

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB

GENERAL MEETINGS

The 1991 Annual General Meeting was held on November 27. Gillian Shirreffs was elected President in succession to Eddie Martin, and Peter Bellarby was elected to the vacant position of Vice-President. All of the other office-bearers appointed the previous year were re-appointed.

The 1992 Annual General Meeting took place on November 25. Fiona Cameron was elected to the vacant position of Vice-President and all of the other office-bearers re-appointed.

A Special General Meeting was held immediately before the 1992 Annual General Meeting, its purpose being to consider resolutions put forward in the name of the committee for a number of changes to the constitution.

The main changes proposed were:

(a) Amendments to the rights of Associate Members – that up to two Associate Members could serve as Ordinary Members of the committee, although not as office-bearers.

(b) An amendment to the objects clause – that the mention of encouragement of hillwalking and climbing was related more to standards than to actual engagement in the pursuit.

(c) Increases in the numbers needed for requisitions, quorum etc., in line with the general increase in the size of the Club.

(d) An adjustment to the provision about committee rotation – that the number retiring in any year did not have to be made up to three if fewer than three had served the normal three-year term.

The proposed changes were all approved, with minor amendments in the case of the objects clause, and the constitution was amended, reprinted and copied to all members in March, 1993. At the same time the Members' Handbook, of which only new members had received updated versions since it made its first appearance in 1977, was thoroughly revised, reprinted and copied to all members.

The 1993 Annual General Meeting was held on November 24. Eddie Martin demitted office as Huts Custodian after 13 years' service (three of them overlapping with his presidency); Robbie Middleton was elected in his place; Peter Ward stepped down as Librarian after seven years' service spanning two moves of the library. Ken Forbes was appointed to replace him. All other office-bearers were re-appointed.

ANNUAL DINNERS

The 1991 Annual Dinner was held at the Stakis Tree Tops Hotel, Aberdeen. Simon Richardson, the guest speaker, gave an illustrated talk, "Traversing Alaska's Mount Hunter and Other Mountaineering Adventures".

The 1992 Annual Dinner, at the same venue, was addressed by Eric Langmuir, who's talk, "Climbing and Exploring in the Kingdom of Bhutan", was accompanied by superb slides.

The 1993 Annual Dinner – same venue – presented the opportunity for Dr Robert Aitken to give an illustrated talk, "A Time to Care: Scotland's Mountain Footpaths". This linked in with the committee's decision earlier in the year to sponsor a footpath maintenance project on the Coire Etchachan track.

Richard Shirreffs.

MEETS AND EXCURSIONS 1991-1993

The average attendance at excursions for the period covered by this journal was 31.6, about the same as in the previous period. The attendance for each one is given in the list at the end of this report. The best turnout was 52 for the Cairngorm traverse in 1991 and the poorest was 18, shared by the Ladder Hills and the Speyside Way outings, both also in 1991.

The first excursion was from Inverey to Spittal of Glen Shee. This was rather a misty day on the tops, and members either crossed from Altanour to Glen Thaitneich via Beinn Iutharn Mhor or by the glen that runs round the east side of Beinn Iutharn Bheag. The following one to Beinn a' Ghlo was planned without a meal, to give a longer day for a complete traverse of the three main summits. The party started from Killiecrankie and made their way to Shinagog by way of Glen Girmaig and returned to Blair Atholl via Glen Fender. Although it was a beautiful day, time did not allow for all three to be climbed due to the length of the approach and the walk out at the end. However, recent improvements to the road up Glen Fender may allow us to take the bus up as far as Monzie in future, which would solve this problem.

The overnigher from Loch Quoich to Glen Sheil started off very inauspiciously. The bus journey to Invergarry was through continuous, heavy rain. However, by the time we reached Loch Quoich it was dry and gradually cleared to give a beautiful night. Two parties climbed Gleouraich and Spidean Mialach, one of them going on to Sgurr a' Mhaoraich, while the majority tackled the South Cluanie Ridge.

The next meet attracted a very poor turnout, on a day of good weather. Half of the party crossed Ben Rinnes while the others walked along the Speyside Way from Dufftown to Ballindalloch. Here, the old railway track wound its way through a deep wooded valley from Dufftown to Craigellachie, with more open countryside on the remainder of the route. A feature of this walk was the discovery of a pub at Carron in the early afternoon, where welcome refreshments were enjoyed by all.

The Cairngorm traverse attracted a very large attendance, the best for many years. The weather was good and as usual a number of different routes were followed including the Lairig Ghru, Ben Macdhui and Derry Cairngorm or Carn a' Mhaim. One member climbed all the Munros on the west side of the Lairig Ghru from Braeriach to Carn Cloich-mhuillin and was first back to the bus. The party which limited itself to the Lairig Ghru were late.

Very few members managed to finish the traverse from Glen Clova to Dykend within the allotted time, although no one was seriously late. This was partly due to the length of the walk, but mainly because of the thick mist which made navigation difficult between Mayar and Glen Finlet. The road improvements between Aberdeen and Perth have made day trips to Perthshire possible. On the Ben Challum meet the bus made the journey to the starting point at Auchtertyre in only three hours and 10 minutes. Although the weather was good on the lower slopes, the hill top remained shrouded in mist all day, but there was plenty of time to enjoy the climb. The traverse on the Ladder Hills from the Pole Inn at Glen Livet to Strathdon was poorly attended. It was a brilliantly sunny day with a fair bit of snow lying on the higher reaches. The following excursion offered three possible routes, the Bulig Mounth, the Stock Mounth or the Cryne Corse Mounth. Only the first two were followed, with the bulk of the party choosing to go by the Bulig Mounth and climbing Kerloch on the way. This area is now very extensively forested, but the trees are still small enough to afford views which sadly will disappear.

1992 started in traditional fashion with the Lochnagar meet. It was an unpleasant day of wind and drizzle, with very little snow cover except on the higher parts of the plateau. Unfortunately, one of the party slipped and broke her wrist while descending from the south summit. A much better day was had for the outing to Morven, but again there was an almost complete absence of snow. It was rather windy on the Inverey meet, and most people climbed Carn Bhac. Our first winter excursion to Glen Isla for many years proved successful, apart from the difficulty experienced in turning the bus, the previous turning space at Auchaven having been fenced off. Most members went to Mayar or Glas Maol and one party ascended Tom Buidhe. Once again there was hardly any snow.

The Easter Meet was held at the Glen Affric Hotel in Cannich, with 37 attending. These included several from furth of Aberdeen, one of whom had cycled from Bedford. Although the weather was mixed, it was not unpleasant and enabled parties to achieve a wide variety of walks (over a wide area), including Glen Affric and the Loch Mullardoch and Loch Monar areas. One party hired a boat which dropped people off at various points along Loch Mullardoch, allowing climbs to be done on both the north and south sides of the loch. Snow cover was confined to wet snow on the higher reaches, but the ground elsewhere was sodden, and wet feet seemed very much the order of the day.

The outing to Beinn a' Bhuid took the form of a traverse from Allanoich to Invercauld. There was no meal to allow for a longer day on the hill, and all accomplished the traverse in rather mixed weather. A fine day accompanied the next outing from the Devil's Elbow to Glen Clova. The entire party crossed Glas Maol, Cairn of Claise and Tolmount. From here some went eastwards to climb Cairn Bannoch and Broad Cairn while the rest went over Tom Buidhe and descended into Glen Doll, all having a wet finish. A very large party traversed from Achlean to Coylumbridge, with most going over Carn Ban Mor and Sgoran Dubh Mor on a hot, sunny day.

The 1992 overnigher involved catching the train for Corrou at Bridge of Orchy. As on the previous occasion, the train made an unscheduled stop for us at the south end of Loch Treig. Around half the party climbed Stob Coire Easain and Stob a' Coire Mheadhoin on the west of Loch Treig, while the others went to Beinn na Lap, Chno Dearg and Stob Coire Sgriodain on the east. Unfortunately, it was misty on the tops and a bit windy, although a very pleasant morning on reaching lower ground.

The traverse from Ballater to Glen Esk attracted an unusually high turnout for the end of August, attracted by the wedding of two of our members, which was planned to take place at the end of the walk in the ruined church by Loch Lee. Unfortunately, weather did not permit such an outdoor event, but the wedding went ahead in the church near the car park at Invermark.

A smaller number than usual attended the Cairngorm traverse, with most going over the summit of Ben Macdui before splitting up for different descent routes. The excursion to Ben Challum the year before encouraged the attempt on Ben Vorlich by Loch Lomond, which was again a success. The bus took just under three and a half hours to reach Ardlui, leaving seven hours to climb the hill. This proved just enough, there being more to the hill than the map would suggest. Those who attended the traverse from Crathie to Glen Muick found more snow on Lochnagar than there had been on the last three winter excursions to this mountain. The weather was fine, but due to snow conditions, not all the party managed to complete their planned route, some retiring from Meall Coire na Saobhaidhe to Coire na Ciche.

The Ochil Hills excursion was on a somewhat wild day with mist on the higher summits. However, all but one party completed the traverse from Sherriffmuir to Dollar. In contrast the weather on the traverse from Tarfside to Bridgend of Lethnot via the Hill of Wirren, was very good. On this occasion one party apparently disturbed a pheasant shoot, although it was almost dark by that time.

Conditions were appalling for the 1993 winter excursion to Lochnagar. The bus reached Spittal of Glen Muick without too much difficulty, but it seemed for a time that it was inadvisable for it to remain there. However, a snow plough came and cleared the road later in the morning and the blizzard abated. Nobody attempted Lochnagar, although one party did manage to reach the Meikle Pap. On the next outing to Glen Clunie, we lost some time in the morning when the bus broke down at Invercanny. It was a cold, misty day and climbs were accomplished on both sides of the road from the car park. The main party traversed from Sgor Mor to Morrone. We enjoyed brilliant sunshine at Glen Clova, but the wind was fierce. Most members went up Mayar and Dreish while others climbed in the Loch Brandy area. On the Linn of Dee excursion the day was very cloudy with mist shrouded hills. Derry Cairngorm was the main objective for most people, but some turned back at the Etchachan Hut as the weather deteriorated.

The 1993 Easter Meet was based at the Spean Bridge Hotel. Despite the excellent terms offered, once again attendance was disappointing, with a maximum of 27 on the Saturday night. The weather was really quite good with a beautiful, sunny day on the Friday, dry and clear on Saturday and it cleared up nicely at lunch time on Monday after a morning of rain. It will perhaps be remembered as the Easter Meet on which few Munros were climbed. On Friday one party ascended Beinn a' Chaorainn in Glen Spean while another climbed Sgurr na Ciche in upper Glen Dessary. On Saturday one group reached the summit of An Gearanach in the Mamores. Most people concentrated on lesser ascents, some as far away as Ben Hiant in Ardnamurchan.

The outing to Cairngorm or Bynack More turned out to be a beautiful day. The bulk of the party went to Bynack More, either by the Pass of Ryvoan or from Cairngorm car park via the Saddle. Others climbed Cairngorm and Ben Macdhuì. One member reached Beinn Mheadhoin, and the rather remote Corbett of Creag Mhor also received attention. The excursion to Ben Vorlich and Stuc a' Chroin took the form of a traverse from Edinample to Callander. Conditions were good and most people climbed both hills. The following meet to Ben Avon was also a traverse, this time from Cockbridge to Invercauld. It started off as a dull, misty day but cleared up to give a beautiful afternoon.

The overnighiter was from Braemore to Kinlochewe, with some people starting from Dundonnell or Poolewe instead. It turned out to be a very poor night, which restricted the amount of climbing. Time was lost due to poor visibility and difficulty crossing swollen rivers. Some members climbed Sgurr Ban and Mullach Coire Mhic Fhearchair. Other lower hills were ascended, but the two parties who set out for A' Mhaighdean failed to reach it.

On the Ben Lawers excursion most people left the bus at Lawers Hotel to do a traverse of Ben Lawers and Beinn Ghlas. Although it was a fairly good day at lower levels, it was not pleasant on the tops. The Cairngorm traverse, in contrast, was in fine weather despite a rather misty start. The usual variety of routes were followed, but as on the previous year the attendance was disappointing. Both these excursions have been notorious in the past for members arriving back at the bus late, so it is perhaps worth recording that everyone returned in good time on both occasions.

One feature of the outings in the period covered by this report, has been an increase in the number of young people coming along, with those under 21 accounting for 13% of total attendance. 10 of the 36 on the 1993 overnight excursion were in this age group. It is an encouraging trend which I hope will continue.

Graham Ewen.

EXCURSIONS

1991

12 May	Inverey to Spital of Glenshee (22)
1 June	Beinn a' Ghlo (25)
22/23 June	Loch Quoich to Glen Sheil (27)
25 August	Ben Rinnes/ Speyside Way (18)
15 September	Cairngorm to Linn of Dee (52)
6 October	Glen Clova to Dykend (29)
26 October	Ben Challum (32)
17 November	Ladder Hills (18)
7 December	Bulig Mounth/Stock Mounth (42)

1992

19 January	Lochnagar (49)
9 February	Morven (41)
29 February	Inverey (24)
22 March	Glen Isla (30)
25 April	Beinn a Bhuird (28)
10 May	Devil's Elbow to Glen Clova (25)
31 May	Achlean to Coylumbridge (45)
20/21 June	Corroul to Fersit (28)
23 August	Ballater to Glen Esk (45)
13 September	Cairngorm to Linn of Dee (29)
4 October	Ben Vorlich (28)
24 October	Crathie to Loch Muick (27)
15 November	Ochil Hills (21)
5 December	Hill of Wirren (25)

1993

10 January	Lochnagar (34)
30 January	Glen Clunie (25)
21 February	Glen Clova (34)
14 March	Linn of Dee
18 April	Cairngorm/Bynack More (40)
9 May	Ben Vorlich/Stuc a' Chroin (38)
29 May	Ben Avon (27)
19/20 June	Braemore to Kinlochewe (36)
22 August	Ben Lawers (27)
12 September	Cairngorm to Linn of Dee (34)

EASTER MEETS

1992	Cannich
1993	Spean Bridge

WEEKENDS, 1992-1993

Candidates for the 'Weekend Gold Star Award' in the last two years must include Rum – apart from the diabolical crossing, and the cold, torrential rain on Sunday. Still, one good day on the ridge made all the planning and travelling well worth while.

Carbisdale Castle must rank as the most magnificent of Youth Hostels, and meeting some fishermen on a Corbett-bagging trip resulted in fresh brown trout for tea.

A winter weekend at Muir introduced some of the participants to Piper's Wood – a sapling 75cm high was found. Just enough snow for some winter skills training gave an energetic alternative to long walks.

Tower Ridge from the CIC hut saw mist clearing slowly from the Ben at mid-day. It would have been too cold to linger long, but we spent a happy hour along with the Lochaber team who were busy with reconstruction and clearing up round the Observatory Tower. When the mist finally cleared we were rewarded by a guided tour of the summit – ruins, climbs and views. It was a pity numbers had dropped at the last minute. Was it the weather forecast, the thought of walking in after dark or just the usual collection of last-minute domestic and work commitments?

A full house at Black Rock Cottage was the base for a delightful day in Glen Etive – but Oh, the midges in the evening.

From Ullapool we settled for Corbett-bagging, followed by dinner at the Ceilidh Place. Despite adverse weather conditions most of us managed a morning summit followed by an afternoon reconnoitre which somehow saw us on the top with just time to get back before dark. It has to be said that there were some notable absentees on this second leg. For some the morning's soakings had prompted a vain search for dry clothes. A quick dash back to the shops in Ullapool was the remedy.

Minnigaff proved less popular – was it the time of year, or do we still like to plan for the bigger hills, keeping the lower ones for 'off' days? Those who went enjoyed a challenging day on the 'Awful Hand', with some tricky navigation as mist enveloped the summits.

For me, the Gold Star goes to Newtonmore in 1992. Several of us had hoped for skiing, but with no significant snow to be had we opted instead for a day on Creag Meaghaidh. The summit plateau, reached up Sron a Choire was a splendid snow field. Next, traversing to the window and up on to Stob Poite Coire Ardair for lunch, we watched the climbers toiling out of the coire below. Out to Carn Liath and off down a strategic snow field rounded off the day. A warm, comfortable bunk house followed by a fun day of picnics in the sun and snow slides on Carn an Fhreicheadain completed the weekend. Only bad summit erosion on the latter marred the trip.

At the other end of the scale there was a snow storm on Rest and be Thankful and generous helpings of mist, rain and slushy snow. Whiling away the odd hour waiting for conditions to improve may be spent planning future attempts, or in reminiscing. Mostly we indulge in tales of past glories, but how about the guilty secrets? Have you ever, for instance, opened your rucksack on some high peak only to discover that it isn't yours, that the sandwiches/apple/pork pie etc. from a previous expedition are mouldering away undisturbed in some dark corner, or that the polythene bag of 'kit' that you hastily rammed into your rucksack actually contains the family's dirty washing? If you would like to unburden your conscience, why not join us on a weekend meet.

Booking accommodation without firm figures well in advance is an increasing problem. There are a number of new hostels, but pressure on all types of accommodation is outstripping its availability. It is embarrassing for the club if we book early

and members cancel at the last minute. However genuine the reasons for cancellation, losing a deposit only hits the pocket, but preventing another group from booking reflects badly on the club. On the other hand, if booking is left to the last minute it often results in disappointment. Camping is an obvious answer and is gaining in popularity with some members.

Fiona Cameron

WEEKEND MEETS WITH NUMBERS ATTENDING				
1992			1993	
February	Crianlarich	12	Muir	18
March			Newtonmore	14
May	Rum	9	Glen Brittle	7
June	Cannich	20	Carbisdale Castle	6
July	Muir	18	Achnashellach	7
August	Minnigaff	4	Black Rock Cottage	14
September	Onich	17		
October	Ullapool	10	CIC Hut, Glen Nevis	4
November	Ardgartan	8	Crianlarich YH	18

CLIMBING SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT

The resurgence of climbing within the club continues to go from strength to strength, with this year's summer going down as the best yet, despite the weather.

The first event of the session was last December, when a well-attended indoor talk/seminar was held on winter hillwalking skills. Some of the techniques discussed were put into practice during the Muir Cottage weekend meet, when Sunday was spent learning ice axe skills on a patch of snow on the hillside above the cottage. The previous day, a climb was ascended in Coire Sputan Dearg – Glissade Buttress, in semi-winter conditions.

Unfortunately, the winter all but ended after that weekend, and it was by chance that another ice climb was sneaked in on the Cairn Gorm/Bynack More bus meet – Faicaille Ridge, in pleasantly icy conditions (see article). That marked the end of the winter activities, but it was less than a month until the summer sea-cliff sessions started on Monday evenings.

These were well attended all through the summer and it was decided to continue them, for the first time, until the shorter summer evenings at the start of September. Despite the wet summer, we only lost three or four evenings due to the rain. One evening was spent at the Beach Leisure Centre rock wall. As has become usual, a core of regulars developed with other occasional visitors. The first member to join the Club, purely through climbing activities, was one of the regular gang, and three more should be joining soon. With so many members each evening, we were grateful for the invaluable help provided by Graham Callander and Hal Taylor on many evenings.

Most of the climbers showed improvement over the season, with some fairly intimidating routes being attempted and Charlie Milne leading Severe-graded climbs by the end – a fine achievement.

Due to numbers, it has been necessary to purchase some new climbing gear: two harnesses with belay plates, karabiners and a large holdall to store club gear. Thanks to Fiona Cameron for the use of her bag for much of the summer. For those interested, the club gear is available for borrowing by members when it is not required for club activities, providing they are competent in its correct use. The climbing gear owned by the club is listed below:

Two 50m x 9mm ropes suitable for climbing.
One 50m x 9mm rope only suitable for abseiling.
One 50m x 9mm rope suitable for very little. (i.e. trashed).
Two Ultimate climbing helmets.
One Troll Whillans sit harness (size L).
One Wild Country Alpiniste harness (size M).
Three Wild Country PLJ harnesses (One size fits all)
One Mountain Technology Vertige ice axe (45cm).
One Mountain Technology Vertige ice hammer (45cm).
One pair Salewa Everest crampons.
One DMM deadman.
Six assorted ice screws.
Four assorted pitons.
Four HMS screwgate karabiners.
Twenty two assorted screwgate karabiners.
Two assorted snapgate karabiners
Two assorted extenders
Ten Wild Country Rocks (sizes 1-9, and an extra size 6).
Three 2m slings.
Two 1m slings.
Two figure of eight descenders.
Two Latok Tuber belay plates.

Stuart Stronach



THE LIBRARY

On March 10, 1993, the library moved from 24 Albyn Place to the Special Collections Unit of the Aberdeen University Library at King's College. It is situated down the passage leading eastwards between Elphinstone Hall and the buildings around King's College. (see map) The library is open from 9.30a.m. to 4.30p.m. on weekdays. Car parking spaces are usually available at lunchtime, but be prepared for a longer walk at other times during University terms. Members can borrow books on production of a Caimgorm Club membership card. There is a bright, comfortable reading room and the librarians are welcoming and helpful. A selection of books will continue to be available at indoor meets.

The three fine bookcases given to the Club by past members, notably Past-Presidents, William Garden and James Parker in 1929, have had to be sold, along with some smaller bookcases and duplicate books. The income derived has been set aside as library funds, and conservation of some of our old and more valuable books has begun.

Peter Ward, Librarian to November 1993.

Ken Forbes, present Librarian.

