



2006 SEASON - ISSUE NUMBER 4

WINTER 2005/2006

Dear Member,

## REMINDERS

**KMC Biennial Dinner – Friday 24 February at the Kincaid House Hotel. Please let Steve know as soon as possible if you wish to attend. See details below.**

**AGM – Thursday 16 March at Kirkintilloch Camera Club (7.30pm).**

## 2006: DAY OUTINGS

22 January (Sunday) Meall nan Tarmachan Ridge (that's next weekend folks!)

## 2006: WEEKEND TRIPS/OTHER EXCURSIONS

3-5 February Tranearth, Coniston, Lake District (Organiser: Eunice)

24-26 March Ratagan Hostel (12 places)(Organiser: Helen)

28-30 April Ullapool Scotpackers Hostel (12 places)(Organiser: John)

26-28 May Achininver Hostel, Achiltibuidhe (Organiser: Helen)

(possibility of extending time in North West by staying at Inchnadamph hostel. Anyone interested, please contact Committee member)

7-10 June 2006 - Hadrian's Wall (Walk the Wall)(Organiser: Heather)

22-24 September Torridon Youth Hostel (12 places)(Organiser: Steve)

3-5 November Alec Mac Hut, Onich (Organiser: Peter)

## 2007: WEEKEND TRIPS

25-28 May Strawberry Cottage, Glen Affric (Organiser: Eunice)

Other suggestions for 2007 programme include: Skye and Achnashellach. Any suggestions for either day outings or weekend trips, please contact a Committee member.

The plan to walk a section of Southern Uplands Way will be postponed until Spring 2007 when there are more daylight hours.

**Bookings:** Your booking for any trip should be accompanied by a £5.00 deposit to the trip organiser to secure a place. Early bookings appreciated to give ample time to adjust numbers, if necessary.

## REPORTS

### **The Upper Limits! (Reporter: Charmian Heaton)**

Here is a short tale from the diary of an intrepid KMC explorer.

"This is just a final update on the outcome of my attempt to climb the impressive mountain Ama Dablam in the Nepal Himalayas.

First of all, let me apologise for the poor quality of my satellite phone reports - I'm sorry that they were difficult to understand and hear properly through the PC speakers.

# KIRKINTILLOCH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

For those of you who could make out the story so far, you will know that I made it to Camp 3 at 6,300m or 20,670 feet above sea level. The climbing to this point had been breath-taking and the exposure between camps 1 and 3 was far greater than anything that I had ever experienced before. As you go higher the air still contains the normal amount of oxygen (21%), but atmospheric pressure decreases which results in each breath containing fewer molecules of oxygen. For example, at 5500m (18000ft), each breath will contain roughly half the normal amount of oxygen. This has the effect of making even a straightforward scramble seem a daunting prospect, never mind the vertical rock faces and knife-edge aretes (in places only a foot wide with drops of thousands of feet on either side).

On the final approach to Camp 3, I had to negotiate a collapsed snow bridge where the snow and ice had become very unstable. As I tentatively edged my way past one section, I put my hand out to steady myself and a lump of ice weighing in excess of a ton, started to fall towards me. I was just able to flick the fixed rope to which I was attached over the block of ice before it crashed down the mountainside past me. The consequences of the fixed rope being compromised at this stage would have been unthinkable and this experience was to stay with me over the following night. Four of our expedition members had summited that day and returned to Camp 3 in an exhausted condition. Two were able to continue down to Camp 2 but the other two decided to join Roger and myself and two high altitude sherpas in our two tents and, after spending a couple of hours making endless cups of soup and tea to rehydrate, we battened down the hatches against a rising storm. High winds battered our position relentlessly all night and threatened to tear us from our precarious ice ledges. In the early hours of the morning a large lump of ice crashed into our tent and put an inch cut in Jen's head. None of us got any sleep that night and it was impossible to communicate with the other tent which was only six feet away.

On the 8am radio call, we were told that high winds at Camp 3 usually subside at around 9am when the sun comes around onto the Dablam. However, this was not to happen today and I already knew that I was not strong enough to struggle against the high winds to the summit and to return safely to Camp 2. Not wanting to spend a second night at Camp 3 and mindful of my promise not to compromise my safety, I made the decision to turn back. I had also been unnerved by the collapsed snow bridge which now had to be negotiated in reverse and I knew that my descent would be incredibly cautious and slow. With no subsidence in the high winds, I told the sherpas that I would go down and started to put on every ounce of clothing I had. Thundu helped me to attach my crampons in the bitter cold before I made my way to the top of the fixed ropes. And so started the most nerve-racking 7.5 hours of my life, each pitch being negotiated like my life depended on it (which it most certainly did), and the knife-edge sections were now further complicated by the strong winds.

I eventually collapsed into a tent at Camp 1 around 4.30pm, quite honestly glad to be alive. Thundu lit my stove for me and I made endless cups of soup and tea. Later on, as I lay in my down sleeping bag in the dark I thought:

1. I'm glad to be alive
2. My fingers and hands are bleeding and my legs are bruised and battered
3. I've climbed higher and harder than ever before pushing myself to my physical limits
4. I feel privileged to have been part of the expedition
5. I'll stick to Scottish Munros in future!!!

I look forward to seeing some of you in the hills before too long. Ciao for now, Charmian”.

## **KMC at their best in Tenerife (Reporter: Heather Willimott)**

*Scene 1: Time: 3.10 pm - On top of a ridge 'somewhere' in Tenerife.*

Cast: Group A - George, Helen, Eunice, Anne Marie, Liz, Rebecca and Heather.

Props: One road map - the guide to the walk being safely located in the hotel with all mobile phones.

George: "I haven't a clue where we are!"

Rest: "Nor have we!"

We are some miles SE from our start point, the village, when we should have been some miles due west. We have descended several hundred feet, crossed ridges and finally ascended to a white cross on a ridge - we had confidently followed a cairned path. Animated discussions follow - with relief we finally agree to go down. Down is good - given we can't go up! But more panic and further discussions ensue on *which* way. We eventually decide to retrace our steps to the village which involves much re-ascent.

# KIRKINTILLOCH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

*Scene 2: Time: 3.30 pm - On the coast 20+ miles away near a lighthouse (exactly where they should be).*

Cast: Group B - Ian, Fay and Martin.  
Props: 2 cars

At 1.40, Groups A and B had split at the village at an altitude of 850m. Group B set off to drive 20+ miles round on tortuous roads to meet Group A who *should* have descended gently on a well marked path west to the lighthouse.

Ian to Martin: "You wait here. Fay and I will have a short walk because the others should be here *no later* than 4.00pm"

*Scene 3: Time 4.00 pm.*

Group A are back where they were 50 minutes earlier. We agree Eunice and Anne Marie push ahead with the kitty money to bribe the villagers to drive them to the lighthouse (or at least some of the way).

*Scene 4: Time 4.45 pm - The Village.*

Making excellent speed, Eunice and Anne Marie arrive but fail to persuade the locals to give them a lift. With no alternative, they jog down the road and luckily hail a passing jeep containing two fishermen, with no English, who take them to the nearest town 10 miles away. Looking incredulous the fishermen shake their heads when they establish that neither hitch hiker carries a mobile. Eunice then gesticulates by making swimming movements that they need to get to the sea – confused, the men drop them off at the bus station. Can you blame them? With 10 miles to go and wondering what to do next (no taxis available) they run into a couple from Scotland who drives them to the edge of the town but no further. They start walking along the narrow coast road towards the lighthouse miles away. Almost immediately a vehicle approaches from behind and they flatten themselves against the side to let it pass. Amazingly it contains the *same* two fishermen en-route to the lighthouse - more amazingly they give them another lift. Within minutes - guess what - they see Martin driving fast in the opposite direction. He doesn't see them and speeds on - but fortunately, Ian and Fay soon come into view as the sun sets. Phew!!

*Scene 5: Time 5.00 pm - The Village.*

The rest of Group A arrive and order drinks. Bets are taken on how long it will take for someone to arrive, if someone will arrive, and, if so, who it will be. Heather thinks it will be Ian and Fay by 6.45. Rebecca says it had better be Martin and that she'll kill him if he doesn't make it by 6.30. He makes it at 6.20! It is dark by now and Group A pile into Martin's car to drive back to the lighthouse. No one knows where Eunice and Anne Marie are. (And before you think it - of course we cared!). However, driving down the hairpins in the pitch dark we meet Ian's car coming up. This time we actually rendezvous and all just make it back in time for a late dinner.

The next day, Martin refuses to take us anywhere (how unreasonable). For the rest of the holiday, we didn't move anywhere without several guide books and maps and enjoyed a wonderful variety of walks in spectacular lunar landscapes, through deep gorges and up rocky hills. Mid week, some visited the geologically fascinating and little commercialized island of La Gomera while others went in search of pyramids. The weather was excellent throughout and the low key approach to Christmas by the Canarians was most refreshing. Many thanks to George for organizing the trip. Will he risk another?

## **Spooky Start to 2006 (Reporter: Steve Turnbull)**

It was just another Sunday walk. The chosen hill was Beinn Chabhair, near Inverarnan. The participants were John, Eunice, Rebecca and Stewart.....and Steve. Steve was testing the KMC's resolve by checking out if eight at the St Mary's car park means eight. Steve arrived at 8.05 having had to deal with an emergency. The members' cars were parked and, no, they weren't hiding in them. The buggers had left! Steve pulled into the Drivers car park as the others were pulling on their boots.

John insisted that we walk up the West Highland Way to reach a track marked on the map which turned east and upwards towards a particularly undulating route to gain the summit. This was a beautiful day – a day of wintery atmosphere and mist and low sun and calm. Quite ethereal. Even the KMC troop were calm and quiet. We reached the summit treading carefully over the icy path for three of us had no crampons. The low sun cast our shadows onto the mist and we witnessed spectres with halos. Ben Lui and other hills were

# KIRKINTILLOCH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

dominant on the skyline above the temperature inversion. It took nearly four and a half hours to reach the summit (somehow) and the day ended at over seven hours walking. The pint in a corner of the Drovers ended a perfect New Year's walk. One of those serene, quiet, good to be alive days.

## NEWS AND VIEWS

### Proposed Beauly to Denny Pylon Line

The timescale in which comments and views about this proposal, which will have a detrimental impact on the Scottish countryside, has now closed. Keep an eye out in press and other journals for progress.

### Scotland's First GEOPARK

The North West Highlands (the area which takes in Achiltibuie, Elphin, Inchnadamph, Durness, Cape Wrath, Kinlochbervie, Scourie, the Stoer peninsula, Lochinver and the Inverpolly Nature Reserve), received formal status as a European and UNESCO Global Geopark in September 2004 and was officially launched at the Knockan Crag National Nature Reserve visitor centre in Assynt.

A European Geopark is a clearly defined area with a geological heritage of particular importance in terms of its scientific quality, rarity, aesthetic appeal and educational value. The key functions of a European Geopark are to protect geological heritage, promote geology to the public, and to use geology and other aspects of its natural and cultural heritage to promote sustainable economic development, normally through geotourism.

Geopark status was awarded to the North West Highlands because this outstanding area contains some of the most important and diverse geological and geomorphological features and stunning landscapes in Britain. Geologically, the area is dominated by the internationally important Moine Thrust Zone. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Moine Thrust Zone puzzled geologists who found that older rocks were seen to be lying on top of younger rocks, a situation they then could not easily explain. This is centred on Knockan Crag which is owned and managed by Scottish Natural Heritage. Thrusts are now recognised in rocks around the world, including those in the Himalayas and the Alps – but are rarely as accessible as the Moine Thrust at Knockan Crag.

The rocks in the Geopark record the last 3,000 million years of history for the landmass that we know as Scotland. The North West Highlands Geopark also recognises the diverse natural heritage of the area, local culture and the rich array of historic and archaeological sites. To help manage the Geopark, a local steering group has been established and a part-time Geopark officer is now based in Lochinver. For further information see: [www.northwest-highlands-geopark.org.uk](http://www.northwest-highlands-geopark.org.uk) Two of the KMC's weekend trips (May) are based in, or close to, the Geopark. It is, by anyone's standards, a wonderful area. It contains two Munros (Conival and Ben More Assynt), a number of Corbetts and other fascinating hills like Stac Pollaidh and Suilven.

Recommended reading: Exploring the Landscape of Assynt (A walkers' guide and map showing the rocks and landscape of Assynt and Inverpolly) published by the British Geological Survey, and The Scenery of Scotland – The Structure Beneath published by the National Museums of Scotland.

## SOCIAL AND PROMOTIONAL EVENTS

### Friday 24 February 2006 - KMC Biennial Dinner at the Kincaid House Hotel, Milton of Campsie

A booking has been made for 24 people. We can have a choice of menu. The price varies according to the choice (see below). To help gauge exactly what we collectively want, I've listed the choices and would ask everyone who wishes to attend to contact me over the next week or two (certainly by the end of January) to confirm you are coming, and to give me your preference from the following range (including any requirement for vegetarian, etc). I will collate the responses, evaluate them, subject them to the most detailed scrutiny and make the appropriate selection based on the democratic style of KMC.

Menu 1 - £14.65 per head	Menu 2 - £15.85 per head
Your choice of homemade soup Salad of pineapple and strawberries	Your choice of homemade soup Crab salad with mango and coriander
Braised rump of Scotch beef in a rich red wine sauce	Roast Scotch lamb with Madeira and redcurrant

## KIRKINTILLOCH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

Supreme of chicken with wild mushrooms, cream and white wine  Rich chocolate gateau Fresh fruit salad  Coffee and mints	Baked gammon with apricots and glazed with honey  Fresh homemade trifle Strawberry and honey cream tuille gateau  Coffee and mints
<b>Menu 3 - £15.85</b>  Prawn and egg salad Button mushrooms tossed in garlic butter  Breast of chicken in a creamy peppercorn sauce Cold smoked trout with green salad  Apple pie with cinnamon Iceberg crème de menthe  Coffee and mints	<b>Menu 4 - £17.75</b>  Scottish smoked salmon with lemon vinaigrette Venison pate with rowan jelly  Roast sirloin of beef with creamed horseradish sauce Supreme of chicken chasseur  Freshly baked almond flan with tipsy berries Brandy snap basket with poached pear and ice cream  Coffee and mints
<b>Menu 5 - £16.75</b>  Homemade soup of your choice Crispy crumbed brie with an apple chutney  Escalope of pork fillet with calvados and apple sauce Cushion of Scottish salmon glazed with dill and lemon butter  Toffee pudding coated in hot butterscotch Raspberry cheesecake  Coffee and mints	<b>Menu 6 - £19.95</b>  Tipsy haggis wi' a drap o' drambuie Smoked mackerel with an Arran mustard cream  Medallions of venison in a red wine and juniper berry sauce Raost Grampian turkey with bacon rol;l  Cranachan with raspberries in an oatmeal basket A selection of Scottish cheeses and oatcakes  Coffee and mints

### CLUB BUSINESS

**CLUB AGM - Thursday 16 March 2006 (7.30pm) – courtesy of the Kirkintilloch Camera Club, Eastside, Kirkintilloch**

The AGM will start at 7.30pm prompt. After a coffee/tea break, we could look at a selection of Members' slides and/or digital photies! Please let me know if you wish to show slides.

Printed below is a copy of the AGM agenda, together with the minutes of last year's AGM and the Club constitution. If any Member has any formal proposal to make to the AGM, would they please let me know by the end of this month and I will post the proposal to Club Members for their information.

### REMINDERS!

#### E-mail Addresses

The attached e-mail and address list has been updated. If any details remain to be altered, please let Steve know as soon as possible. Please note that Steve's e-mail address is [xxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:xxxxxxxxxxxxx). One or two of you are still using my son, Josh's, e-mail address which means that it is beaming across to Australia then bouncing back from Josh. But, hey, it just goes to show the state of modern communications when I get a message that has been beamed 24,000 miles from a Club colleague who lives a mile or so away. Fantastic!

#### KMC Equipment List

The Committee decided that it would be a good idea to list the items in KMC's ownership in the newsletter once in a while. The equipment is available for use by any member of the Club, although it is their responsibility to ensure that the equipment is suitable and in a fit condition for the purpose to which it is proposed to be used. Also, it is the responsibility of the person borrowing the equipment to return it to the

## KIRKINTILLOCH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

Equipment Officer when they have finished using it or inform the Officer to whom it has been passed. Cedric Davies is the Club's Equipment Officer. If you wish to borrow any item, please contact Cedric directly.

<p><b>Ropes</b>          11mm x 50m Edelrid (poor condition)          10mm x 50m Mammut Galaxy Superdry          10mm x 50m Cairngorm</p>	<p><b>Slings</b>          Short knotted green tape          Troll 8' Orange tape          Short knotted blue tape - marked red          Medium knotted blue tape - marked blue          Long knotted blue tape – marked black</p>
<p><b>Karabiners</b>          3 of screw gate          1 of non screw gate          Heavy screw gate          HMS screw gate          Figure of eight: Cassin          Figure of eight: Viking</p>	<p><b>Hexentrics</b>          2 of No 8          No 7          No 6          No ? (yellow)</p>
<p><b>Rocks</b>          1 of on wire</p>	<p><b>Harness</b>          Wild Country          DMM (blue)          Troll (multi coloured)</p>
<p><b>Helmet</b>          Cassin          2 of Troll</p>	<p><b>Tent</b>          Vau De Space (2 man)</p>
<p><b>Ice Axe</b>          2 of</p>	<p><b>Crampons</b>          1 set</p>
<p><b>Cooking</b>          1 large cooking pot</p>	