

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB

GENERAL MEETINGS

The 1996 Annual General Meeting was held on 27 November. There were no changes in the ranks of office-bearers.

The 1997 Annual General Meeting was held on 26 November. Richard Shirreffs was elected President in succession to Judy Middleton, at the same time retiring as Secretary after twenty-five years in that position. Eilidh Scobbie was elected Secretary in his place, though with an indication that she wished to serve only until a longer term successor could be found. Ken Thomson was elected to the vacant position of Vice-President. Subscription rates were increased for the first time since 1988.

The 1998 Annual General Meeting was held on 25 November. Ken Forbes demitted office as Librarian after five years in that position and Alex Hidalgo was elected in his place. Les Batt was elected Secretary to replace Eilidh Scobbie and Stuart Stronach was elected to fill the vacant position of Vice-President.

ANNUAL DINNERS

The 1996 Annual Dinner was held at the Elphinstone Hall, King's College, Old Aberdeen, Professor Seaton Baxter giving an illustrated talk entitled 'Reflections on the Cairngorms'.

The 1997 Annual Dinner was also held at the Elphinstone Hall, the talk on this occasion being given by the Club's own (inimitable) Neil Cromar on 'A lighthearted and personal look at Mountaineering' with superb slides.

The 1998 Annual Dinner saw a change of venue to the Amatola Hotel, Great Western Road, Aberdeen. Martin Moran entertained us with an illustrated talk on 'Mountain Adventures in North West Scotland.'

Richard Shirreffs

MEETS AND EXCURSIONS 1996 - 1998

The average attendance at excursions for the period covered by this journal was 27.4, about the same as for the previous period. The attendance for each one is given in the list at the end of this report.

The August 1996 outing from the Cairnwell car park to Spittal of Glenshee began overcast with mist on the hills but cleared later. About half the party went over the Cairnwell, Carn a' Gheoidh and Carn Bhinnein while most of the others reached Glas Maol, Creag Leacach and some of the smaller hills to the south. The Cairngorm traverse followed a period of very heavy rainfall which caused all the rivers and streams to be in full spate. This rather limited the options available on this overcast day. Approximately half the party walked through the Lairig Ghru while the other half went over Ben Macdhui. In contrast the next excursion enjoyed beautiful weather. Around half the party climbed Beinn Tulaichean and Cruach Ardrain, while the others climbed An Caisteal and Beinn a' Chroin. One member managed to do all four.

It was a very misty day on the traverse from Auchallater to Glen Muick. Most of the party went over Lochnagar but some preferred the 'low level' route via the Dubh Loch. The Cromdale Hills had a light covering of snow but the whole party completed the traverse from Bridge of Brown to Advie on a rather windy, cold but clear day. The last meet of the year was somewhat unusual in that the bus took us to the highest point on the road from

Rhynie to Upper Cabrach from where we climbed Buck of the Cabrach, and later Tap o' Noth from Howtown.

At Lochnagar in January 1997 the weather was very poor and few people managed to reach the top because of the near white-out conditions. Another poor day was experienced on Ben Rinnes with strong winds and mist on the higher reaches. The weather improved for the excursion to Mount Keen which was climbed from the Glen Esk side. It was a beautiful sunny day, the only difficulty being crossing the burns beyond the Queen's Well. It was back to misty conditions for the trip to the Lomond Hills, at least for the first part of the route from Scotlandwell over Bishop Hill and West Lomond. East Lomond was however, clear and we had good views for the latter half of the route. It made a change from our usual venues looking down on expanses of farmland with villages and small towns scattered about. High tea at the Lomond Hills Hotel in Freuchie was particularly memorable.

The Easter meet at the Inverve Hotel in Tyndrum had poor weather, so the 17 participants did little climbing. The excursion from Finzean to Tarfside took place on a beautiful day. All the party climbed Peter Hill to begin with, and from there some went on to Mount Battock, some followed the ridge westwards from Peter Hill as far as the Fungle track, while others went through the valley in between. On the traverse from Loch Muick to Crathie most of the party opted to cross over Lochnagar despite early mist, but this cleared away during the morning. At Ben Ledi we had a beautiful day. The President's Party traversed Stuc a' Chroin and Ben Vorlich but all the others opted to climb Ben Ledi and Ben Vane. One far-seeing member had arranged to have a taxi waiting for him at Ballimore, thus saving himself, what proved for the rest of us to be a rather long walk along the road to the Kingshouse Hotel where we had our tea.

The overnight excursion in 1997 was in the Cairngorms, followed by a barbecue at Muir Cottage to celebrate the 110th anniversary of the Club. It had been hoped that this would give members an opportunity to cross over Braeriach and Cairn Toul, a route that has generally proved too long for a normal day excursion, but unfortunately it turned out to be a rather poor night. Most of the party opted to go through the Lairig Ghru and got rather wet. A smaller number who went by Glen Feshie were luckier, where although it often threatened to rain, it stayed dry all night.

The Inverve to Spittal of Glenshee outing was on a fine dry day with all the tops clear. A wide variety of routes were followed, some people climbing An Socach, others Beinn Iutharn Mor and Beag, while others took the 'easy' route through between them to Loch nan Eun. The Cairngorm traverse took place on a beautiful day. Most of the party went over Beinn Macdhuil and from there either by Derry Cairngorm or Carn a' Mhaim. Rather poorer weather was experienced on Ben Chonzie, where although quite pleasant at glen level, the mist did not clear from the top of the hill until late afternoon, by which time everybody was well down.

From Glen Isla to Glen Clova we had a fine dry day with most of the party taking in the summit of Mayar and some doing Driesh as well. At Ben Vuirich we had a dry day but it was very misty on the tops. Despite this most of the party climbed the hill, but others opted for a low level walk, one party reaching as far as Loch Loch. On the Gordon Way we had fine clear weather and all the party followed the route from Suie Hill as far as the Mither Tap, from where our route descended to the Rowan Tree car park.

The first excursion of 1998 was Lochnagar as usual, and everyone who wanted to reached the top on a windy but pleasant day. It was misty at Cairnwell where a large party alighted at the Shan Spittal Bridge and did the round of Carn an Tuirc, Cairn of Claise and Glas Maol. Most of the others did Glas Maol and Creag Leacach from the car park. At the

Linn of Dee most members went up Glen Derry and climbed Beinn a' Chaorainn returning over Beinn Bhreac on what was a reasonably fine day. One party climbed Carn Bhac. The traverse of Schiehallion took place on what was a good day at lower altitudes but persistently foggy on the top of the hill. This was the Club's first winter excursion so far into Perthshire for very many years, but there was very little snow.

The 1998 Easter Meet was held at Spean Bridge, where once again the hotel offered us very favourable terms. It was a weekend of rather mixed weather, but a considerable amount of climbing was done. One party climbed Ben Nevis and traversed the Carn Mor Dearg arête in snow conditions. Other climbs done included a traverse of the Grey Corries, Creag Meaghaidh and Meall Teanga. About 16 people stayed in the hotel and 12 in the Grey Corries Lodge Bunkhouse.

The first excursion after Easter was to Beinn a' Bhuird from Alltdourie Cottage. It was a fine day but a number of people were slightly late in getting back, having been held up by the amount of soft deep snow on the plateau. We had beautiful weather on the excursion from Auchallater to Glen Muick. The President's Party went over Cairn Taggart and Broad Cairn, but most of the others did Cairn Taggart and Lochnagar. Only 11 people went to Bridge of Orchy, the poorest attendance for 30 years on what was a beautiful day. One party left the bus at Tyndrum and climbed Ben Oss and Beinn Dubhchraig. The main group went to Beinn a' Chreachain and Beinn Achaladair, with some managing to do Beinn an Dothaidh as well.

The overnighter gave the choice of climbing either in the Fannichs or in the Beinn Dearg group. Only one party chose the latter with the rest getting off at Loch a' Bhraoin to climb some of the Fannichs, one group actually managing all except the most westerly two. The night was made memorable by the spectacular thunder and lightning storm from midnight until around 4am.

The excursion in August to Jock's Road was on a rather wet day with mist on top. The majority followed the Jock's Road path for most of its route, but some got off the bus at the Cairnwell car park and went over Cairn of Claise and Tom Buidhe. Another group alighted at the Old Glen Clunie Lodge and went from there over Carn an Tuirc and the Tolmount. The Cairngorm traverse started off in rather poor weather with mist on the tops and very windy and cold, but the day improved and by afternoon was quite pleasant. The most popular route was over Ben Macdhuib and Derry Cairngorm, but others visited Loch Avon, some went to Braeriach and Cairn Toul and one party went through the Lairig an Laoigh. On this occasion a large number of people were seriously overdue at the bus, these being the parties who attempted the latter two routes.

The next outing was from Glen Esk to Glen Clova. In the morning it looked as if we were in for a really foul day, but the weather cleared up. Almost everyone followed the route along Loch Lee and from there to the Falls of Unich and Falls of Damp and from there westwards by various routes towards Loch Brandy. At least one group found time to take in Ben Tirran, the Corbett which lies above Loch Wharral. The excursion to Beinn Mholach was intended to be a traverse from Kinloch Rannoch to Dalnaspidal, but high rivers and doubts about bridges led us to leave the bus at Kinloch Rannoch. All but two of the party climbed the hill on what was a rather pleasant day.

The excursion from Dorback Lodge to Tomintoul was a rather mixed day, very wintry higher up, with a covering of snow. Some members climbed Geal Charn while others contented themselves with various low level routes. Snow was also present on the last excursion of this report. From the Forest of Birse most members went on to Gannoch and from there joined the Fir Mounth track which they followed as far as Glen Tanar. One

party went through the Fungle route, climbing Carnferg on the way.

The end of 1998 marks the end of a long association going back over fifty years between the Club and three generations of the Duguid family, bus hirers, following the decision of Sandy Duguid to retire from business. The business has been taken over by Whyte's of Newmachar. What implications, if any, this change may have for the Club remains to be seen.

Graham Ewen

EXCURSIONS

1996

25 August	Cairnwell to Spittal of Glenshee (28)
7 September	Cairngorm Traverse (41)
29 September	Cruach Ardrain (25)
20 October	Auchallater to Glenmuick (37)
9 November	Cromdale Hills (27)
8 December	Buck of the Cabrach (35)

1997

12 January	Lochnagar (43)
1 February	Ben Rinnes (27)
23 February	Mount Keen (26)
16 March	Lomond Hills (25)
20 April	Finzean to Tarfside (27)
11 May	Loch Muick to Crathie (27)
31 May	Ben Ledi (22)
21/22 June	Coylumbridge to Inverey (31)
24 August	Inverey to Spittal of Glenshee (25)
13 September	Cairngorm Traverse (29)
5 October	Ben Chonzie (24)
26 October	Glen Isla to Glen Clova (31)
15 November	Ben Vurich (23)
7 December	Gordon Way (33)

1998

11 January	Lochnagar (39)
31 January	Cairnwell (25)
22 February	Linn of Dee (14)
15 March	Schiehallion (25)
25 April	Beinn a' Bhuird (22)
10 May	Auchallater to Glenmuick (19)
30 May	Bridge of Orchy (11)
20/21 June	Fannichs/Beinn Dearg group (15)
23 August	Jock's Road (28)
13 September	Cairngorm Traverse (40)
4 October	Glen Esk to Glen Clova (22)
24 October	Beinn Mholach (23)
15 November	Dorback Lodge to Tomintoul (35)
6 December	Forest of Birse to Aboyne (27)

EASTER MEETS

1997	Tyndrum
1998	Spean Bridge

WEEKENDS 1997 - 1998

Since the introduction of Weekend Meets to the Club programme in 1979 there has been a wide variety of accommodation and venues used - ranging from hostels to hotels with a few bothies and bunkhouses thrown in for good measure. I believe that in those fledgling days doubts were expressed about the viability of holding regular weekend meets, but I hope that the continuing successes of the meets since then have erased those doubts and shown that weekend meets are truly a core function of the Club, offering an opportunity for Club members to visit and explore a wide variety of locations around the Highlands and Islands (and sometimes further afield) and also giving newer members to the Club a chance to get to know the hills in the company of more established members.

Since the last Journal there has been a change of Weekend Meets Convener, with John Gibson standing down and Geoff Cumming taking on the role, but John's unique sense of humour has been missed in the bothies and bunkhouses and we will be trying to arrange venues that may tempt him along again (but maybe not to the bothies !).

The rest of the weekend meets committee remain basically the same - Judy Middleton, Dave Plant, Ian Bryce and Derek Beverley - but for 1999 Derek is taking a sabbatical and a relatively new member to the Club, Drew McMahon is taking his place (I suspect that Derek is arranging something special for the millennium !)

One recent feature of the weekend meets has been a joint Club Easter Meet with the weekend meets people going to the same venue as the official Club Easter Meets Party i.e. those who stay in hotels rather than hostels. In 1997 this was at Tyndrum where one of the hotels and the local bunkhouse were utilised and in 1998 the venue was Glen Spean, with accommodation in the Spean Bridge Hotel and the Grey Corries Bunkhouse. We will be continuing with this policy in the foreseeable future, as we believe that it widens the community of the Club, and gives an opportunity to some of the newer Club members to meet and socialise with some of the more senior members. In 1999 the joint meet is at Kinlochewe, and reservations have been made at both the Hotel and the adjoining Bunkhouse.

Highlights of the 1997 meets were undoubtedly the trip to Mull in July with the boat trip in ideal weather to Iona and Staffa, and in December the Christmas barbecue at the Shelter Stone where, on a beautiful clear night, some Club members were fortunate to be entertained by an impressive display of shooting stars. 1998 was full of highlights - Alpine conditions in Glencoe, Dave Plant's wild ceilidh on Rum, Ian Bryce's cultural weekend in Pitlochry, and sharing the hostel at Loch Ossian with Windswept the stag. (We did find time to climb a few hills as well)

Something that we are hoping to make a regular feature of the weekend meets calendar is a week long meet. In 1998 Judy Middleton kindly organised a week in Skye and for 1999 Brian Davey is busy planning a trip to Ireland. As Brian works for the Met Office we encourage him to come to as many meets as possible and it seems to have worked - we nearly always have good weather !

If any of this sounds of interest why not come along and join us.

Geoff Cumming

WEEKEND MEETS 1997 - 1998

1997

January	Glencoe	Torren Cottages
February	Muir of Inverey	Club cottage
March	Newtonmore	Independent hostel
April	Tyndrum	Independent hostel
May	Cannich	SYHA Hostel
June	Glen Nevis	Steall Hut
July	Mull	SYHA Hostel
August	Glen Etive	The Smiddy Hut
September	Loch Lochy	SYHA Hostel
October	Inchnadamph	Independent Hostel
November	Crianlarich	SYHA Hostel
December	Shelter Stone	

1998

January	Glencoe	Torren Cottages
February	Muir of Inverey	Club cottage
March	Crianlarich	SYHA Hostel
April	Corpach	Snowgoose Bunkhouse
May	Rum	Kinloch Castle Hostel
June	Glen Affric	Strawberry Cottage & SYHA Hostel
July	Skye	The BMC hut at Glen Brittle
August	Kinlochleven	West Highland Bunkhouse
September	Pitlochry	SYHA Hostel & Guest House
October	Carbisdale Castle	SYHA Hostel
November	Achnashellach	Gerry Howkin's Hostel
December	Loch Ossian	SYHA Hostel

ROCK AND ICE CLIMBING

I wrote my first report for the Club journal back in 1991. Then, climbing was very much a minority activity undertaken by a few members, and with limited ambitions. The report gave a potted history of climbing within the Club, noting the pioneering exploits of members in the early part of the century. It concluded by stating that although we would no longer be forging new routes of our own, we were still as active as possible and having fun. In the space of only seven years, it's nice to have been able to render the first half of that last statement obsolete!

This year, 1998, has seen probably the most active programme of climbing activities in the Club's history, the highlight of which (from a publicity point of view) was the first ascent of a couple of new rock climbs on the coast south of Aberdeen. One of these, 'The Cairngorm Club's Other Crack' received a mass ascent by members on a Tuesday evening meet, and has since been mentioned in 'High' magazine's review of the Scottish climbing year. The name is a reference to the oldest recorded climb in the north east of Scotland, 'Cairngorm Club Crack', on Clachnaben, first climbed by W. Garden in 1901.

When I became Climbing Sub-Committee Convener back in 1991, we were fortunate

to have received such staunch support and financial assistance from the Committee, enabling the purchase of the climbing equipment we required. Activities comprised almost entirely of weekly meets in the summer and the very occasional winter adventure. During the intervening years, I have been very grateful for the regular assistance provided by the more experienced Club members. We have been lucky in that just as one climber has moved on, another has become available to help on a weekly basis. These members, Peter Bellarby, Nigel Eastmond, Graham Callander and Hal Taylor, have been essential in allowing the continuation of climbing activities. Stephen Kirkpatrick is the latest club member who has generously given his time on a regular basis to help other Club members literally learn the ropes. It has been largely due to Stephen's influence that this last year has been by far the most successful in the Club's recent climbing history.



Diane Guilianotti on Central Buttress, Lochnagar (Grade II) 1.11.98

We were, and continue to be, very fortunate in that we are the only climbing club in Aberdeen with access to the Aberdeen City Council climbing wall at Summerhill Community Education Centre. This allowed a regular get-together of members over the 1997/8 winter which was, unfortunately, too poor to have allowed any winter climbing activities of note. Following on from the Summerhill sessions, outdoor climbing started, as has become usual, in the first week of May. Despite a rather poor summer weather-wise, only a couple of weeks were lost as a complete washout, with a few wet evenings becoming devoted to technical training rather than actual climbing. Attendances at these meets rose to such a level that it became necessary to purchase additional climbing equipment, topped up by Stephen's personal spare kit. Many of the attendees were new to the Club, attracted by the climbing as well as (or in some cases, instead of) the walking activities, although a few 'well-kent' faces made welcome reappearances. One of the most satisfying outcomes of the regular activity was that several climbers progressed to leading others up climbs, thus enabling the large numbers to be catered for without excessive queuing time. In that respect, Diane Guilianotti has been one of the star performers of the summer!

On top of the weekly evening meets, Stephen managed to arrange regular trips to the mountains at weekends, with ascents made of Savage Slit in Coire an Lochain, Crystal Ridge in Coire Sputan Dearg and Ardverikie Wall on Binnein Shuas to name but a few. Additionally, an unofficial climbing meet took several members to the Penine Alps, where a collection of 4000 m peaks were climbed during a couple of weeks of variable weather. More recently, as the nights have drawn in and outdoor evening climbing has been curtailed, we have shifted to the dubious pleasures of the Beach Leisure Centre climbing wall, where we have continued to attract new members. The weekly visits to the beach are generally followed by a quick pint in the pub, helping to develop a good social scene away from the climbing itself.

Back at the start of November, five of us managed an ascent of Central Buttress on Lochnagar, under rather tricky early season conditions, which provided a rather extended introduction to winter climbing for some. Then again, Cairngorm climbing tradition does dictate a finish in the dark!

A new climbing sub-committee was formed following the 1998 AGM. Now with five members (Stuart Stronach, Stephen Kirkpatrick, Diane Giulianotti, Anne Cassidy and Andy Lane), this is the largest the sub-committee has been since it was first formed back in 1988. We had a Christmas night out in early December, a Hogmanay trip to Gairloch (where, despite talking a good climb during the celebrations on the 31st, the planned winter climbing on the 1st was reduced to a short rock climb near the village by two of our party with smaller hangovers than most! Six of us recovered enough to climb a Corbett beside Loch Maree on the 2nd, just to prove that we can climb hills as well as cliff faces!). Finally, plans are afoot for an April sport climbing trip to the limestone crags of the Ardeche region of southern France.

A positive pointer to the future is that amongst our regulars this coming year we have at least six who will be undertaking training (and hopefully assessment) towards the Single Pitch Supervisors Award, the climbing qualification most appropriate for assisting in the Club's climbing activities. No longer will the Club be dependent on one or two of us with the experience to look after others. We are no longer a minority activity - climbing in the Club has never been better!

Stuart Stronach

THURSDAY WALKS

The monthly Thursday walks continue to be well supported, and are very sociable. Unlike the long established Meets and Excursions where members select their own routes in a set area, participants follow the route previously planned by the leader. Transport is by private car and the walks, lasting four to five and a half hours are either C (circular) or AB (from A to B). The list below indicates the wide range of walks done during the last two years, including two along sections of magnificent coastline within easy reach of Aberdeen. Part of the enjoyment is in diversions to castle ruins, Pictish Symbol Stones or other items of interest such as the Rocking Stone on Creag Mullach south of Cambus o' May pictured overleaf.

Bill Alexander

1997

January	C	Kincorth Hill - Tullos Hill - Nigg Bay
February	C	Kemnay - Burnhervie - Cot-town Wood then
	C	Leschangie quarries



The Rocking Stone

March	AB	Green Hill - Cairn William - Pitfichie Hill
April	C	Drumcholzie - Hunt Hill - Cairns of Cul nan Gad
May	AB	Cruden Bay to near Boddam
June	C	The Socach from Edinglassie
July	C	Ballater - Sheil of Glentanar - Am Mullach
August	C	Hermit Seat - Watch Craig - Oxen Craig
September	C	Deecastle - Slai na Gour - Craigræ Beg
October	C	Strathfinella Hill
November	AB	Aboyne - Baudy Meg - Old Glentanar School
December	C	Newseat - stone circle at Easter Aquhorthies then Don and Urie at Inverurie

1998

January	C	Persley - Brig o' Balgownie - Broad Hill
February	C	Prop of Ythsie and stone circle then
	AB	Tarves to Udney Green
March	C	Cairn-mon-earn then another C, Mongour Hill
April	C	Coyles of Muick - Glen Girnock
May	AB	Portsoy to Cullen
June	C	Invercauld - Auchtavan - Felagie
July	C	Loch Lee - Burmt Hill - Cairn Caidloch
August	C	Esson's - Gordon Way - Little Oxen Craig - Craigshannoch
September	C	White Cow Wood - Loudon Wood - Drinnie's Observatory
October	C	Glen of Drumtochty - Goyle Hill
November	C	Nordic Ski Centre, Huntly - Bin Forest
December	C	Lumphanan - Kincardine O' Neil

THE LIBRARY

The library continues to be a popular Club resource amongst the more sedentary members. The collection is housed in Special Collections, University of Aberdeen, Old Aberdeen, from where, despite the somewhat restricted opening hours, borrowing continues at a rather greater pace than at the Club's winter indoor meets. New accessions have again covered a wide variety of topics with some emphasis on our local hills. The cataloguing of the collection has finally been completed in the last few months with the recording of our large collection of Journals and ephemera. These listings are all available on the University's online catalogue which will soon be accessible on the World Wide Web. The Club's WWW site will also carry this list, but members can always refer to the comprehensive list in the last issue of the CCJ, Number 104, and to the Club's Newsletter which reports more recent acquisitions.

Ken Forbes

