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2006/07 SEASON - ISSUE NUMBER 3

AUTUMN/WINTER 2006

Dear Member,

2007: WEEKEND TRIPS

The intended programme is as follows (confirmation of dates in next newsletter):

26/27 January	Aite Cruinnichidh, Roy Bridge (Organiser: Helen)
23/24 March	Camping Barn, Lake District (Organiser: Eunice)
4-6 May	Skyewalker Hostel, Portnalong, Skye (Organiser: Steve)
25-28 May	Strawberry Cottage, Glen Affric (Organiser: Eunice)
8-11 June	Section of the Southern Uplands Way (Organiser: Eunice)
21-23 September	Gerry's Hostel, Achnashellach (Organiser: Frank)
November	Suggestions welcomed

2008: WEEKEND TRIPS

Early May	Inverey Cottage, Deeside (Organiser: Steve)
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Bookings: Following agreement at the AGM in March, all bookings for weekend trips must now be accompanied by a £5.00 per night deposit to the trip organiser to secure a place (i.e. £10.00 for a 2-night stay or £15.00 for a 3-night stay). The reason for this change is to supplement Club funds as many hostels now require either full payment in advance or a higher level of deposit. We have to plan well in advance (sometimes over a year) to secure locations and ensure variety in the Club's weekend meets. Early bookings appreciated to give ample time to adjust numbers, if necessary.

REPORTS

Torricon Weekend (Reporter: Steve Turnbull)

2003 was the Club's last outing to Torricon. Looking forward to another weekend in the luxurious Ling Hut, I discovered early that it was already booked. We checked into the Torricon SYHA hostel instead, a roomy establishment lying beneath the western end of Liatgach.

The weather, I am pleased to report, was excellent for the Friday, Saturday and Sunday morning. On the way north, Josh and I drove down the lovely Strathconon and climbed the two corbetts lying to the north of the glen. A straightforward walk, as the hills lie beside one another (just over 4 hours walking). Jean and Iain had driven up the previous day and climbed the two corbetts in the Applecross area near the Beallach na Ba - splendid hills over rough terrain and rock slabs which lie at the surface.

On Saturday, three groups emerged. The first, comprising Richard, Annemarie and her friends Chris, Suzie and Keri, walked in from Kinlochewe to climb Slioch - an 8-hour slog. Jean, Iain and Sandra went for Beinn Alligin while Josh and I had a bash at the two Flowerdale Forest corbetts (not a tree in sight). It was a tremendous day - a slight breeze on

the tops, no cloud to speak of, with great views. One of the things I'm learning to appreciate climbing corbetts is seeing Munros and the landscape from a new angle. The views from Baosbheinn, in particular, in the late afternoon with the western sun lighting up the north sides of Alligin, Eighe, Dearg and Liatgach, was delightful. My team at work has recently acquired a 360 degree camera for project work and I could certainly have put it to good use then. There's a long walk in from the Poolewe road along a rough track, a boggy tiresome march over some moorland and a long ridge to negotiate to reach the summit of Beinn an Eoin (875 metres). In mist, the southern descent could be tricky. Even with good visibility, it required some careful treading among rocks, boulders, and slippery grass zig-zagging down among a series of outcrops and crags. Another tiresome boggy walk across moorland between tiny lochans takes you onto the southernmost hump on Baosbheinn's undulating ridgeline. There is then another higher peak to cross before finally ascending a steep slope to reach the summit at 855 metres. At this point, we used a convenient ridge on the north east to descend back to the moorland and a couple of small rivers to cross (thankfully not in spate). Then, there is the long 5 mile walk back out to the car. This is a strenuous day (8 and a half hours walking at a medium pace). But, it is worthwhile – it's a great remote area of wilderness (like Fisherfield to the north). Any plans to spoil this wild area through hydro-development would be shameful.

The communal meal was up to the mark on Saturday evening and there was the usual banter among friends. On Sunday, Jean, Iain, Annemarie and Chris drove to Achnashellach in search of a new Corbett (Fhuar Toll). After climbing Beinn Liath Mhor and Sgorr Ruadh, the dismal weather arrived and so the Corbett would have to wait for another day. Suzie and Keri walked to Coire Mhic Fhearhair in the Beinn Eighe massif, Sandra went off along the coast and to Applecross, Richard headed south and Josh and I said we were heading off to climb Beinn Damph. We didn't! We drove around the coast too, had coffee at Applecross, viewed the Cuillins and Rum from the head of Beallach na Ba and then met the wet weather near Loch Duich. Josh had an engagement with footballing friends later that day so who was I to insist we climb again after climbing four new hills over the weekend.

On Monday, Jean and Iain climbed Beinn Damph.

Travels in Connemara (Reporter: Eunice Coop)

I think our adventures started as we left Dublin Airport. What was a 3½ hour journey on the return trip, took 5/6 hours depending on which car you were in. This was due to the volume of traffic on the Dublin ring road, losing each other, waiting for each other, eventually buying and eating fish and chips, having to go to the supermarket, etc. Chris who was driving himself had no such problems.

Clifden as a town served the purpose of somewhere to stay, a pleasant enough town which reminded me of Callander - people go there and spend their time aimlessly looking in shop windows.

Being the KMC we wasted no time and by Sunday afternoon we were plodding up a hill in thick mist and rain - just like home from home! Barbara had more sense - she walked by the shore!

Monday saw us abandon our planned walk because the rain was hammering down on the cars and no mountains were visible in the thick mist. Actually before long the day had brightened up remarkably and we enjoyed a walk alongside Lough Killary, a sea loch dubbed Ireland's fford. From the far end we came back over the tops looking at the Mam Turk Mountains (our original plan for the day) bathed in brilliant sunshine.

On Tuesday while Chris, Barbara, Jack, Liz, Helen and George all made for the Aran Islands, Rebecca, Cedric and I climbed the first of the Mam Turks in dense mist and rain. Our decision to abandon the rest of the range was not affected in any way by the fact that this meant a 4k march along the road in the rain to where we had left a car (to save us a walk back along the road!) thanks to George's considerate planning. The others lost their way, missed a boat and decided this was not a day for the Aran Islands.

Wednesday dawned fair and, whilst Chris, Jack, Barbara & Liz set off once more for the Aran Islands, Cedric, Rebecca, George, Helen & I aimed for 6 of the 12 Pins. Considering none of these reach Munro height this is a momentous day out, involving some 5000ft of climbing up and down as the name implies over 6 very rocky peaks. What an exhilarating day out!

On Thursday, I went seeking family history in Westport (with a little success) while the others did a hill called Croag Patrick – ancient name Cruachan Aigle, hill of the eagles. The pilgrimage hill has a huge man-made scar up its face with a shop of sorts which sells religious artefacts at the top (a Costa Coffee would be better). Chris's observations on the hill, its significance and the fact that he thinks the church has something of a safety obligation for the thousands of generally poorly clad pilgrims is interesting. As usual that evening we planned the next day and as usual in the morning took one look at the weather and changed our plans. The decision for the day was Omev Island across the Omev Strand – there and back while the tide was out followed by a bar lunch and then a hill called Diamond Hill in Connemara National Park. And then, all too soon, it was Saturday and after a 5.30am start we set off back to Dublin Airport.

Hero of the week - Chris, with his book of alternative walks
Lasting Impressions - What a beautiful part of the world, which we only started to explore.
There are so many hills still to climb - I'll be back!

Another Irish Adventure (Reporter: Steve Turnbull)

Anna and I ventured over to Ireland in mid September to see some relatives living south west of Dublin. Anna, sensing that a few days of family talk isn't my cup of tea, bade me farewell in Thurles and I was set loose to travel to the south west. MacGillicuddy's Reeks and Brandon Mountain was the target for this trip. The day was glorious and I checked in to a B&B near Killorglin, having first seen the imposing outlines of the group of Irish munros. I'd read up on the Reeks mainly from Butterfield's High Mountains book. I'd also recently acquired a waterproof map of the area in preparation for the possibility of bad weather. If a low front comes in off the Atlantic, it's going to hit this area first!

The Friday morning was bright and clear with heavy dew. I arrived and parked at the farm (2 Euros) which appears to be the main route to Carrauntoohil. The Reeks are formed by two back to back curved ridges with a sharp arête connecting them. They are most commonly climbed in two trips. My plan was to head up the track to the Devil's Ladder (a path which leads onto a low point on the ridge south of Carruntoohil, cut off the track to the right (west) and head up steep slopes onto Beenkeragh (munro). From there, I planned to cross the arête and climb onto Ireland's highest peak, Carrauntoohil, follow the ridge to Caher (munro), then loop back and contour around Carrauntoohil to the top of the Devil's Ladder and review the time and progress. Going solo, I have to admit that I usually feel slightly apprehensive in strange countryside which, I hope, perks up the senses. Anyway, once away on the track, the precipitous mountains loomed ahead and the serrated ridges on the southern circuit looked imposing on my left. These have some tors and towers and Butterfield's description makes them sound interesting! Crossing the river, I made my way slowly up the eastern slopes of Knockbrinnea. At the summit of this peak, Carrauntoohil's northern face looked intimidating in the shade. I continued upwards across numerous boulder strewn bands to the top of Beenkeragh, where the narrow arête came into view below me. My first impressions (seeing various rocky spurs on it and sheer sides) were that it looked like a small version of the Aonach Eagach ridge. I carefully made my way down among the rocks on a steep path onto the arête, which wasn't as narrow as it looked from a distance. In fact, it was a pleasant walk and I stopped to admire the surroundings and the Eagles Nest which plunges into the corrie beneath Carrauntoohil. The path wends its way around rocky spurs to a long gully on the north side which signals the approach to The Tooth. This outcrop is avoided on the south by a path which gets close to the edge in one or two places. However, once passed this section, it was a straightforward climb up a steep gritty path to the summit of Carrauntoohil and the giant metal cross. I spoke to a couple who had walked in from the Caher direction and we took photos to record the event. The ridge over to Caher presented no difficulties at all. In my mind, I had roughly calculated the time it would take to reach certain points. By the time I

reached the Devil's Ladder by contouring across Carrauntoohil's southern slopes and had lunch, I was well ahead of the calculated time.

On a sunny day, and enjoying the freedom of open spaces, I needed no encouragement to keep going. I, therefore, continued onto the second part of the ridge, formed of several peaks of varying heights, passing only one couple who had climbed on to the ridge using a shoulder called the The Bone. I walked at a comfortable pace to Cummeennapeasta, the fourth munro. It was here that I knew I would make a decision as to whether to proceed to the next, and penultimate peak, called the Big Gun. Up to now, the ridge was broad. The way over to the Big Gun was more like a knife edge. A steep path from the summit leads down onto the start of this arete. The rock strata is inclined sharply to the north in slabs. Where slabs have broken off, the path dips down a series of steps requiring some careful but easy scrambling. Butterfield's book warns walkers to cross the narrow parts of the Reeks being mindful of being able to retrace steps if need be, particularly in poor weather. The path is followed under the crest of the ridge on the southern side. At one point, I was not confident enough about a move over an exposed section, because I couldn't see what followed. I retraced my steps and found an alternative route, climbing to a lower position then cutting back across the slope towards Cummeennapeasta and swinging back towards the Big Gun where a faint path appeared. I followed this line, clambering over boulders, back onto the ridge where I regained the higher path which lead to the col under the Big Gun. From here, it was a clamber over inclined slabs around the southern side of the narrow shoulder, following a broken path, onto the summit (it reminded me of the climb onto Sgurr Dubh Mor in the Cuillins). With Butterfield's description of the next part of the ridge in mind, I wasn't sure how easy it would be to continue without facing the tors and towers seen earlier. I could see bits of the path from the high vantage point by the airy cairn and continued on my way, now confident that, with care, I would make it to the next, and final, summit. This part of the ridge didn't really present any difficulties and called for careful scrambling and wending in and around boulders. Half an hour after reaching Cruach Mhor, I lay on the slabs by Lough Cummeennapeasta, eating my last sandwich reflecting on how authors describe tricky sections in words. These words can fill minds with apprehension but, often, the reality is not half as bad. It was one of those nice challenging days. That evening, I stayed at a B&B at Inch, on the southern coast of the Dingle peninsula watching the sun set over the Reeks.

The next day, the weather had changed for the worst. It was drizzling when I stopped off in Dingle to buy a couple of maps. I'd chosen the Saint's Road to climb Brandon Mountain, the route which comes in from the south west. Within a couple of hundred feet of the car, I was lost in a fine wetting mist being blown at me by a gale force wind. Even if I'd tried, I could not get lost for one simply follows a series of large wooden crosses, individually numbered, to the top - fifteen in all if you count the large unnumbered cross at the summit and a continuous line of plastic white markers. Touching the cairn (my last 3'000 footer in the UK and Ireland), I turned around and was blown back down the mountain. At cross number VI, I met a group of people (perhaps pilgrims?) battling their way up. They were surprised to see me emerge from the mist and I must have disheartened them by the grunts they made when they were informed they had the steepest part of the climb to come and still nine more crosses to bear! Their misery must have heightened for, when I reached the car, the rain came on heavily!!!

I had one more day alone and decided to drive north to Galway, an area I had not visited before. Driving on Irish roads is a relatively slow process. There are few town bypasses and it was getting dark when I checked into a B&B, west of Spiddal. Sunday was glorious again. I had no plans to walk. I wanted to reconnoitre the coast-line and drive through the Connemara Hills you've read about in Eunice's article. It's a grand area (often resembling the north west of Scotland) and the hills look inviting. I passed the 12 Pins and the Mam Turk Mountains. I thought the hills looked surprisingly big though some are not even 700 metres high. Coffee (two cups of Bewleys) at Leehaun on Lough Killary and an hour's sit by the loch before heading due east back to civilisation. Another interesting visit to a grand country .

Record Number for KMC Day Outing? (Reporter: Tom Noon)

Woke up before 7:00am on Sunday 15th October for the club's day outing to Glencoe. The forecast was good, opened curtains (just a little so as not to disturb Mairi) - it looked glorious.

Looking forward to getting out and meeting a few people as I have not had the chance to get out much recently.

The newsletter stated meet at 8:00am in St. Mary's car park. Got there just before 8:00am - horror - no cars there, they must have left, nobody knew I was coming. Waited till 8:00am just in case. I thought to myself - I'll surely catch up with them on the A82 before I reach Glencoe. Off I screeched from the car park - oops, police car just behind me - better slow down to at least 35 mph.

I had phoned Eunice early on the Friday evening - no answer, left a message on the answer machine. I was out all Friday evening and all day Saturday, looked at my answer machine late Saturday evening - no messages left, it wouldn't matter I thought; as long as I was there before 8:00am.

Just coming up to Tarbet, that looks like Peter's car - yep a few people in it - time to overtake. A quick glance while overtaking (a few strange looks back) - nope not Peter, he was driving too slow for that.

Further on near Inverarnan, that looks like Eunice's car ahead, hmm!, How am I going to overtake here? As I got nearer, there was only one person in car and it definitely wasn't Eunice (unless she has recently grown a beard). All the way to Glencoe - through the thick mist at Bridge of Orchy and out on to a glorious view from the top of the road at start of Blackmount (temperature inversion) - sunshine all the way along to Glencoe (I know its hard to believe). Drove into main car parks all the way along Glencoe to see if I could spot any recognisable cars. Nae luck. So I decided just to drive on and park near the visitor centre and climb Meall Lighiche, the Corbett beside Sgor na h-Ulaidh.

Just getting on my boots when another car parks with a couple of walkers. After the morning pleasantries the driver turns to me and says "Is that a Honda or a Ford?" "A Ford" I reply - "What kind of Ford". "A Mondeo" I told him. He then went on to denigrate Fords and how his car is better etc. etc. Time to get away as quickly as possible and hope they are not going up the same hill. Anyway didn't see them the rest of the day. I only had the deer for company on what turned out to be a hot glorious October day. I met one other group as I was going down from the col between Meall Lighiche and Sgor na h-Ulaidh who asked for advice and directions - just as well it wasn't misty.

I took my time going back, taking a number of photographs and eventually arriving back at the car. As I was about to leave, I couldn't resist leaving a version of "Wash Me" on the dirty fancy car of the brag. So I left the message "W****R". The things you get up to when you are on your own!

So a record turnout of 1 for an official KMC day outing.

P.S. I found out later that most people were away, Sinclair had turned up at the car park and left just before I got there. He drove off to Peter's to see if anyone was leaving from there. Drove back to St. Mary's, where I had been and gone, and he went home.

Ballachulish Weekend (Reporter: Steve Turnbull)

Alas, the end of another year for the KMC. This one was held at the Alex Mac Hut in North Ballachulish. Actually, this is a misnomer as the Hut is in fact a stone built house and provides very good accommodation on the northern shores on Loch Leven. The weather for the weekend was mixed with lots of rain and low cloud.

On the Friday, John and I drove up to Glen Nevis and walked in to climb Sgurr Coinnich Mor at the western end of the Grey Corries. The tops were clear for the walk in but the cloud started to build up by the time we reached the summit. With the shorter days, the walk back out through the Glen Nevis gorge was in the dark. Fortunately, John had a good LED headtorch because I discovered my battery headtorch had died.

On the Saturday morning, the various groups were up and out early. John and Charmian headed for Glenfinnal to climb Sgurr nan Corraichean and Sgurr Thuilm. Meanwhile, Cedric, Tom, Bob and I used the Corran ferry to cross to Ardgour. Our target was the two corbetts south east of Strontian. The walk up the glen was through long grass and a boggy track in the rain. A long steep shoulder leads to the ridge. By the time we reached the summit of the first Corbett, one of our group was suffering from cramp. With the time marching on, it was decided that we should all climb down from the ridge together. The other Corbett would be there for another day. The gully between the two corbetts, however, proved a bit of a challenge and there was a circuitous walk down steep grass, scree, cutting back and forth over the gully. We reached the car in the dark.

Sunday morning proved no better than the previous day as regards the weather. A group of members went north to climb Cow Hill near Fort William. Charmian's target was Beinn a Bheithir. John and I decided to climb Beinn a Chrulaiste north of Buchaille Etive Mor. This was a good 'going home' sort of hill and it only took us a couple of hours or so.

Eunice's Birthday Bash

A great gathering took place on Saturday 11 November in the centre of Kirkintilloch to celebrate Eunice's birthday. Four hours or nearly non stop Scottish Country Dancing had KMC members and other friend and family swirling to the tunes, stripping the willow and jigging to barn dances. A cheque was presented to Eunice from a collection made from KMC members and Eunice has decided that this should be sent to the Skye, Lochaber and Cairngorm mountain rescue teams.

Heather made a great 'Kilimanjaro' cake to commemorate the 'MEMORABLE' trip to the top of Africa's highest mountain.

ADVERTISEMENT

KMC DAY CARE CENTRE EVERY WEDNESDAY

Weak at the knees? Forgetting things? Having difficulty staying awake?

Then come to the KMC Day Care Centre every Wednesday and enjoy a day spent with fellow sufferers. Free Occupational Therapy and Sudoku lessons.

Join in games such as Bengo, Blotto, Superbladder and Who wants to be a munrobagger? Enjoy regular outings to the Callander Woolly Mills, the IKEA Psychiatric Unit, Tiso's Tea-room, the Green Welly Toilets, and the occasional Corbett. Visit our Reminiscing Room and remember the Munros you claim you've climbed. And those with an alcohol problem can try out our Drying Room.

Pick-up and drop-off at St Mary's Car Park. Bring your own sandwiches, reading glasses, and Leki walking aids.

(Colostomy bag? Don't be embarrassed. Many of our regulars carry Platypuses and will be happy to swap with you.)

NEWS AND VIEWS

Committee Meeting

The next Committee meeting is scheduled for 22 January 2007. If you have anything you wish the Committee to discuss or consider, please get in touch with one of the Committee members (highlighted on the list below).

SOCIAL AND PROMOTIONAL EVENTS

Kirkintilloch Library Open Day

At the end of October, the Club participated in an open day to publicise the KMC. This took place in the foyer of the William Patrick Library. Many leaflets were handed out and two enquiries were made regarding potential new members. Details have since been emailed. A suggestion was made that East Dumbartonshire Council should have a board with leaflets about local clubs in the local libraries. This suggestion seemed to be of interest to the staff. I will follow this up as it seems a good way to keep the Club's profile up for little effort other than producing and, keeping up to date, details of the Club's activities and contacts. The Club's details are also on the Council's website register of local activities.

KMC Christmas Meal

Due to the absence of a number of members pre Christmas, it has been decided to have the meal on Sunday 14 January near the Ochil Hills. Tormaukin Inn, near Muckart for 5pm. Please contact either Eunice or Steve if you wish to attend.