



# *“Mountain Thyme Autumn 2019*



*Mountain Thyme is published by*  
**Blairgowrie and District Hillwalking Club.**  
*The editor welcomes comments and contributions from all members.*

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## PRESIDENT'S INTRODUCTION

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Another Summer and Autumn have come and gone and we are now once more looking at the snow-capped winter hills, good news for some, but perhaps less so for others. The last six months has again been a successful time for the Club with many memorable days for individuals and Club groups alike.

We held two Club week-end meets which involved members travelling to Strathpeffer in June and to Mull in September. Mixed weather on both trips allowed for Munros to be conquered, lesser hills to be scaled and coastal paths to be followed making for some interesting walks for all.

The Club has also taken part in the 2019 Munro Table (see later article) and a further navigation training course organised by Mountaineering Scotland. Both events were fully supported by members.

Our return to holding a Saturday evening coastal walk followed by a supper was successful and saw a good turn-out of members walking from Inverbervie to Johnshaven on the East coast. Members also collected rubbish from the beach along the route making a small contribution to making our environment a better place for sea life.



The attendance at meets has remained constant with little peaks and troughs but the average means that transport by coach is still just manageable and viable to most meets. Of course, as always, more members would ease the strain on finances and visitors are always welcome.



*Perfect day at Loch Laggan*



*Meall nan Tarmachan in November*

On the social side we held a members' slide night when members gave slide shows of various treks in foreign lands and a resume of the last 12 months of club walks at home. We also held our annual barbeque and this year – see later account. We held our Tapas menu event at Little's restaurant in Blairgowrie and, more recently, we had a Club night when Karen Inkster gave an interesting and informative insight to the work carried out by Scotways (more detailed accounts of each of these events given later).

Looking to the future we still have an interesting and varied schedule which takes us up to the 2020/2021 season and, at the time of writing, we look forward to the Dundee Mountain Film Festival, which this year has been part sponsored by the Blairgowrie and District Hillwalking Club. The twixt meet from December 27<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> this year is based in Ballater and all members are cordially invited. Our grateful thanks this year to Terry and Elizabeth Lonsdale for organising this.

Sadly (for me anyway) this will be my final "President's Introduction" as my term as President comes to an end at our AGM. I will be handing over the reins to Phil Seymour in March and I wish him a successful term in office. My two-year term as President has simply flown by and I have enjoyed every single moment. Thank you all for your support during this time.

Can I just close by wishing you all many more good walks, and above all "be safe".

**Ian Cameron**

## MULL WEEKEND

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The Club weekend (13th to 16th September) to Mull was well attended and both walking and social members regaled many tales of their adventures. Some members arrived early on Friday and enjoyed a variety of what this majestic Hebridean island has to offer including a short extended ferry journey on to Iona, a coastal walk to the Carsaig sea arches and a wild life photography course around Loch Scridain and Loch na Keal. There was an unbelievable amount of Wildlife recorded on the Carsaig walk but unfortunately not quite so much on the Photography course. The main centre for accommodation was based at the comfortable Salen Hotel and supplemented by other accommodation in the area.

On Saturday the planned high level route was abandoned in favour of a low level walk because of the forecasted high winds and rain showers and was replaced with a coastal walk around the Treshnish peninsula. This is a wild and rugged corner of the Island and was enhanced by the rough seas and huge rollers crashing on to the rocks around the shore.

On Sunday there was a marked improvement in the weather and several of the higher summits were conquered from a variety of different approaches. Two groups chose different routes to the summit of Mull's only Munro, Ben More, one group ascending a direct approach from Loch Na Keal and the second group completed a full traverse of the "horse shoe route". Two further groups climbed to the summit of Dun da Ghaoithe, a Corbett on the East side of the Island with one party making a direct ascent from Craignure and the second party a longer and more undulating route starting near Fishnish and ending at Craignure. The third mountain "captured" on the day was Bein Talaidh near the centre of Mull. This was again tackled from two different directions. One group chose the shorter sharp route from the south starting in Glen More and the second group the longer walk in along Glen Forsa before climbing to the summit.



*Salen bay*



Starting walk around Tresnish, Mull

Interestingly, there is a memorial at the foot of the mountain, formed from wreckage of the crashed plane, to servicemen who lost their lives in 1944 when a Dakota travelling from Canada to Prestwick crashed into the hill side when the pilot was disorientated in thick mist and a snowstorm. Surprisingly there were only 4 servicemen killed in the incident and the remainder survived and were eventually rescued.



*Summit of Ben Tallaidh, Mull*



*Beach clean up Mull*

As normal the groups all convened for a meal together on Saturday evening, where we were very well catered for at the Salen Hotel. Although the weather was not all it had been hoped for, there was still plenty drama and excitement on the walks. Some members extended their stay beyond Monday and there were also planned trips to a sea eagle watch, otter spotting and further hillwalking.

To coincide with our Club weekend to the Isle of Mull in September, and following the impromptu, and successful, beach clean we carried out on our coastal walk in June, a similar event was arranged on Mull. Although many of the Club members attending the Club weekend had either left the

island or were leaving we still had 10 members and guests who participated a litter pick on Gribun beach south of Loch na Keal. The location was chosen in conjunction with a representative of Mull Otter Watch group who was very grateful of our efforts.

We managed to clear the stony beach of several bin-bags worth of rubbish together with lots of larger items which were all hauled the several hundred meters from the beach to the road where they were to be uplifted by Argyll & Bute Council. It was dreadful to see so much litter in such a small area, much of it from the fishing industry, however we all played our small part in keeping the coastline and seas clean - David Attenborough would approve!

**Ian Cameron/Bruce Henderson**

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## **HAVING FUN AT PUBLIC INQUIRIES**

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You may have heard Karen Inkster's talk at the club night in November about ScotWays' long and honourable history, what it does today and why Rights of Way are still important to safeguard access in Scotland. Here is some more detail on a couple of recent cases that ScotWays has tackled this year. For some years I was on its Board but decided about a decade ago that I had gone to quite enough meetings with a bundle of papers under my arm, so I retreated to become a volunteer member of staff. An interesting time to do this, as the Trump inquiry at Menie north of Aberdeen was looming ahead and, by appearing at this case, we had a modest win, albeit unnoticed by other interests. We had not gone along to stop Trump's huge building proposals, nor even to save nature – a main theme at the inquiry. But at that time, statutory access rights were relatively new and we had a concern that the Trump organisation might try to create an American-style closed residential-leisure park. However, the Inquiry Reporters and even Trump's QC accepted our interpretation of how statutory rights should apply across the site.

So there was a pleasing small win, but one quickly learns that most satisfaction at an inquiry comes from delivering your case effectively and getting out fast, although there can be an interesting challenge in devising cunning arguments. We tend to appear at some of the more controversial inquiries, at which the applicant is often expending much money on supporting their case with long and complex Environmental Impact Statements, backed by teams of professional expert witnesses, as well as heavy legal support. All this is quite serious stuff: hence the need for the

smaller players to be very focussed and professional – also for the arguments to be sharp and cunning. Now onto two recent cases, the first of which was important and interesting.

This first case is the big inquiry held early this year to review proposals for a new golf course at Coul Links, just north of Dornoch. The applicant at Coul is the American golf-leisure company called Bandon Dunes, here in Scotland like Trump to conquer the home of golf. Bandon has a record of expanding from its home on the Oregon coast, and its business model is to create a group of adjacent courses, designed and managed to a very high standard, and closely linked to providing accommodation and other services. These have to be courses of high ranking, the attraction for many wealthy, incoming visitors being to ‘box-tick’ elite courses, and links courses especially are in demand by the box-tickers. Some of the basic infrastructure is already to be found adjacent to Coul: there are good links courses within reach, and one of them – Royal Dornoch – has very high standing in the global listings of top courses, being second top in one such survey. Another key element of the Bandon business model is that the courses should have scenic quality, indeed the company looks for sites with an element of drama to the landscape, through having a bold natural character, and a marine back-drop is an obvious part of the package for links courses.

That is where Coul comes in. All Bandon needs is its own top-ranking course as a platform from which to take the lead, along with other local courses, to provide high quality golfing vacations for incoming players. Having set its development eye on Coul Links, nothing else will do.



*Coul beach*

A deal has been agreed with the landowner, and Bandon is said to already own hotels in Dornoch, so all that needs doing is the pesky matter of getting a planning consent, which has to overcome the reality that its chosen site is also a Site of Special Scientific Interest, an EU Special Protection Area (SPA) for birds, and a recognised wetland site under the Ramsar Convention. Also part of this set of conservation designations is

the adjacent Loch Fleet National Nature Reserve, and the whole is soon to be part of an extensive Moray Firth marine SPA: in short, there is high national conservation value here. How easy Mr Trump had it on the Aberdeenshire coast.

We decided to contribute to this inquiry, which we did alongside the Ramblers, because we judged that the important recreational value of Coul for the public was not getting proper attention. Highland Council had given its consent for this development, but the strong national nature-conservation interest inevitably led to a public inquiry. This delay allowed the recreation voices to slip in and join the debate. The inquiry was a big four-week event and, as ever for these large contentious cases, the volume of paper set in front of the Inquiry Reporters (two of them) was huge. However, most of the four weeks was dominated by the detailed objections on conservation grounds, matched by appropriate defence from the applicant. Most of that debate had a narrow focus on the development site and its immediate surrounds, which left us ample space to slip in solid and broader-based arguments on both the landscape setting and the recreational importance of the site. A bit of conflict emerged at the end of the inquiry, when all parties prepare closing statements, in which each participant summarises their arguments in the light of evidence heard at the inquiry, with the applicant coming last in the delivery. Here the applicant took almost four months to deliver their closings: in part their QC was ill, but my main gripe on this delay was that this closing statement is 720 pages long. Scottish Ministers will take the final decision: the Inquiry Reporters' assessment is now with them and we await the outcome. Evidently this is a case with strong political undercurrents through much local support up north for the claimed economic benefits of creating a golf centre with global attraction, this versus the volume of opposition, some local, but most of it external to the area. The weight of the statutory conservation designations should win the day, but will the politics intervene, and have we have been cunning enough in argument for our kind of recreation.

Onwards to the Southern Uplands and to a wind farm inquiry, which is also sensitive, given climate crisis debate. Wind power development is now growing, after a recent decline when the subsidy for this kind of development was removed. Improved turbine technology makes clear that the bulk of renewables development into the future will use wind-power, given that alternatives such as tidal and wave technologies have not made much progress. Having lost their subsidy, the wind farm developers are looking for consent for ever-bigger turbines and to place them on ever-higher ground. There is a national on-shore wind policy that promotes

more of this kind of development, but there is no strategy for its location, which is left for the local authorities to oversee, and effectively the developers make the running through their identification of sites. The national policy also has a statement about protecting Scotland's fine scenery.

The Southern Uplands have attracted a large number of wind power schemes along their length, and more are likely. There are far too many to challenge, and we do need more renewable power, but we decided to tackle a proposal called North Lowther close to Wanlockhead in the Lowther Hills. Here, the density of oncoming development was threatening the enjoyment of well-used hills, accessible to urban communities in south-central Scotland. So our engagement in this case was a sort of test: first to establish the principle that with extensive development of wind power over the uplands we should be able to identify tracts of open-space land, even though wind farms will still be visible in most directions. And there is a challenge here to test the robustness of the policy to safeguard our best scenery: are the Lowther Hills deemed to have sufficient scenic quality to merit protection against the advance of wind? This inquiry is now over so we will again have to wait and see.

You may have detected that any answer to my provocative heading to this note is that public inquiries really aren't much fun. But some of them do offer much interest through the debate about how public policies on development are interpreted and applied. However, there also is a problem (or is it a challenge?) that too often the voluntary bodies have to play a major role in defending their interests against inappropriate development of the kind described above.

### **John Mackay**

*Two amusing reports from one of our new members who is learning the joys of hillwalking albeit undergoing some hard lessons. Bless you Kerry for showing us the lighter side of hillwalking under the watchful eye of your friends in the club, who keep an eye on you, especially Evelyn. Readers please join Kerry in her latest challenge set out at the end of her second report. Editor*

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## **MCSWEATY, COWS & A PINT**

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To get to the walk from hell I first have to go back several months to when we climbed Beinn a Ghlo, in the company of the lovely Anne &

Irene. As we were descending that day, Irene innocently (or maybe not!) asked me if I did any other exercise apart from hillwalking.

I didn't think she meant raising my arms to drink wine or swinging my legs in a hot tub while drinking wine so I answered honestly no not really!

This got me thinking that at 40 it was time to do more and drink less. So out went Sunday to Thursday wine and seeing how much of a butt print I could make on my sofa and in came semi sobriety and a new exercise routine.

Five 30 minute power walks at lunch time, 1 Pilates, 1 Zumba and one gym session a week quickly led to weekly physio sessions for 8 weeks and an empty bank account. Lesson to self no listening to Irene.

After presenting myself to this young physio straight out of New Zealand I was informed my problems were quite common for an inactive middle aged woman! All I will say further on this point is I don't think he'll use the term middle aged again very soon.

His comment did lead to determination to prove him wrong! On our last few walks out as a club the visibility had been poor and weather not great. So I was delighted to see the forecast was looking mighty fine for our trip to Tyndrum on Sunday. I also went thinking with all this new exercise surely my fitness will be improving and hillwalking will be getting easier. I put out of my head my physio's observations that I had, "no balance, no glute muscles and the worst calf muscles he'd even seen".

Off we headed and the first few hours were very enjoyable in the company of Evelyn, Jean and Irene as we headed for the Corbett, Beinn Chaorach. The route was to take us from the West Highland Way, crossing Allt Gleann A Chalchain then following the NNW ascend to the summit Beinn Chaorach before descending SSW down grassy (bloody) slopes to pick up path of the West Highland Way and return to Tyndrum.

I'm not going to say too much on the issue of cows & bulls but blooming Nora if we could just have one walk that didn't feature them that would be great.

Rookie error I forgot to take a hat on such a hot day so Evelyn leant me her hanky to tie round my head. I'd also rolled up my trousers for some air so the image in your head right now of Compo from Last of the Summer Wine isn't far off.

It was as we started the climb through bog and grass I started feeling sick so the climb in the heat was slow and arduous. I actually didn't know the body had so many sweat glands. Eventually we got to the top and the views were magical. Scotland in all its glory.

Because of the nauseous feeling I couldn't eat lunch and was running out of water another rookie error! The descent was worse than the climb. I was like Bambi on ice falling all over the place and just wanted it to be over. At one point I even considered just sitting down and seeing what would happen if I just stayed there. It was at this point I observed that swimming might be a nice hobby!

At the bottom however the nice ladies let me launch in to the river at the bottom to cool down and drink from – yes like a dog! Although I did get reminded my phone was in my pocket – another rookie error.

The walk back although beautiful was hell. It was literally one foot in front of the other and keep moving. My sincere apologies to the very nice lady who, as we approached Tyndrum told me I was nearly there, my response was highly inappropriate. I confess I moaned the whole way back and had ill thoughts on anyone who looked to be enjoying themselves! Even Evelyn gave up listening to me and speeded on.



*All smiles at the start*



*From the summit of Beinn  
Chaorach*

The only thing keeping me going was a cold pint at the end. Then I realised I had no money. I think at the fear of poking the beast any further Evelyn searched every inch of her rucksack to find enough for that pint – thank you Evelyn I will be eternally grateful.

So maybe my physio is right and I am an inactive middle aged woman. Maybe I will get kicked out the club for complete incompetency. And maybe I will look back on Sunday as stage 2 not stage 3 fun.

What I do know though is I'll never give up trying with hillwalking and it's a small comfort that my Zumba skills are as bad as my hillwalking skills so at least I'm consistent.

Next up Ben More on Mull – God loves a trier.

## POETIC LICENSE AND STRANGE OUTFITS

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November 17 saw the long awaited Navigation Skills Course, one of the great perks of being part of a club. However, after surfing lessons and snowboarding lessons the thought of any 'lesson' involving an outdoor pursuit brought back bad memories.

My fears were slightly allayed by a message from our President who said, "*There is a fair bit of standing about as well as walking at an easy pace*". Lucky for Mr Cameron I don't work for the trades description act!

More of this later, first, I feel like we need to go back to when we last spoke and I was about to conquer Ben More on Mull as part of the club weekend. Well....instead of conquering Ben More I conquered the Mishnish! However, that was due to bad weather conditions rather than my ability – for a change.

Mull, you stole my heart and I will definitely be back to climb your mountain. I did, however, have an act of stupidity when on the last day and we were about to set off to climb a Corbett near the ferry terminal I realised I had left my boots in the hotel which made things slightly trickier – Richard thank you for being my boot rescuer! My fondest memories from the weekend, except the Mishnish, was climbing a gully we weren't meant to and getting lost, and Ian Cameron not understanding my pronunciation and having to act out an impression of a seal to confirm he understood what I was saying...yes I wish I had filmed it too!

So back to the navigation course. The day started well and I have to say full disclosure I did inform the instructor of my limited knowledge and calamity status. Not long after setting off we were overtaken by a familiar dog and shortly by its owner who was running up the hill I was shortly to be plodding up. My awe of his ability to run up it was somewhat diminished by my confusion regarding the attire he was wearing, a cross between what you would wear to fish in the Tay and what Eddie the Eagle would wear!

REPORT THIS AD

As I looked like a boy scout minus the toggle and cap but with the compass and map round my neck – which by the way you're not meant to do; I felt the need to explain! "*I'm on a navigation course*", I quickly called, "*and I'm using my dad's old compass*". Why you would feel the need to explain all that lord only knows! He did call back, "*well then I'm surprised it's not directing you to the pub.*" Good point.

We headed off in the direction of **Ben Vrackie**, great I thought it's a path all the way and one I've been up a few times, it doesn't matter if I don't know what he's on about I can pretend. No such luck that was not the route of the day.

Quite quickly Mr Instructor seemed to interpret my three expressions of glaikit, glaikit and glaikit. As we veered left towards **Meall na h-Aodainn Moire** I was starting to feel the effects of my two weeks annual leave being spent on the sofa watching Christmas movies. Mr Cameron's description to this point was within trading standards; we stopped several times to learn navigation and had a steady pace. Reading the map I wasn't too bad at, trying to work out your speed, gradient and any math elements it was way too early on a Sunday morning. Never mind remembering the three D's.

The day was clear and crisp, the views spectacular. As we took a right round the back of **Meall na h-Aodainn Moire** to face **Meall na Moine**, we were taught some more map and compass skills and the importance of being aware about what was around you. As this point Mr Instructor read my glaikit expression and sent the rest on ahead while he explained things more slowly to me! He also pointed out at this stage he liked a challenge. Not really sure he'd had such a one before though!

It was at this point my two weeks sofa binging caught up and I was completely pickled. Roy and Anne, I apologise for the amounts of 'oh fu\*\*' that came out my mouth as we went down, then very steeply up through the snow. Mr Instructor was behind me and insisted when I told him to pass that he had the cold and was happy with the pace, I don't think he realised he would be fearing for his life if I fell backwards and squashed him straight out. He was also like a machine who didn't even have a raised heart rate.

When we reached a resting place looking on to **Meall an Daimh** we soon noticed darkness wasn't very far away therefore instead of carrying on we needed to descend and reach the corner of **Loch a Choire** before joining the main Ben Vrackie path.

Enter Mr Mitchell and Mr R Cameron who descended the hill like Sherpas descending Everest, either that or it was getting close to Mr M's dinner time. Normally being the one who would spend any snow walk on my face, poor Anne took on the mantle on falling in bog, water, snow and anything in between. Going down so fast was a killer on the knees. Adding in the rocks, snow and bog means today I'm walking like I've spent two weeks on a horse not a sofa.

Six hours after starting off I was for the want of a better expression bugged and thoroughly regretting not doing my goals for annual leave of walking every day or cycling. However Mr Cameron's description of, "*fair bit of standing about as well as walking at an easy pace*", did not add up to my experience of the day.

I do feel though that Mr Instructor got off very easily from my Bridget Jones escapades. The poor man who tried to teach me surfing in Australia got mounted more times than the surf board due to my inability to stand up and the man who tried to teach me snowboarding is probably still receiving psychiatric treatment to get over the girl who landed on top of him and together headed head first down the slope!

Fair play to the instructor, it was a great course and he did promise me a certificate with a smiley face on it – I look forward to displaying it proudly on my fridge.

Now I know how to use a map and compass off I go exploring on my own! Who knows I might even meet my future husband through the mountain rescue.

As 2020 is fast descending on us and many in the country don't have 2020 vision I'm taking on the challenge of climbing 20 Munros in 2020 to raise much needed funds for Royal Blind– so, who in the club is brave enough to come up one with me....? You could spread the pain and take one Munro each.....

*Ciao for now.*

**Kerry Lindsay**

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## **MUNRO TABLE CHALLENGE**

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In 2019 a large-scale environmental community project was launched to celebrate the centenary of the death of Sir Hugh Munro. His name is synonymous with hillwalking in Scotland and much further afield. Sir

Hugh will be remembered forever for compiling a list of mountains in Scotland over 300 feet, affectionately known as the Munro Table and is the “go to” list for many hill walkers and mountaineers throughout the world.

The project was launched on the 19<sup>th</sup> March, which coincides with his death and will run for one year. The Munro Table invited 282 Clubs or individuals to select a hill from the 282 current list of Munros to walk to the summit and record the event by submitting an account of the day. At the conclusion of the event, it is planned to publish a “book” of these walks with a page dedicated to each hill.

It is also planned to store the publication within an archival portfolio and to be presented at various locations on a bespoke table fabricated from wood from Lindertis Estate, the family home and burial place of Sir Hugh. It is the intention of the organisers to display the “book” in a variety of locations including galleries, film festivals, parliament with each location bringing a different community to the project, offering information, education, readings, nature and geology all associated with Munro. The “table” is to be gifted to a public collection in Scotland for future access and research, which will be a unique record of this centenary year in the mountains contributed by the community of the 282 walkers, climbers, clubs and runners who took part.

As most members will recall, the Blairgowrie and District Hillwalking Club supported this venture by “sponsoring” two Munros, Braigh Coire Chruinn-bhaigain and Carn nan Gabhar, both on the Beinn a’ Ghlo massif. On a personal note, I also sponsored Meall Buidhe (Knoydart) and completed this in September.



*Beinn a Ghlo*



*Meal Buidhe*

To acknowledge the support of individuals and hillwalking Clubs, the organisers are funding the planting of 282 high altitude indigenous trees to restore the unique and important wildlife-rich habitat, montane scrub. The planting will involve collecting seed from trees such as dwarf birch and downy willow from precipitous mountain ledges and rocky outcrops. It is hoped that in the second centenary celebrating Munro's death that the mountain ecology may have inherited flora and fauna as a result of the tree planting.

**Ian Cameron**

## **SOCIAL EVENTS**

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### *Club BBQ & Walk*

It certainly brought back memories. For a number of years the Club spent many happy hours at The Moorfield Hotel using it as a Clubhouse, holding AGMs, Ceilidhs and Club nights at this lovely spot in the country. Here we were back again at almost the same spot for this year's Club BBQ hosted by Phil and Jan Seymour at their house in Myreriggs Road.

The weather was ideal for the day with blue skies, billowing clouds and only the occasional shower. A good number of members and guests attended and for one group the afternoon started with a walk from the house past Monk Myre and Parkhead Farm, where the group joined the river Ericht path. From there the route was downstream to Kitty Swanson's bridge returning by tracks and minor roads to Myreriggs Road.

The other group walked towards Monk Myre turning south east on a track through barley fields onto a ridge giving great views of the Sidlaws on one side and the Grampians on the other. The track led down to Easter Bendochy where a short walk east found the local library – in a red phone box! Another track led back across the ridge to Monk Myre to return to the start.



*Robertsons with Susan  
(guest) near Monk Myre*



*Phil and Jan's garden*

The Seymour's immaculate and colourful garden was the setting for the afternoon. An excellent feast was enjoyed by all with burgers, sausages and kebabs supplemented by a huge variety of interesting salads followed by an equally delicious selection of desserts, washed down of course by refreshing beverages to suit every taste!

All those who attended enjoyed not only the food but also the lovely surroundings and the genial company. Many thanks are due to Jan and Phil for their hospitality.

### **Rob Robertson**

#### ***Slide Night***

The Club's annual slide show, although not well attended was an occasion to hear about members' travels to the Balkans, Terry's climb of Mount Kenya and Jane's round up of all walks and club activities this year. All talks were beautifully illustrated and reports punctuated with punchy anecdotes. As usual at the slide night, members submitted photographs for a calendar – fantastic selection of photographs from around Scotland – the calendar quickly sold out and provided a modest profit for club funds.

#### ***Tapas afternoon***

Another fund raising event was an entertaining and gourmet afternoon at Littles' restaurant when Willie Little once again prepared a feast of food for members and guests. An excellent way for the club to raise funds with lots of sociable chat and plenty to eat. Thank you once again Willie.

### **Jane Clark**

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## **FORTHCOMING EVENTS FOR THE CLUB**

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Our Christmas walk is from at the Rumbling Bridge, Dunkeld and finishes in Bankfoot where we will look forward to a hearty bowl of soup at the Bankfoot Inn. Walkers with decorated rucksacks and wearing Christmas jumpers to be spotted !!

The annual Twix Christmas/New year event will be held from 27-29 December in Ballater, Deeside.

Our annual quiz night is on 17 January 2020 and we look forward to a good turnout at Blairgowrie Golf Club. There will be a raffle and once again Roddy will be our quiz master and Evelyn Hood will set the questions.

The AGM is on 27 March 2020 at Blairgowrie Golf club.

Looking further forward

We have our Spring weekend to Ullapool 29 May – 31 May 2020. The Summer weekend is to Rum in September 2020.

**Evelyn Menzies**

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## **THE VICARIOUS PLEASURES OF (NOT) HILLWALKING.**

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It is clear from Mountain Thyme that club members take great pleasure from their hill walking. But this contribution asks an odd question – what is the effect of this communication of the club activities on non-members?

This is an unusual contribution to Mountain Thyme as I am not a member of the club, nor a hillwalker. I do have a nice pair of walking poles but being arthritic they only help me walk a very short distance. And this is where the vicarious pleasure comes in. I follow the club's Facebook page and also am involved a little in the 'Mountain Thyme' production, so I see what is going on with the club and see the photos taken on walks.

Although I cannot go on the walks I can appreciate those stunning landscapes that the club visit and the flora and fauna seen on the walks from the comments and pictures on Facebook.

Bringing it full circle the Facebook post of 24<sup>th</sup> June this year had an actual photo of Mountain Thyme taken on the walk in Glen Tromie.



Here are a few things that I find interesting in the club's publications.

First, Most of the Scottish mountains retain Gaelic names which, at least to me, sound really romantic. For example, how about this from the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition of Mountain Thyme.

“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.”

Now I know these names are normally descriptive so that Bheinn is just a hill, Meall a rounded lumpy one, and Sgurr a jagged one. But to me they still evoke a more romantic vision in Gaelic. Which sounds better Gleann an dubh-lochain or glen of the black little loch!

Second, it is nice to appreciate people's achievement evident from the many photographs of people standing by a cairn at the top of a mountain with a look of satisfaction on their faces. A good example is the photo from the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary issue of the champagne celebration on the summit of Beinn Bhuidhe as past president, Norman Smith, completed climbing all the Corbetts – there are 222. The first club member to climb all Munros and Corbetts as a club member.

Third, it may be obvious to members but the stunning views shown in some of the facebook posts and in Mountain Thyme only emphasise for the rest of us how beautiful Scotland is. We are all lucky to live in this country, a sentiment beautifully expressed by Sir Walter Scott (full marks if you spotted Loch an t-Seilich, Looking South through the Gaick pass).



O Caledonia! stern and wild,  
Meet nurse for a poetic child!  
Land of the heath and shaggy wood,  
Land of the mountain and the flood,  
Land of my sires! what mortal hand  
Can e'er untie the filial band  
That knits me to thy rugged strand!

(Lay of the Last Minstrel)

Fourth, it is not just Scotland that has beautiful landscapes, where members visit other places of interest 'Mountain Thyme' often has a 'Members Travels' item describing visits further afield. For example, "Idyllic saunters in the Isles of Scilly" contributed by Anne and Rob Robertson to the Spring 2018 issue, and "Walking the kumano kodo, a travelogue" contributed by Roddy Cameron to the Autumn 2018 edition.

In summary, it is nice to see such an active club exploring 'the mountain and the flood', and for my vicarious pleasure, please please keep walking, posting the photos on Facebook and producing 'Mountain Thyme'.

**Colin Brown**

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## **SNIPPETS**

### *Pam Kinnear*

In July, Club members were sad to hear of the death of Pam Kinnear. Pam was a stalwart in the early days of the club climbing many Munros and a regular with "Loaning tours" inspiring Penny's signature vegetarian lasagne. Pam was a nurse and, on a club organised first aid course, clearly demonstrated quiet authority and confidence when treating a casualty. Pam met her husband Peter, on a club outing and together they continued to explore the countryside.



*Pam (centre) the boat up Loch  
Mallardoch*



*Pam with Rhoda and Peter on  
Aonach Mor looking towards Ben  
Nevis*

### ***Evelyn and Headway***

Unbeknown to Evelyn, a friend/colleague from Headway nominated her for the Stephen McAleese Outstanding Contribution to Headway Award. *Headway is a UK Charity that promotes understanding of all aspects of brain injury and provides information, support and services to survivors, their families and carers. Headway also campaigns to reduce the incidence of brain injury.*

She only found out when she received a phone call from her friend to say that she is one of 3 from the UK to be selected for this Award. She and Dunc have been invited to attend a glittering Award Ceremony in the InterContinental Hotel, Mayfair, London on Friday 6 December. At the ceremony, she was awarded runner up. Congratulations.

### ***The Blair Fifty***

Donald Douglas has given some thought to the hills that lie within a fifty mile radius of Blairgowrie and has calculated there are twenty-three Munros, eight Corbetts and nine Grahams making a total of forty hills which can be increased to fifty six if Marilyn's are included. Donald plans to climb all these hills – he has already completed the Munros and Corbetts. If you would like to know more about this personal challenge please contact Donald.

### ***Club programme of walks***

The club's hard working committee invites all members to submit suggestions for walks to any committee member for their January

meeting. New and former suggestions are carefully considered by the committee to prepare the next programme of walks, announced at the AGM.

## **CLOSING REMARKS**

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The last word falls to the editor who welcomes comments on this magazine. Visitors are always welcome on walks. If you would like to know more about the club please check the website [www.bdhc.org.uk](http://www.bdhc.org.uk) to find details of forthcoming walks and how to book your place. Reports of most walks are placed on the blog section and a similar report is placed in the Blairgowrie Advertiser. Photos from walks and a short report are usually posted on the club's Facebook page.

**Jane Clark editor**