

## MOUNTAIN ACCIDENTS – GRAMPIANS AND CAIRNGORMS

Compiled by JOHN DUFF

- 16/17.5.80 Charles Vincent McHugh (66), Coatbridge, overdue from hill walking in Lairig Ghru. Rescue helicopter found him the following day walking towards Aviemore. Due to exhaustion he had spent the night in Corrour Bothy.
- 26.6.80 John Harkai (40), Aviemore, was launched in his glider aircraft from Feshie Bridge Airstrip. He got lost in low cloud and eventually crash landed near the mouth of Glen Geusachan. Not knowing his whereabouts, he stayed with his aircraft until located and airlifted out by helicopter uninjured.
- 21.7.80 Alan Morton (47), Essex, sustained a heart attack while walking with his family towards summit of Cairngorm. He was evacuated by helicopter to hospital where he later died.
- 23.7.80 James Muirhead (33), Skene, and Derek New (13), Currie, left Spittal of Glenmuick for Glen Doll Youth Hostel via summit of Lochnagar. On reaching summit of Lochnagar were engulfed in mist and became lost. New fell 100 feet on wet slab rock in North West Corrie and was seriously injured. Evacuated by helicopter to hospital in Aberdeen.
- 6.8.80 George May (58), Kent, was hillwalking with a party of scouts when he tripped and fell near Loch Avon, and broke his ankle. Evacuated by stretcher.
- 6.8.80 A party of four Venture Scouts set off from the Cairngorm Ski Slopes to walk to Corrour Bothy via Chalamain Gap. After getting soaked by rain one of the party was falling behind and complaining of chest pains. On reaching the point where the Lairig Ghru path crosses the Allt a' Choire Mhor burn the youth was unable to continue. Evacuated by Argo Cat and made good recovery.
- 7.8.80 Graham Wilson (19), Gillingham, was on a climbing exercise with a scout group on Creag Bheag, Kingussie when he slipped and fell, dislocating his right knee.
- 31.8.80 One of a party of three males became cragfast while scrambling in Raeburn's Gully, Lochnagar. Rescue Teams alerted but man found own way off before their arrival.
- 1.11.80 Christopher Paul Harvey (16), Glenrothes, went hill walking in the Cairngorms. He arrived at the Scottish Ski Club Hut, Cairngorm in an exhausted condition. After examination by a doctor he was allowed home.

- 23.11.80 Dougal Bannerman (19), Portlethen, along with a group of others was cycling over the Capel Mounth from Glen Doll to Spittal of Glenmuick when he went into soft ground and fell off. He received a small gash to his forehead and complained of neck and chest pains, especially when walking. He continued to Spittal of Glenmuick and was thereafter taken to hospital in Aberdeen, where it was found he had a fracture to the top of his neck.
- 31.12.80 Neil Adrian Bailey (22), Blackpool, collapsed and died from hypothermia while hill walking with two companions in the Lairig Ghru.
- 18.1.81 Three of a party of 30 members of St. Andrew's University Mountaineering Club left Spittal of Glenshee Hotel to walk up Allt Ghlean Thaitneach and down Glen Baddoch. They missed Glen Baddoch and eventually landed in the head of Glen Ey. Because of this they were unable to meet the rest of their party at the appointed hour and were reported missing. They were eventually traced safe and well, although tired, in Glen Ey near Inverey.
- 27.1.81 Orange flare reported seen in direction of Coire an Lochain/Lairig Ghru area. Area searched but nothing found.
- 21.2.81 Three men, were climbing Parallel Gully 'A' in the Coire of Lochnagar. They were roped together and the lead climber was about 50 feet above the other two and about 300 feet above the bottom of the climb. A wind slab avalanche missed the lead climber but hit the other two knocking them off the face. The lead climber held them both but not before they had fallen 100 feet and 240 respectively. One of them, William Wilson (32), Glasgow, was knocked unconscious and was eventually airlifted to hospital in Aberdeen suffering from a broken clavicle, collapsed left lung and severe body bruising. The other two escaped unhurt.
- 3.3.81 Thomas Washington (15), Forres, with two companions, who were climbing in Winter Corrie of Driesh, Glen Doll, fell a short distance while belayed by rope and landed awkwardly, breaking left tibia and fibula. Rescue Teams made their way to Glen Doll in difficult road conditions due to snow. The casualty, who was being sheltered under a big rock by his companions, was stretchered off the hill during the night and taken to Dundee Royal Infirmary.
- 15.4.81 Robert Alexander Wilson (38), and his son Keith (11) went hill walking on Creag Ruadh, Newtonmore. About 100 feet

- below the summit of the hill they found themselves unable to move with safety in any direction. They succeeded in attracting the attention of a local man and were subsequently led to safety.
- 29.4.81 Patrick Hanrahan (30), Glasgow while in charge of a party of youths hillwalking on Carn-an-Sgliat, Braemar, stumbled on a tree root. He was unable to walk. After being examined by a local doctor was found to have damaged a cartilage in his right knee. Declined hospital treatment until he returned to Glasgow the following day.
- 30.4.81 to 31.5.81 David John Deneau (23), a sergeant in the United States Air Force, stationed at Lakenheath, Suffolk, travelled by car to Ballater where he abandoned it in a car park. He then laid a false trail indicating that he was going hillwalking in the Lochnagar area. He was subsequently reported missing by a girl friend and rescue teams were called out and searched the area for four days before the search was called off because it became doubtful if he was in fact missing. In early June, 1981 Deneau was arrested in the United States of America as a deserter. As a result of this a total of 3537 man hours were spent searching for him, not including the time of a helicopter and crew over three days.
- 24.5.81 Alexander Pithie (70), Aberdeen, slipped and fell while descending into head of Glen Callater by 'Jock's Road' and broke his leg. Evacuated by stretcher.
- 28/29.5.81 Christian Eichhorn (37), a German visitor in Braemar, set out for Ben MacDui. He intended returning to Derry Lodge via Loch Etchachan. He got lost and landed at Loch Avon and not knowing where he was, followed the valley, eventually coming out at Tomintoul, one day later. He was none the worse of his ordeal.
- 2.6.81 Linda Elliott (38), Arbroath, one of a party of five on a walk from Aviemore to the Linn of Dee via the Lairig Ghru, was suffering from exhaustion and exposure on reaching Derry Lodge. Party evacuated to Braemar.
- 7.6.81 Steven Leith (15), became separated from his party while walking on Ben Avon. He began to panic and increased his pace in an effort to find his party but in doing so stumbled on a stone and badly sprained his right ankle. He attracted attention by blowing his whistle. He was assisted downhill by members of his party until met by rescue teams and later conveyed to hospital in Aberdeen.

- 9.6.81 Three boys taking part in a three day 'Duke of Edinburgh Silver Award Scheme' in the Cairngorms, became ill after cooking and eating frozen sausages on the first night. By the following morning, two had recovered but the third had to be assisted to Derry Lodge from where they telephoned for assistance. He was conveyed to Braemar and an examination by local doctor found to be suffering from gastro-enteritis and a chill.
- 24.6.81 Harold Holland (30), became separated from his three companions while walking between Glas Maol and Cairn of Claise in poor visibility. On failing to return to the party's car at the Cairnwell, Holland was reported missing. Found safe and well at Tulchan Lodge by rescuers about 0235 hrs the following morning.
- 24.6.81 James Reid (15), Aberdeen, along with three companions and a teacher, were descending off Cnap a' Chleirich, when Reid fell among scree and broke his left leg. Evacuated by stretcher and Argo Cat.
- 27.6.81 Richard Eggleston (26), was hang gliding in the Cairnwell area when on attempting to land, the wing tip of the glider touched the ground causing it to spin round and crash nose first. As a result Eggleston was knocked unconscious and broke his left arm. Carried down by stretcher and thereafter taken to hospital in Aberdeen.
- 18.7.81 James McPherson (50), accompanied by a male and two female companions embarked on a walk from Glenmore Lodge to Inverey, via Strath Nethy and the Lairig an Laoigh. McPherson became ill near Fords of Avon but continued slowly while females went on ahead to Derry Lodge to call for assistance. Found by rescue team near head of Glen Derry, suffering from the effects of a cold and exhaustion.
- 20.7.81 Alexander Benzie (27), and five companions were on a walk from Coylumbridge to Linn of Dee, via Lairig Ghru. On reaching the Luibeg Burn at GR 014939 Benzie started crossing it on his hands and knees. In mid stream his hand slipped off a stone and he fell head first against the stone. He was rendered unconscious and rolled over, face down into shallow water. He was pulled out by his companions and eventually evacuated by helicopter to hospital in Aberdeen suffering from concussion and a broken nose.
- 30.7.81 Two girls went walking on Sgor Dubh, near Luibeg, Braemar and became separated. One girl returned to Luibeg

and after waiting some hours reported her friend missing. Rescue teams were called out but the girl returned to Luibeg safe and well before a search got under way.

8.8.81 John Michael Robbins (30), Mitcham, while hill walking on Ben MacDhui with three companions slipped and fell down a slope for a distance of about 20 feet. As a result he injured his right ankle and was unable to walk. Conveyed by helicopter to Raigmore Hospital, Inverness.

16.8.81 Roy Irvine Tait (45), fell to his death while climbing, unroped and leading two companions on final pitch of Black Spout Buttress in North East Coire of Lochnagar. Died instantly.

19/20.9.81 Brett Newsome (33), Edzell reported overdue on walk from Linn of Dee to Achlene, Kingussie. Was held up because burns were in heavy spate but eventually arrived 12 hours late, safe and well. NOTE: It was considered by Rescue team members that the River Feshie had risen about 10 feet that day (19th).

29.9.81 Lynn Hammond (15), Glasgow walking with a party from Blair Athol to Aviemore, was uplifted by helicopter suffering from hypothermia and conveyed to Raigmore Hospital, Inverness.

2.10.81 A party of five officers and four potential officers from Glencorse Barracks, Penicuik, were on a walking exercise from Blair Athol to Aviemore via Glen Tilt and Lairig Ghru. On the second day the party reached a point in the Lairig Ghru just north of Corrour Bothy when Bruce Hobson (19), collapsed from exhaustion and exposure. He was carried to Corrour Bothy where after being given dry clothing he was able to walk back to Derry Lodge. In the meantime two of his party had continued to Aviemore to raise the alarm.

4.10.81 A party of Aberdeen hillwalkers were traversing Jock's Road to Glen Clova where a female injured her ankle. She was helped off the hill by companions.

4.10.81 Two couples arranged to hike from Glen Clova and Lochlee, Glensik respectively and to meet on high ground midway to exchange car keys. Due to poor visibility and bad weather both couples had eventually to turn back. One couple became overdue, but managed to return to Lochlee in darkness prior to deployment of rescue teams.

- 8.11.81 Hillwalkers Robert Murray (41), Wormit, Peter Clese (53), and Norman McLeod (56), both St Andrew's, failed to return to their car at Glen Doll after leaving to hike out Jock's Road in mild weather, but deteriorating visibility. A search commenced at first light 9.11.81 covering a large area west of Jock's Road towards Glen Prosen and Glenisla. The three men turned up at Tulchan Lodge, Glenisla, in clearer weather, just after midday. They were uplifted by helicopter and brought back to Glen Doll, exhausted but not requiring medical attention. They had become lost and spent the night in a space blanket.
- 20.11.81 Stewart Young (23), and Ewan Fleming, both Dundee, were hiking from Braemar over Jock's Road to Glen Clova when about 1600 hrs same date, they stopped to rest at Davy's Bothy at the head of Glen Doll. Fleming continued after a short time, but left Young to come down after further rest. Young failed to arrive and his companion and others retraced most of the route towards the bothy, without finding him. The weather was mild and it was assumed that Young, who was well equipped, had fallen asleep. Searchers went out to search bothy area at first light 21.11.81, and met Young walking down the track fit and well. He had lost the lenses from his spectacles and had been unable to see well enough to continue his journey in darkness the previous day.
- 13/14.12.81 Ruairidh Smith (24), Aboyne and Ronald Wood (29), Aberdeen, reported overdue after climbing in North East Coire of Lochnagar. The following morning they were located by Rescue Teams safe and well, trying to make their way down from the Coire in blizzard conditions. As they were located a second pair, Gordon Clark (19), Arbroath, and John Fleming (19), Blairgowrie, were also reported missing in the same area. Within half an hour they too were located safe and well, trying to make their own way down to safety.
- 23.12.81 White flare reported in Strathnethy area, Cairngorm by party of hill walkers. Area searched but nothing found.
- 30.12.81 Peter Robinson (18), Chatham, died from exhaustion while on a climb in Hells Lum Crag, Cairngorm. One of his companions received slight injury after falling from the top.
- 13/21.1.82 Dr Kenneth MacRae (41), Penicuik, Midlothian left home to go hiking alone in Glen Tilt area of Blair Atholl, intending to climb Benn a' Ghlo and 'Munros' west of Glen Tilt,

- but failed to return on 17.1.82. His car was found at a farm in Glen Tilt late on 18.1.82 and a full scale search began from first light 19.1.82. Search was hampered by poor visibility and deep snow on the hills. Helicopters were able to assist on 21.1.82 and MacRae was found dead by ground searchers. He was covered by snow on the steep north west face of Meall a' Mhurich, Glen Tilt and appeared to have been involved in, or caused, a minor avalanche while descending. Body was evacuated by helicopter.
- 26.1.82 Party of three R.A.F. men reported overdue on hillwalking exercise to Ben MacDui from Linn of Dee. Took wrong turning at Luibeg Bridge, taking route back to Linn of Dee via the White Bridge in blizzard conditions.
- 13.2.82 About midday Christine Smith (42), Dundee, was climbing the snow covered 'Easy Gully' in Winter Corrie of Driesh, Glen Clova, accompanied by four companions, two of whom had just completed the climb. The party had no ropes and Smith slipped and fell 100 ft breaking her left wrist and ankle. Mountain Rescue Teams were called out along with a helicopter from R.A.F. Leuchars. After several attempts in strong winds, Smith was able to be winched aboard and flown to Ninewells Hospital, Dundee.
- 24.2.82 Alan Catney (25), Banchory, fell from second pitch of snow and ice climb of West Gully, North East Coire of Lochnagar and broke right fibula. Evacuated by stretcher and thereafter R.A.F. helicopter.
- 27.2.82 David Wood (23), and David Woodman (23), both Aberdeen, were climbing Raeburn's Gully, North East Coire of Lochnagar. Wood leading, reached the large cornice at the top and in negotiating it the snow gave way and he fell dragging Woodman off with him. They fell about 500 ft to bottom of gully. Wood was evacuated by stretcher to a snow vehicle and thereafter by ambulance to hospital suffering from broken ribs, bruised left ankle and abrasions to forehead. Woodman suffered chest bruising and sprained ankle and was able to walk out to awaiting snow vehicle.
- 8.3.82 David Allan (24), Aberdeen, became unwell after three day expedition with two companions. Evacuated from Luibeg Bothy to Braemar suffering from exhaustion and severe headaches.
- 8.4.82 Colin Coulling (41), Greenford, became overdue on walk from Cairngorms to Braeriach. A search was commenced and he was found safe and well after staying overnight on

- hill. He was unable to return from his walk due to weather conditions and the fact that he did not carry a compass.
- 18.4.82 Drew Coull (17), Arbroath and a companion arrived at summit of Lochnagar en route for Glen Doll to rock climb. Coull abseiled a short way down West Gully to retrieve a karabiner and sling they had seen from the top. On retrieving the equipment, Coull found he could not climb back up again although the abseil rope was moved to an easier route. After about 3 hours Coull, getting tired decided to climb down unroped. He only got a few steps down when he lost his footing in the snow filled gully and fell a total of 700 feet seriously injuring himself. Coull was wearing trainer shoes. Evacuated by helicopter.
- 9.5.82 Steven Haines (29), Aberdeen, went over his right ankle while walking down Allt Lochan nan Eun Burn, Lochnagar, on uneven boggy ground. Evacuated by R.A.F. helicopter.
- 13.6.82 Dr John Calder (27), and Doreen Hutcheson (11), both Cults, reported overdue from Club outing to Ben Avon. Arrived safe and well at isolated farm some five hours later. Got lost in poor visibility.
- 14.6.82 Search for a geologist working from a tent at Loch Brandy, Glen Clova when his return was overdue. Man found nearby. False alarm with good intent.
- 16.6.82 Grahame MacDonald (16), and Ian Deuchars (15), Dundee, slipped while descending a steep snow patch without crampons or ice axe. Both sustained slight injuries.
- 6.7.82 Mary Elizabeth Thomson (31), Strathdon, while walking with two friends near Shelter Stone, Cairngorm, slipped on loose scree and fell about 20 feet breaking her left tibia.
- 16.7.82 Jeremy Ian Sinclair (17), Guildford, while rock climbing and abseiling on craig Dhubh, Newtonmore, with five companions, slipped and fell some 60 feet and bounced a further 60 feet on large boulders. He sustained serious head injuries and was conveyed to Foresterhill Hospital, Aberdeen.
- 21.7.82 Olaf Zwar (16), West Germany and three companions left Braemar to walk through Lairig Ghru to Aviemore. On the third day Zwar became unwell near Allt a Choire Mhor Burn where he passed out for a time. Examined at the locus by rescue team doctor and found to be suffering from dehydration and hypoglycaemia. Evacuated by Argo Cat



- vehicle and Landrover to Braemar, where after a night's rest he made a total recovery.
- 14.9.82 Patsy Cumming (52), Innerleithen, slipped on stone while walking near Luibeg Bridge, and broke her right ankle. She hobbled to Derry Lodge where she was picked up by Landrover and was attended by local doctor.
- 4.10.82 Dr Raymond A.W. Ratcliffe (59), Edinburgh became overdue on a walk from Derry Lodge through the Lairig Ghru to Coylumbridge. He was found safe and well within the Sinclair Memorial Hut. Heavy rain had caused him to seek shelter in the hut and nightfall prevented him completing his journey.
- 9.10.82 Brian Crawford Hill (22), Glasgow received severe head injuries and injuries to lower back when he fell and rolled some 70-100 feet in the Lairig Ghru.
- 17.10.82 A party of six Venture Scouts from Dunfermline left Glen Doll at 1330 hrs to walk over Jock's Road, to Auchallater, Braemar. They encountered very heavy rain and cold winds en route and carried heavy packs. Although they carried tents they had no tent poles. On reaching the head of Glen Callater, two 16 years old girls in the party were unable to continue. When located they were found to be wearing only wet sweaters and trousers and sheltering in polythene bivvy bags. Carried out by stretcher. When given a hot bath and dry clothing made a rapid recovery.
- 21.11.82 Maureen Borthwick (25), Culter, on a club outing from Spittal of Glenmuick to Auchallater, Braemar, fell in water en route which slowed down her progress. She was reported overdue by some of her companions but arrived safely at her destination before rescue personnel were called out.
- 10.12.82 Two radio technicians on maintenance work at the Goring Radio Hut Morrone, Braemar, were caught out in whiteout conditions on completion of their work and had to radio for assistance to get off the hill.
- 12.12.82 Three climbers, Jonathan Glover, London, George Corbet (24), Glasgow, and James Armstrong (23), Cumbria, were climbing snow and ice filled Diagonal Gully, in Winter Corrie of Driesh, Glen Clova when Corbet leading the last pitch fell when ice gave way. He was roped to the others who were belayed to a piton on the rock face. The belay failed and all three slid and fell 100 ft. Glover, who had lost his helmet during the climb landed on rocks sustaining

- multiple injuries which proved fatal. Corbet and Armstrong landed on snow, the former sustaining minor injuries and shock and the latter sustaining a broken ankle. Nearby off duty Marines, who were hillwalking, raised the alarm. Mountain Rescue Teams were called out and two helicopters from R.A.F. Leuchars were scrambled. Although darkness was falling, the conditions were calm and the first helicopter was able to winch Glover aboard. The second helicopter edged towards the locus in darkness by its searchlight and successfully uplifted Corbet and Armstrong. All the casualties were flown to Ninewells Hospital, Dundee.
- 22.12.82 Patrick Temperal (18), and Paul Kane (17), both Port Glasgow, reported overdue from 1 day walk in to the Shelter Stone from Aviemore. Weather closed in and unable to continue. They made a hole in snow in which they spent the night. Both picked up the following morning by helicopter in Coire Domhain suffering from hypothermia.
- 31.12.82 Robin James Hall (25), Gateshead, was fatally injured when he fell about 300 feet while descending a snow and ice slope in Coire Brochain, Braeriach.
- 2.1.83 Ken Fryer (20), R.A.F., Lossiemouth, slipped and fell whilst walking up Fiacaill Ridge Coire an-t-Sneachda and dislocated his right knee. Conveyed to Raigmore Hospital, Inverness.
- 6.1.83 Ian James Bennet (18), and Simon Christopher Miskell (18), Chester-le-Street, Co Durham, were climbing on Ben McDhui intending to camp when darkness fell. They dug a snow hole which collapsed during the night and both men were soaked through. At first light they made for the Sinclair hut, arriving very weakened. Other climbers made them comfortable and sought help. Uplifted by helicopter and detained overnight in hospital suffering from frost bite and minor cuts.
- 12.01.83 Christopher Keith Braer (22), Gwynedd was walking down slope in Coire an t-Sneachda, Cairngorm with crampons, when he went over on his left ankle breaking it and tearing ligaments.
- 23.1.83 Edward Thomson (32), Glasgow, slipped and slid approximately 60 ft into boulder field while climbing 35° ice slope in Coire an-t-Sneachda. Airlifted direct to Raigmore Hospital, Inverness.

*FOOTNOTE – The Editor is grateful to John Duff, BEM, of the Grampian Police Force for compiling the above list. John Duff acknowledges the assistance and information received from the Grampian Police Force, Tayside Police Force and the Northern Constabulary and mentions that apart from the Police Teams the Rescue Teams usually involved in Cairngorms rescues are:*

*R.A.F. Leuchars and Kinloss*

*Search and Rescue Dog Association*

*Aberdeen, Braemar, Cairngorm, Glenmore Lodge, Gordonstoun School and Tayside Mountain Rescue Teams*

*Helicopters from R.A.F. Leuchars and Lossiemouth*

