

# The Cairngorm Club Journal



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# THE CAIRNGORM CLUB JOURNAL

Edited by Lydia Thomson

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The Cairngorm Club

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## THE PRESIDENT

**Anne Pinches** was elected President of the Club at the 2009 AGM, in succession to Eilidh Scobbie. Anne writes:

“Hills have been part of my landscape since I was born. There's a view of the Campsies from the kitchen window of the home in which I was brought up and where my Mum still lives. Venture outside and you can see Ben Lomond and the Arrochar Alps.

As a family my brothers and I were taken to wild places on camping holidays where the Niger tent was erected after the 'usual' facilities were located by Dad, which would include a nearby farm from which to collect milk for breakfast. I shall be forever grateful for the interest and encouragement shown by my parents in my hillwalking and other outdoor activities.

My first Munro was Ben Lomond, achieved on a family trip the summer after I had been on a winter school 'taster' trip to Glenmore Lodge. However, it wasn't until I arrived in Aberdeen to begin work that I really got started hillwalking. I stayed in digs at Dot Batchelor's and through Dot became a member of the Cairngorm Club in 1974. I had been on the committee twice before becoming Vice President in 1995. In 2006 I took over as Social Activities Secretary. It was during one stint as a committee member that I helped to organise one of the first weekend meets as we know them today.

I have been fortunate that through my work I was able to introduce many youngsters to the pleasures of the outdoors through the hillwalking club and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award at Hazlehead Academy run by Ian Spence and also later at Northfield Academy.

I completed my Munros on The Buachaille in 1989 and then began another chapter in my life when Derek proposed to me at the summit.

I have gained so much from being a part of the Cairngorm Club and have especially enjoyed many wonderful trips to Muir in the company of family and fellow club members. I feel very humbled to follow in the footsteps of so many wonderful people as President of the Cairngorm Club.”

## South from Granada

*Brian Davey*

*South from Granada* is the title of a famous classic book (ISBN 0-14-016700-5) by Gerald Brenan, set in the Andalucian village of Yegen in southern Spain between 1920 and 1934. For walkers and navigators the title should really have been *South-East from Granada* since Yegen is situated some 60km. south-east of this once magnificent medieval, now modern, city. The route from Granada with over 8,000 feet of ascent across the high Sierra Nevada, “mountains of the sun and the air and the snow”, was walked by Brenan in an incredible 19 hours during one long-past September!

The main subject of the book is the village of Yegen, only five km. from Mecina-Bombarón, my adopted white-washed Spanish pueblo, which, along with the hamlets of Golco and Montenegro, is part of the present-day administrative municipality of Alpujarra de la Sierra. Las Alpujarras are the foothills of the Sierra Nevada, mainland Spain’s highest mountain range, and are situated in the province of Granada in Spain’s second-largest autonomous region of Andalucía. The hills are studded by eighty or so of these delightful white villages established by the Moors when they were expelled from Granada in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century during the Reconquista. They stand high above the Mediterranean, approximately 30km. inland, typically at altitudes similar to the summit of Ben Nevis at 1,343m. (4,408ft.), but are separated from the sea by two beautiful coastal ranges of lower mountains, called the Sierra de la Contraviesa and the Sierra de Lújar.

Away back in time when *South from Granada* was written, there were few roads and it usually took two days to reach this region from Granada, a journey which now takes less than two hours by car. Travel in the past was usually by foot, mule or horse-back along tracks which still exist today and which form the basis of the GR7 or *Gran Recorrido Siete*, the Spanish part of the E4, a long-distance trans-European footpath, which stretches all the way from Tarifa near Gibraltar to southern Greece via Andorra, France, Switzerland, Germany, Romania and Bulgaria, a journey that could take many months or even years! However, walking and exploring part of this route through the Alpujarras can be a very enjoyable and rewarding holiday experience. This article provides some useful information to those who may be tempted by a temporary escape to warmer climes from our *somewhat* colder UK weather.



Great good fortune, *y mucho trabajo duro*, has bestowed on me the privilege of a *cortijo* or farmhouse and ten thousand square metres of terraced land, including a small vineyard, at 1,432m. (4,700ft.) above sea level in the Parque Nacional de la Sierra Nevada close to the GR7 route and just below a wonderful range of mountains with summits soaring above 3,000m. Highest of these is Mulhacén at 3,481m. (11,425ft.), just 16km. (10 miles) distance away by crow transport, the highest peak of mainland Spain, named after the penultimate king of Muslim Granada, Abu al-Hasan, who died in 1485. He ruled during a period of decadence and intra-family intrigue before his son succeeded him and finally in 1492 handed over the kingdom of Granada after its capture by the Christian monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella. Legend says that Muley Hacén, as he was called, was buried at the Mulhacén summit, but today there is no visible evidence to support this theory.

Proximity to these superb summits has afforded the opportunity to gradually build up a knowledge of the region over recent years, to walk a sizable section of the GR7 in Andalucía, and to ascend many of the 23 named 'Sierra Nevada Metric Munros'. The challenge of climbing all these in the shortest possible time has been taken up by the English fell-runner and Cicerone Guide author Andy Walmsley, who completed the traverse of all the Sierra Nevada 3,000m. peaks, the *Integral de los Tres Mil*, in a mere 15 hours and 5 minutes in 1989, a record which I believe still stands today. And there are also the 'Sierra Nevada Metric Corbetts'. Cheap air travel and a three-hour flight time from the UK has made these routes and mountains almost as accessible as the Scottish Highlands but, as is necessary with our home-grown mountains, some careful planning is essential regarding when to go and where to stay when you get there.

From Aberdeen, around 1,400 miles almost due south brings you to a latitude of around 37 degrees, and a location in the south of Spain around about 20 miles inland from the Mediterranean Sea. This location has given the Alpujarras and the Sierra Nevada a very special climate which varies greatly with altitude. Lower-level parts can broil in high summer at temperatures of 35°C and above, while at the same time on the higher Sierra summits you can encounter a very pleasant walking temperature of 10 to 20°C and even suffer from wind chill and buffeting, along with a little oxygen starvation, as I have experienced in the month of August in past adventures. Humidity levels are generally very much lower than in the sticky, moist, midday on-shore sea-breeze atmospheres of the nearby Costa del Sol and Costa Tropical, so it is imperative that you always carry adequate drinking liquids to avoid dehydration.

Also essential to stave off the Spanish sun is a sombrero or wide-brimmed hat, most important for those like me with balding pates, but any

other exposed bare skin should be protected with a high factor sun cream to avoid serious sunburn. Dehydration together with heat exhaustion can be as life-threatening as the other extreme of hypothermia. However, even in summer some lightweight waterproof, windproof clothing should also be carried, as at high altitudes the weather can sometimes quickly change, with afternoon showers producing thunder, cold rain or even snow. On the other hand, for lower-level routes the best walking times are spring and autumn, March to early June and September to October. Spring time is attractive for everyone, especially the aspiring botanist, as a great multitude of wild flowers are in bloom, aided by the limited use of herbicides in this rural region where agriculture is still very traditional and mostly organic.

Although the summers are generally hot and dry, by mid-September the settled dry weather begins to break down. Winters in the high Sierras can be extremely severe, with blizzards and most of the snowfall occurring between October and February. Expeditions then will require the full Scottish winter gear, including ice-axe and crampons, plus an awareness of avalanches. Nevertheless, with an average of 320 days of sunshine a year, conditions in winter can often be very settled, with clear blue skies and light winds producing the ideal weather for mountaineering, walking and skiing. A current free 5-day prediction from the Spanish State Agency of Meteorology is provided for the Sierra Nevada (in Spanish) at the following website:

<http://www.aemet.es/es/eltiempo/prediccion/montana?w=&p=nev1>

In summary, depending on the altitude of the intended hike, good walking opportunities can exist throughout the year. Generally it is very hot and dry in the summer months of June, July and August, so this is the best time to walk the high Sierras without the risk of extensive hill fog, blizzards and widespread snow underfoot. Small snow fields can persist throughout the summer, but these are usually melted by the month of August. The snowmelt is vital to support human domestic water demand as well as for agriculture. On the lower terraced slopes of the Alpujarras a series of ingeniously constructed *acequias* or irrigation channels, running almost parallel to the contours, bring water from the high-level rivers and springs to the land below. The credit for the construction of these *acequias* goes to the Moors, though some sources claim that the thanks may belong to previous civilizations, or to the Romans, who also left their mark on the landscape, for example in the still-standing bridge near Mecina-Bombarón, which dates to the Roman occupation of Andalucía between the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC and the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD. Andalucía apparently became wealthy under the Romans, as Rome imported many products such as vegetables, wheat, grapes, olives, fish and metals.



*Almond Blossom Time in the Sierra de Contraviesa*

Today the abundance of water from the melting snows through the *acequia* system, as well as an ideal climate, permits the cultivation of beans, peas, potatoes, onions, tomatoes and all sorts of fruits such as raspberries, mulberries, cherries, apples, apricots, pears, plums, peaches, figs, grapes and at lower levels, lemons, oranges, olives and custard-apples. Along with the traditional shepherd-escorted sheep- and goat-grazing, plus a Serrano ham-curing industry assisted by the dry atmosphere, the village economies are still driven by agriculture, with rural tourism beginning to play a minor role. In summer the shepherds take their flocks into the *borreguil* or verdant higher-mountain pastures. Above the *pueblo* of Bérchules, you may even come across some real cowboys on horses with herds of cattle in the mountains, with some of the cattle looking like Spanish fighting bulls. Although in the past I have found these cattle to be quite docile, I suppose discretion is definitely the better part of valour, so any cattle herds encountered may demand a wider berth.

Other life in their natural habitat that you may meet, apart from some sociable Spaniards at the numerous village fiestas, are ibex or mountain goats, wild boar, foxes, badgers, golden eagles and vultures, plus a wide variety of smaller birds, since Andalucía is on the migration route from



Africa to Europe, making it a paradise for ornithologists. Lizards and smaller geckos are extremely common and there are supposed to be 13 different types of snakes in Spain, five of which are venomous, but any I have met on my travels have been very timid and quite harmless, as they slithered away to their nearest hidey-hole.

Villages in the western Alpujarra, such as Pampaneira, Bubión and Capileira in the Poqueira Gorge, are more tourist-orientated than those in the east of the region, but most villages have small hotels, *hostals* or *pensiones* (small guesthouses), *apartamentos* and *alojamientos rurales* (self-catering apartments) or *casas rurales* (country houses let out on a self-catering basis). A few official campsites also exist such as at Orgiva (el Balcon de Pitres), at Trevezes (whose Alto Barrio at 1,600m. claims to be the highest village in Spain) and at Laroles, a busy little *pueblo* on the GR7 on the way to Puerto de la Ragua, a 2,000m. pass leading north through the mountains.

Wild camping is allowed, though there are some important restrictions, for example you must be above 2,000m., on land without trees, in a group of less than 15 people, and you must have filled in an application form for the *Consejeria de Medio Ambiente*, the Environment Agency, whose fax number is 958 026310. Otherwise you must stay overnight in a refuge or bivouac. There are two manned refuges in the Sierra Nevada. Refugio del Poqueira at 2,500m. lies at the foot of Mulhacén with capacity for 87 people (tel. 958343349). In the east, Refugio Postero Alto at 1,900m. (tel. 958 066110) has a capacity for 60 people and is a base for ascents of Picón de Jerez and other eastern 3,000m. peaks.

There are also two excellent purpose-built non-manned refuges, both with capacity for 16 people sleeping on alpine benches. One is these is situated at 3,050m. at the foot of Mulhacén near the beautiful Laguna de la Caldera and the other is Refugio La Carihueta at 3,205m. at the south side of Veleta, the Sierra's third highest peak. Both these refuges may be difficult to locate when covered by snow in winter, and in recent years English climbers have perished near Refugio Caldera in adverse winter weather. Other non-manned refuges exist, but some of these are in bad condition and cannot be recommended. Camping on lower-level private land is also possible, but permission is first needed, as well as a little Spanish, since, in contrast to the Costas and other tourist areas, not much English is spoken.

However, if you do not speak Spanish a small phrase book is a useful asset and a few easy lessons on a tape or CD based beginners course is all that's necessary to inspire confidence in simple bar, restaurant and shopping situations. Also a few greeting words or phrases are all that are

needed to break down the language barrier and instigate the return of a beaming smile instead of a blank stare at that chance meeting on *un camino de montana en Espana*.  
*Suerte! Buen Viaje!*

The Cairngorm Club

## Derry Lodge

*Graham Ewen*

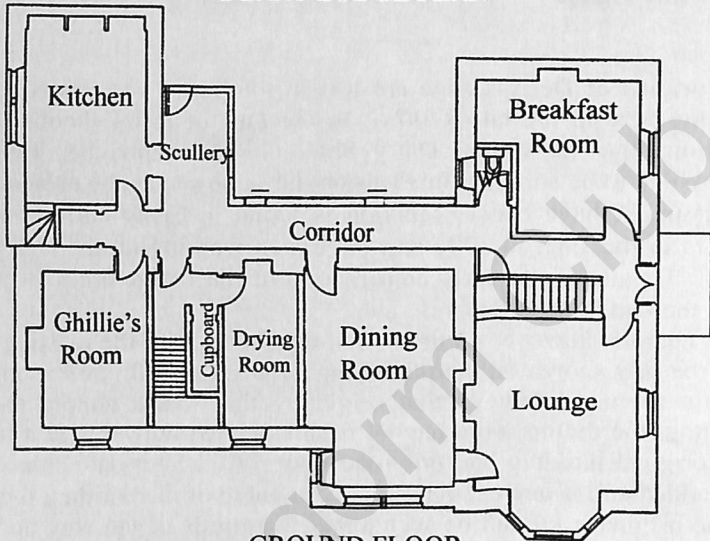
The origins of Derry Lodge are lost in the past. There was certainly a shieling here in the late 1700's. In the Earl of Fife's shooting diary he mentions that he visited Dairy Shiel on 26<sup>th</sup> September 1791. It is impossible to be sure that this was on the same site as the present building but it might have been. Mention is found in estate correspondence of repairs to the shiel in 1794 and three men working on the Derry road in 1798. Details of the early construction of the Lodge are totally missing from the Duff House Papers.

There is however no doubt that the first part of the existing building was the part shown on the plan lying between the Ghillie's room and the Dining room. I believe that originally this was a simple rectangular building, the dining room having been extended outwards at a later date. The original building had only one floor. At a later date a second floor was added and if one examines the west gable of the building the V shape of the original roof can be seen about two-thirds of the way up the wall. The wing containing the kitchen was built next, probably as a two-floored building. It is impossible to guess when these events happened. The east wing of the Lodge was almost certainly added in 1873, when a large amount of money was spent on additions to Derry Lodge. I think it likely that the dining room was extended outwards at the same time. The way the Lodge was built originally left it as three separate buildings with a staircase in each part. At a later date they were to be connected together by a passageway constructed from corrugated iron running along the back of the house. The scullery at the west end of this corridor was also built of corrugated iron.

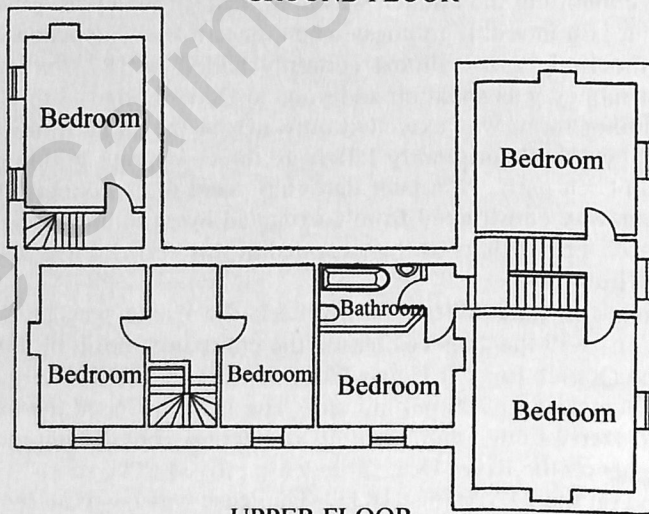
During the time of the fourth Earl, the estate was being run by Trustees. In 1830 the Trustees leased the entire area north of the Dee and west of the Quoich to a Sir Henry Goodriche from 1<sup>st</sup> July 1830 for seven years at a rental of £1,200 per annum. The lease included the use of Mar Lodge and Derry Lodge and all rights of shooting but did not include any fishing rights on the River Dee. This lease proved to be short-lived, as Sir Henry died on the 21<sup>st</sup> August 1833. The lease was taken on by the Duke of Leeds on a year to year basis for the same rent. There is no doubt that the Duke of Leeds made use of Derry Lodge during his tenure, as evidenced by a dispute over firewood which took place in 1851. The cause of this dispute appears to have been that some of the Duke's servants were interfered with, and the threat of an interdict held out, while they



## DERRY LODGE PLAN



## GROUND FLOOR



## UPPER FLOOR

The use of the rooms depicted on this plan corresponds with the use made of them by the Cairngorm Club from 1951 to 1966.

were employed in collecting firewood around Derry, to which the Duke considered he was fairly and legally entitled. The matter was fully investigated by the Trustees, who obviously considered that what had happened was a very small problem compared with the huge amount of money that the Duke had spent on the estate over the previous eighteen years, without any security of tenure. This included £21,000 in rent and around £7,000 on the preservation of the forest. The meeting concluded by declaring that the wood in question was the property of the Duke and that the matter should therefore be dropped.

When the fourth Earl died in 1857 he was succeeded by his nephew, who became the fifth Earl. At this point the Trusteeship was wound up and the fifth Earl took full responsibility for the whole estate. It was at this time that the estate resumed spending money in the area of Glen Lui. In 1856 there is an account from an Alex McDonald, mason, and others for mason work at a new house in Glen Lui (presumably Luibeg). The following year repairs were done to the larder and coach house at Derry Shieling. These were probably situated where the present large shed stands, just to the west of the Lodge itself. In the same year a new water closet was built at Derry; this was obviously an outside one as there is an account for lead for the roof. At the end of December there is an account for sawing wood for new houses at Derry Shieling. Could this be the extension to the Lodge which contains the kitchen, or is it merely referring to office houses? In the same year a stable was erected at Derry, but there is no indication of exactly where. At some point a shelter of some kind was built for the use of ghillies. It was called the Ghillies' Hall. I have no idea when it was built, but in 1894 it was reshingled.

Queen Victoria briefly visited Derry Lodge in 1859. She mentions driving there on her way to climb Ben Macdhui, which she did by pony from there. She also mentions that the party stopped there on the return journey and found some tea, which they had in the shieling, but there is no description of the place or any mention of people staying there. The Ordnance Survey name books, which were printed at the time of the original survey, presumably in the early 1860s, describe Derry as being a one-storey building in good condition.

The census returns from 1841 to 1901 give some insight into the use that was made of the property. In 1841 there is only one house listed under Glenlui. It was occupied by a William McHardy, with his wife and four of a family. He is described simply as a male servant. In 1851, the one house was occupied by a Peter McHardy, a gamekeeper, with his wife and eight of a family. By 1861 there are two properties listed under Glen Lui. The first, now called Derry Lodge, was occupied by a Hugh McCrostie, a deer watcher. The other property was called Glenlui Lodge,

and was occupied by another deer watcher, Alexander McDonald, his wife and four family. In 1871 Derry Lodge was uninhabited. The other property, now called Luibeg, was occupied by a Ronald McDonald, a gamekeeper. In 1881 Peter Miller, a gamekeeper, lived at Derry Lodge and John Mcintosh, another gamekeeper, and his wife lived at Luibeg. In 1891 Donald Fraser, a gamekeeper, and his wife lived at Derry Lodge, while John Mcintosh, another gamekeeper, and his wife and two family lived at Luibeg. Both were still there in 1901.

An inventory of the furnishings at Derry Lodge dated 26<sup>th</sup> March 1912 shows that the Lodge was furnished to a very high standard. It is too long to include it all here, so I will restrict myself to the contents of the dining room. There were: "mahogany buffet, French China dessert set (27 pieces), Oak couch & three chairs in American cloth, Deal table, Mahogany table end, Steel rail fender & set fire irons, Brussels carpet & rug, Mantelpiece mirror in gilt frame, seven Leech's sporting prints and two oil paintings, Scotch arm chair & three chairs and three Holland blinds and rollers". While the list looks impressive, there are some obvious deficiencies. While it emphasizes the 27-piece dessert set, there are only six chairs and apparently no dishes for earlier courses. Elsewhere there are five bedrooms listed, but only three beds.

After the death of the Duke of Fife in 1912, the lavish expenditure on the estate, which had been the order of the day during his lifetime, came to a sudden end. The cause of this was the introduction of death duties in 1894, which would have been very costly as far as the Duke's estate was concerned. However some developments did take place at Derry in the years leading up to the Second World War. A new shed was built in 1924 to replace a number of old sheds, which were demolished. The new shed had a concrete base and the rest of the structure is a wooden frame covered with corrugated iron. It still stands today. A new larder was built in 1926. In 1936 a bathroom was installed in the Lodge. It was taken off the bedroom which it adjoins. Apart from the plumbing, the work necessitated building a partition to separate the new bathroom from the bedroom and the installation of a skylight in the roof to provide light. Also in 1936, a new coal and stick shed was erected directly behind the kitchen. A new water closet was built behind this shed to replace one which had been inside the old coal and stick shed. This would have been intended for use by servants, ghillies, etc. There is also correspondence concerning making new curtains and installing curtain runners and curtain poles. New electric bells were installed in place of the old ringing ones. The pony stables were built in 1937 or 1938. Prior to 1912 all this work would have been done by outside tradesmen, but as much of the above work as possible was carried out by estate employees.

In May 1916 a German Zeppelin was seen flying over Derry Lodge. It was spotted by Neil Bynack, who at that time lived at Luibeg. Apparently the crew had got lost because of bad weather. They later dropped their bombs at various places between Lumsden and Inch and eventually crash-landed in Norway, where presumably they would have been interned.

The increasing popularity of hillwalking led to Derry becoming the starting point for an increasing number of mountain rescues. A first aid post was set up in 1938, consisting of a stretcher and other equipment. This was sponsored by a body called The First Aid Committee of Climbing Clubs. It was kept in a locked shed at Luibeg, but oddly it was the keeper at Derry Lodge who held the key. In the post-war years an emergency telephone was installed at Luibeg. From 1967 onwards Aberdeen Mountain Rescue team have had the use of the old pony stables at Derry, and in November 1977 the emergency telephone was moved there.

It is difficult to ascertain exactly what use the estate made of the lodge from the time the Duke of Leeds left. There is no doubt that for most of the time from 1860 onwards until the Second World War it was used as a home for a gamekeeper. In 1924 a party from the Scottish Mountaineering Club was accommodated there and stabling was provided for their horses. It seems the lodge was empty at that time as Mrs Macdonald from Luibeg was instructed to put on fires for them. It seems unlikely that much use was made of the accommodation by shooting tenants, apart from it serving as an emergency shelter or a place for picnics. The shortage of furniture would tend to suggest this. The lack of a bathroom would probably not have appealed to the type of guests who were being entertained. For example, I have a picture of a fishing party standing in front of Derry Lodge, one of whom was Edward VII, when still Prince of Wales. The Duchess of Fife seemed to have plans for the place in the 1930s, when she had a bathroom added and various other improvements done, but whatever these were, they came to nothing because of the Second World War.

Derry Lodge was requisitioned by the army on the 26<sup>th</sup> October 1942, presumably to provide accommodation for troops, who would be training on the hills round about. The estate removed all the furniture and fittings prior to this event and these were stored for the time being in the ballroom at Mar Lodge. Mr Beattie, the gamekeeper who stayed at Luibeg, was employed on a part-time basis at Derry as gardener and caretaker, and the army paid part of his wages for the duration of the requisition. The requisition was relinquished on 12<sup>th</sup> December 1944 and by all accounts the building was left in a rather filthy condition, so much so that according





*Derry Lodge in its Heyday*

to the Estate Factor, it was difficult to detect whether there was any damage to the walls and woodwork. There was also substantial damage to the Derry road caused by all the military vehicles using it. The estate later claimed around £2,700 damages from the War Department of which £2,200 was for the damage to the road. The Estate Factor at this time presumed that the Duchess of Fife would wish all the furniture and fittings returned to Derry, but this had to be deferred for the time being because of the shortage of tradesmen at this time.

It was around November 1945 that the Cairngorm Club first made enquiries as to whether Derry Lodge might become available for lease, but were informed that this was out of the question. The Estate Factor, however, did suggest that it might be possible to allow the Club to erect a small hut on a site to be agreed, away from the Lodge and the keeper's house, although he doubted if the Duchess of Fife would agree to such a proposal. However the Factor was very favourably disposed towards the Cairngorm Club, and by March 1949 he had obtained, perhaps somewhat reluctantly, the Duchess's approval for such a hut to be erected on the following terms: it was to be built on a site chosen by the Estate; plans of the building were to be submitted to the Estate for approval before any building work started; the hut was to be kept clean and tidy and no litter left about it and to be kept locked when not in use by members of the Cairngorm Club; any damage done to the Derry road, culverts or bridges

during the construction would have to be made good by the Club to the entire satisfaction of the Estate.

However, only two months later in May, the Club was offered a lease for Muir Cottage in Inverey, then called Moor Cottage. It was currently leased to the firm of Messrs McAdam, contractors, to accommodate the workmen who were constructing the fish ladder at the Falls of Lui at that time, but was expected to become available about six months later. The Estate Factor noted in a communication to the Duchess of Fife's representative in London that if this lease could be arranged it would probably avoid the erection of a hut in Glen Derry.

Two years later there was a complete change of heart. The Duchess had indicated to the Estate Factor that perhaps Derry might be let after all. There had been an enquiry in February 1951 from a Mr Maddocks of Ballachulish, who wanted to turn it into a guest house. This proposal was turned down. On the Easter Weekend, Mr G.A. Taylor and Mr W.A. Ewen of the Cairngorm Club were shown round the Lodge by Bob Scott, the keeper at Luibeg. Thereafter negotiations took place to draw up a lease. These were concluded by 7<sup>th</sup> June 1951 and the main points of the lease were as follows:

1. It is agreed that the subject of let shall consist of the main building at Derry Lodge, with coal shed but excluding all other buildings there.
2. The lease, subject to adjustment, shall be for a period of 15 years, with breaks in favour of either party at the end of 5 or 10 years, with entry as from Whitsunday 1951.
3. The rent for the first five years to be £15 per annum, payable at the term of Martinmas for the half year preceding and the half year following, the first year's rent being payable at Martinmas 1951. The rent for the remaining ten years of the lease to be £25 per annum and payable yearly at each term of Martinmas.
4. The Cairngorm Club will take over the whole premises under the let in its present condition and carry out all necessary internal improvements and repairs at their own expense to the satisfaction of the proprietors and free of compensation by the proprietors at the termination of the tenancy. No structural repairs are to be carried out to the subjects without the written consent of the proprietors. The proprietors will maintain the building in a wind and watertight condition
5. It is stipulated that the Club will refrain from organizing any excursions in the area during the stalking season from the 20<sup>th</sup> August to 9<sup>th</sup> October in each year during the currency of the lease. (It was to be agreed the following year that members could

- arrange such trips on the condition that they confer with Bob Scott about their choice of route beforehand.)
6. Access for vehicles (excluding charabancs and heavy vehicles for which special permits would be required) will be available by the road from Linn of Dee to Derry Lodge. The existing fee of 2/6 for the use of the key for the lock on Derry Gate will continue to be charged but will be restricted to 2/6 per double journey for members of the Club staying several days at Derry Lodge.
  7. There will be no objection to the Club gathering and using for fuel any dead wood in the neighbourhood of Derry Lodge.
  8. Accommodation shall be provided in the Lodge for two Estate Ghillies during the stalking season, free of charge to the proprietors. Such ghillies are to provide their own bedding, cooking utensils and fire.

When the Club took over Derry, it was still more or less in the condition that the army had left it in 1944. Huge black marks covered the walls in most of the rooms, probably soot caused by some kind of cooking stoves. A good clean-up and a lick of paint made the Lodge presentable again, all the labour being done by volunteers. There was no real structural damage, except that a bit of flooring had to be replaced in the room that was called the dining room. The timber for this job, which was not done until 1952, was supplied free of charge by the estate. The Lodge was furnished to accommodate 24 people, single beds being provided rather than bunks as at Muir.

Once it was ready, the Lodge was very comfortable during the summer months but less so in winter. It was not possible to use the hot water system because the pipes all had to be drained to avoid frost damage. Consequently all hot water had to be heated in kettles. Perhaps more serious was the fact that the corrugated iron scullery and passageway at the back of the building, very draughty at the best of times, could not keep the snow out during blizzard conditions and the passage used to fill up with snow. The low roof was also a nightmare for taller people. It was decided that the whole structure should be replaced, and as this would obviously be an expensive job, the Club made an attempt to persuade the estate to extend the lease by a further ten years to Whitsunday 1976. The Estate would not hear of this, but did guarantee that the lease would definitely be allowed to run its full course to Whitsunday 1966, i.e. dropping the five- and ten-year break options. On this basis the Club decided to go ahead with the job.

Work started on the evening of the 1<sup>st</sup> July 1955 and was completed in a fortnight. The new building was constructed of T-beam cavity concrete blocks, had an aluminium roof, and the corridor windows were of

glass bricks. The floor was built of precast concrete slabs, and of course the roof was higher than before. Once again the estate supplied the wood used free of charge. Various other jobs were also completed during this fortnight, including painting almost all the exterior woodwork of the Lodge, replacing the copper cold-water pipes between the kitchen and the bathroom with larger bore alkathene pipe, and a masonry dwarf wall was built along the bottom of the slope behind the lodge. Altogether about twenty people took part.

No other major works took place during the remainder of the lease apart from maintenance repairs and painting. The lease expired in 1966 and by then this part of the estate had new owners. At first it seemed that the £25 per annum rent would be increased to £500 but after negotiations the new owners agreed on an annual rental of £100, plus a charge for the use of the road of £150, and the lease to be of only one year's duration. The Club Committee decided to accept this, but it became increasingly obvious during the year that it would be hopelessly uneconomic to continue. The Lodge was badly needing painting and other repairs, and, without any security of tenure, it would have been foolish to spend a lot of money on it. The Club therefore gave up the lease of Derry at Whitsunday 1967. The new owners were John and Gerald Panchaud, Swiss businessmen.

The original road to Derry, built in the 1790's, started at Claybokie and skirted round the hill to where the Black Bridge now is, and from there followed the present route to Derry. The existing road from the public road to the Black Bridge was built at a later date. It is shown on the 1866 O.S. Map, but the Black Bridge is shown as a footbridge. I do not know when the bridge was widened to become a road bridge, but it was certainly many years before 1913, when it required major repairs. Up until 1930 those who were lucky enough to own a motor car could use the Derry road freely without any restriction. However in 1930 a gate was erected and the road was closed to the general public. Thereafter only those with permission from the estate were allowed to use the road, and only as far as a small car park at the entrance to the Derry Wood. Another gate was erected across the road at this point, and a fence constructed along the edge of the wood for some distance either side of the gate. A notice beside the gate instructed walkers that the right of way went down the side of the wood to the river and then along the river bank until past the Lodge. On numerous occasions in the years to come the Cairngorm Club obtained permission to take a bus up to Derry, but of course buses were not as big then as they are now. When the Club got the lease of Derry, members then had motor access to the Lodge itself. The use of the old right of way declined from this time. When the Black Bridge was



badly damaged by the spate of 1956 the Cairngorm Club gave a donation of 50 guineas towards its repair. At the start of the Panchaud ownership of the estate, keys were freely handed out to anybody at the bar at the back of Mar Lodge. Then one day this stopped and since then the road has remained closed to the general public.

Since the Cairngorm Club left, the Lodge has lain empty and became subject to vandalism. Windows got broken and people were breaking in and using the Lodge as a shelter. This was no doubt a major factor in the decision by the estate to stop issuing keys for the Derry Lodge road. Eventually all the windows and doors were boarded up to make the place secure. Unfortunately two skylights in the roof got broken and were never repaired. The loss of the use of the Lodge was a sad blow to Club members and also to members of other clubs who had stayed at Derry from time to time. It was a magnificent situation for a climbing club hut, and its loss means that all the hills in the Central Cairngorms now have at least an extra six miles walking for those who wish to climb them. When Bob Scott retired in 1972, he was not replaced and so there would have no longer been any real supervision of what was happening in the Derry Lodge area.

The Panchauds sold out to an American named Von Kluge in 1989. He carried out a huge number of improvements to properties on the estate and spoke at one point of repairing all the shooting lodges. Alas, that was not to be, and he in turn sold the estate to the National Trust in 1995. The National Trust has repaired the roof at Derry to prevent further damage, making the Lodge once again wind and waterproof. I recently visited Derry Lodge with Susan Bain, the archaeologist employed by the National Trust and was shocked at the condition of the interior. All the plumbing fittings, sinks, bath and toilets have been ripped out. All the fireplaces have suffered the same fate, but they were nowhere to be seen. Did someone take them away? Large areas of lath and plaster have been ripped off the walls and in some places floorboards have been ripped up. Near the bottom of the middle stairway, below one of the broken skylights, a wooden lintel supporting a masonry wall is badly rotten and the wall is presently being held up by acro-jacks. The single storey extension to the dining room has subsided badly and needs to be rebuilt.

The removal of plaster and lath from the bedroom above the ghillie's room revealed the existence the remains of a window, looking into the bedroom above the kitchen. It was this discovery that revealed that the middle section of the Lodge is the oldest part, and not the part containing the kitchen which is what I had previously thought. The National Trust has not yet decided on a suitable use for the property, but when they do there will obviously be a huge expense in restoring the Lodge to a

habitable condition.

*Much of the information on which this article is based derives from the Duff House Papers, which are held in the Special Libraries and Archives of the University of Aberdeen, and also from some private papers kindly lent to me by Captain Nicolson.*

The Cairngorm Club

## **The Brick on Basteir**

The B-F Route (or How Not to Climb the Basteir Tooth)

*Rhona Fraser*

**This is the second of a trilogy by ‘the Brick of Skye’. The first article appeared in ‘The Herald’ in May 1997 and was called ‘The Brick on Bidean - it’s all behind you now’. Names have been changed to protect those concerned!!**

Afflicted, filled with enthusiasm after our success on the Mhadaidh pinnacles and Bidein, announced: “Why not try the Tooth via Collie’s route? After today’s success, it’ll be no problem.” I have heard these soothing words before, I thought, usually before some epic!!!

### **Attempt 1**

The next day we set off from the Sligachan Hotel. The Munroist and The Runner had said Collie’s route was easy, the Munroist even volunteering to take me up herself without a rope!!!???? I tried to be optimistic, but one look at the giant fang of rock that is the Basteir Tooth dissipates thoughts of a panic-free ascent. We reached Bealach nan Lice, descended a little as the guidebook suggested, and stopped at the bottom of a slight break in the line of cliffs where higher up an old sling was visible.

“This is it,” Afflicted confidently announced, and with great gusto launched himself upwards. A few seconds later he came to an abrupt halt. For the next few hours our positions on the mountain changed little. A Local Man and his friend appeared. The former looked upwards and without hesitation set off up the cliff, bypassed Afflicted with ease and efficiently disappeared from view. Stunned at this display of climbing prowess, we gave up and ascended the Munro, Am Basteir, Afflicted by the normal route, myself by a south traverse, avoiding the difficult step on the crest of the ridge. Whilst Afflicted waited for me on the summit, the Local Man’s friend appeared and asked if Afflicted had seen his companion. “He is completely mad and absolutely fearless of heights. I suspect his life expectancy is very short because of this,” he recounted. “By the way, where is your wife?” Oh dear me, ten years ago on this very summit, I was taken for Afflicted’s daughter, a fact I never let him forget. Age must be showing!!!

### **Attempt 2**

Well not a real attempt, more just a ‘thought’. I was on my birthday walk (I will not tell you which one) carrying considerable provisions to cache



*The Basteir Tooth (photo: Roderick Maclean)*

on the ridge for our attempt on the whole Cuillin the next day. I had left most of my equipment hidden in Fionn Choire whilst I climbed Bruach na Frithe and Am Basteir alone, armed only with a ski stick and a small plastic shopping bag. I felt extremely under-dressed on meeting a fellow walker, as there was quite a bit of snow still lying in Coire a' Bhasteir. The Englishman had never been to Skye before and was anxiously intent on doing the Tooth-Gillean traverse despite his lack of local knowledge. A little time later, when he had reached the summit of the Tooth and I the adjoining Sgurr a Fionn Choire, we talked. Only on Skye can two hill walkers have a conversation easily from separate summits, the distances between the hills being so small.

"Collie's route is easy! A wide ledge with no exposure - come up!!" he enthused.

I hesitated but resisted, determined to see my next birthday. Later the Englishman and I met on the summit of Am Basteir, I having chopped my way down the snow with my ski stick, whilst clutching my Safeway (now of course Morrison's) Plastic Bag.

"What was the Tooth-Basteir connection like?" I asked.



“Oh, frightful,” he replied. “It was a ‘my God’ place - absolutely dreadful - steep, and very difficult. All I could do was to keep climbing and hope I didn’t fall off!”

Lower down on the summit ridge I watched as he approached the difficult step on the crest of Basteir. He hesitated, moved a few limbs, and then retreated.

“Is this it?” he asked.

“Yes,” I encouraged.

He tried again but stopped quickly.

“Are you sure??”

“Yes”, I reassured, “I can’t do it, it’s too far for me to reach. I’ll go off to the right using the loose traverse on the south side of the hill. After that, the rest is easy.” *(NB since this time the step has got longer and more difficult due to rock fall)*. He turned back to the awkward slab and with a little grunt was up.

“Difficult move for people with short legs,” was his parting comment. What a nice man!

### **Attempt 3: The B-F Route**

A year later, Afflicted and I ascended the Bealach nan Lice via Sgurr a Bhasteir, I scrambling as much as possible, in an attempt to fine-tune my dubious rock-climbing ability. I then began the long wait in the now familiar place at the bottom of Collie’s route. After an hour or two of the usual inactivity, in the firing line of small stones falling from the direction of Afflicted’s boot, suddenly there was movement in the rope and he was up. He shouted down he had found it far more difficult than any Moderate he had ever climbed. I followed, soon to be bewildered by a small, slightly overhanging bulge, extremely awkward and unnerving. As I quite happily clambered up the next section, my feet reassuringly steady on the gully walls, I came to the following two conclusions: first, that the Munroist NEVER, even with a rope, went up this route for it was far too difficult and she was far too sensible, and second, that I was going to have to face the awful prospect of an abseil down this awkward wee gully. At the top of this chimney there was a short respite on a relatively safe ledge, from which the only way forward seemed to be even more vertically upward. Afflicted struggled on, with me watching anxiously from below. Apparently the holds were tiny and on very steep exposed ground. The hours were ticking by. Looking up I was rather concerned to see we were much nearer Naismith’s route than I thought the guidebook had implied.

Then I looked down. Obvious only from above, was a faint track following the edge of the cliffs. I knew this must be leading down to the start of Collie’s route proper. We now had the prospect of reversing our

way up, with me facing what I had been anticipating with dread all day - an abseil down a steep chimney with no room at the top to manoeuvre. And so it had to be. I stepped down from the ledge to the top of the chimney whimpering, burst into a controlled sob and against all sane instincts walked backwards off the edge into the abseil.

The following 45 minutes were a blur. After five hours of frustration, now glimpsing success, I abandoned everything at the bottom of our 'climb', and ran downward into Lota Corrie. Leaving nothing to chance I descended right to the bottom of the cliffs and looked up. THERE IT WAS!!! Just as the Englishman had described, a wide ledge with no exposure, with a route-confirming abandoned beer can at its base. I set off, like a bolting horse at the gallop, believing that somewhere along the route I would be abruptly stopped by some insurmountable obstacle. But this never came. Only a small chimney at the very top briefly interrupted my sprint for the top. I arrived at the summit gasping with effort, bewildered at the ease of the ascent.

Afflicted and I spent the descent discussing rock climbing grades. Our guidebook for the climb had poorly described the start of Collie's route and graded it as Moderate/Difficult. We had therefore looked for a climb of such difficulty and, in Afflicted's opinion, ended up on a VDiff/Severe!!! Sgurr Dubh Mor by its normal route is an ungraded climb and yet is far more difficult than anything we had met on Collie's route, once we had recognised it.

Later, back on the mainland, we related our tales of woe to the Engineer. We have a habit of calling our little climbs/scrambles by our surnames. If I lead, it is an F-B, if Afflicted, a B-F. The Engineer's Wife listened silently to our story. As the men chatted, our eyes met. Years of experience listening to stories of derring 'does', or in our case 'don'ts'. were betrayed in her knowing smile. "Well we all know what B..... F.... is short for, don't we??" she said wryly.

## The Day We Came Down Bruach Mhor

*for Mike Tucker*

The day we came down Bruach Mhor, Mike, Charlie, Johnny and me,  
Escaped from life for a fleeting day, at peace with each other and free,  
The stony path up Ben a Bhuid, corrected, styled and curving.  
No longer scarring heather slopes, no longer without planning.

The lads we met when half way up the snowfield to the top,  
Conversation stopped our tracks, a little bit of shock.  
“We’re going up here and then Ben Avon, completing our Munro’s,  
Three this week and two the last, we’re in the final throes”.

I asked them what they’d done last week, they said, “They’re at Braemar”  
But naming them or knowing them, that was a step too far.  
Just looking down and ever onwards, the plod up to the top,  
No time to chat or meditate, no time for a friendly stop.

But Mike and Charlie and Johnny and me, we’ve plenty time to huddle,  
Beneath a crag, or a rocky ledge, or to investigate a puddle.  
“Fit wye div frogs come up so high, it must be quite a climb?”  
Mike’s questions always to the point, his humour quite sublime.

The day we came down Bruach Mhor, Mike, Charlie, Johnny and me.  
We found the plane and had a stop to sooth our “descent” knee.  
Finding bits of ragged metal, pondering on its fate,  
But thoughts by now about our comfy car, back at the roadside gate.

*Robbie Middleton*

## Renovating Corrour

### Neil Reid

Aye, and we did it without a Bren Gun Carrier.

A mere 50-odd years since the Cairngorm Club rescued Corrour Bothy from complete dereliction, the MBA and assorted ne'er-do-wells had to step in and do the job over again. Just couldn't get the proper staff in those days I suppose! Now, after two years and 2,000 miles<sup>1</sup> Corrour, cold hole of many a Lairig Ghru-some legend, is now an all-singing, all-dancing five-star hotel of a bothy, where the only fear is of heat exhaustion, and even that can be tackled by opening - yes, opening! - the window. And perhaps even equal in importance to keeping warm, future bothiers can relegate the bothy spade to allotment duties and use their copies of *How to Shit in the Woods* for loo roll. There's a cludgie!

Corrour, relic of Victorian deerstalking days, has been one of the Highlands' busiest bothies for close on a century now. Described as a ruin in the 1930's, it nevertheless remained popular, situated conveniently halfway through the Lairig Ghru and at the foot of the Devil's Point and Cairn Toul. It was a base, too, for some early rock climbing pioneers. In 1950 it was rescued from total ruin by the Cairngorm Club, who replaced the roof and buttressed the north gable to prevent its by then imminent collapse. Amidst lots of hard work and hilarity, which involved ponies, a jeep and, improbably enough, a Bren Gun Carrier (which never quite made it), they certainly made it wind and watertight, but it remained a pretty unwelcoming place by the standards of many other bothies, even retaining a bare earth floor until the 1970's.

The new millennium brought a need for some serious action. Once more the fabric of the bothy was showing signs of wear and tear, and, more importantly, increasing usage meant the problem of pollution was becoming critical - especially as it was slap bang in the middle of a Site of Special Scientific Interest and the newly created Cairngorms National Park. Some even whispered the word demolition, but such sacrilegious

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<sup>1</sup> 2,000 miles is, of course, a suspiciously round figure and is the result of gross misuse of journalistic licence. According to the records (themselves possibly subject to journalistic licence) 46 different people made a joint total of 113 trips over 18 working weekends, notching up 1,808 miles of walking in the process. However, as at least several walked in from the north on at least a few occasions, and at least one had to go chasing after an errant dog, and most went on several short walks with the bothy spade, an elegant but hard to typeset equation can be applied (you have to trust me on this) to give an actual figure for the total distance walked as ... well, as exactly 2,000 miles, actually.



talk resulted in an ambitious plan to build a toilet as part of a renovation of the bothy - a plan which seemed increasingly ambitious as more and more official bodies became involved because of the conservation concerns.

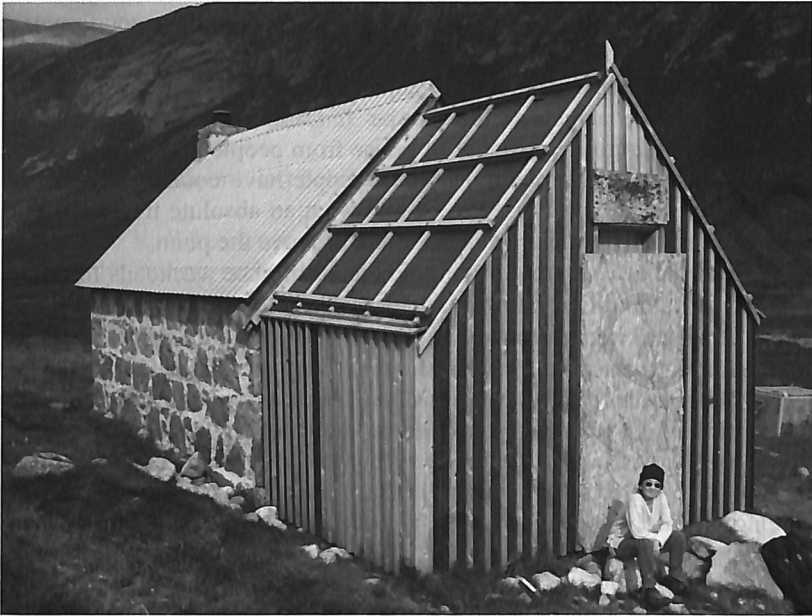
A huge organizational effort ensued. The back of a fag packet wasn't enough: proper plans and drawings had to be made, planning permission and environmental impact studies completed. Materials had to be begged, borrowed and ... bought. Finally, in May 2006, the tangible work began, though, oddly enough, it started nowhere near the Devil's Point, but in a garage in Kirkton of Skene, near Aberdeen, where Maintenance Officer Sandy Simpson and Kenny Freeman started prefabricating the surprisingly large toilet annex.

As the summer progressed, though, the action moved uphill. And, with five rough miles to go beyond the nearest vehicle track, arrangements had to be made to get the whole kit and caboodle up to the foot of the Devil's Point. Back in 1950 the Cairngorm Club had considered a helicopter, but dismissed the idea on the basis of cost. As mentioned above, a jeep took some of the load some of the way, and ponies were drafted in to take some of the heavier loads, such as cement; the Bren Gun Carrier was an experiment, and one which didn't quite work, although it sounds as if they had immense fun trying. However, the bulk of the carrying was done by manpower.

Some 50 years later, different economics applied and, through the coffers of the MBA and a sharing deal with path-builders, we benefited hugely from a number of helicopter flights taking the vast bulk of material and tools in. That's how the quiet of upper Glen Dee was rent first by helicopter flights and then by a generator and the cacophony of power tools, hammers and pick-axes that bemused many a seeker after solitude and quiet over the next 18 months.

The job was massive, the work demanding and hard, the midges at times utterly appalling, but the overriding impression left after 18 weekend work parties was what an absolute hoot it all was. Joiners, brickies and plumbers all had obvious value in the proceedings, but all sorts of folk came and lent a hand, whether as apprentice joiners/brickies or as labourers, carriers and gofers, with some (Okay, only the author) just specializing in asking daft laddie questions all the time to ensure the real experts never got any peace to work.

Sometimes conditions were arduous - the rain lashed down just exactly when the roofing panels had to go on, and a gust of wind lifted one panel right off the ground, nearly decapitating Kenny. And on several weekends passing walkers must have thought they'd come on the James Gang hideout, with us all masked up to try and deter several millions of incredibly persistent midges.



*During the Construction, September 2007*

Nor did it always work out quite right. On the second helicopter lift a door loaded on at Mar Lodge was missing by the time the 'copter reached Corrou - if you ever find it, check there's no-one underneath! The weekend the foundations had to be dug for the toilet annexe - a major excavation - only four folk turned up. When the 10-metre long trench was dug for the soakaway, before we'd actually got the pipework up - another major excavation - the helicopter firm went bust and one of Scotland's most well-used bothies spent all winter and a good part of the spring and summer with a huge great trench outside the front door. Work was finally completed and arguments had started over who was to get the honour (?) of the first 'usage' ... and we realized the 'faecal sacs' were the wrong size.

But despite the odd mishap and disaster it was all done, and in the process Corrou gained a new front door, an inner storm porch with door, wooden floor and wall-lining with sheep's wool insulation, a sleeping platform, a multi-fuel stove with a new flue, and an opening window. The outside walls have been completely repointed (long overdue) and, of course, the whole building is now a third longer with the addition of the wooden annex which houses the dry composting toilet. (Technical specs are available for those with an interest in such things, but since the author

has often been told he “doesn’t understand sh\*t”, that’s a good enough excuse to leave it out here.)

Those who took part have developed a rather ridiculous level of pride in what they’ve achieved, but, to be fair, that’s largely due to the incredible and gratifying amount of praise from people passing through or staying at the bothy. Again and again people have commented on how cold and unwelcoming it used to be and what an absolute treat it is now. And there’ve been some great nights there to prove the point.

Ostensibly, we were all going up there all those weekends to do our social duty, to do lots of hard work. But really, we were all up there for the craic. A typical weekend might have seen everyone gather at Bob Scott’s on the Friday night for a few refreshments and a social soir e (or was that swally?) before an early start for a day of hard work at Corrou and then serious ceilidhing until half-past collapse-o-clock. At the ceilidh would be all the work party (anywhere between four and a dozen or so) and all sorts of ‘guests’ come to stay the night, perhaps expecting peace and quiet, but finding themselves caught up in a riot of story-telling, reminiscence, laughter and song.

They were nights that made all the hard work worthwhile, nights that epitomized what bothy culture is all about: far more than just a shelter from the elements. Where else do you find groups of folk, from 10 year-olds to over-70s, from all walks of life and all corners of the globe, pitching in together, sharing songs and experiences, food and even dry clothes on occasion. (No-one knows whether the false teeth left on the sleeping platform one weekend were meant to be shared around or not...). If that all sounds like an egalitarian idyll (apart from the teeth), well maybe it was, but we were all too busy just having a good time to worry about the theory of it all. That and figuring out where everyone was going to sleep. Sometimes the sleeping plan had to be very carefully worked out several times before everyone fitted properly... and then someone would get up for a pee! It was a chance to make new friends and discover things about ourselves and each other: I would never have believed before that I would ever end up spending a night in a toilet with a Dundonian called Sinbad, but, hey, at least he didn’t snore. Above all, it was just one humungous party.

Yeah, sure, some of those who were there for most weekends did weary now and then, of the walk, of the work, but implausible amounts of alcohol (astounding amounts smuggled into at least one helicopter load, and a truly awe-inspiring load consisting of 30 tins of beer, one box of wine and a hip flask - as well as weekend gear and 3 metres of soil pipe - carried in by one stalwart) and an entertaining mix of characters, foreigners, lost souls (anyone remember the two ‘Weegies’ with the multi-

pack of crisps?) and dogs, not to mention guitars (not always playable), pipes and vocal chords, all given added zing by morning fry-ups and plenty of brew-ups through the day ... all fuelled a truly memorable two years which will be treasured by all concerned.

The five star bothy we left behind? Almost incidental really.

FOOTNOTE: Since work was completed the bothy has performed well, with only minor maintenance being required and (touch wood) no vandalism or instances of folk burning the wood lining in the stove. The toilet is still an ongoing experiment, but has proved more popular than anyone dreamed and a rota of volunteers has had to be set up to change the sacks and keep the whole affair sanitary. Whether the filled sacks will, as originally intended, decompose enough to be safely scattered on the ground, or whether they will have to be totally removed somehow, remains to be seen.

THANKS: All those who took part in the Corrou project, from planning to completion, are due thanks, but a few people and companies should really be mentioned by name:

The family of James Lenegham, a climber who knew Corrou well, but who died in the Alps several years ago, donated a four-figure sum to the renovation;

Eddie Balfour, manager of James Jones and Sons of the sawmill at Dinnet on Deeside, who donated all the 'off the saw' wood that was needed, again worth a four-figure sum;

Wellheads Electrical, of Aberdeen, gave the use of their truck to transport materials;

MCI Electrical, of Aberdeen, gave the loan of a generator for the whole two years;

Friends of Bob Scott's supplied all the insulation (environmentally friendly sheep's wool) and loaned all the power tools required for the project. (In fact, Friends of Bob Scott's were a huge inspiration to the whole project, many of those involved having 'cut their teeth' on the reconstruction of Bob Scott's Bothy, and gained the confidence to tackle what was in reality a major undertaking);

Bert Barnett, besides volunteering on-site, helped design the toilet, did the drawings and guided the project through the planning process;

John Cant, the expert on composting toilets, worked with Bert on the design;



Stan Stewart, one of the many on-site volunteers, deserves mention for his dedication: not enough that he's fast approaching his 70s, he walked in to help just three months after his second hip operation!

Sandy Simpson: at the other end of the age range, MO at just 18, he has been in so often he can now make the entire walk from Derry Gates to Corrou blindfold - and still dodge the puddles;

Peter Holden, the head ranger at Mar Lodge, was also a great help throughout the project.

The Cairngorm Club

## **Do Penguins Have Backache?**

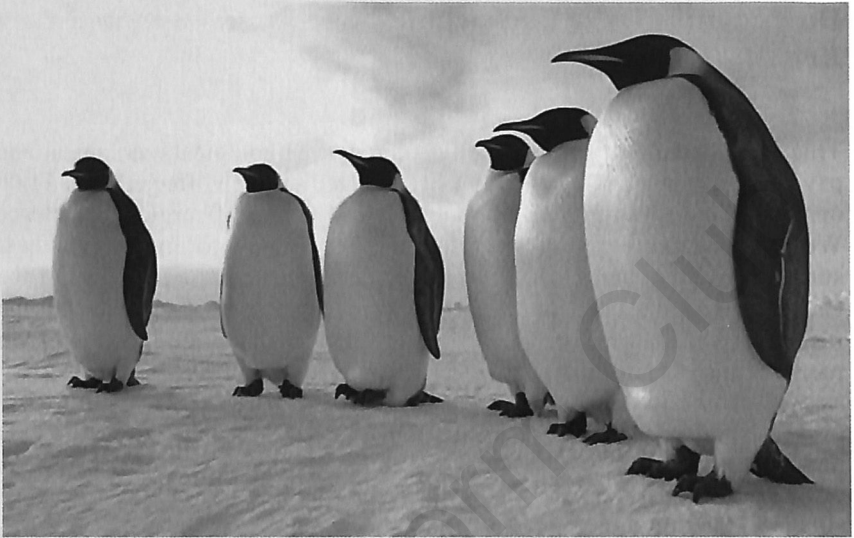
***Ken Mills***

This fundamental anatomical, physiological, pathological, zoological and psychological question was earnestly debated over a coffee table at 11.00 on a weekday morning 20 years ago at that centre of surgical excellence Woodend Hospital, by a team refuelling in readiness for meeting the next surgical problem at 11.10. Two of the debaters were/are members of the Cairngorm Club, and I am glad to report to the present membership the results of that animated conversation, still fresh in my mind (long-term memory may be still intact).

We had started with the observation that we had all had, or were presently suffering from, backache. Indeed, one of the lady coffee drinkers had developed this painful symptom shortly before the coffee had been brewed. She attributed the incapacity to bending over a hot tray of surgical instruments. Many other varied causes were suggested, supported, ridiculed or rejected. Our only consensus was that we were all human (just about) and that we spent many of our waking hours with our spinal columns vertical. We considered giraffes, kangaroos, chimpanzees, gorillas, etc. but decided that their spines were tilted rather than vertical. That only left penguins, as fish, amphibians, and reptiles are well known to be horizontal. None of us knew anything much about penguins as this was before the Internet and 'Life in the Freezer' - but we did know that Emperor Penguins are the biggest of the species and we had heard that they were to be found in Antarctica.

Several friends of mine in Foresterhill had been to Antarctica for the British Antarctic Survey (B.A.S.) to man British bases, mainly in the Antarctic peninsula, for periods of six, 12, or 18 months. The next time I met one or two of them, I enquired about Emperors, but no one knew, except to say that there were no colonies near to British bases. The available books on Penguins were generalised accounts but I found that they are swimming, diving birds incapable of flight and confined to the southern hemisphere (in contrast to polar bears which are found only in northern hemisphere). The further south you go, the bigger the subspecies become. This accounts for the first descriptions of Kings and Emperors not appearing until Captain Cook circumnavigated Antarctica in the 1770's.

I soon found that there were no Emperors in British zoos and indeed the only ones in captivity were in San Diego, California, in a specially refrigerated environment. The ornithological section of the Natural



*What – Backache? Us?*

*(Photo: Glen Grant US National Science Foundation)*

History Museum was in an old Rothschild mansion north of London, so a visit was arranged (by appointment only) to inspect the boxes of Emperor bones that had been presented over the years. It was disappointing that they did not have any articulated skeletons that might, just possibly, throw some light on the effects of an upright posture. I visited on a dark winter afternoon and was ushered up a grand staircase to a large former bedroom containing lines of cabinets with labelled drawers. From one of these, four shoe-box-like containers were extracted: two were inscribed with the words ‘Ross Sea Expedition 1842’ and two with ‘Challenger Expedition 1876’, and each contained beautifully prepared sets of bones. It was a surprise to find how tiny and gracile were the spinal bones in comparison with the large sturdy pelvis and leg bones. I was able handle these rare items and to photograph them on one of the work tables.

Being an associate of the Scott Polar Research Institute in Cambridge, I was able to use the very extensive library and to discuss penguin physiology with an expert, Dr Stonehouse. He explained the mechanisms whereby large penguins can survive excessive cold, dive deep (300m.), and only come up for air at long intervals.

The next move was to ask B.A.S. if they could find a specimen of an Emperor penguin so that I could investigate the matter of penguin backache, which had not been mentioned in my enquiries so far! Apparently, only the base at Halley Bay was within striking distance of an

Emperor rookery. I was warned that they were a protected species, and that various forms of licences would be required to import a cadaver into the U.K. It was proposed that some member of the crew at Halley would be able to visit the rookery in the spring, when the light returned, and collect a bird that had died during the winter when incubating an egg (thus the specimen would be a male, as only males huddle together during the Antarctic winter cradling an egg under their abdominal feathers, while the females go to sea to feed for a few months).

After one season I was warned that a specimen was on its way to Aberdeen, but it never appeared, and despite enquiries it was evidently 'lost in transit'. Next year a large penguin appeared, deeply frozen and wrapped in many layers of thick plastic sheeting. It had been kept frozen after collection for all the many stages of its journey to Aberdeen. Having been warned of its arrival I had secured permission to keep the cadaver temporarily in the deep freeze of the Pathology Department. It seemed a little surreal to be carrying a 20kg frozen penguin on my shoulder along the main corridor of Foresterhill. A number of friends stopped me to enquire but no one recognised the nature of my burden.

On arrival in the Medical School, the Professor of Bacteriology asked if he could culture any bacteria that might be found on the penguin's skin, deep in the feathers, on the hypothesis that they might be unique. I believe that nothing new was found.

Before dissection of the specimen in the basement of the Anatomy Department in Marischal College, radiographs were taken to show the assembly of the skeleton with the soft tissues intact. These showed the remarkable construction of the spinal column and the thorax, with several long fused segments of vertebrae and ribs. None of the bones were aerated as in flying birds, and there was no sign of any growth plates in the limb bones from which I surmised that the bird was an adult. There was no evidence of any degenerative changes in the mobile segments such as those familiar in humans.

Dissection in the cold, solitary gloom of the Anatomy Department, surrounded by embalmed human cadavers awaiting their student investigators the following year, was not an enjoyable experience; especially as attempts to embalm the penguin had failed due to ignorance of the precise position of the major arteries. The melted corpse was slowly disintegrating with the strong smell of old fish filling the atmosphere. After removing the thick layer of fat that underlay the dense feathers and skin, I soon found innumerable features that were new to me. I was astonished by the curvature of the neck bones, by the air sacs, and the huge limb muscles. The remnants were refrozen in the Anatomy Department.



It was about this time that I discovered a wonderful monograph on penguin anatomy published in 1883 in the *Journal of Zoology* by Professor Morrison Watson. He had dissected a wide variety of penguins collected from the Southern Ocean by the 'Challenger' expedition of 1876-78, the first scientific investigation of oceanic waters. His monograph runs to 244 pages, and is illustrated with beautiful hand-drawn diagrams and pictures. He made no mention of any pathological changes. Had I known of his work, my own dissection at Marischal College would have been much better directed and perhaps more fruitful.

The following year, to my surprise, another adult penguin arrived together with a chick covered in fluffy light grey down. I offered the adult to the Zoology Department for preservation of the skin and the skeleton. The chick was kept in the freezer at home alongside food cartons, much to my wife's displeasure! Further radiographs were taken. It had evidently died of starvation, perhaps because its mother had not come back from the ocean in the spring.

Disposal of my specimens had to be considered carefully. Putting parcels of flesh in the bin with household rubbish might offend the Refuse Department. Burying them in the garden at dead of night would probably attract the police. I discussed the matter with a vet who lives nearby and on his advice arranged for incineration at Craibstone. This process cost me £25, my only expense thanks to the co-operation and generosity of all the institutions and departments with which I dealt.

Thus I have not been able to decide if penguins suffer from backache, and no film that I have seen in subsequent years has ever shown an Emperor rubbing its back with a flipper or being massaged by its partner. I did not find any pathological changes that I could recognise in the few specimens I examined. It seems likely that only perfect specimens can survive life in the Antarctic, and even though males and females remain standing around their chicks and walk long distances over the ice, yet a lot of their lives are spent in the sea, and they can progress across the ice plains by skating on their bellies.

Professor Watson's work in 1883 just shows that in nearly every case someone has gone before. The only question that eludes me is how to estimate the age of a penguin, but, since I have not followed the literature for the last 10 years nor properly looked at the Internet, I expect that this matter has also been tied up.

Many great scientific discoveries have followed discussions around a coffee-table, like the one at Woodend Hospital so many years ago, but this time none did so!

### A Poetic Photograph

Donald Hawksworth writes: *In 1975, whilst walking in the area of Monte Rosa, I took this photograph into the sun as we crossed a glacier. I later used it as a Christmas card for my fellow walkers, one of whom sent me this poem, which still gives me pleasure!*



From summer snow to winter snow  
With autumn gold between,  
Along the twisting paths that run  
From Alps to Aberdeen,

Your photo pierced mid-winter dark  
And brought midsummer's light  
In morning glint on glacier;  
An omen that the night

Of solstice marks a new path's start  
Back to the sun and snow.  
Oh may the journey-gods protect  
All wanderers as they go.

And may your year whose path starts here  
Bring you to friends and song  
And morning light on glaciers,  
Bright as the year that's gone

*Gill Linscott*

## Sixty Years On

At the Club dinner in November 2009, certificates were awarded to five members who had each completed the amazing total of at least sixty years of membership with the Club. Those honoured were:

Patrick Sellar	(1946)
Tony Cameron	(1948)
Anne Cordiner	(1949)
Gordon McAndrew	(1949)
Sandy Reid	(1949)



*At the Dinner with the President, Anne Pinches. From l. to r. Anne Cordiner, Sandy Reid, Patrick Sellar, Gordon McAndrew, Tony Cameron.*

Others, who had also reached the magic total but were unable to attend the dinner, also received certificates:

Sandy Anton	(1939)
Bill Hendry	(1939)
Betty Chilton	(1944)
Ian Brooker	(1945)
Gordon Mathieson	(1945)

Frances Hill	(1946)
Margaret Munro	(1947)
Frank Crossling	(1948)
Eileen Leese	(1949)

Several of the recipients responded to the suggestion that they might share some of their memories of days in the hills through the *Journal*, as these might inspire the rest of us towards matching their achievements.

*Patrick Sellar sent three extracts from his climbing diaries, the first from 1947, then one from 1950, and the last from 1987.*

### **The Easter Meet at Crianlarich**

Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1947

The train was up to time at Crianlarich and I walked over to the hotel. I was shown to my room by a very vague woman. There was a double bed and a single bed in the room, and Bobby later tossed for it. I got the single bed, thank goodness. I went for a short walk before dinner, down the road which I expected Bobby to come along in Mr. Reid's car. It was not long before they came along and I got a lift with them back to the hotel. There were nearly 30 members of the Cairngorm Club there. At dinner Bobby, Mr. and Mrs. Reid, and Miss Somebody-or-other sat together. The main climbing party, however, consisted of Bobby, Mr. Reid, Duncan Somebody, Robert Somebody, Nancy Somebody, John Crawford and myself. This seven always climbed together. Robert, Duncan and John were all around the age of 22, John being a particularly high-spirited youth. The food at the hotel was good but not altogether abundant. Mr. Reid kept showering us with sherry and burgundy! After dinner the younger of us went off for quite a long walk towards the Falls of Tulloch. We had tea when we returned.

Friday 4<sup>th</sup> April 1947

A fine cloudy day with mist only scuffing the tops. Our party of seven set off to do Ben More and Stob Binnein. We had breakfast at 8.30 a.m. specially for the Cairngorm Club. We walked along to the Ben More burn and then prepared for our steep ascent. There were about 15 whooper swans on Loch Dochart and about a dozen goldeneye. It was very steep and we halted many times. Very fine views were obtained before reaching the top. The top was in mist but it was wonderfully calm. We ate our lunch and descended rapidly to the col between Ben More and Stob Binnein. The slope up to Stob Binnein was not so steep but was very hard



and I was much pressed without an ice axe. After a little way Birnie Reid sent Robert and me back because of our lack of ice axes. Mr Reid himself and Duncan accompanied us back while the others pushed on. We had to rope up and we had deplorable business in unravelling the rope at first. Birnie Reid himself did not know how to tie the correct knots! I'm afraid the Cairngorm Club is rather care-free and not so efficient as the SMC! We descended to the col in thick mist and a shower of hail. We next descended straight from the col to the Ben More burn. There were some grand snow slopes for glissading but without an ice axe we had to remain roped up and were guided gingerly down. I hardly missed anything by not topping Stob Binnein.

Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> April 1947

Last night, or rather this morning, we were disturbed by a short storm involving thunder and lightning and much heavy rain. By morning, however, conditions had improved sufficiently to allow us to venture out on a climbing expedition. The chief trouble was the high wind driving intermittent showers of hail. We seven were taken in Mr Reid's car to a point in Glen Falloch opposite An Caisteal. We then ascended this admirable mountain over Stob Glas and came back over Twistin Hill. There were a few interesting and tricky parts which I was able to enjoy fully because I had been lent an ice axe on this occasion. The wind was so strong on top that we had to lie flat on our faces on many occasions. It was a short day but more enjoyable than Friday. We were back by 3.30 pm. Some really wonderful views of the sunlight on Ben More and Stob Binnein were to be had. It was too wild an evening for a walk so we spent the time in a drawing room, some of us playing bridge.

*Patrick comments: I was aged 17, having joined the Cairngorm Club in 1946. The Nancy Somebody would have been Nancy Arthur I feel sure. Bobby was my brother R.M. Seller, who died in 1996. Ref. the burgundy, that was my very first ever glass of wine - we never drank wine in Huntly!*

### **The Bus that Nearly Didn't Wait**

12<sup>th</sup> February 1950

Picked up at Queen's Cross 6.30 a.m. Bus pretty full. The plan for the day had been posted as either Lochnagar or Beinn a' Bhuid. I don't like Lochnagar - it's too well known and too popular, so I opted for Beinn a' Bhuid. Only one other member wished to accompany me, everyone else disembarked at the bridge and proceeded up Ballochbuie. Nevertheless, we had the bus driven up to the Invercauld bridge for just us two. We then set out on the long 'plug up the Slugain'. It was a perfect winter's day

with clear blue sky and the deep soft snow sparkling in sharp contrast. The going was heavy, very heavy. With a great expenditure of effort we at last reached the south top of Beinn a' Bhuird by way of Carn Fiachlach. We were richly rewarded by the magnificence of the panorama, particularly looking towards Cairn Toul. We were already behind schedule, but my companion, Nicholls, did not care in the least about being late on our return (a 'keep 'em waiting, good for 'em' sort of attitude!) However, thank God, we decided not to proceed to the North top. We lost a good deal more time on our way back. I saw that we were going to be hopelessly late. I RAN on ahead and arrived at the main road to find the bus drawing up with a full complement. I opened the door and was greeted with a chilly silence. Then Mr. Smith said "Where's Nicholls, Pat?" I replied that he would be a good ten minutes yet, to which Mr. Smith replied "Well, we're not waiting. We're going back to Aboyne for our tea. You can take the public bus home". I said "Right!" and was closing the door when Nancy Arthur shouted "What about your wet clothes, Pat? You must change!" This saved the day, for there was a reconsideration and they decided to wait.

### **The Centenary Meet**

20<sup>th</sup> June 1987

Climbing Log

16.45 left Dalmunzie

17.00 20 Twite

19.40 we reach Loch nan Eun

22.00 top of Beinn Iutharn Mhor - 3 Dotterel, Golden Plover, Ptarmigan.

23.20 Camped in col to North of Iutharn Mhor.

Listened to Snipe drumming. Had a good dram.

21<sup>st</sup> June 1987

07.45 Rose after quite a good night.

08.20 We set off after breakfast. Glimpses of sun. Grouse calling.

09.15 Top of Carn Bhac

09.30 2 pairs Dunlin. We find nests with eggs. Dunlin and Golden Plover both singing. A heavenly morning on Carn Bhac.

09.30 - 12.30 We keep high via Geal Charn, Carn Liath and Carn na Moine.

12.00 Steep descent to Muir cottage.

For the overnight walk four of us set out - myself, Dr. Iain Smart (ex-President SMC), his wife Margaret and son Aaron (aged 14). We were favoured with near calm conditions, not cold and only spoilt by a few light

showers, one of them, annoyingly, just after we had entrusted ourselves to our new-fangled space blankets! In fact, the thin sheets of tin-foil worked surprisingly well. You just wrap yourself into it, of course already in your sleeping-bag and on top of a 'campamat'. Iain doled out a healthy ration of Scotch and it was a fine experience lying there listening to the snipe drumming.

We slept, fitfully, right through to 07.00. Iain lit his famous 'tundra burner' and we soon had tea and a marmalade sandwich. We topped Carn Bhac 09.15 and that was the finest part of our walk. A very isolated Munro, greatly enhanced by lovely Dunlin singing and Golden Plover yodelling. Before us lay spectacular views of the Lairig, Ben Macdui (just clear of cloud), and the back side of Beinn a' Ghlo. We could see right down Glen Tilt exactly along its full length. The Tarf and Geldie were also nicely seen. Mount Battock to the east looked its old bold self.

We were appalled by our first glimpse of the Cairngorm Club Champagne Buffet - a huge marquee and lots of cars. Never mind, it was good to get down amongst the pine trees and smell their scent and hear the siskins sizzling. The sun came out and it became really hot. Found a can of beer and downed its contents in a trice. The lunch was a great success. Aaron demolished three large venison burgers in short order. There were even kippers being grilled on the huge barbecue. Lovely fresh salmon and salad laid out on huge plates. Lots of wine.

Didn't know a lot of folk there, but meeting Wynne-Edwards made up for that. He is rather stooped nowadays but still has that piercing twinkle in his eyes. He fought back from a cancer trouble some years ago. We had a good chat. He said Adam's father was still alive. Disappointingly, Adam Watson junr. himself was not there. Wynne chatted about the old days of Culterty and how he was instrumental in getting the University to buy it from Edgar Smith. Wynne had been to the top of Macdui this morning, like many others present. Here I was, talking to a fine old chap of 82, the oldest to have reached the top! Many slept at the Shelter Stone.

*We climbed three Munros and walked 17 ½ miles before arriving at the Club buffet. But of course that was nothing compared to Prof. Wynne-Edwards climbing Macdui that same night aged 82.*

**Frances Hill** writes:

On receiving my certificate, I thought of my family and their hillwalking and skiing and what they wore, and remembered what I wore towards the

end of the war and a few years after. I had my mother's golf-jacket which was waist-length, and land-girls' corduroy breeches. These were good. On my head I wore a wool balaclava knitted for the navy and my father's plus-four socks (I have big feet), and boys' tackety boots with studs completed the outfit. I suppose I had some sort of waterproofs, but can't remember what. Kitted out with the above, I enjoyed wonderful days with the Club summer and winter. The New Year Meet at the Invercauld Arms Hotel was very special - a coal fire in your bedroom for an extra 2/6d was total bliss after coming off the hill in the dusk, cold, wet but happy. In 1947 Margaret Munro and I went by train to Switzerland and the first thing I did was to buy boots.

**Frank Crossling** writes:

What a nice idea to present the 'old fogies' with a certificate, and to deliver same in person!

I said I had not done much climbing since leaving Aberdeen but I quite forgot that I spent a year in Kenya. I am a surgeon and Glasgow University were helping set up a Medical School in Nairobi. It was a great year, I managed to climb Mount Kenya and of course Kilimanjaro - right on our doorstep. The latter is mainly a slow trudge, combating altitude sickness. You adapt over five days. I had it slightly - forgot all about it but years later I had the same symptoms exactly at 14,000 ft. walking in the French Alps. Flying Doctor trips also added another dimension to the mountains and volcanoes.

Although associated with the club for a large number of years I was actively involved for only five years while I was resident in Aberdeen (my home town) and was a medical student at Aberdeen University, but the memories are vivid. My two main companions on these outings were also medics - Jimmy MacGregor, now a retired GP living in Braemar, and Gordon Mathieson, now Prof. of Pathology in Newfoundland, Canada. We would collect at Queen's Cross at 6.30 of a Sunday morning and pile into the bus. Lots of chatter meeting colleagues, and then our first view of a pink sun striking the Cairngorm tops just below Braemar. We all crowded to that side of the bus for the view. Then what a day of sun and snow - I forget if we climbed or just walked but so invigorating. Then on to the hotel in Braemar for a drink and a meal. Back on the bus - more chatter till sleep crept over some of us.

Thereafter my profession as a surgeon took me all over the world and to many different mountains, but I never lost the fascination and memory of those Sunday outings with the Club.



*Anne Cordiner writes:*

**A Club Member for 60 years**

Obviously a kaleidoscope of memories, which began with survival of WWII, my college training, the beginning of a teaching career which saw 40 years of many activities, and the incredible growth of outdoor clubs and activities. So many aspects to remember and recall, pleasure and excitement, sometimes sadness, success and failure - a different language altogether, friendship and comrades. Now in the passing of Burns' night his well-expressed thoughts

*Oh! Age has weary days,  
And nights of sleepless pain!  
Those golden times o' youthful prime  
Why comest them not again!*

stir a whole random collection of thoughts covering the deeds and thoughts of many years.

First, Club outings, often with an early morning bus. First bus of the year to Glen Muick and Lochnagar, snow, so that more than once the bus went off the road, and we'd end up heaving and pushing, so that it usually got back on eventually! Some members took to skiing; presenting a problem - 30 people, 30 rucksacks, 30 pairs of skis, two dogs, all to fit into one bus.

Shelter: Derry Lodge (*Journal* (1954), no. 89, p. 33-36); the Shelterstone (campfires unpopular!); Muir Cottage with room for 14, just! (*Journal* (1950) no. 87).

The 'dress' of the immediate post-war period, which consisted of ex-army waterproof trousers and jackets (not waterproof, but superb for glissading, unless you lost control), ex-army (or land-army) breeches, rucksacks, ice-axes, fingerless gloves, balaclavas, long socks, and old raincoats cut short.

Adverts of the day: for Blacks of Greenock Ltd., Timpson Boots for Climbers, Robert Lawrie Ltd, Hemp Rope, Manila Rope, and finally Viking Nylon Rope, and Commando Soles after clinkers and tricounis.

The 'characters', either club members, or those the club had contact with, such as Bob Scott, held in awe and respect with his tremendous knowledge of the area. Our one-time President, who always carried his kettle and must have brewed more cups of tea than anyone else in the club. There were many others, male and female, who put their stamp on some aspect of the club activities. We had excellent chefs at barbeques, some fine Dinners, bridge-builders, painters, hut cleaners.

But over the years, so much out and about on meets in many parts of the country, in other countries on foreign meets, which were usually a

summer activity. The small things that added so much to meets, sparkling sunshine, herds of deer. The special birds, such as golden eagle or dotterel. Then the delicate and charming small flowers such as gentian and soldanella, and the large and striking more-robust thistles and knapweeds. Company and laughter, adventures shared, fair weather and foul, some great meals after meets, and often a good snooze on the bus home.

Some still rock-climb, some prefer to walk or ski, some stay at home in Scotland, and many have been further afield on other continents, but there is something for everyone. For those of us who have been a long time with the Club, there are few regrets, and many happy memories, but now the hills seem steeper and higher, the tracks longer, and strangely walking down seems almost as much effort as walking up.

## Gourmandising on Skye

or "Cueillez dès aujourd'hui les Roses de la Vie"

(loosely translated "Gather ye Rosebuds while ye may") - Ronsard

*Donald Hawksworth*

It's gratifying that the Cairngorm Club now caters for older members by arranging occasional 'Daunders' (or is it 'Danders'?). However, this gratification does not extend to the traditional Easter Meet which now seems a thing of the past. It used to be an annual weekend stay in a comfortable hotel - something of a social occasion, gathering together members from far outwith the Aberdeen area - remember the heroic cycle runs the sadly lamented Louis Fussell made from Bedford? The undoubted joys of bunkhouse living appeal less as one grows older, but I suppose one must accept as inevitable and proper that times change and the Club must cater for its more active members.

However, a small group of older members, unwilling to 'rough it' in Knoydart 2009, arranged their own post-Easter Meet on Skye. Alan Bell from Nottingham, Gordon and Leonora McAndrew from Edinburgh, Sheila Murray and I foregathered at a luxury Bed and Breakfast near Portree. From the lounge we had splendid views of the distant Cuillin. We were fortunate in hitting some glorious weather - endless sunshine and the country looking magnificent in its spring freshness.

Our first day found us driving north to the Quirang, where three of us ascended Skye's most northerly hill - Meall na Suiramach (543m.). The steep initial climb from the bealach proved challenging, but the summit panorama made it worthwhile, stretching from the mainland hills round Loch Maree, to the whole length of the Trotternish Ridge. We visited Kilt Rock on our way back to Portree, where we discerned tiny figures rock-climbing up its basalt columns. The evening found us sampling a wonderful gourmet banquet at Kinloch Lodge, stately home of Lady MacDonald of cookbook fame. The menu included such delights as 'Warm Isle of Skye crab mousse with seared west coast scallops', 'Roast butternut squash and sage risotto, parmesan crisps and crispy pancetta', and 'Rich dark chocolate and orange pudding, white chocolate and berry fudge'. After such a feast, we were still not too comatose to enjoy the magical drive back to Portree as the sun went down on the hills.

The next day was cloudier and, at times, showery. We drove across to Neist, enjoying the cliff scenery and seclusion of this remote corner of Skye. Further self-indulgence, I regret to say, at lunch time, for, even here we were able to sample gourmet eating at the famous 'Three Chimneys'

restaurant - amazing to find such a place in the middle of nowhere. I had heard (with some incredulity) that some folk flew there by helicopter for a meal, but it's true - a helicopter was 'parked' across the road when we arrived! After a main dish of red deer, I tried the 'famous' Marmalade Sponge Pudding - marvellous! On our way back to Portree, we digressed briefly for a visit to Glenbrittle. We wandered along the beach reminiscing about a holiday Alan and I spent here in 1956, when we wandered up the Inaccessible Pinnacle, onto the Cioch, over Sgurr Alasdair's 'bad step', finally traversing the Dubhs from Loch Coruisk. Oh for the joyous, carefree days of youth! I recall our sleep being disturbed in the early hours by a thudding of hooves - we had inadvertently camped on a cattle track! Our tent remained intact, but the animals ate a sack of potatoes we had left outside under the awning!

In 2008, four of us enjoyed a post-Easter Meet on Mull, leading on from the Glenorchy Meet (notable for mountain rescue activities!). If we arrange future 'dauner-style' Spring Meets perhaps they may grow into something like the good old-style Easter Meets. Maybe other more senior members might wish to join in, although I fear that the excessive amount of five-star feeding which we enjoyed in Skye might well be a 'one off' - I won't quote the considerable cost of our gourmet meals! However, to adapt the words of a TV ad: "We're worth it"!



## Walking the Dee Watershed

*Lydia Thomson*

A long time ago, I was filling an idle hour looking at maps of our beloved Deeside, when it occurred to me to try and work out where the watershed of the Dee ran - perhaps I had been inspired by the rumbustious account *Walking the Watershed* by Dave Hewitt<sup>1</sup>, which relates the much more ambitious expedition of walking the watershed of Scotland between the Atlantic and the North Sea. My watershed was easy enough to discover, in fact, for many miles around the head of the Dee it ran along the county boundary, tracing a route across some of the highest of the Cairngorm peaks, Ben Avon, Beinn a' Bhuid, Ben Macdui, Braeriach, before swinging in a southern arc to cross the Carn Ealar, the Iutharns, the Cairnwell, Glas Maol, Mount Keen and Mount Battock. Less well defined, but also interesting, was the watershed to the east of the great mountains.

A project was born: to walk the whole watershed in consecutive stages. Flush with enthusiasm, 2003 took me well past the half-way stage, but then came a hiatus. If my legs last out, at some time in the future you may read of the southern stretch, but this article is a summary of the diary of the northern section, from Aberdeen through to the farthest west, the watershed with the Feshie. The fascination of all watersheds is being high on a ridge above two valleys, in this case always the Dee on one side, and on the other at first the Don, then the Avon, the Feshie, the Tilt, the Shee Water, the Isla, and the two Esks, and, as a bonus, no need to worry about stream crossings!

### **Stage 1: Brimmond Hill to Glack, 6<sup>th</sup> March 2003**

A lovely spring morning, blue skies, sunshine, and little white clouds, and still clouds of snowdrops all around in the garden. I knew that we had to go! As we conveniently lived on its slopes, Brimmond Hill seemed the obvious place to start, so Frances and I set off straight out the back door, across the field and up the hill to the starting gate at the viewfinder (266m.). Like stout Cortez, we gazed west, but were not really able to pick out much of the route. Down on the broad track that leads to the little western car park, and then straight across to the farm track, we skirted just to the north of the latest carbuncle of Westhill housing, and eventually reached the Hill of Keir. This was delightful surprise, a rough grassy

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<sup>1</sup> Hewitt, Dave, (1994) *Walking the Watershed*, TACit Press Glasgow.

pudding scattered with bits of gorse, and lovely old single larch trees, a bit stunted, but game, like old Caledonian forest, and in the centre the day's trig point no. 2 (222m.), with 360° views, stretching back to Brimmond, and on to the snow-patched slopes of Morven, with glimpses of the bigger hills beyond, and the Loch of Skene, super-scenic between us and the bulk of the Hill of Fare. We turned our backs on the view with regret, and dropped to cross the B979, then made our way up the farm track to Rogiehill, and Auchronie Hill. A sweep-sweeping little flock of redwings passed overhead, our first interesting wild-life. Really on a watershed-feeling ridge now, as we dropped northwest down the gentle nose to meet the road, and then a gently rising track to another hamlet of converted steadings. We cut up through stubble field at the side of a house to the top of the hill, searching for trig point no. 3, found in a grassy enclosure, circled by scattered fine old beeches, and right next to a pair of standing stones, about four feet high, with scattered stones clustered behind them, looking like the decayed entrance to a barrow-wight's lair. A trudge along busy the B977 road followed, before we turned up the track to Letter, between hedges sheltering a flock of yellowhammers, and then went cross-country to Lauchentilly, and a barn full of inquisitive young woolly cow faces. The farm track to Nether Lauchintilly passed fields with my first lambs of the season, lots of twins, and quite big, playing in a little sandy dip with a turnip pile by the side of the road. A very muddy rise led to Glack, sited just on a col in the ridge, a mini-street of abandoned old farm bothy buildings, plus the standard giant barns, and a little square stone farmhouse. Then quite steeply up bracken, bilberry and heather to trig point no. 4, with perhaps the best all-round view of the day, directly south over a quarry to the Barmekin, with the Hill of Fare beyond, around northwest to the ring of hills leading to Bennachie, back over much of our day's route to Brimmond again. Down in the flat valley bottom between us and the Loch of Skene lay the grey square of the roofs of Dunecht, from whence we caught the bus back to Kingswells.

Watershed distance 10.3 miles.

### **Stage 2: Glack to Learney Crossroads, 17<sup>th</sup> April 2003**

This spring has been amazing. It has hardly rained for six weeks, and last week the temperatures in London and Cardiff have reached 80°F. Here it has been over 60° for several days, and the bees are working overtime bringing in great loads of pollen - golden brown, white, and chrome yellow. And on 16<sup>th</sup> April the swallows arrived back, first one, then two, and are now at their usual perches on the telegraph wires. The day for Stage 2 was one of these glorious spring days, hazy blue and already quite warm. I was on my own this time, as the haze slithered into white mist

just past Elrick, and it was with difficulty that I recognised the gate where we had descended from Glack Hill at the end of Stage 1. Larks were singing fit to bust unseen in the milky mist on the farm track down to cross the A944. Still no view except looming dim whaleback ridges, so I decided that rather than struggle across ploughed fields to the ridge only 100 feet or so to the right, I would stay on the road, swapping long views for the flowers on the south-facing verge - the first violets of the spring, ground ivy, wild pansy, emerging leaves of sweet cicely. By the time I exchanged cheery greetings with old couple watering their garden at Sunnybank Cottage, it lived up to its name, and I turned aside to the trig point at 201m. through a field full of sheep who chased me back to the road, and the metropolis of Glenwood. Short cuts through Tillybirloch brought me to the B9119, at Auchintoul. This unlikely spot is a real watershed, with the Auchorie Burn 100 yards ahead draining to the Don, and the Bethlin Burn less than half a mile to the east to the Dee. The streams draining from the NW side of the Hill of Fare to the Auchorie Burn thus all needed to be circumnavigated.

I turned off the main road, meeting an ancient car, with two quite ancient ladies who stopped for a chat - was I going all the way up the hill? the ancients one asked. She had been up many times, but not any more, and the less ancient one hoped I had refreshments with me. Now it was getting really warm, with (intimidating!) views ahead up to the ridge of the Hill of Fare. For 20 yards I put my feet over the watershed before crossing the burn again to reach a ruin in an idyllic setting, sheltered under a last big tree. Here a track was marked on the map up the hillside, but it seemed to cross a great tract of gorse. Nothing for it but a jungle traverse, without machete, to where the gorse was burned, and I was soon covered in charcoal - hands, clothes, map - before I reached the thank-god grass. Why is it that every time I climb the Hill of Fare I end up in some awful pickle? The track was there alright, a wide, sunken path, but now jammed full of gorse bushes, so nothing for it but the deep heather along the flanks. Luckily before too long I reached a burnt strip, which took me up the shoulder quite a way, but then abandoned me. The next bit towards the edge of the wood was real purgatory, hummocky ground covered in man-eating heather, and a severe shortage of even animal tracks. After some very slow and sweaty going, I finally made it to the wall along the edge of the wood, where I sat in welcome shade and attempted to clean my hands so that I could apply more sun-cream without blacking up.

Heading straight into the sun, I saw the trig point with a lovely wall leading to it, which I leapfrogged to try and find the least-worst going. Now the heather was slightly shorter, and I was glad to see a line of shooting butts stretching across the broad summit of the hill - surely there

would be a path between them. But no, and the heather became worse, interspersed with tussocky grass, and what would normally be impassable bog, but was luckily just damp after all the dry weather. Heading west, I did find a track, and turned to follow it, but it died after 100 yards, so I headed west again, the gently convex slopes limiting the horizon. I will draw a veil over the awful heather that followed, before I finally reached the beautiful open larch woods, with a blissful logging track straight along the ridge in front of me, taking me delightfully and quickly to the B993, just at the watershed col. An anticlimactic struggle through the woods on the other side, in search of the 332m. trig point, led to a strategic withdrawal, and then I left the watershed for the day, for a lovely easy wander, through estate woods, rhododendron-lined, and idyllic grassy tracks, past Learney House, along beech avenues to Torphins, and a lift back to my car and home.

Watershed distance 10.8 miles; cumulative 21.1

### **Stage 3: Learney Crossroads to Tullochvenus, 15<sup>th</sup> May 2003**

This stage runs north from the Learney crossroads, and over the hills to Corrennie and the B9119. It was Fiona's turn to accompany me on the Great Watershed Bash, and as the logistics of A to B walking were beginning to be a bit difficult, we took two cars, and shuttled around before starting off from the crossroads. (In a purist moment I had earlier insisted on walking from the Torphins col down to the crossroads.) Woodland and meadow meanderings led us to the 327m. hill, and down to Ewens Croft, another of these nice wee cottages nestled in the dips and hollows of the land, and then to Denwell. As we approached the little farm, tucked in between its buildings, we enthused on its lovely rockery, ablaze with phlox and pansies, and other rock plants growing from crevices in the stone wall. A tiny little body came out to talk to us, she couldn't have weighed more than 6 stones, in cardigan and trews, joined by her husband, a real old farmer in brown moleskin patched all over. She was bursting to talk, and he soon warmed up to converse too, telling us about their granddaughter aged 12 and how she loved to come and stay, and had told her teacher all about getting a bull for the cows, and how when a cow was looking dead in the field, she had said she knew it wasn't, it was only sunbathing. And of course lots of talk about the weather, and how it was not the same at all at all, and how her husband had been just up on the hill, when a tornado came by and picked up a dead tree that was lying around. The postie arrived, and we took our leave, being ushered through a beautiful blacksmithed wrought-iron gate, and taken to see the gate post that an oystercatcher had adapted for a nest by picking out the



rotten wood from the top, and laying three large olive and brown spotted eggs.

We had to cross our watershed briefly, up along a purling little brook, and then I took to the heather to the post marking the summit of Green Hill, set in a little patch of grass, with flowering cloudberry, and a magnificent 360° degree view - Cairn William and Bennachie, all over the Don plain, squared with brilliant yellow rape, to the sea beyond, across to the Hill of Fare, round beyond to the south watershed hills, Mount Keen, Lochnagar, and a white palisade of the Cairngorms, probably looking into the Beinn a' Bhuid corries, and then round to Tap o' Noth. Afterwards I trotted down again to meet Fiona at the col between the Green and the Red Hill.

The next stretch was an act of faith, trying to find a way through the belt of wood, onto the Red Hill. Luckily the detail in the 1:25,000 map showed a fence line running through, and after a bit of woodland wandering backwards and forwards, to see where any weakness lay, particularly along the edge of a thick and impenetrable stand of mature spruce, we found the fence, and it soon led us out onto a tongue of open moor sticking into the wood. A wide swathe had been cut through the heather, which made for marginally easier going, but not by much. Still, the fence led us straight to our goal, even if there were stretches of it that were the nastiest tussock grass, and the views were opening out again to the far snowy hills, and across the beautifully green bowl to the north. Craigievar Castle looked spectacular, tucked in its little fold of woods, flag flying over warm ochre turrets. A lovely feeling of being on the top of the world, to say nothing of being on a watershed! Soon we found a track, running down to the bealach beyond the Red Hill (where a track runs across north to south) and then on up Benaquhallie, delightfully easy going and more lovely views. At the top we walked round the trig point (today's first) three times, trying to spot Fiona's house, the watershed start on Brimmond Hill, and scanning out our route ahead, over Craiglich, Pittendreich, Pressendye, and the hulk of Morven beyond. Then we made a brief detour to the amazing cairn, the tall skinny stone man standing proud on the wide stone platform south of the summit, before swinging down along the wall dropping quite sharply, turning south through grazing to reach the road and our car. There really is a special feel to the watershed, with the vales of Dee and Don spread out on each side of you. Watershed distance 7.5 miles; cumulative 28.6.

#### **Stage 4: Tullochvenus to Queen's View, 4<sup>th</sup> June 2003**

This was meant to be a little walk to fill the gap in the watershed between the descent from Benaquhallie and the Queen's View above Tarland, and

so it did, but involved a long circle beginning and ending at the station square at Lumphanan - yes it did use to have a station, as we discovered from careful examination of the map, the Ballater line curving north from Banchory and then south again to Aboyne. The map had promised a Military Road leading north from the very English-looking church with a spire at the top end of the village. It was a delightful track through the woods, very well made, and spookily resonant of the tramp of red coats and white gaiters. It followed quite high above the side of the stream valley, with lovely views back through rolling hills towards Deeside. Then we clambered over the first of dozens of gates, squelched through a boggy bit, and reached the road, joining up with our descent from Benaquhallie.

We potted along the road, stayed by ice-creams from the Tullochvenus shop, with magic views north to Bennachie and the ridge of hills stretching round to Tap o' Noth in their bright spring green, splashed with the yellow of broom and gorse. Views seem much better at walking speed, and the sunshine polished everything up marvellously. Turning south up the rising road towards Bogentassie, we were soon very obviously on the watershed again, with views behind and before. A fence led up to the trig point of Mill Maud hill, and a view of all the southern watershed hills lined up before us, round to Lochnager, with its rippling fringe of supporters. Dipping down to cross the main road, some agile gate climbing and electric fence ducking got us on to the slopes of Corse Hill. This was lovely easy going, at first just on grass, but then changing to heather, and blaeberry, but always with the track of a wheeled vehicle which meant that we had one path each and could talk easily all the way up. We discussed Pen Haddow and his recent rescue from an ice floe when down to his last day's food after reaching the North Pole - and pontificated about how they have it far too easy compared to the good old days of Nansen and Mawson and Scott. We had been intrigued as we approached the top of Craiglich to see two figures on the top by the cairn - pinching the watershed glory from us? Only as we pulled up the last steep bit did we see that they were a couple of sticks, and a little solitary rowan tree, right next to what had obviously been a fine round cairn, of mortared shaped stone of some six feet high and ten feet round, beside our second trig point of the day. Near at hand below us was the green and pleasant Howe of Cromar, a patchwork of grassland and green wheat, edged by the broad wooded ridge falling away from us and rollercoasting up to Mortlich. Beyond, the great hulk of Morven, with behind it peeping out the corries of Beinn a' Bhuid, with two staring eyes of snow patches. Then the shoulder of Morven leading round over Pressendye, to ripple up at the northern slopes of our Craiglich.

A handy cart track dropped down N through well spaced woods, and then a field track took us down to the road, where the gates were adorned with publicity to try and prevent the proposed giant quarry and landfill. We popped around the corner to the Queen's View indicator, then quiet roads and woodland tracks meandered the long way back to Lumphanan. Watershed distance 5.3 miles; cumulative 33.8.

### **Stage 5: Queen's View to the A97 above Tarland, 12<sup>th</sup> June 2003**

A two-car convoy out, to leave one on the watershed of the A97 above Tarland, the other back at Queen's View. We wandered up a pleasant sandy track into the dew-wet woods, eventually taking to convenient tractor spools, running straight uphill, to the high-level traversing forest track that runs around the top of Pittendreich, through the immature woods. After that, the way was straightforward, but lovely in the warm sun round and up the shoulder of Pressendye, being surprised that what looked like the top really was - we had both thought that it was one of the hills that played the fool on you. We sat on the cairn, gazing round as we had our lunch, arguing over the which hill was which, and tracing the watershed route back to Brimmond Hill on the horizon. The way along the ridge to Lazy Well was a pleasant jaunt, the landscape plotted and pieced where the heather was being managed. Again a rolled-up-sleeve day, and as usual far too much clothing carried! The way up to Baderonach Hill seemed to be of slightly different geology, as the grassy slope was bright with tormentil and bedstraw, in contrast to the heather wastes at our backs. On the summit were the second trig point of the day, and a beautifully constructed honey-pot shaped memorial cairn. The tracks (for once) were just as shown on the map, due south, and then sharp west to the edge of the tiny Overlook Loch, on its bank a boulder three-foot square, carved with old men's faces<sup>2</sup>. Into the trees then, and onto a grassy untrodden track that seemed to lead in the right direction. It's always spooky in the woods when you can't really tell which direction you're going, and the track got boggier and wilder, and the trees pressed in on each side, but then we got a glimpse of water through the trees, and there we were, back at the road by the little Witchcock Loch. We had crossed one stream going down the wood, but close inspection of the map revealed a drain that divided into two, one branch running south to the Dee, and one north to the Don, and there was definitely no exit south from the loch - so we decided our watershed credentials still held. Watershed distance 8.4 miles; cumulative 42.2.

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<sup>2</sup> Donald Hawksworth describes this and other sculptures in *The Art of Cromar*, Cairngorm Club Journal, (2007) no. 108, p. 273.

**Stage 6: A97 to A938, the Traverse of Morven, 17<sup>th</sup> June 2003**

After weeks of balmy dry weather, the forecast was now for at least showers, but nothing daunted the convoy proceeded to Glen Gairn, where we left Fiona's car at the top of the pass and drove round in mine to the same parking space used at the end of Stage 5. A boggy, then deepish heather slog up the first slopes, with disturbed curlews calling, led to a very pleasant track along the side of Bonlee Hill, and we pattered along, in glorious sunshine, Fiona in her swimsuit top! A coffee stop once we'd followed the wall onto Craig Wangan, gazing north-east over the forests and ridges, getting our Bucks and our Taps mixed up as usual. Our ridge seemed to be not only a watershed, but a weathershed. To the north there were still blue skies sunshine and white woolly clouds, to the south the murk over the plain was thickening, and the sky was a deepening grey. The wall soon became a line of ancient fence posts, but these led us faithfully almost to the end of the day. A footpath took us upwards, over Little Cairn, and then Mid Cairn, a delightful stretch of bilberry mixed with cloudberry, its white giant bramble flowers sprinkled all around. At this stage we were amazed to descry a human figure - the first met on the watershed since Day 1. A level march took us to the large summit cairn with the trig point in its little stone fort just to the north.

Then we were off again, losing height directly, following the faithful fence down the broad west ridge. Although the sky was now grey, there were lovely views across to Lochnagar, with the rarely seen silver of Loch Muick to its flank, and the knobbls of Ben Avon against the western skyline. A wild place, no sign of Ballater tucked deep in the Dee valley, few tracks in sight, and no roads. The fence divided, and we took the northwest line, ever down along the ridge, among golden plovers flying and peeping. I hadn't realised how much height we would lose (must read maps more carefully in future!), and there was a final steep little defile on the exact watershed at Clac of Bunzeach. A steepish pull up the ridge opposite, as I plodded up to the spectacular stone man (worthy of a Wainwright sketch), which had been prominent sticking up like a needle from a long way back. The faithful fence led to the next mini-top, before we were brought up short by a sword gash, a 100-ft. deep cleft of steep rock and scree, the Slacks of Glencarvie. My minimal geological knowledge suggested that this must have been an overflow channel from melting ice sheets. The fence plunged straight down what looked like a pretty loose and nasty slope, but a little reconnaissance showed steep grassy slopes around to the south, to yet another exact watershed. Our sudden appearance had disturbed a bird of prey, which from its angry swearing as it circled above us made me think it was a peregrine - it must



have had a nest on the rocky outcrop, but we couldn't spot it, so we went on our way leaving it to its peaceful wilderness.

At the enormous cairn on the top of Mona Gowan, a heavy shower came on, the sky was deep grey all around, and it seemed that the remainder of the day would be miserable. Looking back, Morven seemed only a step behind, looking west the next top seemed a long way off. However, the positive act of setting out again seemed to wave a magic wand, the going down was easy, the going up didn't seem so far after all, and more amazingly we were in sunshine, though how this managed to penetrate the grey sky I don't know. So we had a tea break, sitting back to back on the O.S. 'pile of stones' on the grassy top. The final, almost level stroll to the summit of Scraulac was a delight, across close-cropped turf, past exposed peaty patches mosaiced with drought cracks, and grouse families with bundles of fluffy just-airborne chicks, the mums luring us along with broken-wing rushes. Civilisation was now in sight, down in Donside there were silver loops of river, with the road rising up towards the Lecht beyond. Abandoned at last by the faithful fence, we made for a couple of cairns on the rim of the hill, passing some really nasty bogholes, and there suddenly directly below us was the main road, and the car. A grand day, with every foot of the way (in both senses) on the watershed! Watershed distance 9.4 miles; cumulative 51.8.

### **The Big Push**

#### **The A938 to the Tilt Watershed, 18<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> September 2003**

##### **Day 1**

Having reached the serious mountain stretch of the watershed, I persuaded my husband Ken that an Expedition was called for, and after poring over maps we decided that the best ploy was for me to be dropped at our previous last point on the A97 col above Tarland, while he drove to the Linn of Dee, got out his shiny new bike and pedalled back to Invercauld House, before walking in to Loch Builg, a place that has often seemed ideal for a camp, and which lay slap on the watershed. After the best summer in years the weather forecast was still goodish, as I set off up the steepest bit of the day, direct from the road, the little hump and then the big hump of Carn a' Bhacain, along handy little deer tracks, through a brown and grey and gold landscape, although the sun wasn't too far behind the high cloud.

The little lochan on the way to Camock Hill was dried and black, and just beyond the top, there was a whole family of cairns. On the slopes leading up to Brown Cow Hill, the only memorable feature was a gulch, like a mini Slacks of Glencarvie. Otherwise the contours were so gentle that no summit was in sight, just an ever-receding horizon. At Meikle

Geal Charn, there were outcrops of quartz and boulders on top, and a fence to follow down the ridge, directly into the wind with eyes weeping. Ken soon joined me at the ruins of Loch Builg Lodge, and we put up the tent, and cooked supper as the cloud gradually thickened and dropped onto the top of Culardoch, and the drizzle began. So we retired to our bijou tent, and essential reading material (for Ken "I thought I might be spending a long time in the tent" Anna Karenina!). A big skein of geese gossiped overhead, circled for a bit, and settled down onto the far end of the loch in the twilight.

## Day 2

Ken was making breakfast at 6.45, and we packed up as the sun crept down the hill slopes behind us, reaching us just in time to dry the soaking flysheet a little. A stream gully, carefully taken on its left bank to preserve the watershed, led us to the ridge of Carn Dearg and Carn Drochaid, which would be respectable hills were it not for the giant mass of Ben Avon towering above them, with all its ridges and lumps and bumps. It seemed a long way up to the two granite warts of Stuc Gharbh Mhor. The way ahead was now very obvious, around the big bowl on our left, past the impressive face of the Clach Choutsaich, with streams on the right falling to the Avon, on the left to the Gairn, round to the main summit. We trotted easily down to the Sneck, and plodded up the other side, and across the featureless plateau of Beinn a' Bhuird to the tiny cairn of the north top, then off into the unknown, down the stony/grassy west ridge, towards two tiny lochans. Then we were in a shallow basin, the dreaded Moine Bhealaidh, which was amazingly wet given the summer, with sluggish ditches winding here, there and everywhere, so that it was impossible to know quite where the watershed was, but we slithered across it, coming to better ground as we turned north on the broad ridge leading up to Beinn a' Chaorainn Bheag. Here were the first signs of civilisation, a couple of cairns, and a path leading down between the sweet little tarns on the col and up to the top of Beinn a' Chaorainn itself. The last lap was down the ridge to the west, coming to a wide grassy plateau, which would have made a lovely high campsite, but we were aiming for the Lairig an Laoigh cut deep into the hillside another 100m. below. Perched on the rim looking down, it seemed impossible, but steep grassy slopes did eventually cork-screw down to heather and stones, and the black peat-haggy valley, just about exactly at the col. We couldn't find a dry spot, so wandered around the corner to camp by the Hutchison Hut for the night.

## Day 3

There was cloud on the tops as we set off at next morning, to contour back round into the Lairig an Laoigh and pick up the watershed again, and there was cloud at the top of Stob Coire Etchachan, though it seemed to be rising, and then there were amazing views down onto the cloud hanging around in the trough of Loch Avon, and across to cloud-capped Macdui. Down the ridge to Loch Etchachan we went, and round its northern flats, to the foot of the Carn Etchachan cliffs. These looked pretty formidable, but the boundary, and the watershed, went straight up them. I knew that we had gone up that way once before, and again we managed to wiggle up quite easily, if steeply, popping out on the ridge just about at the summit cairn. As we turned southwest along the ridge, I saw clear blue in the sky to the north, a sharp delineation with the cloud, which gradually worked its way south, turning it into a glorious day by the time we had got to Macdui. I love that valley of the Garbh Uisge Mor high on the east summit slopes, a real Shangri La. The purling stream runs through banks covered with the most vivid emerald moss. There are tiny lochans, with mini sandy beaches. Beyond the rim of its bowl the ground falls away to the black hole of Loch Etchachan, and its outfall tumbles down to the gash of Loch Avon. A beautiful serene place it seems, but so high that it would be a terrible place to be caught in bad weather. Enough poetising! We pulled up the stony flank to the south, and followed the stone heaps to meet the path, and the people coming up from Loch Etchachan. They were lightly clad, and going disgustingly fast, and I cursed them inwardly as I plodded in their wake past the tumbledown minibothy, and up to the cairn. But I forgave them as we lolled in the sun and ate our lunch, and gazed at the view. As always it seemed as though to go across to Braeriach would be only a hop and a skip, as the Lairig Ghru just disappears. My planning had envisaged that we would do just that, aiming to camp at Loch nan Stuirteag, but we were running rather late. Anyway, off again, over point 1295, strictly following the boundary and watershed over the boulder fields, and joining the path again at the steepish little drop down to the Lochan Buidhe plateau. The watershed passes just between the two burns, and we then turned to follow the March Burn down to the Lairig Ghru. This turned out to be quite scary, as the slopes fell away and became really steep, with the stream in a rocky gully. Ken behind me, over-loaded with the tent, slipped and slid down 30 feet or so on the steep grass, so after that we teetered down pretty carefully. About two-thirds of the way down the stream disappeared into a tangle of boulders (just as the map showed!) and gradually the slopes began to ease a little. Anyhow, all did go alright, and we found ourselves down at the col, out of the wind and in the sunshine in the middle of the afternoon. Then I threw a wobbly, and declared that this

was quite far enough for today - the slopes on the Braeriach side looking not much better than those behind us. So we found a lovely campsite just on the edge of the first of the Pools of Dee, and slothed around in the sun, drying the tent, which had been packed soaking wet, dangling my feet in the pool, watching the sun glitter on the water, and to my great surprise discovering minnows/sticklebacks, anyway little fish with lots of fins, swimming in the pool. How on earth did they get there? The pools have no obvious inlet or outlet, the water flowing underground (which is why it's impossible to say if the March Burn flows to the Dee or the Spey.) And they must be almost frozen solid most winters. When the sun finally went over the hill, and the midges came out (though not too desperately) we retired to our sleeping bags, though the voices going through the Lairig continued far into the gloaming.

#### Day 4

We were off early from the shadowy glen, climbing up the steep slopes which turned out to be surprisingly easy, and not nearly as steep as the previous day's descent, to reach the ridge of Sron na Lairige, and in and out of the mists and a cold wind to the summit of Braeriach. Once on the plateau we navigated by rough compass bearings, keeping to the highest ground above the wells of Dee, and glad to see the Einich cairn loom up, and when we met the corrie edge there was no need to worry about route finding. To satisfy summit fever we continued down and then up the stony slope to the top of Angel's Peak, clear of cloud, before backtracking a little to pick up the long ridge leading south-west to Loch nan Stuirteag, where the autumn leaves of the little woodrush in the sward were like flickering red flames. From there it was a pull up the long bare shoulder and tops of Monadh Mor into the wind, with the dark clouds brushing the top of Bheinn Bhrotain over to the east. The watershed took us almost due south, on the long, long ridge of Cnapan Mor and Cnapan Beag, the going getting worse as we got lower and the heather got longer, and seeming to last for ever until we at last came out on the boggy footpath to the Feshie, at the watershed with a new river. The weather was deteriorating, with black skies hiding the high peaks, so we settled down to the ten-mile slog out to the Linn of Dee, grateful when the boggy path became a track at Geldie Lodge, stayed by tea at White Bridge, and thankfully reaching the car just before the rain.

Grand total for the four days 52.5 miles, of which 42.6 on the watershed and 12,330ft of ascent. Cumulative watershed distance 94.4 miles.



## The Cortina Meet

*Sheila Murray*

Continental Meet, July 2009.

This heading in the February Newsletter caught my eye and, as I read on, I became more excited to see that “senior citizens will find plenty to see from below the peaks”. Was this my chance to join another Alpine Meet since the first occasion in 1960? I was sorely tempted but the prospect was somewhat daunting. Was I wise to embark on such an adventure at my age? But I need not have worried.

Let me take you back briefly to 1960 and the time when travel abroad was limited because of the then allowance of foreign currency. To get to Geneva we flew from London in the very early hours of the morning, reaching the railway station as the early workers were emerging for their day's work. I can still vividly remember sitting on the platform relishing coffee, croissants and black cherry jam - what an introduction to Switzerland! We journeyed on by train along the lake-side, and then by bus into the Valais with its chalets on 'toadstools' and the post-buses with their musical horns - a sound now seldom heard. We eventually reached the simple Aiguille de la Tza Hotel from where, under the guidance of Anne Cordiner, already an experienced Alpinist, we had our first experience of the Alps in all their glory. I can still recall the thrill of early morning expeditions from a hut, guided at first by torchlight across the sparkling snow, eventually to the summit of, say, the Pigne d'Arolla or the Tête Blanche, and the extensive panorama of snow-covered peaks in every direction.

But enough of nostalgia and fast forward to July 2009. This time there was no early-morning flight, but a pick up from one's house at a civilised hour for the drive to Edinburgh, whence to Italy and Marco Polo airport. Here a water-taxi was hailed and soon we were skimming over the waters to the centre of Venice itself. Disembarkation was a somewhat nerve-wracking experience but a strong arm was at hand to ensure no mishaps occurred. Our party of the two Scobbies (Eilidh Senior and Eilidh Junior), Frances Macrae-Gibson and myself spent two nights in a small but very central hotel, a stone's throw from St Mark's Square thus making our modest sight-seeing relatively easy. Having assimilated the 'flavour' of Venice we were glad to board a train and head north to Bolzano, where we met up with Ken and Lydia Thomson, who had made their way there by a more strenuous route and one more in keeping with a Cairngorm Club Meet. The main purpose of going to Bolzano was, of course, to view Ötzi, the Ice Man, whose 5,300 year-old remains were



*Two Past Presidents beneath the Cinque Torri: Sheila Murray and Ken Thomson*

discovered in the Ötztal Alps by Helmut Simon in 1991, and which now provide the centrepiece of a fascinating exhibition in the museum.

Now our circuitous journey to the Dolomites was nearing an end, and Cortina d'Ampezzo beckoned, and (dare I say it?) a taxi was engaged to take us there. At last, after some difficulty finding our apartments, we had arrived! There we were joined by Gordon Stalker, the seventh member of the group. This being my first visit to Cortina, I was surprised to find such a large, sprawling township with one-way streets, numerous hotels, restaurants and up-market

shops. All this surrounded by breath-taking walls of impregnable rock. What could I possibly do here?

I soon realised that the resourceful Eilidh had the answer, by using the local buses and the occasional taxi (!) one could gain a thousand metres or so, and thereby, instead of always looking UP, one could now look ACROSS at these mighty limestone giants! Our favourite vantage point was the Tre Croci, where we could laze in the sun, do a little botanising, or take slightly more strenuous exercise before rendezvousing at the nearby restaurant to sample what was on offer.

One day Ken kindly took a day off and assisted me onto a chair lift, thus enabling me to reach the even greater heights of the Cinque Torri. Here we explored the Italian gun emplacements, from where they successfully faced the Austrians on Monte Lagazuoi during the First World culminating in the battle of Caporetto.

So the days passed and down from the heights we returned to Cortina where certain of us had a little rest, after which, as if by magic, a delicious three-course meal would appear by courtesy of Eilidh and Frances. Usually the three 'youngsters' of the party would join us later to tell us of

their day's exploits, which filled me with a certain amount of envy. It was good to know that some club members still upheld its traditions, yet at the same time to realise that advancing years should not be a deterrent to joining such a meet. This octogenarian certainly does not regret having done so, thanks to Eilidh and the others.

The Cairngorm Club

## Who Was Jaakoff Prelooker? Ken Thomson

Volume I no. 1 (1896) of this *Journal* (pp. vi and 47) records that, on 1 May 1894<sup>1</sup>, Mr. Jaakoff Prelooker of Odessa was admitted as one of the first three Honorary Members of the Cairngorm Club on the summit of the Barmekin<sup>2</sup>. No other details are vouchsafed therein, except the names of two other Honorary Members admitted at about the same time (though not necessarily at the same place), i.e., Sir William Cunliffe Bart. of Glentana (without the ‘r’, as was his insistence) and the Rev. William Forsyth, D.D., of Abernethy, Speyside (author of *In the Shadow of Cairngorm - Chronicles of the United Parishes of Abernethy and Kincardine*, 1900). Curiosity aroused, the present writer undertook a little research, with the results below. Much about Prelooker himself comes from an introduction, by Helena Frank<sup>3</sup>, to one of the man’s own books, *Russian Flashlights* (1911)<sup>4</sup>.

Yakov (or Iakov) M. Priluker, a Jew, was born in Pinsk in Western Russia (now Belarus), in 1860. His grandfather being a noted Rabbi, he was first educated in an ultra-strict Jewish seminary, learning the ancient Hebrew of the Old Testament and the Babylonian Talmud. Then, under an edict of the Russian government, he was sent in a group of such children to a Government School to learn Russian and a little arithmetic, geography and history. His parents removed him to another rabbinical seminary, but the young Jaakoff kept up his Russian in secret, and eventually managed to escape to another Government College, though again with strict discipline. There, he came across the New Testament, and started to

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<sup>1</sup> The year is not clear in the *Journal*; the “Excursions and Notes” sections of the early *Journals* are notoriously skimpy with such essential information for later generations. Other evidence (see below) shows that the year was, in fact, 1893.

<sup>2</sup> Such a membership admission procedure seems to have been common Club practice at the time, and even Committee meetings were sometimes held on mountain summits - a practice which, if reinstated, might reduce their current duration! Interestingly, in *CCJ* Vol. IV (no. 24), Prelooker no longer appears as an Honorary Member, his name being replaced by John R. Findlay of Aberlour (either J. Ritchie Findlay who died in 1898 - the name is in italics, along with that of Sir William, who died in 1900 - or perhaps his son Sir John Findlay, for whom Aberlour House was a “northern home”; both were proprietors of *The Scotsman*).

<sup>3</sup> Helena Frank was a British non-Jewess who studied Hebrew and Russian in order to translate Yiddish. Fearful of the survival of the language, she founded the Anglo-Jewish Yiddish Literary Society, and translated many works, including *Yiddish Tales*, and the poem *In the Factory* (with Rose Pastor Stokes, an American socialist activist, and latterly a Communist).

<sup>4</sup> Downloadable from [books.google.co.uk](http://books.google.co.uk).





envisage a reconciliation of Jews and Christians - a view later enlarged to include Mohammedans, Buddhists and others.

In 1880, he graduated, and was appointed as an assistant master at the Second Government School for Jews in Odessa - then, as now, a major Black Sea port in the Ukraine. Here, he proselytised amongst more orthodox Jews, and through the local daily paper, whose Christian editor had been imprisoned and exiled several times for his liberal political views. An editorial in 1882, arguing against Jewish traditions such as physical circumcision, the Sabbath being on a Saturday, and a ban on Jewish-Christian marriage,

created great agitation and confusion, with some Jews believing that the Government was attempting forcible conversion. Prelooker's post was threatened, but he managed to avoid condemnation for heresy by the Crown Rabbi, and wrote a book (*Hebrew Reformers: New Israel and the Spiritual Biblical Brotherhood*) which the Russian Government in St. Petersburg - then notoriously anti-Semitic - looked on favourably as a way of fomenting further dissension amongst its Jewish population. Back in Odessa, however, Prelooker was still in hot water, declared a heretic by the Jewish Community Council but saved by sympathetic if autocratic officials.

Over the next few years, *Hebrew Reformers* gained many admirers, and Prelooker found fellow-thinkers amongst the Stundist and Molocan movements which were trying to break away from the Russian Orthodox Church. However, the "New Israel" movement<sup>5</sup> which attracted him was

<sup>5</sup> The "New Israel" religion arose in the second half of the nineteenth century. Its aim was to facilitate, by means of radical religious reforms conceived in the spirit of rationalism, contact between Jews and Christians, and thereby pave the way for civil emancipation. The twofold religio-social program of the sect was to recognize only the teachings of Moses, rejecting

now viewed suspiciously by the government, and Prelooker suffered much persecution, as related in his *Experiences of a Russian Reformer*. He decided that he would not last much longer in Odessa (or perhaps Siberia), and decide to emigrate to England, where he arrived in 1891 with only two pounds in his pocket (the remnants of a gift from a friendly Berlin professor), and letters of recommendation from the English Church in Odessa. Despite this unpromising start (he was not, of course, the only Russian refugee in London), he soon established a reputation for speaking and writing (his flair for languages was astounding; he wrote in Russian, Yiddish, German and French, as well as English), and he was gave lectures in various parts of Britain, as well as on the continent.

In subsequent years, he gave talks, often in Edinburgh and elsewhere in Scotland at the invitation of reform-minded church leaders, on a variety of topics, including *The Position of Women in the Five Great Religions*. Some of these events were in and around Aberdeen, where Professor Charles Stewart was President of the Aberdeen Philosophical Society, and it must have been this visit that brought him to the attention of the Cairngorm Club. As recorded in successive April and May 1893 issues of the *Aberdeen Weekly Journal*<sup>6</sup> (which in fact seems to have been a daily), Prelooker lectured - sometimes with "oxy-hydrogen slides" - over about ten days in several churches, as well as in the Albert Hall, Huntly Street. He dealt with several subjects, including *Russian Life, Religion and Politics*, and the writings of Count Tolstoy (then a novelty).

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both the typical Russian Orthodox view of Mystery in God, and the Jewish Talmud, dietary laws, circumcision rites, and traditional form of worship. The day of rest was transferred from Saturday to Sunday; the Russian language was declared to be the "native" tongue of the Jews and made obligatory in every-day life, and usury and similar distasteful pursuits were forbidden. In 1891, Vasilij Semionovitch Lubkov took control of the New Israel movement, declaring himself to be the living God. In 1905, the church moved its centre of operations to Rostov-on-Don, and later spread its influence over the south of Russia. In 1913, about 2,000 followers under Lubkov's leadership migrated to Uruguay and established a farming town with very restrictive rules. He confiscated all the possessions of his followers and turned them into essentially one family. At the end of the 1920's, Lubkov moved with a few families to Manich in the Soviet Union, where, although persecuted, the cult survived until the 1950s. In 1972, the Uruguay government repressed San Javier by destroying the library.

<sup>6</sup> Scanning these pages - as can easily be done online at Aberdeen City Libraries - reveals further items of some fascination, especially in the advertisements, e.g. for Cockle's Antibilious Pills, and full sets of teeth at one guinea each. Another article records the imprisonment (for destroying documents) of the Dowager Duchess of Sutherland as a "first-class misdemeanant" in Holloway Gaol; she was accused in Parliament of having had "a special apartment luxuriously fitted up in plush, with carpets, curtains, cushions, mirrors, and flowers", permission to be attended by her own maids and medical attendants, "her meals sumptuously provided", and eight boxes of personal luggage.

In the same paper, the Club's meet to the Barmekin is recorded in some six inches of closely typed newspaper column<sup>7</sup>, and took in Dunecht House, Culfossie, the Balcarres Inn at Echt, and thence by alternative lowland and upland routes to Midmar Castle, where members were invited in for tea. On the summit of the Barmekin, Prelooker - apparently the only Honorary Member actually present on the occasion - is recorded as commending the "physical, moral and intellectual advantages of mountaineering", and wondering if the "Russian character was probably modified by the generally flat nature of [that] country".

Prelooker took his propaganda to anywhere that people would listen, including the Ascot races, and eventually became the founding Secretary of the Russian Reformation Society, dedicated to better mutual understanding between Great Britain and Russia<sup>8</sup>, and encouraging reformers in the latter country. Prelooker's book *Under the Czar and Queen Victoria: the Experiences of a Russian Reformer* was a success, and in 1897 there appeared - with an opening quotation from Tennyson - the first issue of the monthly *The Anglo-Russian*, which lasted until 1914. He organised a Russian choir, and a Russian Exhibition in several towns on the south coast of England, and gave lectures all over Great Britain, including Aberdeen - where "after the lecture they paid him more than the fee agreed upon"!

Not all Prelooker's initiatives were successful. He had opponents who defended the Russian Empire, and reacted badly to this early ecumenism.<sup>9</sup> A "Ruscan" press agency, launched partly to counter Russian

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<sup>7</sup> Probably by Alexander Inkson McConnachie, the Club's indefatigable first Secretary and *Journal* Editor. The paper also records the busy activity on the Aberdeen railways on 1 May, which coincided with a newfangled Bank Holiday, and its many train excursions. The Ancient Order of Shepherds needed two trains from Aberdeen to Nairn and Inverness; the Club is not alone in seeing changing transport demands for their excursions!

<sup>8</sup> At that time, British perceptions of Russia were coloured by memories of the Crimean War, suspicions of 'The Great Game' in the Himalayas, and anxiety over anarchism in Europe and elsewhere.

<sup>9</sup> One of his opponents was William Thomas Stead, a fervent sexual moralist (though a supporter of women's rights, and an anti-war crusader) and campaigner for the Tsar. After two years of formal schooling, and editorship of the *Darlington Echo* at 20, Stead moved to the tabloid-like *Pall Mall Gazette*, in which role he set up - rather incompetently - the procurement of a young girl in order to highlight Victorian hypocrisy. He was sent to jail for three months, and, though in prison uniform for only a day, thereafter went to work by London commuter train every 10<sup>th</sup> November in his arrowed suit. Amongst other achievements, he caught and cooked office mice in order to understand the experiences of the besieged residents of Paris in 1871, conducted the first-ever interviews with the Tsar, and oversaw the building of the Peace Palace in The Hague. However, he did not survive the Titanic in 1912.

encroachments on Finland<sup>10</sup> and perhaps other Scandinavian countries, did not last long, and the Boer War scuppered a Russian language school set up in London with the hope of teaching army officers. During the First World War, he was not afraid to associate himself with unpopular causes, as can be seen from an entry by Daisy Parsons, the first woman Mayor of West Ham, in the *Worker's Dreadnought* of May 1917: "A splendid lantern lecture, with music, on Russia by Jaakoff Prelooker will be held in Lee's Hall May 14<sup>th</sup> 7.30 pm".

A notable aspect of Prelooker's work, and *The Anglo-Russian*, was devotion to the cause of women's rights, including suffrage. He gave many lectures on this theme despite the risks of alienating potential audiences, and was greatly assisted by Mrs Frances Swiney, wife of an Anglo-Indian major-general, President of the Women's Suffrage Society of Cheltenham, author of *The Awakening of Woman*, and a regular columnist in *The Anglo-Russian*. But Prelooker was not simply a speaker and editor in this field. Having married an Englishwoman (Ethel Thorpe, who bore him two daughters) in 1905, but remaining himself a Russian and therefore without a vote (like his wife), he objected to paying taxes and rates, until the Horsham Petty Sessions Court issued a distress warrant. Only the widespread interest in his case eventually persuaded him to give in. In 1909, he became a naturalised British citizen.

Prelooker published in Russian, German and (excellent) English; the British Library catalogue lists 23 works against his name. His best-known works are perhaps *The New Israelite; or, Rabbi Shalom on the Shores of the Black Sea*<sup>11</sup> (a thinly disguised account of the 'conversion' of his grandfather), *Heroes and Heroines of Russia: True and Thrilling Revolution Stories*, and his pamphlet *To My Persecutors*. A good account of the body of Anglo-Russian literature at this time, and its influence on shaping British opinion in time for the 1905 Russian Revolution (during which several thousands died, to little avail) is given by Peaker<sup>12</sup>.

Prelooker died in Hastings on October 24<sup>th</sup> 1935, leaving a bequest to the British Association for the Advancement of Science. His obituary in *The Times* the next day recorded some of the above facts of his life, and added that in 1913 he had been Vice-President of the Anglo-Ottoman Society, and in 1916-17 President of the Société Internationale de Philogie, Sciences et Beaux Arts.

<sup>10</sup> Then an autonomous Grand Duchy within the Russian Empire, until the Finnish Declaration of Independence in 1917.

<sup>11</sup> Aberdeen University Special Collections has a copy of this volume.

<sup>12</sup> Carol Peaker (2006) 'We are not Barbarians: Literature and the Russian Émigré Press in England, 1890-1905' in *Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 3. See [www.19.bbk.ac.uk/index.php/19/article/viewFile/451/311](http://www.19.bbk.ac.uk/index.php/19/article/viewFile/451/311).



The question remains: why was Prelooker was given honorary membership of the Cairngorm Club? It seems unlikely that mountaineering prowess was the reason, and there is no-one left alive to throw personal light on the matter<sup>13</sup>. Away from the Carpathians in the far west, the Ukraine is a singularly flat country apart from the 2,000ft. Heights of Sevastopol in the Crimea (where rock-climbing is now advertised). In the nineteenth century, mountaineering had hardly got going in Russia, if one excepts imperialist explorations in the Caucasus in Georgia and the Pamirs in Afghanistan. None of the accounts of Prelooker's time in Britain mentions hillwalking, or even sport of any kind. Thus a Club mystery remains unsolved, at least for now. But it has been fun trying, and exploring the corries, lochans and ridges of the objective, even if the summit has not been reached.

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<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, *CCJI*(1) p. 46 records that, at around the same time as Prelooker, one Ranald R. Macdonald was admitted as a new Club member. He was the father of Ranald Jnr, who in 1954 introduced to the Club one Eric Johnston - now a very senior Honorary member (M Sec 56-67, Sec 67-72, VP 66-67, 76-77, Aud 78-82, Pres 82-85, Hon Pres 94-03)!

## Unpublished Place Names in Upper Deeside *Adam Watson and Ian Murray*

### *Introduction*

Below we list and discuss names that we have found since the publication of a book *The Place Names of Upper Deeside* by Watson and Allan (1984), for the sake of brevity called *Wa* below. One of us (IM) came across a few while interviewing local residents for his own book on local history and folklore (1992), and he told AW. It excited us to find a few 'new names', and we thought that a brief note about them would be worth publishing. To make sure, however, we decided to do more interviews and more searching of old papers and maps. This was the tip of a wee iceberg, revealing scores of new names. Below we give the results of our two decades of intermittent effort, involving many visits to places as well as numerous interviews and searches of old sources. Our collection is unusual in containing much history as well as place names, for instance connections between some names and Queen Victoria at Balmoral, such as the Eagle Hoose, the Elephant's Graveyard, and the Irons.

If readers know or come across any name in upper Deeside that appears to be absent from the lists in Watson and Allan (1984, 1988) and the present account, we would be pleased to be informed. Place names are an important part of local identity, but many are disappearing with the passing of older generations. It is good that the names of places in this fine part of Scotland be recorded, now and in future.

In 1984, one of us (AW) was first author of *The Place Names of Upper Deeside*, published by Aberdeen University Press. The study rested on interviews with 260 local residents, supplemented by maps and other historical sources. That book documented nearly 7,000 place names, a high proportion of them previously unpublished. It might have been thought that afterwards there would be no other place names to be found in Upper Deeside. However, one can never be certain that one has heard all of even a single informant's place names, let alone those of all others interviewed and the far bigger numbers not interviewed.

One of the most outstanding informants for the 1984 book was retired farmer Willie Downie of the Lebhall farm at Micras east of Crathie. During work for the 1984 book, AW interviewed him on many days, including two day-long trips in the field. At the end of the last day, he announced with a smile, "Adam, I have no more names to give you. You have milked me dry!" Years later, however, Ian Murray of Ballater was recording information about local folklore from old folk, including Willie

Downie, and heard him in the course of conversation mention a few place names that seemed new to Ian and that he could not recall seeing in AW's 1984 book. IM then phoned AW and came to see him around 1990, and we realised that Willie had not been milked dry after all! This led to the two of us interviewing him again and to other interviews with informants visited by AW in the 1970's and 1980's. We also interviewed new informants discovered by IM and found names in historical sources unavailable to AW earlier.

We present 235 place names from Upper Deeside that did not appear in the 1984 book and 24 from lower Glen Tanar and Glen Carvie outside Upper Deeside. Also we make corrections to some names in the 1984 book and add extra information on names listed there.

The 235 new names are an interesting set, some Gaelic, some Scots, some English, reflecting Upper Deeside's rich variety of language and tradition. Mrs Jean Bain, the last fluent native speaker of the Aberdeenshire dialect of Gaelic, died at Crathie as recently as 1984.

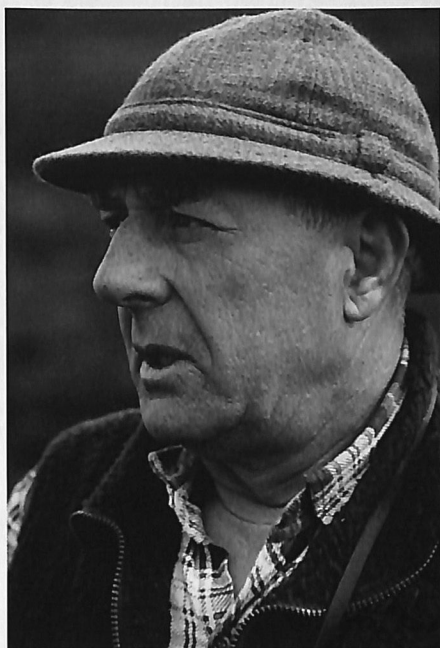
However, Gaelic is in decline, and so is Scots, as incomers with neither language form a rapidly increasing proportion of the local population. Meanwhile, several of our best informants such as Willie Downie, Charlie Wright and Rob Bain have died. It is timely to publish this article so that their names are not forgotten.

### *Methods*

Most names in the first list below are to our knowledge unpublished. IM noted a few in his three books on folklore in Upper Deeside, but not the full data on pronunciations, meanings and other aspects as we do here.

Upper Deeside, the study area for the 1984 book and the present book, covers the two parishes of Crathie, Braemar and Glenmuick, and Tullich and Glengairn. We include a few names from just outside these parishes, in lower Glen Tanar and Glen Carvie of Strathdon. These were not in the paper by Watson and Allan (1988) on place names around the boundaries of the study area for their 1984 book.

Since 1984 the Duff archive has become available (University of Aberdeen, Special Collections MS 3175), including many old papers from Mar Lodge and other land up from Braemar. The archive has been searched (Dixon and Green 1995, Ewen 1996, 2001, S. Mitchell letter to A. Watson, Jamieson 1998). In the archive we inspected one plan and one paper (note that two maps re-drawn by Ewen contain errors that were not in the originals). In addition, Roy's maps (1747-55) are now available online in high quality, and inspection of these revealed a few names that Watson and Allan had not seen earlier.



We spell Scots as in Grant & Murison and give pronunciations that follow the standard phonetics of the International Phonetic Association (Table 1). Table 2 explains the abbreviations that we use in the lists. The Gaelic term *Ruighe* has different meanings that are hard to separate (Fraser 1995), so for convenience we translate all cases of it as cattle-run. For locations we give grid references, but omit them in a few cases involving minerals, where this might lead to ground disturbance by digging.

*John Robertson checking place names at Glengirnock, May 1983  
(photo: A. Watson)*

**Table 1. Phonetic scheme**

Underlined letters in English words as pronounced by Scots indigenous to the area. For brevity in the lists we often omit phonetics of common English words such as 'the'.

a <u>fat</u>	ɔ <u>pot</u>	ð <u>the</u>	' main stress on following syllable
e <u>day</u>	u <u>too</u>	θ <u>thin</u>	, subsidiary stress on following syllable
ɛ <u>get</u>	ʌ <u>sun</u>	ʃ <u>she</u>	· half-long vowel
ɛ̃ <u>her</u>	ae <u>high</u>	x <u>loch</u>	: long vowel
ə <u>taken</u>	ei <u>height</u>	j <u>you</u>	
i <u>see</u>	oi <u>boil</u>	z <u>dogs</u>	
ɪ <u>bit</u>	ʌu <u>down</u>	ʒ <u>measure</u>	
o <u>bone</u>		ŋ <u>thing</u>	



**Table 2. Abbreviations.**

C is common use (more than 7 people among those interviewed), F a few (4-6), U uncommon (1-3). Two capital letters show an informant's initials.

A	Arrowsmith	M1	Murray 1999
D	Duff papers	Ma	Mackenzie
Di	Dixon & Green	Mc	MacGillivray
Do	Dorward	P	Poll Book, Stuart
E	Ewen 1996	Pe	Pennant
Fi	plan for Earl of Fife	R	Robertson
He	Henderson & Dickson	Rms	Thomson 1984
I	Invercauld map by Brown	Tw	Invercauld map 3
Im	Invercauld maps by others	Wa	Watson & Allan 1984
J	Jamieson	Wa88	Watson & Allan 1988
Jm	J McHardy	V	Victoria

IM noticed a few names in an unpublished 1800's poem by John Mackenzie of Glen Gairn and in a typescript by John Robertson of Ballachlaggan (Ma and R above).

### *Upper Deeside names not in Watson and Allan 1984*

Alltdoire Park (Jm), the Alltdourie Park (U), field at Alltdourie by Invercauld House

The Arns (U ði'arnz), Scots alders, 298955, trees by Dee at Micras

The Auinward Foord (Im3), Avinard Foord (Tw), Athan Bhard, little ford of fields, Scots Fuirid a ford, 094896, on Dee at Inverey

The Auld Regions (U ði'al'ridzənz), Scots old, 283965, long-disused former cultivated fields on Geallaig Hill above Wester Micras

Aultannich (Im5), after the nearby burn Allt an t-Sionnaich (OS), 012878, former farm township by Geldie-Dee confluence

Back Island (Fi), SE of 085894, former island at Inverey, not an island now

The Back Park (AS), 344979, a field at Culsh by Gairn

The Back Road (JR), 243947, high road to Invergelder from Balmoral

Baddachubber (Im3), Bad a' Chabair, clump of the pole, 096804, copse near Mar Lodge

The Bad Fiantaige Burn (F ði,bad'fjantək'barn), part of Coulachan Burn at Bad Fiantaige

The Bad Fiantaige Brig (F brɪg), Scots bridge, at above burn

The Badgers' Hillock (F 'badzərz'hɛlək), 337901, below Linn of Muick

Balineonan (A), Baile an Eoinean, stead of the little bird, same as Dail a' Chata up Clunie

Ballniloan (Im5), Baile nan Lon, stead of the wet meadows, W of Wester Tullochcoy

- The Balmoral Bonnet (F ði'bəl'morəl'bonət), 232898, a pine with foliage shaped like a Balmoral bonnet, tree now toppled by wind but still alive, NW of Lochnagar
- Balnialt (Roy), Baile an Uillt, stead of the burn, shown as a farm on E side of Muick SE of Toldhu, on N side of a burn near its entry to Muick
- The Banks of Inverey (J), 'a place with pine', probably E of Muir Cottage
- The Barns o Beinn Mheadhoìn (F 'barnzəben'men), tors
- The Bear's Fit, (JR ði'berz'fēt), SW of 227832, a rock outcrop with indentation like the imprint of a bear's foot, W of Dubh Loch
- Binlea (in 1602 Rms), 'the Blakhillok callit Garchory or Binlea', i.e. the top at 358017, noted as Tom Dubh Garbh-choire by Wa, Binlea suggests Beinn Liath or grey hill
- The Black-strip Burn (Im3), Scots Stripe a small burn, 094899, at Mar Lodge
- The Blue Stane (EG ði'blu'stin), Scots stone, NE of 221937 beside former Aberarder school, schoolchildren slid down the boulder's E face (published M)
- The Blue Stane (WD as above), 344965, Polhollick feryman Benton refused to put his boat out if the river Dee ran above this boulder
- The Boars' Holes (WD ði'borz'holz) at two places mentioned collectively. IM transcribed it as The Boar's Holes (M1, p. 92) but it seems likely that there was more than one boar. The sites were traps for killing wild boars that had been driven uphill. WD said the family Morgan who formerly farmed Rinabaich used both holes as hides in the late 1800s to shoot deer. Both were well built with stones, The one at 291962 had its uppermost wall set into a vertical bank, lower side-walls, and a floor level with the ground on either side, situated at the top of a long curved hollow where animals could have been driven from below. The hole at 309973 had a wall of the same height all the way round in a circle, with a floor well below ground-level and the top of the wall at ground level on flat ground on a hill-spur, among naturally regenerated Scots pines. There were no trees at either site in the late 1800s or even in the 1940s at the second site.
- Bog Farral (WD bog'farəl), 269015, a bog, and the nearby former Gairnside farm of Bog Farral (Wa) was named after it
- Bogrossalich (Ma, RB bog'rɔsləx), Bog Rosailich, bog of reddish place, 320020 up Fenzie
- The Bomb Hole (C ði'bɔm'hɔl), 278024, hole from a bomb dropped on Gairnside by a German plane in early 40s (photo M1)
- The Boolin Green (Do, F ði'buləngrin), Scots bowling, summit green on Lair of Aldararie, where men from different glens formerly bowled with a round stone
- The Bouchts (U ði'baxts), Scots pens, NW of 300966, stone pens at Micras
- Brae Riggs (Fi), 091896, farmland at a bank near Inverey
- Brechohill (Roy), Breacach, speckled place, with Hill, shown as the long shank E of Allt an Uisge in Glen Muick
- The Bridge Pool (U), same as the Gairnshiel Puil of Wa
- The Brig o Dams Wuid (PG 'brigədamz'wɪd), wood on both sides of road at bridge by Gairnshiel kirk, the Brig o the Dam was in Wa as the name of the bridge, and PG gave it as the Brig o Dams

- Bull's Nose (Gregory), to judge from its position in a list, was half way between Sean Spittal Bridge and the top of the Cairnwell road
- The Burn o Coire Slugain (U ði'ɒɾnə,koɾ'slʊgən), 208807, in Callater
- The Burn of the Dail Ceorc (Jm, U ði'ɒɾnəði,dal'hork), 172917, at Dail a' Choirce opposite Invercauld House
- The Butchers' Walk (JR ði'butʃəɾz'wak, M1), 287939 to 302920, path used in late 1800s by butchers from Khantore to Bovaglie and back for sheep to feed Balmoral household
- Cairn Craganaglowin (Im3), Carn Creagan nan Gleann, cairn of Creagan of the glens, 112904, where a former track reached a gap in a stone dyke above the former farm of Creagan at Mar Lodge, cairn and some of the dyke later removed for road-metal
- The Canadian Bank (C), was on S side of railway shortly E of Ballater Station, used for loading timber cut by Canadians near Ballater during the Second World War
- The Carding Mill (Jm), the Lint Mill later became a carding mill, at Milltoun of Invercauld
- Castle Park (Im4a), 157925, field by Braemar Castle
- The Chapel in the Valley (JR), humorous nickname (because the wooden hut was so small) for Victor's Hut in Ballochbuie, named after Victor McIntosh from Braemar
- Charlie Clais Bhacaidh's Stane (WD 'tʃarɫe,klaf'vaxez'stin), boulder SE of 297968, favoured by one who lived at nearby house Clais Bhacaidh at Micras, was nicknamed after his house-name and buried beside the boulder, which has since split, and vegetation now covers his house 40 m NW.
- The Circle (WD), NW of 294966, small boulders in a circle on heather E of Crathie
- Clais a' Mhadaidh (F klaf'vate), hollow of the dog, 988932 on burn's W side c100 m up from ford, Clashmattie (Roy), Clashmaddy (A), shiels S of a hollow of the same name, same as Gordon's (1925) 'ruined bothy'
- The Cnoc Chalmac Parks (F), three fields in Glen Gairn
- Cnoc Phlocaich or Phlocaid, (WD 'fləkəx or 'fləkətʃ), hill of the lad, WD in his 90s said a keeper had told him this name a long time ago, but he was now uncertain of the location; his place names were predominantly between Bridge of Gairn and Crathie on the N side, and up Glen Gairn
- The Cobbler's Walk (U 'kobləɾz'wak), also The Souter's Road (U ði'sutəɾz'rod), Scots Souter a cobbler, 266944, track from Crathie to Dee suspension bridge, used by a former cobbler walking to his shop at Easter Balmoral
- Coire Slugain (U koɾ'slʊgən), corrie of gullet, 209807, Callater corrie with narrow funnel
- The College (WD ði'kolədʒ), Watson & Clement (1983) quoted WD, and M1 (p. 81) gives some detail, former Micras school on site of Hazel Cottage garden
- The Communal Well (WD ði,kəm'junəl'wel), former public well at Queen's Road in Ballater

- Corn na ?hullor or ?lullow (Fife 1798), handwriting uncertain, to judge from Earl's description of a hunt, by elimination was at 977932 on Beinn Bhrotain, Coire na h-Iolaire, corrie of the eagle
- The Cornamuich Road (J), 'hill pathway' for Inverey folk going to Braemar by Coire nam Muc before present public road was made
- The Cots (U ði'kots), 298968 and E of burn, stone-cots largely overgrown, near Micras
- Country Road (Im5), 114901, former track from Inverey to Braemar on Dee's N side
- The Crafties (F 'kraftez), Scots little crofts, anglicised name for Bad Fiantaige by Coulachan Burn
- The Craig (U kreg), also The Little Craig, rocky hill W of Bridge of Gairn
- Craig Maud (Roy), Creag Madaidh, rocky hill of fox, shown at site of Craig of Tulloch OS, and note Fox Cairn OS nearby to the N, which raises the possibility that the local story of Fox Cairn being named after a man of that name may be a case of popular etymology, and the possibility that Fox Cairn was an anglicised form of Craig Maud
- Craig of Alchulie (Mc), from the description, Alchulie was Allt Cholzie, and the Craig a hill between Craig Hillock and Auchnacraig Hill, maybe the rocky slope at 350885
- The Craig of Arderg (Im3), 125807, crag W of Braemar
- The Croft (U ði'kroft), former house near Aucholzie, at a field called the Croft (I, Wa)
- Croft Glass (D, 1682), Crote Glass (Im3), Croit Ghlas, green croft, N of 110901, former croft near Mar Lodge, stones later removed
- Croislish (D, 1763), Croit Lise, croft of garden, a former Lui farm-township, thought by elimination (D) to be S of 055925, if so, was near Bad an t-Suidhe
- Crom Lands or the Forked rigs (Fi), Crom crooked, Lands maybe from Lann, enclosure or land, but note Na Crom-raon at Braemar now pronounced Cromlins (Wa), 091897, former farmland at Inverey
- Cross Lands (Fi), 086894, farmland at Inverey
- The Crystal Diggers' Path (U), was near Shelter Stone Crag
- The Cuarsag of Ben Avon (Jm, said to mean curve), A' Chuarsgag, the curve, location not known
- The Culsh Corrie (U), 343978, near Culsh in Glen Gairn
- Cutaway Cottage (OS, C), a house W of Cambus o' May Hotel, with a corner cut off to make room for the railway, see The Docket Hoose
- The Dark Walk (Jm), was SE of a water course taken from Allt Dourie, an area below the stables and N of Invercauld House, still dark because of thick coniferous trees
- The Deer Park (Jm), former field for keeping deer near Invercauld House, probably to NW
- The Deil's Darnin Needle, see Farquharson's Needle
- Delbreak (Im4a), Dail Bhreac, speckled haugh, 174919, former Invercauld field
- Derleks Well (R), at Dail Choirce, later called Derleks (Wa) at Aberarder



- The Docket Hoose (F 'dɒkət), Scots Docket is clipped or cut, the house later called Cutaway Cottage
- The Doupin Stane (F ð'ɔ̃lɪpənstɪn), Scots where novices visiting marches or property for the first time were initiated by a ceremony in which 'doup-free' members dumped novices down smartly on their buttocks against a march stone (Gm). This is a boulder that was taken from Aberarder to Tamidhus of Crathie.
- Duncan's Hoose (JR 'dʌŋkənʒɦus), 267810, ruined divot-shelter named after a Moulzie stalker of the late 1800s
- The Eagle Hoose (F ð'i'gəlɦus), SE of 244938, wooden hut with wire-netting, attached to an outdoor cage, carries a plaque informing that eagles were from a nest in 1885, and eagles kept till c1950, building still there but cage removed, near Balmoral
- The Eagle Rock (U ð'i'gəl'rɒk), 913842, eagle perch on Carn an Fhìdhleir
- The Eagle Stanes (F ð'i'gəl'stɪnz), 223028 and 231035, two rocks on Brown Cow Hill, each with a metal ring bolted into the rock to hold a trap formerly set to catch eagles
- East Bridge (A), 147865, house SW of the Clunie bridge now called Fraser's Brig (Wa), stones removed later, maybe for road-metal
- The East Muir (F mir), E part of Muir of Dinnet towards Dinnet House
- Eelen gues (Im3), Eilean Giubhas, island with fir, N of 088897, by Dee N of Inverey
- The Elephant's Graveyard (U, ð'eləfənts'grevjɑrd), 271938, tree-clad enclosure where an elephant was buried in Victoria's time at Balmoral
- Ellen Begg (Im3, Tw), Eilean Beag, little island, 104896, at riverside by Victoria Bridge
- The Eileruig Wood (Jm, U 'elrək'wɪd), plantation S of Little Elrick at Invercauld
- Ernie's Moss (F 'ernezɦos), Scots peat-bog, SW of 205995 on track's E side, where Balnault farmer Ernie Fraser dug his peat
- The Eskie Pond (F ði'eske'pɒnd), Scots Esk a newt, Eskie diminutive, 270952, a mire with newts, well known to Crathie folk when PG was at school nearby
- The Fairy Hillock (U), same as Tom an t-Sidhein near Daldownie
- The Falls o Allt Fìleachaidh (F ði'falzəalt'fɪləxi), anglicisation of Linn of Allt Fìleachaidh
- The False Corrie (U ð'fɔ̃ls'kɔre), anglicisation by some members of Braemar Mountain Rescue Team for Coire na Saobhaidhe on Lochnagar, named because if they were walking on a rescue mission to the Corrie of Lochnagar from Glen Gelder and were not sufficiently careful they could easily go to this corrie, the next one to the W
- Farquharson's Needle (C), also The Deil's Darnin Needle (F 'dɪlz'darnən'nɪdəl), same as Monaltrie Monument
- Faunoran (OS 1:10 000, C fən'uərən), Feith an Fhuarain, bog-stream of the well, 269948, house at Crathie with a good well beside it
- The Flats o the Black Burn (U), plateau on upper part of Black Burn above Loch Muick

- The Forkins (U ðɪ'fɔrkənz), Scots Forkings a fork, W of 248008 where two Gairnside roads join
- The Gairden Brae (U), 357936, a hill on a track past former walled garden of old Glenmuick House
- The Gauger's Lookoot (PG 'gedʒərz 'lukut), Scots gauger an exciseman, 273045, a stone shelter, name was well known to Willie Gordon of Sleach and PG's father, overlooks an old track from Gairn to Corgarff
- The General Smuts, see Gladstone's Heid
- George Mackay's Roadie (RB 'dʒɔrdʒmə'kaez'rodi), Scots Roadie a path, N of 296009, after a Gairnshiel man
- Glac Begg (Im3), Glac Bheag, little hollow, 106897, near Mar Lodge
- Glacnabea (Im3), Glac na Beithe, hollow of the birch, S of 113902, a rock there has a centuries-old birch still growing, its roots in cracks in the rock, near Mar Lodge
- The Glack o Tomnavey (Ma), Scots Glack a hollow between two hills, in Glen Gairn
- Gladstone's Heid (JR hid), Scots head, refers to Prime Minister Gladstone, a boulder with a face carved by a former Rinasluick man (photo M), SW of Rinasluick, WG gave it as General Smuts, after South African leader Jan Smuts who visited the area (U)
- The Glas-choille Moss (U ðɪ'glasxəl'mos), 304042, peat-bog with cart-track still visible, same as Bruach Dhuhb (OS)
- The goat cott stance (Im3, shown on map as a dark blob, so was probably a rock, name printed in lower case), E of 110905, a prominent rock in this location overlooks a rough slope formerly enclosed on its E and W sides by a stone dyke, and abutting on its N side against steep screes, near Mar Lodge, so presumably someone stood there, watching over goats
- Greynose (J), a place with pinewood on Mar Lodge estate, probably translation of Sron Liath, grey hill-nose
- The Gully (F), defile of a burn behind cafe at Glenshee Ski Centre
- The Haugh of Dellmore (J), Scots Haugh a streamside meadow, at Mar Lodge
- The Haugh o' Delnabo (Ma), on Gairn
- The High Road (U), from Blairglass to Daldownie on Gairn, above the Low Road
- The Hill Park (AS), N of 345975, a field at Culsh in Glen Gairn
- Hillie's Brae, (C 'hèlez'bre), Scots Brae here a hill on a road, after a Hill family who had a shop there (nicknamed Hillie), 369959, road from station square at Ballater up to the bridge over former railway
- The Howe (AS), 334984, Scots Howe a hollow, here a moorland basin in Glen Gairn
- The Howe Burn (WD), the low part of Torgalter Burn
- The Howe o Megan (U ðɪ'hʌuə'megən), 325895, flat area E of Craig Megan
- The Howe o the Gweemlin (R), at Ach nan Cuithe Iomlan in Glen Feardar
- The Hut (Ian Mitchell), 418981, ruin of former small drystane house above fields at Cambus o' May
- The Indian Graveyard (JR ðɪ'ɪndʒən'grevjard), NW of 250943, where a few Indian servants of Queen Victoria were buried on a shelf beside a small pool with a

- ditch running to it, gravestones now overgrown by rhododendron, SW of Balmoral Castle
- Invercauld Forest (C), Wa gave The Forest of Invercauld (I) but omitted to state that Invercauld Forest is a common name for the deer-forest on Invercauld Estate (in Scots a forest was an area for hunting, not necessarily wooded and often treeless, the modern usage for a wood being an anglicisation, and other terms formerly widely used in Deeside were forester for a deerstalker, forestry for the process of hunting, afforested for an area being turned into a hunting area by introducing and protecting deer, and free forester for a local deer-hunter who did not work for a landowner and poached for a living)
- The Irons (Whitehead 1960, JR ð'e'irənz), SE of 210911, where Prince Albert shot a big stag in 1858 at the site of a derelict sawmill where big pieces of iron lay on the ground (JR). A nearby burn had been dammed to power the mill, and the dam remains are still visible (now altered to form a trout pond), while the track to the mill is also visible. Although published, the name is worth including here for its historical interest.
- Janet's Hoosie (AnnS), same as The Muir at Gairnshiel, Janet a former inhabitant John Ewen's Sawmill (Jm), was near Milltoun of Invercauld
- The Kame o Morven (U kem), Scots Kame a terraced hillock, on Morven's S side Kichaderg (Im3, J), Caochan Dearg, red burn, 109903, runs on and among reddish rocks, most of water now diverted to Cragan house
- The King's Briggie (WD 'brigi), Scots little bridge, W of 298968, turf-covered so that King George's horse was unaware of it when he rode to nearby butts
- The King's Road, (C), private road up Muick's W side when kings reigned in the 1900s
- Kinnavey (A), Cinn Bheith, end of birches, differs from Ceann an t-Sean-bhaile (shown by A as Kenheneval), 231936, former house near Inver
- Lady Sinclair's School (Jm), was at Milltoun of Invercauld in late 1700s
- The Laird o Glen Muick (JR), SE of 295826, a rock on Creag Bhiarach like a man's head when viewed from the side, later fell in a landslide, now on Balmoral but was on Glen Muick estate till late 1940s
- The Larches (U), 268002, larch wood W of Gairnshiel
- The Lecht (U lext), An Leachd, the declivity, 260007, slope near Cnoc Chalmac
- The Lecht Roadie (U 'lext'rodi), 261006, path on above slope
- The Lime Quarry (JR 'kware), 248946, former quarry SW of Balmoral Castle
- The Lint Mill (Jm), established at Milltoun of Invercauld, W of Alltdourie Cottage, in late 1700s
- The Little Hillie (U), a double diminutive, 255002, W of Gairnshiel
- The Loch Braes (F 'lox'brez), steep slopes on Loch Muick's E side
- The Loch Braes (F, as above), steep slopes on Loch Builg's W side
- Long-field (Fi), 087892, at Inverey
- The Long Water Track (Jm), water course cut from Glas Allt Beag to near Alltdourie, to supply a former pond where many trout were kept in hollow NW of Alltdourie
- The Loupin-on Stane (McConnochie 1891, JR ˌlʊpən'on'stin), a stone that was at the back of the house at Spittal of Glenmuick, where the last landlady of the



*The Muckle Stane o the Mairch*  
photo: Ian Murray

mac na Bracha, son of the malt, or whisky (Jm) in a list of hills, corries and burns on Invercauld Forest, Mac na Bracha, son of the malt

The Mairch Dyke (RB 'mertf), Scots march, 258011, stone-wall at Wester Sleach

The Mairch Road (CW 'mertf), 181900, path at Balmoral march near Invercauld Bridge

The Mairch Stanes (F 'mertf'stinz), marker stones on Abergeldie-Balmoral march

The Mam (Gordon 1941), Gaelic Mam a pass, here the pass S of Carn a' Mhaim, traversed by Lairig Ghru path

The Maple-leaf Wuid (C wid), Scots wood, 096904, uncut by Canadians in the 1940s because the plantation trees were too young, to the fanciful the Canadians left a wood uncut in the shape of a maple leaf as a mark of their presence, the shape resembles vaguely a maple-leaf, still obvious from Inverey, and the metal strainer posts around the former plantation are still there

Meall Eal Buidhe (Jm), hill of the herb, called St. John's Wort is how Jm described it in a list of hills, corries and burns in Invercauld Forest. This plant favours rich soils over base-rich bedrock

The Middle Valley (C), name used by Glenshee ski staff for valley W of Meall Odhar

Mill Croft (Fi), 087887, an arable field with buildings nearby, at Inverey

The Monega Brig (C mon'egə), recent new footbridge across the Cairnwell Burn near the foot of the Monega track to Glen Isla

former pub in a building on the other side of the road from the house mounted her horse, locally was usually The Mountin Stane (JR 'mauntən,stin), no longer there, JR can remember the building that formerly held the pub, and said that most of the stones and slates were used for renovating the house at the Spittal in 1928

The Lowps (JR lʌps), Scots fish-jumps, turbulent part of Muick below the Linn

The Low Road (U), from Daldownie down Gairn to Braenaloin

Lundie's Corner (U 'lʌndiz), NW of 318883, in road up W side of Glen Muick, after a Birkhall keeper of that name

Lundie's Cottage (U), former house opposite the bothy at Corndavon Lodge, was for decades the home of a keeper named Lundie

Mackintosh's Hut (U), same as Victor's Hut in Ballochbuie (Victor Mackintosh)



- Morgans' Burn (WD 'mɔrgənz's'blɔrn), named after a Rinabaich family, same as Easter Micras Burn (OS)
- The Moss Road (U ði'mos'rod), 262002, track to a Gairnside peat-bog
- The Mountin Stane, see the Loupin-on Stane
- The Muckle Stane Hotel (U ði'mʌkəl'stɪn,hə'tel), Scots big stone, hotel is humour for a shooters' lunch-spot at the Muckle Stane or Clach Mhor Bad a' Chabair up Girnock
- The Muckle Stane o the Mairch (WD mɛrtʃ), 300969, boulder on Rinabaich-Lebhall march
- The Muir (U ði'mɪr), Scots moor, same place as the Black Muir, W of Gairnshiel
- The Mullach Fuirid (C ði'mʌlɐx'fjʊrd), Scots Fuirid a ford, 198022, on road W of Comdavon
- The Mustard Stane (RB stɪn), a boulder with a hollow on top for grinding mustard seed, stood in front of Torran house on Gairn, now overgrown or removed
- The Mutton Larder (JR, M1), building formerly used for storing mutton for Balmoral
- Newton Cottage (OS, C), N of 396980, above Newton of Tullich or Drylea
- The Newton Face (F), 335975, hill-face N of Newton of Gairn
- The New Walk (JR ði'nju'wɒk), 270815, path built c1910 for Edward VII by Loch Muick, later also the Diagonal Path (Wa), and to some walkers the Streak o Lichtmin (a name used by other walkers for the zigzag path and later vehicle track at 286820 that stalkers call the Snob Road)
- Norman's Tree (F 'nɔrmənz'tri), 086938, an old pine of spiral growth in Glen Quoich
- The Nose o the Capel (U ði'noziði'kepəl), An t-Sron (OS), meaning the nose, on N side of Capel Road
- The Old Schoolhouse Pool (U), in Gairn at the Auld Schoolhouse of Wa
- The Old Man 'as the Garbh Choire Mor is locally known' (Hudson 1976), but Wa, Wa88 and we found no indigenous folk who knew it, so this error probably originated in Firsoff's (1946, p. 231) reference to perennial snow there as the 'Old Snow', but Firsoff often over-used quotation marks, such as 'pockets' and 'froth', and, following Hudson's paper on snow, Spink (1980) in a paper on snow reported that he saw 'the Old Man (Garbh Choire)' and Gilbert (1984) took this further by stating that snow in 'Choire Garbh' (sic) is 'known locally as The Old Man', and Gilbert & Fox (1985) by writing of 'the permanent snowfield, known locally as The Old Snowman', but these are not authentic names
- The Packman's Grave (JL who lived nearby at Braenaloin), said to be a man called Macfarlane, same spot as the Tinker's Grave
- The Peat-stack Hut (F), W of 315871, former shed up Muick, used for storing cut peats
- The Peat Foord (Im3), Scots Fuirid a ford, 118900, near Mar Lodge
- The Planks (U), S of 268017, where W. Gordon of Sleach used planks to cross Gairn (M)
- The Poacher's Corrie (F), recent anglicised name for Coire an Lochain Uaine of Derry, where William Smith of Abernethy stayed while poaching deer

- The Pointoul Foord (Im3, J), Pointoul Foord (Tw), Poll an t-Sabhail, pool of the barn, Scots Fuird a ford, 093897, on Dee near Inverey
- The Priest's Stane (U stin), anglicisation of Clach an t-Sagairt at Loch Callater
- The Prince's Stane (JR stin), 324838 near Allt Fìleachaidh, same Prince of Wales as in the Prince's Stone on Lochnagar
- The Private Side (F), upper Glen Muick's W side with its private road
- The Pulpit Stane (RB stin), 299013, a pulpit-like boulder near Gairnshiel
- The Queen's Road (McConnochie 1897), road by Loch Muick to Glas-allt-shiel, referred to Queen Victoria
- The Queen's Seat (JR), 285820 on track's S side, three boulders form a natural seat at Loch Muick
- The Rams' Park (AS), 345977, field in front of Culsh house in Glen Gairn
- The Raon Gate (WD ren), gateway in a stone-dyke at top of the Raon Parks
- The Raon Parks (WD), a collective for more than the one field An Raon at Micras
- The Red Bank (U), a pool in Gairn about 225018, near Corndavon Lodge
- The Red Lands (Fi) noted as 'poor Soil', 090896, at Inverey
- The Reid Wall (U òr'id'wal), Scots red well, 298968, iron-ore well near Crathie
- Rettie's Corrie (U 'retez), after a former Gairnside man, same as Coire an t-Slugain
- The Riverside Walk (JR wak), path for Queen Victoria beside Dee at Balmoral Castle
- The Roadmen's Hut (JL), 271991, stone foundation above the road's N side, was a hut where they kept their tools before the days of tarred roads
- Robertson's Park (U), 205935, field named after a Ballachlaggan man
- The Rocks of Creagcluaine (Jm), the Rocks of Creag Clunie (U), cliffs above main road
- The Ruch Corner (U 'rox), Scots rough, same as Loinn Aitinn at Blairglass, a rocky field
- Ruigh Fionnladh (Jm, who wrote that it means Fionnladh Sheiling), Ruighe Fionnlaigh, Finlay's shiel, Fionnladh Mor, by tradition the first Farquharson of Invercauld, was said to have been born at this house on a knoll close to the path up Gleann an t-Slugain, on W side of Glas Allt Beag
- Sand Rigs (Fi), 093897, sandy former farmland by Dee at Inverey
- Sandy Spout (McCoss 1921), same as the Red Spout on Lochnagar
- The Sappers' Bothy (C, Watson 1975), SE of 990989, ruin of hut used for OS survey, also The Sappers' Hut (Alexander 1928) and The Sappers' Kitchen (U) on Ben Macdui
- The Scob (JR skob), Scots Scob is a rod, and in place-names a point projecting from a hill, 276916, ridge between Creag nan Gall and Tom Bad a' Mhonaigh
- The Sentry Box (F), 380906, stone-shelter on Cairn Leuchan near Ballater
- Shannoch (A), Seanach, old place, house E of burn at Balnault, now three houses
- Sheanusk (D 1700s), Sean-uisge, old water, 113901, old course of Dee near Mar Lodge after river changed course (E)
- Sherlaid (Roy), Sear-leathad or east slope, the slope of Carn a' Mhaim on E side of Lairig Ghru, Wa misread this as Sherluich and thought it might be for Sgeir Fliuch, but Roy showed it clearly further N on Carn a' Mhaim above the E side of Lairig Ghru

- Sherref Yard (Fi), Scots Sherref a sheriff, or personal name, 088895
- The Shenwell Park (J), Sean-bhaile, old stead, Scots Park a field, 096896 by Mar Lodge
- The Shoulder o Inchnabobart (U 'judër), Scots shoulder, 309868, a low hill-ridge in Glen Muick
- The Shoppie Road (RB 'fope), 323016, track past former little shop up Fenzie Skinner's Moss (U), Skinner personal name, Scots Moss a peat-bog, same as Moine Taibhseach on Glas Choille
- The Smugglers Garret (Jm), was a long upstairs room, the only pub in Braemar, replaced by Fife Arms Hotel
- The Slate Quarry (McHardy)
- The Snob Road (F snob), track from Black Burn up to the Snob at Loch Muick
- The Snow Corrie (F), a stalkers' name for Coire an t-Sneachda of Beinn Bhrotain
- The Sodger's Cairn (F ði'sodžërz'kern), Scots soldier, resembles a soldier when viewed from above, W of 373904 in Glen Muick
- The Souter's Road, see Cobbler's Walk
- Sput Clach (McCoss), Sput-chlach, stone-spout, same as climbers' later name Chokestone Gully in An Garbh Choire
- The Spying Cairn (JR ði'spæcənkern), 303819, a built cairn at a good spot to spy for deer by the Capel Road
- The Staghorn Wreath (U riθ), snow in Lochnagar corrie in spring is like a stag's head, with snow in Douglas-Gibson Gully as one antler and in Raeburn's Gully the other
- The Target Stane (WD stin), boulder at E side of burn beside and N of the Lebhall
- The Three Graves (RR), SW of 344907, marks in the ground from graves at Aucholzie
- The Tinks' Place (AS), SE of 343983, where tinkers stayed at the roadside in Glen Gairn
- Tom na Moine (U ʔamnəmoïn), hillock of the peat-bog, 356928, ruin in Glen Muick
- Tomantian (Im3), Tom an t-Sidhein, hillock of the fairy knoll, NW of 109903 by Mar Lodge
- The Torgalter Brig (F), carries main road below Torgalter
- Tornaleat (D late 1700s), Torr na Leathaid, hillock of the slope, a Mar tack
- The Tulloch Corrie (Ma, U), near Tullochmacarrick, same as Coire na Cloiche
- The Wall-ee (PG ði'wal'i), Scots well-eye or spring, same as the Buailteach Wall
- The Wallie o the Crofts (JR 'wale), Scots small well, same as the Crofts Wall but less anglicised, in Glen Muick
- The Water Course (Jm), dug from Allt Dourie burn by a lime kiln towards the Keiloch and passing through the Deer Park so that the deer could have water to drink, at Invercauld
- The Waulkmiln of Dellmore (J), near Mar Lodge
- The Wee Craig (U), Scots small, same as Creag na h-Eaglaise E of Crathie
- The West Muir (F mir), west part of Muir of Dinnet towards Cambus
- The White Wuidie (F 'widi), Scots small wood, at Craigendarroch Walk in Ballater

The Wolf Cairn (JR ðr'wulfkern), SE of 327887, said to be where the last wolf in Glen Muick was killed, was at road's E side at Wolf Corner, later demolished for road widening

The Wolf Pit (WG ðr'wulfpët), c325044, hollow for wolf-trapping, with stones set into the ground near grouse-butts, but not found by us

The Wolf Pit (as above), not seen by WG but the late Willie Ross told him it was a hollow S of the E-W track on Morven at very approximately 354026

A place-name rhyme from Cromar runs *Fae Faandhu ti Tamgleddie, Fae Paddockpuil ti Allalagie, There nivver dwelt an honest body*, 'fe'fan'du,ti,tam'gledi, 'fe 'padək'pil,ti,ala'lagi, ðərnivər'wizən'onəst'bədi. Tam Gleddie is in Wa under Tom Gleadaidh and Allalogie OS in Watson & Allan (1988). We have no information on locations of the other names, but obviously they are in Cromar near the two places that are still well known. Faandhu is likely to be Gaelic Fan Dubh or dark plain.

### **Changes to names in Watson & Allan 1984**

Ach a' Mhadaidh, delete Easter and Wester Ach a' Mhaigh, same as Easter & Wester Auchavrie, Easter 052925, Wester 051926 (D), Auchavairy (D late 1700s), Achavenie (E, but note that handwritten *n* and *r* are often hard to distinguish with certainty), Achavadie (Roy), Achavairie (Im5)

Ach nan Saighdear, pronunciation favours the singular Ach an t-Saighdeir, field of the soldier (Thomson)

Bad a' Mheig Wood, Im3 shows it at 109906 as Pat Vaich, so should be Bad Bhathaich, clump of the sheltered place, a pine copse near Mar Lodge

The Cave is N of 087871, first rocky pool on Ey Burn N of Colonel's Bed Coire Bhronn and Allt Bhronn with the same derivation Bhronn, meaning of bulges

Creag Curraigh, delete, it is The Craig Quarry, a quarry W of Bridge of Gairn

Creag na Saobhaidhe, detailed inspection of Roy's maps shows it to be the 702 m top at 011860 S of White Bridge, not near Linn of Dee as stated in Wa

Derleks, should read 'see Dail Choirce', not 'see Dail a' Choirce'

The Horseshoe of the Lair is not OS, 314785 and also for 250 m W along the contour

The Little Craig, the entry Creag Curraigh should have been Creag Corraidh but both are wrong (see Creag Curraigh above), rocky hill W of Bridge of Gairn

Long Hill, shown by Roy as Cairn of Claise, not Glas Maol

The Lunndaiddh Moss, maybe Lundie's Moss, given the name Lundie's Corner in the list above, map reference slightly wrong, should be at 318883 on W side of Muick

Meall is usually a masculine noun, so it would be classic Gaelic form that accompanying adjectives would not be aspirated, e.g. should be Gorm, not Ghorm

The Miners' Hut, map reference dubious, as IM found a stone foundation at a different spot nearby

Poacher's Cave, was above Miners' Hut, could shelter six men (McConnochie), IM now finds no cave but it may have vanished by boulder movement



Poll Tearlach, pronunciation favours Poll Searlus, pool of Charles (Thomson)  
 Roinn a' Bhathaich, Roy gave Runavoch, not Runavach  
 The Sleach on Gairn, Insleugh in Campbell (1750), so An Sliabhach  
 Sron an Daimh, the spur is at 003999 SW of Loch Etchachan

***Information to add to entries of names in Watson & Allan 1984***

Abergeldie, Abergaldie (He)

The Admiral Tree, sometimes The Admiral's Tree, a Scots pine with a double trunk and spreading form, favoured by an Admiral who liked to stand under it beside a short path of sand from the nearby road up Glen Tanar (JO)

Allt a' Mhadaidh-allaidh, Alltvatigally (E), Altavatagally (D 1763), Aldvattigally in Roy, not Altvattigally

Allt Chernie, given as Aldchurn (Roy)

Allt Domhain, also Altmarlich (Archer) from Allt Mearlach, burn of thief

Allt nam Meirleach, given as Altmarlich (Archer)

Baile an Eilein, Ballnilan (Roy), Im 3 shows Ballneilan E of 103901, N of burn where it turned S, but burn's course since straightened, former farm at Mar Lodge, stones later removed

Baile nan Taobhanach, Ballnantuanoch (Im3) shown as NW of 100900 on burn's S side, Ballintuanach (E), former farm at Mar Lodge

Beinn a' Bhuid, Ben y bourd (Pe)

Beinn Mheadhoin, Ben-Main (Mc), Ben Main (V)

Beinn nan Ciochan, Bennyhigh or Benchichin Mountains (He)

The Beitheachan Burn, the Beachan Burn (Mc)

Ben Avon, Ben Awin (He)

Ben Macdui, hill of sons of Duff (Watson 1926) from Beinn Mac Duibh, fits pronunciation and old written forms better than Macduff's hill which would be Beinn Mhic Duibh

Braemar Castle, given as Castle Marr (Avery)

Braigh Mharr, shown Brea Marr along Morrone slopes W to Corriemulzie (Avery)

Bynack Burn, given as Water Alturan (Avery), which suggests perhaps Allt Dhobhrain or burn of the water or the otter

Cairn Geldie, given as Carnjoldy or the Devil's Carn (Avery)

Cairn of Claise, Carn of Glascha (Do, 1403), Cairn Glaishie (V)

Cairn of Gowal to local folk the Cairn o the Gowal (JR) is the 983-m top, not 991-m one to N or 927-m one to S as incorrectly shown on some past OS maps (Stewart 1998). Munro's Tables (Scottish Mountaineering Trust 1997) incorrectly put Cairn of Gowal at the 991-m top, which is far from The Gowal that gives The Cairn of the Gowal its name.

The Cairnwell, given as Kern Vaalg (Archer)

Caochan nan Spold, given as Clachnaspaild (Roy)

Carn Aosda, maybe Carn Naois, Naois' hill (Diack 2006), which would fit with nearby names of Fingalian legend such as Carn an Tuirc, Ben Gulabin and Tom Diarmaid, but perhaps also Carn an Fhuathais, hill of the spectre, though Diack's note 'old age' and the name Moses' Cairn may suggest Carn an Aoise, hill of the age

- Carn Bhac, given as Carnvaich (Roy)  
 Carn Leac Dubh, Caurneleachkadow (Im5)  
 Carn Meadhonach (U karn'menax)  
 Castle William, also Castle Willie (WD)  
 Castleton, Castalltoun of braymarr (Pont) and Casteletown of Brae Mar (Fi) indicate Gaelic Caisteal  
 Ceann Dalach, Im3 shows Cantalloch at 107901 on burn's S side, so it means end of haugh, not head of haugh as in Wa, former farm near Mar Lodge, stones later removed  
 Charter's Chest, the Charter House; hiding place of the rocks of Creagluaine (Jm)  
 Clais Balgair (WD), also Clais Bhalgair (RB 'valagër and WD in 1996)  
 Clais Bhalgair, (F often 'valagër to Balmoral stalkers), a hollow in Ballochbuie  
 Clunie Park, the Cluaine Park (Jm)  
 Cnoc na Teididh, Knockintid (E), Knocknatet, Knocknatete (D 1763)  
 Coireach Bhuth, given as Qurrevous (Archer)  
 Coire an Dubh-loch, the Corry of the Duloch (Mc)  
 Coire Mor (OS), Coire mhor na Lairige (Gordon 1921), Coire Mor na Lairige, big corrie of the pass, on Ben Macdui above Lairig Ghru  
 Coire na Poite, Muick one published; as Taylor (1981) gave Corrie na Poitch  
 The Coths, Coathes (Mc)  
 Craig Doin, Craig-an-dain (Mc)  
 Creag an Dail Mhor, Great or Mickle Craigandal, Larger Craigandal (Mc)  
 The Croft, W of Balmoral, often the Crofts locally (F)  
 Dail a' Choirce, Delfork (P, suggested as a Mar farm by Di), but no good evidence of its being on Mar, maybe was one of the Invercauld farms with this name or elsewhere in the Lordship of Mar which included land outside that which later became Forest of Mar, thought to be Dalvorar (Di) but seems unlikely  
 Dail Gainimh, Dalgenie (E), Dallgainy (D 1750)  
 Dail Rosaigh, Delnrosick (D 1739) suggests Dail an Rosaich, haugh of the rose bush  
 Derry Cairngorm, Cairngorm of Derrie, or the lesser Cairngorm (Anonymous 1847)  
 The Derry Dam Fuirid , the Ford of the Derry (V)  
 The Devil's Point, given as Baden Divul (Roy)  
 Druim a' Chreagain former farm, Wa location wrong, Im 3 shows Drumachragin E of 111902 and NE of present Cragan, stones later removed  
 An Duibh-leathad, 'the heid of the Divilet' in 1602 (Rms)  
 Eilean Giubhas, Ellengues (Im3), 118903 was at riverside, now an island by Mar Lodge  
 Na Feadan, W of Feadan Odhar or Muckle Feadan on Conachcraig are three small gullies joined at the foot, their green vegetation contrasting with dark heather around. In 2002, JR pointed out to AW their resemblance to bagpipes. The gullies are green with blaeberry and mat-grass, associated with snow-lie and groundwater springs. Feadan is a bagpipe chanter, whistle, or gully where wind whistles.  
 The Fog House, Balmoral one, the Moss House (V)

Geldie, Guillie (D 1763)

The Ghillies' Hall at Allt-na-giubhsaich, also The Ghillie Hall (U)

Glas allt Beag, written as the glaisallt burn (Jm), at Invercauld

(The) Haugh, former farm W of Dinnet, given as The Haw (Roy), probably following the common pronunciation among older Scots of Haa for Haugh

The Horseshoe o the Lair, horseshoe-shaped hollow often holding snow till early summer, horseshoe in Scots lucky position with the ends up, and a pale horseshoe of mat grass is conspicuous after snow has gone (JR)

Inbhir Geallaidh, Invergeldie (D 1739)

Invercauld, Invercald (He), Inver Call (Avery)

Inverey, shown as Inneree (Avery)

Keiloch, written as Ceileach (Jm)

Lairig Mhor, the collective name The Lairig (C) is still well known to Invercauld gamekeepers as a peaty tract E of Tom Breac, S of Corndavon Lodge

Lochan Uaine (Cairn Toul), Loch na Youn or the Blue Lake (Anonymous 1847)

Lochnagar, the hill called Lochnagar (He), the mountain Laghin y gair (Pe)

Loch nan Stuirteag, given as Loch Na Stiurtag (Roy)

Milltoun of Auchendryne, Miltown of Achidrine (Im3) shown E of Mill of Coull

Monadh Ruadh, The Mona-rua, Monadh-ruadh (Mc, 'extending from the western base of Ben Vrotan to the eastern base of Ben-Aun')

Moor of the Inver, noted as the Muir of Inver by McConnochie 1895

The Park of Inis Lagaigh, Lagaigh at hollow-place, not at hollow, a birchwood with pasture, not an arable field

Pass of Ballater, Pass of Bollitir (Pe)

The Pass o Little Craig, usually The Pass o the Little Craig (F)

The Play Cock (I, drawn as a small 'Green'), site of a blackcock lek or display-ground at least back into late 1880s and this is the meaning (JR), Scots Playcock a pastime or game

Poll na Buitsich, N of 338967 (JR), a pool with no inlet or outlet, W of Bridge of Gairn

Richarkarie, given as Richurchy (Roy)

Sleac Ghorm (OS), three instances of this name, from An Sleaghach Gorm on Balmoral, An Sleaghach Gorm in Callater and An Sliabhach Gorm on Carn a' Mhaim may all be An t-Sleac Ghorm, meaning the blue slab at Balmoral and Callater where it is a slabby cliff, and the blue hill-face at Carn a' Mhaim where it is a steep slope of dark boulders. Badenoch folk used Sleac instead of Leac, and other Leac names in Wa suggest that Leac and Sleac may be alternatives.

Snout na Loinne (F)

Strath Dee (Avery) shown as main valley W of Braemar past Mar Lodge

The Timber Foord (Im3), Scots Fuirid a ford, 140915 on Dee W of Braemar

Tobar Chuirn or Red Well of the Cairnwell, stated (Wa) to be under the top car-park at the Cairnwell but water seeps out on the E side. The water is still red from iron compounds, staining the gravel of the car-park immediately E of the road, 200 m N of the pass summit.

Tolmount, Watson (1926) suggested Tul meaning brow

Tom nan Sealgair, Tomnashallager (E), Thomshalager (D 1770)

Tullich, Tulloch (Pe)

Uisge Bhruidh, Vhrich-vhruich (Anonymous 1847), given as Water of Brouen (Archer), which suggests a form like Brown in Bridge of Brown near Grantown

### *Names in lower Glen Tanar and Glen Carvie*

The Howe o Monawee (F ði'hluəmonə'wi), 505935, Wa88 suggested Moine a' Bhith, but Moine Bhuidhe or yellow peat-bog maybe more likely

Jock Milne's Stane (F stin), N of 484915, named after a former gamekeeper, beside Jock Milne's Well (Wa88) on E side of Water of Allachy

The Peat Stable (F pit), for horses pulling peat-carts on a track at Moss of Monawee

The Three-mile Tree (U ði'θri,meil'tri), a big pine at third milestone from Glentamar House

Auld Francie's Stane or Francie Riach's Stane or the Francie Riach Stane (U ald'fransiz'stin, frans'i'riəxs'stin), 346070

Breacan Hillocks (OS), The Breacon Knowes (brakən'knəuz), from Breacan or speckling, Scots Knowe a knoll or hillock

Cairnagour Hill (OS, k'jarna'gəuən, other Strathdon informants F told AW k'jarna'gəuər), which suggests Carn nan Gabhair, hill of the goats, JA's pronunciation suggests nan Gobhann of the smiths, or nan Gamhann of the stirks

Castle o Ha ('kasələ'ha), i.e. Castle of Haugh, and in 2010 he said the Haa Castle ('ha'kasəl), remnant of the dry-stone foundation still evident on haugh between Craigneach and Lochans at about 352087

The CATERAN Howe ('ketərən'həu), Scots thief hollow, 349063, just E of main route from Morven Lodge to lower Carvie

The Crooked Rig ('krukət'rig), 350086, field S of Birkford

The Greens (grinz), centre of them is at 343067, grassy stretches on the hill

The Laird's Park (lerdz), 344076, large area enclosed by a stone dyke, said to be reserved for the laird to use in a crisis

The Lang Greens, Scots Lang is long and the Greens are the middle part of the Lang Greens

The Lead Mine ('ledmein), in upper glen, no mine there today but some signs of stone having been taken from there

Morven's Roadie ('morvənz'rōdi), Scots Roadie a track or path, 347064, path towards Morven, following approximately the line of a burn

Pattie's Knowe ('patez'knəu), Scots Knowe a knoll, Pattie personal nickname, 349089, hillock SW of Birkford

The Peat Hillock (pi'hələk, but JA's uncle Frank Anderson called it pethələk), 344079, a flat-topped hillock formerly used for drying peats dug from a moss on the hill behind.

Rahosh, (rə'hɔf), Ruighe Chois, cattle-run of the hollow, 345082, a well SW of Lynemore



- The Ringin Stane (ˈrɪŋənstɪn), 348082, a stone about three feet across, rings when you roll a pebble along it or throw a pebble at it, S of Craigneach  
 The Rhubarb Yard (ˈrubərbjɛrd), 350084, at an old house S of Craigneach  
 The Sooth-rinnin Wallie (ˈsuθrənənˈwale), Scots south-running small well, 348084, SW of Craigneach  
 The Waster Hoose (ˈwastərhus), 344084, a ruin SW of Lynemore  
 Willie's Hoose (ˈwɛləzhus), 344074, ruin of small square building built into a stone dyke, not remembered who Willie was

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## Musings on Past Journals

*Eric Johnston*

As the fortunate possessor of a complete set of the Club Journals I have enjoyed dipping in to them from time to time. Now that I am an armchair climber I have been able to look at them afresh and appreciate better what a wealth of interest they contain, not just about the Club and its personalities and the development and changes in the climbing scene, but also the changes in social attitudes, particularly to nature and the environment. For example, early in the last century a member remarks casually how he had twice killed adders in Glen Ey. The persecuted osprey is recorded as disappearing completely by 1904, happily to return some 50 years later.

The first Journal issued in 1891 (one shilling (5p) - a price held till 1921) is a gem. There was a beautifully written article by James Bryce, the Honorary President, MP for South Aberdeen later to become a Viscount and OM, and future President of the Alpine Club with a mountain in Canada named after him. Then a piece about the Blue Hill, a favourite Sunday outing for Aberdonians in my youth, with a recommended route via the Green, Windmill Brae, Hardgate and Bridge of Dee. It is a great viewpoint and had an indicator which included Lochnagar and Ben Rinnes. Hugh T. Munro has a description of a Cairngorm outing full of topographical detail reminiscent of the painstaking work which went into the Tables published the same year. It is interesting to note that after the first completed round in 1901 by his contemporary the Rev. A.E. Robertson, 22 years were to pass before they were completed again. The Munro phenomenon was a long way off; there were only eight Munroists at the end of the war in 1945. This is not really surprising as the Tables were looked on mainly as a useful guide and aide-memoire. My early copy, which has a foreword stating wistfully "it is a pity that some most attractive elevations such as Suilven and Stac Polly fail .... to find a place in any of these Tables ", is full of pencilled dates of when I climbed a particular Munro.

In 1918, Sir Hugh, who by then had succeeded to the Baronetcy of Lindertis near Edzell, wrote another article for the Journal *Three nights in the Cairngorms* which shows another side to his character. In it, he mentions that he still aspired to stand on the three 'tops' which he had not yet climbed and that "Raeburn, Collie, Garden, must combine to haul me up on a rope". Sadly he died the following year with his ambition unfulfilled. His night adventures in the Cairngorms ended with him arriving in Braemar at 4.30 am "with some trouble we woke up the people



at the Fife Arms and were royally entertained". Changed days indeed! In his article he mentions his friendship with Donald Fraser the stalker at Derry Lodge who reminisced about stalking in Mar Forest with the Kaiser and Prince Henry of Battenberg - the Prince was the finest rifle shot he had known and could shoot a stag through the heart at 400 yards. Fraser spent the winter months mounting stags' heads and, using cast horns, claimed he could make a much better head than nature could produce.

One of the great controversies over the years has been the desirability of building a road from Deeside through Glen Feshie to Kingussie, first mooted by General Wade in 1724. The attraction to climbers was a quick route to the West coast and the Club debated the proposal several times. In 1913 the subject was raised with a proposal that the National Road Board should get involved and in 1918 and 1924 the idea was supported by the Club - Braemar was described as a 'cul-de sac', which many would consider one of its attractions, and in 1960 after a prolonged debate the majority, including myself, were against. All this was grist to the local Press, as was the suggestion in 1899 that Aberdeen should draw its water from the Avon rather than the Dee, tapping in at Inchrory. This idea, first made by a Club member and opposed by other members, simmered on for some time.

In 1908 five Club members set out to climb "the six highest Cairngorms in one day" but "our friends did not anticipate that we would succeed" (*see Past Proceedings, p. 402 of this Journal, Ed.*). Succeed they did and were picked up by 'wagonette' in Glen Eunach after 19 hours climbing. This time was eventually described as a 'record' for others to challenge and in 1932 the time taken by R.P. Yunnie, the only member of his party to complete the round, had come down to just over 15 hours. Yunnie had several first ascents to his name and was a frequent contributor to the Journal. The Club President was not pleased and wrote in the Journal "racing over hills is not true mountaineering and is to be condemned - don't do it again". However he did relent a little and continued "I happen to know all those who took part in this adventure, and realise that they all have the true climbing spirit". Yunnie came to prominence during the war when he won the Military Cross as second in command of the unorthodox long-range desert group 'Popski's Private Army', the title of a best-selling book. By the time I did the round (1961), followed by V.C. Wynne-Edwards (1963 and 1968), it was featuring in the Guide to the Cairngorms and had been described in the *Journal* as 'something of a classic'. The irony is that the six tops are not the six highest Cairngorms'; Beinn Mheadhoin is 40 feet higher than Ben Avon.

One notable change over the years is the clothing worn on the hills. In the photograph of the group taken at the unveiling of the Club Indicator



on Ben Macdhui in their raincoats, they might be standing at the Castlegate on a wet day. Old clothes were the thing until Ventile and then Goretex with brighter colours came along. The indicator, first proposed in 1913 but not erected until 1926, was funded by public subscription as a memorial to Alexander Copeland, the first chairman of the Club. The photograph reminds me of a letter I found in the Club files several years ago. It was from Percy Unna demanding back the generous subscription of £5 he had made to the memorial fund. It was written when he found out what form the memorial was to take. Unna, a wealthy Old Etonian and SMC member, did not approve of cairns, signposts, indicators etc. and had firm ideas about keeping the hills 'natural'. He is someone to whom the present generation of climbers owe a great debt, as the man who bought mountains and gave Glencoe, Ben Lawers, Goatfell, and parts of Torridon to the National Trust of Scotland under strict conditions. He also tried, unsuccessfully, to buy the Cuillins. I presume he got his £5 back.

The advertisements in the early Journals are interesting. The Palace Hotel in Aberdeen (since burnt down) always had a list of the crowned heads of Europe and celebrities who had patronised it. The boot shop adverts showed the different nailing patterns available. Tricouni nails were ideal for the heathery climbs of the Cairngorms. Also, they left a trail on the rocks which helped climbers identify and follow routes! On snow and ice there was little need for crampons if you had tricouni. Robert Lawrie of London was the well known alpine specialist where I bought a Stubai ice-axe. You rang the bell at a private house near Marble

Arch to be ushered in to meet Mr Lawrie, a charming man who knew all the big names in the climbing world.

Climbers look back nostalgically to their own Golden Age, but I do think the early climbers with just a map, compass and perhaps an aneroid, had the best of it, planning their routes without recourse to guide books, quickest routes and times set out "like a railway timetable" as J. Norman Collie put it according to Hugh Welsh. They also had the exhilaration of running down the great scree shoots like that of Sgurr Alasdair on Skye, a pleasure which I can recall. All the small scree stones have long since slid down the slopes as climbers inevitably damage the mountains. In the 1898 Journal there is a complaint about the length of the heather in the Lairig Ghru, the writer saying that "something should be done about it": the reverse of our problems with paths today! The National Trust for Scotland and others are thankfully doing something about it, and trying to restore some of the damage, an expensive business which all climbers should support.

And so I conclude this piece of rather indulgent nostalgia by saying that I'm sure all Club members will agree how indebted we are to the industrious editors and the contributors who have made the Journal possible and so successful over such a long period.

## Past Proceedings

*The first volume of the Cairngorm Club Journal was published in July 1893. The 108 issues to date bring vividly to life the activities of the Club, the hills and the history of the time. I have chosen here two contrasting accounts of days in the hills, showing the best and the worst that the weather can bring!*

### *A Hundred Years Ago*

*From Volume VI no.32, January 1909*

*The Six Cairngorms in a Day*

*Ian M. McLaren*

There was quite a gathering of hillmen in the 4.35 p.m. train for Ballater on 20<sup>th</sup> June last. One large party was going up Lochnagar next day, and another was to camp out in Glen Derry, while we ourselves, five in number, were to attempt to conquer the six highest Cairngorms in one day. It sounded a big undertaking, and our friends did not anticipate that we should succeed, but at any rate we set forth firmly resolved to accomplish our task, if nothing unforeseen occurred. I may say that most of us were in excellent training, and had carefully prepared for the venture.

We left Ballater about 7.30 p.m., and drove up to Loch Builg via Crathie. It was a glorious evening, and every thing pointed to the weather continuing good. Leaving Loch Builg punctually at midnight we set forth on our long and lonely journey. It was quite chilly, though there was still a distinct glow in the northern sky. We followed the track up Glen Gairm, although it is two miles longer than the route by the county boundary, because it was easier going in the dim light. Before long we struck up to the right in the shadow of Carn Eas, and at 2.23 a.m. we reached the summit of Ben Avon. We did not remain long there as it was very cold indeed. The moon had risen by this time, and away to the east there were signs that soon we should have the sun to cheer us. There was a little mist hanging about Beinn a' Bhuidr, but it had quite disappeared before we reached the first cairn.

Pushing on again, we reached the foot of the Sneek exactly at 3 a.m., and at the same moment the sun rose out of the clouds. At 3.50 a.m. we were on the North Top of Beinn a' Bhuidr, and after this commenced the most monotonous part of our day. It is a very long and very tedious five miles to Loch Avon, the long heather with hidden holes and loose stones making us proceed very cautiously, and it was 6 a.m. before we lay down on the shores of the loch, and, after a most refreshing dip, had our first proper meal. It was glorious basking in the sunshine and looking along



the loch to the snow-crested crags at the far-end - the one drawback being the number of midges and other insects. There were plenty of trout rising at the flies all over the loch.

After an hour's rest we made a bee line for Cairngorm, and reached the top a few minutes after 8 a.m. The view was superb - there being as yet no heat haze. We recognised almost every well-known Scottish mountain, and viewed Ben Nevis with especial pleasure, as we had been on the top of the abandoned observatory at 3 a.m. exactly a week before. All the hills to the north of the Moray Firth stood out quite clearly, and we were very glad to be able to pick out without hesitation an old friend, Ben More in Assynt. Ben Alder seemed quite close at hand in the clear morning sunshine. Certainly 8 a.m. is an excellent time for a good view.

Unfortunately we had no time to spare, so once more set forth. Ben Muich Dhui (*sic*) was reached at 10.34 a.m., about two and a half hours ahead of the time we had allowed ourselves. After this we made our first mistake - we took too direct a route for Glen Dee, and found the descent over the huge boulders very tiring indeed. By the time we reached the Dee we were only too ready to have another hour's rest, and enjoy lunch. We started off again at 1 p.m., and ascended Cairn Toul by the ridge to the left of Lochan Uaine. It was hot work, as the sun was very strong, and the gradient very stiff. However 3.16 p.m. found us at the cairn. Although there was a fair breeze in the valley, there was not a breath of wind at the summit - in fact the first thing that caught my eye was a common tortoiseshell butterfly (*Vanessa urtica*) flitting about the cairn. I may say here that we saw very little wild life during the day. Some gulls near Loch Builg, a few deer at the head of Glen Gairn, several grouse, numerous ptarmigan, a snow-bunting on Beinn a' Bhuird, and a lizard on Cairngorm were about all we noticed. We found two ptarmigan's nests near the Feith Buidhe, and almost trampled on some chicks on Braeriach. We were also surprised at the small amount of snow, in comparison with what we saw at the same date the previous year. In 1907 the large plateau on Braeriach was one vast snow-field - this year there were merely a few scattered wreaths.

We left Cairn Toul at 3.30 p.m., and, crossing to the south of the Angel's Peak, reached the Wells of Dee at 5 p.m., and the cairn of Braeriach at 5.30 p.m. Here our photographs were taken, and we congratulated ourselves, as our day's work was practically completed. The scramble down to the lower bothy in Glen Eunach (*sic*) was easily accomplished, we arriving there about 7 p.m., just as our waggonette was driving up. We had arranged that it should wait for us from 7 to 9 p.m., and so we actually finished up in accordance with our time-table. The

bath and dinner that were waiting for us at Aviemore were very much appreciated.

We had been nineteen hours on foot, with about three and a half hours of rests *en route*. As far as we can make out the distance covered was about thirty-eight miles, and the height climbed nearly eleven thousand feet. Of course we had two great points in our favour - long daylight, and perfect weather with no mist or wind. Then again the hills were all quite familiar to us, and we were in excellent training. It was a day that we shall remember all our lives with the pleasantest of memories.

### ***Fifty Years Ago***

*As the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Club approaches, you may enjoy this account of the celebrations of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary!*

*From Volume XVII no. 93, 1968*

*The Seventy-Fifth Anniversary Excursion*

*Two Members of Long Standing*

The overnight excursion on June 23-24<sup>th</sup> 1962, marked the occasion of the 75th Anniversary of the foundation of the Club at the Dairy-maid's Field by Loch Avon on June 23<sup>rd</sup> 1887. It was followed by a luncheon at the Fife Arms Hotel, Braemar, at which the future prosperity of the Club was toasted by a large company.

The idea was to walk over Cairngorm, 4,084 feet high at the last count, descend to the Shelter Stone, there to hold a Committee meeting at midnight, commemorating the Founding of the Club, and then to repair to Derry Lodge over Macdhui, or by way of Coire Etchachan if one boggled at the full combat course. There were 43 starters, many of them members of long standing, in whom hope had triumphed over experience. The hopes were not realised: well could we have done with the hot lunch of soup and boiled beef served on the summit of Cairngorm to the 31 members who attended the first meet in July 1889. Those were the days, when earth was nigher Heaven than now!

It was a popular meet, and various extra bodies, all of whom claimed to have booked but whose names could not be found on the official list, turned up to join the transport at Golden Square. The President has been known to be kind-hearted and on this occasion promised to take them as far as Queen's Cross, where the problem persisted. However, there were some absentees, and so, the problem resolved, the party set off for Glenmore, all in fine fettle, on a sunny summer Saturday. Some anxiety showed itself as we ran into low cloud and rain in the Glens of Foudland: it cleared as we reached Grantown for a successful tea, descended again at

Nethy Bridge, and by the time we set out from the Cairngorm car park for the midnight rendezvous at the Shelter Stone we knew the worst - at least we thought we did, which was perhaps fortunate! On a similar occasion in Glencoe, the kind-hearted President had exercised his discretion in favour of the comfort and well-being of the party, but had had some difficulty in living it down. This memory hardened his heart, and he said to himself "This is the 75th Anniversary Meet. To Hell with comfort, they will go and get wet this time!" And they did.

Although George Taylor had averred that he rarely encountered rain on Speyside, it was evident that, on this occasion, it was raining on both sides of the mountain, with hail and snow higher up and a gale to boot. Consequently, most aimed at reaching the Shelter Stone by the shortest route, by Coire Raibeirt, although one or two missed the way and, at least, may properly claim to have made an excursion. We, too, might have made an excursion but for Martin Nichols, who produced a compass, waved it vaguely in a south-easterly direction, and George said he thought that was about it and nobody could well disagree with a Speyside man, so we came into Coire Raibeirt without benefit of map. There doesn't seem to be much to this business of route-finding when one analyses it.

By the time Cairngorm summit was reached the President knew that all but one responsible party were ahead, and that weather conditions had deteriorated to such an extent that further contact would be unlikely. The story of the night from this point on is thus inevitably a personal one, but since it must be similar in design, if not in detail, to that of other groups, it is perhaps worth recording. It had its moments.

From Cairngorm, Bain, Ewen, Taylor, Nichols and party set off for Coire Raibeirt into the teeth of the blizzard and in gathering gloom, running at times in the hope of getting into at least comparative shelter in the shortest possible time. We sympathised with Martin Nichol's expression of parental anxiety on losing contact with his daughter; rather querulously he added: "She has the sandwiches". The only other memory here is of hurricane, hail, hurry and splash. Down Coire Raibeirt and along the shores of Loch Avon things were quieter, and it was possible to see through the murk that there were still vast quantities of snow in the upper reaches of the Feith Buidhe and Garbh Uisge Beag area. Mentally, but perhaps that was because of weather concussion, it seemed just a step now to the Shelter Stone. Some step!

As the open ground of the Dairymaid's Field was reached we met the full fury of the gale and continued progress became almost impossible. The President was brought to a standstill from time to time and Ewen, with water gushing out through the welts of his boots, kept charging up and down the bank of the rapidly rising Garbh Uisge in the purely

academic exercise of searching for stepping stones which had long before been completely submerged.

At the head of Loch Avon the wind blew furiously, great sheets of spray being lifted off the loch and the swollen Feith Buidhe tumbled as furiously through the snowfields over black rocks. The north face of Macdui, magnificent at any time, looked even more impressive in the midnight murk. I waited for Martin Nichols to acquaint him with the fact that wading the Feith Buidhe was inevitable, the Shelter Stone being on that side of the stream, as Euclid would say, remote from our station. Bain hardly glanced at the stream: "Heavens," he said, "my sweet peas will be taking a terrible battering."

The stretch up to the Shelter Stone provided the most exhausting effort of the night, but in due course, spurred on by the thought of sanctuary, food and drink, the rendezvous was reached. There were voices to the left, voices to the right, voices ahead. Every boulder in the area, it seemed, was sheltering someone, but there was no sanctuary. The Shelter Stone was full, very full. The President had intended to hold a Committee Meeting at the Stone, co-opting all those present for the occasion, but he couldn't get inside and the Secretary could not, or was unwilling to, be found. Somewhat later the Secretary was located in the Hutchison Memorial Hut, but it transpired that he had omitted to bring the Minute Book, so the whole idea had to be abandoned.

After a quick sandwich and coffee, off we went again, determined to be done with the affair at the earliest possible moment. As we climbed out of Glen Avon, Peter Howgate and party, out of Derry Lodge, hove in sight. It was difficult to understand why they should be laughing and gay, but that was the memory of the moment. From this point to Loch Etchachan is a featureless flat at any time, and there was a fair amount of water en route. Despite the help of a torch, visibility in the intense dark and driving rain was limited and Loch Etchachan was only located with certainty when Ewen went in a little deeper than usual.

As far as could be seen through the steam, the Hutchison Hut was fully occupied, so we pressed on as rapidly as our sodden clothes would allow, reaching the Derry Woods as the first grey light of dawn filtered in. It was just possible to make out a couple of tents in the woods. As we looked one flew away on a wisp of wind. It is regrettable, but we laughed our first laugh for a long time and hurried on regardless. Dry clothes, food and drink, a seat by a roaring fire, and Derry has never been so comfortable.

Sunday was bright again, all were safely back and it was once more a happy party of 60 or so who foregathered at the Fife Arms, where we were



glad to greet those who, unable to cross from Glenmore, had come from all around to be with us at lunch.

But, Mr Editor, although I know we waded the Feith Buidhe, that the meeting of Committee was cancelled, that we groped our way in mist and dark to Loch Etchachan and thence, at our best speed, to the Derry, as wet as I have ever been in my clothes. And although I remember that Bain produced a small Thermos flask, filled, I supposed, with hot coffee, the top of which he filled and handed to me, and which to my surprise was the authentic brew of Speyside which I had never seen carried in a Thermos before, for me the affair will always be associated less with those far events at the Dairymaid's Field than with that with that shattering *non sequitur* of near horticultural disaster at Milltimber: "Heavens, my sweet peas will be taking a terrible battering!"

## IN MEMORIAM

The Club notes with regret the deaths of the following members since publication of the previous *Journal* (with date of admission to the Club, type of Club membership and Club service):

Jean Alexander (1971, Associate)  
 William Alexander (1968, Ordinary, Com 71-74)  
 Harry Anderson (1957, Ordinary)  
 Sandy Anton (1939, Ordinary Life, Com 57-59 60-62 82-84, VP 58-59)  
 Dorothy Bell (1976, Associate)  
 Douglas Berry (1949, Ordinary Life)  
 Ian Brodie (1998, Ordinary)  
 Ian Brooker (1945, Ordinary Life, Com 47-51)  
 Tony Cameron (1948, Ordinary Life, Com 49-53, 54-57)  
 G A Cole (1995, Associate)  
 Frank Crossling (1948, Ordinary)  
 Louis Fussell (1967, Ordinary Life)  
 John Galloway (1959, Ordinary, Com 65-67 68-69, VP 69-72,  
 Indoor Meet Sec 70-77)  
 Harry Hancock (1978, Associate)  
 Brodie Lewis (1973, Ordinary, Com 74-77)  
 Duncan Macrae-Gibson (1967, Ordinary)  
 Ronald Mahaffy (1971, Ordinary)  
 Jack McIndoe (1955, Ordinary Life)  
 Margaret Munro (1947, Ordinary Life)  
 Satej Shirodkar (2010, Ordinary)  
 Ian Stephen (1960, Ordinary Life, Com 67-70 73-75, VP 75-78)  
 Alister Sword (1985, Ordinary)  
 Richard Vincent (1979, Ordinary)  
 Lumsden Walker (1940, Ordinary Life)

### WILLIAM ALEXANDER

William Alexander, known to all his friends as Bill, joined the Club in 1968. He died in September 2009. When I joined the Club in 1970 Bill was already a well established member, on the then "permanent list" for the bus, and one of a group of particularly friendly members, who took new members like me under their wing and made them feel not only welcome but also keen to do as much as possible in the Club. Bill did a stint on the committee from 1971 to 1974. He was one of several who, before we had weekend meets as such, went off at weekends to Muir and further afield. He maintained his interest in meets and other activities over the years, and latterly came to be one of the keenest organisers of midweek walks, which he always prepared for meticulously, checking the route and timings, and researching anything of interest that was to be seen. By profession he was a primary teacher, latterly Deputy Head at Airyhall. He was also keenly interested

in music (both as a listener and as an accomplished pianist) and in tennis. His sister Jean, also a Club member, died in 2010.

**Richard Shirreffs**

### **SANDY ANTON**

Alexander Elder Anton was born in 1922 near Buckie and spent his early years there and in Fochabers. He was a lecturer in law at Aberdeen University, and in 1959 was appointed to the Chair of Jurisprudence at Glasgow University. He served on the Scottish Law Commission from 1966 to 1982, was Literary Director of the Stair Society from 1960 to 1966, and was appointed CBE on his retirement from the Chair in 1973.

In his teens, Sandy developed a passion for the Scottish hills, including their flowers. In 1948, he made the first ascent of Pinnacle Ridge, Beinn a' Bhuidh with G. W. Ross, and in the 1950's he went scrambling in the Alps in summer and skiing there in winter. When skiing came to Aviemore, he was quick to enjoy long traverses on skis in the Cairngorms and Monadhliaths. Later, he revived his boyhood interest in picturesque places along the Moray coast and in the country towns and villages along or near to the banks of the Spey. Their history became a paramount interest, as evidenced in his *Speyside Way Guide* (Cicerone Press, 2002), and he became an authority in the Scottish Rights of Way Society. He served the Club in several ways, notably on the Committee and as Vice-President, as an excellent speaker, as author in this *Journal* of 'Battles for Cairngorm Rights of Way' (1991, no. 102, p. 23-29), and assisting Sheila Murray with the Centennial Book.

**Ken Thomson**

### **LOUIS FUSSELL**

Many older members will remember Louis, who joined the Club while a music teacher in Aberdeen. He died in Bedford in 2008 at the age of 82, after being knocked off his ancient bike, on or off which he collected ferociously for local or national charities (see *CCJ*, 1996, no. 104, p.230, for an account of how to raise £2,000 for Albania by cycling from Land's End to John o' Groats, and get invited to a champagne party!). In his eighties, he raised £4,500 for Macmillan Cancer Relief by cycling from his home in Bedford to Glasgow. He was a man of many parts - as well as a hillwalker, he was a karate black belt, an outdoor winter swimmer, a violin player and a viola maker, a composer of symphonies (eight, some performed in Romania), and a vegetarian. He was a founder member of the Cycling Campaign for North Beds, and had cycled from Land's End to John o' Groats three times - his arrivals at our Easter Meets being mere stopovers!

**Ken Thomson**

### **BRODIE LEWIS**

Born in 1917, Brodie Lewis died in 2007. He was introduced to the Club by Leslie Hay in 1973, and became an enthusiastic member. He had always been interested in the hills, and as a student canoed singlehanded round the coastline of Scotland, climbing west-coast hills along his way. When he graduated from Kings College London in medicine, his maritime adventures got him into the navy, and he spent a

not uneventful war as medical officer on destroyers. After the war he took Joyce and the family to Australia, practising haematology. He came back to Scotland when called upon to organise the Blood Transfusion Service at Foresterhill. He quickly took to the hills again, and that included taking his son Peter up the Cioch Slab! Brodie also was an intrepid traveller to unusual places; he hitchhiked to Timbuktu, and with Eddie Martin and Leslie Hay he went to the Mount Everest Base Camp, taking in Kala Pattar (over four times the height of Ben Nevis). He joined our Munro-bagging weekends but by then was handicapped by hip trouble. Brodie pushed himself to the limit, refusing to take pain-killers, except on a Linn of Dee to Glen Feshie walk which included the Fiddler. When John Gibson replaced the offending hip joint, it was so worn down that it became a museum exhibit. Brodie enjoyed our summer weeks at Muir, liberally providing the wine for the meals - he was a *bon viveur* and appreciated quality in all things. Brodie was a keen supporter of the Indoor Meets, contributing lectures and slides of his adventures. He also would go out with the retired members for the Thursday walks until recently, but once he became really frail Ruth Payne took him for short walks, and he loved that. Brodie led a very full life and the Club played a large part in it.

*Ian Lowit*

#### **RICHARD VINCENT**

Dick died in July 2010 aged 89 at his home in Santa Paula, California. A graduate in chemical and later mechanical engineering, he ended his wartime career in the American Navy as lieutenant commander. He joined Texaco and moved around the USA in various positions, before moving to Iran as operations manager of a project which was planned to send huge volumes of gas to the then Soviet Union. When this was suddenly abandoned in 1979 due to the Khomeini revolution he was transferred to Aberdeen, initially as offshore installation manager on the Tartan platform, then promoted to district manager for Scotland.

A long-standing member of the Sierra Club in his home state, Dick and wife Audrey joined the Cairngorm Club and took to the Scottish hills with great enthusiasm. He was a man of strong opinions and enlivened any outing with spirited conversation and booming laughter. He particularly enjoyed weekend meets as a means of adding to his knowledge of Scotland. In May 1980 Audrey and he drove west aiming for the Ben Alder Lodge Hotel in Newtonmore, but their map indicated this to be half-way along the shore of Loch Erich. No staff appeared on their arrival so he signed the visitor book and was enjoying a nip of whisky presumably left out for guests when a distinguished gent appeared. After a few pleasantries it dawned on Dick that this was a private shooting lodge! His embarrassment was profound, they fled back down the long road to find their hotel, and the incident passed into Club folklore, aided by his frequent re-telling of the incident.

Dick retired in 1984 but returned for an Easter meet a couple of years later. His invitation to Club members to cross the pond and join his expeditions to the high sierras of California was taken up by a few of us, creating memorable experiences. He will be remembered with great affection by all those Club members who knew him.

*Hazel Witte*



## PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB

### GENERAL MEETINGS

Four Annual General Meetings and one Special General Meeting have been held since the last issue of the *Journal*, the first at the Aberdeenshire Cricket Club on Morningside Road, and the others at the Seafield Club, Seafield Road.

On 12 November 2007, with 31 members attending, the following were elected(\*) or re-elected as Office-Bearers: Anne Cordiner (Hon. President), Eilidh Scobbie (President), Adrian Scott (Vice President), Alec Macmillan\* (Vice President), Ken Thomson (Secretary), Derek Pinches (Treasurer), Richard Shirreffs (Hut Custodian), Alec Macmillan (Day Meets Secretary), Anne Pinches (Social Activities Secretary), Dave Ogden (Climbing Activities Secretary), Ian Bryce\* (Weekend Meets Secretary), Garry Wardrope (Communications Secretary). Derek Beverley, Colin Brown, Ben Mellor, Dave Kirk\*, Marj Ewan\*, Andy Lawson\* and Jay Turner\* were elected as ordinary members and Alex Barbour as associate member of the Committee, although Ben Mellor and Alex Barbour subsequently and separately expressed their unwillingness to continue on the Committee. Membership was reported as 453, 15 fewer than the previous year. The Club subscription rate for 2009/09 was approved as remaining at £13.00 (reduced rate £6.50, with categories as previously) *plus* the MCofS affiliation fee to be fixed in September 2008. Under AOCB, discussion focussed on the recent incorporation of the Mountaineering Council of Scotland, with Richard Shirreffs supplying much of the requested information.

On 12 November 2008, with 39 members attending, the following were elected(\*) or re-elected as Office-Bearers: Anne Cordiner (Hon. President), Eilidh Scobbie (President), Adrian Scott (Vice President), Alec Macmillan (Vice President), Ken Thomson (Secretary), Derek Pinches (Treasurer), Richard Shirreffs (Hut Custodian), Anne Pinches (Social Activities Secretary), Mike Brian\* (Climbing Activities Secretary), Ian Bryce (Weekend Meets Secretary), Colin Brown\* (Communications Secretary). No nomination was made for the position of Day Meets Secretary, which therefore remained vacant throughout the year, Ken Thomson acting in default. Marj Ewan, Derek Beverley, Peter Fayers\* and Jay Turner were elected as ordinary members of the Committee. Membership was reported as 448, 5 fewer than the previous year. The Club subscription rate for 2009/10 was approved as remaining at £13.00 (reduced rate £6.50) *plus* the MCofS affiliation fee to be fixed in September 2009. AOCB discussion focussed on discounted charges and membership bookings at Muir.

On 11 November 2009, with 39 members attending, the following were elected(\*) or re-elected as Office-Bearers: Graham Ewen\* (Hon. President), Anne Pinches\* (President), Marj Ewan\* (Vice President), Derek Beverley\* (Vice President), Ken Thomson (Secretary), Derek Pinches (Treasurer), Richard Shirreffs (Hut Custodian), Derek Beverley\* (Day Meets Secretary), Anne Pinches (Social Activities Secretary), Mike Brian (Climbing Activities Secretary), Marj Ewan\* (Weekend Meets Secretary) and Colin Brown (Communications Secretary). Sandy McIntosh\*, Ruth Payne\* and Kees Witte\* were elected as ordinary members and Peter Aikman\* and Amanda Lyons\* as associate members of the

Committee. (In January 2010, Arthur Dickie was subsequently co-opted onto the Committee). Membership was reported as 427, 21 fewer than for the previous year. The Secretary reported that a Club-wide consultation over remaining with the MCofS had resulted in a definite but not overwhelming majority in favour of staying as a Club Member. The Club subscription rate for 2010/11 was approved as remaining at £13.00 (reduced rate £6.50) plus the MCofS membership fee, which, due to the recently agreed change in the MCofS financial year, would be £7.50 for the 7-month interim period in 2009/10, and £13 due in December 2010. Under AOCB, discussion focussed on (i) the possibility of installing a telephone at Muir, in view of a recent emergency, and (ii) on the Club's Constitution. On the latter, a number of issues were discussed, including membership categories and office-bearer rotation.

On 12 November 2010, with 30 members attending, a Special General Meeting was held to revise the Club's Constitution, partly to effect a consistent minimum membership age (of 18) to avoid legal complexities, and partly to update other minor items. These revisions had been thoroughly discussed via Club consultation and a Committee Working Group, and, after some discussion of the insurance position on guests and children on Club meets, were passed *nem. con.* at the SGM. The AGM took place immediately afterwards, and the following were elected(\*) or re-elected as Office-Bearers: Graham Ewen (Hon. President), Anne Pinches (President), Marj Ewan (Vice President), Derek Beverley (Vice President), Ken Thomson (Secretary), Derek Pinches (Treasurer), Richard Shirreffs (Hut Custodian), Derek Beverley (Day Meets Secretary), Anne Pinches (Social Activities Secretary), James Hirst\* (Climbing Activities Secretary), Marj Ewan (Weekend Meets Secretary) and Colin Brown (Communications Secretary). Arthur Dickie, Amanda Lyons, Sandy McIntosh, Ruth Payne and Kees Witte were elected as ordinary members and Peter Aikman and Eddie Alaslewski\* as associate members of the Committee. Substantial AGM presentations were made by Derek Beverley on Day Meets, and by James Friend on Piper's Wood. Discussion under AOCB and other items focussed on: the pre-approval of office-bearer expenses; MRT and MBA donations; minibus driving tests; and ideas to commemorate the Club's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

*Ken Thomson, Secretary*

## COMMUNICATIONS

It can be argued that a club is its communications, whether informally oral on the hills, in huts or by phone, or more formally as described below. The coming together of a group of people with common interests is bound to spark both enthusiasms and disagreements as ideas and experiences are exchanged, and the Club has amongst its Constitutional objects not only "to offer opportunities for such persons to engage in [mountaineering] in company with others;" but also "to issue such publications as may be considered advantageous". Such publications have since its earliest days included this *Journal*, which needs no description here, and for several decades a Newsletter has been distributed by post to all Members, currently in a 16-page A5 format, three times annually.

In 2004, with the electronic communications revolution well underway, the Club decided to add a Communications Secretary to its list of Office-bearers, with Garry Wardrope, an ICT specialist, taking on this role. He had for some previous years been editing the Newsletter and seeing to its duplication and distribution, jobs previously done for many years by Richard Shirreffs as the Club Secretary. In 2008, Colin Brown took over this role. However, as described below, Andy Lawson was also very active in promoting the use of e-communications within the Club.

The Club's first website hit the 'ether' around the Millennium, with Garry Wardrope setting it up and acting as webmaster over its lifetime. With pressure of work meaning that Garry was less able to keep the site updated, Andy Lawson, on his own initiative but with the Committee's enthusiastic approval, created the Club's current website (<http://www.cairngormclub.org.uk>), in an attractive format, with the Club's coat of arms prominent on the 'Home' page. Over the intervening years, the website has been extended until it now contains 12 sections with dozens of webpages including links to meets, membership details, Muir Cottage and the inevitable Miscellaneous. The website is the 'public face' of the Club on the internet, and frequently the route by which newcomers get in touch. Colin Brown took over as webmaster from Andy in September 2009.

The web domain, [cairngormclub.org.uk](http://www.cairngormclub.org.uk), also gives the Club the facility to set up email 'aliases' such as 'newsletter@cairngorm.club.org.uk' which, when linked to an individual's personal email address, allows us to maintain both anonymity and continuity.

Another initiative, started in 2001, was the setting-up of a Yahoo! e-mail system by which registered Members, who must also be Club members, can send out messages to others via a single e-address. Yahoo! now has some 100 registered members, and is actively used by those seeking informal meet partners, or to make intra-Newsletter Committee announcements.

In the summer of 2008, Andy Lawson, again on his own initiative, set up the Club Forum, which now has 100 registered members, over 400 topics (from Overnighter Meets to General Banter) and over 2,000 individual posts. Use of the Forum has perhaps not yet settled down, but it already contains a wealth of striking photographs (sparking a monthly competition), a large number of hillwalking accounts set out by hill 'category', and a variety of opinions. It has also been used for unofficial Club polls and most recently for an interactive web-chat to arrange the 2010 Day Meets calendar.

A number of other media are used by the Club to promote itself and its activities: these include monthly-updated posters in local shops and libraries, social meet entries in a RSPB-sponsored "syllabus" of evening talks in and around Aberdeen, and occasional articles such as those by Ian Bryce on Muir in *The Scottish Mountaineer* no. 32 in autumn 2006, and by Adrian Scott in the *Press & Journal* in early 2009. The Club has also been featured on a BBC Scotland programme, and several of its events were filmed over winter 2010/2011 by a London company for Japanese television.

As this issue of the *Journal* goes to press, Club discussion is underway over whether and how to move from purely 'snail-mailed' Newsletters and formal

communications such as AGM notices to more electronic media. Moreover, the Mountaineering Council of Scotland is advertising YouTube videos and Facebook entries. By the time the next issue appears, we may all be constantly online and even perhaps 'twittering and tweeting' via our personal e-screens!

*Ken Thomson, Secretary*

## SOCIAL MEETS

The usual series took place, and provided (it is hoped) enjoyable opportunities for the fit and the not-so-fit to meet, and to ask "*fit like?*".

## DINNERS

The four **Annual Dinners** held since the last issue of the *Journal* were all held at the Old Mill Inn, Maryculter, and featured speakers as follows:

- 16 November 2007: Mario de Maio, Leader of the Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team, on the activities of the AMRT
- 14 November 2008: Paul Brian, President of the Scottish Mountaineering Club, on some personal recollections
- 13 November 2009: Simon Richardson, on his winter mountaineering in Scotland and beyond.
- 19 November 2010: Adele Pennington, on her mountaineering career and double-summiting of Everest

This edition of the *Journal* (p. 344) records those honoured for 60 years of membership of the Club at the Dinner in 2009. In 2010 the members listed below were honoured for 50 years of membership (those present at the occasion are given in bold font):

John Mutch	(1951)
<b>Sheila Murray</b>	<b>(1953)</b>
Ginette Dallere	(1953)
<b>Eric Johnston</b>	<b>(1954)</b>
John Hay	(1954)
<b>Duncan Macrae</b>	<b>(1954)</b>
<b>John Nisbet</b>	<b>(1955)</b>
Martin Slocock	(1955)
Ian Rattray	(1956)
Peter Howgate	(1956)
Harry Anderson	(1957)
<b>Donald Hawksworth</b>	<b>(1958)</b>
<b>John Vigrow</b>	<b>(1958)</b>
<b>John Quarterman</b>	<b>(1958)</b>



**INDOOR MEETS**

(\* indicates presentation by a Club member)

2007

March: Donald Hawksworth\*, *Mountain Slides*

September: Members' Night

December: Dave MacKinnon, *Wildlife Crime Investigation*

2008

January: Fiona Banks, *The Social and Cultural History of Bennachie*

February: Alison Todd, *The Search and Rescue Dog Association*

March: Ellice Milton, *Photographing Wild Flowers and Landscapes*

September: Members' Night

October: Susan Currie, *From Penguins to Polar Bears*

December: Alistair Beeley\*, *Across Scotland from Ben Macdui to Ben Nevis*

2009

January: Robbie Middleton\*, *A Trip Across the High Plains and Andes of Peru (the Inca Trail)*

February: Eric Jensen\*, *Deeside Seasons*

March: Dave Shand\* and others, *Mount Kilimanjaro*

October: Sandy McIntosh\*, *Old Club Slides*, with musical and poetical accompaniment

December: Murray Duncan, *Restoring the Deeside Railway*

2010

January: Donald Barrie, *The Long and Winding Road*; a cycle trip in Africa

February: Gill Shirreffs\*, *Buitres, Boats and Boobies*, the Shirreffses in South America

March: Nic Bullivant, *Looking after the Cairngorms*

April: Sandy McIntosh, *'I have Been There'*; old Cairngorm Club slides

October: David Jarman, *Bad Steps, Narrow Places and Vanishing Munros*, the shaping of the Highlands by huge land slips and rock slides

December: Roger Houghton, *Walking in the Jura and Swimming the Corryvreckan* (cancelled due to snow)

2011

January: Members' Night

February: Marj Ewen\* and friends, *The West Highland Way and other long walks*

March: Nicola Seal, *Lyme Disease*

**OUTDOOR SOCIAL MEETS**

Barbecues were held at Templars Park, Maryculter, in June 2007, 2008, 2010 and 2011. In 2009, some went to the Old Mill Inn for a bar supper instead!

*Anne Pinches Social Activities Secretary*

## MEETS AND EXCURSIONS

The sections below record the bare bones of the main outdoor Club activities (and most of our activities *are* outdoors, despite the occasional impression to the contrary!) over the period under review in this issue of the *Journal*, i.e. the four years 2007 to 2010. As recorded elsewhere, the establishment of the Club Forum on the worldwide web has enabled members to post accounts and pictures of Club meets, and so full(er) details of most of the meets recorded below can be found there.

### DAY MEETS



*The Lochnagar Bus Meet, January 2008*

Under the secretaryship of Alec Macmillan, and then, after a vacancy, of Derek Beverley, day meets continued almost every month but took various forms according to season, numbers, etc. The perennial problem of filling a coach, and paying for it, intensified during the period under review: a standard hire is now around £500, with strict driver's hours limiting flexibility for latecomers and pub-crawling. Thus, resort has been had to self-drive minibuses, members' cars and even the good old Deeside service bus. Each has their advantages and disadvantages in terms of prior organisation, organiser/driver burdens, flexibility and costs, but variety is the spice of life!

The tradition of Lochnagar in early January was maintained, though sometimes disrupted - and once (2010) even cancelled - by ice and snow. Similarly, the Cairngorms were regularly traversed in September, though with a base at Muir in 2007 for a change, and a coach share with the Stockets in 2010. The usual venues of Glens Shee, Clova, Quoich and Callater were all visited en masse, and Morven, Mount Keen, Culardoch, Braeriach (from the north) and

Creag Meagaidh were all ascended, some more than once. Particularly notable day meets included a Dee to Feshie traverse in April 2008 and a traverse of Ben Avon from Cockbridge to Invercauld in June 2008

The allocation of responsibility for Overnigheters between the Secretaries for (long?) Day and (short?) Week-end Meets has never been entirely clear, but this has proved no obstacle to their successful organisation and outcomes. The years under review saw Overnigheters to the South and North Cluanie Ridges (2007 and 2008), Dundonnell (2009) and the Moor of Rannoch (2010).

The August day meets have traditionally been of a more informal character. In recent years, these saw ascents of the remote Corbett near Glendoe in 2009 after two previous unsuccessful attempts, and a mini-overnighter to Cairn Toul in 2010.

Two other innovations (as far as is known) were (i) a Christmas Mystery Tour, organised by outgoing President Eilidh Scobbie in December 2009, which was voted a great success, especially the Donside hotel meal afterwards, and (ii) a coastal walk from Arbroath to Montrose, when we reached the giddy heights of 70m. in November 2010.

### **2007**

January	Lochnagar (coach)
February	Loch Ness area (car; cancelled due to snow)
March	Glen Clova (coach)
April	Beinn Dearg (minibus)
May	Linn of Quoich to Linn of Dee (coach)
June	Glen Feshie to Linn of Dee (coach)
June	South Cluanie Ridge (Overnighter)
August	Ben Vorlich/Stuc a'Chroin (cars)
September	Cairngorm Traverse (coach Muir to Glenmore)
October	Dorback Lodge to Tomintoul (coach)
November	Morven Traverse (coach)
December	Glen Callater (coach)

### **2008**

January	Lochnagar (coach)
February	Glen Lyon area (cars)
March	Glenshee (minibus)
April	Linn of Dee to Blair Atholl (minibus)
May	Glen Mark via Mount Keen to Deeside (coach)
June	Cockbridge via Ben Avon to Invercauld (coach)
June	North Glen Shiel (Overnighter)
August	Loch Laggan area (cars)
September	Cairngorm Traverse (Glen Morlich to Linn of Dee)
October	Auchallater to Spittal of Glen Muick (coach)
November	Aboyne via Fungle to Glen Esk (coach)
December	Braemar Golf Club

**2009**

January	Lochnagar (coach)
February	Glen Isla
March	Beinn a' Bhuid (coach)
April	Glen Lyon - Carn Mairg (cars)
June	Dundonnell - Kinlochewe (Overnighter)
August	Glendoe (Fort Augustus) (cars)
September	Loch Einich circular
October	Callater to Spital of Glen Muick
November	Ben Rinnes
December	Ladder Hills

**2010**

January	Lochnagar (coach)
February	Achnasheen (minibus)
March	Upper Deeside (service bus)
April	Inverey to Spittal of Glenshee (coach)
May	Creag Meagaidh (minibus)
June	Blackmount/Glenceo (Overnighter)
July	Mount Keen (Ballater/Aboyne via service bus)
August	Cairn Toul/Braeriach (cars, some overnight)
September	Cairngorm Traverse (Glen Morlich to Linn of Dee)
October	Jock's Road (minibus)
November	Arbroath to Montrose coastal (minibus)
December	Loch Lee (minibus)

**WEEKEND MEETS**

Weekend meets during the period under review were supervised successively by Ian Bryce, Tim Walmsley and Marj Ewan, and proceeded regularly i.e. almost every month, and successfully if judged by numbers of participants and experiences. Each year starts traditionally with a Burns Night weekend at Muir, and aims for a 'big' meet around Easter time, but otherwise each is different, according to suggestions made and accommodation available. One or two camping meets to the west coast were also undertaken, mainly to facilitate rock-climbing.

The weekend meet to Bridge of Orchy was distinguished, if that's the right term, by a member and her parent failing to return by the time of the evening hotel meal. This provoked a MRT call-out which eventually engaged several teams and a helicopter. The duo were located making their way down from the Ben Dorain col at around 1 a.m., and no public repercussions resulted.

By way of compensation for the hi-jacking of the Overnighters to the Day Meets section above, here may be recorded the Winter Training weekends, some from Muir, and others involving snowholes above Speyside. Like the Club's other training activities, these were all arranged by Adrian Scott.





*Above Glen Coe on the Weekend Meet, December 2010*

### **Weekend Meets**

#### **2007**

January	Muir Cottage (Burns Night)
February	Roy Bridge
March	Inchnadamph Lodge
April	Torridon Youth Hostel
May	Lazy Crofter, Durness
June	Alex MacIntyre Hut, North Ballachulish
July	Clachtoll Campsite, Lochinver
August	Newtonmore/Aviemore (climbing meet)
August	Ariundle Bunkhouse, Strontian
September	Loch Ranza Youth Hostel, Arran
October	Inverarden Cottage, Crianlarich
November	Inver Croft House, Achnasheen
December	Glen Clova Hotel Bunkhouse

#### **2008**

January	Muir Cottage (Burns Night)
February	Glenfeshie
March	Sleeping Car Bunkhouse, Bridge of Orchy
April	Cannich Bunkhouse
May	Skye
June	MacIntyre Hut, Onich
July	Muir Cottage

August	By-the-Way Hostel, Tyndrum
September	Torridon Youth Hostel
October	Station Lodge Hostel, Tulloch
November	Raeburn Hut, Laggan

**2009**

January	Muir Cottage (Burns Night)
February	Loch Ossian Youth Hostel
March	Corran Ferry Hostel
April	JMT bunkhouse, Knoydart
May	Glen Brittle BMC hut, Skye
May	Achlean (by minibus) - Muir
June	Loch Lomond
July	Jura
August	Sheigra, Kinlochbervie
September	Strawberry Cottage, Glen Affric
October	Muir (Ghillies' Ball)
November	Great Glen Hostel, Spean Bridge
December	Blackrock Cottage, Glencoe

**2010**

January	Muir Cottage (Burns Night)
February	Tyndrum Lodge Hotel
February	Fraoch Lodge, Boat of Garten (Winter Training Meet)
March	MacIntyre Hut, Onich
April	Glen Affric Youth Hostel
May	Sail Mhor, Dundonnell
June	Lagangarbh SMC Hut, Glencoe
July	camping
August	Glen Brittle, Skye
September	Morvich NTS
October	Raeburn Hut, Laggan
November	Trossachs Tryst, Callander
December	Great Glen Hostel, South Laggan

**ROCK AND ICE CLIMBING**

Secretaryship of this aspect of the Club's activities during the period under review was mainly in the hands of Dave Ogden (2006-2008) and Mike Brian (2008-2010), but passed to James Hirst in late 2010 after the Mike's departure to Antarctica. Summer activities continued as usual, i.e. weekly visits to various coastal locales, with occasional forays to Clochnaben and the Pass of Ballater.

During the winters, activities switched from the RGU wall to the new Transition Extreme facilities at Aberdeen beach.

## OVERSEAS MEETS

### TATRAS Summer 2007 and CORTINA July 2009

*Tatras:* The Club's website records (amongst other things, including photographs) 'eight seasoned Club members' starting off from Golden Square (of course) and heading for Zakopane, the principal mountain resort of the Polish Tatras, where the Club last met in 1990. After some days of walking in the National Park, including a *via ferrata* and the highest mountain in Poland, it was over the border via a beautiful wooded pass for eight days in Slovakia, where the rock is granite - good and grippy, compared with the 'marble' limestone of the Polish side - but some hotels turned out to be bankrupt!

*Cortina d'Ampezzo:* This involved seven members - some younger than others - staying in two apartments in the pleasant centre of Cortina. Forays were mainly to tea and coffee houses (some by cable car), but a few brave souls ventured out onto the excellent paths in the vicinity, and even onto a short *via ferrata*. Apart from the stunning scenery, interest was focussed on flowers and First World War remains.

## THURSDAY WALKS



*On the Hill of Fare, Mid-Week Walk, February 2009*

This popular series of monthly walks, usually originating by shared cars from Kingswells or elsewhere, and involving a 5- or 6-hour route, continued under Jack Connell's genial and efficient supervision until 2009, when Arthur Dickie took

over the well-oiled machinery. Yet more of Aberdeenshire was scoured, with longer-distance efforts penetrating beyond Braemar to Sgor Mor and Glen Quoich, while near-at-home forays were made to the wilds of Countesswells.

**2007**

January	Ellon & Formartine Way
February	Hill of Fare
March	Glencat
April	Glen Girnock
May	Longhaven
June	Sgor Dubh/Sgor Mor
July	Glen Feardar
August	Glenbuchat
September	Gordon Way
October	Lochnagar
November	Burn o' Vat
December	Scolty

**2008**

January	Kirkhill
February	Barmekin of Echt
March	Glentana
April	Cairn William
May	Glenfenzie
June	The Socach
July	Glen Callater
August	Art in Cromar
September	Carn Liath
October	Johnshaven
November	Correnie Moor
December	Clachnaben

**2009**

January	Bucksburn
February	Hill of Fare
March	St Combs - Rattray Head
April	Correen Hills
May	Pressendye
June	Deskry Water
July	Carnferg
August	Morrone - Corriemulzie
September	Mongur - Monluth
October	Huntly - Clashmach
November	Balmoral Cairns
December	Scolty - Blackhall Forest



**2010**

January	Fetternear
February	Braeroddach Loch
March	Airlie Ridge
April	Peter Hill
May	Carn na Drochaide
June	Gairnshiel/Shenval
July	Loch Phadruig
August	Suie Hill
September	Clais Fearnagh
October	Tap o' Noth
November	Bennachie
December	Mortlich

**DAUNERS**

This addition to the Club's range activities was initiated by Ian Bryce in 2007, although Ruth Payne has played a major organisational role in recent years. Designed for members who may not feel up to the rigours of the Mid-Week Walks, they involve a gentle walk on a well-made path, before resort to a reliable lunchtime venue on Deeside or Donside, e.g. Milton of Crathes.

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The Cairngorm Club



