



# The Munro Society NEWSLETTER

No. 57, April 2023



*The classic view of Gairich from Loch Cuaich – see article on page 20 (John Marjoram)*

## President's Blog

**Alf Barnard** reflects on some recent adventures



A very warm welcome to all members and their families. The weather this winter has been mostly exceptionally kind, with only a wintry blast in December to remind us of the time of year. Braemar still holds the record for the lowest temperature this winter at -17.3 Celsius (a whole 1.0 degree Fahrenheit), which occurred on 13<sup>th</sup> December.

I hope that you have managed some time in the hills, despite the weather. However, with spring being only 'just around the corner', depending on which

part of the country you live in, we have everything to look forward to with better weather and increasingly long days. I for one certainly can't wait for the 'golden' months of April, May and (hopefully) flaming June.

My hill achievements have been pretty feeble this winter, due to idleness, a very old dog (15 years) and various other commitments. I had a couple of extended trips up Glen Doll (upper Glen Clova), the first coinciding with the 'wintry blast' in December, which brought home the benefits of a well-insulated modern mountaineering hut.

The second, during the time of heavy thaw, saw the annual Burns Night celebrations enjoyed, with even a walk up Jock's Road and down by Bachnagairn. Davy's Bourach (emergency bivouac shelter) was renovated in late 2019 by the Forfar and District Hill Walking Club, and is now completely wind and watertight. It can sleep four in some comfort and is surprisingly (Tardis-like) spacious.

Note: due to Storm Arwen (November 2021), the lower part of Jock's Road has still to be avoided by a signposted by-pass route, as it is totally impassable.

A Grampian Club day-meet to Peebles and the hills there in January was a new experience, as I had never visited that area before. To our surprise the new snow was a foot deep on the 'high' hills of Graham height.

To try to get out regularly I have joined a walking group titled the 'Over the Hill Mob'. They are all grumpy old men aged between 68 and 80 years, so I fit in very well! The craic and the company is much to be enjoyed, even if the actual walking cannot be described as strenuous. Dogs are allowed on these walks, so young Rab, my Border collie (10 in May this year), and his friend Bert, a springer spaniel (11), keep us company. They tend to have to wait for us, for some quite unknown reason. But they don't seem to mind, as long as they get their fair share of the pieces.

The other Sunday we decided to do a 'new' Graham, Leagag – all of 601.0 metres (1,971.785 feet), which (at present) holds the record for the lowest of all the low Grahams. This means driving almost all the way to Rannoch Station. However, it was actually most enjoyable, even if the views were a little blurry due to the conditions. Curiously, the Ben, though totally unmistakeable, looked no higher than the other hills due to the low light.

A year has gone by already since I stepped into Anne Butler's shoes, which was a daunting prospect as she did such a magnificent job over the 3½ years she held the office of President. Just to make certain that I kept on the straight and narrow, she is still serving TMS as the Vice-President. At the AGM Ann White is stepping down after five years as the Secretary (serious offenders get a shorter sentence!), so a very big thanks to her for her exemplary service to the Society. Due to the distressing lack of candidates, Anne Butler has kindly volunteered to become the Secretary.

Most fortuitously, Oliver Bartrum even though at present the Treasurer, has volunteered to become VP

as well as Treasurer. Obviously, we seriously need a new TMS Treasurer. Any volunteers? It is not too onerous; obviously, as I did it for five years! If anyone is interested, please discuss it with Oliver.

On 5<sup>th</sup> November (remember, remember) we had the Annual Dinner at the usual venue – the Grant Arms at Grantown-on-Spey; a very decent turnout of 62 in total, comprising 39 members and 23 guests. The guest 'before-dinner' speaker was Kevin Woods, who amazed us with his sheer enthusiasm and also his exploits in doing a winter round of the Munros in 2019-20.

Anne Butler organised the photo competition which was up to its usual very high standard. The overall winner was Oliver Bartum with a great photo of a rock titled 'A hole with a view'. Congratulations to Oliver. The hotel served up its usual excellent fare with superb friendly service. The 'after-dinner' speakers were our Honorary President followed by your present President. We are back there on 28<sup>th</sup> October this year – so remember to book your places early at the hotel, and also for the dinner.

On Sunday we had the President's Walk, attended by 25 or so, from Boat of Garten along the Speyside Way, returning via the Pine Marten Trail. The weather even played its part by the sun shining for the second part. A fitting end to yet another superb weekend.

Other events to look forward to this year are the weekend meets organised most efficiently by the redoubtable Anne Butler – Mull 2<sup>nd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> June; Strontian 28<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> July; Glen Coe 22<sup>nd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> September. For those who have not attended these Society meets, they are most enjoyable and well recommended. There are apparently, other hills existing to be climbed other than the Munros, though I doubt that?

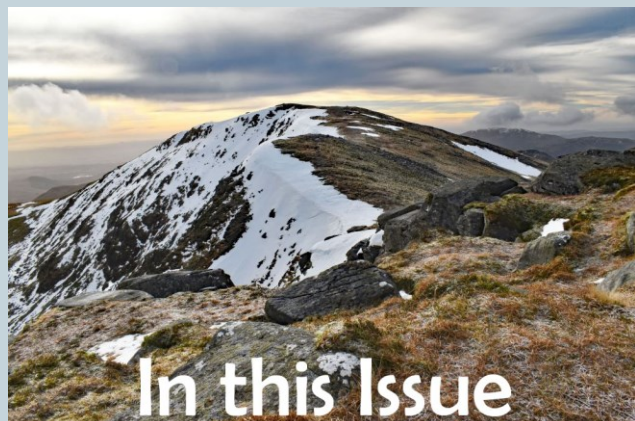
The Munro Legacy Exhibition Story continues on its triumphant journey around Scotland, most ably skippered by Alan Watt. In November 2022 it was at the Dundee Mountain Film Festival, and then traipsed up the A9 to Carrbridge for the SMC Annual Dinner. From Carrbridge it went to Glenmore Lodge near Aviemore - and in February 2023 at the Fort William Mountain Festival. Next stop, the Strathearn Centre in Crieff from 20<sup>th</sup> March to 10<sup>th</sup> April. It certainly gets around.

Lastly, I hope that you all thoroughly enjoy the spring and manage to venture into the hills. See you all at the Annual Dinner on 28<sup>th</sup> October.

TMS



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## In this Issue

<b>4</b>	<b>News Section</b> <i>Of the Society and Elsewhere</i>
<b>7</b>	<b>Don't Walk into Telegraph Poles</b> <i>Hamish Brown</i>
<b>8</b>	<b>Another Big Day</b> <i>Mike Weedon</i>
<b>11</b>	<b>The Start of it All – Ben Cruachan</b> <i>An essay by the late Irvine Butterfield</i>
<b>14</b>	<b>The Railway Peaks</b> <i>Derek Sime</i>
<b>15</b>	<b>A Monadhliath Traverse</b> <i>Andrew Fraser</i>
<b>16</b>	<b>Another Diamond Munroist</b> <i>Malcolm Wylie</i>
<b>19</b>	<b>The Mountains of Mourne</b> <i>Jan Drye</i>
<b>20</b>	<b>If at First...Try...and Try Again</b> <i>John Marjoram</i>
<b>22</b>	<b>Munro Summits List – a Final Revision?</b> <i>Charles Everett</i>
<b>24</b>	<b>Much Ado about 9.6 Metres</b> <i>Alan Dawson</i>
<b>26</b>	<b>Mind Games in the Cuillin</b> <i>Alan Rowan</i>
<b>28</b>	<b>The Lindertis Diary</b> <i>A Sideways Look at the Walking World</i>
<b>30</b>	<b>Dates for your Diary</b> <i>Some Dates for 2023</i>
<b>31</b>	<b>Book Review</b> <i>Eric Young on Dawson's Grahams Book</i>
<b>32</b>	<b>Postbag</b> <i>Your Letters and Emails</i>
<b>32</b>	<b>Photo Competition</b> <i>2022 Winning Entries</i>



You probably received your December Newsletter later than usual. Although it was printed by late November, various issues conspired to cause the delay, not least of these being that the Post Office was initially too busy to accept a bulk mailing due to the Christmas rush, and the series of pre-Christmas strikes at Royal Mail. Delivery times were highly variable and reports indicated these were many days, or even weeks apart. Hopefully this issue will reach you in good time.

In this issue we have advice on telegraph poles, Mike Weedon concludes his Cuillin series, an essay by the late Irvine Butterfield, some railway peaks, a wild walk across the Monadhliaths before the windfarms, and another diamond Munroist. A rare visit to Northern Ireland, and Munros that took several attempts, follow. Then, read about the rationale behind the changes to the Grahams list (as well as a review of Alan Dawson's new book), and some interesting thoughts on Munro's Tables. It's back to the Cuillin with Alan Rowan, and the usual miscellany that is the Lindertis Diary. There are of course dates for your 2023 diary and the booking forms, and to round things off, the winning entries in last year's Photo Competition.

Hopefully you will find much to interest and entertain, which may inspire you to revisit a hill or route, or even write up some of your adventures to be shared with members in the Newsletter! All contributions gratefully received.

Please send material for the August issue **by 30 June 2023** to [simed44.ds@gmail.com](mailto:simed44.ds@gmail.com) (max. 1,500 words). The earlier an item is received, the better the chance of it appearing in the next Newsletter. Photos should be sent as separate jpg files (max. 2MB per photo), and NOT as embedded files. Also, why not drop a line to the Postbag section – we like to hear from you!

TMS