

CLUB NEWS

THE PRESIDENT

James Friend was elected President in November 2014. He has kindly provided a summary of his background and his thoughts about the Club.

I was born and brought up in Edinburgh, the youngest of three boys, and my childhood days included many family walks in the Pentlands. My first venture to the north-east was in 1947 on a family holiday at the Gordon Arms, Kincardine O'Neil. During the holiday I ascended my first Munro, Lochnagar, in a major heat wave. In my teenage years I was involved in a hill-walking club at school, with trips to bag Munros at half-term holidays in February, June and November. The winter trips were usually by bus to stay in youth hostels, and in summer to camp, and indeed one of the first summer trips involved camping at the foot of Ben Dorain, which later gave its name to the Club.

After medical training and the start of family life with Elizabeth, (also later a Cairngorm Club member), I got my hospital consultant job in Aberdeen in 1973. For some 10 years I was a member of an informal group of up to a dozen hill walkers who went out every month, but the group shrank as some people left Aberdeen, and so I joined the Cairngorm Club. Since then I have taken part in just about every sort of activity the Club has undertaken, apart from rock climbing!

Over the years Elizabeth and I attended many of the bus meets, weekend meets, dinners, and ceilidh dances, and have greatly enjoyed them all. Very sadly Elizabeth died in 2005, but her lively and caring approach to life, her humour, and her laugh, will not be forgotten.

More recently I was asked to take responsibility for Piper's Wood in Glen Ey, and for the 125th anniversary of the Club the area was doubled by the installation of further fencing, financed by generous Club members. I joined the Committee in 2012, and was very surprised and moved to find myself being elected to the Presidency.

Reading again the History of the Club, so well described by Sheila Murray in her book marking the Centenary in 1987, I am impressed by the heritage which we all share in the Club and the commitment of so many over the years to help us all benefit from the good fellowship and the joys of walking our wonderful hills. The combination of being able to experience that beauty, the physical challenge and exercise in wonderful surroundings and great company is one of the most precious benefits of living, as far as I am concerned. So as Club members we have the duty (and the pleasure) of keeping it all going for each other and those who follow. I hope that I can contribute as much as I can as your latest President, though I know that I shall struggle to match up to my illustrious predecessors.



James Friend