



“Mountain Thyme” *40th Anniversary!*



Mountain Thyme is the Newsletter of

Blairgowrie and District Hillwalking Club.

The editor welcomes comments and contributions from all members.

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PRESIDENT'S INTRODUCTION

Welcome to another edition of Mountain Thyme. This issue is different from the normal format and it has been published as a special edition compiled to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the Blairgowrie and District Hillwalking Club.

The Club has come a long way in forty years yet still retains many of the original principles and practises set out at the very outset. We still meet every third Sunday and mostly travel by coach to our beloved hills for relaxation, for enjoyment and for companionship on the walks. Perhaps one of the biggest changes over the years is the promotion of safety and the encouragement for members to be better trained and equipped. Personal equipment and attire have evolved with the widespread use of Gore-Tex and other similar breathable fabrics which were not so widely available four decades ago. It is now common practice and in fact included in our Club Rules, that members heading for high tops in the winter months should carry an ice axe and be proficient in the use of this essential piece of winter equipment. Who amongst the 1978 winter walkers carried an ice axe or crampons?

One other very notable change would be our website, www.bdhc.org.uk. Now that internet and modern technology is available in most homes many members now regularly visit the site and book their seat on the coach to our outings via the club web site. This has recently been updated and will soon carry the full syllabus of walks and events for the year and all the walk sheets. These should be available to assist in members planning for the walks ahead. We are grateful to James Tweedie who set up and maintained the first version of the web site on a voluntary basis up until recently when it was taken over by Graphite, who now do this on a commercial basis.

Over the Clubs 40-year existence, it has passed through the “explosion” in popularity of hillwalking in the 80s and 90s and has seen membership numbers rise and fall accordingly. Membership peaked at around 70/75 members but this has now tailed back to around 50 members. Although this lower number is still sustainable, to function as a “Club” the current committee is looking at ways of increasing this number. It cannot be denied that the demographic of the Club has changed and the level of walks has altered in tandem. Many members now choose to tackle shorter and less strenuous walks than perhaps they did 20/30/40 years ago. The

Club needs to evolve with this change and may need to offer a wider variety of walks for the “mid-level” walkers amongst us, whilst still retaining the option of conquering our higher mountains.

The use of coach transport to the walks has always been an integral part of how our Club operates and we have been fortunate over the years to have formed good relationships with local coach hire companies and even formed special bonds with some of the drivers. Some of the longer serving members will recall drivers such as Ed Chandler who was our driver with Glenisla Coaches, and Ronnie Lothian, one of the regular drivers with Pegasus Travel. More recently a ‘bond’ has been formed with Ally Downie our usual driver with J P Coaches. Transport has always been the major expense the Club incurs year on year, and we are heavily dependent on fund raising events to subsidise these costs and retain fares at a relatively low level. It has always been felt that coach travel is an important aspect of the club and is often the only opportunity to unite the various walking groups travelling to and from club meets who may otherwise not cross paths. There are of course other opportunities for the integration of club members and our “social” events are usually well attended and a good opportunity to catch up with friends from other walking groups. Over the years we have moved to and from various venues for these formal and informal events, and at present we seem to have settled at the Blairgowrie Golf Club who offer us the use of their excellent facilities and always make us very welcome.

Running a club such as the BDHC does take a considerable amount of effort and we should be grateful to the committees over the years who have taken on this role. Most current members have at some time been involved in the running of the Club and are too numerous to mention individually. Suffice to say that the backbone of our committee is a good Secretary, Treasurer and Meet Secretary and we are lucky in this Club, that these posts have always been filled by enthusiastic members. If you are reading this and have not yet been on the committee, don’t worry, your time will come!

Our 40th Anniversary celebrations are shortly coming to an end and I hope that the membership has taken part and more importantly enjoyed the events through-out the year. Our two weekend meets during the year, were perhaps a wee bit more adventurous than some years. We have had memorable trips to Knoydart in the Spring and Hadrian’s Wall in the summer months. The commemoration of the first ever Club walk to the Glen Doll and Clova area was a great success and Iain Mitchell’s tales from the “Early Years” was both amusing and entertaining. The Dinner with our Guest Speaker, Mark Beaumont, was perhaps the highlight of

the year and a most successful evening and coincided with the largest congregation of Past Presidents the Club has ever united.

Time now to move on and look forward to the 50th Anniversary in 2028.
Good walking and be Safe.

Ian Cameron, President

THE FIRST 40 YEARS - REFLECTIONS FROM FOUNDER MEMBER

When a notice appeared in the “Blairie” in the summer of 1978 inviting anyone interested in forming a hill-walking club to attend a meeting I immediately saw this as an opportunity to get back, on a regular basis, to an activity which I had previously enjoyed.

I had been introduced to the hills in the 1950s as a member of the Banff Boy Scouts where hill walking was a favourite activity. This began as shorter walks in the lower hills of Banffshire before progressing to the Northern Cairngorms which were fairly easily accessible from home. Student holidays gave the opportunity for more outings, mainly backpacking trips, but this lapsed to only occasional visits to the hills after I settled in Blairgowrie.

Early meetings were well attended and the Blairgowrie and District Hill walking Club was formed under the guidance of Community Guidance Officer Ken Stewart. A committee was elected with Graham Smith being appointed founder president.

A programme of walks every third Sunday was quickly compiled and began with a trip to Glen Doll where some members elected to tackle the Munros Mayar and Driesh whilst a larger group climbed the Capel Mounth path to cross the plateau to the north of Glen Clova. Both groups finished at the Clova Hotel.

My abiding memory of this outing was stepping off the bus to be greeted by Ken Stewart saying “well Mitchell I see you’ve done this before judging by that disreputable old anorak.” This was the usual cotton pull over the head garment of that time with the large kangaroo pouch; very useful for carrying nuts and raisins.

In the early days of the Club the committee had a wide choice of hills which few members had climbed and so could arrange a programme of walks which offered something new for everyone. Although the early walks often included Munros, these were not being routinely “ticked off” by members as the craze of “Munro bagging” was still in its relative infancy. Whilst the first round of the Munros was completed by the Rev A.E. Robertson in 1901, by 1978 the number of recorded Munroists had still not reached 200. This, however, soon began to change with access to the hills becoming easier and the number of guide books growing rapidly, resulting in the current total, 40 years later, exceeding 6000.

The scope for members to explore new areas was extended by the introduction of a spring weekend followed in a few years by an autumn weekend. The first weekend was tent based at a campsite by Loch Awe, below Ben Cruachan. The following two Spring weekends, at Glen Nevis and Arrochar, were also tent based but repeated washouts prompted a rethink and resulted in Youth Hostels becoming the preferred base. This proved very successful as many hostels were located in excellent hill walking areas.

Inevitably this led to members keeping a tally of Munros climbed and coming to realise that completing the list might be feasible. Some of the more remote Munros were, however, outwith the scope of a day walk and required special trips usually in small groups wild camping to access the target hills. One camp with Rob and Graham Smith at Barrisdale is memorable for the multitude of hungry midges which decided to join us in our small tent. Before setting out on another solo three day back packing trip to the remote Fisherfield Munros I parked my car at Kinlochewe and left my details with the local petrol station attendant. When she saw where I was going she remarked “If you break your leg in there it’ll take them a month to find you”. That certainly concentrated the mind and made sure I paid attention. By early 1992, my Munro total was nearing completion and I began to plan the final summit.

The Club Spring weekend that year was to be at Torridon and I had one hill in the area, Slioch, still unclimbed so deciding on the last one was easy. Slioch it would be. When the day came, 6 June, the weather was perfect, warm, and dry with clear views. As the first Club member about to complete the Munros I was delighted that a large group chose to accompany me to the top



Slioch summit June 1992
(Photograph submitted by Jane)

Fairly high on the hill we stopped to watch a stag enjoying a cooling dip in a lochan apparently unconcerned by our presence. The now traditional walk to the cairn under a canopy of walking poles did not take place as poles had not yet become standard equipment but a couple of bottles of champagne were produced and a great celebration followed. On the descent it was decided by one of the worthies (possibly inspired by the stag) that it would be fitting for the first club Munroist to be “baptised” in the nearest suitable pool. This was duly carried out with reasonable care but little regard to dignity. It was, however, a pleasant way to cool down on a hot day but does not appear to have become a tradition on these occasions! Other members have continued to complete the round with the current total in the Club now standing in the mid teens.

Whilst the ticking of lists may not appeal to everyone, it certainly takes you to parts of the country which would otherwise remain unvisited.

Following completion of the Munros I found that my attraction for wild places has not at all diminished and that the hills regardless of height still have the same appeal. I am particularly pleased that my son Robert, shares this enthusiasm and that we can enjoy the great outdoors together.



*Iain on Beinn an Dothaidh
(Photograph by Robert Mitchell)*

Had it not been for my membership of Blairgowrie and District Hill walking Club, I would be unlikely to have completed this journey and I am grateful for the companionship of members and the motivation inspired by belonging to an enthusiastic group of individuals with a common interest.



*Iain & Roddy on north ridge of
Uisgneabhal – May 2007
(Photograph by Rob Roberston)*

Iain Mitchell

KNOYDART WEEKEND

In late May, the Club held the first of the celebrations of the 40th anniversary – an extended weekend meet, with a party of 25 members, visiting the remote Knoydart area. Walkers were based in Inverie reached by ferry from Mallaig which felt like being on an island.

The weather was excellent over the four days – almost too hot for walking and rather a lot of midges. Staying at Knoydart Lodge was splendid and we were warmly welcomed by members of the Knoydart Foundation. Over the course of four days, walkers completed many varied and interesting walks with some focusing on Munros and others tackling Corbetts and coastal walks.



Knoydart – June 2018
(Photograph by Ian Cameron)

One member climbed three Munros (Ladhar Bheinn, Meall Bhuidhe and Luinne Bheinn) and enjoyed high level ridge walks whilst others reached the distant heights of Corbetts Beinn na Caillich, Sgurr Coire Choinnichean and Beinn Bhuidhe.

Indeed there was a champagne celebration on the summit of Beinn Bhuidhe as past president, Norman Smith, completed climbing all the Corbetts – there are 222. Many of these hills are in remote locations so this was a great achievement – well done Norman – the first club member to climb all Munros and Corbetts as a club member.



Norman on Beinn Bhuidhe – June 2018
(Photograph by Aedan Smith)

Ten members were on the summit of Beinn Bhuidhe with Norman and a further 8 approached the hill reaching various points – including the Ile Coire Bealach, Sgorr Coire Gobhar and the very inviting waters of Loch Bhraomisaig. Pairs of walkers found various ways off Beinn Bhuidhe including a very sporting descent aided by a rope following the hydro pipeline. Of course there is more to see in Knoydart and members also enjoyed long and varied, circular walks into the heartland and around the coast checking out historical sites and community projects and sampling home cooking in the wonderful Airor cafe. One member brought his bike and this gave him access to the Dubh loch and the south east ridge of Ladhar Beinn. There were many displays of colourful wild flowers and

plenty opportunities to spot birds at the coast with a golden eagle flying over just as walkers prepared to get on the return ferry. Cracking start to 40th anniversary celebrations with many fine walks, great company and friendship.

Jane Clark

HADRIAN'S WALL

It was perhaps a unique occasion for our seasoned bunch of hill walkers to have visited an area so little known to the group for their autumn weekend meet held in September. This was another meet much enjoyed by all who took part, the lonely moorland scenery of this part of Cumbria and Northumberland has a beauty all of its own, the wall and related visitor centres and extensive Roman remains along its length make it a wonderful area to visit and to walk. Some members enjoyed an intensive weekend of walks whilst others stayed the week and were able to visit the local town of Hexham as well as enjoying more of the wall and sometimes just following its route where the stones had been plundered for building foundations for the parallel military road constructed in the eighteenth century. Many of the remote farmsteads had also clearly used the wall's well-cut masonry.

The wall had originally been 4.5 metres high with a base of two or three metres depending in which section, most is now between one and one and a half metres high where it still exists,

The group of seventeen met at the Anchor Hotel in Haydon Bridge on the Friday evening to plan the main walk for the Saturday as well as enjoying a meal and a few drinks for those not driving.



Hadrian's Wall
(*Photograph by Ian Cameron*)

The whole group agreed to walk what is often considered to be the most scenic section of the wall and which includes lengths that run above impressive crags. This section runs from the brand new and very impressive visitor centre at Sill (including the UK's newest and poshest Youth Hostel) and along the wall, east to Chesters – 12 miles in all.



*Hadrian's Wall Sycamore Gap Autumn 2018
(Photograph submitted by Jane Clark)*

The group enjoyed its traditional meal together on the Saturday evening, again at the Anchor Hotel.

Over what was, in reality, an almost a two-week presence by the various club members, virtually all the interesting sections of the wall, from west to east, were walked by the various parties involved. The bits in between dubbed by Martin as 'agricultural walks' were less interesting but as these usually connected the more dramatic sites, were tolerated if not enjoyed.

Whilst this was a walking holiday, club members also enjoyed visiting the various forts and townships built before and during the construction of the wall. Vindolanda was perhaps the most interesting of these and together with its associated museum, containing some amazing artefacts, made for a very enjoyable half-day excursion.

The recently opened Sill Visitor Centre in the central section of the wall, also impressed, costing £15m it was a remarkable fusion of information centre, museum, café and youth hostel with some of the latest technology available to show off the heritage of the wall. It seemed quite bizarre to find that its car park was controlled via the very latest number plate recognition and payment system – up there in a remote and wind-swept part of the Northumbrian moors!

In conclusion, the Hadrian's Wall trip joined the long list of successful club weekends away, very different in character to the traditional ones but nevertheless enjoyed by all.

Ian Richards

ANNIVERSARY DINNER WITH MARK BEAUMONT

To celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the Club, a dinner was held at the Blairgowrie Golf Club in early October with current and former members and guests. There were no fewer than 20 past presidents of the Club in attendance and at least one of the founder members who remains an active walking member was in the company.

The current President, Ian Cameron, welcomed members, former members, friends and guests to the Dinner and gave a well received short recount of the first 40 years of the Club, followed by a toast to the Club.

Following the Dinner, former President Stuart Nichol, introduced the after dinner speaker, Mark Beaumont, record breaking long distance British cyclist, adventurer, broadcaster, documentary maker and author. Mark entertained the captive audience with an illustrated talk recounting his early adventures and his Record Breaking, Around the World in 80 days, 16,000mile cycle journey.

Following the lecture, Mark answered questions from the floor and said what a pleasure it had been to attend the Club Dinner. He felt he was coming home, having spent his early childhood years in the area when he had lived near Ballintuim just north of Blairgowrie. The evening closed with a Prize draw with a grand array of valuable prizes donated by members and Perth branches of outdoor suppliers, Rohan and Tiso, The Naked Sheep Dunkeld and Cross Border Brewing, Dalkeith.

An eloquent vote of thanks was delivered by member Martin Collins, after which the Club honoured Founder Member and twice former president of the Club, Iain Mitchell, by installing him as Honorary Life President of the Club. The formal presentation of the certificate was made by the Guest Speaker, Mark Beaumont, who congratulated Iain on his achievement. Iain replied accordingly saying it was still a pleasure to be able to attend walks and support the Club in every way he can.



*Presentation to Iain Mitchell
2018 (Photograph by Ian
Cameron)*

Ian Cameron, President

ANNIVERSARY WALK TO MAYER AND DRIESH

On Sunday 28th October, the Blairgowrie and District Hillwalking Club celebrated the 40th Anniversary of the Club by retracing the route undertaken on the inaugural walk organised by the Club in September 1978. Twenty five members, including one who had been on the very first walk, attended this event and travelled to Glen Doll for the starting point at the Visitor Centre at Braedownie.

Although the walkers were greeted with sunshine and light winds in the valley, the overnight snow on higher ground meant that winter conditions were afoot on the mountain tops. All the suggested routes commenced by following the White Water and Fee burn through Glen Doll Forrest to Corrie Fee.



***First Club Walk 1978
(Photograph from Tom Morrison
collection.)***



***The club in Corrie Fee 2018
(Photograph by Ian Cameron)***

At this point the Group assembled and were entertained by the echoes of red deer stags roaring in the distance from the higher corries. One part of the group climbed to the top of the Corrie and the spectacular Fee burn waterfall before returning to the starting point. The majority continued to the summit of the nearby Munro, Mayer, before retracing their route. There were magnificent views in every direction from this summit with most of the surrounding hill tops in Glen Shee, the Southern Cairngorms and Lochnagar all visible below the cloud level.

The remainder of the party continued south at high level to reach the second Munro of the day, Driesh. Light winds and low temperature meant that the walkers were faced with wind chill temperatures well below freezing, but good underfoot conditions ensured that walking was not hindered.

There were three different descent routes from this second Munro with the first group electing to continue south, over Hill of Strone and Cairn Inks to end up at Clova Hotel. The second descent route was via the Shank of Drumfollow where snow as deep as 200mm was encountered on the ridge. This route gave magnificent views down Glen Doll, into Corrie Fee and north along the “Jocks Road” path. The third and final descent from Driesh was by retracing the ascent route back over Mayer and back down through Corrie Fee.



***Looking down on Glen Doll
from the Shank of Drumfollow
(Photograph by Ian Cameron)***

All groups reconvened and travelled to Pitcrocknie Restaurant, Alyth where more members met the walkers with to enjoy a meal followed by a celebratory birthday cake. The day ended with founder member and Honorary Club President, Iain Mitchell, entertaining the members and guests by recounting many humorous tales from his 40 years walking with the Club.



*Jane and Betty cut the Birthday
Cake
(Photograph by Bruce Henderson)*

Ian Cameron and Ian Richards

TWO NEW MEMBERS SHARE THOUGHTS OF THEIR FIRST YEAR IN THE CLUB

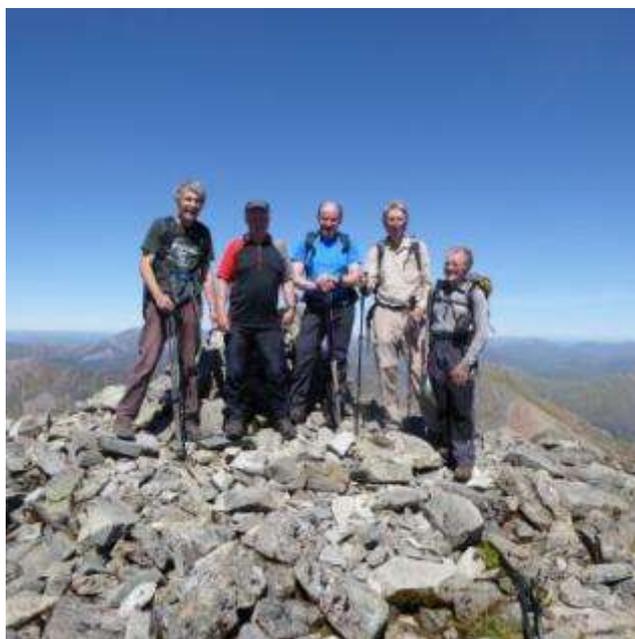
The Thrill of reaching the peak of a Munro and looking out for miles on a clear day in Scotland's hills is truly exhilarating and one of life's great pleasures. Getting there is a challenge, mind you and some hills are more challenging than others but it is always more than worth it.

Our walks are every third Sunday, and on long days we leave Blairgowrie at 7.30am. Now I generally need a good reason to get out of a warm bed at 6.15am on a Sunday morning, but hillwalking with BDHC offers a lot of reasons: a sense of friendship, self-achievement, camaraderie, fresh air, learning about the history of Scotland, including its flora and fauna, and of course, the glorious views, both from the bottom and the top of the hills. They are a photographer's dream.

I am a relative novice to hillwalking, and after my first walk (to Glenshee and Conacraig) I **was** worn out, but I had learnt a bit more about myself. I could push myself to a greater limit than I expected. When I look back at my photos, they remind me of how I felt at the time, seeing the beautiful

green forests below, the mix of heather and bracken, and the white cumulus clouds with a blue sky as the backdrop. It brings a little smile, coupled with a sense of pride.

A few walks later, there was a change of plan in the morning, and I was asked if I was up for a walk at Glencoe. I said, "Sure, why not?" A bit naive perhaps. It was challenging, especially the last 100 metres where the incline made it look as if I was about to go mountain climbing. But hey, I made it and what a thrill that was! I even found myself featured, along with the rest of the group, in a photo in The Blairgowrie Advertiser as well as Scottish Mountaineer.



Roy with Bruce, Ian, Richard and Roddy on Bidean nam Bian county top of Argyll (Photograph submitted by Bruce Henderson)

Many people today want experiences, excitement, humour, and memorable times. Hill walking in a group has all of these – in spades. There are times when you are stretched, and you ask yourself why you are doing this. But I'm coming round to believing there is an innate need in many of us to prove to ourselves that something difficult can be achieved.

I can honestly say I don't look at hills in the same way anymore. It's not that I think I've tamed them - far from it. Maybe it's a peculiar way of looking at it, but it's as if we are friends now. But I have a great respect for my new friends. 1000 metres up in the Cairngorms on your own, especially without a map and compass, would be so dangerous, and is a truly scary thought. But BDHC has many experienced members and I learn from them as my confidence builds.

New members are provided opportunities to practise map and compass use, as well as first aid training. You never know when you might need it. The cost of joining is very low, and equipment doesn't have to cost the earth.

Give us a try by coming on one of our taster walks. The website has all the details to make contact to book an unforgettable day in the Highlands of Scotland.

Roy Heel

I'm not sure if it was the Christmas cheer or the sheer disbelief that I was almost a year away from being 40 that made me announce on the 1st January I would like to take up hillwalking! It just so happened I was also in the company of one of Blairgowrie and District Hillwalking Club's committee members and before I knew it I had agreed to go on the walk at the end of January.

You would have thought that given it had been such a poor winter with so much snow that a beginner would instead decide to wait until warmer months before embarking on this new hobby! Dragging myself out of bed that cold January morning and 7am I almost wished I had. Or perhaps if I knew that I would spend most of my time face down in the snow I may very well have waited a few months! However, when I arrived home that evening, pride barely intact but still with all my bones together, I had a great feeling of accomplishment. Someone later described it to me as stage 2 fun – you don't enjoy it at the time but look back on it with great memories!



Kerry on Stob Binnean, May 2018

(Photograph by Jane Clark)

Seeing the pure white mountain hare, herds of red deer and not to mention the stunning landscape that we live amongst certainly made the early starts and face planting in the snow worthwhile.

If all my new friends that were so accepting of this crazy novice who couldn't (and still can't) get through a walk without falling, wondered why I was now part of their group, they never showed it. Everyone was so welcoming and great teachers.

Fast forward a few months and we enjoyed a terrific weekend in Knoydart where the sun shone and instead of dipping our feet in ice we

were paddling in burns and filling up our water bottles straight from waterfalls. It was simply stunning.

Now almost a year on, I've tried to make as many walks as possible, some I've completed easier than others but one thing that's been constant is I always fall! However, each time I get back up with a smile on my face (a new bend in my poles) and a soggy bottom or knees!

I have learnt so much about myself in this last year, my ability to go on when I thought I had nothing left, my ability to moan when I got fed up with the snow and my ability to undertake a new hobby that I never thought I would do.

No matter how hard the climb up has been, the views of Scotland's countryside from the top of a hill is one that catches your breath every time. If I can do it any one can. I feel honoured and privileged to go out with this amazing group of people at a ridiculous time on a Sunday morning and learn from their wisdom and knowledge. The one thing I do wish I had done at the start was take out shares in a company that makes walking poles – I think I would be rich by now!

Kerry Lindsay

LOOKING AHEAD -THE ATTRACTION OF THE HILLS: A PERSONAL REFLECTION

Writing this piece about the future of the club got me reflecting about what drew me to the Scottish hills and how do we try to ensure people are equally enthused to join the club and enjoy the experience with like minded people.

I was immediately drawn to the dramatic sight of Stac Pollaidh. At that time I remember bounding up the hill, no knowledge or interest in such things as Munros and Corbetts and all the rest. It was just an adventure in spectacular scenery that had to be explored.



Stac Pollaidh
(Photograph by Phil Seymour)

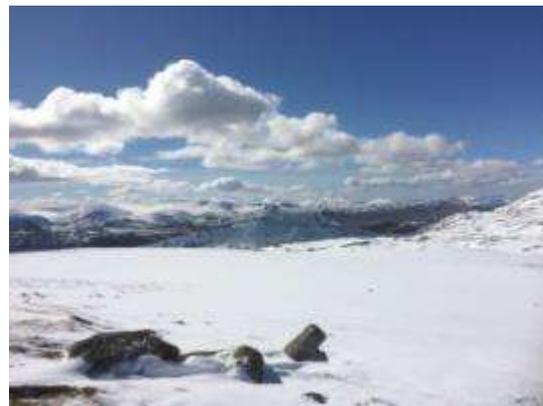
Reflecting on my love for the Scottish hills and countryside made me recall when that love affair began. My first experience of the Scottish hills was as a 17 year old Essex boy on holiday visiting Achiltibuie and

the Summer Isles. It was further experience of great (sunny) holidays on the west coast of Scotland, walking, diving and sightseeing, which eventually drew Jan and me to make the big leap to move to Scotland in 1987 when the opportunity arose. Since that time I have enjoyed a lifetime of climbing hills all over Scotland. Whilst never drawn personally to actively take up the challenge of completing all the Munros or Corbetts many of my hill walks have been accompanying others who were so inspired.

I joined the BDHC three years ago and from the very first walk felt incredibly welcomed by what was made a hospitable and supportive experience. In my first year, somehow every third Sunday the weather was good and I began to wonder why I carried all the gear in my rucksack, as I never seemed to need it. How different year two was, so many times I'd look at the weather forecast and, a week ahead, it looked good or okay but somehow, come Sunday, the rain or wind or both welcomed us on the hills. It's in those situations that the camaraderie of walking with other like-minded people makes all the difference to the experience.

Last winter was the first time for some years that I'd experienced some 'real' snow. However, the experience was incredibly different over just a few months. Firstly at Amulree where the snow was soft and it got to the stage where every step you were up to your thighs making the going very challenging.

Later, climbing in the Monadhliath hills, the snow was hard and it was a joy to walk on, making progress very swift. Both experiences highlighted that with the right gear you can 'enjoy' nearly any conditions. There is something about snow on the hills which just brings out their majesty and it is hard to beat being on top of a hill with a 360 degree panorama of snow topped hills.



Monadhliath hills
(Photograph by Phil Seymour)

I have thoroughly enjoyed my three years with the club, particularly the fantastic weekends with great company and hospitality. Looking forward, when I take up my role as President, I see us continuing to face the challenge of how we sustain and grow the club. I see the challenge to be

enthusing others to want to get out on the hills to ensure the club can celebrate its 50th Anniversary in ten years time. Realistically that means we need to attract new, active, members to maintain numbers and enable us to be financially secure. If we are to succeed it also means we need to take account of the changing way in which people communicate, live their lives and their attitude to being part of a club. Whilst there may be just as many (if not more) people in the hills, that's not generally reflected in the numbers in clubs. So we need to try to understand what the dynamics are and what that means for us to sustain the club going forward.

Whatever else, the attraction of the hills does not wane, so we need to ensure we work together to share the joy and wonder that the great outdoors offers to all and, in addition, the camaraderie that being part of a group offers to enhance that experience.

Phil Seymour, Vice President

CLOSING REMARKS

We have certainly had some great times this year and everyone will have their own highlights. I hope this edition of Mountain Thyme captures the spread of activities as well as the energy and friendliness of the club as we celebrate 40 years of hill walking. Thanks to all the contributors for penning their articles and submitting photographs.

As well as all the events reported in this edition, the autumn edition of Mountain Thyme carried reports of two members completing personal challenges – Norman Smith completing a round of Corbetts and Munros whilst a member of the club and Bruce Henderson climbing all the County Tops in the UK in one year. Bruce set himself the challenge to honour of the club's anniversary and many members enjoyed accompanying him on the County Tops. For this edition, I've limited coverage to two photographs – in the article about Knoydart and within the piece from new member Roy who joined Bruce on a very long day trip in Glen Coe. Well done Norman and Bruce and perhaps you have inspired others to embark on a hill walking challenge?

To encourage more people to join us, we place reports of our walks in local press and earlier this year, Mountaineering Scotland and the Blairgowrie Advertiser carried illustrated pieces describing the club's activities. We contribute to social media via Facebook and Twitter.

Jane Clark editor