

October 2023



The Cairngorm Club

Established 1887

Registered Charity
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Editor Colin Brown



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The Newsletter of the Cairngorm Club

DO MID-MONTH STRAVAIGS TAKE YOUR FANCY?

Might you be interested in some shorter walks with Club members? Three former Club Lady Presidents thought that some Club members might be interested in meeting other members for walks which are shorter than the current Mid Week Walks, though there is no reason why people shouldn't attend both.

While open to any Club member to attend, these walks would be designed to be attractive to people who would be happy to do walks taking about 3 hours, largely on tracks or paths.

Typically, the walks would be around 5 to 6 miles long. The proposal is that these walks would happen monthly, on the second Friday of each month, meeting to start the walk about 10.30am. The start of the walk would be within an hour's drive of Aberdeen. Everyone would be expected to carry a packed lunch, and the group would stop about midday to eat, and would plan to end the outing with tea/coffee in a coffee shop.

Contact Judy Middleton, Gill Shirreffs or Eilidh Scobbie to discuss if you might be interested in joining - and sometimes organising - a Mid-Month Stravaig!

Journal Call for Book Reviews and Members' Achievements

I have a goodly number of varied articles lined up for Issue 115 of the Journal, scheduled for printing in Spring 2024.

However, a few more book reviews would be welcome. Do you have a good mountaineering/Cairngorms book to recommend? Let me know and we can discuss.

Secondly, have you completed a personal or group achievement in the period since the last Journal, perhaps an epic day's hillwalking, long-distance route, classic climb, round of Corbetts or Munros, etc.? Don't be reticent: it's good to have these adventures recorded in the Journal, and they inspire others. Please contact me at journal@cairngormclub.org.uk to discuss further.

Jean Robinson, CCJ Editor

Social Report

The Indoor meets and AGM are now booked for the Garden Room at Fountainhall at the Cross (formerly Queens Cross Church). The following are offered for the rest of Winter 2023/24:

- 15th Nov AGM - talk by Stephen Addy on restoring the banks of the Dee
 - 6th Dec Linda di Maio "Trekking in Dolpo Nepal. Land of the snow leopard, a cultural trek."
 - 10th Jan Sue Chalmers on her TGO challenge
 - 7th Feb Still to be organised, but perhaps something more wildlife based, perhaps Uwe Stoneman, Senior Site Manager, RSPB Abernethy, generally on the RSPB vision for upland areas.
 - 6th Mar Members Night
- (The February and March talks may be swapped)
- The Club Dinner will take place on the 17th November 2023 at the RNUC (see separate enclosure/attachment).
- There are plans to have a BBQ at the RNUC on a Wednesday in June 2024, and a DIY BBQ at Muir on Sat 3rd Aug, as part of the Club's summer weekend at Muir.

Eilidh Scobbie, Social Secretary

The Club Forum

Since 2011, the Club has maintained a members-only website on which those registered can post or read many sorts of items, such as accounts (many with photos) of Club meets and other expeditions, and "news and banter" about Club affairs, e.g. Committee and AGM minutes. To register, go to <https://www.tapatalk.com/groups/cairngormclub/index.php>, and enter a username and password.

Trip to Corvara

Notes of interest are sought for a return trip to Corvara in the Dolomites. Highlights will be Alpine meadows filled with flowers and huts selling strudels, good high-level mountain paths, good valley walks, chair lifts from the village, via ferrata, climbing etc.

Would suit folk who like a bit of comfort, i.e. nice hotel, good food and convivial company (depending on who goes!) The intention is to fly from Aberdeen to Venice during July 2024.

Notes of interest please, to Adrian Scott – forester@touckswood.co.uk.

Muir

The work weekend at the end of May went very well. Thanks very much to a group of loyal workers. As normal the weather was very good.

During this weekend a Fire Risk Assessment was done and we were advised to install fire alarm sound activated fire door retainers and to insert intumescent seals in both common room doors. This work will be done soon. Also, recently the slate roof and flat roof were inspected by a local contractor.

Kees Witte, Hut Custodian

Midweek Walks

The draft walking programme for 2024 is close to completion. As usual it will offer a range of walks around the northeast.

In the meantime the first two walks of the new year will be -

January 25th	Hill of Beltie	(Ken Thomson)
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February 29th	Loch Kinord	(Malcolm Lamont)
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The 2024 programme will be on the website and circulated via Googlegroup email in the near future.

Finally, I would like to thank all those who have organised such interesting and enjoyable walks this year.

The midweek walks continue to be well supported and it has been great to see some new faces this year.

Joyce Ritchie

Midweek Walks Co-ordinator

Weekend Meets

Further to meets mentioned elsewhere, here are the Weekend meets for Spring and early Summer 2024:

Apr 19 (2 nights)	Mol Mor, Torridon	Brian Purves
May 3 (2 nights)	Loch Ossian Youth Hostel	Joyce Ritchie
May 31 (2 nights)	Strawberry Cottage, Glen Affric	Alex Barbour
Jul 19 (2 nights)	Kirkwall Bay Campsite, Orkney	Sue Chalmers
Aug 2 (2 nights)	Muir Cottage	Eilidh Scobbie

Glen Dye Moor Project

A second “public drop-in session” was held in Strachan on 23 August, to show the latest Scottish Woodlands thinking about this area around Clachnaben, which has been bought by Aviva for carbon credit purposes. The area to be afforested has been reduced to about 3000ha (out of 6300ha), and peat restoration off the Cairn o’Mount road is to start in September. There seems to be little more so far on fencing or path plans, but an access discussion meeting has been held. A “Main Entry” with toilets will be created at the Spital Bridge, about 2km south of the small quarry (which, like most of the traditional access route, will remain within the old Glendye Estate). More at <https://glendyemoor.com>.

Safety and Accidents

The Club Committee noted with sadness the deaths of 3 people on the Aonach Eagach in early August, when the Club had a Meet at Corran Ferry: some participants had planned to do the ridge that day but diverted elsewhere due to the weather forecast. One of the fatalities was Dave Fowler, a well-known Fort William guide: since employment was involved, a HSE Fatal Accident Inquiry is being considered. The Club has recently revised its Meet Organiser guidelines for safety and other matters, and the Committee will put Safety as a routine item on its meeting agenda.

Donations

The Club has made the first of three annual donations to Mountain Training Scotland (£1000) to provide bursaries for outdoor training.

£500 has been donated to each of the Mountain Rescue Teams in Aberdeen, Braemar and Hebrides and £250 to Scottish Mountain Rescue.

Payments to the Club

The Club’s bank details are:

Name “Cairngorm Club”; Sort Code 83-15-31; A/C 19165508.

Please use the purpose of the payment as the reference e.g., “Traverse” or “Membership”. Your account name is provided by the bank and need not be repeated. The reference field may be limited to 18 characters, including blanks.

Club Member Achievements

On the Club website there is a page that lists Club member achievements - <http://www.cairngormclub.org.uk/miscellaneous/achievements/achievements.htm>. If you have “completed” your Munros, Corbetts etc., your name, and a picture if you have one, can be added to the list. Please forward any relevant information to newsletter@cairngormclub.org.uk.

Club Subscriptions

The Mountaineering Scotland affiliation fee for 2023/24 has risen by £2.60.

Cairngorm Club subscription rates for 2023/24 are:

	Full Rate	Reduced Rate
Club	£13.00	£ 6.50
MS	£20.15	£20.15
Total	£33.15	£26.65

Direct Debits were collected on 2 October 2023. A membership card for 2024 is enclosed with this Newsletter. Members not paying by Direct Debit should arrange payment during October.

All members are encouraged to pay their subscription by Direct Debit and, where appropriate, to make a Gift Aid Declaration. Forms for each are available from the Treasurer.

Donald Thomas,
treasurer@cairngormclub.org.uk

Transfer to Ordinary Membership

The Club aims to “promote competence, safety, knowledge and responsibility of attitude amongst persons who engage in mountaineering”. Our membership structure reflects this, with “Ordinary” and “Associate” memberships. Ordinary Membership (OM) recognises a basic level of experience and competence, ”to look after yourself and to lead one or two others in all conditions normally encountered on the Scottish hills, without expecting any proficiency in the use of ropes”. We hope most members will become OMs but many join as Associates and never consider progressing to become an OM.

Over summer 2023, several Associates were approached with a view to their transfer to OM status. 10 listed elsewhere have so far made the change (which involves no change in subscription rates or normal voting rights). Only OMs can be Club office-bearers. If you are an Associate Member with appropriate experience, why not apply now? We ask for a brief written declaration of experience and the support of two Ordinary Members - just send a completed Application Form (see website) to the Membership Secretary. If you wish to improve your skills first, please let our Training Officer know. We run various subsidised courses, including navigation and winter skills, and also offer financial support to attend some external courses, including at Glenmore Lodge.

Donald Thomas,
treasurer@cairngormclub.org.uk

Glen Ey Woods

The Covid pandemic meant that no re-survey of Piper's Wood was possible when it otherwise might have been done, but earlier this year plans were formulated to have it and the enclosure at Altanour surveyed in July - the month when most plants are likely to be visible. Two persons with sufficient botanical knowledge were approached and agreed to take on the hoped for surveys – Andrew Painting, who works a lot with the NTS at Mar Lodge, and David Elston, who had worked with the James Hutton Institute.

A mutually acceptable date was agreed – 9 July. It was established that neither surveyor particularly needed Club members to be there, but having set up the arrangements I decided that I ought to be present, at least at Piper's Wood, and Richard Frimston also volunteered to come, with his Range Rover, which the Mar Estate kindly agreed we could take up the glen. We enjoyed good weather and completed both surveys. I am still awaiting the updated listing for Altanour but hope to have it soon allowing me to contribute a fuller article, with tables of the plants found and their frequency, for the next Club Journal, continuing the pattern there of documenting the success of the Glen Ey Woods project.

Richard Shirreffs

Munro Completion

A long-standing member of the Club, Vicky Herbert, completed her round of the Munros, on Ben Lomond, on 2 September 2023. In Vicky's own words –

“Thirty-one people joined me for my final hill which took place in glorious sunshine on Ben Lomond. I tried to invite everyone I'd been up a Munro with (although some may have been missed as until I reached 200 or so, my records were gained from other people's logs and coloured in hills with dates on a Munro map my parents bought me). This included thirteen from the Cairngorm Club, all of whom I've enjoyed some quality mountain days with. Also there were various other hill companions I've made whilst being up in Scotland. The day was topped off with twenty-seven of us meeting later at 'The Pier' in Balloch for food and drinks where a good evening was had.”

Congratulations Vicky, from all your friends in the Club.

Road News

1. Highland Council are proposing a No Waiting scheme for the Glenmore road, including the Lodge side-road and below the Coire Cas carpark.
2. The car park at Auchallater has been moved uphill, to make room for machinery etc. in the lower area, beside a metal bridge that has appeared alongside the existing road bridge.

Day Meets take place once a month and can be by coach, mini-bus, car, or service bus. Meets are generally on Sundays but occasionally on Saturdays. Members should contact the Meet Organiser to book a place. The organiser or Day Meets Secretary can be contacted if any additional information is sought. Meets generally leave Aberdeen at St. Margaret's School, Albyn Place, at 7am, with pick-ups possible on the route out (which may vary with meet location). Departure times and cost are listed in the centrefold of this Newsletter. On all Meets, an organised "President's Party" walk will be available for those new to the Club or for members who simply want a day out without the challenge of route-finding or navigation. The following Day Excursions are offered for Winter 2023-24.

October 21, The Convals via Craigellachie/Dufftown/Aberlour (Saturday)

This meet allows a circular route from Craigellachie taking in Dufftown, via the Speyside Way spur, the two 'Conval' hills', Aberlour and back to Craigellachie via the Speyside Way. To book, or for more information, please contact Colin Brown via newsletter@cairnngormclub.org.uk.

November 19, Glen Pollagach Circuit (Sunday)

This meet will follow the fine ridge around the glen between Glens Tanar and Muick. After crossing the Cambus o' May footbridge, we visit a forgotten millstone in the trees below the Bellamore climbing crags, and then the (once) Rocking Stone on Pannanich Hill, before following a landrover track to Craig Vallich, a Mounth Road over to Knockie Branar, and down the Black Moss past the (non-rocking) Big Stane o' Carn Beag, to the Dee. A 7:30 start from Aberdeen. To book, contact Ken Thomson via secretary@cairnngormclub.org.uk.

December 10, Buck of Cabrach (Sunday)

The minibus will depart from St. Margaret's at 8am and travel to The Buck of Cabrach, a Graham just south west of Rhynie. The President's Party will ascend The Buck before wandering around various tops and returning to the minibus mid-afternoon. On our return to Aberdeen, we aim to stop somewhere for food and drinks. The cost of this trip is the new standard price of £15. To book, please contact Will Ellwood by email meetorganiser26@cairnngormclub.org.uk.

January 14, Lochnagar (Sunday)

The coach will depart from St. Margaret's at 7am. As is traditional, the President's Party will ascend Lochnagar but there are many alternatives including the other Glen Muick Munros and Corbetts, walking back to Ballater, or simply a walk around the loch itself. Afterwards we will stop for High Tea; details will be announced nearer the time. To book, please contact Garry Wardrope at training@cairnngormclub.org.uk.

October 2023

13	Fri	Weekend	Morvich, Kintail (Marj Ewan; meetorganiser13@cairngormclub.org.uk)	
18	Wed	Climbing	Indoor Climbing at Transition Extreme (Stuart Dick; climb@cairngormclub.org.uk)	
21	Sat	Day	The Convals via Craigellachie/Dufftown/Aberlour Circular (7am; 28; 288450; 7hrs; £15; minibus; Colin Brown; newsletter@cairngormclub.org.uk)	
25	Wed	Climbing	Indoor Climbing at Transition Extreme (Stuart Dick; climb@cairngormclub.org.uk)	
26	Thur	MWW	Clova Hill, Lumsden (Rod Campbell)	

November

1	Wed	Climbing	Indoor Climbing at Transition Extreme (Stuart Dick; climb@cairngormclub.org.uk)	
3	Fri	Weekend	Muir Cottage (Mark Peel; meetorganiser38@cairngormclub.org.uk)	
8	Wed	Climbing	Indoor Climbing at Transition Extreme (Stuart Dick; climb@cairngormclub.org.uk)	
15	Wed	Climbing	Indoor Climbing at Transition Extreme (Stuart Dick; climb@cairngormclub.org.uk)	
15	Wed	AGM/ Social	AGM followed by talk by Stephen Addy - Upper Dee Flood Plain Restoration Work. To be held at the Queens Cross Church Garden Room (Eilidh Scobbie; social@cairngormclub.org.uk)	
19	Sun	Day	Pollagach Circuit (Deeside) (7:30am; 44; 422976; 6hrs; £15; minibus; Ken Thomson; 07891 741368; secretary@cairngormclub.org.uk)	
22	Wed	Climbing	Indoor Climbing at Transition Extreme (Stuart Dick; climb@cairngormclub.org.uk)	
29	Wed	Climbing	Indoor Climbing at Transition Extreme (Stuart Dick; climb@cairngormclub.org.uk)	
30	Thur	MWW	Finzean (Richard Shirreffs)	

December

1	Fri	Weekend	Blackrock Cottage (Esperanza Martin; cte9@cairngormclub.org.uk)	
6	Wed	Climbing	Indoor Climbing at Transition Extreme (Stuart Dick; climb@cairngormclub.org.uk)	
6	Wed	Social	Linda di Maio - Trekking in Duplo Nepal. To be held at the Queens Cross Church Garden Room (Eilidh Scobbie; social@cairngormclub.org.uk)	
10	Sun	Day	Buck of Cabrach (8am; 37; 427250; 6hrs; £15; minibus; Will Ellwood; meetorganiser26@cairngormclub.org.uk)	
13	Wed	Climbing	Indoor Climbing at Transition Extreme (Stuart Dick; climb@cairngormclub.org.uk)	

13	Wed	Climbing	Indoor Climbing at Transition Extreme (Stuart Dick; climb@cairngormclub.org.uk)
14	Thur	MWW	Banchory - Crathes (Eilidh Scobbie; social@cairngormclub.org.uk)
20	Wed	Climbing	Indoor Climbing at Transition Extreme (Stuart Dick; climb@cairngormclub.org.uk)
January 2024			
10	Wed	Climbing	Indoor Climbing at Transition Extreme (Stuart Dick; climb@cairngormclub.org.uk)
10	Wed	Social	Sue Chalmers - The TGO Challenge. To be held at the Queens Cross Church Garden Room (Eilidh Scobbie; social@cairngormclub.org.uk)
14	Sun	Day	Lochnagar (7am; 44; 311852; 7hrs; TBC; coach; Garry Wardrope; day@cairngormclub.org.uk)
17	Wed	Climbing	Indoor Climbing at Transition Extreme (Stuart Dick; climb@cairngormclub.org.uk)
24	Wed	Climbing	Indoor Climbing at Transition Extreme (Stuart Dick; climb@cairngormclub.org.uk)
25	Thur	MWW	Hill of Beltie (Ken Thomson; secretary@cairngormclub.org.uk)
26	Fri	Weekend	Muir Cottage - Burns Supper Weekend (Helen Russell; weekend@cairngormclub.org.uk)
31	Wed	Climbing	Indoor Climbing at Transition Extreme (Stuart Dick; climb@cairngormclub.org.uk)
February			
7	Wed	Climbing	Indoor Climbing at Transition Extreme (Stuart Dick; climb@cairngormclub.org.uk)
7	Wed	Social	Speaker TBC. To be held at the Queens Cross Church Garden Room (Eilidh Scobbie; social@cairngormclub.org.uk)
9	Fri	Weekend	Milehouse Cottage, Feshiebridge (Kolbjorn Akselvoll); ctte3@cairngormclub.org.uk)
14	Wed	Climbing	Indoor Climbing at Transition Extreme (Stuart Dick; climb@cairngormclub.org.uk)
17	Sun	Day	Ladder Hills (8am; 37; 340190; 6hrs; £15; minibus; Craig Thomson; ctte11@cairngormclub.org.uk)
21	Wed	Climbing	Indoor Climbing at Transition Extreme (Stuart Dick; climb@cairngormclub.org.uk)
28	Wed	Climbing	Indoor Climbing at Transition Extreme (Stuart Dick; climb@cairngormclub.org.uk)
29	Thur	MWW	Loch Kinord (Malcolm Lamont)
March			
1	Fri	Weekend	Lagangarbh Hut, Glencoe (Steven Pollok meetorganiser28@cairngormclub.org.uk)
6	Wed	Climbing	Indoor Climbing at Transition Extreme (Stuart Dick; climb@cairngormclub.org.uk)

Please note: bookings not confirmed until payment is made.

October 13 & 14 Morvich, Kintail (2 nights)

To be held over the September holiday weekend, this meet is to the National Trust Hostel at Morvich. With the Corbetts and Munros of Glen Shiel and Glen Affric and Glen Lichd nearby, and only a short drive from Skye, this meet offers plenty of options. To book, please contact Marj Ewan via meetorganiser13@cairngormclub.org.uk.

November 3 & 4 Muir Cottage (2 nights)

If you haven't yet stayed at the Club hut at Muir of Inverey, this is a great opportunity. With the southern Cairngorms and the Glenshee hills a short drive away you will be spoiled for hiking choices. Low-level walking, mountain biking and perhaps some early winter climbing are also available nearby. To book, please contact Mark Peel via meetorganiser38@cairngormclub.org.uk.

December 1 & 2 Blackrock Cottage, Glencoe (2 nights)

The Ladies Scottish Climbing Club hut appears in lots of calendar photos nestling under the Buachaille and is handy for the many Munros and Corbetts nearby as well as climbing on some classic routes. To book, please contact Esperanza Martin via ctte9@cairngormclub.org.uk.

January 26 & 27 Muir Cottage, Burns Supper Weekend (2 nights)

Celebrate Scotland's Bard Robert Burns with some traditional Scottish food, drink and possibly some traditional music. Over the weekend you could also tackle some of the Munros, Corbetts, skiing or ski touring, and low-level walks as well as your haggis, neeps and tatties. To book, contact Helen Russell via weekend@cairngormclub.org.uk

February 9 & 10 Milehouse Cottage, Feshiebridge (2 nights)

Located one mile from village of Kincaig on the road to Insh the Ladies Scottish Climbing Club Hut is the perfect location from which to visit the Cairngorm and Drumochter hills on the doorstep. To book, please contact Kolbjorn Akselvoll via ctte3@cairngormclub.org.uk.

Day Meets - where appropriate for some meets - departure time; map sheet(s); grid reference(s) of drop-off and pick-up points; walking time; cost; means of transport; organiser contact details)

Mid-Week Walks (organiser; contact details, if available)

Weekend Meets (organiser; contact details)

Climbing (Summer) (organiser; contact details)

Membership News

The Club is sorry to hear of the death of the following members:

Duncan Macrae	(Ballater, Ordinary Life since 1954)
Helen Turner	(Aberdeen, Associate since 2002)

The following Associate members have been admitted since the last Newsletter:

Peter Henry	(Birse)
Susan Gauld	(Aberdeen)
Ian Williamson	(Banchory)
Colin Larmour	(Aberdeen)
Gemma Watt	(Aberdeen)
Aj Monroe	(Bridge of Don)
Wojciech Wojdyla	(Inverurie)
Ann Marie Firth-Bernard	(Achiltibuie)
Ewen McLachlan	(Lochinver)
Sarah Scott	(Aberdeen, re-joined)
Alex Mair	(Aberdeen)
Mikko Futter	(Aberdeen)

The following Associates have transferred to Ordinary Membership:

Kevin Adam	(Cults)
Kate Brockman	(Durriss)
Guy Bromby	(Kirkton of Skene)
Andrew Brown	(Torphins)
Will Ellwood	(Aberdeen)
Tom Gray	(Banchory)
Mike McKelvey	(Aberdeen)
Forbes McPherson	(Glasgow)
Vay Mutch	(Countesswells)
Grant Signorini	(Aberdeen)

The Club has also attracted 14 new Interim members since the last Newsletter.

Diversity Bursaries

As reported at the last AGM, the Club has been seeking ways to fund the promotion of diversity in mountaineering. An agreement has recently been reached with the official body Mountain Training Scotland to make 3 annual payments of £1000 each to fund “*candidates wishing to undertake a training or assessment course ... for whom financial constraints may be a barrier to participation ...*”. This should assist 3 or 4 candidates each year, preferably from groups with limited or no familiarity with the Scottish hills, e.g. refugee or ethnic communities. The Club will play no role in candidate selection, but hopes that some from the North-East will benefit. It and its members will be kept informed about numbers and origins.

Munroist List Clerk

To register a completion of a round of the Munros, of the Tops, Furths, Corbetts, Grahams or Donalds, members should contact Alison Coull who is the “Clerk of the List” for the SMC.

Please contact her at -
munroclerk@smc.org.uk

Alison Coull
258/1 Ferry Road
Edinburgh
EH5 3AN

Are you a Member of the Club Google Group?

If not, you could be missing important Club information!

The Club uses Google Groups to distribute official communications from the Club and for general communications by members. All members of the list can post to all other members. Typical use of the list is to organize ad-hoc meets and social meetings, selling/buying gear etc.

You can subscribe/unsubscribe to/from the lists simply by emailing the list owner at comms@cairngormclub.org.uk from the email account you wish to use, to subscribe, or the one that is registered, to unsubscribe.

Once subscribed, members can post messages by emailing cairngorm-club@googlegroups.com.

Also contact comms@cairngormclub.org.uk if you have any questions about the list.

The list owner cannot change the email address under which you have subscribed, only delete it and add the new one.

NTS Cards

The Club has 15 cards which allow free entry to NTS (and NT, in England) properties and car parks. To borrow, please contact Ken Thomson (see back page).

Meet Suggestions

The Weekend and Day Meet Secretaries are always on the lookout for walks that could be incorporated into the Meets Calendar (for 2024 and/or 2025). If you have an idea for a meet, just contact them (see back page).

Physiotherapy Services

For treatment of injuries or conditions which have arisen during sporting activities or affect participation in them, other than chronic degenerative conditions.

Cost £39 (a discount of £5) on proof of Club membership (e.g. card); priority appointments for Club members; next-day appointments if booked before noon.

Aberdeen Physiotherapy - 01224 626266

Fire!

The severe drought in May and June 2023 resulted in several outdoor fires in Scotland, as well as elsewhere in the UK and abroad – even a small one at Muir, swiftly brought under control, and at least one at Derry Lodge. Four nation-wide “very high” or “extreme” wildfire warnings were issued by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS), and a fire above Cannich covered six square miles (1500 ha or 3700 acres): a video (made from the land management viewpoint) is available at youtu.be/OvTS_qkgEly.

The term “wildfire” is used rather differently in the UK than in other countries (since we have little “wild land”), and covers a wide variety of fires, from outbreaks near housing etc. through grassland and gorse to remote moorland fires, often on hard-to-extinguish peat.

In Scotland and Northern England, muirburn – the deliberate and controlled burning of moorland, usually to create a grouse-friendly habitat – has long been a bone of contention. A recent NatureScot research report (no. 1302) has examined the impacts of muirburn on wildfire, carbon flows and wildlife, and found that:

- There is much uncertainty over how many wildfires are caused by muirburn getting out of control, but the proportion in Scotland seems to be around a half.
- There is no consensus as to the net (and longer-term) impacts of muirburn on carbon budgets, and particularly little information on soil carbon stocks/fluxes.
- Burning appears to increase heather over time, at the expense of grassland; sphagnum moss seems able to recover. Burning (or mowing, and predator control) favours red grouse, golden plover, curlew, lapwing, redshank and ring ouzel, but disfavors meadow pipit, skylark, wheatear and twite.

Studies of wildfire use a number of databases, indices and approaches.

- The Fine Fuels Moisture Code (FFMC) classifies the moisture content of surface litter (e.g. needles and twigs), while the Duff Moisture Code (DMC) indicates the moisture content of loosely-compacted and slower-drying organic layers with a depth of 5-10 cm. The Initial Spread Index (ISI) combines FFMC with wind speed, and indicates fire spread potential. The Fire Weather Index (FWI) combines surface observations at noon and represents fire danger at mid-afternoon.
- A recent James Hutton Institute project has examined how to adapt the widely used Canadian FWI to the special conditions of moorland in Scotland, which currently has no Fire Danger Rating System (FRDS)

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due to lack of data. Since 2014, Firebreak Services Ltd., run by Malcolm Bruce of Glentanar, has been delivering wildfire danger assessments on behalf of the Scottish Wildfire Forum (SWF), based on personal knowledge and contacts, and use of the above indices.

Multi-day Trips 2024

In recent years there were several multi-day trips in the Cairngorms, one on part of the Charlie Ramsay round, in winter, and one in the far North of Scotland. All have used two or more nights' camping either in a remote valley or on mountain tops. I'd like to share some tentative plans for 2024.

Before late February 2024, including some Grade I Winter ascents within one or more of:

- (1) Ascent of Castlegates Gully west of Loch Avon. Head west across the Lairig Ghru and south west up Angel's ridge.
- (2) Completion of Ramsay round (begun in late 2021) starting at the west end of the Grey Corries and then clockwise along the Mamores.
- (3) Arkle from the West, then Foinaven. Then, possibly, ascents of gullies on the West face of Ben Hope.

You need: Winter Mountaineering and camping experience and be comfortable moving with ice axe and crampons, sometimes on Grade I Winter ground which will be consequential if you trip or fall. There may be an element of opportunism so dates may move according to conditions and weather systems. Party size: maximum 4.

Mid May 2024. One of:

- (1) Part of the boundary, or march, of the Mar Lodge Estate. Some of this was completed in July 2022.
- (2) The Beinn a Bhuird Corries and the Corrie north of the Sneck
- (3) The Eastern and Northern Corries of Ben Avon

Party size: maximum 6

Capabilities for Summer and Winter: Able to live and walk with minimum equipment and rucksacks around 11 kg weight in Summer and 14 kg in Winter. Physically fit and with organised equipment. Capability for long days, perhaps extending into the night on terrain which may be rocky, steep, away from Strava heat map routes, and pathless.

Please contact Guy Bromby, via meetorganiser18@cairngormclub.org.uk, if you would like to suggest alternatives or express a tentative interest.

Training

Navigation Training

An evening of night navigation will be organised for Sat 1th November. This will be suitable for anyone, irrespective of experience. It is also hoped to organise a further practical session early in the new year; watch the club mailing list for more information on this.

Winter Skills

This year's Winter training will coincide with the weekend meet to Lagangarbh Cottage on 2/3 March. Topics covered will depend on the wishes of the group but will likely cover such things as moving on snow and ice, ice axe arrest and avalanche awareness. Likely cost for two days' training is £55 (subsidised by the Club), a bargain for what is on offer. Suitable for complete winter novices or more experienced members looking to brush up on their skills.

To book or express an interest in either of these events, please contact training@cairngormclub.org.uk.

Capercaillie Genetics

A recent report on DNA collected from contemporary and historic samples (mostly feathers, but some tissue/blood, which give higher-quality samples) collected in Scotland and some European regions concludes that:

- The samples collected in contemporary Scotland show genetic similarity to the samples from Scandinavia and central Europe, termed "the Northern lineage".
- The contemporary Scottish population has the lowest genetic diversity of any of the Northern lineage, but there was no evidence that the levels of genetic diversity in Scotland have declined during the 20th century.
- The Abernethy samples showed higher but rarer genetic diversity, suggesting that birds rarely move around between Cairngorm habitats.

The report, and more information about the Cairngorms Capercaillie Project, including a video on the report, are available at cairngormscapercaillie.scot.

Snow Patches

For the third time in consecutive years, all snow patches disappeared from Scottish hills in summer 2023. In the last retreat of the Garbh Choire, the Pinnacles patch disappeared in mid-August, when the last (Sphinx) patch measured about 5.5m by 4.5m; it disappeared in early September, a month before its death in 2022.

Club Office-Bearers and Other Positions

Hon. President	Robbie Middleton (honpresident@cairngormclub.org.uk)
President	Garry Wardrope (ccpresident@cairngormclub.org.uk)
Vice-President	Ivan Hiscox (vp@cairngormclub.org.uk)
Vice-President	Izy Kirkaldy (vp2@cairngormclub.org.uk)
Club Secretary & Librarian	Ken Thomson (secretary@cairngormclub.org.uk)
Treasurer & Membership Secretary	Donald Thomas (treasurer@cairngormclub.org.uk)
Communications Secretary	Colin Brown (newsletter@cairngormclub.org.uk)
Huts Custodian	Kees Witte (huts@cairngormclub.org.uk)
Muir Booking Secretary	Forbes McPherson (muir-booking@cairngormclub.org.uk)
Day Meets Secretary	Garry Wardrope (day@cairngormclub.org.uk)
Weekend Meets Secretary	Helen Russell (weekend@cairngormclub.org.uk)
Acting Climbing Secretary	Stuart Dick (climb@cairngormclub.org.uk)
Social Activities Secretary	Eilidh Scobbie, Norbank (social@cairngormclub.org.uk)
Midweek Walks Coordinator	Joyce Ritchie (mww@cairngormclub.org.uk)
Journal Editor	Jean Robinson (journal@cairngormclub.org.uk)
Training Coordinator	Garry Wardrope (day@cairngormclub.org.uk)
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