

Muir of Inverey

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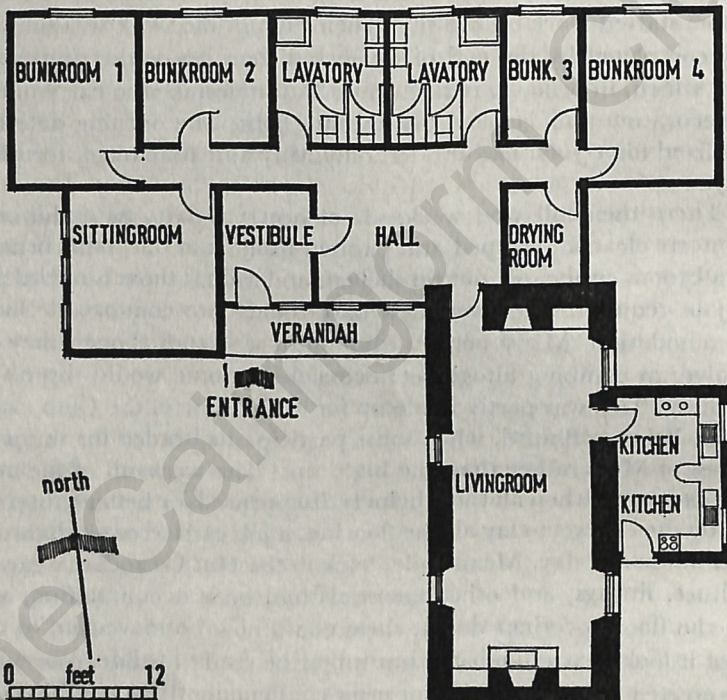
The notes in the last issue of the *Journal* reported on the agreement to purchase Muir, and gave a preliminary account of the alterations which would be made to increase its accommodation. Much of 1971 was taken up in preparing plans, and in obtaining official approvals and tenders. It was not until the beginning of November that contractors started work on the site. Their part of the work was substantially completed by the end of April, but then it was the turn of the Club, which, in order to reduce costs, had undertaken to carry out all the decorating and some of the finishing jobs. The opening date had been fixed for 1 July, and this left only May and June to get the place ready.

There then followed weekends of hectic activity as enthusiastic volunteers cleaned, scraped and painted inside and out, built benches and a broom cupboard, put up shelves, and did all those hundred and one jobs required to convert new bare rooms into comfortable living accommodation. Many helpers came each weekend, though they did not give up climbing altogether; occasionally some would slip off for an outing. This was partly made up for at the time of the Club excursion to Beinn a'Bhuird, when some participants headed for the paint brushes of Muir rather than the high tops! The weekend of the overnight excursion when all these helpers disappeared for better things was used by the experts to lay all the flooring, a job carried out at lightning speed inside one day. Meanwhile, back in the Hut Custodian's garage, furniture, fittings, and other materials had been accumulating, and, with the floor coverings down, these could now be moved in, so that at last it looked as though the hut might be ready in time. The bunks were erected—more of an engineering construction than anything else, curtains made and hung, and two stalwart members built the stone-flagged path to the front door, in spite of the rain. Even on the morning of the opening, there were last-minute jobs to be completed before the workers could lay down their tools, clean up, and present themselves, neat and tidy, for the Grand Opening Ceremony.

The alterations have been designed to provide simple but comfortable accommodation for 18 persons in a building which would be easy to maintain and convenient to use.

The wooden annexe which housed a dormitory has been demolished, and the partition in the main building which separated off

another bedroom has been taken down. All the bedrooms are now in the new extension, along with the washrooms, a drying room, and a small common room. To provide sufficient living area for the increased numbers, the whole of the main building is devoted to a dining/common room, and the fireplace there moved to the opposite end of the room. The whole of what was the scullery and bathroom has been gutted and made into a kitchen. The main entrance is now in the new extension, and leads into a vestibule, and then into a large hall.



Plan of Hut

The new building is a timber construction formed of logs, pressure treated with preservatives to resist attack by fungus and insects, and shaped so they interlock to give a weathertight seal. The material is cut to size according to the architects' plans at the contractors' works in Innerleithen, and assembled at the site on a prepared platform. Compared with traditional methods of construction, this prefabrication technique simplified some of the problems of building at a somewhat remote place like Inverey, and shortened the length of time the

hut was out of action. Inside surfaces have been left in a natural state, but the exterior has been stained dark brown to blend with the surrounding trees. The original stone building has been finished outside with white stone paint, with the result that the complete structure has a very pleasing appearance, and is entirely in character with both its surroundings and its function.

The four bedrooms will hold 6, 6, 4 and 2 persons, an arrangement which permits a great deal of flexibility in allocating rooms to different parties. The rooms have double-tiered bunks, constructed of canvas slung between galvanised steel tubing fixed to the walls. The washrooms have shower cubicles and electric shaving points, and, though this latter facility may seem odd in the one labelled 'women', the rooms were made identical so that large parties of one sex could use them both. Furniture has been bought, or, in the case of the dining tables, made, in natural wood styles to suit the building. The floors in the vestibule, hall, and corridors are concrete slabs, but in all other rooms are covered in vinyl tiles or sheeting, a surface that is hard wearing and needs little upkeep. There are electric heaters in the bedrooms and the small common room. Cooking, water heating, clothes drying, and frost protection of the plumbing system are also serviced by mains electricity, the supply having been augmented to cope with the increased load.

At the time of writing, the 'new' Muir has been in use for six months, and all visitors have praised the building and its facilities. The Club now has a fine hut ideally suited to the needs of climbers, and the credit for this must go to a succession of Hut sub-committees who carefully considered the sort of accommodation required by the Club, and to the architects, George Bennett, Mitchell & Son, who planned and supervised the alterations. The Club is fortunate in that one of the senior partners in that firm, Jock Lamb, is a member, and took a personal interest in the project. Though there was financial assistance from public bodies, the purchase and improvement of Muir would not have been possible without the Taylor bequest, and a plaque in the main living room acknowledges his generosity.



Muir of Inverey, Official Opening

2/ The reconstructed Club hut was officially opened on Saturday, 1 July 1973 by the Hon. President, Col. E. Birnie Reid, in the presence of over 100 members and guests, including Captain Alexander Ramsay of Mar, Councillor George Collie representing Aberdeen Town Council, Mr John L. Russell representing Aberdeen County Council, and a cousin of the late Dr George Taylor, Mrs M. McKenzie of Nethybridge accompanied by her husband.





Left to Right - R. Scott; Mrs J. L. Russell; J. L. Russell (Representing Aberdeen County Council); Councillor G. Collie (Representing Aberdeen Town Council); Col. E. Birnie Reid, Hon. President; Miss Sheila Murray, President; Capt. Alexander Ramsay of Mar, Mr and Mrs MacKenzie, E. F. Johnston, Secretary; Major Cheyne, Factor, Mar Estates.

[photo by Joan Johnston]



[photo by P. F. Howgate]