

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB

GENERAL MEETINGS

The 1994 Annual General Meeting of the Club was held on 16 November. Judy Middleton was elected President in succession to Gillian Shirreffs, and John Gibson filled the vacant position of Vice-President. Eric Johnston was elected Honorary President following the death during the past year of Robert Bain.

The 1995 Annual General Meeting was held on 22 November. Fiona Cameron was elected to the vacant position of Vice-President.

ANNUAL DINNERS

The 1994 Annual Dinner was held at the Stakis Tree Tops Hotel, Aberdeen. The writer Irvine Butterfield was guest speaker, giving an illustrated talk entitled 'Writing a Book'.

The 1995 Annual Dinner saw a change of venue to the Elphinstone Hall at King's College, Old Aberdeen. Allen Fyffe of Glenmore Lodge gave an illustrated talk on a two-man expedition climbing Kalanka in the Nanda Devi Sanctuary, by a new route.

Richard Shirreffs

MEETS AND EXCURSIONS 1993 - 1996

The average attendance at excursions for the period covered by this journal was 27.4, a drop of 4.2 from the previous period. The attendance for each one is given in the list at the end of this report. The best turnout was 47 for the Lochnagar meet in January 1996 and the poorest 11 at Ben Chabhair in 1995.

Our first outing was advertised as 'Linn of Dee to Blair Atholl'. River levels on the day were so high that it was deemed inadvisable to attempt this route, with the necessity of fording the River Geldie and Bynack Burn, so all stayed in the bus round to Blair Atholl and did various walks from there. The next trip was from Auchallater to Glen Muick, and although it was very misty almost all the party went over Cairn Taggart and Lochnagar. We next went to the Steplar Pass. It was a frosty clear day and the whole party followed the right of way throughout, with some diverging to take in Cook's Cairn. The year finished off with a walk to Clachnaben.

The Lochnagar excursion in January 1994 was, like the year before, attended by very windy weather. Nobody reached the top though some did try. On the following outing to Loch Lee it was a sunny clear day accompanied by a very cold fierce wind. Little in the way of climbing took place. Those who ventured on to even the lower tops were soon driven off by the conditions. At Inverey the weather was better but misty on the tops. Carn Bhac seemed to be the main objective but some ventured on to An Socach. At Cockbridge we were back to gale force winds again and progress even in the valleys was very difficult. The main beneficiary of the conditions was definitely mine host at the Allargue Hotel.

The 1994 Easter Meet was held at the Loch Duich Hotel in Dornie. Those attending had to contend with snow on the road on the way over from Invergarry to Cluanie. The weather continued bad through to the Saturday with rain and northerly gales and no hills

climbed. The Sunday, however, was a beautiful day and several parties climbed A' Ghlas-bheinn where they encountered new snow on top. The hotel was very comfortable but the attendance disappointing.

After Easter the weather improved and we had quite a pleasant day at Glas Tulaichan. This was followed by an even better one at Schiehallion three weeks later. Our luck continued on the traverse from the Cairnwell to Inverey, with most people going over Carn a'Gheiodh and either Ben Iutharn Beag or An Socach. Our luck however did not continue for the overnight excursion which gave people the choice of either the Grey Corries or Creag Meagaidh. It was quite a wet start, and although the rain did stop it remained misty throughout. Nevertheless most of the party reached their objectives. One group managed to climb all the Grey Corries, Aonachs Beag and Mor and Carn Mor Dearg as well. The risk of having two different finishing points was well illustrated at the end, with one party quite late in Glen Nevis, leading to a delayed pick up for the Creag Meagaidh party and a late arrival for them at the hotel.

The autumn excursions started with a pleasant day on Jock's Road with most of the hills on either side being climbed. The Cairngorm Traverse had much poorer weather with the route across via the Shelter Stone being the most popular. A much better day was had between Glen Feshie and the Linn of Dee with about half the party going through the glen while the rest went over the hills from Achlean. It was wet on Ben Dorain with snow on the higher parts, but everybody managed to climb it, some doing Beinn an Dothaidh as well. The excursion to Mount Battock was a traverse from Millden Lodge to Glen Dye Lodge. It was a very fine day and the whole party climbed both Mount Battock and Clachnaben. The last outing of the year was to Culardoch and took the form of a traverse from Invercauld to Inver. It was not a particularly pleasant day but most of the party did go to the top of Culardoch while others bypassed the summit.

The winter meets of 1995 started off with the usual outing to Lochnagar. Unfortunately, for the third year running weather conditions were very poor and few attempted the climb. Of those who did, the maximum achievement was an ascent of the Meikle Tap. A large number opted for a walk to Ballater, one party doing a traverse of the Coyles of Muick. At Glen Clunie it was very foggy even at the car park, but despite this a wide variety of hills on both sides of the road were climbed. In contrast the excursion to Glen Clova had a brilliant sunny day but there was a heavy covering of soft snow which hampered progress. Most of the party attempted to go to Mayar via Corrie Fee but were forced to turn back as it was deemed too hazardous to attempt the climb out of the corrie. We also had a fairly bright day at the Linn of Dee although it was rather windy. The most popular route on this occasion was a traverse from north to south over Derry Cairngorm. Others did a more leisurely traverse over Creag Bhalg finishing at Allanaquoich and walking back to the Linn of Dee by the road.

The 1995 Easter Meet was held at Spean Bridge. On this occasion the weather was good to begin with on the Friday and Saturday, and quite a number of hills were climbed. The weather broke down on the Sunday with heavy rain and mist and several people went home. The hotel was reasonably comfortable but some of those attending thought that the meals were a bit meagre.

After Easter we had our first visit to Alltdourie since the new road was built there and had to park the bus in a new location behind the farm. Weatherwise it was quite a good day lower down but rather poor at a higher level, and this combined with soft snow conditions, prevented the main summit of Beinn a' Bhuidr being reached. Very few people attended the excursion to Beinn Chabhair which turned out to be a beautiful day, and everyone

reached the summit. One party also climbed An Caisteal. The one problem was that there was no suitable parking space for the bus at Inverarnan, so it had to go elsewhere and come back to meet us later. The excursion from Cockbridge to Tomintoul had reasonable weather, but there had been some heavy rain previously leading to high river levels. The main party had intended to climb Cnap Chaochan Aitinn and then to cross the Caiplich at the Castle, but were forced to change their plans and returned to Tomintoul via the ridge that runs northward between the valleys of the Avon and the Ailnack.

The 1995 overnighter enjoyed the best weather of any in recent years. Approximately half the party got off the bus at the Cluanie Inn while the rest went on to Morvich. A wide variety of hills were climbed on both sides of Glen Affric. It was a beautiful night with the hills remaining clear while the valleys filled with mist. This event coincided with Aberdeen University's Quincentennial Challenge to climb all the Munros, and some of our members contributed substantially to that.

The autumn excursions of 1995 were all accompanied by rain in whole or in part. The first gave members the choice of doing either the Fungle or the Fir Mounth. This was a reasonably good day with clear views all around although there were a few nasty showers in the afternoon. The Cairngorm Traverse followed on immediately after some of the heaviest rain that any of us can remember. This might explain the ten last minute cancellations, making this quite the smallest group attending this excursion for a long time. Despite this the day was enjoyed by those who came. About half the party did the Lairig Ghru while the others went over Ben Macdhui and down Corrie Etchachan. There was about two hours of persistent rain during the afternoon but apart from this the day remained dry. River levels were still high three weeks later when we were due to go through Glen Tilt. The problem of fording the Geldie was avoided by setting out from the Linn of Dee along the south bank of the Dee. This avoided fording either the Geldie or the Bynack. The Allt an t-Seilich still had to be crossed but did not prove much of a problem. The excursion to Glen Lyon attracted a good crowd with about half climbing the Carn Maing group while the rest went to Stuc an Lochain. Glen Prosen to Glen Clova was also well attended but was unfortunately a rather misty day, if not quite as bad as on the previous time we did this route. On Ben Vrackie we had a very wet day but nevertheless everyone reached the top.

1996 began with Lochnagar and once again an unpleasant day. On this occasion however some members did reach the top, one of them by the Black Spout. At Morven we had a beautiful sunny day but had to contend with rather deep soft snow which made the going very difficult. Some members did reach the top while others contented themselves with more minor ascents such as Peters Hill. The following excursion to Inverey was also a good day with much less snow, at least on the lower slopes. On the Cairngorm outing four members had winter skills instruction from one of the Glenmore Lodge staff. Unfortunately this was a rather stormy day and those who attempted the higher tops were forced to turn back. At least one party did manage to climb Meall a' Bhuachaille, the Corbett to the north of Glenmore Lodge.

The 1996 Easter Meet was held at the Culaig Hotel in Lochinver. 26 people attended, most staying in the hotel with others in bed and breakfast establishments nearby. The weather was very windy for the whole weekend and this severely curtailed the amount of climbing done. One party did manage to climb Quinag. Other activities included exploring the caves at Inchnadamp and visiting the Falls of Kirkaig.

The first excursion after Easter was the Capel Mounth. It was a good day with members either following the watershed southwards as far as Loch Brandy or sticking to the right of

way route throughout. It was I am told, 250 years to the day since Lord Ogilvy's Regiment crossed here after the battle of Culloden, later to disband in Glen Clova. The outing to Glen Lochay was also attended by good weather and many hills were climbed on both sides of the glen, despite the rather short time available occasioned by a rather slow bus driver. The weather on the day of the Braeriach excursion was not so good with rain and mist, but despite this most of the party did climb the hill and had quite good views from the top.

The overnight walk was from Kinlochleven to Glen Nevis. It was a beautiful night with just a few patches of mist during the early morning when several parties saw brocken spectres. Everyone climbed at least one of the Mamores with at least one party climbing them all.

The drop in attendance mentioned in the first paragraph of this report has led to large losses being incurred. Out of 40 excursions, sixteen attracted less than 25 people and only three had more than forty (which used to be the average 20 years ago).

Graham Ewen

EXCURSIONS

1993

3 October	Linn of Dee to Blair Atholl (17)
24 October	Auchallater to Spital of Glenmuick (28)
13 November	Steplar Pass (23)
5 December	Clachnaben (28)

1994

9 January	Lochnagar (32)
30 January	Loch Lee (24)
19 February	Inverey (18)
13 March	Cockbridge (19)
24 April	Glas Tulaichan (30)
14 May	Schiehallion (33)
5 June	Cairnwell to Inverey (34)
25/26 June	Grey Corries/Creag Meagaidh (28)
28 August	Jocks Road (26)
17 September	Cairngorm Traverse (33)
9 October	Glen Feshie to Linn of Dee (32)
30 October	Ben Dorain (36)
26 November	Mount Battock (36)
11 December	Culardoch (28)

1995

15 January	Lochnagar (42)
5 February	Glen Clunie (27)
25 February	Glen Clova (18)
19 March	Linn of Dee (22)
23 April	Beinn a Bhuird (20)

13 May	Beinn Chabhair (11)
4 June	Cockbridge to Tomintoul (24)
24/25 June	Morvich to Affric (19)
27 August	Fungle or Fir Mounth (27)
10 September	Cairngorm Traverse (30)
1 October	Linn of Dee to Blair Atholl (22)
22 October	Glen Lyon (36)
11 November	Glen Prosen to Glen Clova (42)
3 December	Ben Vrackie (32)

1996

14 January	Lochnagar (47)
4 February	Morven (26)
25 February	Inverey (20)
16 March	Cairngorm (22)
21 April	Capel Mounth (32)
11 May	Glen Lochay (23)
1 June	Braeriach (27)
22/23 June	Mamores (22)

EASTER MEETS

1994	Dornie
1995	Spean Bridge
1996	Lochinver

WEEKENDS 1994 - 1996

This section of the Club's activities continues to flourish, but the fickleness of the weather experienced is only exceeded by the fickleness of numbers attending. The difficulties of booking the right amount of accommodation 12-18 months in advance has been mentioned before, and a policy requesting a sizeable deposit up front should help to reduce deficits from last minute cancellations. There were two major blips. A'Chuil Bothy failed to attract any takers in August 1994; are we becoming soft or does the (very) simple life not appeal any more? Carrbridge Bunkhouse had only three in March 1995, which in view of the toilet facilities was perhaps just as well. Craigellachie Lodge was a sell-out in March 1994.

Dundonnell/Sail Mhor in June 1995 was notable for the past lady President's final Munro. A group of loyal supporters entered the clouds at sea level, and continued to the requisite summits and back in continuous rain and minimal visibility. The current lady President's last Munro, Beinn Ime in August 1995, could not have been more of a contrast. A large gathering attended in tropical conditions - was it the prospect of a glass of champers at the top? Modesty forbids a full description of the degree of undress achieved.

Aite Cruinnichidh Backpackers Lodge, opposite Glen Spean Hotel (July 1994) can be recommended, even if it cannot be pronounced. It was a pity that a member wrote off his car on the switchback road alongside Loch Arkaig en route to Sgurr na Ciche; even there cars can come from the opposite direction. At Knockan in October 1994, we were indebted to the Grampian Speleological Group for accommodation, and relieved to discover that

this was above ground. Assynt is increasingly well provided for. We are booked into the new Inchnadamph Field Centre in October 1997, which is only 100 metres from licensed premises.

The Skywalker Independent Hostel at Portnalong also receives our recommendation. When we visited in May 1995 the weather was very variable - from light rain to continuous downpour. One useful tip is that the Sligachan Hotel will accept Visa or Access in payment of a pint of Murphy's if you leave your money at the hostel as I did. We filled the Coruisk Memorial Hut in July 1996. This outing was probably unique in as much as several normally stable Club members reported sighting a whale. So far no reports of pink elephants.

The end of the year outing has come by habit to be at Crianlarich Youth Hostel, chosen originally by certain members for its proximity to the charms of Inverarnan Hotel. 1996 and hopefully 1997 will be no exceptions. Join us later this year or in 1997, and be prepared to pay the deposit.

John Gibson

WEEKEND MEETS 1994 - 1996

1994

February	Muir
March	Newtonmore (Craigellachie Lodge)
May	Ossian YH
June	Dundonnell (Sail Mhor Croft)
July	Glen Spean (Aite Cruinnichidh Lodge)
August	A'Chuil Bothy
September	Morvich Outdoor Centre
October	Knockan
November	Crianlarich YH

1995

February	Muir
March	Carrbridge Bunkhouse
May	Skye (Skywalker Hostel, Portnalong)
June	Dundonnell (Sail Mhor Croft)
July	Knoydart (Inverie)
August	Arrochar
September	Arran
October	Ratagan YH
December	Crianlarich YH

1996

January	Muir
March	Achnashellach (Gerry Howkins Hostel)
May	Tongue YH
June	Culra Bothy
July	Skye (Coruisk Memorial Hut)
September	Torridon YH
December	Crianlarich YH

CLIMBING SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT

There were few official Club winter outings in 1994/95. However, individual members climbed several routes in the Cairngorms and further afield, covering a wide range of standards of difficulty. The summer of 1995, despite being one of the driest on record, saw little Club activity on the rock climbing front. Members who usually ran the weekly meets were unable to commit on a regular basis due to work commitments, although, once again, individual members managed to accomplish several worthwhile climbs.

This pattern continued through the winter of 1995/96, with no official Club winter climbing outings, but this summer has seen a much more satisfactory resurgence of interest. From the first week of May until the last week of July, members were active on the coast to the north of Cove, including those who had never climbed before, and those who needed reminding of former talents! These meets were highly successful, a factor which has been borne out by the number of times members have borrowed the Club climbing gear this year. At the start of the season, a new 11mm rope was purchased along with 2 quickdraws to aid the development of leading skills. These have been well used over the summer. Thanks must go to Graham Callander for his invaluable help in the running of these climbing sessions.

Stuart Stronach

THE LIBRARY

The library is now housed in Aberdeen University Library's Special Collections Department, the location of which is given along with a Catalogue elsewhere in this Journal. Whilst the move from 24 Albyn Place in May 1993 was not initially of the Club's choice, the new home has undoubtedly brought significant benefits to our collection. With the books now housed in a proper library we are in the fortunate position of benefiting from a location safe from the vagaries of the weather and people (!) where experienced staff, in particular Iain Beavan, are able to not only offer restoration advice but also to catalogue the entire collection. AUL staff were amazed at the breadth of our collection, which now stands at 793 individual books in addition to several Journals, pamphlets and old maps. Several of the older books are priceless not only in terms of their monetary value but also in their recording of Grampian's past.

An early priority after the initial settling-in was the conservation and restoration of some of these older books and it was particularly fitting that a bequest from our former Librarian, Jean Callendar was used to this end. AUL staff also offered advice on the binding of several extensive runs of other Clubs' journals and in the deposition of a collection of several hundred, vulnerable, glass photographic slides of views in Grampian and Scotland from earlier this century.

The recent cataloguing of the books into the AUL's computer system has greatly enhanced our knowledge of what the Club actually possesses and should any member wish a computer disk version (in Microsoft Word 6) of this it is available from the Librarian. It should be made clear that the whole Collection remains the property, and responsibility of the Club, that only Club members can borrow books, and that Aberdeen University only provide a place for the keeping of the books - though members of the University can refer to the books in the Library.

Ken Forbes