



2004-2005 SEASON - ISSUE NUMBER 2

JUNE 2004

Dear Member,

Was it co-incidence that your Committee met on the 21st, the longest day of the year? Six people carrying out a mid-summer solstice ritual in Wykeham Road, the Wood-ed henge site in the west end of Glasgow. The setting sun (it was a beautiful evening) added to the atmosphere. No monolithic standing stones in sight though, only some nearby gate pillars and a tame fox being nurtured on chicken wings by a kindly (or misguided) neighbour. The ritual was a light hearted affair, no chanting or robes, just a relaxed session getting on with the business of the KMC. However, the outings for 2005 are well and truly aligned with the mid summer sunset. The long days of Spring and early Summer is a busy time for Club activities, and five excursions have taken place within the last two months or so; to Cannich, Ratagan, two trips to Skye, and a Spanish climbing vacation. In addition, there have been the usual Wednesday and Sunday outings, and we are pleased to report that the advertised outing to the Aonach Eagach ridge went ahead as planned, in spite of a poor weather forecast. Success on all accounts, including 'two' new Club Munroists. Congratulations to Jean Keddie for topping (or bottoming) out on Beinn Fhada in Kintail, and also to Heather for completing the mainland Munros near Glen Affric. Reports on all these outings are noted below.

In spite of the showery day chosen to hold the BBQ, another successful event was held at Jean and Iain's residence in Lennoxton. Thanks to our hosts, and sincere apologies to Sinclair and Maureen who were lead into thinking this was a treat still in store. I take full responsibility. Yep, it was me who hit the '2' figure instead of the '1' button on the keyboard in the last newsletter and misprinted the date. But, the good news is, I'll make sure you get two sausages and burgers next year! Meantime, I promise to proof read these sheets more dilligently. Ooh err!

2004: WEEKEND TRIPS

- 9/10/11 July Inchnadamph Hostel (fully booked - organiser Richard)
- 24-27 September Snowdonia (Bryn Dinas Bunkhouse)(places still available - organiser Steve)
- 26/27 November Inchree Hostel, near Corran Ferry (organiser - Heather)

2005: WEEKEND TRIPS

- 28/29 January Derwent Water Hostel, near Keswick (10 places - organiser - Helen)
- 26/27 March Grey Corries Lodge, Roy Bridge (12 places - organiser - Iain)
- 29/30 April, 1 May Mar Lodge, near Braemar (15 places - organiser - George)
- late May Isle of Arran (details in next newsletter)
- 23-26 September Kinloch Castle Hostel, Isle of Rum (15 places - organiser - Steve)
- 11/12 November Glen Feshie (14 places - organiser - Jim Bunney)

Bookings for weekend trips should be accompanied by a £5.00 deposit to the trip organiser. Early bookings appreciated to get the numbers adjusted, if necessary.

DAY OUTINGS

The details of the weekly outings will be finalised at the Thursday evening meeting at Lenzie Rugby Club, Viewfield, prior to the date. Please contact Jim Bunney (Co-ordinator) as early as possible, and by 6pm on Saturday at the latest. The next advertised day outings are as follows:

- 25 July Ben Starav area, Glen Etive
- 29 August Ben Cruachan Horseshoe
- 10 October Glencoe (interest has been shown in Bidean Nam Bian via the Ossian's cave route)

REPORTS

KIRKINTILLOCH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

Costa Blanca (Reporter: Ron McBrearty)

Gus and I spent a most enjoyable climbing holiday in the Costa Blanca in early April. We flew to Alicante and picked up a hire car. After driving north on the autopista, we reached our rented flat (near the beach) in Calpe. For the first four days the weather was glorious and we climbed numerous traditional and bolted routes in different areas - Echo Valley, Sella and Toix. The bolted routes were a new experience for us but great fun!! During the last three days the weather changed – it got cold, windy and showery – so we toured Calpe Old Town, and explored the Sierra Bernia, the Penon d'Ifach, and the impressive Mascarat Gorge. We'll be back!

Cannich (Reporters: Paul and Moyra Chapman)

Friday 30 April was our first weekend trip with the ubiquitous KMC! Although most of the group seem to be retired and could get away earlier, or managed to wangle a day off, we had to work so didn't escape until six. Having been warned that the A82 road was closed before Tyndrum, on account of a land slip, we decided to head up via the Callander/Crianlarich route which proved to be a good choice. We expected to be the last to arrive at the hostel in Cannich, but that honour went to Mike and Sandra, who had chosen to drive north via the A9, and were held up for well over an hour due to failed traffic lights. The lucky who left early on Friday had already completed 2 Munros, 5 Corbetts between them, and consumed an undefined quantity of liquor in the local pub! First impressions of the hostel were that it was in a good location, comfortable and had good cooking facilities (once we found out how to work the cooker!).

With the prospect of an early start in order to catch the boat along Loch Mullardoch, the majority of people retired early for a good night's rest. Cedric, Iain and Peter were last to bed as they opted for some extra lubrication.

At seven the next morning, there was a flurry of activity in the hostel, as people prepared for the long day ahead. Peter had his own agenda and set off for Glen Affric alone. Liz was catching the boat on its second trip up the loch, intending to alight half way up and meet the main party on their way back from distant An Socach. At 8.00, we reached the jetty and clambered aboard the vessel, which looked too small to accommodate ten KMC members, their kit, and the Danish skipper. We were taking bets as to how long before the boat resembled the Cambridge-Oxford boat race in a submersible! Fortunately, it was a pleasant and still morning, with mist on the hills. Much to our relief, the boat made it to the drop-off point, where our skipper, smiling from ear to ear, picked the bank notes eagerly from our clutches, and headed off again for his second lucrative bunch of maritimers. Meanwhile, the mist was evaporating and the Affric and Mullardoch mountains emerged magnificently from their mantle, revealing obstinate patches of snow. Cedric was sporting the consequences of his nightcap - a bump on the head, where (low and behold), he had miscalculated the level of the floor, stumbled and...well, we know the rest. He is, after all, a past master on this count (or so he admitted in the last newsletter!).

The mountains were fantastic in the bright sunshine. Everyone - Cedric, Steve, Richard, Mike, Alan, Alistair, Eunice, John, Jim and myself, spent several hours hiking along the Mullardoch ridge (An Socach, An Riabhachan, Sgurr na Lapaich and Carn nan Gobhar), meeting Iain, Jean and Sandra coming in the opposite direction (not enough room on the boat), and spotting Liz in the distance, climbing the southern shoulder of Sgurr na Lapaich. There was a steep snowy descent from this hill. The party strung out a bit, but on such a bright and clear day, this was no issue. Mike suffered a bit from cramp but stalwartly strode on to success.

On the return to the hostel, it appeared that Peter was the only person unaccounted for and Liz seemed concerned about this. As time drew on, she became more agitated. It was then that I realised that Peter had borrowed Liz's car. Peter (with car) soon arrived back having walked over a number of the Affric Munros, including remote Beinn Fhionnlaidh. It later transpired that, in his hurry to set off, he had forgotten to take his hiking socks and had completed the day only in a single pair of thin socks. Ouch!

We all gathered in the kitchen for the communal meal which I have to say was excellent and consisted of carrot and orange soup, spaghetti bolognese, sticky pudding or apple strudel, a selection of cheeses and biscuits, gaelic coffee with truffles, with plenty of liquid refreshment. Who says the KMC don't do things in style? Once again, Cedric, Iain and Peter were last to bed (a reputation to uphold).

Sunday was neither an early start, or a very nice day. The clag sat stubbornly on the hills all day. Peter, Cedric, Mike, Alan, Alistair, John, Iain, Jean and myself were doing the Strathfarrar Round of 4 Munros (Sgurr Fhuar-thuill, Sgurr a' Choire Ghlais, Carn nan Gobhar and Sgurr na Ruaidhe – a nice easy mouthful!). The gates to the glen did not open until 9.00am.

This was to be a map and compass day (read on!). Leaving the car at either end of the walk, we set off from the west end. Feeling on form, Alan, John and I, left the track on the way to the first mountain and headed onto the ridge early for a more interesting walk, thinking the weather would improve (Ed - oh, foolish thoughts!). Things were going well until we left the summit of Sgurr a' Choire Ghlais. We were still thick in cloud. Alan headed off first (like a train), closely followed by me, followed by John behind. I soon lost sight of

KIRKINTILLOCH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

John, and as I didn't have a map (I won't do that again in a hurry), I thought I would catch up with Alan as he was still in sight. As I went faster, so did Alan! He obviously didn't know that when I were a lad (!), that I was a school cross country champion and soon managed to catch him saying "are you sure this is the right way?". Alan hesitated, took out the map, and discovered that the hill in front of us shouldn't be there!! We were now just below the cloud. We were faced with a decision – do we continue down into the glen and to the car, or turn around and head back over the top and bag the other two Munros? We obviously turned around, and headed back from whence we came. John meantime, had sussed the error, checked his GPS, and readjusted his line of march, no doubt muttering to himself! Fortunately his choice words were lost in the mist. Alan and I reached the summit an hour and a quarter after leaving it the first time. We then continued in the right direction, catching up with John on the coll between Carn nan Gobhar and Sgurr na Ruaidhe. When we came down, we were pleased to see Alistair waiting patiently in the car to give us a lift back to the hostel.

Some of the group, namely Moyra, Eunice, Sandra and Liz, opted for a more relaxed day. A visit to Beaully Priory and a nearby coffee shop for coffee and cake. They did, however, manage to drive along Strathfarrar Glen and climb part way up the mountain to have lunch by the waterfall. Then it was tea and more cakes at the hostel, joined by Steve (who claimed he'd stayed back at HQ on account of having urgent office work to do!). A really tough day all round!

In the evening, half the group ate in the hostel, while the others walked off to the local hostelry for sustenance. The food was good but the entertainment LOUD. A hasty retreat to the hostel for a wee nightcap completed the day.

On Monday, some people managed a Munro or two on their way back home, including John and Steve who climbed Gleouraich and Spidean Mialach near Loch Quoich, in falling snow then sunshine. I opted for a gentle walk around Loch Affric with Moyra, before making the journey back to Kirkintilloch (obviously via a coffee shop). A most enjoyable weekend with generally good weather, good company, and good fun!

I believe the statistics for the weekend were 5 Corbetts, 91 Munros, 4 coffee shops, 1 day's work (Steve), 42 bottles (a mixture of wine and beer)...and the Mountain Rescue or helicopter was not required!

Ratagan (Reporter: Liz MacFarlane)

The seven mile track from near Cluanie Inn into Alltbeithe hostel starts off well but, as it rises to the watershed, degenerates into a mud avoidance exercise. Six of us: Heather, Sue, Peter, Eunice, and I walked into the hostel on Thursday 13 May, because on Friday, we wanted to climb Mullach na Dheiragain, Heather's final hill on the round of mainland Munros. Alltbeithe used to be only slightly better than a bothy with few facilities. It was left open in winter with an honesty box for overnight travellers to contribute to costs and in summer, I don't know why, it seemed to attract some weird types to act as wardens and many are the tales of their odd behaviour. Now, all is transformed! Alltbeithe is GREEN, has toilets, showers, clean dorms, an immaculate kitchen and a warmly welcoming young woman, Louise, as warden. Well worth a visit.

We woke early on Friday morning as Peter chose to tell us in a loud stage whisper, enunciating very clearly, that there were six deer outside. With cries of delight, we all jumped out of bed to view this once-in-a-lifetime spectacle! What would we do without Peter (strictly a rhetorical question). It was a cool morning with a hint of rain as we set off so, for the others, it was trousers and jackets but, in spite of cries of "Liz, you make me cold just looking at you", I soldiered on in shorts and warm jacket. My increasingly reluctant-to-do-anything-strenuous legs need a bit of encouragement to move so I hoped the wee nip in the air would do the trick. Up we went to the bealach, west of An Socach, dropped down into the corrie then angled up onto the Mullach na Dheiragain ridge. I remembered this as quite a long ridge, the map showed that indeed it is a long ridge, but I had forgotten how l...o...ng a long ridge could be. The greyhound, Eunice, loped ahead and as she crested each top hope would rise that she would stop and smile and show a thumbs-up sign but her slim figure would gradually disappear again, and again, and again. How long is this ridge? The wind blew, the rain rained as only Scottish mountain rain can and we struggled on. There was a mini rebellion as Sue and I arrived at what HAD TO BE THE TOP, yet Eunice was still going on. Rebellious thoughts were banished when she explained she had just been checking that the ridge dropped. Huddled together we congratulated Heather. Even Peter, with a bit of prodding mumbled his congratulations before saying, "let's get the hell out of here!". And we were off like five greyhounds and a rather elderly but determined collie. A strange phenomenon occurred on the way back: the ridge got shorter. Down to the corrie we went, grudging every foot of height lost, then up to the bealach. Eunice, who didn't need to hoard her energy, took a lovely easy-angled line right to the bealach but the rest of us carelessly went too high and my legs staged a five minute sit-down strike before the cold got them moving again. Back at the hostel, the friendly warden let these six drookit climbers in to drip all over the floor, sizzle their dripping socks on her stove and consume mugs of tea and slices of cake before the muddy trudge out. Another strange phenomenon occurred: the seven mile track out to the Cluanie got longer. I blame George Bush. A good meal at the Inn, some wine and more congratulations ended what I thought was a typical Kirkie Club day-out: good companions, lots of laughter, changeable weather and a challenging hill enjoyed – never 'conquered'.

KIRKINTILLOCH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

The plan for Saturday was that twenty five of us staying at Ratagan Hostel would meet at the summit of Beinn Fhada at one o'clock to celebrate Jean's completion of all the Munros. This seemed a plan doomed to failure as, in bad weather, the fleet of foot would freeze waiting for the plodders. Foolish me. When calm, quiet, nothing-is-a-bother Jean organises something, it works. Solely because I paced my ascent perfectly, I arrived at 12.55pm followed two minutes later by Jean. A bottle of wine waited on top of the trip point, cheers and laughter greeted her then she was hoisted up for a photo-shoot. (Note the jargon - our photographers are getting very professional). It was clear and bright on top but with quite a strong cool wind so Jeans' sister, Anne, produced what looked like a child's Fisher-Price 'tranny' and soon had couples up dancing the Gay Gordon's. the White Heather Club they weren't. In big boots, gaiters, warm trousers and big jackets, the attempts of the women to birl under their partner's arm while trying to avoid Jean's mad sister dancing about in the middle waving the tranny in everyone's ear to keep them on beat was the funniest sight I've seen on a hill. Their dancing and the laughter of the watchers was fuelled by a large alcoholic intake: champagne, then wine, then a dram, then wine a delicious Bailey's, then..... twenty one of us kept laughing all the way downhill while Iain, Tom and two of Iain's friends, Richard and John, went on to climb the Corbett, Sgurr Gaorsaic.

When I went in to the dining room for the evening meal, a man at a middle table was energetically chopping lemons then dropping pieces in plastic tumblers which others filled with gin and tonic. A production line of G&T. Great! Jean, of course, insisted it was no trouble to cater for twenty-eight and produced a really delicious meal Iain organised the timing for each group to go to the kitchen for food and as no-one would jump a queue with Iain in charge, the whole thing went amazingly smoothly. Heather, another nothing-is-a-bother woman, had a big cake for Jean and had painted a view of Beinn Fhada on top. It not only looked good - it tasted good.

When we were all feeling mellow after fresh-air, exercise, food and wine, Jimmy brought out his guitar and started to play. Eunice knew ALL the words to ALL the songs so with the rest of us half a word behind her, we all joined in. Anne borrowed Jimmy's guitar, played and sang and again we sang along with her with quite a few entertaining (bawdy) solos to keep the laughter going. Heather asked the warden if we were disturbing others but he said it was a pleasure to hear a group that could sing (fortunately, I only sang very quietly). This was a wonderful evening and a suitable ending to a great day and, for six of us, to two great days.

I think there can be no more deserving of the title Munroist than Heather and Jean. They were never single-minded in pursuit of 'ticks' but instead have walked and enjoyed all the hills for years so that they have an encyclopaedic knowledge of mountainous Scotland. I have sat open-mouthed as Heather not only named all the hills on the horizon, but could also tell us the month and year she was on each and I have walked behind Jean, once on an icy Narnain, and admired her quiet, compact, careful foot placing. With their experience and wisdom I know that Mullach na Dheiragain and Beinn Fhada will be little blips in their continuing love of the mountains.

Skye High! (Reporters: Steve Turnbull and Chris Wilson)

While the celebrations of Jean and Heather's successes were starting at Ratagan, a Land Rover was passing through Morvich with three KMC members, bound for the Cuillins in Skye. At the end of last year, I found myself needing only fourteen Munros to finish off the round. However, while I had not deliberately left Skye till the end, I was now confronted with the 'Beecher's Brook' of mountains - the mighty crux! Since I had climbed none of the Cuillins, I decided to employ a guide. George Yeomans of 'Guiding in Skye' had been recommended to me by a work colleague and I contacted him in November. Having spent the best part of a week with George, we (that is Mike, Chris and I) would thoroughly recommend him as a guide. Richard was part of the Ratagan celebrations and joined us on the Sunday evening.

We arrived in Glen Brittle to stay at the SYHA hostel at eight, after a long drive, with a diversion near Dornie because of a road accident. I had booked George for his Munro course - in which he attempts, with his clients, all the Munros on Skye. He was to tell us that only once had he failed to achieve this goal! Mike needed Am Basteir, Sgurr nan Eag and Sgurr Dubh Mor, to complete the Skye Munros. Chris was like me, needing all twelve.

We met George, and another companion on the course, Sally (a vet from Kent), at the hostel on Sunday morning at nine. He quickly eyed us up, and our gear (I had previously given him the low-down on our experience). He described what his plans were but, of course, this would all dependent on the state of the weather, and as we all know, Skye produces its own micro-climate. Moreover, as he is one of the local mountain rescue leaders, there was always the chance he'd be called out in an emergency.

I had been to Glen Brittle once, three years ago. I had heard tales of these mountains for years, and read up on them. But, I was not in the least awestruck. I entered this adventure with an open mind and in the knowledge we had an experienced guide. Anything would be a bonus. On my first visit to the Glen, the cloud was so low, as to obscure everything but the lower grassy slopes of the mountains. The mist was still hugging the hills and there was a nip in the air. For our first day, George told us we'd walk up into Coire a' Ghreadaidh and Coire an Dorus and depending on the conditions and wind intensity, we might expect to do

KIRKINTILLOCH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

Sgurr a' Mhadaidh, Sgurr a' Greadaidh and Sgurr na Banachdich. Up until now, these names had been...names. The latter had conjured up Sandra's unfortunate accident in 2001. I was supposed to have been on that trip but had had to pull out at the last minute. Now, here was the real thing. George handed out helmets and harnesses. We started up the path. Two hundred yards along the track, I stopped and told him I'd left the harness in his car boot. Great start! Less than two hours later, we dropped our gear in the damp misty confines on the top of the steep scree in Coire an Dorus, donned our helmets and soon stood on the pinnacle summit of Sgurr a' Mhadaidh. I could scarcely believe it. I had done my first 'Cuillin'. An hour later, having negotiated the An Dorus scramble, we stood atop Sgurr a' Ghreadaidh. Two down inside an hour! Perhaps it was fortunate that the cloud was well down, as the exposure of the next part of the ridge would have frightened the faint hearted. George lead us carefully along the narrow ridge line, off the ridge occasionally along narrow ledges and back to the arête again, exposure ever present. He was patient and pointed out the foot and hand-holds, keeping an eye out for our well-being and seeing who was more, or less, confident in exposed places. The signs of a competent mountain leader. There was a point where we had to hold on and 'bum' along for a few feet. In the mist, this didn't seem too bad, but on a clear day, some may have felt a little unnerved about the 'visible' exposure. Sally admitted to this later in the week when the visibility improved! We stopped to eat at the bealach under Sgurr na Banachdich and the clouds lifted sufficiently to give a tantalising glimpse of the main ridge (not the peaks) and the rugged nature of the landscape, with views east to Loch Coruisk. Wow! By two in the afternoon, we were standing on the summit of Sgurr na Banachdich, and by three, we were back at the hostel. Speaking personally about our first day, I couldn't quite take in that we had just climbed a quarter of the Skye Munros. I was hooked on 'rock' and mesmerised by the way these grand mountains unfolded at close quarters. But, I also wanted to see them in their full glory, i.e. free from cloud! Next day, George said he'd meet us at Sligachan .

I woke at six next morning to the sound of teeming rain and my heart sank. At an early breakfast, the rain eased off, but came on heavy again as we drove to Sligachan. We waited for George to arrive with Sally and were certain there was no chance of getting out on the hills. Richard had arrived the previous evening and we had dined that night at the Carbost Inn. Richard admitted he was tired from his exertions around Ratagan and climbing Garbh Bheinn (Skye Corbett) the day before. George arrived and said he was confident that this was the last front crossing Skye. The weather should improve. We had been joined by Chris 2, and Isaac, whose guide had dropped a stone on his foot! They'd come to join our party for a few days instead. They were fine guys and the enlarged group soon set about laughing and joking as we got to know one another. Chris Wilson explains: "We all met for the first time in a lay-by at Sligachan in the pouring rain. The usual reaction would have been to get back in the car and go and find somewhere warm and dry. But there was no real debate on the subject. I could tell these KMC members were hard men and not easily put off. We all got our gear together and off we all headed up into Coire a' Bhasteir, following George like a group of well behaved school children. As the weather started to ease, the usual conversations started up between a group of hillwalking strangers about how often you go hillwalking and whether you've completed the Munros, are in the process of bagging them, or just out for a pleasant day's walk (Sally and Isaac were in the latter category and I'm not sure why they chose to come out in the rain!).

George set a nice steady pace and by the time we got into the Coire, the worst of the rain had stopped and we could see Pinnacle Ridge leading to Sgurr nan Gillean on our left, the jagged west ridge of Gillean, and the imposing rock protrusion that is Am Basteir straight ahead. We left our sacks under the base of Am Basteir and bagged the straightforward Bruach na Frithe and returned to the sacks, studying the rock face of the Basteir Tooth. We dropped the sacks again at the Bealach a' Bhasteir to don helmets and harnesses for the first challenge of the day. The view looking up the sloping rock face is awesome but the scrambling was easy. George lowered each of us down the 'tricky slab' (about fifteen feet) and we continued across the sloping shelves to reach the exposed summit. I was impressed with George's patience to get everyone down and back up over the slab. Back at the Bealach, he told us that if we all wanted to go up the west ridge onto Sgurr nan Gillean, he'd have to take us over the difficult part of the ridge in two separate groups and that this would take some time. He was honest about the degree of exposure and eventually offered to take Steve (upholding the honour of the KMC) and Isaac (who didn't know what he was letting himself in for). I was keen to go as well, because it is a graded climb. The others, keen to let us get on with it, descended to the lochan in the Coire and watched our progress from below. It turned out to be a great scramble up a gully, and then an exposed traverse on a very narrow part of the ridge, including negotiating an exposed pinnacle before easier ground up to the summit. The use of a security rope and George's precise instructions on where the foot and hand-holds were made it easy for us. On the way up we met a couple who had traversed under the summit thinking they were on the 'tourist route!'. On the way down, George lowered us one at a time down a large chimney before the pinnacle. As first man down, I enjoyed watching the pinball antics of the others trying to negotiate the wide, wet chimney without getting knocked about too much on the end of the rope. We met up with the rest of the group who had been patiently waiting and then had a long walk out to complete a 9-10 hour day". Back at the hostel, the KMC group ate heartily on spaghetti bolognese prepared by Steve, washed down with wine, all after a stop for a jar or two at the Carbost Inn. Two days down and half the Munros done!

KIRKINTILLOCH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

Richard decided to head home on the Tuesday morning and settled up with George. The weather was vile. Heavy rain and a forecast of gales. Nonetheless, George considered this was a good day to climb Bla Bheinn, which sits to the south east of the main Cuillin ridge. Chris 2 didn't join us as we understood (wrongly) that he was keeping this hill for his last Munro. We set off from the car park by Loch Slapin in our waterproofs. After some distance, Mike announced he wanted to save himself for the other hills, and having already climbed Bla Bheinn, he walked back to the car. The group, now consisting of George, Steve, Chris, Isaac and Sally, soldiered on in the blustery and wet conditions, passing another group with their guide. Up steep grass and rocky banks we climbed, onto the ridge, following a path. We reached the summit expecting to be fighting against the gale. It was windy but not galeforce. George assured us that the views to the main ridge were spectacular - but all we could see was a wash of grey cloud. He also demonstrated the magnetic quality of the rock with a compass. The needle spun around! After a quick bite, we proceeded with due haste back down the slopes to the car. Minutes from the car park, George received a mountain rescue call-out so he left Sally in our care and rushed off to Glen Brittle. We drove to Portree to drop off Sally and also to do some shopping. I met someone who had studied field archaeology with me a few years back. He'd moved to Skye - small world! Back in Glen Brittle, the mountain rescue team were out in the rain for six hours. Poor George was a tired drookit man when we spoke to him when he emerged from the cloud at around eight. He had found a walker rockfast on a tricky narrow section of the ridge between Sgurr a' Ghreadaidh and Sgurr na Banachdich. The walker had used his mobile phone to call for assistance when he came off the main ridge and got stuck. By the time he was found safely, he was suffering from mild hypothermia! I suggested to George that we should have our day off the next day to give him some rest but he said he'd phone us in the morning and decide then. That evening, three guys had arrived in the hostel and we got chatting. I was taken aback when one of them stated they were going out with George the next day to do the In Pin! This was news to us. Meanwhile that day, Chris Wilson decided to walk into Coir' a' Ghrunnda. With low mist, he missed the higher traverse line above a line of cliffs on the west of the corrie and attempted to go over the boiler plate slabs in the centre. After a minor slip on wet rock, and a severe loss of confidence, he retreated and spent the rest of the day walking around the coastline.

The next morning as arranged, Nicky (our welcoming warden), handed me the phone and I had a chat with George and read him out the latest 2/3 day forecast (cloud level, windspeed, temperature, etc). On the basis of our conversation, George decided that we should attempt the southern group of three Munros. Knowing this would be a long day, I asked if he was really up to it after his very long cold day the day before. He shrugged it off. I passed the phone over to the other group who were disappointed they would not be going out to attempt the In Pin that day with our guide. I should explain that their original guide was the same person, I think, that had broken his foot. On the basis of the long range forecast, and local knowledge of the weather systems, I expect, George thought that Friday looked promising. The Thursday forecast didn't look too good.

Chris Wilson reports: "We all returned to Coir' a' Ghrunnda with George - a much better day where one could see the outflow from the lochan. This, for me, was justification for using a guide who can find their way around such an intimidating place in the mist. What a Coir', it must be one of the most spectacular and rockiest in the UK. An interesting little scramble just to get into the upper corrie with its fine lochan. We kept on losing Steve, as he did his Spielberg impersonations, recording our progress for posterity. After the climb up to the bealach below Sgurr nan Eag, we followed a series of ledges on the south side of the ridge to the summit (by now in mist). Back at the bealach, George took us on his own route which contours under the east side of the Caisteal and around to the notch between Sgurr Dubh Mor and Sgurr Dubh na Da Bheinn which avoids going over the top and involves an easy but exposed scramble over a slab. As one of the most experienced scramblers in the group, I was surprised that George didn't get the rope out for this, as it was pretty exposed and a slip would have been 'pretty unpleasant'. The sun had come out by now so we got great views from here of the summit of Sgurr Dubh Mor down into Coruisk and along the ridge. It was interesting to see that George has many routes waymarked by stones wedged in rocks at strategic places - useful markers borne from wide experience of traversing the mountains. The scramble up Sgurr Dubh Mor was enjoyable (if you know the route!), to a very airy summit where there was barely room for us all to perch. Momentarily, there were spectacular views of the whole ridge before the mist rolled in again.

We followed the ridge over Sgurr Dubh na Da Bheinn and contoured around the west side of the cliffs leading up to Sgurr Alasdair, spotting above us at one point, the infamous TD gap, one of the hardest climbing pitches on the crest of the ridge. Finally, we gathered in the gloom of a shallow cave under the Sgumain bealach and geared up. George roped us up an easy gully on the south of the Sgumain ridge before a rather scrabbly climb to the summit of the Munro, the highest in the Cuillins. I got a clear message from the group that they would prefer me not to discuss the grade of the scrambles or climb with George beforehand. Ignorance of such technical matters was bliss, as far as they were concerned!". Steve records: "My suspicions of a steep grade were confirmed while scrabbling up the last few metres to the summit using all fours, when I happened to look behind me! The slope shot off at an acute angle into a sea of mist and oblivion. We reached the summit at 5pm exactly. We descended carefully to the top of the Great Stone Chute and then we were let off the leash to go at our own pace down the 900ft chute into Coire Lagan. Chris

KIRKINTILLOCH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

2 and Sally bounded down the screes at speed leaving the rest of us to tread our way out of the confined space near the top, where the angle of the slope is steep and the scree is mainly stripped and every footstep moves great piles of stones. Care is needed not to dislodge large boulders. It is quite eerie in this canyon in mist, with the constant chatter of rocks sliding and knocking together underfoot. It was also muddy, like walking in a concrete batching plant. Our boots were grey when we reached the bottom of the chute. We ate the last vestiges of our lunch-boxes by the boulders where the Coire plunges towards the sea and the slabs are smooth and rounded from ancient glaciers. Above us, the Cioch outcrop jutted from Sron na Ciche. Sally remarked that she was amazed that we were all so fit!!! She was talking about her companions who were somewhat older than herself! Of course, we took it as a compliment.”

Thursday was our day off and everyone did their own thing. The KMC contingent drove to Portree and spent some time sitting comfortably in a café reading newspapers while it rained. Later, we drove around the north end of the island, viewing the Quiraing and stopping to look at Duntulm Castle. During the days at the hostel, many visitors came and went, including a large party of Belgian cyclists. There was a homely atmosphere.

Friday dawned fair and clear! This was our last day with George. In spite of the relatively poor weather during the week, we had had the opportunity of climbing ten, out of the twelve Munros. I thought this was quite remarkable since earlier in the week, it seemed we would do well to get half of them done. We met another guide, Paddy, and his group, whom we'd passed on Bla Bhein. George and Paddy planned to get a rope system going on the In Pin. I thought, "Well, this is it. The In Pin day". The weather looked too settled to break but you never know on Skye. The walk started from the Memorial Hut, directly up the shoulder leading to Sgurr Dearg. Near the top, a squall loomed and it started to hail, then snow. What! However, it didn't last long, long enough though for me to make a snowball from the icy collection on the top of the sack being carried by the person in front of me. But, that was the end of the bad weather. I was filming again. This was an opportunity too good to miss. Suddenly, there it was, the narrow blade of rock we call the In Pin. It looked smaller than I had imagined it to be! We geared up and carefully climbed down the slabs to the start of the climb. Paddy went up first to get the first rope in place and took one of his party with him. The first climber would tow a trailing cord that would be fed out from below and allow the rope to be pulled back for the next climber. That was the theory. Chris 2 followed George up to the mid-section and I followed him up using the ample hand and footholds. George shouted instructions if we needed them. When I reached the mid-point, I paused while he clipped a sling onto my harness. I moved past him and stood next to Chris. Mike had been feeding out the cord I was towing but he'd had to let it go when it became clear it was not long enough! George uttered a few words and said he'd have to abseil down to sort it all out. Meanwhile, Paddy, who was in charge of the top rope, shouted down to Chris to 'Climb!'. I fed out the cord Chris was towing and pulled the rope back and clipped it into my carabinier when he reached the summit. Two other smaller parties were coming up the lower section when I was about to climb to the summit. I was ready to go, and unclipped from the safety of the sling. George was preparing to abseil when I realised that I had to stay put, for without George to feed out my cord, I would tow it with me to the summit and screw up the pulley system. There was nothing I could do except wait for George to return and lean against the rock. At the mid-point, the short side of the In Pin is perhaps 40-50 feet, while immediately behind my stance, the exposure was defined by a much greater fall of hundreds of feet. "I'm not fastened on the sling!", I suddenly thought. I quickly rectified that by tying on again. The other parties made their way behind me in two groups of four, then George returned having sorted out the lower rope system. I had been standing at this spot for nearly half an hour enjoying the views, the sunshine and unconcerned with the exposure. Paddy shouted down and it was my turn, at last, to climb to the summit, where I was unclipped from the safety of the rope and sat by the summit boulder (picking up a stone or two for posterity!). Sally and Isaac soon joined me, but it was clear that Sally wasn't happy at being unroped in this very airy position and I asked one of the other guides, who was lowering his client, to also lower her down to terra firma. He obliged and lowered Isaac and me too. I had enjoyed doing the In Pin and didn't think it was as daunting as some people make out, but it does take a little nerve and certainly concentrates the mind. We watched the others climbing, and eventually grouped together again for the walk over to our last Munro. This involved descending down the very steep slabs under An Stac. We dropped the sacks at the bottom and George lead us on the scramble to the top of Sgurr Mhic Choinnich, where he was the first to congratulate me for bagging all twelve Skye Munros. The weather was perfect and we sat atop that exposed mountain for some time taking in the majesty of the views. We were left to our own devices for the run down the An Stac screes. We had all had a wonderful day, even Sally, who had said to me on top of the In Pin "Why have I come up here?".

Chris, Mike and I met up with Isaac at the Sligachan Hotel for a meal later. We all agreed we'd had a tremendous week, had enjoyed one another's company, and were grateful for George's guidance, knowledge, and collection of amusing anecdotes.

I was pleased that Mike and Chris 2 had completed their Skye Munros, and happy that Chris T had all but one of them also done. Naturally, I was delighted to have cleared my 'Beecher's Brook', leaving me with a clear run to complete the Munros. Mike has reduced his tally to less than twenty. Chris has to return to climb

KIRKINTILLOCH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

Sgurr nan Gillean. I would do it all again. Meanwhile, Chris Wilson from Deeside, has contacted me to say he bagged his last Munro (Ladhar Bheinn) a couple of weeks or so after the Skye trip.

I bumped into Rebecca a couple of days after returning from Skye and a few before the Coruisk trip (see below), and when she enquired as to how I'd got on, it was met with the refreshingly direct exclamation "You jammy bugger!". I know I am.

Skye from a Different Perspective (Reporter: Sandra Owen)

"Of course we'll manage four of us in Anne Marie's car." George's words of the previous Thursday night did not reassure me as I surveyed the growing pile of food and rucksacks, on the pavement outside George and Helen's house. "Leave it up to George," whispered Anne Marie and, sure enough, with admirable skill the boot was filled, although shut with difficulty, and the back seat allowed just enough space for George and me. However, I tried not to show my concern at George's words as we left Glasgow. "Of course we'll have room to take Liz and her rucksack from Broadford to Elgol!" It had been planned that Peter would pick up Liz, who had been on a backpacking trip, but, at the last minute arrangements had gone slightly awry. However, a timely phone call and a rushed bus journey by Liz from Kyleakin to Broadford resulted in a successful meeting of Helen, George, Anne Marie, Peter, Eunice, Rebecca, Liz, Jack and myself in a pub in Broadford, ready for our trip to the Memorial Hut at the end of Loch Coruisk in Skye.

And it was a trip to remember. The weather was superb throughout the weekend. The hut is situated in an inlet of Loch Scavaig, with Sgurr Dubh Mor and Sgurr nan Eig rising behind it. Just round the corner, following the shortest river in Scotland (or is the river at the end of Loch Morar shorter?), is Loch Coruisk, with its dramatic views of the Cuillin ridge. There was an exciting feeling of isolation as the boat from Elgol left us stranded for the weekend and a slight feeling of apprehension when George and Jack had initial difficulty operating the gas cooker. The hut offers intimate accommodation for nine. Washing facilities are basic but many of us used the river and others, like Jack, abandoned all modesty and washed outside the hut, oblivious to all who might just happen to come round the corner at an inopportune moment!

On Saturday, George, Helen, Eunice, Rebecca and Anne Marie set off on a relatively easy day up Marsco – after all it is only 736 metres high. They left at 8 in the morning and arrived back at 7 in the evening, looking rather tired. They had approached by the Sligachan pass and returned by Camasunary. The last section along the coast from Camasunary was hard going and the Bad Step paled into significance in comparison with the rough and indistinct nature of the rest of the path. That, along with the Eunice's fast pace down the side of Loch na Creathaich, meant George was early in bed that evening.

Jack, Liz and I followed Peter westwards along the coast but, after slithering over wet seaweed for twenty minutes, we decided to leave Peter to his own devices and, after an abortive attempt at the Bad Step, had a fantastic day on the Drum nan Ramh ridge – a relatively easy climb which must afford one of the finest all round views of the Cuillin ridge. Peter, apparently, struggled manfully round the coast for a while, returning by a Willimott route which returned partly by the coast but finished by climbing over the lower slopes of the ridge and down a sporting route to Loch Coruisk.

On Sunday, Eunice, Anne Marie and Rebecca headed for Drum nan Ramh and finished off with a walk round the Loch. Meanwhile, George, Helen, Peter, Jack, Liz and I followed the Sligachan path to the top of the bealach. Jack returned to walk round Loch Coruisk and the rest of us, using Liz's GBS system and Peter's tuition, successfully located the Monument to General Maryon. He was lost in the area in 1946 and his body was found by an ex-army friend after searching for him for three years. We continued on to climb Sgurr na Stri and once again were rewarded with magnificent views not only of the Cuillin Ridge but also out to sea to Rum, Eigg and Soay, down to Camasunary and Elgol and up the Southern ridge of Bla Bheinn.

The boat journey out on the Monday morning was beautiful and gave a fitting end to a special weekend. I was left with mixed memories: tea in bed and early morning porridge made by George; Jack playing his mouth organ in the evening on the shores of Loch Scavaig; views of Skye and the Cuillins from a different perspective and visions of Peter wandering around Loch Coruisk in his underpants at five in the morning!

Aonach Eagach Ridge (Reporter: Steve Turnbull)

John Berry's fingers were tightly crossed, so keen was he to do the ridge, one of the finest in Scotland. The last planned walk of the ridge had had to be cancelled due to inclement weather. The forecast didn't look too promising this time either. Nonetheless, John, Ross, Cedric, Jim and Steve met up in Kirkintilloch for the drive to Glencoe two weeks ago. Driving north, the summits of some Munros were in cloud. It was clear when we passed Bridge of Orchy. The previous week, several club members had battled with Beinn a' Chreachain and Beinn Achaladair in rain and strong winds. The sun was shining in Glencoe. Ross and Jim disappeared for a while to take one of the cars to the Pap of Glencoe end of the ridge. We started walking in

KIRKINTILLOCH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

high spirits at around ten, steadily up the track onto Am Bodach, where we sat and enjoyed the views. The last time I'd traversed the ridge was in 1980 and I recalled the exposed drop off onto the ridge. Of course, it calls for care, but it posed no real difficulty. For John and Cedric, this was a new ridge and I could tell they were enjoying themselves. Soon, they had bagged the first Munro, Meall Dearg. The ridge narrows beyond this point heading westwards. Down rock bands, up a chimney, over small outcrops, then drop steeply from Stob Coire Leith to the series of pinnacles. It's funny how one forgets the detail of some mountains. I must confess that I didn't remember the exposure on one of the pinnacles, which is climbed on the north side, then back up to the ridgeline. It was a straightforward exercise with good visibility and dry rock. Wet rock on the ridge could be a real problem as the grain is very fine and it would be easy to slip. The second Munro was reached, Sgorr nam Fiannaidh, then we decided to go for the Pap itself. During the day, light squalls had passed to the north and south of us and we'd caught a few drops on the edges of these passing showers. We dumped our sacks at the base of the Pap just as a heavy shower passed overhead and we got quite wet. The views from the summit were atmospheric with nice colours looking westwards to the Ardgour peninsula and rainbows. There was the obligatory stop at the Bridge of Orchy hotel, to complete a satisfying day.

FOREIGN TRIPS

Majorca - hotel accommodation has been altered. Contact George.

Canada 2005 - anyone interested in participating in the idea of organising a trip to the Canadian Rockies can attend a meeting in Iain and Jean Keddie's house in Lennoxton at 7.30pm on Friday 23 July, where the itinerary and details can be discussed.

AN ESSAY ON THE CARING SHARING KMC (Sinclair Steven)

A trip to the Pottery Bunkhouse earlier this year led me to reflect and ponder on some aspects of KMC weekends. One traditional feature of the weekend is the midnight, or more accurately, the wee sama oors of the mornin', visit to the bog! This phenomenon is apparently becoming more common with the increasing age profile of the club. I mean, we are getting older. The quantity of white hair sported by club members, those still hirsute, is such that, in moderate to heavy snowfall, the heads in front merge so seamlessly with the atmosphere it is like being in a procession of headless, goretex-clad ghouls.

Ever weakening bladders go hand in hand (don't ponder that image too long) with increasing imbalance. Whether it is the onset of doddering legs or the imbibing of excess alcohol, our midnight wanderers have a tendency tae fa ower. I have been known myself to wander the darker and smellier regions of some strange hostel or bunkhouse, but that's just the diabetes, the kind of thing that gets you on a toilet list at school. (You know there are so many weans on the toilet list at my school that they no longer carry schoolbags, but just stuff their jotters into their incontinence bags). But I digress. As I personally wander, it is always with care, delicacy and concern for my fellow sleepers. This is not always true of others. Some of you may remember Loch Lochy Hostel. This was one of the first occasions of the communal meal, not so well organised as now. The weekend co-incided with Burns' Night and produced such a plenitude of haggi that that the remains could have harled the exterior of a large part of the hostel. Anyway, that night Jack had over-imbibed and the familiar creaking and groaning of bed springs and supports began. We all know that music: the soprano melody of strained metal springs, with the bass accompaniment of three or four tones of flatulence. (I hear, from a respectable distance of course, that the high pitches of both sounds in the ladies' dorm makes them indistinguishable). Shortly after Jack exited for his Capatin Oates routine, there came a most horrid clatter as various solid parts of Jack's anatomy hit every step of the not inconsiderable flight of stairs leading down to the bog. What was noticeable was the tremendous silence and immobility throughout the hostel in the aftermath, a silence that maintained itself until Jack, bruised but relieved, hirpled back and clambered into his bunk. KMC care and concern at its most typical.

This was brought to mind by a similar incident at the Pottery Bunkhouse. Cedric, somehow, managed to plummet from his bunk (the bottom one) on his way to the toilet. Despite his falling with a tremendous crash, there was scarcely a stir of movement from his fellow-bunkees. Tom, Isensed, glanced over, saw a twitch that seemed to indicate life (but not as we know it Jim) and re-entered the land of nod. The following night Cedric was roped in so tightly to his bed he could scarcely turn! This was a great relief to myself directly above him, as his incessantly restless turning the previous night, before his fall rendered him semi-conscious, had produced such swaying (increased proportionately at my elevation by the Principle of Moments) that it induced distinct feelings of mal de mer in the Central Highlands. (The geographical Central Highlands, not my own personal Central Highlands).

A new feature of the recent weekend was the hot tub. For a modest outlay it was possible to disport oneself, naked or thereabouts, in pouring rain, on a January night, in a luke warm tub...for pleasure! The ladies who made use of the facility resisted the temptation of total disportment and fortunately it was a dark night. Later came the debate on how the cost of the disportment was to be equably divided. One suggestion was that it be borne in proportion, in Archimedean terms, to the amount of water displaced by each disporting body. This proposal was fiercely resisted by Tom (call me Slim) Noon, who had joined the ladies, on the basis that it

KIRKINTILLOCH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

would empty his wallet, just as his entry had emptied the tub of water, producing Laggan's first tsunami since the glacial melt down.

The memory of sylph-like romping figures (dream on Sinclair, dream on) also brings to mind a discussion I couldn't quite follow about visual or visualised diets. It seems your perception of your body shape is more important than the actual body itself. This, one could see, appealed strongly to Peter, then on his third helping of dessert. He could obviously see his visualised self slipping gossamer-like through a narrow opening, while the rest of us could see the reality collide heavily with the jambs on either side.

It is memories of bonding moments like these that remind me why it has been a year and a half since my last weekend with the KMC!

KMC EXHIBITION UPDATE

The KMC exhibition has been on display at the Lennoxtown public library for three weeks and it is being arranged to also be put on display in the Bishopbriggs public library.

KMC CHRISTMAS DINNER

The Bridgend Hotel at Callander has been booked for a pre Christmas evening meal (same as last year) for **Sunday 12 December**. 20 places have been booked but it would be useful if anyone interested would contact Steve who will make a list, and contact the hotel if additional places are required.

OTHER SOCIAL EVENTS

The Committee is investigating getting speakers to talk to club members during the Autumn/Winter. The two suggestions made so far are: Mountain Photography by Neil MacGregor of Bearsden, and Mountain Scenery (geological features, etc) by David Jarman (featured in the current edition of the Scottish Mountaineer). Update in the next newsletter.

CLUB SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions have been due since the AGM held in March. This will be your **last newsletter** if you do not renew your subscription. Non renewals will also automatically cancel your membership of the McofS and copies of the Scottish Mountaineer. Please contact John Berry (Treasurer). An updated list of members will be included in the next newsletter.

JOHN MUIR TRUST CONSERVATION WEEKEND, BEN NEVIS

Peter informs us that there is a conservation weekend on 3 and 4th July. Accommodation can be arranged at the Alex Muir Hut. The operation will be the observatory ruins survey and summit clean up.

Meeting point: Youth Hostel Bridge (NN128718) at 9am on Saturday and 9am on Sunday. Tasks, all tools bags and workgloves will be provided. For the survey work, anyone who can bring a GPS, digital camera, notepad and pencil would be welcome.

Will Boyd-Wallis is hoping to arrange a helicopter lift of the Carn Dearg shelter and remains of the old one.

Health - anyone with a history of health difficulties that could be affected by these activities should forewarn Peter or Will directly. All volunteers are strongly advised that their anti-tetanus inoculations should be up to date. Personal first aid kits should be brought. These will supplement the group first aid kit provided by the John Muir Trust whose staff have had first aid training.

Saturday evening talk - there will be a discussion on the 'Nevis Issues' in the Highland Suite at the Nevis Bank Hotel, Fort William from 8pm onwards. It is intended for JMT members participating in the conservation activities but is also open for other JMT members.

STAMPS FOR IAIN

Iain would be very grateful if anyone in the club (or their friends and contacts), would pass him used UK stamps, particularly if they are of unusual value.

OUTDOOR ACCESS CODE

A leaflet on Scotland's Outdoor Access Code, entitled 'Enjoying Scotland's Outdoors - an track for new access rights and responsibilities' is now available from Scottish Natural Heritage. For further information about the content of the leaflet and the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, contact the Recreation and Access Group, 2 Anderson Place, Edinburgh EH6 5NP (phone 0131 446 2400, fax 0131 446 2405, e-mail: recreationandaccess@snh.gov.uk).

For further information about how SNH proposes to publicise the Code and promote understanding of it, contact the Awareness and Involvement Unit, Battleby, Redgorton, Perth PH1 3EW (phone 01738 444177, e-mail: clare.myles@snh.gov.uk).

KIRKINTILLOCH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

Best Wishes,

Steve Turnbull

KIRKINTILLOCH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB