

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB

GENERAL MEETINGS

Since the last journal in 2001, there have been two Special General Meetings. The first was on 26th November 2003, when a motion to amend the Constitution to include a new Office Bearer position of Communications Secretary, was unanimously approved. The position relates to communications in a broad sense, but in particular covers the production of the Newsletter and the management of the website, as the latter has gained increasing significance in this electronic age and has become an essential marketing tool for the Club.

The second SGM, which was held on 31st March 2004, brought the unanimous approval of constitutional amendments which have radically altered the legal status of the Club. The Club is now a non-profit-making organisation and, as such, can obtain Inland Revenue recognition as a Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC). The change in legal status came about upon the recommendation of the Treasurer, Derek Pinches, against the background of the fundraising initiative in connection with the Muir refurbishment project. Donations made toward the project now should be able to attract Gift Aid tax relief. Future additional financial benefits may also flow from this change in status.

At the AGM on 21st November 2001, vacancies in the Office Bearer positions were filled as follows: Geoff Cumming was elected as Vice-President; Fred Belcher as Climbing Secretary; Derek Beverley as Weekend Meets Secretary and Anne Cassidy as Secretary. The following were elected to the vacant Ordinary Committee positions: Marjory Ewan, Joyce Ritchie, Adrian Scott, Gill Shirreffs, Zöe Šokec and Stan Urbaniak.

At the AGM on 27th November 2002, all existing Office Bearers were re-elected and vacancies in Ordinary Committee member positions were filled by Kevin Bannister, Neil Gauld and Andy Lawson.

At the AGM on 26th November 2003, Ian Bryce was appointed President and other vacant Office Bearer positions were filled as follows: Eilidh Scobbie as Vice-President; Andy Lawson as Bus Meets Secretary; Kevin Bannister as Climbing Secretary and Garry Wardrope as Communications Secretary. Ordinary Committee member vacancies were filled by Tim Walmsley, Jean Robinson and Ken Mills.

ANNUAL DINNERS

The 2001 Annual Dinner was held in the Jarvis Amatola and a talk was given by Bob Reid of the SMC on 'A Winter Traverse of the Cuillin Ridge'. The 2002 Annual Dinner was held in the Jarvis Amatola and a talk was given by nutritionalist, Dr. Chris Fenn, on 'Eating to Climb Everest'. The 2003 Annual Dinner was held in the Aberdeen Northern Hotel. John McKenzie, President of the Mountaineering Council of Scotland, gave a talk on 'Climbs in the Northwest Highlands'.

Anne Cassidy
Secretary

MEETS AND EXCURSIONS

Below is the final report from Graham Ewen, who retired as Bus Meets Secretary at the November 2003 Annual General Meeting, after no fewer than 36 years of service. Such a period of effort over Sunday early morning rises, the Scottish bus and hotel systems, late returnees from the hill, complaints over supper menus, and what Graham, in his first report, called the 'economic rate' of providing bus seats, should not go unremarked.

Over the years the *CCJ* accounts of bus, overnight and Easter meets give little away about the activities of their author; and it was sometimes observed on the bus that the Meets Secretary (in conformity with current MC of S safety guidelines, and like his successor) was a facilitator rather than a leader. Thus, his comings and goings during a meet tended to be shrouded in some obscurity. Yet, at the end of the day, he usually appeared well acquainted with conditions on the hill, and on cross-country excursions, though last to leave the bus, he was mysteriously sitting in his usual seat when the rest of us clocked in. Things were a little different on the return journeys; Graham no doubt felt it his duty to see that the hotel bar was ready for the Club's custom.

Graham has faithfully recorded bus and other meets over the years in this *Journal*, but only the Committee was fully privy to his statistical system, which could tell you that the average bus meet attendance was 35.2 in 1979, or that we had visited Lochnagar 27 times in the last 15 years, 75% of the time in bad weather.

During Graham's reign, although roads have improved, changes in the regulations over bus drivers' hours, have made life more difficult - bus meets once ventured as far afield as Ben Lomond! The numbers, patterns and behaviour of Club members have also changed enormously - no longer are the ladies allowed sole access to the bus to get changed. But, throughout this time, behind the scenes, Graham was always there, on the telephone, dealing with his coloured forms, and planning the next dozen meets for the Committee. The Club owes him an enormous debt, and we offer sincere thanks from all those who have enjoyed bus meets over the past decades.

Ken Thomson

EXCURSIONS 2001-2003

The average attendance for the period covered by this journal was 21.8, a drop of 1.5 from the average of the previous period. The attendance for each is given in the list at the end of this report.

The first excursion to take place in the period covered by this report was the Cairngorm Traverse in September 2001. On arrival in Speyside the hills were very much covered in cloud and the day did not look very promising. However as the morning progressed the clouds cleared and it became a very pleasant day. Most members stayed on the bus as far as the car park on Cairngorm and all the Munros between there and Derry Lodge were climbed by at least one party. One member

went through the Lairig Ghru. In October between Crathie and Glen Muick it was a bit windy, but most of the party traversed Lochnagar, one or two of them ascending by the Black Spout. The November excursion to the Cromdale Hills turned out to be a very wet and windy day. Nevertheless the party disembarked as planned at Bridge of Brown and traversed the Cromdale Hills finishing off at Advie rather wet for the experience. At Auchallater in December the day started rather windy and later on became rather wet, but a wide variety of hills were still climbed on both sides of Glen Clunie, some members even going as far as the Tolmount. This trip finished with a ceilidh in Braemar Golf Club.

On Lochnagar in January 2002 it was a rather cold and windy day. Most members ascended Lochnagar via the Ladder and returned by the Glas Allt. A number of members climbed the Black Spout. There was a very disappointing turn out for the excursion to Clachnaben in February with only ten in attendance. It was a very pleasant day and all present ascended the hill by the new path from Glen Dye. Most people extended their day by going west to the Hill of Edendocher before descending to Charr, from where they made their way back to the bus along the estate



At the Summit of Little Wirren

road. Having failed to get to Loch Lee in February of 2001 it was decided to attempt this excursion again in March 2002. Alas, it was not to be. When we arrived in Edzell it was snowing heavily, and it was deemed inadvisable to take the bus any further. The bulk of the party plodded through the snow to the top of the Hill of Wirren from there. Others went on shorter low-level walks.

In April the excursion to Glas Tulaichean turned out to be rather wet and cold. The main party ascended from Glen Lochsie and descended via Loch nan Eun. In

May the customary excursion to Perthshire was on this occasion to Ben Vorlich and Stuc a' Chroin. Despite the fact that it was a very wet day, both these hills were climbed by the President's Party. Others called it a day after climbing Ben Vorlich itself. One party persuaded the bus driver to take them halfway down Loch Lubnaig, and then made their way over the low pass which leads from there into Glen Ample. The June excursion was advertised as a trip to Beinn a' Bhuird but in fact the President's Party went to Ben Avon via the Slugain Glen and the Sneck. It was a wet morning but later cleared up. The descent was made into Glen Gairn and from there returning to Alltdourie via the Bealach Dearg.

Only eight people turned out in August for the excursion from Auchallater to Glen Muick, almost certainly the lowest attendance ever recorded on a Club bus meet. It was a beautiful day and seven of the party traversed both Cairn Taggart and Lochnagar, while one lone member went over Cairn Bannoch and Broad Cairn. The good weather continued on the Cairngorm Traverse in September. The bulk of the party made their way to the top of Ben Macdui by various routes, some going on to Derry Cairngorm. One party went down to the Shelter Stone, thereafter climbing Beinn Mheadhoin. In October we had another good day for the excursion from Glen Esk to Glen Clova. The most popular route on this occasion was over Cairn Caidloch and from there westwards to Muckle Cairn. From here a detour was made southwards to take in Ben Tirran before turning north again to Green Hill to pick up the track which leads down into the glen past Loch Brandy. The run of good weather continued in November for the excursion to Ben Rinnes. The starting point was in Glen Rinnes and the entire party followed a much improved footpath from there to the summit. From there the route was northwards, eventually crossing the main Aberlour to the Grantown-on-Spey road, to pick up the Speyside Way, which was then followed into Aberlour where the bus was waiting. The last excursion of the year was to the Linn of Dee followed by a ceilidh at Braemar Golf Club. A variety of walks were undertaken on a rather pleasant day, the most ambitious being a traverse of Derry Cairngorm.

As usual the first excursion of 2003 was to Lochnagar in January. It was a rather overcast day with snow lying right down as far as the Falls of Muick but it was melting rapidly and by the end of the afternoon all the snow below around 2,000ft had melted. Most of the party set off to climb Lochnagar by the Ladder route, but some of them diverted to climb the Black Spout. It was here that an avalanche took place that resulted in the tragic death of John Elgie, one of our members, whose obituary is on page 179. In February the excursion was to Ben Wyvis. Following a string of low attendances on previous February excursions a self-drive minibus was used instead of hiring a coach. The experiment proved quite successful, the attendance being the best February figure for some time. Ben Wyvis was successfully 'conquered' and the party stopped for a fish supper in Dingwall on the return journey. In March at Glen Clunie the weather was very poor, as it was raining and there was quite a strong southerly wind. Undeterred, the bulk of the party left the bus at the old Glen Clunie Lodge with the intention of climbing Carn Aosda, Carn a' Gheoidh and the Cairnwell. However the weather won on this occasion and only Carn Aosda was climbed, the party arriving back at the bus around lunchtime. The

afternoon was spent in Braemar where the weather was much better. Several members ascended Creag Choinnich, while others spent the afternoon looking around souvenir shops or in the pub.

The weather was very good for the excursion from Glen Clova to Glen Muick in April. Most of the party ascended Broad Cairn from Bachnagairn and returned via Loch Muick. In Perthshire in May the weather was less kind, with some heavy showers and the higher tops covered in mist for most of the day. Nevertheless some members did climb Ben More but the largest party got off the bus at Ardchyle and walked from there to Lochearnhead through Gleann Dubh and Glen Kendrum, some taking in the Corbett of Meall an t' Seallaidh on the way. Much better weather attended the excursion from Glen Esk to Ballater in June, the whole party following the right of way throughout, taking in the summit of Mount Keen on the way.

The first excursion after the summer break was to Lochnagar. It turned out to be a very hot day, but the whole party ascended Lochnagar by a variety of different routes. On the Cairngorm Traverse, however, the weather was not so good, the day starting off rather overcast and gradually deteriorating into a persistent drizzle which left most of the party rather wet by the end of the day. Nevertheless the bulk of the party did a traverse of Ben Macdui descending into Glen Luibeg via the Sron Riach. Surprisingly everyone was back at the bus well before the deadline of 7pm so the bus was able to leave the Linn of Dee early. The October excursion was from Inverey to Spittal of Glenshee. It was again a rather overcast day with a low cloud base but at least it stayed dry. Some members crossed Beinn Iutharn Mhor, reporting that they had found it very cold on the top. A rather larger number ascended An Socach, while others took the 'low ground route' crossing over from Glen Ey in between An Socach and Beinn Iutharn Beag to Loch nan Eun and descending from there. In November the excursion was from Strathdon to Ballater. The starting point was about a mile west of Candacraig, where there is a bridge across the Don. It was quite wet in the morning but cleared by lunchtime to give a fine afternoon. The entire party climbed Cairn Mona Gowan with some going on from there to climb Morven also, while others descended from there into Glen Gairn. The last excursion of the year was to the Gordon Way, starting off at the top of the Suie Hill and following its entire length to the Bennachie Centre or Esson's Car Park as it used to be called. It turned out to be a beautiful day and all present completed the entire route, many taking in all the tops of Bennachie on the way.

2001

16 September	Cairngorm Traverse (42)
7 October	Crathie to Glen Muick (15)
4 November	Cromdale Hills (19)
2 December	Auchallater (32)

2002

13 January	Lochnagar (36)
10 February	Clachnaben (10)
10 March	Loch Lee (19)

21 April	Glas Tulaichan (20)
19 May	Ben Vorlich (24)
16 June	Beinn a Bhuird (16)
25 August	Auchallater to Glenmuick (8)
15 September	Cairngorm Traverse (26)
6 October	Glen Esk to Glen Clova (22)
3 November	Ben Rinnes (19)
24 November	Linn of Dee (21)

2003

6 January	Lochnagar (28)
9 February	Ben Wyvis (14)
9 March	Glen Clunie (14)
13 April	Glen Clova to Glen Muick (15)
18 May	Ben More and Stobinian (27)
15 June	Glen Esk to Ballater (16)
24 August	Lochnagar (24)
14 September	Cairngorm Traverse (32)
12 October	Inverey to Spittal of Glenshee (20)
9 November	Strathdon to Ballater (20)
7 December	Gordon Way (27)

Graham Ewen

WEEKEND MEETS

In January 2002, only two months after taking over from Geoff Cumming as Weekend Meets Secretary, my home in the north-end of Aberdeen was completely destroyed by fire. I lost everything, including hill journals and all my mountain gear. I tell you this not to secure your sympathy, for I am now well over the event and the turmoil that followed, but rather as an excuse for the absent or patchy detail that may follow.

The first meet covered took place at Laggan Potteries Bunkhouse in December 2001. Organised and run by Geoff Cumming, a Christmas Dinner of turkey and all the trimmings awaited parties who were out on Corrieyairack Hill and Creag Meagaidh. On the latter, the party who had been climbing failed to reach the summit due to deep soft snow on their chosen route and were forced to turn back. In the evening many adjourned to the hot-tub and enjoyed a wine or a beer *al fresco* beneath the stars!

The January Meet of 2002 was as usual at Muir Cottage. Carn a' Mhaim in the Lairig Ghru and Sgor Mor lower down Glen Dee were both successfully climbed. Deep soft snow again however was the issue of the day - one party, ascending from Loch Etchachan, failed to reach the summit of Derry Cairngorm due to white-out conditions and deep soft snow underfoot, and a party climbing on Lochnagar was likewise hampered. This overdue but safe duo ran out of time on Black Spout Buttress and had to abseil off from halfway up. They were very late sitting down to

their haggis, neeps and tatties - for this meet has traditionally been a Burns' Supper Meet. In February, Ian Bryce and the usual suspects made it to Crianlarich Youth Hostel where many of the surrounding hills received attention. In March the late John Elgie was the sole attendee at the Ratagan Youth Hostel Meet. Deep soft snow and blizzard conditions once on the Five Sisters Ridge hampered progress to such an extent that he was forced to retreat.

The Easter Meet, which now comes under the umbrella of Weekend Meets, took place at the Spean Bridge Hotel in April 2002. The weather was glorious. Cloudless blue skies and near windless conditions meant that many of the surrounding snow-capped hills were visited. Corbett's List received much attention, especially from the 12 or so more senior members who chose to stay in the Hotel itself - a further 10 members, occupying the Roy Bridge bunkhouse, were more set on gathering Munros. All got together in the evening. In May the Club descended on Skye for what was, again, a weekend of terrific weather. Many took tents, it was midge-free, and some long days were had including a 12½-hour round high above Coire Lagan. This party ascended by way of the Cioch Slab (Original Route) and Eastern Gully and descent was by the An Stac screes. The Pinnacle was not climbed due to lack of time, queues and dehydration. One party however failed even to make the ridge: without ice-axes or crampons, wet sun-warmed snow and ice high up in the Great Stone Shoot halted progress. A comical descent, partly on our bums, followed, the remainder of the day being spent on the hot stone-slabs that are Coire Lagan. Blaven and other tops on the ridge were also visited by members, one of whom was celebrating her birthday.

In June 2002 we had two weekends away. The first, to the Lazy Crofter at Durness, attracted 16 members. Ben Hope and Arkle were climbed and a five-pitch V. Diff climb (I believe it was 'Offside') on Creag na Faolim, a crag, was successfully undertaken by many. The second at Glenmore Lodge, attracted three members for the AGM of the MC of S, when Fred Belcher was elected as Vice-President. In July Gordon Stalker and myself walked into Kinbreack Bothy in Glen Kingie for what was a very enjoyable meet (well it was a meet: there were the two of us!). See Gordon's article elsewhere in this *Journal* for a fuller report. In August Laggan Potteries again was the venue. The Saturday was a bit misty and wet but many of the surrounding hills received attention including the Easains and the Grey Corries. Beinn a' Chaorainn and Beinn Teallach were ascended by one party as was Stob Poite Coire Ardair from 'the window' on Creag Meagaidh. In the evening after a communal meal, all attended and very much enjoyed a ceilidh, which is held annually in Laggan Village Hall. September saw the club at Onich. Climbing in Glencoe was undertaken by nearly all, and the Long Climb and Archer's received attention. The Buachaille Etive Mor was also bagged by the tourist route, and the Aonach Eagach ridge was successfully traversed by three lady members. On Sunday the girls found themselves 'off route' on Curved Ridge, Buachaille Etive Mor. Some very difficult ground had to be climbed before the easy descent could be made. On Monday Bidean nam Bian was climbed by one party by Dinnertime Buttress.

October saw the meet split between the SMC Hut at Elphin and the Assynt Field Centre. Good weather meant Ben More Assynt, Conival and many local

Corbetts were climbed, the hills all having snowy tops. One party managed Cul Mor and Cul Beag. Everyone descended on the Hut in the evening for the now fairly regular communal meal and get together, Eilidh Scobbie organising. In November only six members made it past a flooded Elgin for a meet at Kath Gregory's Bunkhouse at Cannich. All six successfully traversed the Strathfarrar Four, which were in winter condition. Sgorr na Diollaid was visited on the Sunday. The December Meet took place at Callander, as the original venue, Loch Ossian Youth Hostel, had to be closed for refurbishment. Again a Christmas Dinner featured and a great time was had by all. Ben Vorlich and Stuc a' Chroin were climbed, the meet being organised by Joyce Ritchie.

Joyce also organised the following meet in January 2003 to Muir. Derry Cairngorm, Carn Bhac (from Altanour Lodge) and Sgor Mor in Glen Dee were all successfully climbed, as was Carn na Drochaide by our then President and current Journal Editor. The party who set out for Ben Macdui failed to reach the summit owing to high winds and vicious wintry showers. In the evening Anne Cassidy piped in the haggis and a great night was had by all. The following day saw a dramatic change in the weather. It became really warm and incredibly windy. A party out on a snowless Culardoch had to crawl on all fours to reach the balmy summit. The temperature given for Aboyne, just down the road, was subsequently given as 17.7°C - unreal! In February a high-pressure system meant conditions at Crianlarich Youth Hostel were just right for some winter mountaineering. Beinn Mhanach, Beinn Achaladair and Ben an Dothaidh were all visited, as was Ben Lui by Central Gully. The Tarmachan Ridge was traversed by one party, again in crampons, on the Sunday. March saw the meet split between the Ling Hut and Torridon Youth Hostel. Messrs Belcher, Fellowes, Walmsly, Wardrope and Bannister traversed Liathach, roping up for the trickier sections, whilst the party at the Youth Hostel favoured the nearby Corbett, Ben Damh. Another party successfully climbed Beinn Liath Mhor. One senior member fell and injured himself quite badly whilst descending a Corbett in the area; he has however made a remarkable and almost full recovery.

The Easter Meet of 2003 took place at the Aultguish Inn, Loch Glascarnoch, and was attended by 42 members. Some lovely spring weather meant all of the Fannichs and Beinn Dearg hills were visited in many combinations. Two parties managed a five-Munro day, traversing all the tops from Sgurr nan Each to Beinn Liath Mor Fannich. Brocken Spectres were seen higher up, whilst lower down one party encountered an otter. Beinn a' Chaisteil, Ben Wyvis and Little Wyvis were all visited as was Sgurr Bhreac and A' Chailleach on Sunday by two parties. Seana Bhragh was climbed by one member, who went on to gather the Munros of the Beinn Dearg group, leaving off only Cona' Mheall. One member who had recently reached 70 years of age added an extra excitement to the event by hiring a Ceilidh Band for us all to dance to on Saturday. The accommodation and food (we ate wild boar for tea) was good and the venue more than suitable to our needs, with quite a few members choosing to camp adjacent to the Hotel.

In May Zöe Sokec ran a successful meet to the Merseyside Mountaineering Club Hut in North Wales. Climbing and scrambling routes on Tryfan were undertaken on Saturday, despite intermittent lashing rain, and on Sunday a mass saunter to the Devil's Kitchen took place. Ironically, Monday gave the best weather,



The Easter Meet 2003, on the Druim Reidh Ridge of Tomain Coinich

but by then most Aberdeen-based members were on their way home. The party who stayed on undertook the Snowdon Horseshoe. June saw 10 members joining countless others for the MC of S AGM at Glenmore Lodge. Most stayed at the Lodge but one camped and another made use of the newly renamed Glenmore Lodge Youth Hostel. Bynack More and Cairngorm were climbed as was Meall a' Bhuachaille. The Fiacaille Ridge was ascended by one party whilst others opted for the organised events such as 'use and misuse of GPS'. In July with many members away in Zermatt, 29 made it to Achiltibuie for a camping meet. A ceilidh on Friday and a seafood barbecue on the Saturday made for a most enjoyable weekend for all who attended. Local Corbetts, perhaps unsurprisingly, received much attention. A highlight for the organiser must have been the disintegration and disappearance of her rather suspect tent during the first, rather windy, night!

In August, at the tail end of a long heat-wave, 32 members descended on Kinlochleven for a rather 'midgie' weekend. Superb weather meant climbing in Glencoe for some and Munros in the Mamores for others. Curved Ridge received a lot of attention. One party climbed the Pap of Glencoe and enjoyed some terrific views from its rocky little summit. September 2003 saw 14 members gather at the Whitehouse, Knoydart, which despite the cold showers was found to be an excellent bunkhouse. On Saturday most ascended Luinne Bheinn and Meall Buidhe. It was a warm and sunny day with views across to Mull and Rhum. The highlight came on Sunday, however, with a mass ascent of Ladhar Bheinn in deteriorating weather. Atop, Gordon Stalker celebrated his final Munro amongst friends, with all enjoying some champagne and shortbread. A presentation of a bottle (of whisky) and a gift

voucher was made. In October at Morag's, Fort Augustus, some terrific weather meant that many hills were bagged. Gleouraich and Spidean Mialach, Sgurr a Mhaoraich and the Carn Ghluasaid group were all visited over the weekend which saw members in shorts and tee-shirts high up above the fog, for there was a temperature inversion on Saturday. One party managed Stob Ban and two adjacent Munros in the Grey Corries, whilst others were out on the Five Sisters of Kintail. Gairich and Aonach Mor were also climbed, the latter partly by gondola! However, the weather changed on Sunday and one party had to turn back high up on Gleouraich due to high winds and snow. A salmon and champagne reception, in anticipation of an impending marriage, was given by the organiser and his bride-to-be on Saturday night, and was very well received!

The Laird's Bothy, Kingussie, was the venue for the November Meet and 24 members attended. Facilities were good and the following hills were all climbed: Stob Choire Clairigh, Stob Coire an Laoigh, Beinn Teallach, Carn an Fhreceadain, Sgorr Gaoith and Meall Chuaich. On the Sunday most folk headed for Glen Banchor, for an ascent of Carn Dearg, Carn Sgulain, and A' Chailleach. A highlight of this meet was stumbling upon the opening of the Strathspey Away Festival, a celebration of music, song and dance. All enjoyed the Friday night ceilidh, some so much in fact that they've taken to dancing classes!

Loch Ossian Youth Hostel has been extensively refurbished to a high and ecologically sound standard. At the head of a Loch Ossian there now stands a very grand and modern shooting lodge, and at Corroul Halt there is now a small pub as well as a bunkhouse. It was at the ever-popular venue of the Youth Hostel that 18 members met up in December 2003. On Saturday the weather was not great, with rain, sleet, hill fog and snow higher up. Despite this parties were out on Carn Dearg and Sgorr Gaibhre, Beinn na Lap, Leum Uilleim, Stob Coire Sgriodain and Chno Dearg. Another party, away early, managed all three Munros above the Uisge Labhair (loud waters), going over Beinn Eibhinn, Aonach Beag and Geal Charn, but were very wet on their return. On Sunday, most walked out mid-morning over the Road to the Isles, whilst others waited for the late train.

In January 2004, 34 members and guests were at Muir for the Burns' Supper gathering. Fred Belcher *et al.* supplied the haggis, neeps and tatties and the catering was up to the usual high standard. Longest day on the hill goes to the party out on the west-side of the Lairig Ghru, who managed Devil's Point, Sgor an Lochain Uaine and Cairn Toul. However, many members enjoyed a less strenuous time with lower-level walks, mostly in and around the Mar Lodge policies. Our new Bus Meets Secretary climbed a snowless Broon Coo Hill on the Sunday.

In February, 18 members made it through the blizzards and snowdrifts for a meet at Laggan Potteries Bunkhouse, a favourite venue. The weather was glorious both days with clear blue skies and much sunshine (many came home with sunburnt noses). The following hills were all climbed: Creag Meagaidh, Stob Poite Coire Ardair, Beinn a' Chaorainn, Beinn Teallach, Corrieyairack Hill, the Fara and the Geal Charn by Garva Bridge. Easy Gully on Creag Meagaidh was successfully climbed by one party. Snow conditions underfoot were a bit mixed, ranging from deep soft powder through to hard ice. The Window on Creag Meagaidh was very icy, and one

party witnessed a member of an unassociated group fall and slide some distance. Fortunately apart from a little bruising she was unharmed. In the evening, Ian Bryce and Ken Thomson modelled some Club-wear (fleece tops, tee-shirts, sweatshirts etc). On this occasion we shared the Bunkhouse with the Eagles Club.

The last Meet covered in this report was a meet to Cannich in March 2004. Some 19 members and one dog made it to Kath Gregory's Bunkhouse for a fairly wintry weekend meet. Parties were out on the Strathfarrar Hills, An Socach above Loch Mullardoch and Mam Sodhail in Glen Affric. The party for Strathfarrar had difficulty obtaining access to the glen but were eventually successful. From a party of nine, all but two descended after ascending Sgurr na Ruaidhe and Carn nan Gobhar. Vice-President Cumming and Ms Robinson continued up Sgurr a' Choire Ghlais, where conditions on top were described as 'bad'. Gales, wet snow showers and mixed underfoot conditions persisted, the wind and snow rising to such an extent that both feared escape might be impossible, but they did however make it. Only two in the party who set off for Mam Sodhail made the summit. Deep, wet and at times unstable snow underfoot meant many were concerned enough to turn back. Visibility was poor and the unrelenting snow and wind meant going was difficult and very tiring. One member of the party on Mam Sodhail fell around 50ft through a cornice on descent, luckily landing in some deep soft snow. The individual who set out for An Socach successfully bagged this rather remote hill, but he, like the rest of us, was very wet on return. In the evening we enjoyed a very pleasant communal meal with many different members contributing a course. One party visited some rather spectacular waterfalls at Plodda near Tomich on Sunday; most however decided to travel home despite a marked improvement in the weather.

In summary, Weekend Meets continue to be a healthy and popular part of the Club activities, and have an important role and function within the Club. Numbers attending are steadily increasing and occasionally, if you book at the last minute, you may find there is no bunk-space available and the organiser may have to turn you away! However, most establishments allow camping either in their grounds or nearby, and camping either by necessity or from preference is becoming quite a trend. As in the past, the Weekend Meets sub-committee try to produce a varied programme of venues with a mix of bunkhouse, hostel, hut, hotel, occasionally B&B, bothies and camping. Sometimes we may get it wrong, but we are always on the lookout for new and/or different venues, and if you fancy going somewhere, please do let a member of Weekend Meets sub-committee know. Better still, why not get involved in the organising yourself, for it is the individuals within the club that make the meets happen. Weekend Meets Forever!

EASTER MEETS

2002	Spean Bridge Hotel & Bunkhouse	(22)	Garry Wardrope
2003	Aultguish Inn	(42)	Derek Beverley

WEEK END MEETS

2001	November	Rogart Railway Carriage	(4)	Geoff Cumming
	December	Laggan Potteries Bunkhouse	(18)	Geoff Cumming
2002	January	Muir Cottage	(20)	Rowena Jay
	February	Crianlarich Y.H.	(17)	Ian Bryce
	March	Ratagan Y.H.	(1)	Derek Beverley
	May	Skywalker Hostel	(16)	John Elgie
	June	Lazy Crofter Durness	(16)	Garry Wardrope
	June	Glenmore Lodge (MCof S AGM)	(3)	Ian Bryce
	July	Kinbreack Bothy / Kingie	(2)	Derek Beverley
	August	Laggan Potteries Bunkhouse	(22)	Derek Beverley
	September	McIntyre Hut Onich	(15)	Fred Belcher
	October	Elphin SMC/Assynt Field Centre	(17)	Eilidh Scobbie
	November	Glen Affric Backpackers	(6)	Stan Urbaniak
	December	Trossachs Backpackers/Callander	(22)	Joyce Ritchie
2003	January	Muir Cottage	(23)	Joyce Ritchie
	February	Killin Y.H.	(12)	Ian Bryce
	March	Ling Hut & Torridon Y.H.	(12)	Garry Wardrope
	May	North Wales M.M.C Hut	(21)	Zöe Šokec
	June	Glenmore Lodge (MCofS AGM)	(10)	Ian Bryce
	July	Achiltibuie Camping	(29)	Joyce Ritchie
	August	Blackwater Hostel Kinlochleven	(32)	Anne Cassidy
	September	The Whitehouse Knoydart	(14)	Joyce Ritchie
	October	Fort Augustus (Morag's)	(12)	Stan Urbaniak
	November	Kingussie (Laird's Bothy)	(24)	Neil Gauld
	December	Loch Ossian Y.H.	(18)	Andy Lawson
	2004	January	Muir Cottage	(34)
February		Laggan Potteries	(18)	Jean Robinson
March		Glen Affric Backpackers	(19)	Claire Marris

*Derek Beverley***ROCK AND ICE CLIMBING**

To anyone reading the previous two Journals, one of the prevailing themes is that of everything changing, yet the scene remaining the same. This theme has continued over the past two years, and the 'climbing scene' within the Club remains vibrant. There have been many comings of new faces, with marginally fewer goings of old faces. One or two departed to work in other lands, the most notable being Andy Lane whose move to South America and consequent closeness to some of the world's finest climbing areas is looked upon enviously by some. Others such as Stuart Stronach were away for much of this reporting period, due to heavy work commitments, but it is good to see him back climbing with us again on a fairly regular basis. Stephen Kirkpatrick, who with Stuart was one of the stalwarts of the climbing resurgence within the Club in the 90s (of the 20th century!), has recently started work at Fraserburgh Academy and promises to become an active force again within the Club. With Andy Lane leaving us, Fred Belcher became Climbing Activities Secretary at the 2001 Club AGM.

As is usual by now, the wall at Summerhill formed the mainstay of the early winter activities in 2001/02. These were well supported with on one occasion more than 20 people attending. Overall it was the best supported Summerhill season that the Club has had. Marge Ewan organised an excellent day trip to the wall at Alien Rock, Leith, with two car-loads making the return trip. Several people made sorties over various week-ends to assorted locations in search of in-condition ice-climbs with little success, the most notable of these failures being the attempt at a winter ascent of Black Spout Buttress by Adrian and Stephen. This resulted in the pair of them arriving back at Muir on the occasion of the Burns' Supper after 11pm. Not much was achieved until early March, when two of our members had an excellent climb on good ice up the waterfall of Look C Gully in Corrie Fee.



Climbing on the Sea Cliffs

The outdoor season of climbing started in early April at Black Rock Gulch and continued through until late September at Boltshough. During this period we had one major incident, when the Climbing Secretary fell whilst leading a climb at Deceptive Wall and was taken to the ARI by helicopter. (Fortunately nothing was broken, just battered and bruised and a destroyed pride, though it was a month or so before he was seen trying to climb again). Good climbing was had in early June during the course of the Club's weekend meet at Durness. The following week saw a party of eight Club members off to climb at various locations in the Peak District. This week saw some awful weather conditions, but nevertheless a good time was had by all. In July there was a Climbers Meet at Muir Cottage, with instruction being provided over the course of the weekend at the Pass of Ballater. On the Saturday there was the usual superb barbecue, organised by Anne Cassidy ably supported by various willing hands. The Reiff trip in August saw a lot of activity at the cliffs in good weather, whilst those who chose to go to Stac Pollaidh finished up having to abseil off in pretty foul conditions. The following day saw an attempt by four pairs

of climbers to ascend the Old Man of Stoer, the most impressive sea stack on the north-west coast. The lead pair of Stephen and Adrian was successful, as was the second pair led by Jim with a visiting French climber. Due to various hold-ups and deteriorating weather conditions, the remaining two pairs had to abseil off.

Beyond the Tuesday evening events, which formed the Club's organised programme, there was lots of activity in the north-east and the other major climbing venues throughout Scotland. There was then a lull in activity until Xmas, though a few people trained on the Bouldering Wall at the Beach Leisure Centre and more joined them for beers after they had finished.

The new year had an inauspicious start, when John Elgie, an active and well-known Club member, tragically died as a result of an avalanche in the Black Spout of Lochnagar. The indoor season got underway as usual on the wall at Summerhill. Lots of new faces appeared during the course of this season, and the evenings were well supported, but lots of people only appeared on a couple of occasions, which gave us a headache when it came to collecting monies due. It was only thanks to the efforts of Marge Ewan that most of the monies came in, and next year the monies will be collected on each visit. Due to the weather it was not a good year for winter climbing and nothing of note was reported. In addition to Summerhill, several week-end trips were made to the wall at Inverness.

The outdoor season commenced in April and after a couple of Tuesdays a large party, organised by Zöe Šokec, left for a long week-end to try the climbing in Wales. We stayed at the Merseyside Club's Hut at Llanberis and were joined by several of their members. On Saturday various pairs left to climb various routes, but after getting started on the climbs most people were thwarted by a sudden change in the weather - hail, sleet and pouring rain which then continued for the rest of the day. The most notable achievement of the day was by Tim and Ernie, who managed to outpace the weather and complete one of the major routes on Tryfan. The weather continued to be poor the following day and time was devoted to 'retail therapy'. On the Monday most folk headed back to Aberdeen, but Garry and Fred stayed on to scramble up and complete the Horseshoe on Snowdon.

June saw another climbing, training and barbecue weekend at Muir. Some folk took advantage of this to brush up on Alpine techniques prior to leaving for the Club meet at Zermatt. The ways and routes taken to Zermatt were various. Some came across the hills from Italy, others across the hills from Verbier, while others used either car, plane, train or combinations of these. During this meet there were several ascents of 4000m peaks, and a massed ascent of the Breithorn. An extremely pleasant afternoon was spent by several pairs, climbing the smooth polished rock of the Riffelhorn, before catching the train back to Zermatt. Several members had a narrow escape on the way down the Zinal Rothorn, when they were almost hit by a major rock-fall, which actually resulted in ropes being cut in half. Others had a grandstand view from the terrace of the Hörnli Hut of the collapse of a large section of the Matterhorn ridge above, and the subsequent forced evacuation by helicopter of all the climbers on the mountain.

During the time of the Zermatt trip, those climbers that did not attend organised a well-attended trip to Reiff, where much climbing was achieved on the cliffs. In August, during the week-end meet organised by Anne to Kinlochleven, several major classic routes were achieved by many of those attending. During all this, the Tuesday evening meets continued, with a consistent turn out of



Mass Ascent of the Breithorn

approximately 20 people. Activity continued along the cliffs and, once the bird nesting season was over, several routes that were out-of-bounds earlier in the season were attempted and ascended, among them the airy and exposed Diagonal Crack at Longhaven. Also this year Eagle Ridge at Lochnagar became almost the preserve of the Club, as it was ascended at various times by so many members. The most notable climb of the year, though, must go to Bill Stephen and Jim Woodley for their successful ascent of the Old Man of Hoy in Orkney, an event which resulted in several bits of lost gear.

On completion of our normal organised outdoor season, thoughts turned to indoor climbing again. The good news is that there is now a good wall in Dundee, and this has become the normal scene of Club activity until the Summerhill wall becomes available to us in January. In fact, recently three new climbing activities centres have opened in Scotland: Dundee, Kinlochleven and Ratho. Already a lot of Club members have made use of these facilities, and no doubt each of them will figure prominently in future activity reports.

Due to an ever-increasing involvement and clash of dates with his MC of S duties, Fred Belcher handed over the responsibilities for the Climbing Activities Secretary to Kevin Bannister at the 2003 AGM. As this report will have shown, the climbing scene within the Club is in an extremely healthy condition, and it continues to attract many new members to the Club.

Fred Belcher

THURSDAY WALKS

Details of the organisation and itineraries of the Thursday Walks over 2001-2003 are included in the article on page 144, so no formal report is presented here in this edition of the *Journal*.