

## IN MEMORIAM

### JIM BRYCE

Jim Bryce died on the April 20, 2018 aged 74. He joined the Cairngorm Club in 1999.

Jim was born in West Kilbride, Ayrshire, moving to Saltburn by the Sea in Yorkshire and attending Coatham Grammar School in Redcar. It was in Saltburn that Jim's passion for Middlesbrough Football Club was kindled. He was often found on a Saturday morning outside a neighbouring hotel getting autographs of his footballing heroes. Returning to Scotland he attended Allan Glen's School, Glasgow where he was very keen on Rugby both at school and as a FP. He reached a high standard in swimming and gained gold awards in life saving.

His enthusiasm for the outdoors and the hills was encouraged by his parents and the scouts. The scout troop went every second year to the International Scout Camp at Kandersteg in the Bernese Oberland, Switzerland. At the age of 14 Jim set off from a mountain hut at 2am with Bergfuehrer Hans Harry and scouts for his first Alpine peak, the Morgenhorn 3627m (Peu Difficile). His mountaineering gear included his school trousers over his pyjamas. He did have an ice axe. He loved Arran. and at the age of 6, Goatfell was one of his first hills.

Jim studied Maths, Economics and Statistics at Glasgow University. He was a member of the GUM, (Glasgow University Mountaineering Club) and he enjoyed rock climbing, snow and ice climbing and heading off to remote mountain bothies devoid of creature comforts to be in the hills and mountains. In addition, he was a keen squash player, enjoyed cycling, downhill skiing and ski mountaineering.

Jim started work with the Highlands and Islands Development Board. After 2 years, he went to Jordanhill College, to do teacher training. He taught maths at Perth High School and moved to Invergordon Academy and progressed to Principal Maths Teacher. He was involved in extra-curricular activities such as swimming, rugby, climbing, camping and hillwalking trips He loved walking up the hill opposite his house and listening to the skylarks. He was a keen cyclist and was the Sustrans co-ordinator in Ross-shire.

As well as being an active member of the Eagle Ski Club in the 1980s, he was a member of several mountaineering clubs including the Junior Mountaineering Club of Scotland, The Moray Mountaineers, the

Austrian Alpine Club, The Glasgow Glenmore Club, and latterly The Cairngorm Club.

Jim had a great knowledge of hill access: where to stay and the vagaries of Scottish weather, great assets when he stepped in as Club Weekend Meets Secretary in 2014 carrying out the role with care and expertise until his untimely death. His thorough knowledge of the Scottish hills meant that the weekend meets calendar remained interesting and varied. He organised highly successful meets to Harris, Rum, Wales and the Lake District alongside long-standing favourite Scottish mainland destinations.

Jim attended almost all weekend meets, the exception being the January Burns Supper meet when he was usually skiing in the Alps. He had an exceptionally good season in winter 2017/18, whilst still keeping tabs on meet organisation from abroad. He signed himself off from one such email with the words “Skiing has been great - lots of snow, clear blue skies and sunshine. Jim Bryce well knackered each day.”

On most occasions, however, Jim would be there to greet members arriving at a hostel or hut on a Friday night, his presence always a cheering one after a long drive in the dark at the end of the week.

Having completed the Munros and Corbetts, Jim was well on the way through his Grahams with which he appeared to have a love-hate relationship; they were all apparently either “cracking hills” or right “b\*\*\*\*\*s”. After returning from long days ascending his latest Graham he was quick to remind us that Grahams and Corbetts could be even more challenging than Munros

He is missed.

### **CHARLES GIMINGHAM**

In the death, aged 95, at Tor-na-Dee on June 19, 2018 of Professor Charles Gimingham OBE FRSE FRSB, the Club has lost one of its most scientifically distinguished members, and a longstanding one: he joined the Club in 1969. As a world-renowned botanist and ecologist based at Aberdeen University (which he joined in 1946, as a Research Assistant), Charles specialised in heather and moorlands: as a press obituary nicely put it, his “name ... was synonymous with *Calluna vulgaris*”. He published several major books, including the authoritative “Ecology of Heathlands” (Chapman and Hall, London, 1972), and was author or co-author of many papers on heathlands, their plants and

management. He is first recorded as giving a talk to the Club - "Arctic-Alpine Plants in Scotland" in 1965, and he gave another - "Mountain Plants at Home and Abroad" - in 1984. The Club's Journal contains two short articles by him: "Ecologists at work in the Cairngorms" (*Cairngorm Club Journal* no.95, 1973, pp. 71-75), describing the then recent work on the effects of soil erosion and deer grazing on mountain plants, and "A Critical Time for the Cairngorms" (*Cairngorm Club Journal* no. 103, 1994, pp.126 - 127) and a review of the Gimingham-edited book: "The Ecology, Land Use and Conservation of the Cairngorms" (Packard, 2002). He received the MBE in 1974, and an OBE in 1990, while serving on the Countryside Commission for Scotland. He was also on many advisory committees, including that for the NTS Mar Lodge Estate.

On the hill, Charles is recalled as providing excellent company, colouring many walks with his erudite elaborations on passing flora and fauna in the landscape. A modest and gentle man, Charles wore his learning lightly: but no-one who consulted him could doubt his deep respect for one of the major ecological features of the Cairngorms.

## CYRIL HENDERSON

Cyril Henderson was born on May 9, 1923 in Littleton, County Durham. He studied Physics at University College London (UCL) which had moved location to Bangor during the Second World War. He did a PhD at UCL and became a member of staff there. He was part of a group carrying out research into bubble chambers which were used to investigate elementary particles. His book, "Cloud and Bubble Chambers", was published in 1970. While he was at UCL he met Margaret Johnson, who also worked there, and they were married in 1959.

In 1967 Cyril took up a post at the University of Aberdeen. A prime reason for the move to Aberdeen was Cyril and Margaret's love of the hills. He was a member of the Aberdeen Radio Astronomy Group. Cyril became a member of the Cairngorm Club in 1984; Margaret had joined a few years earlier.

Cyril celebrated completing the Munros on September 19, 1992 with members of the Club, friends and his children, Christine and John. His other daughter, Jill, was unable to be present. The final Munro was Carn Cloich-mhuilinn, which Hugh Munro himself had chosen to be his

last although he didn't climb it. Rather ironically Carn Cloich-mhuilinn has subsequently been demoted from the list of Munros. In the evening the celebratory meal at Cyril's cottage in Braemar was turkey and vegetarian haggis for the vegetarians. Sadly, Margaret was not there with him; she died in 1987.

An old family friend, Liz Lindsey, recalls a 'Munro Bagging' week based at Newtonmore in 1994 and particularly remembers Cyril leaping down Geal Charn like a mountain goat! This was typical of Cyril. He had energy and was a skilled mountaineer and ski-mountaineer.

Cyril remarried, Renée Johnson, Margaret's cousin, in 1995. In February 1999 Cyril was walking alone in whiteout conditions near Easedale Tarn in the Lake District when he collapsed. Fortunately, a couple were walking towards him when he went out of sight, so they went to see what had happened. No phone signal could be had so one stayed with Cyril while help was sought at a farmhouse by the other. A helicopter came, Cyril recovered and had another 20 years of active life. The couple were strangers but became friends of Cyril and Renée following the incident.

Cyril died on July 28, 2019 at Kendal at the age of 96. A memorial event to celebrate his life was held on October 26, at Natland, Cumbria. It was attended by many of his family and friends including those from the worlds of mountaineering and physics, a tribute to the regard in which he was held.

His legacy is enthusiasm for the hills and willingness to lead others and encourage them to go just a little bit further. Cyril had five grandchildren, the oldest of whom are keen walkers and rock climbers, like their grandfather. They are following in his footsteps!

## **DR IAN LOWIT**

Ian was a member of the Club between 1973 and 2013, and on its Committee 1973-76. He died on October 20, 2019, aged 100, after an eventful life, which included escaping from Austria shortly before the Second World War, and developing the Lowit Child Psychiatry Unit at Aberdeen Sick Children's Hospital. A keen hill-goer, he completed all the Munros.

**SANDY (W.A.H.) REID**

A Life Member, and one of a family once well represented in the Club, Sandy joined the Club in 1949, and acted as Honorary Treasurer between 1965 and 1986. He died on October 18, 2019.

**HELEN RUTH WARD (née BALLANTYNE)**

Ruth was born 1929. Her father managed the Home Estate farm at Douglas and her mother had been an army nursing sister (Qarans) and had served overseas in Egypt.

She had an idyllic childhood and had many stories to tell; cooking eggs from the henhouse in a tin can, having to be rescued from the bullpen which she had entered and how she had been given half a crown by Lord Dunglass (later Prime Minister Alec Douglas Home) which she promptly lost!

Ruth followed her mother into nursing, qualifying first as a sick-children's nurse at Edinburgh, then as a general nurse at GRI and then as a midwife before joining the RAF as a nursing sister (PMRAFNS). It was in the RAF that she met her husband, doing his National Service at RAF hospital Wilmslow.

On marriage she left the RAF and became Sister in Charge of the diet kitchen at The Duchess of York Hospital for babies in Manchester. The couple later moved to Sheffield where their family was born and then to Aberdeen. By this time, it became apparent that nursing was incompatible with bringing up a family and she retrained as a teacher of food and nutrition at Robert Gordon's and later became a teacher at Aberdeen High School for Girls.

As soon as the family were old enough, Peter and Ruth joined the Cairngorm Club. By this time Ruth had become an insulin dependent type 1 diabetic but she did not let that hold her back and the couple had many enjoyable years tramping the hills and staying with friends at Muir Cottage.

Sadly, Ruth's health deteriorated, and she could no longer roam the Cairngorms and she died on December 2, 1919 at the ripe age of 90 after a full and eventful life.

**ADAM WATSON**

Adam Watson was elected as an Honorary Member of the Club in 1982, having been a member somewhat briefly around 1950. Born in

Turriff, he gained First Class honours in zoology at the University of Aberdeen in the 1950s, and then a PhD in 1956 for his thesis on the Annual Cycle of Rock Ptarmigan. In 1953, he was invited by Col. Pat Baird (Club President 1958-59) as zoologist on Baffin Island. A second doctorate in 1967 was awarded for his scientific papers on the populations and behaviour of northern animals. In the 1940s, he began the systematic monitoring of long-lasting snow patches in the Cairngorms, more recently extended in collaboration with Iain Cameron. This work, and his long-term monitoring of animal populations, are highly relevant to the current issues in global warming and impacts of climate change.

He climbed and skied extensively in the Cairngorms, in Scotland's other mountain ranges, and in Norway, Lapland, Canada and Alaska. In the 1950s, he did much climbing with Tom Patey while the latter was compiling the first SMC *Climber's Guide to the Cairngorms* (1961); later, he wrote successive editions of the SMC guide *The Cairngorms*, which demonstrate his immense knowledge and affection for the range. He also made the first one-day ski traverse of the 'Bix Six' Cairngorms in 1962. In 1972, he was the chief expert witness for the Crown in the fatal accident inquiry on the Cairngorm Plateau Disaster, and in the early 1980s he was a major figure in the Lurcher's Gully campaign. According to his long-term colleague Des Thompson, "*Obsessive, authoritative and energetic, he spent decades observing natural phenomena in mountain environments*".

His many honours included four honorary University doctorates, an Emeritus Fellowship at the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology at Brathens near Banchory where he worked for several decades, and a Lifetime Achievement Award by the John Muir Trust, of which he was an early Trustee. Aberdeen University holds over 40 books (most within the Club's collection) authored or co-authored by Adam Watson, and there are innumerable scientific papers in many scientific journals.

The Club has also received notification of the following deaths:

**Molly Gilbert** (1978, Ord): died Aug 16, 2019

**William Hendry** (1939, Ord Life)

**Isobel Paton** (1971, Ord): died April 9, 2019

**Mike Fellowes** (1984, Ord): died September 19, 2019

**Thomas Pearce** (1967, Ord Life): died March 1, 2019

**Robin Morris** (1985, Associate)

**Gordon Mathieson** (Ordinary Life, 1945; died May 17, 2018

**Tom Smith** (1980-2011, Ordinary)

**Irene Martin** (1974, Associate): died August 12, 2018

**Walter Burnett** (1985-2017, Associate)

Although never a Club member, the loss of Andy Nisbet was noted with great sadness.

Deaths occurring after December 2019 will be recorded in Issue 114.