

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB

GENERAL MEETINGS

The Ninety-eighth Annual General Meeting was held on 26 November 1986. The office bearers appointed were Hon. President Ralph Gerstenberg, President Anne Cordiner, Vice-Presidents Eddie Martin and Gillian Shirreffs, Secretary Richard Shirreffs, Treasurer Alex Matthewson, Editor Antony Chessell, Librarian Peter Ward, Huts Custodian Eddie Martin, Meets Secretary Graham Ewen and Indoor Meets Secretary Neil Cromar. Tributes were paid to the retiring Treasurer Sandy Reid and retiring Librarian Jean Callander both of whom had served the Club in those offices for many years.

On the same evening a Special General Meeting approved an amendment to the constitution whereby there would no longer be a fixed lower age limit for ordinary membership and the sole criterion would be experience and ability on the hills.

The Ninety-ninth Annual General Meeting was held on 25 November 1987. All of the office bearers appointed the previous year were re-appointed.

ANNUAL DINNERS

The 1986 Annual Dinner was held at the Stakis Tree Tops Hotel, Aberdeen, and the guest speaker, Louis Kass, gave a talk, illustrated with slides and sound, entitled 'Expedition to the Andes'.

The 1987 Dinner, which was the Centenary Dinner, was also held at the Stakis Tree Tops Hotel, Aberdeen. Amongst other special guests Tom Weir was principal guest and proposed the toast to the Club.

At the 1987 Centenary Dinner, the President, Miss Anne F.G. Cordiner called upon the special guest of the evening, Tom Weir, M.B.E., to propose the toast 'The Cairngorm Club', but before doing so, addressed the company in the following terms - Editor:

Guests, Ladies & Gentlemen of heroic spirit, once again welcome to this our most formal event of the Cairngorm Club year and I can only hope at this stage that you are well wined and dined and are therefore prepared to sit back for a little while which I can assure you will assist your digestive processes. It is not given to many individuals nor indeed to all organisations to reach and celebrate their Centenary and thus although this is not our one hundredth dinner we felt that we could scarcely not make our Centenary the focus of tonight. At the Club's first formal dinner in 1890, the Club had grown to 100 and as I look round at you all tonight I cannot fail to be impressed and think that we have reached this great age in a remarkable state of fitness and reasonable health although I admit that some of us are a lot fitter than others, or should I say that some of us are a lot less fit than others, but one hundred years on we have added a good many to our membership for we now number the magical size of 399 if not the actual 400. While I have been a member of the Club which is now for quite a few years, I have always marvelled at the wonderful mix of human nature that is the Cairngorm Club and to me this has always been one of the happiest aspects of the Club.

I know in the early days it was usually only professional people that had the leisure and the money to go to the hills and do their own thing there, but nowadays we don't consider that we are in the least bit snobbish — we embrace a wide spectrum of the human race who share our love of the hills. Many professions are represented though I

do agree we doubtless have more than our fair share of lawyers and doctors but we have some very brilliant academics in our ranks and also thank goodness we have very many practical folk as well. We all have talents and we all have handicaps and if you are wondering where I am leading with all this, it is simply that in a big club like this we need and we can put to good use all those talents and I think this year of our centenary, has seen them harnessed as never before. All your office bearers and your Committee in the Club are volunteers and while I do not usually mention people by name on a night like this, they have this year had some exceptionally hard work to do and, I would just like to recall some of their accomplishments as the year has gone by, and the more so because, as President, I found them all working very vigorously, very enthusiastically, very unselfishly and in whatever has been asked of them they have been unfailingly cheerful in the Club's interests. I'll endeavour to start at the beginning. Without our volume of the Club history, which many of you now will have seen, of which I believe there maybe some copies here tonight if you have not yet bought one, everything else really would have fallen a little flat — it really was the keystone of many of our activities and it can have been no easy task to sort out fact from fiction and hearsay. Sheila worked hard on it for three years at least and I believe that it has been a very great success. They do say Sheila, that the first book that you publish is the worst so I don't know whether you have got any more ambitions or whether any of your friends in the Club have yet thought up any other subject for you but you have worked so long and so hard that the Committee and members of the Club would like to give you a small token of their appreciation — we have here for Sheila some more of the Club glasses engraved with the Club Coat of Arms which we hope Sheila will be happy to accept from us (Applause and Presentation). I am not suggesting that Sheila is a whisky drinker and we have not given her what goes in to them; perhaps some of her friends will do that.

There has been a great deal of paper work to be attended to this year and many extra-long meetings which had to be recorded and our hard-working Secretary, Richard Shirreffs has worked really hard this year.

Muir of Inverey was the focus of our Midsummer Jollity and it received a great deal of preparation. Certainly it was scrubbed down and it was painted up, inside and outside and it had various new fittings installed and it generally had a spring clean such as I think it has never had since it was opened, and all that was masterminded by our hard-working Huts Custodian and Vice-President, Eddie Martin.

Strangely enough our Indoor Meets Secretary does also get around out-of-doors as well and Neil Cromar was very ably assisted and abetted by Robbie Middleton a member of the Club and between them they did nearly all of the organising of the Champagne Buffet and Barbecue which many of you had the pleasure of attending and indeed as you saw if you were there they did much of the actual pouring and much of the cooking on the day in question and they had very many willing helpers among the guests here tonight.

We also owe the delightful sketches in Sheila's history at the end of some of the chapters to another member who unfortunately is not with us tonight, Ian Strachan and we were very pleased to see them there.

The incredibly fine and detailed work in the Scroll to mark our Centenary, (and there are some at the far end of the room which some of you have probably already observed) was done by Norman Shepherd and if you want further proof of his work, it's with you tonight on the table, in the form of the menu — thank you Norman.

And then there were various other things which celebrated the Club's Centenary; there were the glasses with the Coat of Arms on them; there were enamels and brooches which some of you are wearing tonight and there were some badges which I have obtained now for Past Presidents and these were solicitously helped along by Michael Carry, so we were very pleased to have them.

We had a display in James Dun's House in July and August and that was organised

by our very busy Treasurer, Alex Mathewson, and perhaps it was the type of Summer we had, I don't know, but the art gallery staff tell us that a good many people showed a great deal of interest in that display. Some small part of it is at the far end for you to look at later on.

And then of course all those photographs down there as you know now, were organised by Peter Ward, so if you want copies then you can see him afterwards. The list of people involved has really been endless and I am not going to go right through it or I would be here most of the night, so forgive me if you haven't been named, but to our bakers of cakes and our huskers of strawberries and our whippers of cream and decorators of salmon and our makers of that humble cup of tea that kept us all going, our most sincere thanks.

We also had the help of some non-members and we would like Harold to thank his friend Ian Munro, who brought up-to-date the Presidential sketches. I am not entirely certain that I liked his treatment of the lady Presidents but that is very personal. Lt. Col. Craigie Halkett here, very kindly granted us the use of the field adjoining Muir for parking and also saved very many weary feet and allowed the older members of the Club to get to the top of Ben Macdui and to Loch Avon by allowing us the use of some cars up the Derry road and we are very grateful for that. Some of our helpers are indeed unknown to some of us. Fraser Stronach took an army, I think, of Scouts up before the celebrations even started and they carted away a vast amount of rubbish from the Shelter Stone.

I think any organisation that has been around as long as we have has its triumphs and occasionally its tragedies and I think perhaps our History and our Midnight celebrations and buffet and the James Dun's House have been triumphs for us this year. We did unfortunately have a few misfortunes and I hope those members will forgive me if I just mention that I know that on the way home from the celebrations some members had some very expensive accidents to their cars. We were very relieved that none of them were seriously injured in any way, nor did they injure anybody else and I can promise them absolutely, being who they are, we do know that it was not the liquid refreshment that caused the accidents.

We have had our critics also, some who lacking full information were a little bit naughty and rushed into publication without checking their facts. Well that is something for which I guess a Club of this age has a pretty broad back and we can ride it out, but it did make me rather angry that some of those statements which were inaccurate, rebounded very badly on one of our hardest working members in a personal sort of way. On the other hand I suppose there are those who can argue that, alright, our critics certainly didn't remain indifferent to us — there was a response so I guess in a strange sort of way, they flatter us as well — and for our part at least, we are still on speaking terms. If the Cairngorm Club have ably demonstrated their staying power and endurance, perhaps developed a little bit from our proximity with the Granite City and the granite mountains of the Cairngorms, let it also never be accused of a lack of willingness to understand and listen to others. In these modern times there is a great deal of juggling and bandying around and I am sure most of you who read some of the outdoor and the climbing magazines and belong to other organisations know perfectly well that the walkers, the climbers, both the snow and ice variety and the rock climbers, the skiers, the downhill enthusiasts and the cross-country ones, those that want to ride mountain bikes to the top of Ben Macdui and such places, the long distance footpath planners and makers, those who take their hang-gliders to the mountain tops and throw themselves off and those who wish to flourish their four-wheel drive machines around the country, or the motor-cyclists who want to scramble, the conservationists — they are all fighting for their own cause or their own little niche and blame and counter-blame I think is bandied to and fro rather wildly and rather without thought.

I think that it is time that we all need to sit down, get our acts together and decide

what we want to conserve, why we want to conserve it and for whom we want to conserve it. And we need to collect a lot more hard evidence all round, but above all I think that we need to talk; we need to be humble in our demands as we try to thrash out suitable compromises and it will be compromise I have no doubt — and I just say all of this to let people know that we are very aware of what is going on around us; we do know that it will not be easy; we do know that it can't be done in the twinkling of an eye.

But to return to our own Club activities, if I list some of the places which members have been to during the last year, it sounds rather like a travel agent's advert. Last year has seen Cairngorm Club members in Africa, America, Australia, China, Iceland, Russia, Malaya, as well as some of the more usual areas that we consider in Europe, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, France, Crete, Greece and after our members' night, I was struck by the coincidence, having seen another member's slides, that within the last two years, four people in this room tonight, have followed the white dotted line up to the top of Ayer's Rock in Australia and placed the Cairngorm Club names up there. But pride of place tonight must surely go to that very quiet young man, Rick Allen, who has twice now been high on Everest's unclimbed ridge, only to be driven back by the elements. We were very sorry Rick, that you had such an expensive time, not only money-wise but effort-wise and didn't have the satisfaction and the joy of getting to the top, but we are indeed very glad to see you safely back, because we know that it is not an easy task and it is rather a dangerous one, however you shrug it off.

So what do we see as we gaze from our different and many summits? I think that it would be rather presumptuous of me to try and suggest what we see, but do we look back at the past or do we look forward to the future? Can we learn from the lessons of the past and make use of them in the future? But one thing I do know — it is not just the summits that draws so many of us to share this hobby that keeps us in the Club — but it is rather the many small delights that make up the total; the flowers that spring up at our feet; the sparkling, tinkling, running water which sometimes becomes a roaring charging stream; the scudding clouds or the clouds of hailstones that flail us as we fight our way through them; the butterflies, the birds, the insects, the animals, the colours and the scents that we are aware of and I think perhaps many of us appreciate the sense of proportion that the hills always return to us. In the past it has always fallen to the President to propose the toast to the Cairngorm Club, but as I am one of you, it did seem on this very special occasion a little bit, just presumptuous, to toast ourselves in effect. Thus we have asked along tonight, Tom Weir, grand old man of the Scottish hills, to come along and step out of his usual niche of showing us slides and propose the toast to the Club. Tom knows Scotland, its highlands and its lowlands and its many nooks and crannies, I am sure, better than any other person in this land. So Ladies and Gentlemen, I am going to sit down and hand over to Tom —

Tom Weir's address was in his own unique style - Editor:-

Madam President, members of the Club, Guests, well for me it's a very special and Royal occasion and indeed it should have been even more Royal, because Bonnie Prince Charlie and Diana at one time, should have been here and when they couldn't come they said well we'll get the old fellow, he'll do. But I'll tell you this, I think I know why the Aberdeen folk are regarded as careful because your very first dinner held in 1890 cost five bob; there were seven toasts and the next one didn't come until 1920 — beat that if you can! I also like the idea in 1905 — the 'at home' in Kennaway's Rooms — 'Morning Dress 7.30 to 11 o'clock, one lady friend admitted free, one shilling for each extra girl-friend'. The purpose of the meeting I believe was to secure additional members!

Well the first time I saw Cairngorm Club members en-masse was in 1953, and when I heard that it was dress-suit I thought, "my God they must really be behind the

times" and I was very glad that I had a friend exactly the same size as myself — his dress-suit fitted me. Well, I don't remember much about the talk — I know I showed some slides; I had dinner, but the climb next day wasn't done with members of the Cairngorm Club, it was done with Bill Brooker, Mike Taylor — it was a rotten day, there was snow falling and I was led to Eagle Ridge, the noblest ridge in Scotland (didn't J.H.B. Bell say so?) I was wearing vibrams, they were in nails and the sparks were flying literally, I'll tell you — and at the top it was snowing hard and all I could hear was praise of the Cairngorms — these men, 1953; this was the new wave, the men who were opening up the Cairngorms and they were wanting to write a guide book and tell the world things hadn't changed. The good things in life — everybody's got to know them and before time, the last thing you want to see is another person on the mountains, but this is the way climbers have always worked. Now Tom Bourdillon who was on the Everest expedition of 1953, arrived in Aberdeen as I left Aberdeen and he was giving a talk on the climbing of Mount Everest and, what should happen — the following — exactly a week later to Tom Bourdillon; he was taken to Eagle Ridge, by Tom Patey and by jove! Bourdillon ended up by saying — it was the hardest climb he'd ever done in his life, because a foot of powder snow had fallen. And Tom Patey said to me afterwards "You know if I hadn't been up with you the previous weekend, we wouldn't have got up it". He said "I wouldn't have known the route!"

Well it would have been fitting in fact if Diana and her husband had come to this dinner because, think of it, this Club was really formed at the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria, so what could have been better, especially with all the Royal fireworks that have gone on since then. And at the Jubilee dinner (Professor Norman Collie was there) — now, Collie was the man who told the tale of the Fearla Mhor, the Grey Man of Ben Macdhu, but he didn't call it the Grey Man. All he heard as he walked along was a crunch every few steps and there was this other crunch and gradually he became conscious that there was some supernatural presence and he took to his heels and the story is that about four miles later when he was out of breath he stopped and that story has chilled the blood of many a lone bothyer ever since. Not only have they heard the crunch of the approaching feet and the noise of somebody trying to get into their bothy, but one man was so sure that that man was coming to him, and it was a grey man he reckoned he was seeing, and he's in this audience tonight and his name is Sandy Tewnton. Sandy was home on leave from the army and he'd taken his revolver with him. The story he tells is that it was in case he was hungry and he might shoot a ptarmigan. Anyway, here he was in Coire Etchachan when this shape actually came towards him; out came the gun and he fired three bullets into it and he didn't even stop to see if he'd made a kill. Anyway, Sandy's looking down at the moment and I'm trying my best not to look at him.

Well in the early days of this Club of course, it was really a field Club whereas the S.M.C., formed in 1889, alpinism and exploration of gullies and unclimbed ridges were really what it was all about and it must have been wonderful to have been a climber at that time, because so little was known of Scotland; everything was discovery; Munro had just made the tables and in fact inspiration was everywhere in the writings of early climbers because of that discovery. And when the first generation of climbers of my class — I was a humble working-class boy who worked in a grocer's shop, worked until Saturday night, the last bus left Glasgow about a quarter past nine at night and catching that you could be in Loch Lomond just after ten and if you walked for a couple of hours, you could waken up amongst the hills.

And what really was the truth of what these early writers in the *Cairngorm Club Journal* and the *SMC Journal* had to say? Now it has been said that mountaineers may be strong but they are rarely silent and if ever God's truth was spoken, that's it! Because when I started climbing, guide books started to come with monotonous regularity, The Cairngorms by Sir Henry Alexander, The Western Highlands by Parker (two members of the Cairngorm Club), a general guide listing all the Munros

enabling you to tick them off one by one, and a guide to the Isle of Skye. And for us it was a marvellous time because we were the first working-class generation with enough money to get to the hills and enough time because the 48 hour week had come in. Also, there was so much public transport (people didn't have motor cars), that you could go almost anywhere very cheaply — I could spend a week in Skye, I admit that I could get half fare on the train and on the bus, but I could spend a week there for four quid! — and as a worker in a grocer's shop, I even got the messages cheap!

But the great thing about this time was that wee Clubs were springing up; the first was the Ptarmigan; they were enrolled round a camp fire on the outside of Glasgow, twenty four members, the cry was 'Ptarmigan' and when you heard that, you knew one of the real breed was there. And then from the shipyards came the Craig Dhu — Andy Saunders, a great chap, you used to see him in the Campsies — there were only five in the Club when my pal and I got to know them — my pal Matt. And then the Tricouni Club was set up — and Alex Small is in this audience tonight, one of these members and indeed he made the first ascent of Agag's Groove on the Buchaille Etive Mhor and we celebrated that climb two years ago — is that right Alex? And it was great to see these chaps looking so young, considering it was such a long time ago when they did it. They were men when I was a boy! McIntyre's bus was called 'The Mountaineer' and it ran from Glasgow to the Alps; I can't remember if it cost two quid or three quid, but I know it was a tight fit in the bus — so for the first time, chaps I knew were climbing the Matterhorn and other mountains, some of which I'd never heard of. And then of course I talked about the new wave, Tom Patey, Bill Brooker, Mike Taylor, Douglas Sutherland and all that crowd — and following them came another bunch of young men called the Kincorth Club; they'd a doss up in Beinn a' Bhuird and you had to be in the know to get it. This was built mysteriously — in the dark of night men went up carrying rhone pipes and other pieces of stuff and it really was the finest bothy, and there was a book in it and you had to sign your name and it said something like 'Nudes and how to draw them' and 'Male members leave their names, female members leave their telephone number'. And that was Freddy Balcombe and Sticker Thom and soon-and these were some of the men by the way who rebuilt Bob Scott's bothy recently. And then there came another new wave in the '70's and '80's, men of Andy Nisbet, Rick Allen and that kind who seemed to have more energy than any men that I've ever known had. For example, I was reading Andy Nisbet's and Charlie McLeod's epic. They started on Lochnagar, climbed Eagle Ridge in half an hour, set off at a run for the Mitre Ridge, they then did Snake Ridge, Sphinx Ridge, Robert's Ridge and got to Glenmore having covered 37 miles, 9000 feet of climbing and they didn't keep the kit chap waiting to pick them up — waiting. Isn't that great? — I don't know how they do it.

Well I've written down here a few things, but I'm not going to say them all because I don't want to keep you all night, but it could be said that mountain clubs which survive several generations have obeyed an immutable law, which is not the survival of the fittest but the opposite, the survival of tradition-bearers, to carry forward what made the Club in the first instance, sound — and that is because the mountain will always mean more than the man. For the six men at Loch Avon on the 23rd June 1887, proposed 'to open our ranks to the admission of men and women of heroic spirit and possessed of souls open to the influences and enjoyment of nature', they meant something if you came to analyse them, which is absolutely true. They were appealing to something deep down in all of us, irrespective of our own personal achievements, so I give you a toast knowing that if the world survives, so will the Cairngorm Club! So will you be upstanding and drink a toast to "The Cairngorm Club".

THE
CAIRNGORM CLUB
CENTENARY

1887-1987



THE SHELTER STONE

The Front Cover of the menu for the Centenary Dinner



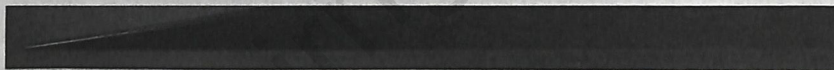
Office-Bearers and Guests at the Centenary Dinner held at the Stakis Tree Tops Hotel Hotel, Aberdeen.
Photograph reproduced by kind permission of Aberdeen Journals Ltd.

SOCIAL EVENTS DURING CENTENARY YEAR

In March, we held our customary Cheese and Wine Party at the Winter Gardens, Duthie Park, Aberdeen, attended by 107 members and friends. The following month, a special dinner was held in honour of Leslie Hay, who had attained the distinction of being a member of the Club for 60 years. The dinner was a pleasant, happy occasion, held in the Atholl Hotel. In June, the Club normally holds a barbecue in Templars' Park, but it was decided instead to hold a 'champagne barbecue' at Muir as part of the Jubilee Celebrations. A large attendance was anticipated so it was arranged to hire a marquee in case of wet weather. Car parking was anticipated as a major problem, so Mar Lodge Estate was approached for permission to use the field immediately to the west of the cottage. The new factor Lt. Col. Charles D. Craigie Halkett proved to be extremely helpful, and permission was very quickly forthcoming (as was permission to take a few cars up the Derry road to Derry Lodge to ferry 'older' club members who were taking part in the Ben Macdhui/Shelter Stone walk). Tables and chairs were organised from the Village Hall in Braemar. A work party spent a week getting Muir into immaculate condition. Two special barbecues were commissioned. The Indoor Activities Sub-Committee met to agree a menu which, even by their customary high standards, would be fitting for a centenary celebration. Invitations were sent out to local people who, over the years, had been associated with the Club and with Muir, and the Sub-Committee were at pains to ensure that as much as possible of the provisions and wine was purchased from local sources. Nothing, but nothing, was left to chance, to the extent that even portable loos were organised for the event! Some of the quantities make interesting reading - e.g. 72 bottles of sparkling wine: 66 litres of boxed wine: 100 venison burgers: 100 pork and apple burgers: 100 sausage slices: 50 black pudding slices: 18 lbs of ham: 24 lbs of turkey: 30 lbs of salmon: 50 lbs of strawberries which had to be husked and individually counted - they amounted to 2,400 — and 300 potatoes which had been pre-baked and wrapped in foil — and countless quantities of different salads, to name but some. The weather was kind and the event was voted a great success by the 265 members and friends who attended. The centenary year's social events culminated with the annual dinner held in the Stakis Treetops Hotel. The customary pre-dinner lecture was dispensed with to allow everybody a better opportunity to mix and socialise. Some of the exhibits from the centenary exhibition held earlier in the year in James Dun's House were on display and provided an interesting focal point. Special menu cards were arranged so that members would have a memento of the dinner to take home with them, and again, special attention was paid to the choice of menu. The absence of pyrotechnics on Ben Macdhui during the June overnight excursion was compensated for in the form of the dessert course named Macdhui Surprise, which, emblazoned with sparklers, was carried into the darkened dining room to great applause. In similar nomenclature vein the starter was Clac Dian Paté and the main course Chicken Glen Derry. A piper played at the hotel door to greet members and guests as they arrived, and he also piped in the top table. Those who wanted it, received a glass of sparkling wine as they entered the function suite. The principal guest was Tom Weir who proposed the toast to the Club, and the other main guests were Mrs. Weir, Captain Ramsay of Mar and The Lady Saltoun, Lt. Col. Charles D. Craigie Halkett and Mrs. Craigie Halkett, and Mr. Derek Petrie and Mrs. Petrie of Invercauld Estate. Mar Estate and Mar Lodge Estate were further represented by Mr. Ian Campbell and Mrs. Campbell, and Mr. Stuart Cumming and Mrs. Cumming respectively. Mr. Sandy Duguid whose company is used for the Club's bus meets was present along with his wife. Mr. Bill Marshall, accompanied by Mrs. Marshall, represented The Braemar Civic Amenities Trust and a special invitation was issued to our own member Mr. Rick Allen who had just returned from The Altos Everest '87 Expedition. He was accompanied by Miss Alison Charmatz (now Mrs. Alison Allen!). Braemar Mountain Rescue Association was



Mr & Mrs A. Leslie Hay with the Hon. President and his wife, the President and the Vice Presidents. (Photograph by Neil Cromar)



A poster for the Club's Centenary Exhibition at James Dun's House and one of the exhibits showing a pre-war Cairngorm Club Member! (Photographs by Neil Cromar)

represented, as was the Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team, and the Scottish climbing fraternity and sorority. It was gratifying that all but two were represented by their current presidents, and the two which were not, were represented by past-presidents. 235 members and guests attended the Dinner, some of whom had travelled from as far as Coventry and London to be there. In conclusion, the Indoor Activities Sub-Committee Convener does not expect to be available for the bi-centenary in 2087 but he hopes that his successor will enjoy the same incredibly high level of support and assistance from his Sub-Committee and from Club members, which the present incumbent has had the good fortune to receive.

N. Cromar

MEETS AND EXCURSIONS 1985-88

The attendance recorded for the period covered by the Journal shows a slight increase, the average being 32 on this occasion, compared with 30 the previous time. (The attendance is given in brackets after each excursion in the list at the end.) The best turn out was 50 for the Linn of Dee to Glen Feshie excursion in 1986, this being the only occasion that some members failed to obtain a seat. The poorest attendance of 17 was shared by the Blair Atholl excursion in 1986 and the Mount Battock excursion in 1987.

The first excursion in this report was to Ben Rinnes in November 1985. It proved to be a day of torrential rain, and although most members set off up the hill, to the best of my knowledge none reached the top. At Glen Lethnot in December it was snowing and the road in the upper part of the glen was very difficult. The bus did reach the end of the road but - memories of what nearly happened in Glen Clova in 1980 - it was thought prudent to have the bus meet us further down the glen on our return.

1986 started as usual with an excursion to Lochnagar, and although there was little snow around on this occasion, the bus got completely stuck in the hollow just beyond the Mill of Sterin turn off, due to icy road conditions. Fortunately a gritter arrived after a time and retrieved us from this situation. The next two excursions to Auchallater and Glen Clova were accompanied by very deep snow which limited the climbing possibilities. Great difficulty was experienced in turning the bus at Glen Clova due to the depth of snow and indiscriminate parking of cars at the quarry and at the farm. The car park, which had been cleared was almost devoid of cars. The next excursion to Blair Atholl was very wet and misty, but nevertheless most of the party climbed Carn Liath and some went on to Braigh Coire Chruinn-bhalgain.

The 1986 Easter Meet was held at the Loch Duich Hotel in Dornie, the same venue as on the previous year. Once again the hotel was very comfortable and the meet attracted around 40 people. A lot of snow on the higher peaks inhibited the amount of climbing done. Nevertheless many of the higher hills were climbed by various parties including the Saddle, most of the South Clunaie Ridge and Beinn Sgrìol. Several parties visited the Falls of Glomach, walking across from Dorusduain, as the driving route via Killilan is no longer open to the public. One party which went to Applecross found the upper part of the Bealach na Ba almost blocked and a snowplough working. They visited the small ruined village of Uags which was reached by a very rough path from Toscaig.

The first two excursions after Easter were rather wet with thick mist on the tops. Much better weather accompanied the Beinn Dearg excursion, although it was misty on top for much of the day. This proved to be a long walk and many members had difficulty in getting back to the hotel in time for tea.

The overnight excursion of 1986 was a very good one in terms of weather. About half the party got off the bus at Loch a Bhraoin and did a traverse of the Fannichs, finishing off at Loch Droma. At least one member climbed all of them. The other half

started from Inverlael and most of them climbed the four Munros in the Beinn Dearg group, also descending to Loch Droma, a descent which proved tricky in places. It was a marvellous night. Sun was seen shining on the top of the Beinn Dearg cliffs until almost midnight. Mist filled the valleys to the east but the west remained clear all night. We had an exceptionally good lunch on the Sunday at the Alltguish Inn. We were delayed for about an hour and a half at Tarvie on the return journey. The road was closed because a lorry carrying formaldehyde for the clean up of Gruinard Island had spilt part of its load.

Good weather accompanied the Monega Pass excursion and the Cairngorm Traverse, where, as usual, a large number of different routes were followed by the various parties. The remainder of the year's excursions had poor weather with rain and high winds. The Cabrach to Glen Buchat excursion was particularly unpleasant with most of the route exposed to a strong southerly wind and frequent heavy showers. The conditions on Bennachie were very little better.

Unfortunately these poor weather conditions were to persist for most of the following year. Our centenary year was not marked by the best of luck as far as weather conditions were concerned. The year started, as usual, with an excursion to Lochnagar. The Glen Muick road was blocked and so the starting point was Invercauld Bridge. A strong wind and deep snow hampered progress and nobody reached Lochnagar. One or two members got as far as the Staic. The rest of the winter excursions were accompanied by mist and snow.

The 1987 Easter Meet was held at the Spean Bridge Hotel which proved to be very comfortable. Around 40 people were present. On Good Friday, in excellent weather, a large party ascended Ben Nevis. Many other Munros were climbed mainly in the Mamores or in Glen Spean. By Sunday the weather had broken down completely and it poured all day. Some members went to church in the morning, no doubt to pray that the weather would improve. By Monday their prayers had been answered and several members went climbing before returning home.

The first excursion after Easter was to Ben Avon and this was a beautiful day with clear views all round and almost all those present reached the top. We did not know it but this was the last clear view we were to get from the main summit in 1987. On the next excursion from Achlean to Coylumbridge soft snow and thick mist on the Carn Ban Mor plateau held up progress to a worrying degree, even for those who had chosen the shortest route, but in the end everyone reached Coylumbridge in time. The Ben Lawers excursion, as so often in the past, was a day of pouring rain. Nevertheless all those present climbed at least Beinn Ghlas and Ben Lawers, followed by high tea at the Lawers Hotel which was not really big enough to accommodate the party.

The overnight excursion of 1987 was planned to be a very special occasion to celebrate the Club's Centenary. The dates chosen (20th/21st June) was the nearest weekend possible to the actual centenary date which would properly have been the 23rd June. It had been decided that it would be most appropriate to retrace, as far as possible the same route as the original six members had taken exactly 100 years before. While only 34 people travelled on the bus, a much larger number attended using their own transport. The weather started off uncertain, but dry, and despite the presence of heavy clouds it was to remain so. The main party set off from the Linn of Dee about 7 p.m. and travelled to the summit of Ben Macdhuì via Glen Derry and Coire Etchachan, reaching the summit just before midnight. It had originally been intended to have a fireworks display on the summit, but this idea was dropped because of environmental considerations. The President said a few words and some members drank a toast to the Club at this point.

Members made their way back from the summit in the direction of the Shelter Stone. Some camped for a time beside Loch Etchachan while others slept out in the open. Three members went via the summit of Cairngorm reaching the Shelter Stone just before the appointed time of 6 a.m. Around 100 people assembled there, were led



The President delivering her speech at the Dairymaid's Field and being recorded by BBC Radio Scotland. (Photograph by Peter Ward)



Club members at the Dairymaid's Field. (Photograph by Richard Shirreffs)

by the President down to the Dairymaid's Field, the place where the Club had originally been formed. Here, in a short speech, the President recalled the events of 100 years before and the company then drank a toast to the Club. A large number of photographs were taken. By this time the heavy cloud cover of the previous night had broken up and the sun was shining. Once the proceedings at the Shelter Stone had finished it was a long trek back to Inverey for the barbecue which took place in the afternoon. I could not help feeling some sympathy for the girl from BBC Radio Scotland, who carried a fairly heavy tape recorder all the way up Ben Macdhui and down to the Shelter Stone. Last seen, travelling very slowly near the Etchachan Hut, she must have got back all right, as a short broadcast covering the event was made a few days later.

The next excursion to Lochnagar was very misty but at least on this occasion most of the party reached the top. The Cairngorm Traverse started off in pouring rain which encouraged most members to follow lower rather than higher routes across. Those who went by the Larig an Laoigh had some difficulty crossing the River Avon at Fords of Avon, and indeed no easier crossing place was found higher up contrary to what was recently mentioned in the press. Between Ballater and Glen Esk we had a reasonably pleasant day with some sunshine but unfortunately the higher parts of Mount Keen remained mist covered all day. Between Glen Isla and Glen Clova, however, the mist was at a much lower level and no worthwhile views were obtained. On the excursion from Strathdon to Lary most members climbed either Cairn Mona Gowan or Scraulac and some climbed both. The northern approach to these hills was covered in deep snow almost down to the main road, while surprisingly there was virtually none on the other side. The excursion to Cat Law started in very promising fashion with some sunshine and at last the main objective was clear of mist. Alas, just as the main party was about to reach the summit mist swept in and spoiled the view. Enough was seen, however, to suggest that this would be a very good viewpoint on a clear day.

1988 started off with a very wet day on Lochnagar. Some members went to the summit while others preferred to stay on lower ground. Although it was January there were only one or two small patches of snow to be seen. It was a different story at Cockbridge three weeks later with the hills covered by at least a foot of soft snow. It was however, a brilliantly clear sunny day and most members climbed Brown Cow Hill, some of them on cross-country skis. Good weather also attended the Carn Bhac and Glen Clova excursions and by this time the snow conditions were better.

Some difficulty was experienced in finding a venue for the 1988 Easter Meet and arrangements had not been finalised in time to be included in the circular. It was held at the Royal Hotel in Ullapool, which proved to be a very large place, but the food was good and the 30 members who attended found it very comfortable. In addition a small number stayed at the nearby campsite. On this occasion the weather was good but there was quite a bit of snow on the higher hills, which was softened by the sunny weather making hard going. Nevertheless most of the Fannichs and the Beinn Dearg group were climbed by one party or another. One party got as far as Seana Bhragh. Other parties were attracted by the lower hills to the north such as Quinag, Cul Mor and Ben More Coigach, which were largely clear of snow. A very good view of the new bridge at Kylesku was obtained from the most northerly top of Quinag.

The excursion to Beinn a Bhuird started off a fine day with a lot of sunshine. There was still a lot of snow on the mountains, but it was melting fast, and the River Quoich proved very difficult to cross. Unfortunately the weather broke down at lunchtime and it rained all afternoon. Good weather was experienced on Jock's Road and most members followed the right of way path throughout but others climbed some of the Munros on the west side of the path. The last excursion in the period covered by this report was to Meall nan Tarmachan. We left Aberdeen in a very overcast day, conditions which persisted all the way to Lix Toll. Between there and Lawers Car Park the weather brightened up and, shortly after we left the bus the mist started to lift from



Past Presidents at the Centenary Champagne Barbecue at Muir.
Back Row:- Eric Johnston; Sandy Black; Harold Watt; Alan Watt; Sheila Murray. Front Row:- Robert Bain; Ralph Gerstenberg; Leslie Hay.
(Photograph by Joan Johnston)



Present and Past Huts Custodians at the Centenary Champagne Barbecue at Muir. Back Row:- Peter Howgate (also P.P.); Denis Hardy; Eddie Martin. Front Row:- Robert Bain; Ken Fraser. (Photograph by Joan Johnston)

the surrounding hills. Members present seemed to thoroughly enjoy the traverse of this hill, which proved very interesting even although the views were impaired by rather hazy conditions.

One of the effects of recent road improvements and the advent of more powerful buses has been a substantial reduction in journey times giving us more time on the hill. The journeys to Cairngorm or Lawers Car Parks, for example, which used to take fully four hours can now be completed in three. This has enabled us to have a later start (7 a.m. instead of 6 a.m.) for the Cairngorm Traverse on the last two occasions, while still giving members plenty of time on the hill. It may be possible to do the same in future for some of the Perthshire excursions, but not for all of them it would seem, as some members seemed to need all their time to complete the recent traverse of Meall nan Tarmachan. Of course, perhaps most members prefer these early starts? Opinions please!

G. Ewen

EXCURSIONS

	1985
9 Nov.	Ben Rinnes (31)
8 Dec.	Glen Lethnot (39)
	1986
12 Jan.	Lochnagar (43)
1 Feb.	Auchallater (28)
23 Feb.	Glen Clova (26)
16 Mar.	Blair Atholl (17)
20 Apr.	Capel Mounth (49)
11 May	Crathie to Auchallater (25)
31 May	Beinn Dearg (24)
21/21 Jun.	Inverlael to Loch Droma (27)
24 Aug.	Monega Pass (33)
6 Sep.	Cairngorm to Linn of Dee (49)
28 Sep.	Linn of Dee to Glenfeshie (50)
18 Oct.	Inverey to Glenshee (33)
9 Nov.	Cabrach to Glen Buchat (45)
7 Dec.	Bennachie (37)
	1987
11 Jan.	Lochnagar (33)
31 Jan.	Mount Battock (17)
22 Feb.	Glen Clunie (24)
22 Mar.	Glas Tulaichean (31)
26 Apr.	Ben Avon (28)
17 May	Achlean to Coylumbridge (32)
30 May	Ben Lawers (35)
20/21 Jun.	Ben Macdhui (34)
23 Aug.	Lochnagar (34)
12 Sep.	Cairngorm to Linn of Dee (34)
4 Oct.	Ballater to Glen Esk (20)
25 Oct.	Glen Isla to Glen Clova (37)
14 Nov.	Strathdon to Lary (32)
6 Dec.	Cat Law (23)

	1988
9 Jan.	Lochnagar (37)
31 Jan.	Cockbridge (23)
21 Feb.	Carn Bhac (32)
19 Mar.	Glen Clova (23)
17 Apr.	Beinn a Bhuird (31)
7 May	Jock's Road (20)
29 May	Meall nan Tarmachan (28)

EASTER MEETS

1986	Dornie
1987	Speanbridge
1988	Ullapool

WEEKEND MEETS

A large crag loomed ahead, magnified once by the mist and again by our imaginations. This must be the south top of the Cobbler to be scrambled up and then down on our way to the main summit. Heavy rucksacks proved awkward, but as we broke through into sunshine we decided we were enjoying a taste of 'rock'. Sitting above a sea of cloud we greeted 'island' friends. Bens Lomond, Narnain and Ime all looked to be within 'swimming' distance.

The last three years of weekend meets have included too many memorable occasions to recount all. This year a new dimension has been added by Peter Bellarby and Fraser Stronach offering to help would-be climbers to get started. To this end the club has bought some new equipment which had its first outing on our first winter weekend meet in February '88. This weekend attracted walkers, climbers and skiers and will hopefully become a regular feature of future programmes. Some of those who went climbing on snow-covered Stob Coire nan Lochan enjoyed the added thrill of a 'Cresta Run' slide down the lower slopes at the end of the day - an excellent form of quick descent.

We have tried to keep a balance of types of accommodation, but with huts being booked up increasingly far in advance, and members being unable to make a firm commitment on the same time-scale, we are relying increasingly on Youth Hostels. With their improved facilities (Torridon has a microwave!) and later lights out time (11.45pm for grade 1) we find them very convenient - although we have still managed to be locked out!

Finding A'Chuil bothy fully booked we tried out-of-season caravans for our Glen Dessary meet. Two fine days of hillwalking gave way to a wet Monday. Having avoided fresh water shrimps in the drinking water with difficulty, ingenuity was now applied to catching brown trout.

A special opening of the Ossian Youth Hostel coincided with the Chernobyl disaster. Drinking 'pure' rain water in ignorance we explored the area from Ben Alder to Leum Uilleum. In the evenings we were welcomed back by Tom Rigg, the warden, with stove hottering and chessboard out. He also hoped we might have energy left to qualify for his 'round the loch in an hour' club, but he let us off with promises to return.

The Outdoor Centre at Elphin attracted members and their families, some of whom preferred pony trekking to walking. As usual we split into groups and individuals, exploring hills from Ben Hope and Klibreck (morning and afternoon) to Ben More Assynt and Quinag. Those of us who opted for the long day to Suilven wished we could have pony trekked in. It is a long way in for so little time on top. It was hard to resist fleeting backward glances towards its unique silhouette as twilight turned to darkness and we had to hurry home.

Boats proved a mixed success as alternative transport on Loch Mullardoch (Cannich '88). As the dam was being repaired the water level was unusually low making sandbanks a major hazard. Add to that the odd mechanical fault and lack of petrol and you might decide to stick to walking!

Who would have thought that the Alex MacIntyre Memorial Hut at Onich was a suitable base for a trip to Ben More in Mull? Those of us with less imagination (or a less pressing need to visit this particular Munro) spent a dramatic day on a variety of Glen Coe hills. Dinnertime Buttress was a worthwhile short day for those late in starting, and, back at the hut, after consuming odd mixtures of 'convenience' and 'health' foods, we all joined in a spirited singsong round a cosy fire. If you know any words beyond the first verses you could be a star!

Our stay at Laggangarbh coincided with a Glen Coe bus meet by the Moray Mountaineering Club. We combined - by a variety of routes - to celebrate Margaret MacLennan's final Munro on Buachaille Etive Mor and then adjourned to the hut until the bus returned. Such forward planning was greatly appreciated on a damp, chilly day!

With keen ornithologists, botanists, climbers and skiers - not to mention Munro baggers - among our regular 'weekenders' suggestions for future venues and accommodation are always welcome. Those who cannot book in advance, or prefer other than the 'official' base, are welcome to camp or find their own accommodation, joining the main group activities as they wish.

	1986	1987	1988
Feb	—	—	Crianlarich YH
May	Ossian YH	Torridan	Cannich
June	Glen Dessary	—	Ardgarden YH
July	Moidart	Crianlarich	Skye
Aug	Glen Affrich YH	Rhum	Knoydart
Sept	Laggangarbh	Elphin	Kintail
Oct	Steal Hut	Onich	Arran

Fiona Cameron

