

## CLUB PROCEEDINGS

This review covers the period since early 2022, i.e. two years of Club activities carried out largely in the post-Covid-19 era.

### GENERAL MEETINGS

Both the 2022 and 2023 AGMs were held in hybrid form, i.e. both in-person and by Zoom. In 2022, 30 members attended, and the following were elected or re-elected as Office-Bearers: Robbie Middleton (Hon. President), Garry Wardrope (President and Day Meets Secretary), Izy Kirkaldy and Ivan Hiscox (Vice-Presidents), Ken Thomson (Secretary), Donald Thomas (Treasurer), Kees Witte (Hut Custodian), Helen Russell (Weekend Meets Secretary), Stuart Message (Climbing Activities), Eilidh Scobbie (Social Activities Secretary), Colin Brown (Communications Secretary); and the following as “ordinary” Committee members: Kolbjorn Akselvoll, Mike Culley, Stuart Dick, Mike Duguid, Susan Jensen, Craig Thomson, (all re-elected), and Esperanza Martin Gil, Vay Mutch and Brian Purves. During the year, Club membership rose slightly, from 338 to 340.

The 2023 AGM saw 41 members attending, and most Office-Bearers re-elected, with the following replacements: Helen Russell (President), Mike Duguid (Vice-President) and Craig Thomson (Day Meets). Stuart Dick (continued as Climbing Secretary) Mike Duguid and Susan Jensen all stood down as “ordinary” Committee members, while Will Ellwood was elected as a new one. It was reported that Club membership had again risen to 359.

### MEETS

#### DAY MEETS

In both years, the traditional excursions were made to Lochnagar in January and across the Cairngorms in September as well as the midsummer overnights, to the Mamores in 2022 and Glen Shiel in 2023. The Schiehallion meet in 2022 was preceded by a talk by a John Muir Trust ranger. In December 2022, a traverse of Bennachie had to be cut short due to deep snow, and a meet to Glas Tulaichean in February 2023 was met by very high winds. In both years, multi-day camping meets were held, and snowholing on the White Mounth in March became a regular occurrence. The planned October 2023 meet to the Convals near Dufftown had to be cancelled due to Storm Babet.

	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
January	Lochnagar	Lochnagar
February	Mayar & Dreish	Glas Tulaichean

March	Snowholing - White Mounth	Snowholing - White Mounth
April	Ben Lawers Traverse	Beinn Bhreac
May	Broad Cairn - Cairn Bannoch	Ben Wyvis
June	Overnighter - Mamores	Glen Shiel (overnighter)
July	An Sgarsoch/Carn an Fhidhleir*	Monadhliaths
August	Middle Cairngorms*	Glen Feshie; Atholl – Deeside*
September	Cairngorm Traverse (S to N)	Cairngorm Traverse (N to S)
October	Schiehallion	Cancelled
November	Ben Rinnes	Pollagach Ridge
December	Bennachie	Buck of Cabrach

\* Multi-day trips

### WEEKEND MEETS

These meets proved very popular in both years when many of the usual locations were revisited. An “extra” meet at Muir was held in November 2023, and proved successful.

	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
January	Muir (Burns Night)	Muir (Burns Night)
February	Kinlochleven (with FRCC)	Rothiemurchus Lodge
March	Inbhirfhaolain, Glen Etive	Inverardran, Crianlarich
April	Strawberry Cottage, Glen Affric	Glen Brittle, Skye
May	Coruisk Hut, Skye	Hogarbost, Harris (camping)
June	CIC Hut, Ben Nevis	Rum; Durness (camping)
July	Naismith Hut, Elphin	Forest Way, Lael
August	Shielaig (camping)	Corran Bunkhouse
September	Rum Hostel	Knoydart
October	Riasg, Roybridge	Morvich, Kintail
November	Inverardran, Crianlarich	Muir Cottage
December	Corran Bunkhouse	Blackrock Cottage, Glencoe

### CLIMBING

In both years, climbing meets, both formal and informal, resumed much as in pre-Covid days, i.e. indoors at Transition Extreme (and sometimes at the Alford Community Campus) during the winter, and outdoors on the coast or inland.

Two self-rescue training sessions were held in 2022. In spring 2023, Stuart Dick took over Climbing Secretaryship duties from Stuart Message.

### **MID-WEEK WALKS**

Coordinated by Joyce Ritchie, these Walks resumed as pre-Covid normal, with several well-known locations revisited. A highlight was the A-to-B Walk in August 2022, from Glen Dye to Clatterin' Brig, during which we heard a talk at Charr Bothy about the tree-planting and access plans of the new purchasers of Glen Dye Moor (which includes the Clachnaben summit), and tea and scones were enjoyed at the Brig café before the coach arrived. In 2023, traverses of the Coyles of Muick in April, and the Hill of Fare in August, were perhaps outstanding. See Joyce's article elsewhere in this issue.

	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
January	The Blue Hill	Kemnay – Fetternear
February	Glen Girnock	Kincorth & The Gramps
March	Portlethen – Newtonhill	Glen Gairn
April	Carn Mor, Corgarff	Coyles of Muick
May	Carn Fiaclach Beag	Ballochbuie – Callater
June	Sgor Buidhe, Ballater	Carnferg
July	Correen Hills	Craig Leek
August	Glen Dye – Clatterin' Brig	Hill of Fare Traverse
September	Baudy Meg	Upper Glen Dye
October	Seven Bridges	Clova Hill, Lumsden
November	Sands of Forvie	Finzean
December	Drumoak Circular	Banchory Circular

### **SOCIAL ACTIVITIES**

Eilidh Scobbie organized both the 2022 and 2023 Dinners at the Royal Northern & University Club, with talks by Mick Fowler, "No Easy Way", and by Simon Richardson, "Looking Around New Corners in the Alps and Canada", respectively. The RNUC also hosted the Club's summer BBQs, and the indoor meets in 2022/23, but in autumn 2023 the latter were switched to the Church Centre at Queen's Cross.

### **COMMUNICATIONS**

Colin Brown continued to maintain the Club's website [www.cairngormclub.org.uk](http://www.cairngormclub.org.uk), and to edit the thrice-yearly Newsletters. The

Google Group email system was well-used, supplemented by WhatsApp. By the start of 2024, the Members' Forum had 169 members, 1450 topics and over 7600 posts. Facebook was well used by the climbers, and a general Club Facebook page was populated with meet reports mostly by Mike Duguid, with 633 followers in November 2023.

### **MUIR COTTAGE**

Kees Witte continued as Custodian, supervising Work Weekends in both years, and in spring 2022 Forbes Macpherson took over bookings from Jamie Vince. After Covid, Muir was fully re-opened at the start of 2022, and the number of bed-nights recovered to 1200 in 2021-22 (2020-21: 500) and 2158 in 2022-23, i.e. back to normal if not above. In 2022, the bedrooms were rewired, with bunk light/USB sockets and smoke sensors installed, and in 2023 automatic closers and intumescent seals were fitted as fire protection to the common-room doors. Most of the trees planted a few years ago continued to thrive, despite the attention of the local deer.

### **FINANCE**

Receipts returned more or less to normal in 2022 and 2023, with membership subscription revenue around £8000, and Muir letting receipts of around £20,000. On the expenditure side, the usual range of Club donations, subscriptions and training grants to members were made, but with higher affiliation fees becoming payable to Mountaineering Scotland. Printing and digital archiving of Club Journal no. 114 in 2022 cost around £1750, and electricity costs at Muir – for new fittings, rewiring and per-unit charges – rose substantially. In pursuit of the Club's charitable objectives, about £15,000 was spent on various Club projects (see next subsection), whilst continuing and increasing the Club's donations to Mountain Rescue. Despite this, the Club's 30 September bank balances remained high, at £ 108,015 in 2021, £110,940 in 2022 and £ 105,252 in 2023.

### **PROJECTS and TRAINING**

As life returned to normal after Covid-19, attention turned to using the Club's reserves, over and above the sums needed for prudent management and for future maintenance of Muir. After a preliminary airing at the 2021 AGM, a number of possible projects were considered by the Committee, and a more detailed and costed list was presented at the 2022 AGM. In the event, the

following projects were pursued during 2023, with varying degrees of success and consequent expenditure:

- 50% funding of footbridge repair by Dalhousie Estates over the Water of Unich (£3748)
- Steps, path and bridge repairs to the Gordon Way just east of the B992 (£5400)
- Contribution to pathwork costs by Balmoral Estate at Loch Muick (£5000)
- First of three annual payments of £1000 to Mountain Training Scotland, for bursaries to assist individuals “for groups with limited or no familiarity with the Scottish hills, e.g. refugee or ethnic communities.”
- Replacement or repair of the Club-erected indicators on the summits of Lochnagar and Ben Macdhui: no progress due to difficulties in locating a competent firm
- Footpath repair on Clachnaben: further work delayed due to land purchase by investor interested in improving access
- Glen Ey Woods: Richard Shirreffs arranged a species survey by experts at both Piper’s Wood and Altanour: see report elsewhere in this issue.
- Contribution to the “It’s Up To Us” campaign by Mountaineering Scotland and Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland for path repair outside the National Parks, initially on An Teallach (£5000).
- In addition to his duties as President and Day Meets Secretary, Garry Wardrope organized a number of training activities, including a two-day course in first aid in 2022, and a one-day one in 2023, along with winter skills courses at the February Weekend Meets each year, and a self-organised Night Navigation course on the Hill of Fare in 2023. Finally, the Club made 50% contributions to the costs of certification courses for several members.

KEN THOMSON, CLUB SECRETARY