

Proceedings of the Club

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

The *Eightieth* Annual General Meeting was held on 19 November 1968. The President, Mr A. C. R. Watt, in opening the meeting, referred with regret to the death of Mr J. G. Kyd who was the senior member of the Club.

Mr Watt, on behalf of the Committee, proposed that Mr Robert Bain be elected an Honorary Member of the Club. Tribute was paid to the work done by Mr Bain on behalf of the Club both as Huts Custodian and as President and he was unanimously elected to Honorary Membership.

Office-bearers appointed were: *President* Mr A. C. R. Watt; *Vice-Presidents* Mr E. F. Johnston and Miss S. Murray; *Hon. Secretary* Mr E. F. Johnston; *Hon. Treasurer* Mr W. A. H. Reid; *Hon. Editor and Librarian* Dr R. L. Mitchell; *Hon. Meets Secretary* Mr G. Ewen. The President announced that Mr K. W. Fraser would be leaving Aberdeen and would not be able to continue as Huts Custodian. It was agreed to leave the appointment of a successor to Mr Fraser to be dealt with by the Committee. (Mrs K. W. Fraser kindly acted as Huts Custodian until Mrs A. A. Graham was appointed by the Committee at their February 1969 meeting.)

At a Special General Meeting preceding the 1968 A.G.M. a resolution was passed amending the Constitution and Rules to increase the Life Membership subscription from 10 guineas to £15.

The *Eighty-first* Annual General Meeting was held on 18 November 1969. Before commencing the business the President, Mr A. C. R. Watt, referred with regret to the deaths of Mr H. Welsh, Hon. President of the Club; Lt.-Col. C. Reid and Mr A. Mutch.

Before the election of office-bearers the President stated that Dr R. L. Mitchell would not be standing for re-election as Editor and Librarian and he thanked Dr Mitchell for his many years of service to the Club both as a committee member and as Editor and Librarian. Office-bearers appointed were: *Hon. President* Col. E. Birnie Reid; *President* Mr A. C. R. Watt; *Vice-Presidents* Miss S. Murray and Mr J. S. Galloway; *Hon. Secretary* Mr E. F. Johnston; *Hon. Treasurer* Mr W. A. H. Reid; *Hon. Editor and Librarian* Mr D. Hawksworth; *Hon. Meets Secretary* Mr G. Ewen; *Hon. Huts Custodian* Mrs A. A. Graham.

The *Eighty-second* Annual General Meeting, which was held on 25 November 1970, was preceded by a Special General Meeting called to consider a new Club Constitution proposed by the Committee. The new Constitution was adopted with minor amendment.

Before commencing the business of the Annual General Meeting the President, Mr A. C. R. Watt, referred with regret to the deaths of Mr J. W. Milne and Mr G. Roberts.

A proposal from the Committee that subscriptions be increased was put to the meeting and, after amendment, it was decided that for the year commencing 1 October 1971 annual subscriptions would be, members over age 21, £2, or they may commute the subscription by a single payment of £20;

members under age 21, £1; members residing outwith a 50-mile radius of Aberdeen, £1.

Mr Watt, on behalf of the Committee, proposed that Lt.-Col. H. J. Butchart and Dr R. L. Mitchell be elected Honorary Members of the Club. Tribute was paid to the long service rendered to the Club by both and they were unanimously elected to Honorary Membership.

Office-bearers appointed were: *Hon. President* Col. E. Birnie Reid; *President* Miss S. Murray; *Vice-Presidents* Mr J. S. Galloway and Dr S. A. B. Black; *Secretary* Mr E. F. Johnston; *Treasurer* Mr W. A. H. Reid; *Editor* Mr D. Hawksworth; *Librarian* Miss J. A. Callander; *Meets Secretary* Mr G. Ewen; *Huts Custodian* Mr P. F. Howgate; *Indoor Meets Secretary* Mr J. S. Galloway.

At the close of the meeting Mr Watt was thanked for all he had accomplished during his term as President and particularly for the preparatory work he had undertaken in revising the Club Constitution.

ANNUAL DINNERS

The 1968 and 1969 Dinners were held in the Caledonian Hotel on a Saturday in November. The 1970 Dinner saw a departure from tradition in that the Dinner was held in the Northern Hotel for the first time. The excellent speakers at these Dinners were:

1968 John E. M. Duff: Mountain rescue in the Rockies and the Cairngorms

1969 Tom Weir: Climbing in Scotland

1970 Miss Esme Murray Speakman: The Ladies' Scottish Climbing Club Expedition to Greenland 1970

The 1970 Dinner was an historic occasion for two main reasons. The first was the change of venue already mentioned. The second was the appearance on the scene of our first Lady President. Miss Sheila Murray presided at the Dinner with the charm and efficiency that she has since brought to the chairing of Club meetings. It seems astonishing that, in this age of emancipation, the Club has not before elected a lady as President, but I think that all Club members are genuinely delighted that this state of affairs has at last been remedied.

MEETS AND EXCURSIONS 1968-70

The chief problem in organising excursions is that of providing seats, for all who wish to attend, at an economic rate. Often, the bus is not filled to capacity but, on several occasions, the number booking has exceeded forty-one by a dozen or so and a second bus has been engaged. Too often the surplus dozen is reduced by late cancellations to around eight - an uneconomic figure. In 1968 and 1969 we provided three seats for every two people; in 1970 the ratio of seats provided over the year to seats occupied was 1.12 to 1, a step nearer the ideal, achieved by engaging mini-buses, which, though relatively expensive to hire, prove more economic than sparsely filled second buses. The mini-bus is not necessarily wholly responsible for the improved ratio; probably other random factors enter. The greatest loss sustained on any one excursion occurred

in May 1970 (Ben Wyvis), when we were nearly £16 down, an unacceptable figure. The loss occurred partly because we had engaged a mini-bus, which was only sparsely filled, five having failed to turn up. (There were other factors – e.g. a large number of Junior Members carried at half-fare.) Some future Club historian may be a little puzzled by the figures for April 1969 when forty-eight people shared forty-one seats. He might search long for the explanation. The two-tier post was introduced at this time, and some letters were delayed, with the result that forty-eight people turned up, all thinking I had received their bookings. Since then I have advised booking by telephone.

I have noted the number attending on each date, hoping that this would provide some clue to the kind of excursion most favoured by members. I am not sure that anything conclusive emerges, but obviously the Ladder Hills and Mount Battock occupy a low place while, curiously, the Correen Hills attracted forty-one and Lochnagar, erstwhile favourite outing, failed to attract (twice) in 1968. The Monega Pass attracted sixty-one, yet, on a previous occasion the Monega excursion had to be cancelled for lack of support.

Only one excursion, to Glen Clunie in February 1969, was cancelled, the reason being very bad road conditions in the Aberdeen area and, on police advice not to travel unless the journey was really necessary, the decision was taken to cancel the excursion. In terms of achievement the poorest excursion was Lochnagar (February 1970) where no party reached the top – not surprisingly, since it was such a day that one donned a cagoule before going from the bus as far as the boot. One considerable ‘day’ fell to a South African colleague-guest who, in response to my query: ‘What do you want to do?’ replied: ‘As much as possible.’ I sent him off with Junior Members Patterson and Falconer, who took him over Cairngorm, Cairn Lochan, Ben Macdhui and Derry Cairngorm to the Linn of Dee in some seven hours. He agreed that he had had a good day; I observed him on Monday having some difficulty in mounting the school stair, and, on Friday, he confessed he was still sore. That seems to put his Drakensberg excursions in proper perspective!

The overnight excursion of 1969 produced a little variety for some. The Army was in occupation of Alltbeithe Youth Hostel, where some members had hoped to snatch an hour or two of sleep, but either Lights Out was very late or Reveille very early; the Army was awake, the ‘bar’ was open and a piper entertained us to the Green Hills of Tyrol, an unusual lullaby. The overnight excursion of 1970 demonstrated once again how really tricky it can be to negotiate the broken country of the West Coast in darkness and mist.

The Easter Meet 1969 was held at Achnasheen and was attended by forty people. The weather for once was perfect and many hills were climbed by different parties over a wide area. There was little snow for this time of the year and most of the climbs were without incident. One party, however, required two attempts before they succeeded in climbing Beinn Eighe and certain parts of Beinn Alligin were tricky owing to hard frozen grass on the steep slopes around the summit. Members of the party were particularly pleased with the Ledgowan Hotel.

During the second week of July 1969 a meet was held at Glen Brittle in Skye. It was attended by some twenty-four people, most of whom stayed at the Glen Brittle Memorial Hut or camped at the beach site. The weather during most of the week was very bad, especially during the first three days. Those

who had not visited Glen Brittle before began to have considerable doubts as to the existence of the Cuillins. Owing to the bad weather members spent the first few days in various non-mountaineering activities. On Sunday the hut party went to church at Carbost while those at the camp site spent the day digging drainage ditches. Monday saw quite a large party on the boat at Uig for a day trip to Lewis and Harris. By Wednesday the weather had cleared up considerably and a number of tops were reached by various parties, including Sgurr Alasdair and Sgurr nan Gillean. Unfortunately the unsettled weather returned on Thursday, following a thunderstorm on Wednesday night, and a party who climbed Sgurr na Banachdich reported almost winter conditions on the top although the less adventurous of us, who visited the Old Man of Storr, had a very pleasant day. Most of the party returned to Aberdeen on the Friday, having to wait two hours for the ferry at Kyleakin before making good their escape.

The Easter Meet 1970 was held at the Inchnadamph Hotel in Sutherland. The hotel could not accommodate the complete party, the surplus being accommodated in nearby farmhouses and a caravan, and fed in the hotel. Getting there proved a rather hazardous business, especially for those who were late in leaving Aberdeen on the Thursday, due to a heavy snowstorm north of Inverness. The sudden cold spell obviously caught the hotel staff by surprise and we huddled round a single fire in the hotel that night. Bad weather lasted throughout the meet, but despite this a large number of members climbed the two Munros of the area – Conival and Ben More Assynt. One member had a rather narrow escape on the narrow ridge between the two when a cornice on which he was standing gave way suddenly and he just managed to jump clear in time. A number of the smaller hills in the area were climbed, including Cul Mor, Cul Beag, Canisp and Ben More Coigach. The limestone caves proved an attraction for some as did the Eas Mor waterfall, reputed to be the highest fall in the country.

It would seem that many tend to underestimate, sometimes grossly, the time required for the descent. In the Cairngorms one can almost always complete a descent in a relatively short time; on rougher, steeper, less familiar ground, this is often not the case; add mist, rain, wind and, in the case of the overnight excursion, darkness, and the descent may actually take much longer than the ascent. This was the case on Sgurr a' Mhaoraich and on Lawers, apparently. It is galling to have to stop short of one's objective but, in some circumstances, there is no alternative.

The performance of two junior members (on Ben Lawers) is perhaps worthy of comment. Not surprisingly, in those appalling conditions they went off course, but soon noticed that they were descending a valley running north but which of two such they could not for a time decide. Finally, they noted that the burn turned westward and they concluded, correctly, that they must be in the Fin Glen. When they reached the confluence with the Allt a' Chobhair they were sure of their location, reversed their route up the main stream, crossed the col to Coire Odhar and descended to the car park, retrieving the situation in a most commendable manner. They should be acquiring confidence in their map reading.

We have been unfortunate as regards weather over the past few months, with only one or two really good days. The Lochnagar outing provided con-

ditions similar to those encountered on Ben Lawers; but the sun shone for one member who had a brief encounter with Royalty! If there is anything in the Law of Averages we should have a run of perfect weather for the rest of the year.

G.E.

Post Script, May 1971. And so it turned out! We have had eight consecutive good-weather excursions, since the Ben Avon outing, followed by an almost summery Easter Meet (again held at the Ledgowan Hotel, Achnasheen) – a near record, surely. The hills carried even less snow this Easter than in 1969, with the result that three parties were persuaded to include Liathach among their objectives, while one of the forty-seven who attended the meet climbed twelve Munros in the period, including those ultra-remote hills, Lurg Mhor and Bidein a Choire Sheasgaich.

G.E.

EXCURSIONS

1968

- 21 Jan. Lochnagar (29)
- 11 Feb. Glen Clunie (35)
- 3 Mar. Lochnagar (26)
- 24 Mar. Beinn a Bhuird (35)
- 5 May Glen Doll (31)
- 26 May Ben Lawers (30)
- Midsummer. Kingshouse to Loch Tulla (35)
- 8 Sept. Cairngorm (34)
- 5 Oct. Jock's Road (38)
- 27 Oct. Cairnwell to Inverey (49)
- 17 Nov. Ben Rinnes (44)
- 8 Dec. Clachnaben (39)

1969

- 12 Jan. Lochnagar (44)
- 9 Mar. Beinn a Bhuird (43)
- 27 Apr. Mount Keen (48)
- 17 May Beinn a' Ghlo (39)
- 8 June Loch Morlich to Tomintoul (30)
- Midsummer. Affric to Bridge of Croe (51)
- 7 Sept. Coylum Bridge to Linn of Dee (41)
- 4 Oct. Lochnagar (55)
- 26 Oct. Monega Pass (61)
- 15 Nov. Morven (41)
- 7 Dec. Correen Hills (41)

1970

- 10 Jan. Mount Battock (29)
- 1 Feb. Lochnagar (42)

1970

- 21 Feb. Glen Clunie (31)
- 15 Mar. Ladder Hills (27)
- 26 Apr. Glen Clova to Glen Isla (41)
- 16 May Ben Wyvis (47)
- 7 June Glen Feshie (50)
- Midsummer. Quoich Bridge to Glen Shiel (40)
- 30 Aug. Ben Lawers (33)
- 20 Sept. Lochnagar (39)
- 18 Oct. Ben Avon (55)
- 7 Nov. Auchallater to Glen Muick (41)
- 22 Nov. Corryhabbie (37)
- 13 Dec. Bennachie (40)

1971

- 10 Jan. Glen Clunie (38)
- 30 Jan. Lochnagar (56)
- 21 Feb. Beinn a Bhuird (62)
- 14 Mar. Glas Tulaichean (45)
- 25 Apr. Auchallater (37)
- 16 May Glen Lyon (41)
- 5 June Cairngorm to Linn of Dee (57)
- 26/27 June Kinlochleven to Glen Nevis (42)
- 22 Aug. Bynack More (33)

EASTER MEETS

- 1968 Laggan Inn
- 1969 Achnasheen
- 1970 Inchnadamph
- 1971 Achnasheen