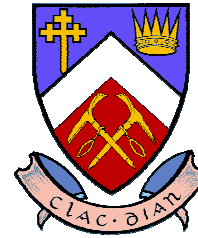


## Club Office-Bearers and Other Positions

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Hon. President</b>                       | Ruth Payne,   |
| <b>President</b>                            | Marj Ewan<br>(ccpresident@cairngormclub.org.uk)     |
| <b>Vice-President</b>                       | Joyce Ritchie<br>(vp@cairngormclub.org.uk)          |
| <b>Vice-President</b>                       | Garry Wardrope<br>(vp2@cairngormclub.org.uk)        |
| <b>Club Secretary &amp; Librarian</b>       | Ken Thomson<br>(secretary@cairngormclub.org.uk)     |
| <b>Treasurer &amp; Membership Secretary</b> | Derek B Pinches<br>(treasurer@cairngormclub.org.uk) |
| <b>Communications Secretary</b>             | Colin Brown<br>(newsletter@cairngormclub.org.uk)    |
| <b>Huts Custodian</b>                       | Kees Witte,<br>(huts@cairngormclub.org.uk)          |
| <b>Muir Booking Secretary</b>               | David Kirk<br>(muir-booking@cairngormclub.org.uk)   |
| <b>Day Meets Secretary</b>                  | Garry Wardrope<br>(day@cairngormclub.org.uk)        |
| <b>Weekend Meets Secretary</b>              | Sue Chalmers<br>(weekend@cairngormclub.org.uk)      |
| <b>Climbing Secretary</b>                   | Rod Campbell<br>(climb@cairngormclub.org.uk)        |
| <b>Social Activities Secretary</b>          | Eilidh Scobbie<br>(social@cairngormclub.org.uk)     |
| <b>Midweek Walks Coordinator</b>            | Joyce Ritchie<br>(vp@cairngormclub.org.uk)          |
| <b>Journal Editor</b>                       | Jean Robinson<br>(journal@cairngormclub.org.uk)     |
| <b>Training Coordinator</b>                 | Garry Wardrope<br>(day@cairngormclub.org.uk)        |
| <b>Other Committee Members</b>              |   |
| Debbie Fielding                             | (ctte5@cairngormclub.org.uk)                        |
| James Hirst                                 | (ctte4@cairngormclub.org.uk)                        |
| Ivan Hiscox                                 | (ctte12@cairngormclub.org.uk)                       |
| Izy Kirkaldy                                | (ctte10@cairngormclub.org.uk)                       |
| Mark Peel                                   | (ctte11@cairngormclub.org.uk)                       |
| Adrian Scott                                | (ctte17@cairngormclub.org.uk)                       |
| Jamie Vince                                 | (ctte3@cairngormclub.org.uk)                        |

Disclaimer: The views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the Cairngorm Club

October 2020



*The Cairngorm Club*

*Established 1887*

Registered Charity  
Number - SC047567

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Editor Colin Brown



The Newsletter of the Cairngorm Club

## A Completion on Mull

Around this time last year I began to plan for my Munro completion on Ben More, in Mull, on my 60th birthday. However Covid-19 had other ideas, and with 6 other summits to visit before this was possible, it looked like it might have to be put on hold for now.

Come August however, and with the easing of the lockdown, it began to look as if there might be a possibility that it could once again be on the cards.

After a long day on the Glen Dessarry and Glen Kingie hills, with a traverse from Sgurr na Ciche to Sgurr Mor, the end was in sight, and once the two Munros on the Aonach Eagach ridge were summited, all was set for the big weekend in Mull.

Sat 5th September dawned with several family and friends (including three Club past Presidents, and the current one) heading up Ben More from Dhiseig. It was not the best of weather but it was still enjoyable, with first Munro ascents for some of the party.

Thanks to Club members who attended, I hope you enjoyed the day. I would also like to thank the many Club members whom I have shared enjoyable Munro days and nights with, including some sadly no longer with us, especially Jim Bryce and Graeme McEwan.



Colin Brown

## Day Meets

Having come out of full lockdown we have restarted Day Meets. These are organised to comply with the Covid guidelines/law and are risk assessed. Unfortunately this means we have been unable to use a minibus and members have had to make their own transport arrangements.

Because of this and the ever evolving situation, we have not been following the previously published programme, each event being advertised by the Club email list.

Going forward, we aim to organise monthly meets to locations that are relatively easy to get to by car and some accessible by public transport so that members without their own transport can also join us if they wish. Notwithstanding any changes to the guidelines/law, it is hoped we will be able to have a coach for our January Lochnagar meet but with no meal afterwards.

Garry Wardrope, Day Meets Secretary

## Weekend Meets

Weekend meets have been on hold since April because of the various government restrictions and the closure of many of our usual venues, such as club huts. Most of these offer shared accommodation and communal facilities, and it may be some time before they are available again for group use. However, we continue to monitor our bookings on a monthly basis.

Any Club member interested in a forthcoming meet is welcome to register their interest with the Meet Organiser or the Weekend Meets Secretary. They will then receive any updates, should the situation change.

## Club Bulletins

Thanks go to Ken Thomson for organising and distributing fortnightly 'Bulletins', which have supplied members with relevant information about the Club, and links to other items of interest, during the recent restrictions.

## Virtual Meets and Coffee Mornings

Thanks also go to Eilidh Scobbie for arranging fortnightly 'Virtual Meets' which have been well attended by members. Virtual 'Coffee Mornings' have also been held to help members keep in touch in these strange times.

## Mountaineering Scotland AGM 21 November 2020

This will be held online, and – presumably – will be open to all MS members, including Club Members, but if anyone would like an issue to be raised formally with MS officials by the Club, they should contact the President or Secretary (see back page).

## Membership News

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

|                              |                               |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Eric Johnston (Jan 2020)     | Member since 1964 (Honorary)  |
| Sheila Murray (Apr 2020)     | Member since 1953 (Honorary)  |
| John Mutch (Jan 2020)        | Member since 1951 (Ordinary)  |
| Dionne Macmorran (July 2020) | Member since 1997 (Associate) |
| Graham Page (Jan 2020)       | Member since 1969 (Associate) |

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

|                 |          |           |
|-----------------|----------|-----------|
| Steven Pollok   | Aberdeen | Ordinary  |
| Tessa Dunford   | Aberdeen | Associate |
| Johnathan Noble | Aberdeen | Associate |
| Tom Richmond    | Forres   | Associate |

## Riparian Planting

The Upper Dee Riparian Woodland Project has been shortlisted for "Enhancing Our Environment" Award of the Scottish Land & Estates organisation. Since 2013, the Dee District Salmon Fishery Board and the River Dee Trust have planted over 140,000 native trees along the river banks of the upper Dee and its tributaries, including the Geldie, Ey, Gairn, Clunie, Baddoch, Callater, Slugain, Gelder and Muick. Riparian trees will lower the summer water temperatures in these important salmon nursery streams, both through direct shading and by cooling ground water as it flows through the riparian zone. Salmon also benefit through: provision of insects for their diet; increased nutrients through leaf drop; and large trees and branches that fall into the stream will create spawning gravel and cool deep resting pools, protecting fish from predators. Trees also reduce the speed of water run-off from the surrounding land, and increase general biodiversity. Further funding will come from SNH's Biodiversity Challenge Fund for a "10,000 tree" project, which, rather than waiting for trees to mature and fall over, will see the installation of "large woody structures" in the rivers Gairn and Muick to provide essential pools and spawning gravel.

## Deer Reports

The national mean density of red deer on open-hill ground in the Highlands and Islands fell by 9% from its peak in 2000 to about 9.6 deer per km<sup>2</sup>, due to higher culling, slightly above 22% (the traditional rate was around 17%). However, regions vary greatly in both densities and culling rates. In the Monadhliath, Cairngorm/Speyside, East Grampian-Upper Deeside, Glen Isla/Glenshee and Birse, deer densities have decreased markedly, by over 35%, while in Cabrach/Glenbuchat the density increased by 38% since 2000. There is no evidence that falling sheep numbers (down by 40% in the Highlands and Islands) have affected red deer density.

## 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

## DISCOUNTS

Cotswold - Blacks  
Craigdon Sports  
Nevisport

Hilltrek - Dess  
Climbing - Ballater  
All the above shops offer  
discounts to Club members on  
production of a current  
membership card

TISO discount nights 6.30 to  
8.30 pm, quarterly.

## Payments to the Club

The Club bank details are: Sort Code 831531;  
Account no. 00129748.

So that the payment can be allocated to the right place, please use what the payment is for as the reference e.g., "Traverse" or "Membership". There is no need to include your name. Note that the reference field is limited to 18 characters including blanks.

## Club Forum

If you are not already a member, why not register for the Club Forum? You can register at - <https://www.tapatalk.com/groups/cairngormclub/index.php>.

## Cairngorm Club Christmas Card

There has been a suggestion that it would be good to have a Christmas Card this year, based on Rhona Fraser's winning photograph of "Bog Cotton" in the Club's Photographic Competition run at the time of the summer solstice. Profits from the sale of this card will be divided between The Mountain Rescue Association (SC045003) and Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland (SC028028), whose role is to maintain footpaths in our mountains. Nearer the time, further details on cost etc will go out to the club's yahoo group, and if you don't belong to that group, but would be interested in buying some cards, please email [social@cairngormclub.org.uk](mailto:social@cairngormclub.org.uk).

## Cairngorm Club Journal Issue no. 113

All members should have received a copy of the above; if not, please contact the Secretary, Editor or Membership Secretary (see back page). Anyone wanting extra copies (£5 each, plus postage if needed) should get in touch with Jean Robinson by email at - [journal@cairngormclub.org.uk](mailto:journal@cairngormclub.org.uk). Material is already accumulating for Issue no. 114!

## Covid-19 and the Club

As is obvious elsewhere in this Newsletter, the Club's outdoor activities have had to be severely curtailed due to rules and guidelines from the Scottish Government and Mountaineering Scotland. The Club Committee considered arrangements in late August and, as conditions change, will do so again in mid-October, when a Covid-19 'Officer' will be appointed.

## Mid -Week Walks

The Mid-Week walkers normally meet on the last Thursday of each month. The walking programme includes a range of walks, which are traditionally shorter in the winter months. Walks are usually 4-5 hours in length and driving time to the start point is never more than 1.5 hours from Aberdeen.

This year's Mid -Week Walking programme ground to a halt during the Covid 19 lockdown. As restrictions eased we looked into trying to restart the programme in some form or other. After a few false starts we were all set to do Clais Fhearnaig in August. Unfortunately yet another lockdown was put in place for Aberdeen citizens preventing many of us from attending, including the Meet Organiser! Thanks to Ken Thomson for stepping in and offering a local walk for the city dwellers and to Kees Witte for organising another for those living in the Shire.

The September bus meet, a traverse of Mona Gowan and Morven, became a split party excursion. One group of 7 climbed Morven from Groddie and the other group of 9 climbed Mona Gowan from the Gairnsheil/Corgarff Road. Although rather bracing at the summits we had clear views and it felt great to be out on the hill again.

Uncertainty over Covid 19 remains and all we can do is hope for the best and review the situation on a month to month basis.

All being well, the walks for the remainder of the year are:

|                                |               |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| Glen Tanar Circuit             | 29th October  |
| Royal Cairns                   | 26th November |
| River Dee and Old Railway Line | 17th December |

Details about booking, starting points and routes will be sent out in advance of each walk.

The programme for 2021 is in its final draft. It offers a variety of interesting walks, including a city one, a coastal one and a selection in Deeside and Donside. Once it is finalised it will be on the Cairngorm Club website.

All walks are now risk assessed to meet the Club's Covid Guidelines and attendees will be sent the Personal Covid Guidelines prior to the walk.

If you would like to find out more about the Mid-Week Walks please contact Joyce Ritchie at - [vp@cairngormclub.org.uk](mailto:vp@cairngormclub.org.uk).

## NEMT Mountain Views

North East Mountain Trust has recently published another issue of its “Mountain Views” magazine, this time a 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary edition with articles by most of its leading figures over the years since its inception in 1980 to oppose a super-quarry at Longhaven, and shortly afterwards its involvement, with the Club, in the enquiry on downhill ski developments in the Northern Corries. Other articles cover more recent NEMT activity, and directions of possible future work. The Club receives several “free” copies as part of its membership of NEMT, and the Secretary (see back page) will be glad to post one to any interested member.

## Climbing in Covid

After the easing of restrictions we began climbing outside, on our usual Tuesday evenings, on the 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020 at Meikle Partans sea cliffs with eight in attendance. I have full records of all meets since then as we were required to keep an attendance register for each meet with contact details for all present. One week after we had recommenced weekly evening meets, Aberdeen was locked down forcing us to split our members into two sections - Shire and City - and choose separate venues for them to climb at. Stuart Message kindly took over the coordination for the City folk. This arrangement lasted until September when we reverted to normal.

Venues visited included Pass of Ballater, Greymare Slabs, Clashrodne, Alan's Cliff, Hidden Inlet and Boltsheugh. Average attendance was about seven from a pool of regulars of about fifteen. In August around five or six routes would be climbed, but as the daylight shortened this reduced to three or four. The weather has been kind to us and we have only had to change the date once or twice. In normal times bad weather on the Tuesday evening would prompt a retreat to the Transition Extreme climbing wall but this facility has only just been re-opened and access is limited by numbers at an increased price with no discount for CC members!

The sports climbing trip to the Costa Blanca at the end of November is increasingly in doubt so I probably won't be dusting down my Passo Doble outfit.

Evening meets will end at the start of October and plans will have to be made for a possible alternative to Transition Extreme.

Rod Campbell, Climbing Secretary

## Tom Baird

Following his serious bike accident near Falkirk last month (e.g. damage to vertebrae and spleen, but could have been worse, it appears), Tom is now at home and getting on well. He was very “lucky” that he was super-fit. He walks each day, and has gradually built up the distance to over a mile.

## Snow, Snow, Snow

It was reported in November 2019 that about 9 square metres of the Sphinx – the snow patch lingering in the upper reaches of the Garbh Choire between Braeriach and Cairn Toul – had survived the rigours of the 2019 summer (unlike in 2017 and 2018, when almost all Scottish snow disappeared).

A BBC news item in early February asked “*Why is there less snow on Scotland's mountains this year?*”, and highlighted the high temperatures experienced to that date, due to an absence of “lobes of Arctic air” reaching Scotland. At Cairngorm Mountain, almost 100 tonnes of snow were artificially produced every day for more than a month in preparation for the winter season, and the Cairngorm Sleddog Centre was closed after 20 years. Of course, this was written before the widespread snow cover established in early March.

The annual all-Scotland survey on 19-20 August 2020 reported 175 patches, easily the most since 2015, and the third highest total since 2008. As usual, Ben Nevis was the hill with the most, with 38 patches, Macdhuì clocked up 18 patches, and Braeriach 10. Snow has completely disappeared in Scotland six times in recorded history – 1933, 1959, 1996, 2003, 2006 and 2017.

A James Hutton Institute (JHI) report to the Cairngorms National Park Board (see [www.climateexchange.org.uk](http://www.climateexchange.org.uk)) tried to forecast snow cover in the Park out to the year 2080. Since regular measurements have not(!) been taken at the 3 ski areas over the last few decades, the forecast is based on long-term measurements at Balmoral and in Glen Clova, and on Met Office climate projections. The “*initial results show a reduction in snow cover as the observed warming trend continues and accelerates*”, especially after 2040, with ever-shorter snow seasons. Some commentary ([parkswatchscotland.co.uk](http://parkswatchscotland.co.uk)) suggests that higher-level skiing investment at Cairngorm around the Ptarmigan station might be viable, but that input (such as the current snow-making equipment) at the base station is likely to be unwise in the medium and long term. It suggests focussing on Coire na Ciste, which has a better chance of holding snow, than on Coire Cas.

## Greina Book

The Club has received the book *Greina – Wildes Bergland* (1986) from its author Bryan Thurston, a recently admitted Associate Member who lives in Switzerland. The book (in German; 150pp, with B&W photos) celebrates an area in southern Switzerland which Bryan says resembles the Cairngorms. It has been placed in the Club's archives. A short article by Bryan appears in the current issue of the Club's *Journal*.

## Lunch & Dander

If it becomes possible to hold Lunch and Danders before the next Newsletter they will be advertised on the Club website.

(continued from page 7)

Wednesday 3 February 2021 at 7:30pm: Steve Kentish: "Trans Pyrenees in winter"

The goal was to cross The Pyrenees from coast to coast, Mediterranean to Atlantic in winter, by ski or foot only, no lifts, cars etc. After comprehensive route and accommodation planning, what could go wrong?

Wednesday 17 February 2021 at 7.30pm: (speaker and topic to be confirmed)

Wednesday 3 March 2021 at 7.30pm: Elise Wortley of "Women with Altitude" on walking in the shoes of famous early female mountaineers.

Wednesday 17 March 2021 at 7:30: Mike Duguid on "Cairngorm Club Snowhole trips"

I am still looking for speakers for some of the Wednesday evening slots – any topic considered, but something with a hill connection is preferred.

Eilidh Scobbie, Social Secretary

## Parks and Paths

The five-year The Mountains and The People project has spent over £6 million building and rebuilding more than 140km of paths in the two Scottish National Parks. The project ends in autumn 2020, but the path charity OATS is organising volunteer work in places such as Jock's Road, Loch Brandy and Lairig an Laoigh.

## Training

### Winter Skills

We are unsure if the planned winter skills weekend meet will be able to go ahead. However it may be possible to organise training closer to home (likely to be Glenshee) so that we don't require overnight accommodation.

### First Aid

The Club regularly organises accredited First Aid Courses. The next course will be organised when we have enough folk interested, so please register if you wish to attend.

### Navigation

With nights drawing in, we will again spend an evening of 'night navigation' at the Kirkhill orienteering course. This is a great opportunity to build confidence in your navigation when you are walking in the dark.

To book, or register your interest, in any of the above activities, please contact Garry Wardrope by email at [day@cairngormclub.org.uk](mailto:day@cairngormclub.org.uk) (full contact details on the back page).

## Muir Cottage

Only Cairngorm Club members have been able to stay in Muir Cottage since the lifting of the lock-down from mid-July. There is a 72 hour break between bookings where **nobody** will be allowed in the cottage. As of 25th Sept only one-member household/extended household (a 'bubble') can stay. As Covid restrictions prevented us from running the usual work weekend in May, a different approach was taken and several small groups took on planned tasks during a week in July. This was a great success and many thanks to the club members who took part. By the end of November we will assess when we can open Muir again for outside groups, in line with what other clubs are doing. Meantime visitors are asked to bring their own sheets and pillow cases, as the ones usually in Muir have been removed for the time being. Mattresses now have waterproof protectors and of course Covid procedures have to be followed.

Booking information can be found on the Club website or email - [muir-booking@cairngormclub.org.uk](mailto:muir-booking@cairngormclub.org.uk)

Kees Witte, Hut Custodian

## Sheila Murray

We are sorry to report Sheila's death on 6 April 2020, just a couple of months before her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. Sheila joined the Club in 1953, became its first female President in 1970-73, and in 1987 produced the Centennial book *The Cairngorm Club 1887-1987*: an obituary is expected in the issue of the Club's journal due in 2022-23.

The private internment took place recently.

### NTS Cards

As a member of the National Trust for Scotland, the Club holds 15 NTS cards which allow free access and parking to NTS properties (and NT ones in England and Wales) for Club members and their guests. To borrow for a week or two, please contact the Secretary (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 £45 (a discount of £5) on proof of Club membership (e.g. card);  
priority appointments for Club members; next-day appointments  
if booked before 12 noon.

**Aberdeen Physiotherapy - 01224 626266**

## Cairngorm Club: Virtual Dinner

While rumour has it that there cannot be a Club Dinner this year, I have in fact booked a venue – a Zoom room! The plan is to gather in the Zoom Room (which can accommodate up to 100 people) at 7.00pm on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2020. Booking by email to - [social@cairngormclub.org.uk](mailto:social@cairngormclub.org.uk) is essential, and as usual, you can invite as many guests as you like. Unusually, no charge will be made!

Our speaker is wild life photographer, Peter Cairns, whose presentation is rather topical – on rewilding Scotland.

As usual, the event will start with our President welcoming everyone and Peter will start speaking about 7.15pm, for just short of an hour. After that, it is time to eat. You may be sitting at home on your own, or you may have invited another household in (depending on the then rules for socially distancing). Zoom enables setting up of virtual side rooms - so as long as you tell me in advance who you would like to be at your virtual table, I can organise that.

Obviously, the Club will not manage to deliver dinner to your home, but I will be suggesting an appropriate menu from a national food purveyor – though if you prefer a cold pie and beans, that is equally fine. After an appropriate gap, everyone will be brought back to the main room, for the usual toasts and general chit chat.

It will be an interesting occasion – hope you can manage to join the fun!

### CLUB SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions for the year 2020/21 became due on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020. For those paying by Direct Debit this was collected automatically on 1<sup>st</sup> October. Others should send their subscriptions to Derek Pinches, the Club Treasurer.

Cairngorm Club Subscription rates for 2020/21 are as follows:

|              | Club   | MS     | Total  |
|--------------|--------|--------|--------|
| Full Rate    | £13.00 | £17.55 | £30.55 |
| Reduced Rate | £6.50  | £17.55 | £24.05 |

The reduced rate above is available for members who, on 1st October, are aged 65 or over, or under 21; or under 25 and still in full-time education; or who are normally resident and working more than 80km from Aberdeen.

First subscriptions are only part of a full year's subscription, based on when admission occurred within the Club year. (MS = Mountaineering Scotland)

## Social Events Planned from late September 2020

As it looks as if social gatherings won't happen in the near future, the Club's social events will continue online, using the Zoom platform. Details are sent out to the Club Yahoo! group and posted on the Forum a few days before the planned event. If you would like to attend any of these virtual events, and aren't presently receiving an email, please email me on [social@cairngormclub.org.uk](mailto:social@cairngormclub.org.uk).

On Wednesday 30 September 2020 at 7.30pm: Anindya ("Raja") Mukherjee "Nanda Devi - How the Goddess Kept Her Secret"

Raja first spoke to us at the Virtual Meet on 24 June, and this time he gave a longer talk than is customary at Indoor Meets.

In this talk, Raja described the process of discovery of the intricate and apparently insurmountable terrain around Nanda Devi, the historical progression of its exploration and touched delicately upon the veil of mythology that still exists around the mountain. He limited his discussion within the timeline of 1883 to 1936, i.e. starting from W.W.

Graham's first expedition in the Rishi gorge area to the ascent of Nanda Devi. In the process, he analysed the topography and described in brief how, after a series of attempts that spread over late 19th century to early 20th century, explorers were finally able to decode the secrets of the so-called Blessed Goddess and reach its inner basin.

The events planned for the winter are as undernoted:

Wednesday 14 October 2020 at 7.30pm: Ken Thomson "The Blue Hill: a Local Investigation"

Wednesday 28 October 2020 at 7.30pm: Mike Duguid: "The Cumbria Way"

Wednesday 11 November 2020 at 7.30pm: Club AGM

Wednesday 25 November 2020 at 7.30pm: Susan Jensen: "Mountaineering on the edge of the Tibetan Plateau"

Friday 20 November 2020 at 7pm: Club Dinner (see page 6)

Wednesday 2 December 2020 at 7.30pm: Graham Ewan: "Climbing in Scotland pre Lockdown"

16 or 18 December 2020 at 7.30pm: Club Christmas event

Wednesday 6 January 2021 at 7.30pm: Iain Campbell: "From the Lion's Mouth" Travels in Kashmir and Tibet.

Wednesday 20 January 2021 at 7.30pm: Stuart Message: "Some Interesting Climbing Experiences"

(continued on page 8)