river soon, however, put matters right; and passing over the long flat plateau beyond Red Craig, they duly reached Boustie Ley, from which a bird's-eye view was got of Loch Brandy 800 feet below.

Passing from Boustie Ley to Ben Reid on the way back to Clova, the full force of the wind was felt, and a boundary fence running between the two hills was of valuable assistance as an anchorage at the more exposed points. Finding themselves with ample time to do the short distance between Ben Reid and Clova, a long halt was made on the face of the hill. The view from this point down the valley of the Esk to the sea was magnificent, the higher ground being dotted with heather fires burning briskly in the strong breeze.

On arrival at Clova, it was found that the party had been increased by eleven, six of whom had arrived from Loch Muick *via* the Dubh Loch and Bachnagairn while the other five had motored from Dundee.

Saturday was the day of the strong gale. Two members left Clova for Tarfside while the programme for the remainder was the ascent of Dreish and Mayar, and a walk along the ridge *via* Hill of Strone to Cairn Inks and so down to Clova. The gale, however, caused a considerable curtailment of this programme.

The ridge north of Dreish was duly ascended by the Eilbo corrie above Glen Doll Lodge. In the corrie numerous deer and two foxes were seen. It was not till the party commenced the ascent of Dreish itself that the full force of the gale was felt. So strong was the wind that progress was impossible save in comparative lulls and, however ignominious it might be, members had to lie flat on the ground to prevent themselves being hurled over the precipices. Three members afforded considerable amusement by all hurriedly deciding—assisted by the wind—to cling simultaneously to the same spot on the hill.



The member who arrived there first, and who was accordingly at the foot of the pile, fared rather badly. Large pieces of snow crust, from some patches of old snow, hurling along at apparently anything from 60 to 80 miles per hour added to the general discomfort of the party, and ultimately a descent had with difficulty to be made by the Winter Corrie of Dreish.

On Sunday, as a result probably of the exertions of the previous day, it was a somewhat small party that made its way up to the top of Jock's Road, over the ridge north of Craig Mellon and down to the "Paradise o' Pines at Bachnagairn," a beautiful oasis in a waste of hills. The excellent photograph by Mrs. R. M. Williamson, appearing in this number, gives some idea of the beauty of this lonely spot. From here Macdonald and Ellis, who had come over the Capel in the dark the previous evening held north to the head of Loch Muick, while the rest of the party proceeded down the Esk past Moulzie to Clova.

The following day members reluctantly departed to their various homes. The meet was a most successful one, and though the greater number present came from Aberdeen, there were several members from Dundee and from England. The ladies who took part are to be congratulated on their performances, as the prevailing high wind rendered the conditions most unfavourable for them.

#### EXCURSION TO BENNACHIE.

On Saturday, 8th June, the Club climbed Bennachie. The party, which numbered about twelve, left Aberdeen at 1.37 p.m. for Oyne, from which point the hill was climbed. There was mist on the top of the hill, but otherwise the conditions were excellent, and a very enjoyable afternoon was spent. The party returned to Oyne where they had tea—Mr. John Clarke, the Chairman, presiding. The party returned by the 7.54 p.m. train for Aberdeen. Amongst those present were:—Messrs. C. T. Christie, John Clarke, Dr. McIntyre, George McIntyre and guest, J. A. Parker, William Porter, E. W. Watt and Theodore Watt.

J. B. G.