

June 2024



The Cairngorm Club

Established 1887

Registered Charity

Number - SC047567



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The Newsletter of the Cairngorm Club



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Out with the 'Old' (Hut Custodian), and in with the 'New'

Life will be strange after giving up the custodianship after 12 years, but I am sure that Muir will be in good hands with Eilidh. I would like to give a big thank you to Forbes, who is our first contact with bookers, and also a thank you to the Club members who helped at work weekends and have volunteered to do jobs at Muir when they were staying or visiting the cottage.

On reflection of my time in the post, I realise I have managed to spend quite a lot of Club funds while improving and maintaining the hut. These include: a bike shed, the solar cell, new stove and the stainless steel kitchen worktops. Money well spent, I feel!

Kees Witte

Kees took over the job of Muir Custodian in 2012 when he retired from his day job. After 12 years of service overseeing the Club's annual May work weekend, and routine maintenance at Muir, Kees is taking a well-earned retiral, so that he can explore some distant parts of the world that weren't within his grasp as an oil engineer, starting with a trip to Mongolia, in August.

I have volunteered to take on the role (the first woman we have had in the post). It is not because of my DIY skills, but my experience of working with Deeside tradesmen.

(continued on page 2)

(continued from page 1)

There are plans for me to be supported by a team of Club Members, who will be willing to assist with specific jobs: one volunteer has already been appointed as Head Gardener! I would welcome anyone else who would like to help from time to time to get in touch. The plan is to set up the team as a WhatsApp Group, and any team member can volunteer for a particular task which I am unable to attend to myself.

Eilidh Scobbie

Day Meets

Since the previous newsletter we have had four great Day meets. The many members who've attended have enjoyed trips to some fine locations, and here's a run-down of where we've been and when.

In February, Strathdon was visited for a hike over the Ladder Hills commencing in Glen Nocht. All members stayed as one group and completed a circuit which reached the Corbett, Carn Mor (the highest point in this group of hills).

The March meet was a traverse of Carn an t-Sagairt Mor. Mike Duguid organised this trip which started at Invercauld and finished in Glen Callater. At 800m the snowline was reached and it was a clear winter's day as we crossed the Munro.

A change of route was needed for our April meet. Due to storm-force winds, the planned ascent of Sgor Gaoith that Vay Mutch was organising got swapped for a low-level hike up and down Glen Feshie, and a visit to the splendid Ruigh Aiteachain bothy.

Our May meet began at Linn of Dee, and with many options available from this starting point, members headed off in various directions. A President's Party of four completed the walk in to Corrou and the ascent of Devil's Point. Will Ellwood organised this trip and an enjoyable day, in pleasant weather, was had by all.

I'd like to thank the organisers, of all monthly meets, whose efforts are creating enjoyable and memorable days out.

The next four Day meets in the calendar (more details on pages 3 & 7) are all very tempting, with visits to the Mamores, Lochnagar, Creag Meagaidh and of course the Cairngorms -

June 22/23	Mamores Overnighter	Tom Litterick
Sat July 13	Lochnagar Indicator Visit	Ken Thomson
August 10/11	Creag Meagaidh	Vay Mutch
Sun September 8	Cairngorm Traverse (N to S)	Guy Bromby

Details of day meets for the rest of the year are on page 6 of this Newsletter and on the website calendar. Reports and photos from previous outings can also be found on the Club Forum.

Craig Thomson, Day Meets Secretary

Lochnagar Indicator Centennial Event, Saturday 13 July, 2024

The programme for the above will be as follows (times may vary slightly, but not the coach start):

- 8:00 a.m. Coach leaves St. Margaret's School, Aberdeen (pick-ups possible at Mannofield, Cults, Peterculter, Banchory, etc.), arrives Spital of Glen Muick 9:30am
- 9:45 a.m. Gather with car personnel in lower Spital car park for briefing, and start ascent
- 1:00 p.m. Summit: short commemorative ceremony around indicator
- 5:30 p.m. Meal (grill-type plus traybakes etc.; BYOB) at van in Spital car park
- 6:30 p.m. Coach departs Spital, arrives St. Margaret's 8:00pm

If interested in coming, please indicate to me:

- Your participation: names (or at least numbers)
- Transport: coach seats £15 each (children free) or own car. If coach, pick-up point
- Summit intention(s)
- Meal(s), with any dietary requirements (e.g. vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free) £20 pp (free to young children)

Payments (without which coach seats and/or meals are not confirmed) should be made by bank transfer to "Cairngorm Club", sort code 83-15-31; a/c 19165508, ref. "Lochnagar", or by cheque to "Cairngorm Club" sent to me.

Obviously appropriate clothing and footwear should be worn by all who intend to summit. Children will be welcome, but must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

Any queries or concerns to me, please!

Ken Thomson

Anyone for a Wild Camping 'Taster'?

We wish to share an introductory experience of camping suitable for those who wish to learn with others before enjoying a remote and wild camp by themselves. Current date is nights of Friday 18th and Saturday 19th October, probably cool enough to subdue midges. Location: West of Linn of Dee and/or on Carn Liath, South of the Dee.

We don't intend long distances: to focus on living, sleeping and eating efficiently and comfortably. There will be the opportunity for learning other "hill skills". We encourage you to borrow or share a tent and to use a 3-season sleeping bag. An inside, in person, kit familiarisation date is at Westhill on Wednesday 2nd October, from 1900 to 2030 with food to eat that evening. Closing date for this event is end Monday 16th September. Please contact Guy Bromby by email at meetorganiser18@cairngormclub.org.uk, or Mike Duguid at vp2@cairngormclub.org.uk.

Gift Aid

The Club benefits from Gift Aid on subscriptions and donations. If you pay UK tax and have not already made a declaration, please consider doing so. Members with a declaration are reminded to notify the Treasurer if you:

- wish to cancel the declaration;
- change your name or home address;
- no longer pay sufficient tax.

The Club Forum

Since 2011, the Club has maintained a members-only website forum. Advanced user features include the ability to upload photos, and by subscribing to individual (sub-)Forums, you can get email alerts of activity in them. All users registered can post or read many different items, such as accounts 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.

2024: the Year of the Club BBQs

After the success of the recent Club barbeques at the RNUC, we return there for the 2024 BBQ on the evening of 12 June. There will be the usual excellent array of meat and vegan options, followed by ice cream with some surprise treats!

As last year, the cost is £25 with a cash bar for drinks (including tea and coffee). Let’s hope for another lovely evening, we have been so lucky so far – but if it rains we will be able to go into the RNUC’s Garden Room!

Prebooking is essential as places are limited – please transfer £25 per person to the Club bank account (ref BBQ + your name), and email - social@cairngormclub.org.uk to give the names of your party.

If you are attending the Lochnagar Day meet on 13 July there will be, at the conclusion of the walk, a “grill meal plus traybakes” laid on near the car park.

For anyone unable to attend on 12 June, or the Lochnagar meet, there will be a BBQ at Muir on 3 August which will be open to all members and their friends. This is timed to coincide with the Club's August weekend meet. While I hope it will be a popular meet, people will be welcome at the BBQ as "day visitors".

Annie Ives (see article in the most recent Club Journal), is going to come up to Muir on the morning of the BBQ to do a "bumblebee hunt" adventure in the morning. I will send out more details nearer the time.

Cairngorm Club Subscriptions (1 Oct 2024 – 30 Sept 2025)

At the Club AGM in November 2023, the subscription rate for the above year was maintained at £13.00 (reduced rate £6.50) plus the Mountaineering Scotland affiliation fee. The MS Affiliation Fee (including the Civil Liability Insurance premium) for the year 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025 is £21.75

Subscriptions paid by Direct Debits will be collected on 1st October:

	Club	MS	Total
Full Rate	£13.00	£21.75	£34.75
Reduced Rate	£ 6.50	£21.75	£28.25

Members not paying by direct debit should arrange payment during October. The reduced rate applies to Club members who have informed the Treasurer that on 1st October 2024 they will be 65 or over, 21 or under, or in full-time education, or are normally resident and working more than 80 km from Aberdeen.

Members wishing to pay at the reduced rate should tell the Treasurer of the reason.

Members who do not participate in any Club-organised outside activity and do not use Muir Cottage may, if they desire, withdraw from paying the MS Affiliation Fee. Please discuss this with the Treasurer.

Members of multiple clubs (or Individual Members of MS) wishing to pay the MS Affiliation Fee other than through the Cairngorm Club should tell the Treasurer their MS membership number and which club it will be paid through if appropriate.

All members are encouraged to pay their subscription by Direct Debit and, where appropriate, to make a Gift Aid Declaration (see page 4). Forms for each are available from the Treasurer.

Donald Thomas, Treasurer
 treasurer@cairngormclub.org.uk

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 name is provided by the bank. The reference field may be limited to 18 characters, including blanks.

Breamar Mountain Festival 2025

It has recently been announced that this event will return next year and run from 6 to 9 March 2025.

Club Members' Survey

The Committee is in the process of evaluating the results of the survey. Thank you to all members who took the time to complete it.

Once this evaluation has been completed the results will be shared with members along with an action plan to implement any changes/improvements that it is felt necessary to make.

Fire Consultation

In spring 2024, the Cairngorms National Park Authority carried out a public consultation on how to limit wildfire risk (which climate change is likely to increase) in its area. In 2023, there were 219 active fires dealt with by the Park Rangers and 678 fire-remain sites (map etc. available: see <https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Fire-management-consultation-Feb-to-Apr-2024.pdf>). Three Options are being considered:

- 1: a year-round fire management byelaw, the simplest to communicate not directly linked to a wildfire risk-based approach.
- 2: time-limited fire management byelaws, applied only at times and in areas of high fire risk.
- 3: no byelaw, but increased communication/education for fewer fire incidents. The byelaws would cover barbecues, but not properly controlled fires within a property curtilage (including a bothy), camping stoves, or muirburn. Presumably CNPA will decide on its further action over the rest of this year.

The Walking Partnership

The Club has joined the Walking Partnership, supported by Ramble Worldwide: see <https://www.rambleworldwide.co.uk/responsible-tourism/the-walking-partnership>. Each time a Club member books with Ramble Worldwide, nominating the Club (before the trip), it will receive payment as follows: UK £10 per person booked, short-haul £20 pp, long-haul £30 pp. This includes bookings that have already been made. More information via support@thewalkingpartnership.org.uk, or 01707 331133.

Private Group Holidays by a group of 8 or more people qualify for a discount of 5% off the basic holiday price per person, plus the TWP payments as above (subject to a cap if 16 or more group members booked). Other benefits include a dedicated personal Private Groups service, and for all private groups of 8+ the organiser will receive a gift voucher of up to £100 to be redeemed on one of our holidays. See <https://www.rambleworldwide.co.uk/private-groups>, or phone Melanie on 01707 386723 or email her at groups@rambleworldwide.co.uk.

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 on pages 8 and 9 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 Summer 2024.

June 22-23, Overnighter in the Mamores (Saturday/Sunday)

A minibus trip, starting at the Polldubh car park in Glen Nevis. The main party will walk over the two westerly Munros (Mullach Nan Coirean and Stob Ban) to then descend to the bealach and Lochan Coire Nam Miseach to camp/bivvy. Next day we will ascend Sgurr an Lubhair and Sgurr a Mhaim and descend back to car park. Option for others to carry on Am Bodach and An Gearanach and descend into upper Glen Nevis to get picked up at the head of Glen Nevis car park. Minibus will return to Aberdeen in the evening. To book contact Tom Litterick by email at meetorganiser29@cairngormclub.org.uk.

July 13, Lochnagar Indicator Centennial Visit (Saturday)

The coach will leave St Margaret's at 8am for a start of 9.30am from Glen Muick. The object of the day is to visit the summit of Lochnagar for a short commemorative ceremony around the indicator at 1pm. Grilled food will be served back at the car park at approx. 5.30pm. To book, please contact Ken Thomson by email at secretary@cairngormclub.org.uk.

August 10/11, Creag Meagaidh (Saturday/Sunday)

This will be a car meet to Creag Meagaidh with the aim of ticking off a few peaks and camping/bivvying on high ground. Day option available by arrangement with the organiser and other participants/drivers. To book, contact Vay Mutch by email at ctte5@cairngormclub.org.uk.

September 8, Cairngorm Traverse (Sunday)

The coach will depart from St Margaret's School for Glenmore at 7am. The walk will be from north to south with various options available which include Ben Macdhui and Beinn Mheadhoin, or a visit to Loch Avon and the Shelter Stone. Return to coach at Linn of Dee by 6.30pm. To book, or for more information, contact Guy Bromby by email at meetorganiser18@cairngormclub.org.uk.

May 2024

- 28 Tue Climbing Outdoor Climbing - Yellow Wall
(Stuart Dick; climb@cairngormclub.org.uk)
- 31 Fri Weekend Strawberry Cottage, Glen Affric (Greg Walters;
meetorganiser30@cairngormclub.org.uk)

June

- 4 Tue Climbing Outdoor Climbing - Peel Slough
(Stuart Dick; climb@cairngormclub.org.uk)
- 11 Tue Climbing Outdoor Climbing - Fulmar Wall
(Stuart Dick; climb@cairngormclub.org.uk)
- 12 Wed BBQ BBQ to be held at the RNUC (Eilidh Scobbie;
social@cairngormclub.org.uk)
- 14 Fri Stravaig Circuit from Monymusk (Jay Turner;
meetorganiser20@cairngormclub.org.uk)
- 18 Tue Climbing Outdoor Climbing - Souter Head
(Stuart Dick; climb@cairngormclub.org.uk)
- 22 Sat Day Overnighter to the Mamores (Tom Litterick;
meetorganiser29@cairngormclub.org.uk)
- 25 Tue Climbing Outdoor Climbing - Pass of Ballater (East)
(Stuart Dick; climb@cairngormclub.org.uk)
- 27 Thur MWW Kerloch (Brian Purves; ctte8@cairngormclub.org.uk)

July

- 2 Tue Climbing Outdoor Climbing - Graip
(Stuart Dick; climb@cairngormclub.org.uk)
- 9 Tue Climbing Outdoor Climbing - Meikle Partans
(Stuart Dick; climb@cairngormclub.org.uk)
- 12 Fri Stravaig Location TBC by Google Group email (Gill Shirreffs;
meetorganiser9@cairngormclub.org.uk)
- 13 Sat Day Lochnagar Indicator Revisited (7am; 44; 311852; 7hrs; TBC;
coach; Ken Thomson; secretary@cairngormclub.org.uk)
- 16 Tue Climbing Outdoor Climbing - Alan's Cliff
(Stuart Dick; climb@cairngormclub.org.uk)
- 19 Fri Weekend Orkney Caravan Park, Kirkwall (Sue Chalmers;
meetorganiser5@cairngormclub.org.uk)
- 23 Tue Climbing Outdoor Climbing - Boltsheugh
(Stuart Dick; climb@cairngormclub.org.uk)
- 25 Thur MWW Carn Ealasaid, Cockbridge (Helen Russell;
ccpresident@cairngormclub.org.uk)

30	Tue	Climbing	Outdoor Climbing - Clashrodneyn (Stuart Dick; climb@cairngormclub.org.uk)
August			
2	Fri	Weekend	Muir Cottage (Eilidh Scobbie; huts@cairngormclub.org.uk)
3	Sat	Social	BBQ at Muir Cottage (Eilidh Scobbie; huts@cairngormclub.org.uk)
6	Tue	Climbing	Outdoor Climbing - Yellow Wall (Stuart Dick; climb@cairngormclub.org.uk)
10	Sat	Day	Creag Meagaidh Overnight (Vay Mutch; ctte5@cairngormclub.org.uk)
13	Tue	Climbing	Outdoor Climbing - Souter Head (Stuart Dick; climb@cairngormclub.org.uk)
16	Fri	Stravaig	Location TBC by Google Group email (Gill Shirreffs; meetorganiser9@cairngormclub.org.uk)
16	Fri	Weekend	Glassie Farm Bunkhouse, Aberfeldy (Tom Litterick; meetorganiser29@cairngormclub.org.uk)
20	Tue	Climbing	Outdoor Climbing - Black Rock Gulch (Stuart Dick; climb@cairngormclub.org.uk)
27	Tue	Climbing	Outdoor Climbing - Craig Corn Arn (Stuart Dick; climb@cairngormclub.org.uk)
29	Thur	MWW	Gelder Shiel (Joyce Ritchie; mww@cairngormclub.org.uk)
September			
3	Tue	Climbing	Outdoor Climbing - Long Slough (Stuart Dick; climb@cairngormclub.org.uk)
8	Sun	Day	Cairngorm Traverse (7am; 36, 43; 989063 - 063898; 8hrs; £15; coach; Guy Bromby; meetorganiser18@cairngormclub.org.uk)
10	Tue	Climbing	Outdoor Climbing - Alligator Ridge (Stuart Dick; climb@cairngormclub.org.uk)
13	Fri	Stravaig	Location TBC by Google Group email (Gill Shirreffs; meetorganiser9@cairngormclub.org.uk)
17	Tue	Climbing	Outdoor Climbing - Deceptive Wall (Stuart Dick; climb@cairngormclub.org.uk)
24	Tue	Climbing	Outdoor Climbing - Burn o' Vat (Stuart Dick; climb@cairngormclub.org.uk)
26	Thur	MWW	Cairn William, Pitfichie (Tom Litterick; meetorganiser29@cairngormclub.org.uk)

Please note: bookings not confirmed until payment is made.

May 31 & June 1, Strawberry Cottage, Glen Affric (2 nights)

Strawberry Cottage in Glen Affric is maintained by the An Teallach Mountaineering Club. It is a unique location with access to many of the fantastic ridges that are not easily accessible for a day tripper. To book, contact Greg Walters by email at meetorganiser30@cairngormclub.org.uk.

July 19 & 29, Orkney Caravan Park, Kirkwall (2 nights)

The venue for the Club's July meet is Orkney Caravan Park which can accommodate tents and campervans, and also has a few camping pods. There may not be any Munros in Orkney, but there are Marilyn's, and in the west of the Mainland there is such a concentration of spectacular neolithic remains that it has been declared a World Heritage site - one of only three in Scotland. Book your accommodation online and let Sue Chalmers know by email at meetorganiser5@cairngormclub.org.uk that you will be joining the meet.

August 2 & 3, 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. A BBQ is being organised for the Saturday evening. To book, please contact Eilidh Scobbie by email at huts@cairngormclub.org.uk.

August 16 & 17, Glassie Farm Bunkhouse, Aberfeldy (2 nights)

Glassie Farm, near Aberfeldy, is ideally placed for the Ben Lawers, Glen Lyon and A9 Munros and Corbetts. You also have Loch Tay nearby for watersports. To book, please contact Tom Litterick by email at meetorganiser29@cairngormclub.org.uk.

September 27 & 28, Saddle Hostel, Invergarry (2 nights)

This meet is a joint weekend with the Stocket Hillwalking Club. Ideally located in the Great Glen there are many hills of all description nearby and good cycling and walking on the Great Glen Way. Loch Ness is also close for some Nessie spotting. To book, please contact Helen Russell by email at ccpresident@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:

Murray Smith (Westhill, Ordinary member; joined 1973)
 Joyce Hancock (Coventry, Associate; joined 1984)

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

Graham Reid (Aberdeen, Associate)
 Lindsay Ashworth (Cockermouth, Associate)
 Helene Corrieu (Banchory, Associate)
 Jason Guthrie (Banchory, Associate)
 Naiara Carabias (Aberdeen, Associate)
 Robert Wilkinson (Aberdeen, Associate)
 Craig Donald (Aberdeen, Associate)
 John Baddeley (Aberdeen, Ordinary)
 Ann Baddeley (Aberdeen, Ordinary)
 Nuria Carballal (Aberdeen, Ordinary)
 Pauline Larmour (Aberdeen, Associate)
 Jonathan Hollick (Aberdeen, Associate)
 Stephen Goodwin (Penrith, Ordinary)
 Jacob Miller (Inverurie, Associate)
 Alex Walker (Glasgow, Associate)
 Calum Neilson (Aberdeen, Associate)
 Jen Walklate (Aberdeen, Associate)
 Gordon Turner (Dulnain Bridge, Associate)

The Club has also attracted 7 new Interim members since the last Newsletter.

Elsick Mounth Maintenance

A small group has formed to maintain the Elsick Mounth trail which had become blocked and overgrown in places. A work party was organised in conjunction with Forestry and Land Scotland, and 2 club members assisted the first event. Further events are planned - if interested in helping please contact Mike Duguid at vp2@cairngormclub.org.uk.

Journal Editor

After 8 years of doing an excellent job as Journal editor Jean Robinson has decided to step down. The Club is very grateful for Jean's hard work and effort over such an extensive period.

Consequently, we are looking for a new journal editor and if interested please contact Helen Russell at ccpresident@cairngormclub.org.uk.

Mid-Month Stravaigs

The June Stravaig will be a low-level circuit from Monymusk. The walk includes riverbank, farm tracks and forest tracks, roughly 5 to 6 miles. Parking and meeting place will be at the Monymusk village hall near the church (or park on the surrounding streets) in time for an 11.00 departure. Bring a drink and some food for a stop on the walk. A recce will be carried out before the walk and a Club Google Group email will be sent out at least a week beforehand.

Aberdeen members may wish to meet at the Kingswells Park and Ride as usual, to car share, if others want to do likewise.

There will be a check on opportunities for coffee, soup etc. after the walk at the Grant Arms café in Monymusk.

If you are planning to come on the walk, please contact Jay Turner by email at meetorganiser20@cairnngormclub.org.uk.

The Stravaigs for the rest of the year are to be held on the following dates: July 12, August 16, September 13 and October 18. Locations and times will be advised nearer these dates.

Muir

The work weekend took place in late May and was once again a successful event with many tasks completed. Thanks to all who took part in helping to keep our hut looking great.

Day Meets for the Remainder of 2024

Sat 05 Oct	Dufftown / Aberlour	Colin Brown
Sun 03 Nov	Ben Vrackie	Kolbjørn Akselvoll
Sun 08 Dec	Morven (W to E Traverse)	Helen Russell

Weekend Meets for the Remainder of 2024

Oct 18 (2 nights)	Raeburn Hut, Laggan	Sue Miller
Nov 15 (2 nights)	Inver Croft, Achnasheen	Caroline Watt
Nov 29 (2 nights)	Corran Bunkhouse	Esperanza Martin

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

Midweek Walks

Further to meets mentioned elsewhere, here are the Midweek Walks for the rest of 2024:

Oct 31	Glenbuchat Ridge	Kevin Adam
Nov 28	Inverbervie Circular	Brian Davey
Dec 12	Ellon followed by Christmas lunch	Marj Ewan

Glenmore “Cairngorms Connect” Visit, 18 April 2024

About 20 Club members, and a few others, met at Loch Morlich for a short walk conducted by Forestry & Land Scotland staff up the track towards Rothiemurchus Lodge. We stopped – in a somewhat chilly wind! – to hear about FLS activities in support of the above project, *“a bold and ambitious 200-year vision to enhance habitats, species and ecological processes across a vast area within the Cairngorms National Park”*, i.e. from Abernethy and Rothiemurchus round to Glenfeshie (Deeside estates seem to have dropped off). Most discussion focussed on forest transformation/creation – the latter mainly by regeneration through deer suppression: about 100 deer are shot each year in Rothiemurchus – and on the management of the half-million visitors to Glenmore each year. Afterwards, several of us went on to the Cairngorm Club Footbridge, which is again showing signs of wear and tear after the 2012 re-painting exercise: FLS has it in mind to “do something” about this and the bridge’s “awkward” approaches, but what, and when, is unclear. As members may have noted recently, the Glenmore Visitor Centre, with its café and car park, is to be taken over from FLS by a local community trust: see the FLS “Communities” website.



(Text by Ken Thomson and photo by Mike Duguid)

Deer Management at Caenlochan

A new Section 7 agreement between NatureScot and the local Deer Management Group covers 33,488 ha at Caenlochan, to the east of the A93 in Glenshee, including the top end of Glen Clova / Glen Doll. It aims to reduce the red deer population from over 40 to 10 deer per km² by spring 2026: it is now around 13 deer per km², after previous S7 targets were “not met”. The area includes the Caenlochan Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and component Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) Caenlochan, Glen Callater and Garbh Choire. A long post on this “saga” is available at parkswatchscotland.co.uk/2024/05/10/deer-density-the-cairngorms-1-naturescots-target-of-10-per-sq-km-for-caenlochan/.

Soil Fungi DNA Processing

Some Club members have been involved in the James Hutton Institute’s ‘Mountain Heights, Hidden Depths’ project by collecting soil samples from Munro summits. If you are a bit unclear on fungi DNA, or ever wondered what those white-coated scientists do in their labs all day, the JHI has produced a 13-minute video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rC8bE8SaH3A>) showing some of the processing steps involved in extracting the DNA from these samples. Later this year, a summary is promised of how the soil biodiversity is to be characterised.

The ‘Sawdust Fusiliers’

The above is the title of a small (130pp) booklet in the University Library, recording the World War Two activities in the Scottish Highlands of the Canadian Forestry Corps (CFC). It was written by William C. Wonders, a Canadian geographer who died in 2011; his name is attached to the largest academic map collection in Canada. Out of 33 camps in Scotland as a whole, there were six on Deeside, at Blackhall (west of Banchory), Ballogie (two camps), Glentinar, Abergeldie (near Pannanich) and Mar Lodge (west of Muir Cottage). The district HQ was at Aboyne, and training courses were held at Park House, Drumoak. The relative openness of cultivated Scottish forests compared to natural Canadian ones helped, and social relations were excellent, but rain and boggy ground often interrupted operations, and the men had to be told to cut close to the ground rather than higher up. A photograph shows the hill behind Mar Lodge shorn of trees.

Snowhole trip March 2024

This year's snowhole trip was successfully undertaken at the end of March, with 3 members setting off from Cairn Gorm and finding a great spot at Garbh Uisge Beag with an excellent view for sunrise. After constructing a large snowhole in perfect snowpack, some short night hikes were taken to generate heat and dry off, find water and stargaze. Awaking to excellent

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conditions, they toured past 'all the zeroes', Lochs Etchachan and Avon, and back over Cairn Gorm to finish, retiring to the Pine Marten for well-deserved refreshments. A full report of the trip is on the Club Forum, with photos and a short video.



(Text and photo by Mike Duguid)

A Poetical View of the Cairngorms

*A hill there is, which forms a sable wall
Through all the north, and men it Grampus call.
Here lean-cheek'd Barrenness terrific strides;
A tattered robe waves round her iron sides;
Two baleful eyes roll in her iron face;
Her meagre hand supports a pile of grass;
Her bare white skull no decent covering shews;
Eternal tempests rattle on her brows;
Lank-sided Want, and pale-eyed Poverty,
And sharp-tooth'd Famine, still around her fly;
Health-gotten Hunger, want-descended Pain,
Vein-numbing Cold — are all her gloomy train*

From 'The Hunter', an early poem by James Macpherson, later publisher of 'The Poems of Ossian', comprising 'Fingal' and 'Temora'. Born and bred in Badenoch, Macpherson spent 3 years at Aberdeen University before returning home in 1756 to teach (unhappily) and to write (as above: the two "baleful eyes" perhaps refer to the NW corries of Braeriach?). He later visited the West Coast and the Western Isles to obtain oral and written records of Gaelic poetry which he published to huge acclaim: Hazlitt ranked him with Homer, the Bible and Dante! He went on to serve the Governor of Florida and (more lucratively) the Nawab of Arcot, to become an MP, and to buy an estate, Belville or Balavil near Kingussie. His ashes were interred in Westminster Abbey.

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