



K M C

**2007/08 SEASON 6**

**January 2008**

Dear Members

A happy New Year to you all. May all your worries vanish the snow on the hills in our spring-like winters. Since the last newsletter we have had a successful and entertaining slide night at the Camera Club. I am sure it was anyway but I can't recall much of it. The Xmas dinner at Tormaukin I do remember well, particularly the noise levels in the echo chamber of a conservatory we ate it in, but it was a great evening and all twenty odd there enjoyed themselves immensely. As we move into another year events to put in your diary are the biennial dinner and the AGM.

#### **2007 - 08: DAY TRIPS**

Sunday 16 March Stob Binnein and Ben More

Remember to contact Heather to find out where the more informal Sunday meets are going or check your email.

#### **2007-08: WEEKEND TRIPS**

The intended programme is as follows:

15-16 February 2008 Glen Doll (Organiser: Jean Keddie)  
2-5 May 2008 Inverey Cottage (Organiser: Steve Turnbull)  
23-26 May 2008 Knoydart (Organiser: Sandra Owen)  
26-28 September 2008 Inchnadamph (organiser Frank)  
24-25 October 2008 Tulloch Station (Organiser: Eunice Coop)

Both Sandra and Frank are emailing you to find any more interest in Knoydart and Inchnadamph respectively. Both meets have had a good response I believe, but there is the opportunity to book some more places.

Bookings: The Committee decided that, in future, weekend places will be booked for 8 beds rather than the former practice of booking 12, with the opportunity (perhaps) of increasing the number as members finally stir themselves. So if you wish to be sure of a place, get moving.

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. Late cancellations will have to pay full accommodation costs, unless this is waived by the hostel concerned.

## **SOCIAL EVENTS**

### **Club Dinner**

You should all have heard from Eunice regarding the dinner in Kincaid House Hotel Friday 22 February 7.00 for 7.30. If you are coming could you get in touch with me **soon** to confirm how many of you you are and the dishes from the menu with which you wish to regale yourself(ves). For the night to be a success we need a good number there and a willingness on the part of some to offer a form of entertainment viz anecdote, reminiscence, dirty joke. It is the chance to meet old 'friends' and exchange notes on the effectiveness of medical trusses and Grecian 2000. The ladies can exchange notes on... there are some areas even I don't dare to go.

### **Menu**

#### **KMC 2008 BIENNIEL DINNER**

##### Kincaid House Hotel

Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> February

7.00 for 7.30pm

£20 PER PERSON

##### *Starters:*

Venison Pate served with Plum Chutney

Haggis Fritters with Drambuie Cream Sauce

Soup of the day

##### *Main Course:*

Citrus Baked Scottish Salmon with a Herb Butter Sauce

Chicken Dish (as yet to be decided)

Slow Braised Beef and Red Wine Casserole with Dumplings

Honey Glazed Gammon Steak with Apricots

##### *Dessert:*

Crushed Meringue with Strawberry and Honey Cream

Sticky Toffee Pudding with Hot Butterscotch Sauce

Cheesecake

Cheese Board

Tea or Coffee

### **2008 AGM**

This will be held in the Camera Club March 13 at 7.30.

## REPORTS

### Reflections on Achnashellach (September 2007)

The KMC outing in September was to Gerry's Hostel at Craig, near Achnashellach. Tales of the hostel form part of the club's folklore though this was the KMC's first visit since last century. The hostel was new to me. Iain, Jean, Sandra, Chris, Steve, Frank, Richard arrived on Friday while Joyce joined on Saturday morning. Sandra was very upbeat having climbed Stob Ban and Mullach nan Coirean solo in the Mamores on the way north. I met up with David Short from Lancashire at lunchtime and we had climbed Fuar Tholl in mixed conditions. The heavy showers had swollen the River Lair which has to be crossed to gain access to the hill and the level had risen significantly by the time we descended, calling for extreme care to cross it without incident. Our summit attempt was clear but the wind howled. David joined some of us for a humorous meal at the hotel in Achnasheen in the evening.

On Saturday, the normal early morning caffuffle took place preparing for the "off". Iain and Frank headed for the two munros south of Craig (Sgurr Choinnich and Sgurr a' Chaorachain). Two new munros for Frank. Jean, Chris, Joyce, and Sandra headed for Beinn Liath Mhor and Sgorr Ruadh while Richard, David and I headed for An Ruadh Stac. A strong westerly wind was blowing and cloud obscured the peaks. By-passing Beinn Liath Mhor and on the climb to the summit of Sgorr Ruadh, Chris was blown off his feet onto the unforgiving quartzite boulders. In view of the state of the weather, Chris's badly slashed thumb, knocks and bruises, the party wisely turned around and retraced their steps to Craig where Chris retreated south for attention. Meanwhile, Richard, David and I reached the coll under Maol Chean-dearg which gives views to the steeply sloping quartzite slabs on the lower slopes of An Ruadh Stac. In the wet and mist, these slabs appear daunting but with care, we climbed them without incident. It was a steep pull up the eastern side of the hill but we were in the lee of the hill and sheltered from the worst of the gale. A great hill and a new corbett for all of us. Back at the hostel, I received some advice from Gerry as to where to place wet gear. Very good advice I thought and did as I was told! A hearty KMC communal meal followed.

It was brighter on Sunday morning though no less windy. Frank conquered another new munro (Fionn Bheinn) with a group of KMC members. Sandra bravely battled up to the col under Maol Chean-dearg by herself but was forced back by the gales. David and I teamed up for a cycle trip from Attadale to Ben Dronaig lodge with the aim of climbing Ben Dronaig. Moments after leaving the car park and, thankfully, at low speed the saddle of my bike collapsed when a bolt sheered dropping me to the ground. The bike shot off into the grass. Miraculously, we managed to repair the damage as David had a replacement bolt which was exactly the right fit. If you are familiar with this track, you will know it is an effort to push a bike up a thousand feet over the first few kilometres. Nonetheless, Ben Dronaig Lodge was reached in around an hour and a half in clear weather with the peaks in view, including Bidean a' Choire Sheasgaich and Lurg Mhor. The ascent of Ben Dronaig was direct from the Lodge and the galeforce wind blew us along the summit ridge to the cairn. Pressed against the trig point by the force of the wind, there were good views south to the Mullardoch hills. A squall moved in fast from the west quickly obliterating all views and the heavy rain started like a tap. Waterproofs smartly on, we beat a hasty retreat off the hill back to the Lodge. Happily, the squalls held at bay for most of the journey back to Attadale.

On Monday, most of the party headed home. David, who is also doing the round of corbetts, and I planned to spend the rest of the week walking together. That day, we climbed Sgurr na Feartaig and Beinn Tharsuinn (south of Craig) in mist discovering the damaged (and apparently deserted) camping equipment that Frank and Iain had come across 2 days earlier. We drove to Shiel Bridge on Tuesday and climbed Sgurr Mhic Bharraich (south of the Ratagan hostel). On the way up by Loch Coire nan Cragachan, we added a young woman from New Zealand to our small party when she joined us for the summit bid in thick mist. David's camper van was parked up at the camp site in Loch Carron. That night, the weather turned very cold indeed and a light dusting of snow was on the high peaks next morning. We drove up the spectacular Bealach na Ba, parked at the summit and set off in chilly and

unpredictable weather with several warm layers on to climb Sgurr a' Chaorachain and Beinn Bhan (the Applecross corbetts). The weather improved as the day went on and we gained superb views over the islands. David was in his element (2 new quality corbetts). These hills are definitely worth doing more than once (or twice). On the walk back over the rough country from Beinn Bhan, we spotted a family of 5 eagles soaring high above us - a wonderful sight. A reward of a pint of ale at the Applecross Inn afterwards. Most afternoons, we partook of tea and cakes at the Loch Carron café as a reward for the day's labours! Next morning, we moved south and left the van at Shiel Bridge camp site. Using the car, we headed over the Bealach Ratagain to Glenelg and then round to Arnisdale. Although a number of the KMC had climbed the two corbetts beside Beinn Sgritheall in March 2006 in snow, David was keen to climb them and I was happy to oblige as these are also good hills giving splendid views on a clear day. It's a steep pull up Beinn nan Caorach to gain height but we lay in the sunshine on the summit of Beinn na h'Eaglaise looking over the shimmering seas to Knoydart and the islands. We also did a bit of mountain spotting for a future walk into the Ben Aden area in the rough bounds of Knoydart. On the Friday morning, David headed home while I nipped up Am Bathach, an easy corbett lying due north of the Cluanie Inn. On the ascent, I saw another family of eagles. Magic!

## **NOTES FROM DOWN UNDER**

To mark our 30<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, Anna and I decided to go 'Down Under'. It's a long way to go, the jet lag is disorientating and to change from winter into summer, or vice versa, in a day is very strange! But, it's all worth it. New Zealand is a country of superb contrasts with changing scenery reminding one of a great number of places, including parts of Scotland, England, Ireland and Wales, Europe and America. Anna and I arrived in New Zealand equipped for all kinds of weather and also with our walking gear. We had a broad outline of a tour but nothing too firm as that might stymie some unforeseen activity we would wish to indulge ourselves of. New Zealand is thoroughly equipped for tourism and in spite of having some travel guides, there is no shortage of brochures and leaflets, route maps and all manner of useful information to assist the hapless traveller.

24 hours or so after leaving Glasgow, a cloud bank lined the horizon of the Tasman Sea as we neared New Zealand. The west coast of South Island, like the west coast of Scotland, has a high rainfall from the prevailing weather systems. The clouds obscured the coast but the Southern Alps emerged through the cotton wool to reveal a magnificent jumble of snow laden peaks and long flowing glaciers. Canterbury Plain stretched out before us with the Waimakariri River channel carrying ice melt to the sea. We had arrived. Get your head around the fact that you are now on the other side of the world!

A day to unwind in Christchurch. A very English city of mainly low rise buildings and a pleasant place to be to wind into tour mode. A walk in the botanics, a ride on the old tram, a coffee at Starbucks (a worldly experience), up the gondola on the Banks peninsula and a boat trip from Lyttleton to watch the Hector's dolphins play in the bay. Rested, our clockwise tour commenced with a drive down the road in the direction of Dunedin. We simply did not have time to visit everywhere and we made a B-line for the interior through Geraldine and Fairlie. The landscape unfolded with scenes reminiscent of Scotland, California and other places we have visited. Farmland, rolling hills, woodland, flat barren plains and a backdrop of mountains. We were blessed with weather in the high 20's for most of our stay making some of our gear redundant. The ultra violet in New Zealand is particularly strong we were informed. We had both been burned on the boat trip! The view over the brilliant bleached turquoise blue of Lake Tekapo lead to the high peaks, with Mount Cook dominating. Booking a night at an apartment in Twizel, named after the Northumbrian village, Anna and I drove up the road passed Lake Pukaki to Aoraki/Mount Cook. There, there is a very pleasant walk up the Hooker Valley to the glacial lake of the Hooker glacier which sits beneath the majestic mountain. On our approach on the left, the hanging glaciers of Mount Sefton above us were active with noises like rifle fire as they creaked and split, cascading small avalanches down gulleys. A very dramatic landscape. There is a monument to Alpine climbers who have perished in these mountains. I spent some time studying routes up the peaks and wondering if I could attempt Mount Wakefield, a paltry peak of some 1,200 metres or so, in comparison with its neighbouring giant, Mount Cook (3,754 metres).

The apartments we stayed in were self catering and cosy easily picked up after a day's travelling. Next day, we motored via Cromwell to Queenstown, the activity centre of South Island. Had I the bottle to bungee jump, the ultimate place to do it is over the awe inspiring Kawarau canyon. We saw the bridge from which the jumpers plunge – that was sufficient for this trip. Our apartment in Queenstown overlooked Lake Wakatapu and the Remarkables. The highlight of our stay was a white water rafting trip down the Shotover River Canyon. Anna and I were at the front of the raft so caught the full force of all the rapids. The road trip to get to the start point is also an interesting experience along the Skippers Canyon track which clings to the sides of precipitous hills. While we would have loved to have driven further south to Fiordland and done some walking there, we simply had no time to do so in view of other aspirations. From Queenstown, we journeyed via Cardrona to Wanaka, where we had fine views over the lake to Mount Aspiring, and then over the pass into rainforest leading to the west coast at Haast. The clouds had banked up over the mountains and we suffered our first drizzle. We stopped for the night at Fox Glacier. Josh had climbed Franz Joseph glacier on his trip in 2006. We were to follow in his footsteps. We walked to the foot of the terminal moraine at Fox Glacier noting how the glacier appeared to have retreated in recent years. We also walked to Lake Matheson where the well documented photos show the peaks reflected in the lake. Alas, the clouds obscured the picture for Anna and me. We were equipped for the walk onto Franz Joseph glacier and lead to the foot of the climb through the debris churned up by the ice flow. Doing anything for the first time is interesting. Our small party spent over 2 hours on the ice walking through gulleys, looking down crevasses and being entertained by a cheeky Kea parrot scrounging for food. That night, we had reached Greymouth further up the west coast.

We now aimed for the Abel Tasman area and it was a long hot drive through mountain sections following the gorge of the River Buller. Earlier, we had driven north to see the Punakaiki pancake rocks in the Paparoa National Park and a seal colony at Cape Foulwind.

We stayed for a couple of days based at Kaiteriteri near the southern end of the Abel Tasman track – one of the best beaches in the world claims the Guardian newspaper! Azure seas, a sub tropical feel, light breeze and sunshine, Walking time! A water taxi dropped us off in Awaroa Bay and we walked south to Torrent's Bay (about 16 kilometres of the 41 kilometre track) through rainforest and over tidal estuaries at Tonga and Barks Bays. The maximum height on this section did not exceed around 500 feet. The next morning, Anna and I decided to try our hand at sea kayaking. I obviously did not listen attentively enough at the briefing or did not understand something. We had to adjust foot stirrups in the kayak. For the first leg, I was in the front with Anna at the rear. We set off and try as I might pushing both my legs, the steering on the kayak did not respond particularly well. Our kayak set off at right angles to the beach in the opposite direction to the tutor and the other kayakers. The tutor was shouting for us to turn and follow. The kayak appeared to have a mind of its own!! My stirrups were clearly not set right and I had to slide down inside the kayak to exert what I thought was the right pressure to help steer the vessel. Well, not exactly. We had reached half distance and beached the kayak before I realised that I had had no influence on the steering and our zig zag manoeuvres had all been down to Anna, perhaps a bit oblivious to this fact in the rear. Also, I had had to suffer verbal abuse all the while from my rear about where our kayak was heading. I should take some blame as a good coxswain should bark out the orders (in this case) from the foredeck! We changed positions and the steering was a little improved for the return leg. Clearly, the Turnbull's need more practice in this sport. It was a laugh and enjoyable. My plan to get a kayak for paddling along the Forth and Clyde Canal has surprisingly met little reaction from Anna. The temperature got up to 33 degrees and the drive east through Nelson to Picton was a warm one. We reconnoitred the end of the Queen Charlotte track at Anakiwa with an ice cream in hand.

Picton is a small attractive town nestled in the rolling forested hills near the Marlborough Sound. Anna and I returned next day to Anakiwa and walked the 13 kilometres to Mistletoe Bay and back. Great views high above the Sound. The day after (another hot one), we caught the tourist ferry which visited the various dropping off points on Queen Charlotte's

track. The first stop was Ships Cove (where Captain Cook had first landed in New Zealand). We were dropped at Punga Cove with our hired mountain bikes. We had chosen the most challenging part of the track (16 miles of ups and downs) with over 3'000 feet of ascent. Pushing the bike up the hill from sea level at Punga Cove to gain the start of the track was an effort in itself. There were many steep sections where the bike had to be pushed uphill or where it was safer to walk the bike downhill because of the gradient of the stony and dry gritty surfaces. There was also a timetable to meet to ensure we met the return ferry from Torea Bay but this was comfortably achieved. I really enjoyed the day but Anna felt terrified on some sections. Cycling through the forest sections on the descent to Torea Bay, the track clung to the hillside. To come off the bike and plunge into the forest on one of these sections would have been serious. We ended the day eating hoki (fish) and chips (the best I've ever tasted) in our Top Ten apartment in Picton.

The southern hire car was dropped off at the port first thing next morning and we stepped aboard the ferry for Wellington, leaving behind fond memories of travels in the South Island. Along the Marlborough Sound and across Cook Strait (previously names in a geography book) and into the capital of New Zealand, an attractive city with a mix of old and modern buildings and a lively centre for shopping. Highly recommended, we visited the national Te Papa Museum on the waterfront. We also visited Anna's cousin later.

We hadn't much time allocated for North Island and drove directly to Taupo through pleasant and changing landscapes and the desert that surrounds the Tongariro volcanoes to the shores of Lake Taupo. The apartment at Taupo was excellent, overlooking the town and a perfect place to watch the setting sun (noting that 'north facing' receives the most sunshine).

We planned to stay with friends near Tauranga the following night and visited two interesting volcanic sites en route, the first called Orakai Korako – a small but fascinating hidden valley north of Taupo. Rotorua was not to our liking as we drove through it (New Zealand's Las Vegas or Blackpool). Our friends took us for a walk up Mount Maunganui on the Saturday morning before we completed the last stage of our journey to Auckland via the Karangahake gorge in the Coromandel region. Like many other places in New Zealand, this had once been a thriving gold mining area.

One night near Auckland harbour, a walk in rainforest next day then off to Sydney on the first leg of our homeward journey. We stayed 3 nights near the Circular Quay between Sydney Harbour Bridge and the Opera House. We loved Sydney. During the daytime or lit up at night, the harbour area is impressive. One day we used a daytripper public transport ticket and visited Manly on the ferry, Manly and Bondi beaches and various other places. We caught a late evening ferry to the north side of the harbour to see Sydney lit up on the return trip. A sight that will remain with us forever. On our last full day, we caught a train to Katoomba in the Blue Mountains. This had been recommended to me. A mile from the town centre are views across expansive Australian canyonlands. Not as impressive as the Grand Canyon by a long margin but interesting. The problem with much of the scenery we'd seen, as with North America, the majority of hills and many mountains are covered entirely with trees. Ecologically and from the global warming point of view, this is good, but give me a raw Scottish mountain with visible bedrock any day. There are walks into the bush near the canyon edge. Having been blessed with no noticeable insects all holiday, the flies at Katoomba were b\*\*\*\*\* nuisance and we were glad to return to Sydney. Some hours were spent at the Museum of Contemporary Art and walking in the botanical gardens (enormous fruit bats) prior to bidding farewell to the Antipodes the following day. Then, the long haul home and another period of disorientation. Returning from the summer to the chill of winter UK is one hell of a shock to the system!

Would we return – yes! So much still to see and do, including walking some of New Zealand's classic walks like the Milford and Routeburn tracks and the Tongariro Crossing in North Island. Two sets of friends emigrated there in recent years but Anna and I would miss the UK and all that it offers, including its history, buildings and accessible countryside.

New Zealand 2007

## POTTERY BUNKHOUSE LAGGAN NOVEMBER 2-4 2007

*At the Pottery Bunkhouse there were distinct mutterings that the Pascoes never did anything except drink beer, eat and generally walk round things, play Scrabble and look at things cultural - in other words, they never did anything for the club.*

*I have therefore decided to confute all these base innuendoes , so please read on:*

*The weekend was ably arranged by Cedric - though he had omitted to discover the hot tub was out of action - vandalised by previous drunken groups ( not KMC of course) who had been there! . Disappointed tubbers were Heather and Peter, Sandra, Eunice, Fay and Ian, John, Charmian , Anne Marie and Chris. But that was the only disappointment - the weather was kind, the local hostelry ((Monadhliath Hotel) friendly and the communal meal on Saturday - courtesy of Cedric, Eunice and Heather and Stephen ( in his absence) - superb eating and value as usual. The bunkhouse is comfortable and well equipped and the lady of the house makes excellent cheese scones and coffee for sale at the attached Pottery Coffee house - not of course, that anyone had time or inclination to try these out - or did they? Now that would be telling...*

*On Saturday, As usual the dawn was broken by everybody except me getting up in the dark and disappearing without waking me - how kind. However Cedric and Heather decided they had done enough mountains for a while (citing age and knees as excuses) and that they would honour the lazy Pascoes with their presence, looking at Wade roads and bridges and heading off up Major Corfield's route over the Correyairack pass to Fort Augustus. Setting off at a cracking pace, the age and knees soon disappeared into the distance, leaving the Pascoes to mess about taking photos and looking at stone thingies while walking at (Fay's) usual measured pace - well I do have duck's disease -( bum too near the ground.)*

### **Heather** reports:

"The military track is atrociously eroded - ruined by water and "off roaders". The upper reaches near the zig-zags were pulped to a peaty morass - so disappointing since the sign at the bottom referred to the historical value of Wade's highest pass. (*The Pascoes did in fact get that far, but retreated from the scene of destruction, and the prospect of climbing up to the bealach, to do more culture (and cheese scones...)*) Once reaching the top we quickly reached Correyairack - a demoted Corbett, then went on to Gairbeinn - a good high level traverse with improving visibility. To our north we could see the massive infrastructure being created to support a new hydro scheme. Several little lochans which drain a huge basin of hills will be subsumed - but hopefully when finished the new dam will not detract too much from the scenery . We also spotted a wind farm to the west and any feeling of remoteness quickly evaporated."

### And from **Sandra**:

" with Anne Marie and Chris, we climbed Creag Meagaidh, Stob Poite Coire Ardair and Carn Liath."

### And from **Eunice**

"John Berry and I cycled from the bunkhouse to Cluny Castle and from there about 5km up a track to an unnamed bothy where we left the bikes. From there we walked up towards Loch Dobh and then took to the hills up to Carn Dearg. From there turned west and then south along a ridge to complete a high horseshoe. From there dropped back to the bikes and, obviously, cycled back to the bunkhouse - getting back to an empty place by mid afternoon"

## Sunday

*Fay, Ian, Heather, Cedric and Peter went for a gentle stroll through woodlands near Feagour in Strath Mashie and had a look at a deserted village of Drum na Aird - all the men had got lost in a snowstorm returning from a wedding and never reached home. Too much 'moonshine' presumably, but sad. No helicopter rescues in the 1750s. We found a 'des res' that would have made an admirable home for the club, but Peter later discovered the asking price was o/o £220 k - for a shell, with absolutely no 'cons' of any kind, 'mod' or otherwise, so that idea unfortunately bit the dust.*

**Sandra** retreated homewards to continue her aspirations to become a philosopher of high renown.

**Chris** reports "Anne-Marie and I climbed Beinn a' Chraoainn & Beinn Teallach Nothing too exciting to report apart from seeing Cameron McNeish (Scotland's foremost hillwalking author) on the Sunday morning walking on the same route" *(Now there's a tick for you!)*

And **Eunice** "Cycled along Glen Tilt (both with bikers bum - but that is superfluous info) along to Forest Lodge. From there climbed steeply initially up and then over easier gradient to Carn A'Chlamain. This was a new one for John. Lots of people on the hill. Lovely day with just a little mist hovering from time to time on the tops. Soon back at the car"

*Apologies for the lack of literary style - just consider the raw material I was working with! Charmian was in there somewhere, with Peter on Saturday I think - definitely in training for her participation in the Everest Marathon!*