

IN MEMORIAM

The Club records with regret the death of the following members:

Ernle Beyts (OL 1973)
John C. Elgie (O 1994)
Muriel Fisher (A 1975)
Ada A. Graham (OL 1943)
Williamina Hay (OL 1931)
Kathleen Hetherington (A 1982)
David Levie (O 1984)
Edward I. McDougall (O 1952)
Archibald M. McGregor (OL 1947)
Robert A. Ruddiman (A 1979)
Alexander Tewnion (O 1947)
Harold Watt (OL 1967)
Charlotte H. Wisely (OL 1933)
William Wright (OL 1950)

Many of the above were members for a long time and had served on the Committee. Some current Club members will have affectionate memories of them.

ERNLE BEYTS

Ernle Beyts died on 18th September 2003, at the age of 87. He joined the Club in 1973, joining his wife, Edna, who had been a member for some time. By then, Ernle had been a diabetic for well over 30 years, so that Edna was not only his companion, but also the 'monitor' of his health on the hill. Sadly, Edna's own health failed, and she was no longer able to continue hill-walking. However, Ernle, by now an Ordinary Life member of the Club, was by no means ready to give up the hills, so others in the Club kept the necessary 'eye' on him.

Ernle's determination to 'bag Munros' had him attending bus meets and overnight excursions until he was past 70; and that included the long overnighter from Dundonnell to Kinlochewe via Beinn Tarsuinn on a glorious June 'night'. He joined in a memorable weekend meet to Knoydart in the early 1980s, and managed (with some of the weight of his food carried for him - we tend to forget that standard 'dried packets' don't suit diabetics!) to walk in to Barrisdale. The next day he was thrilled to reach the top of Ladhar Bheinn. His first solo 'wilderness experience' came the next day, when he was 'sent' via the stalkers' path to Loch Quoich; the rest of the group carrying his bags via the Loch Hourm path back to the cars and then picking him up. He had received STRICT advice on food intake, and knew that we'd find

him whatever, and enjoyed the stillness and isolation that so many of us (who can, and do, routinely walk alone in our Scottish hills) value enormously.

Professionally, Ernle was a librarian, but a man of many interests and talents, from gardening to playing the flute. He achieved medals for well-controlled diabetes lasting 50 and then 60 years - at the time of his death he was close to 70 years on! Ernle was a Quaker, and on a Club meet in Perthshire was observed standing on a 'quaking bog' - he 'quaked'! The Club was well represented at his Memorial Meeting in late September.

Ruth Payne

JOHN ELGIE

John was an experienced and accomplished mountaineer, with a keen sense of adventure and an immense sense of fun, and it was a privilege to have known him.

Originally from Buckinghamshire, John joined the RAF at an early age and travelled the world with them before moving to Plymouth where he developed a love for antiques and diving, gathering an interesting collection of maritime artefacts. Following his time in Devon, John was employed by Marconi as a telecommunications engineer, and travelled throughout the Middle East and North Africa, before settling in Aberdeenshire where he established a guiding company specialising in long, wild treks across the Scottish Highlands. However, realising that the guiding business was taking the enjoyment out of his hobby, John started a gardening business instead and saved the hills for pleasure. He soon found that he really loved being a gardener; it fitted well with his strong feelings about environmental issues. It also gave him the space to rekindle his love for the hills and allowed him to spend more time with his family, and to exercise his talent as a dog trainer, another facet to John's full and active life.

John was an active Club member, enjoying many of the Club's activities, from climbing on the Aberdeen sea cliffs, to barbecuing hamburgers at the Shelter Stone during the annual Cairngorm Traverse. He particularly enjoyed the camaraderie of the Weekend Meets, where his sense of fun and endless enthusiasm was an inspiration to others. On occasion, though, John's good humour wasn't always apparent, and it was sometimes joked that he had spent too long in the sun and sand to really enjoy the delights of the Scottish bogs and the unpredictable weather. I remember in particular an especially wet and windy round of the Fisherfield Six which didn't have the same appeal as a dry Shenavall Bothy. But an incident with the gas stove left John with no air in his inflatable sleeping mat, resulting in a sleepless and rather grumpy night before a hasty retreat the next day to a warm car and a good laugh at Corrie Hallie.

John's sense of fun was never more apparent than on a Club trip to Rum, when an amusing incident with fire might have easily led to the destruction of

Kinloch Castle, as the rest of us were far too helpless with laughter to lend a hand to extinguish the flames. Fortunately no damage was done, and it didn't prevent John from joining in the laughter before completing a round of the Rum Cuillins.

John was a knowledgeable and skilled climber who selflessly gave his time to instruct and lead others, but though climbing was his first love he just enjoyed being in the hills, having fun, in the company of friends. He died as a result of injuries sustained in an avalanche on Lochnagar and with his death many people have lost a great friend.

Geoff Cumming

KATHLEEN HETHERINGTON

Kathleen died, aged 58, on April 1st 2004 after a short illness. She had been a Club member for many years following in the footsteps of her husband, John. Kathleen trained in PE at 'Dumf' and worked at Aberdeen University, before marrying John, whom she met here. Latterly she taught PE, especially at Donaldson's School for the Deaf in Edinburgh. She had many interests and skills, from sport and Scottish country dancing to music, and of course her love of the hills.

Although she and John have lived in Edinburgh for many years, Kathleen was one of the original group of Club mums for whom Eddie Martin set up the Muir July Family Week. Kathleen, along with Gill Shirreffs, Judy Middleton and Shelagh Lawson and their respective children, spent a number of these 'weeks', encouraging the young, keen and not so keen, up their first Munros, and spending relaxing hot summer days around Muir. She kept us all on our toes but always with good humour.

Kathleen was always good company on the hill and was especially pleased to walk with those of us who did not move at speed! She enjoyed getting out and away from busy city life, into the peace of the mountains. In addition to the Family Weeks Kathleen also came on some of the early Weekend Meets, and she and John regularly attended the Club Dinner.

She leaves her husband John, and sons Callum (keen Munroist and Club member) and Thomas.

Gill Shirreffs

SANDY TEWNION

Sandy Tewnion, one of the hardy breed of outdoor characters forged over the years on the granite anvil of the Cairngorm mountains, died at his home in Dollar in April 2003. He taught biology at Dollar Academy for 20 years from the early 1960s.

Sandy was one of three Aberdeen brothers who conducted a campaign of exploratory climbing in the Cairngorms in the 1930s and 40s, when it was still something of an adventure even to penetrate into their craggy recesses. One brother

emigrated to Canada, becoming President of the Alpine Club of Canada; a second died in a blizzard of exceptional savagery that engulfed his party above Loch Ossian in December 1951.

Sandy came to wider notice in a characteristically distinctive way. While on leave during the war, and walking alone on the cloud-blanketed plateau of Ben Macdui to study dotterel, he had a terrifying encounter with the Great Grey Man. Sandy brought the meeting to a close by firing three shots from his Service revolver into the mist. Anyone less likely to have invented such a tale, or to be subject to the fears or imaginings that might give rise to mountain spectres, it would be hard to envisage: but no-one who heard Sandy describe the incident was left in any doubt of its reality for him. Sightings of the Great Grey Man seem to have been few and far between since the War.

Later in the war he suffered severe leg wounds that left him lame and in pain for the rest of his life. Despite this handicap Sandy continued to walk the Scottish mountains, and to study and photograph their wildlife. He made a real contribution to our knowledge of mountain hare, dotterel, and snow bunting, and contributed finely illustrated articles and notes to a range of journals and magazines. It was a measure of his enthusiasm that he was able to convert me and several equally sceptical friends, who had joined his school Natural History Society at Dollar in the hopes of gaining access through Sandy to bigger and further mountains, to the joys of counting ducks and trapping spiders around the Ochils.

On first acquaintance Sandy appeared the dourest of dour Aberdonians. His withering stare and gruff sarcasm could cow any unruly pupil. But that granitic exterior concealed a man of much kindness, wry humour, and intense feeling for the mountains, islands, and wildlife of Scotland. His compelling blue eyes shone with a light that seemed drawn from the wide winter skies of the Cairngorms. For many friends and former pupils who held him in high regard and affection, memories of Sandy will always be inseparable from a vision of the inspiring spaciousness of those high plateaux and the plunge of their remote crag-rimmed corries.

Bob Aitken

HAROLD WATT

The death of Harold Watt in Cambridge in December 2003 brings to the end a long family association with the Club, the printing industry and Aberdeen. Harold's father, Theodore Watt, and his uncle, Edward Watt, who both joined the Club in 1911-12, were eminent local men - Theodore a master printer and Edward Provost of Aberdeen in 1935. Harold joined the Club in 1967, the same year that his brother Alan became Club President, and Harold himself became Vice-President in 1973 and President in 1976.

After wartime service as a pilot, and afterwards training as a printer, Harold

joined Aberdeen University Press in 1948. He took a professional interest in the appearance of the Club's *Journal*, and helped Sheila Murray design the President's Badge of Office. On the hill, he was famed for the same precision, returning to the bus within a minute of the Meet Secretary's appointed hour.

Elizabeth Hardy writes:

I enjoyed the pleasure of Harold's company on a number of Club Meets. He had joined the Club in 1967, but his knowledge of and interest in the hills, particularly the Cairngorms, began many years earlier. He recalled the days when one could take a morning train from Aberdeen to Grantown, for example, cycle in for a hill walk, then return to Aberdeen in the evening with the added comfort of the dining car.

He rarely missed a Meet and for some years was accompanied by his wife Betty. He enjoyed the overnight excursions even when the weather left much to be desired. In 1983 he underwent heart by-pass surgery and only six months later was able to tackle the traverse of Glen Tilt. He was proud to be President, continuing his family's involvement with the Club. His sense of humour was much appreciated at Club dinners.

After Betty died he later married again, exchanging the Scottish hills for Cambridgeshire, where he enjoyed another of his interests, music, attending many concerts.

Robbie Middleton, Hut Custodian, reports a last word:

Shortly after our initial appeal to members for financial assistance to renovate Muir of Inverey, I received a letter from Past President of the Cairngorm Club, Dr Harold Watt, from his home in Cambridge. I had been away over Christmas and unfortunately did not hear of his sudden death in December. I therefore replied to him, thanking him for offering us his Christmas heating allowance bonus from Mr Brown towards the proposed works to be carried out at Muir. What a practical idea!

It was a shock to receive a call from Muriel Watt, telling me that Harold had died on his way home from church in early December. She intimated that she knew of his wish to help with Muir and asked if she could send the cheque directly to me. I little thought that the accompanying letter would contain a lovely last word from Harold to share with all his old friends in the club. Muriel copied what Harold had written in his diary just four days before his sudden and unexpected death:

"I have written a note, promising a £160 gift as a contribution to there refurbishing of Muir, as a modest return for what in sheer enjoyment the Cairngorm Club has given me."

Muriel closed, *"He was such a happy man!"* Thank you, Harold.