

Aberdeen Hillwalking Club



Newsletter 2012-2013

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter and apologies for the delay in issuing this production, which was caused by the hospitalisation of Kris Howard, our editor, who unfortunately was involved in a serious road traffic accident whilst cycling. Kris received extensive injuries from which I am pleased to report he has now recovered from and indeed has joined us again on our outings. Sadly, Kris has decided to give up the role of editor and the "baton" has been taken over by Fiona Wallace, ably assisted by her husband Alan. We wish them well in this new task and ask for your help and support by providing them with any interesting news items or articles appropriate to future editions of the newsletter. We have enjoyed a great summer, weatherwise, with record temperatures throughout the country. Let us hope this will encourage our members and any newcomers to join us on future outings. There are only a few walks left before the end of our season and it is always useful to check out your hillwalking equipment to see if you require to renew or replace items. Many bargains can be had from sales and discounts, so check out our list of outdoor retailers for special offers. One important and essential item, which we should all carry, is a first aid kit. It does not have to be extensive but should at least cover essential items, which may be necessary for outdoor use. There are plenty of off-the-shelf kits available and information on-line to enable you to create your own emergency kit. If in doubt, just "Google" it and I'm sure you will find details of items required. Our regular feature on reporters' notes and our blog site is a good selling point for encouraging new and existing members to join.

TRIBUTE TO WILLIE ROBB

I am grateful to Brian Ritchie, Marine Lab Hiking group, for his tribute to Willie Robb in the autumn 2012 newsletter. Unfortunately, I was on holiday immediately after the incident and had no time to write my thoughts. However, I feel it is necessary to again pay tribute to Willie. I still find it difficult to come to terms with the tragic situation in October when Willie went missing. I am sure many members who were on the walk that day feel the same way. We will never know exactly what happened to cause his death by drowning in the river Spey.

Willie was a stalwart of the club over a period of at least 30 years, participating in regular club outings, hiking trips abroad and numerous week's hikes during this period. Willie was a quiet and unassuming man, who was an experienced hillwalker having completed all the Munros a few years ago. During his funeral service, attended by many club members as well as other folks from hillwalking clubs he was associated with, it was mentioned that Willie had other interests including country dancing and bowling. I am sure that several stories were recounted about Willie and his hillwalking experiences. Again, I express praise for the Police, Mountain Rescue, dog search and helicopter

MAIRS THISTLE SCOTLAND

As you may be aware Mairs Thistle bus company have had a number of problems recently following a fire at their bus depot. The company has now "ceased to trade" which left us with no bus hire firm to complete our programme of outings for the 2013/14 season. We have at short notice been able to secure buses through Watermill Coaches (Peterhead and Ellon) although there is a slight increase in hire costs for some outings at the end of the season. We are sorry to lose the services of Gordon Milne who has been a good friend of our club for many years and wish him well in any future venture.

DISCOUNTS

These are available at a number of retail outlets as indicated below;

Blacks, George Street	10%
Millets, Union Street	10%
Hilltrek, Aboyne	10%
Nevisport, 186 George Street	10% (selected lines only)
Craigdon Sports, St Andrew Street	10%
Graham Tiso, John Street	up to 25% on Tiso club evenings only

Both Craigdon Sports and Tiso have recently launched loyalty cards, which entitles members to at least 10% discount. Tiso have also approached the club to offer us meeting facilities for AGMs or group sessions and can provide support for kit discussions, advice on expedition planning and special invitations to significant store events including club discount evenings. The committee will be considering this offer in due course.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- Photo and Video Show 7th November 2013 at the Sportsman's Club, Queen's Road, 7.30pm
- Suggested walks from members for next year's programme to be submitted to a committee member by 10th November.

Winter Walks, all 9.00am starts

- 10th November Colpy to Gartly (Foundland Hill),
- 8th December Crawton to Stonehaven
- 12th January Back o' Bennachie to Visitor Centre, followed by Festive Meal
- 2nd February Potarch to Aboyne (by Falls of Dess)

NEMT

October 15th Heather Morning " Mountain Safety"

November 13th Nigel Williams "Compass, Contours, GPS and Digital Mapping"

December 17th Murdoch Jamieson "A climbing apprenticeship served in the North West Highlands"

January 15th Chris Townsend "Mountain Ski Touring"

February 18th Manny Gorman "The Corbetts in 70 days (without motorised help)"

March 19th to be confirmed

All lectures will be held in the Sportsman's Club starting at 7.30 pm

Entry £4.00 Concession £2.00

REPORTS AND PHOTOS FROM THE WALKS

11th November 2012 Lunan Bay to Arbroath

Today was a 9.00am start, there were 30 members. Our intended route was amended to take in to account of the closures on certain parts of the coastal path, not everybody was happy about this, but safety is paramount. It was a lovely day and all alighted at Lunan Bay apart from Kris Howard. We made our way on the official route till Auchmithie where we had lunch, some members took the coastal

route from Auchmithie to Arbroath. Several members made their way to the Newgate pub and Bill, the bus driver, picked us up at the white gates, a good day and all back safe and sound. I was presented with a bouquet of brussel sprouts from Lizetta Garwood, they were very good. **Fiona**



Red Castle ruins, Graeme Stephen, Jim Henderson



Above Corbie Knowe

With a good turn out of 30 walkers and a very good weather forecast, our spirits were high as we headed south from Aberdeen. We picked up Margaret and David Fenlon at Portlethen, had a short comfort stop at Stracathro and commenced the walk at Lunan just before 11am. Many pictures were taken at Red Castle overlooking the Lunan Water before descending to the beach and sand dunes for an extremely

pleasant walk to Corbie Knowe. We ascended the cliff path above Ethie Haven, where some opted for the cliff top route south, whilst others walked inland on farm tracks to take lunch overlooking the old harbour at Auchmithie. Again, some took the coastal route from here towards Arbroath, the remainder headed across land to arrive at our bus parked on the Arbroath promenade. Refreshments were taken at the local Newgate Inn and we left Arbroath at 5pm for our return to Aberdeen. **Graham**



Alan, David & Margaret Fenlon, Linda and Kevin, Auchmithie.

9th December 2012 Milltown of Towie to Tarland

It was a fairly mixed forecast for this area today with strong winds from the northwest. 26 walkers were booked on the bus and we departed from Duthie Park just after 9am. A toilet stop was taken at Alford and we commenced our walk around 10.45am from near Milltown of Towie. The forecast was pretty accurate with wintry showers and a very stiff breeze on our backs as we climbed on wet slushy snow up the shoulder of Craiglea Hill. We then traversed the hill, passing

the site of Humphrey's Well and onwards to the summit of Pressendye. We did not linger on the top as the wind chill factor was high and it began to snow. We descended from the summit, again on wet slushy snow, on the new waymarked "blue route" and took a short lunch stop in the trees below Pressendye summit. It continued to snow, sleet and lightly rain as we descended on the "blue" trail all the way into Tarland. Refreshments were taken at the local pub before our driver had us back in Aberdeen well ahead of schedule. Graham, in the absence of Frank Kelly our AHCW President, wished everyone a Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year and hoped to see them again on walks in 2013. It had been a fairly easy 8.5 mile walk, made difficult by the wet slushy and slippery underfoot conditions. **Graham**



Group on Blue Route below Pressendye

13 January 2013 Ballater to Dinnet



Maria, Heather, Andrea & Martin on the Deeside Way.

Our New Year walk returned to familiar territory with an outing to Ballater and a choice of a two-part walk. The first part being a circular route around the Seven Bridges, while the second part and a number of members warmed up with a "pit stop" for coffee in the numerous coffee shops within Ballater. The traditional festive meal was scheduled for the Feughside Inn but unfortunately, a late closure meant a change of venue. Our thanks are due to Fiona Wallace, who at short notice arranged an alternative venue of the Burnett Arms, Banchory. The meal and service was first class, allowing members to participate in a chat over festive drinks before returning home to Aberdeen. **Frank**

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Gilbert, Anne & Grace at The Burnett Arms, Banchory.

3rd February 2013 Glentinar to Tombae



Lunch at the Half Way Hut

With a good forecast, 22 walkers looked forward to a lovely winter's outing. Gordon was driving today and he soon had us at our comfort stop at Aboyne. We commenced our through-walk near the visitor centre around 10.15am, with most sticking to the route sheet, but some opted for a slightly shorter walk ending up at Deecastle on the B976 road. The walk through the Glentinar forest was extremely pleasant with the trees hanging in snow. A pair of buzzards was seen soaring high above The Strone.

We eventually had our lunch at "Half Way Hut" before continuing on the second stage of our walk. This part of the walk turned out to be a bit of a slog, as the path over towards Knockie Branar and Black Moss was completely filled with deep snow. The snow pack was such that it would not support an individual's weight and sinking into it up to your knees was extremely tiring. However, we made it to the col in blazing sunshine and sunglasses were the order of the day as the glare from the snow was something else. We rested at the col and descended to the Tombae side of the hills where our bus awaited us at the Tombae/Greystone track. A short refreshment stop was taken at "The Boat Inn" at Aboyne, where all discussed and remarked on their various happenings of the day. We were back home in Aberdeen well ahead of our scheduled time. This was a fabulous 10 mile walk, made just a little tiring by the underfoot conditions. **Graham**



Group on Black Moss

3rd March 2013 Old Rattray to Fraserburgh

32 walkers today for our first walk of the new 2013 programme. It was good to see some members who had not been with us for some time and three new walkers. Frank Kelly welcomed the newcomers to our Club and described to them our procedures of the day. We picked up Christine Brown, Ray Kemp and the Wallaces at the Bridge of Don area and John Stewart and the Grants at Ellon "Park and Ride", where we had a short comfort stop. Bill Sutherland our driver then headed north and had us at our start point at Old Rattray by 10.45am.



Frank on gate style

Most of the walkers commenced at Old Rattray near the Loch of Strathbeg, but Martin, Heather, Maria and the Grants travelled with the bus to commence their through-walk at St Combs. A small

group headed firstly for the Rattray Head lighthouse area before heading north, whereas most of the remaining walkers traversed the sand dunes towards the footbridge at the north end of the Loch of Strathbeg. We took lunch at St Combs before our onwards walk through Inverallochy and Cairnbulg. New fences had been built behind the houses in Inverallochy and, because of this barrier, we had to jump a burn and cross fields to gain the old disused railway line which led us to the road bridge over the Water of Philorth. A pleasant walk along the edge of the Fraserburgh golf course followed which took us to our awaiting bus on the beach esplanade. Refreshments were taken at the Royal Hotel in the "Broch" before Bill, our driver, had us back at the Duthie Park in Aberdeen exactly on time. A very good outing which was enjoyed by all. **Graham**



It was a lovely day with most people doing the full walk. 5 of us were dropped off at St Combs and enjoyed a lovely morning coffee at the



Tufted Duck just to get us started, followed by picnic lunch at

Cairnbulg and finishing with tea at Fraserburgh. We were treated to a great display of jetski-ing at Fraserburgh. **Heather**

17th March 2013 Tigerton/Menmuir to Edzell (Brown & White Caterthuns)

Unfortunately, this outing was poorly attended with only 18 members on the walk. The weather forecast was not good, but the day turned out to be surprisingly pleasant, apart from a brief snow flurry. Despite the relatively short distance of 6 miles, members enjoyed the walk over both Brown and White Caterthuns with hill top defensive ramparts. Detailed notice boards gave an indication of the historical significance of these forts constructed with stones and turfs. An early finish allowed a welcome pub stop in Edzell where we met with some of the group who chose an alternative walk to the Rocks of Solitude. **Frank**



Group on summit of White Caterthun

31st March 2013 Easter Balmoral to Littlemill (Glen Girnock)



Grace, Anne & Ken having lunch at Bovaglie ruin.

It was a cold bright Easter day, there were 22 members. There were 3 options for today's walk, 6 members were dropped off near Loch Ullachie and headed for the Coyles of Muick, Kris was dropped off at Littlemill, where Bill, our bus driver, checked for suitable parking for our pick up at the end of the walk. The remaining 15 continued to Easter Balmoral and were dropped off at Lochnagar distillery. We had an enjoyable walk to Bovaglie ruin

where we had lunch. We saw a herd of deer walking in single file about a mile long. As we continued our walk we saw the party of 6 descending through deep snow to cross the Girnock Burn. Most arrived back about 2pm with the party of 6 arriving about 2.45pm. We had a pub stop at Ballater and thanks to Bill, our bus driver; we were back to the Duthie Park on time. **Fiona**

14th April 2013 Lary to Logie Coldstone



Early Lunch at Morven Lodge

22 walkers were on today's outing. The day started overcast with some heavy rain on the way out but this soon turned to light drizzle. 2 members took the bus to the far end to have a shorter walk. Those who disembarked at Lary made their way up the glen planning to take the lower path along the side of Morven but found the way blocked by a raging torrent of snowmelt. Despite tracking further up the bank of the stream the situation did not improve eventually reaching a level area resembling a basin of water. The decision was taken to turn back so we headed for an

early lunch at Morven Lodge via trees at The Tom. After lunch Gilbert managed to recall the bus to Ballater, the skies cleared and the walk down was completed in sunshine. Following a pub stop in Aboyne, Gordon got us back to Aberdeen 10 minutes early. **Hamish**

28th April 2013 Craigellachie to Cragganmore

We had 26 walkers booked on the bus today. We picked up John Stewart, Graeme Stephen and the Grants at Inverurie before heading towards Huntly to collect Margaret Leslie. Gordon our driver soon whisked us north to our comfort stop at Dufftown. Some stayed on the bus at our starting point at Craigellachie to have coffee en route to Cragganmore. Wendy painted a

lovely picture whilst waiting at our pickup point. Us others had a day of sunshine and showers - some of which were hail showers. The scenery was marvellous and we passed and chatted to cyclists and walkers on the Speyside Way on our way south. In the sunny times, it was lovely and warm, but in the showers, it was cold and miserable. Wet weather jackets and overtrousers were on and off - such was the changeable conditions. After 12 miles, we reached our bus parked at Cragganmore. We just got back to the bus in time as the heavens opened - some walkers were not so lucky and got soaked. We put the kettles on and all enjoyed a welcome cuppa.

The bus departed almost an hour early and we

had a short refreshment stop at Dufftown on our way back to Aberdeen which we arrived almost an hour ahead of schedule.

Graham



Lunch at Knockando



Graham on bridge over the Spey near Cragganmore



Fiona and I took a short detour to the Falls of Linn. **Alan**

12th May 2013 Glen Tanar Circular

It was a dry day, although winter seemed to be going on and on, when 26 members and visitors set out for Glen Tanar. There were 2 walks listed on the route sheet, but there are so many good paths in Glen Tanar that a number of variations are possible, and a few were taken on the day.

One newish walk not shown on the O/S maps is a riverside walk back to the Visitor Centre from the east instead of returning via the Fairy Loch. However, all of this was not sufficient for 2 ladies who decided that Mount Keen was their objective. This they achieved and everybody was back to the bus by departure time. A stop at the Boat Inn, Aboyne completed the day. **David**



Margaret, Vi, Christine & Alastair enjoying a cup of tea.

26th May 2013 Spittal of Muick circular

We originally had 24 booked on the bus but following a few cancellations we had 19 on the bus leaving Aberdeen. The numbers were boosted by 1 as we picked up Margaret Cameron's sister Flora (& her bike) as we met her cycling up the Glen towards the car park at the Spittal of Muick. Most walkers decided to do the 5 tops or just Lochnagar on its own whilst others did shorter variations involving Broad Cairn & the Dubh Loch. Gilbert, Grace & Fiona opted to walk the Capel Mounth Circular anti-clockwise. It was a perfect day for walking - no rain; little wind & an overcast sky most of the day. Gilbert's party lost their way for a short time at the start of the Capel Mounth trail in Glen Clova as a whole swathe of trees had been cut down resulting in the track skirting the edge of the trees instead of passing through the forest as it would have done originally. After tea or coffee back at the bus we returned to Aberdeen via Ballater where we had a half hour stop for refreshments.

Gilbert

I took in Lochnagar and a return by the Glas Alt waterfall. In all my years in this area, I have never seen so many people out in the hills. I spoke to 3 guys from New Zealand, 2 walkers from Nigeria and many other walkers who had never been on Lochnagar before. What a wonderful day to be out in the hills. On the summit of Lochnagar, there must have be dozens of people enjoying the glorious views in all directions. I pointed out Morven to the northwest, which lies 88 miles away near Helmsdale across the Moray Firth, such was the clarity of the air.

The Glas Alt waterfall never fails to impress and today was no exception - many photographs were taken here. We rested in the sunshine on the grass on the side of Loch Muick before our return to the bus at the Spittal car park. **Graham**



Summit view towards The Stuib

9th June 2013 Lomond Hills (Freuchie to Kinross pier)



A rest break near Wester Balgedie

There were 15 members on the bus; Graeme Stephen joined us at Freuchie as his parents lived nearby. The members on the bus today were split between the Lomond Hills Traverse and the Loch Lomond Heritage Trail. 11 went for the Lomond Hills and 5 for the Heritage Trail. I went for the former. We commenced at Freuchie and headed towards Easter Lomond, with great views over Falkland Palace and its environs. We continued over towards Wester Lomond and a very steep ascent to its Trig point, where we were glad to have a lunch stop on the summit. It was then a very steep knee trembling

descent to Glen Vale and an extremely pleasant walk through this valley towards an entrance to the Loch Leven Heritage trail. This part of the walk turned out to be a real slog as what appeared to be a 2 mile "round the Loch dander" turned into a 4 mile "foot aching" bash. Nevertheless the refreshments in the Bistro made up for the weariness on nearly 15 miles. **Graham**

23rd June 2013 Keiloch circular

The forecast was not great for today with strong wind and heavy showers predicted. 19 diehards were on the bus. We picked up Margaret Leslie at Aboyne and our driver soon had us at the Keiloch car park at Invercauld. Most walkers went for Culardoch, whilst Cassidy, Graeme, Michael and John Stewart came with me into Ballochbuie Forest. We crossed the Old Bridge of Dee and walked towards the Victoria Bridge over the Falls of Garbh Allt before traversing towards the Hokki Hut (presented to the UK Royal Family by the Swedish Royal Family) on the edge of the forest for a welcome "elevenses". A small herd of red deer was seen running



Hokki Hut

through the forest as we descended to the hut. This was followed by a pleasant stroll through the forest glades to a very indistinct path which climbed towards Creag nan Leachda (784m). Unfortunately, I misdirected on this indistinct path and we descended on a very slippery faint track into the narrow glen on the south side of the hill. We took lunch in the trees here before descending to the A93 Braemar road just before the road bridge. - A delightful path - one which I had never been on. Rain showers met us



Cassidy, Michael, Graeme & John on Creag nan Leachda path

as we crossed the road bridge but we were soon at the bus to watch a James Bond video until the rest of our walkers arrived. Most of these walkers had a pretty awful day on Culardoch with heavy rain and a cold wind. After tea/coffee at the bus we continued homewards. We took a short refreshment stop at Aboyne, also letting off Margaret Leslie, before arriving back in Aberdeen almost 2 hours ahead of schedule. It was a better day than I had expected - but these days have to be expected in Scotland's "summer times"!! **Graham**

7th July 2013 Braeriach (Sugar bowl car park)

There were 22 walkers booked for today's outing and with a super weather forecast, it was hoped for a good day in the Northern Cairngorms. We picked up 3 members at Inverurie and Margaret Leslie near Huntly before heading to Aberlour on Speyside for our short comfort stop. Our driver then had us at the Loch Morlich area by 10am. The route sheet suggested 3 walks and these were all taken up by our walkers. Some went for Braeriach, others for Ben Macdui with a return by the Cairngorm summit. 4 went for low level walks around Loch Morlich and Loch an Eilean. Alan Wallace and I tackled the "Goat Track" in Coire an t-Sneachda to reach the plateau.

In Coire an t-Schneachda, the sun was blazing down and the "Goat Track" was very steep, but what a tremendous vista was available looking back down the coire. Not a breath of wind was had on reaching the plateau and we rested for a short time to take in the superb views. We wandered leisurely across the plateau to take many pictures above the Feith Bhuidhe waterfall looking along the full length of Loch Avon - surely



Alan taking photos of Loch Avon

one of the best views in all the Cairngorms. After this picture-taking session, we climbed to the summit of Cairn Lochan for our lunch-break in the sun. Here, we met a group of adults and youngsters from the Ellon BB company who were camping near Carrbridge. On our descent back, we met 3 walkers from the Inverness Hillwalking Club, 2 walkers from Romania, 2 walkers from Peterhead and a man and his son from Newtonmore. All were enjoying this glorious day in the high Cairngorms. I returned to the bus at the Sugarbowl carpark by the Alt Mor track via Utsi's Bridge where I met up with John Stewart and the Kellys. The kettles were boiling as we returned to the bus and tea and coffee was enjoyed by all. Everyone was enthusing about their respective walks. Gilbert and Grace had been at a wedding in Aviemore the day before, but caught up with us on the day. We took a short "chipper" and refreshment stop at Aberlour before Stan our driver had us back in Aberdeen well ahead of schedule. This was probably one of the best days I have ever had in the Cairngorm plateau area - those members not out today, missed a day to remember!! **Graham**

When I got back to the bus I asked Stan the bus driver if he knew the score from the Men's Wimbledon Final between Andy Murray and Novak Djokovic. He turned on the radio and the score was 2 sets to love up for Murray, we listened to the rest of the match and after a nail biting time, Andy Murray won in 3 sets, 6-4; 7-5; 6-4. First British winner since Fred Perry in 1936. **Fiona**

21st July 2013 Ochill Hills (Blackford to Tillycoultry)

21 people were on this hike including 1 day member. The day started overcast with some mist so while most walkers alighted at Blackford two stayed on the bus and had a wander in the Tillycoultry area. During a steady ascent several members failed to do a left turn and had to backtrack (one was an experienced member who had done this walk before!). Jim took a path round the north side of



Upper Glendevon reservoir

the reservoir and found this easier than the original one which is now somewhat overgrown. After a lunch stop at Blackhills there was some hard climbing to reach the top of Skythorn hill then it was "downhill all the way" to the bus which was parked at the western end of the village where most of us enjoyed refreshments. Leaving a few minutes late the driver still got us home a half hour early at 7pm. **Hamish**

We had 21 walkers on the bus today, Alistair Condie was picked up at Portlethen and we continued southwards to a short comfort stop at Perth "park and ride" service station. The weather forecast for the Ochil Hills was for a cloudy start but becoming sunny by lunchtime. The forecast was in fact



Lunch at Bioch Bridge

"spot on". The Upper Glendevon Reservoir was very low, after rainless weeks and the paths too were also dry. We took lunch at the bridge over the Brioch Burn near Backhills Lodge in blazing sunshine. It was then a bit of a slog as we climbed to the Maddy Moss col in hot sunshine, this lasted all the way to our pickup point at Tillycoultry. Linda Henderson and Graeme Stephen climbed Andrew Gannel Hill (670m) and Ben Cleuch (721m) before descending by The Law to the bus park in Tillycoultry. Wendy Sutter painted a lovely picture near the Mill Glen quarry. A welcome "cuppa" was enjoyed by everyone and refreshments were

taken at the local pub before returning to Aberdeen on time. This was a great day in the Ochil Hills.

Graham

4th August 2013 Linn o' Dee circular

23 walkers turned up on the day, the walking conditions were good - it was dry, very little wind and there was a short, light shower late in the afternoon which we experienced whilst descending the shoulders of Ben Macdui. About half the walkers headed up Glen Derry & stopped at the Hutchison Memorial Hut. This has been recently refurbished and the porch is now fully enclosed with a door. Most walkers then continued on to climb Ben Macdui although several walkers opted for Derry Cairngorm. We were entertained by a remarkably tame snow bunting at the summit of Macdui which was begging for titbits. Margaret Cameron and her sister Flora were thinking of veering off towards the ridge to take in Carn a' Mhaim (a Munro) but changed their minds as time was short and there was



Coire Etchachan

no easy route off Macdui to gain this ridge. Several walkers ventured to Beinn Bhreac and others walked in the area around Linn O' Dee. Frank, Rosemary and Jim got off the bus early at Inverey to take in the hills in that area and Wendy set up her easel by the waters edge at Linn O' Dee. Everyone had a great day albeit a little tiring for some. The bus departed on time at 6:30pm and we stopped at the Boat Inn at Aboyne for our usual half hour pub stop. **Gilbert**

It was a 7am start and with a favourable weather forecast, we looked forward to a good outing. 4 walks were suggested on the route sheet and these were all taken up by our members. We welcomed Pauline MacLennan, whom we had not seen for some time. Jim Henderson and the Kellys got off the bus to do some walking in the Glen Ey area. Margaret Leslie did a circular walk through Glen Quoich and returned to the bus via the Clais Fhearnaig ravine. Hamish walked to the salmon ladder by the old



Ela at Hutchison Memorial Hut

Derry Lodge path and the rest of us visited the refurbished Hutchison Memorial Hut in Coire Etchachan. The party divided here, most went for Ben Macdui with a return by the Sron Riach shoulder. Graeme Stephen, Michael and I climbed to Creagan a' Choire Etchachan and then Derry Cairngorm with our return to Derry Lodge via the new path down into Glen Derry. It was a long hard day - 9 hours (18 miles) back to the bus and a welcome cup of tea/coffee. Wendy painted 2 lovely pictures at the Linn o' Dee area. All walkers were back on time and we had our short refreshment stop at the Boat Inn in Aboyne before our return to Aberdeen almost an hour ahead of schedule. What a great day - almost perfect with wonderful views, but hampered by a strong cross-wind on the high tops. **Graham**

18th August 2013 Dunkeld to Kirkmichael

We had a fairly good turnout of walkers today with 27 on the coach. We took a comfort stop at the



Refreshments at Kirkmichael

Forfar "MacDonalds" and Gordon our driver had us at the start point near Dunkeld just before 10.15am. We walked northwards towards "The Glack" and onwards to take lunch on the shores of Loch Ordie. A shower of rain made us stop and put on the waterproofs, but this soon passed and the sun re-appeared. The paths were pretty dry underfoot and we made good time towards Loch Oisineach Mor and the smaller Lochan Oisineach. Our onwards track, for some reason, followed the Rights of Way path yellow markers rather than the one described on the Route Sheet. However, this track skirted a

new high fence line, but eventually descended through the forest to our destination at Kirkmichael. We took our short refreshments stop at the local hostelry after a 14.7 mile through-walk. Most walkers enjoyed this most scenic walk. Gordon had us back in Aberdeen ahead of schedule. **Graham**

We (Frank, Gilbert, Janet, Hamish, Fiona & Alan) kept to the new way marked trail until we reached the wood about 4 kilometres from Kirkmichael at which point we left the marked route and followed the edge of this wood and headed north through rough and wet ground to join the original track. Once on the track we headed east past holiday lodges set in the trees and after hearing an unusual bird sound coming from the trees we eventually noticed a jay perched high up in a pine tree. It was not long before we reached the bus parked near Kirkmichael fire station where a welcome cup of char was waiting. **Gilbert**

1st September 2013 Chapelton of Glenlivet to Bellabeg (Smugglers Trail)

Fine day but very windy on the exposed part of the walk resulting in lost specs and hats. Some of the girls were almost blown off their feet. 3 sensible walkers took the bus round to Bellabeg and did some sheltered walks there. **Heather**



Who's Lost??

15th September 2013 Culbin Forest Circular

A good attendance of members turned out for this coastal walk around the Culbin Forest on the Moray Firth. The weather forecast was not good, however it showed signs of improvement as we journeyed north towards Forres and Nairn and indeed the morning remained clear and dry until lunchtime. The Culbin forest is managed by the Forestry Commission and extensive way-marked routes are evident with leaflets and maps of the area. Most members followed our suggested route, which saw us negotiating the maze of tracks to reach a trig point and watch tower at hill 99 (i.e.99 feet



Gilbert, Grace & Frank



above sea level) before leaving the forest to reach the beach and sand dunes.

The weather deteriorated and it rained for most of the afternoon but all safely returned to our starting point at the Wellhill visitor centre. A welcome stop at Keith on the way home for drinks and fish suppers ended a short but interesting day. **Frank**

29th September 2013 Ben Rinnes (Edinville to Dufftown Golf Club)

Twenty-eight walkers were on the bus, with one no-show. Six walkers chose to leave the bus at Craigellachie to walk part of the Speyside way back to Dufftown, and two people remained in Dufftown for the day. The rest of us set out from the Allt a'Bhainne distillery in the direction of Ben Rinnes. Three walkers chose to skirt round the mountain, while the rest made the ascent. I was walking



The Coffee Club on the Speyside Way



Scurran of Well

with my sister Helen and we made a detour to the top of Scurran of Well.

After the descent, we made the climb over Meikle Conval before finishing our walk at

Dufftown Golf Club. We had fine weather for the whole day, although it was rather windy on the descent. Everyone

enjoyed a drink in the Clubhouse; as there were just two of us wanting tea, the lady behind the bar very kindly boiled a

kettle for us. Everyone was back in good time apart from one person who missed his way on the final part of the walk, demonstrating the importance of carrying a map. However, we eventually located him, and arrived back in Aberdeen only five minutes later than planned. **Janet**



Rae & John on Ben Rinnes

Social Events

Video Show 8th November 2012

We had a super turnout of members at the Sportsman's Club on Queen's Road for our annual picture/video show. Graham Sangster, in the absence of Frank Kelly, our President, welcomed everyone to this social evening and described the forthcoming events. The proceedings started with a spectacular video of the Aiguille du Midi cable car journey above Chamonix in the French Alps near Mont Blanc. This was followed by Gilbert McCurdy showing pictures of his visit with Frank Kelly to the Cuillins of Skye in June 2012, including some great shots on the Inaccessible Pinnacle. Graham then showed a video film of his "walking" holiday in the French Ecrins National Park Alpine area, including some scary sequences on the "via ferrata" of Tete de la Maye. A compilation of pictures from all of the Club's walks and social events in 2012 was then presented - pictures had

been supplied from various members. Finally, Graham who had recently returned from the volcanic island of Lanzarote showed pictures from the caves and lava fields of the Timanfaya (Fire Mountain) National Park.

The proceedings were closed by Graham thanking all presenters for their contributions in making the evening successful and to all members for attending this extremely popular AHCW social event.

Claik Night 25th April 2013



Once again, we had a super turnout for this very popular social event on our Club's calendar. The event was held in the Sportsman's Club on Queen's Road. 28 members attended and it was good to see Marjory McCloud, Shirley Penny and Maria Sitkiewicz who had not been on club outings for a while. Frank Kelly welcomed everyone to the event and introduced Graham Sangster to

describe his small quiz, named "Aberdeen and NE Surroundings". The catering staff supplied us with stovies and macaroni & cheese and jolly good it was too!! The answers to the quiz were given and it was won by Rosemary Kelly with a high score who received a bottle of wine. Various members had donated gifts for the draw.



Rosemary celebrating her win

The "lucky ticket" number draw was won by Alistair Condie, Graeme Stephen and David Garwood who all received a bottle of wine. All in all, it was another terrific social evening with plenty of good "claik". We must thank (a) Gilbert McCurdy for organising the venue, (b) Graham Sangster for putting together the quiz and lastly to Heather Eddie for printing the tickets and organising the event. Frank Kelly closed the evening by thanking all members for participating in another great "Claik Night".

Summer meal at the Ashvale 21st June 2013

We had great turn out for our now annual summer meal at the Ashvale, past members chatted with present members to catch up with all the news. The meal was lovely and plentiful, thanks to Fiona Wallace for organising the event.

Meal at the Royal Hotel 4th October 2013

We had a lovely evening in the company of past and present members, food was excellent as was the drinks. The evening was extended by some folk who continued to The Stag (previously The Star and Garter) and then to The Bridge Bar before getting the last bus home. Thanks to Heather Eddie for organising the meal.



Colin Chapman's Sponsored walk through the Great Glen

Dear Friends

I thank you all for your generosity in supporting my fundraising trek last week from West to East coasts of Scotland, through the magnificent Great Glen. It was a lovely varied walk with some interesting historical features as well as beautiful scenery, and fortunately, the weather was fantastic. The only disappointment was that my granddaughter, Megan, had to drop out after reaching Invermoriston, as her feet were in a terrible state with blisters. I could not let her continue like this, so I finished the last two days alone. If you saw Megan's feet, I think you would agree that her 41 miles was more creditable than my 73! For the record, my schedule was :



Megan



Day 1 (April 1st): Fort William to Gairloch - 10.5 miles

Day 2: Gairloch to Aberchalder - 17.5 miles

Day 3: Aberchalder to Invermoriston - 13 miles

Day 4: Invermoriston to Drumnadrochit - 14 miles

Day 5: Drumnadrochit to Inverness - 18 miles

Total 73 miles; 14.6 miles /day; 34 hours walking including pit stops

Dear friends

Thanks to your generous support, I thought I should let you know that my granddaughter Megan is now in India with the Project Trust and after settling in She will be working in an Eye hospital in Hyderabad. Her duties at the moment seem to be helping to teach English to some of the staff at the hospital. Megan has a 'blog' page which she will update with information about her experiences; this is www.meganraistrick.blogspot.co.uk.

Best wishes

Colin

THE ISIE CAIE HERITAGE WALK – SUNDAY 8TH SEPTEMBER 2013

On a glorious sunny morning our walk started from the Harbour in Cove where the men of Isie's family would have launched their fishing boats and landed their catch. Isie's creel was loaded with the catch and then lifted on to her back by two of the fishermen for her to carry into Aberdeen on foot. We aimed to take a



Wendy as Isie Caie

similar route to Isie's to remember the hard life our ancestors led in order to live off the sea. Cove Harbour would have been much the same then as it is now, and the cliffs to the south of the Harbour would have been well known for the very rare fern found there. First discovered here in the 1800s this is now a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

We climbed the hill to the Cove Bay Hotel, which was there in Isie's time too, and collected our salmon sandwich lunches. Cove Bay Hotel, in conjunction with J Charles & Son fish merchant, and Kings Foods donated the sandwiches, crisps, fruit and a drink for all the walkers, and they were greatly appreciated.

The walk then took us north along Colsea Road to join the Coastal Path. Isie Caie's route would have taken her further inland, across the fields closer to where the railway now runs, but we stay with the coastal path passing the old Fishing Station, where the hoist for pulling boats up from the sea is still in place, and then heading inland to Doonies Rare Breeds Farm for our lunch and a comfort stop. Hot teas and coffees provided by the Doonies Rural Education Group were very welcome to accompany our sandwiches from the Cove Bay Hotel.

After our break we returned to the coastal path and continued north towards Aberdeen. We saw a buzzard, peregrines, pied wagtails, swallows, and a variety of seabirds, though no dolphins today. We passed another Site of Special Scientific Interest along our route, a very distinctive rare geological formation to the south side of Nigg Bay, which was involved in the beginnings of geology as a science, and continued along the coast round Nigg Bay and below the Girdleness Lighthouse and the now unused foghorn, its sound one Isie would have been familiar with in bad weather.

We entered the harbour area on Greyhope Road, passing the site of the ferry Isie would have originally used, and on across the Victoria Bridge into Aberdeen proper, as Isie would have done once the bridge was built. We continued up Market Street and walked through the Harbour itself, with the permission of the Aberdeen Harbour Board, to Regent Quay, and on to Shiprow and the Aberdeen Maritime Museum.

The walk took a bit longer than we had expected - we took our time and enjoyed the glorious weather, so we didn't have long to look over the Maritime museum - just enough time for our fishwife look-alike to pose by the creel displayed in the museum with Isie Caie's granddaughter, Chirsty MacSween, who had come up from Glasgow especially to join us.

Cove in Bloom has raised £1,760.00 so far for our statue of Isie Caie. A small beginning in raising the £20,000.00 we need, but as always – we have to start somewhere, and we are delighted with the amount raised by our sponsored walk. We plan to repeat the walk next year, and for many years to come. **Wendy Suttar**

Background Information on Hikes

Towie to Tarland 9th December 2012

Our route sheet referred to the new colour-coded walks around the Tarland area. A very informative and illustrated new booklet entitled "Tarland - a great place to walk" is available for sale at both the village pharmacy and, the village *Spar* newsagent describing all the walks in the area. The attached map is a scan from the new booklet.

The Tarland Way - the new 10k (6 miles) cycle/walk between Aboyne and Tarland was officially opened on 23rd June 2012 by the Countess of Aboyne. The Tarland Way was a project initiated by Tarland Development Group and undertaken and managed by the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust (COAT) with generous funding from Aberdeenshire Council, Leader Two, The MacRobert Trust, the Scottish Climate Challenge Fund and the Scottish Government. An illustrated booklet describing

aspects of local history, agriculture, natural history and geology along the route will be for sale.
Graham

Ratray to Fraserburgh 3rd March 2013



St. Mary's Chapel, Ratray.

The chapel which was constructed in the 13th century is one of the oldest structures still standing in North East Scotland. The use of this site for religious purposes almost certainly predates the chapel through an association with the spread of Christianity in Buchan during the 6th to 8th centuries. The structure is thought to have been erected by William Comyn as a private chapel dedicated to his son who was drowned accidentally in a well.

The first recorded reference to the site is in 1220 through note of a gift made by William Comyn, Earl of Buchan. This gift was initially in the form of alms and later in money. Further mention is made in 1451 and 1460. In 1460, King James III confirmed a charter for the payment of five pounds (Scots) and two stones of wax to the chapel of the '*Beate Marie Virginis of Ratreff*', (Blessed Virgin Mary of Ratray). This annual payment was probably continued until the Reformation in 1560. Although the chapel may have served the Burgh of Ratray until the great storm of 1720, which sealed the fate of the settlement, it is more likely it was simply replaced by the Parish Kirk of Crimond about 1576 following the Reformation. As a result of neglect over many years, the kirkyard with its broken down walls had almost become part of the surrounding farmland. In 1848, through monies provided by a former parishioner, the present walls were constructed. The remains of St. Mary's Chapel were consolidated as part of Aberdeenshire's Historic Kirkyards project in 2006. **Graham**

Ratray - a vanished Royal Burgh. The site of the original village of Ratray was centred on the site of the now vanished Castle of Ratray, an inconspicuous mound beyond the farm of Old Ratray - just beyond the above mentioned chapel. In 1564, the community here was granted Royal Burgh status by Mary, Queen of Scots. This entitled it to a *mercat* (market) cross, a weekly market, two fairs a year, as well as the right to dispense justice locally through a court. It also gained foreign trading rights. However, these advantages were granted not because it was thriving, but in order to settle a dispute between the Hays, Earls of Errol, the Keiths, Earls Marischal and two neighbouring landowners who all disagreed over ownership of the village. By making it a Royal Burgh, the Crown benefited from taxes and levies raised locally and more importantly, Queen Mary dampened down a quarrel between powerful families.

Ratray at that time had a safe landing place. It overlooked the Loch of Strathbeg which was much smaller than it is today and had a sea connection from the south end of the loch. The local boats used this sheltered haven and the village achieved some fame for the quality of its codfish. However, shifting sands over the years proved treacherous. These sands gradually accumulated around the harbour area making the channel increasingly difficult. As a result, Ratray did not prosper. The

villagers never built houses in stone as they were urged to do. The community received its final setback in 1720 when a great gale moved a sand dune and blocked the loch's sea exit. Tradition tells of the trapping within the loch of a vessel with a cargo of slates. Some folk continued to fish, drawing their boats onto the open shore at Rattray Head, but without its harbour, the village was doomed and soon dwindled away. **Graham**

Walking in Mallorca

I recently went on a walking holiday to the rugged Serre de Tramuntana area in northwest Mallorca. I was based in the coastal village of Port de Soller and did day walks, often using the local bus services to gain remote areas. Many people have said to me, that they did not consider Mallorca as a place for walking, but since I first visited this island in 1996, the authorities have definitely got their act together and most of the coastal and mountain paths and through-routes are clearly signposted and way-marked to complement well written walking guide-books. This island can now compete with other countries relying on trekking and hill-walking in their tourism schedules. The weather in Mallorca can also be extremely hot and most walkers avoid the summer months which can be very busy with "sun-seeking only" tourists.

One of my walks, visited an area in the heartland of this mountainous region and to gain the starting point, I took the local bus which ran between Port de Soller and Port de Pollenca. I was dropped off near the Cuber Reservoir below the steep buttresses of the highest peak on the island - Puig Major (1436m). Mallorca has no natural lakes, but the two reservoirs built to augment its water supplies provide satisfactory alternatives. This rugged and extremely beautiful area is a paradise for birdwatchers with red kite, osprey and black vultures frequently seen. I joined part of the



recently refurbished GR 221 route which crosses the Serre de Tramuntana mountain chain of the island. I followed the shores of the Cuber Reservoir and then climbed and traversed the Col de l'Offre (875m) with its metal cross. My ongoing route was then a long steep descent through a narrow gorge on the excellent mule track known as the *Pilgrim Steps* which runs from the village of Biniraix to the ancient monastery at Lluc. The scenery in the gorge was magnificent at every turn, with plenty of shaded areas along the way, as the heat in the narrow steep sided valley was intense with hardly a cloud in sight. After 15km of GR 221 walking, I emerged near the local *cantina* at Biniraix for a well earned refreshment before walking into the Placa de Constitucio in the centre of the old Mallorcan capital city of Soller to catch the local bus back to my base at Port de Soller. What a wonderful day in the mountains! I can definitely recommend a walking or trekking holiday in this mountainous part of the beautiful Balearic island of Mallorca. **Graham Sangster**

Lanzarote - Timanfaya (Fire Mountain) National Park.

In October 2012, I travelled to the Canarian island of Lanzarote. This island is steeped in history and in 1994, it was the first entire island to be declared a "World Reserve of the Biosphere" by UNESCO. This fascinating island is truly extraordinary. Its fate was decided over two and a half centuries ago, when the largest volcanic eruption in recorded history took place, leaving a strange and alluring countryside in its wake - a landscape littered with volcanoes and dark streams of jagged lava. At that time, a local priest described it as "*the earth suddenly opened up and an enormous mountain rose from the bosom of the earth and from its apex shot flames which continued to burn for 19 days*". In fact, this catastrophic eruption lasted intermittently for some six years (1730 to 1736) burying one third of the island including eleven villages under metres of lava. Less than 100 years later, another eruption increased the existing number of volcanoes from 26 to 29. This is the backdrop to nearly every scene on the island.



You have to go with a guide through the Fire Mountain National park, which traverses the lava fields - some of the tunnels have a very thin crust and, if non-supervised, your weight could collapse them leading to a very nasty accident as, in some places, it is 360 degrees centigrade only 5 metres below ground. When tongues of lava flow from the point of eruption, they drag along the surface of the ground obliterating everything in its path. The surface lava cools rapidly and solidifies, but molten lava (magma) continues to

flow beneath the crust. The magma sinks gradually - thus a cavity or tube sometimes forms beneath both the crust and the depressed lava flow. I went with a guide into the *Cueva* (cave or volcanic tube) *de los Verdes*, a vast volcanic tube below the mountain of *Monte Corona*, at present, measuring one kilometre in length - the most spectacular underground trip I have ever been on. If you ever visit the island of Lanzarote, make sure to include the Timanfaya Fire Mountain. **Graham Sangster**

Postscript from the Editorial team

Our thanks to all those who contributed with articles and photos.

If you have any interesting information, news or photos to share with the club through the newsletter, please email these to Fiona or Alan Wallace or any committee member.

Thanks Alan & Fiona Wallace.