

“Mountain Thyme”

Blairgowrie and District Hillwalking Club Newsletter, January 2010

*Mountain Thyme is the Newsletter of the Blairgowrie and District Hillwalking Club, published in January and June each year.
The editor welcomes comments and contributions from all members.*

The Presidents comment.

It is that time of year again when I have to put pen to paper – not always an easy task, but one which as President of the Club, I must complete.

Over the last few walks it has been encouraging to see so many members, both old and new, attending our meets. The weather has not always been kind to us, but the friendship and camaraderie more than makes up for this.

In September we had a great weekend in Fort Augustus with over 20 members attending. As usual on the Saturday, we all went off on a variety of routes, but we all came together again for a lovely meal on the Saturday evening. It gave us a great chance to talk to others about the highs and lows of their particular walk that day.

We had our ‘Club Night’ in October when our guest speaker was Mike Daniels, Chief Scientific Officer with The John Muir Trust, who was ably assisted on the evening by our very own Allison Russell, who is Head of Finance and Administration at JMT. We were entertained to an interesting and informative talk on the work of the trust, which was followed with a sales table of John Muir Trust materials. (Early Christmas shopping for some). I am sure many of us did not realise just how many projects the Trust are involved with.

The November ‘Club Night’ was also a successful evening with members showing us slides from their holidays and adventures over the last year. We concluded the evening with the results of the photographic competition. Winners this year were rewarded with the honour of having their photographs included in the ‘Club Calendar’. There are a few Calendars remaining which cost £4.50 each and are being sold by Neil McLeod on a first come first served basis.

At this point I would also like to extend my personal thanks to Neil and Alice McLeod for once again hosting our summer evening walk in Glen Ogilvy followed by a BBQ at their home. A most enjoyable afternoon and a source of much needed income for the Club.

The last walk of 2009 was our Christmas walk (and decorated Rucksack competition) in the Glen Isla area with all walks ending up in the Hotel at the Kirkton of Glen Isla for soup and Christmas mince pies.

You can see from the above that this has been a good year for the Blairgowrie and District Hillwalking Club and I sincerely hope this continues on into the New year.

I would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy, Prosperous and Peaceful 2010. Hope to see you all soon.

Evelyn.

Trivia Quiz: *What does Santa do on the 26th of December?*
: *Turn to back page for the answer.*

Transport arrangements.

This seasons transport arrangements appear to the committee to be working quite well. Following our transition from Pegasus Travel, to J P Coaches, from Forfar, we have noticed a significant difference in the amount of money 'lost' on arranging transport.

The smaller coach seems to work well on most walks, but can very easily be upgraded to a larger coach if numbers justify, as was the case recently on our Christmas meet when we had 40 members in attendance. As members will have noticed it is slightly more restricted for room on the smaller coach, but if we could all continue to use the coach boot for our day sacks, then we feel it is justified in continuing with transport being provided by JP Coaches.

Quiz night.

The Club are holding what has now become a very popular annual quiz again this year on Friday 15th January. The quiz will be held in the Altamount House Hotel and will start promptly at 7.30pm. Once again Roddy Cameron has agreed to act as Quiz Master and contrary to popular belief; Roddy insists that he will not be persuaded to part with answers prior to the questions being asked, not even for a wee dram of his favourite tippie.

Groups of up to four competitors are invited to form teams for the quiz, which is also open to non members of the Club.

Ceilidh.

The Club Ceilidh will be held slightly later than normal this year, with the date now set for Saturday 20th February 2010. We will be holding this fun evening at the Enverdale House Hotel in Coupar Angus starting at 7.30pm.

This event has proved to be very popular in recent years and members are urged to book tickets early from Nina Bell to avoid disappointment.

AGM and Dinner.

The AGM and Dinner this year will be held at a new venue for the Club, Strathmore Golf Club at Alyth on Friday 26th March 2010 at 7.00pm prompt. Again please book early for the Dinner to allow the necessary arrangements to be made for the catering.

Forthcoming walks.

3rd January 2010.

Glendevon to Dollar.

8.45am from Alyth.

9.00am from Blairgowrie.

There are options for all levels of through walks starting at various points in Glendevon and all ending up in Dollar.

24th January 2010.

Glen Clova/Glen Doll.

8.00am from Blairgowrie.

8.15 from Alyth.

There is the option of a through walk over Driesh and Mayer, or a circuit from Rotal Lodge and Loch Brandy both ending up at the Clova Hotel, or a shorter walk starting and finishing at the Clova Hotel climbing up to Loch Brandy and back.

14th February 2010.

Glen Falloch.

7.45am from Alyth.

8.00am from Blairgowrie.

There are numerous options in this area for all level of walks. Suggested routes include a climb to the summit of An Caisteal, or to the top of the Corbett Meall An Fhudair, or a low level walk along The West Highland Way from Crianlarich to the Inverarnan Inn.

7th March 2010.

Glas Maol/Glenshee.

7.45am from Alyth.

8.00am from Blairgowrie.

The suggested "A" walk starts at the Ski Centre, climbing over Glas Maol and Creag Leacach ending up at the Spittal of Glenshee. The "B" walk is a shorter route summiting on Carn Aosda and finishing at the Ski Centre and the "C" walk is suggested as route to the summit of Ben Gulabin and ending up in the Spittal of Glenshee.

Winter walking.

Members will be aware that the Club rules dictate that if members are intending to climb to the higher summits in winter conditions that they should carry and be able to use an Ice Axe as a minimum requirement, but preferably also carry and be able to use crampons. If unable to do so then the members are encouraged to consider alternative lower level walks.

Two go Furth.

(“*No problem at all*”- apart from a few hiccups.).

Most members of the general public are aware of the “Munro’s”, Scotland’s 3000ft. mountains, and of the challenge to climb to the summit of these 283 summits and therefore become Munroist’s. Few however will be aware of the further challenge to complete an ascent of the peaks in England, Wales and Ireland sometimes referred to as ‘Furth of Scotland’. It is generally accepted that to be recognised as completing the Furth’s, that there are four mountains in England, fourteen in Wales and eight in Ireland which need to be conquered.

Having both previously completed the Munro’s, and most of the Furths, Terry Lonsdale and I set out with a plan in August to complete this challenge together with a support crew.

Flights, transport and accommodation were arranged and off the group set in the “wee sma’ hours” on 27th August. Our first hiccup came at Dublin Airport where I had booked a hire car, only to be told that the company I had hired from had “no cars” and was passed on to another company.

Our first and second night stays were booked at Glendalough International Hostel in the Wicklow Mountains which was to be our base to complete our second last ‘Furth’, Lugnaquilla. Our second hiccup came when the warden of the Hostel told us we had no booking and that the Hostel was booked by a private group. However after a mild mannered protest, our hosts were able to find us the accommodation we had booked.

The third hiccup for me arrived on the morning of the day planned for Lugnaquilla, when a fairly severe bout of food poisoning left me unable to join the group for the day and meant that I missed out on a fine day to the highest point in The Wicklow Mountains.

On day three the group travelled to The Galty Mountains in central Ireland close to Tipperary where our target was Galtymore which had now become Terry’s last of the Furth’s and my second last. After eventually finding the access road leading to the hills, an easy climb in near perfect conditions was a fitting end to Terry’s challenge and the customary celebration was carried out on the summit.

Our accommodation for that evening was in the eeriest building I have ever had the ‘pleasure’ to spend a night, Foulksrath Castle near Kilkenny, with its never ending spiral stone stair case to the top floor dorm, the haunting organ ‘music’ and the Baronial Dining room, which all added to the atmosphere of this allegedly haunted Castle.

An early start on our last day allowed for enough time to travel back to the Wicklow mountains for half of the group, who for their second time in three days and my first time ever, to ascend to the summit of Lugnaquilla, thus completing my round of the Furth of Scotland Mountains. I was not blessed with the fine day Terry had had the good fortune to get for his completion. I was ‘lucky’ enough to get mist and heavy rain. At least my companions on the day were able to tell me what the views had been like two days previous! A leisurely return to Dublin and flights home rounded off a successful trip for both Terry and me.

Congratulations to Terry on becoming the first member of the Blairgowrie and District Hillwalking Club to complete the Furth of Scotland Summits.

Apart from the hiccups mention previously, the two common lasting memories for all who had attended the event was the Guinness, and the helpfulness of the Irish people. On one occasion “Mary” opened up her kitchen /restaurant and produced a very homely meal for seven very hungry hill-walkers at the drop of a hat “no problem at all” and another restaurant at Glendalough provided a free taxi service to and from our accommodation, “no problem at all”. In fact everywhere we went in Ireland, it was a case of “*no problem at all*”.

Ian Cameron.

Terry on the summit of Galtymore.



“Congratulations Terry”. First of the Furths.

Trivia Quiz ; *What does Santa do on the 26th December?*; answer:-



“Bless his cotton socks”