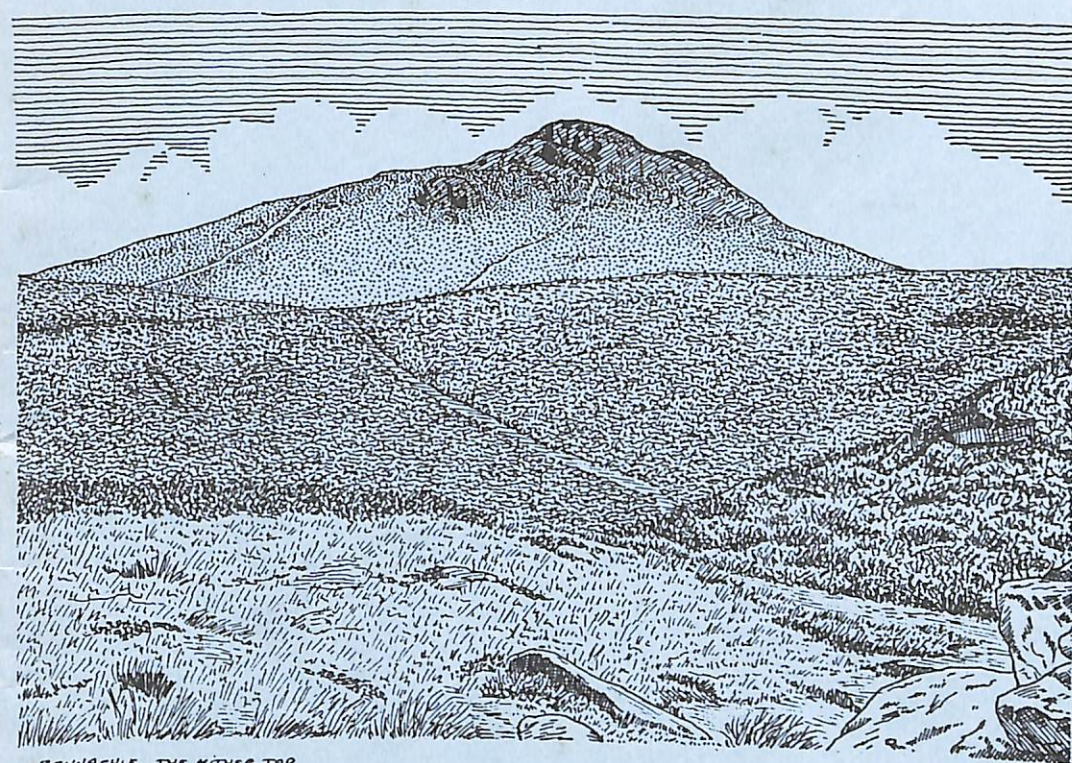


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NORTH EAST MOUNTAIN TRUST NEWSLETTER SUMMER '87



BENNACHIE, THE MITHER TAP.

IAIN MACDONALD



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Michael B. Slater, Director
FOR YOUR HILL WALKING, MOUNTAINEERING,
ROCK CLIMBING, SKIING, SKI-MOUNTAINEERING
EQUIPMENT

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EDITORIAL

Colin Murray, joint editor of the Spring Newsletter, has recently left Aberdeen, so any complaints about this issue should all be directed to me! If you have any, please let me know. At the risk of sounding cliched, I would like to stress that your opinions are very important. I can't know what they are unless you tell me, so why not get in touch? Not everyone can agree with my views on mass events, for example.

Well, I hope you've all recovered from the cycle run by now. I'm ashamed to admit that I couldn't make it myself, but I still managed to raise some money, though. We're hoping for plenty more contributions yet, by the way, though we've done pretty well so far. If you were one of the many folk given a membership form on the cycle run then, frankly, its about time you sent it in! If you weren't there then you can use the form at the back of the newsletter. It's one effective way you can help keep the hills as you like them - without too much effort!

There is also a form at the back of this newsletter inviting suggestions for this winter's series on NEMT talks.

That's about it, then, except to say that, apart from the afore-mentioned forms, all correspondence should be addressed to:

ANDREW GORDON,
THE RECTORY,
BIELDSIDE,
ABERDEEN.
(or Phone 861552)

I. TRUST ACTIVITIES

SPONSORED CYCLE

Colin Jamieson, who organised this year's cycle run, reports:

The Trust's main fundraising event, the annual cycle run, took place on the 6th June, with 150 cyclists completing the 40 miles to Ballater, relatively unscathed. £800 had been collected already by the end of June (but keep the money coming in -Ed.) and thanks are due to everyone who helped make this year a success.

There were quite a number of new faces, which is good news, and some pretty crazy fancy dress outfits on show. Prizes were awarded, incidentally, for the following outfits: The Red Devil, The Moderator and McBatman.

So, if you didn't make it to the cycle run this year, then you missed a great day out, and you have 10 months or so to prepare your bike for next year's event. Hope to see you there.

TRUST MEMBERSHIP

Well, things are looking up. I am happy to report that we can now welcome the Inverness Mountaineering Club as Ordinary Members of the Trust. With a Membership of 50 the Inverness Mountaineering Club represents a significant geographical spread for the support of the Trust. We can also welcome 6



The Membership Secretary setting off
for Ballater

new Associate Members, which is good - however, on the day of the Cycle Run I did give out around 100 forms so if there are any stuffed in a drawer somewhere - please dig them out! Yes, as usual, I can also refer you to the back page of the Newsletter.

Talking of Newsletters.....!! I hope you are beginning to see the long promised improvements. Colin Murray is off to Edinburgh for the foreseeable future leaving Andrew Gordon to deal with things. We have discovered we can get photos printed at a reasonable cost, as you will see from the snapshot of the cycle run, so if you have any environmentally significant prints please let us see them. Black and white photos are best, although colour ones can be used if there is enough colour contrast.

The work of the Trust is certainly soldiering on and with the current climate of development in the North East, there is going to be a lot to do in our efforts to try and bring about a balanced approach.

One last snippet - a non-involved plug for the Oceanroutes 24-hour phone forecast. Just dial 00-77-00-77-00 for a good local weather report to help you plan your adventures.

Jennifer A Cook
Membership Secretary

ACCOMMODATION - GOOD NEWS

The Trust has been successful in obtaining the use of a room at the English Association premises in Belmont Street. This means we now have a base from which to conduct our activities and where we can store files and other documents which have built up over the years. The intention is also to use the room for meetings - either at committee level, for working parties or for general discussions.

At the moment we are hoping to obtain filing cabinets, a photo-copier and other office type equipment. So, if anyone can help, please phone Brian Findlay on 582822.

NEMT CALL FOR REMOVAL OF SNOW FENCING

The North East Mountain Trust has asked the Secretary of State for Scotland to instruct the Highlands and Islands Development Board to remove the snow fencing from Coire an t-Sneachda in the Northern Corries Site of Special Scientific Interest.

The snow fencing has proved almost useless, because patchy snow cover meant the runs were always incomplete and too dangerous or difficult for skiers to use.

Although the fencing is a permanent eyesore, and hardly ever of benefit to skiers, it is highly unlikely the Scottish Secretary will agree to the request.

BULLDOZED TRACK: GLEN EY

It now appears that the end is in sight in the saga of the bulldozed track in Glen Ey. At a recent meeting, Kincardine & Deeside District Council's Planning Committee confirmed that there would be no change in the conditions laid down when retrospective planning permission was granted in March 1986. The Estate Factor subsequently wrote to the District Council referring to the matter as a time wasting problem. According to a report in a local paper, Mr Willis (the Estate Factor) said the estate staff were able to sow grass seed at the beginning of May. 'You will remember this was thought to be the most sensible solution to this time wasting problem,' he said in his letter. 'I see absolutely no point in doing more for the time being until we see whether this work has been successful.'

Director of Planning, Mr Norman Marr, said the Estates were obviously resisting co-operating with the Council and he recommended that enforcement action be taken against the Estate owner, Captain Ramsay. Councillor Ted Needham said he found the letter extremely offensive and the committee backed the Director's recommendation.

The Trust awaits further details of what is to happen, but as it appears that enforcement action is going to be taken, albeit rather belatedly, the Council is to be commended. It is hoped that this will make other landowners in the area think twice before they consider similar activities.

At last, it looks as if all the efforts made by the Trust (who first drew attention to the road in 1984), and other bodies, have been worthwhile.

NEMT AND GLENSHEE MANAGEMENT PLAN

As part of its activities on behalf of members, the Trust comments on the Management Plans being evolved by the ski development companies, as laid down by the National Planning Guidelines on ski development. The fact that the NPGs were produced - and with this requirement in them - is due not least to pressure from the Trust.

The Trust recently commented on the draft Glenshee Management Plan. Most of the recommendations the Trust made for improvement have been accepted. For example, the Trust urged that snow lie records be kept of areas intended to be developed, so that the developments could be proposed on a rational basis. We also pointed out that the number of skiers using the area had to be limited to what the area's snow lie could accommodate on any one day; and that more consideration should be given to the fast-growing sport of cross-country skiing. There has been a positive response to these and some of the other points we raised in the final draft of the plan.

The situation at the Lecht is much less satisfactory. No plan has yet been finalised there, and present proposals seem to conflict with what the company said it intended to do. This is a situation the Trust needs to look

into further and, possibly, take some action on.

On the whole, though, these plans are helping to upgrade the standards of management at Scottish ski resorts, thus reducing unnecessary damage to wildlife and landscape, and reducing conflict between land users.

BENNACHIE WORKING PARTY

Jim Conroy, NEMT General Secretary, was at the second meeting of the Working Party set up by Gordon District Council to discuss a Management Plan for Bennachie, and describes, here, what went on:

GDC had prepared a programme of suggested topics for discussion at the meeting. Once the boundaries of the Hill were agreed (those identified by the Bailies of Bennachie), it became clear that there were two main areas for consideration:

1. Ownership, Access and Rights of Way:-
The Bailies have already gone a long way in establishing ownership of the Hill, and have also been examining Rights of Way. It was agreed that the Trust, The Bailies and representatives from the Community and District Council should deal with this. Rather than meeting formally, it was thought better if members worked independently and sent their data to the Council. All the information would be collated there.

2. A Catalogue of Sites of Interest:-
There are many sites on the Hill which are of interest, and may be worth preserving. A

second group will attempt to catalogue these and, where possible, give an indication of the degree of protection required.

Once both groups have reported, a further general meeting will be called, hopefully in September, to discuss the next stage.

If any member wishes to comment on any aspect of Bennachie, could they please contact Jim Conroy, Foca, Old Mart Road, Torphins, Banchory.

CHANGES IN THE ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE NORTH EAST MOUNTAIN TRUST

These are outlined, here, by Jim Conroy:

In the last Newsletter, details were given of the weekend at Ballater, where the future organisation of the Trust was discussed. The proposed changes were also discussed at the last meeting of the Executive Committee, and members were asked to comment on them. As a result of this, the following changes were agreed.

1. The Role of the Executive Committee:
An increase in the number of Club Representatives (a result of the general increase in the membership of the Trust) meant that the Executive Committee was becoming too large to act as a useful forum for general discussions and it was felt that this group was not operating as effectively as it could. Because meetings were only held every other month, some decisions were either having to be made by a few members (usually

the officers) or having to wait until there was a Committee meeting.

To overcome this, it was decided a small Management Group should be established, to deal with the day to day running of the Trust. This would consist of not more than six members, although others could attend discussions about specific topics, such as the bike ride. This group, which will include the Chairman, the General Secretary, and the Treasurer, will meet as and when necessary, but at least once a month. If urgent action is required, this can be discussed over the phone.

The Management Group will also be responsible for ensuring that the Working Parties (see below) are operating satisfactorily. The present Executive Committee will become the 'General Council' of the Trust, and it is to this body that the Management Group will report, and be responsible for its actions. The General Council will consist of the officers of the Trust, one representative from each of the member clubs, and representation for the Associate Members. The General Council will meet less frequently, but at least twice a year.

The Annual General Meeting, however, will still have the final say on how the Trust operates.

2. Working Parties:

It was agreed that the Working Parties were still the best way for the Trust to use its expertise. The Management Group will be responsible for setting them up but, once established, each Working Party will be

responsible for agreeing its own size, methods and so on. It will produce its own spokesman, press releases, etc. and will have a limited degree of executive authority. It will report to the Management Group, who will ensure it operates efficiently, and within the aims of the Trust. The Working Parties will periodically report to the General Council and will be responsible for the production of an account of their activities, to be included in the Annual Report.

For the immediate future, it was decided that three Working Parties would be formed (once these have been established, others will be formed if necessary):

A. Cairngorm Working Party - for the time being, this will include ski developments, Lochnagar and the Mounth.

B. Forestry.

C. Rights of Way - this will include the coast.

The Management Group will find a convener for each body and. once its aims are identified, a general meeting will be called, open to all members, to discuss the work of, and with a view to getting help in the running of, the Working Party. In this way, it is hoped that members who have an interest in a particular topic will be able to learn how the Trust operates. Members can then, if so inclined, become more active in the Trust's affairs.

This is a precis of the main changes proposed. A Management Group has already been formed, and will operate until the AGM, when the changes will be put before the members, and they will be asked for their support.

NOTE: The aims of the Trust will, of course, remain unaffected.

II. FEATURES

'CONSERVATION ACCIDENTS'

Most readers will probably be aware of the accusations levelled at NEMT and fellow conservationists, in recent months, about injuries to skiers at Cairngorm. It is alleged that conservationists are responsible for a significant number of skiing accidents on the mountain because their opposition to the westward expansion of facilities there is said to contribute towards overcrowding. Indeed, the disgraceful adoption of the term "conservation accidents" by some Highland Regional Councillors implies that they feel conservationists alone must shoulder the entire blame.

Not only is this accusation illogical it is morally wrong. Clearly the pro-skiing lobby is now quite prepared to "fight dirty" in order to try and get its own way. To suggest that conservationists are unconcerned for the welfare of those injured on the slopes is unacceptable.

Needless to say, the Trust was outraged at these suggestions, and chairman Drennan Watson wrote a number of letters to the local and national press, in response, as well as an article which appeared in 'The Scotsman'.

Quite apart from the fact that people are hardly being forced to go skiing and risk injury, it is debatable that expansion would end the problem anyway. At peak periods, the slopes would often remain overcrowded, because the area available for skiing would

be limited according to the amount of snow cover - which can vary greatly on Cairngorm.

Even so, conservationists are not standing in the way of all development. While it is felt that the Northern Corries are too important to be spoilt by the paraphernalia of downhill skiing, there is still scope for expansion eastwards from the existing ski area. The new ski centres planned for Aonach Mor and Drumochter would also help relieve the pressure at Cairngorm.

In the past, planning permission for ski development in Scotland has, in fact, been refused only twice, and never wholly on grounds of wildlife conservation. On one occasion all parties agreed the plans should be dropped, once the reasons for objecting had been explained, and on the other - that of the Lurcher's Gully Inquiry - the Secretary of State for Scotland blocked development after hearing evidence from both sides and deciding that the case put by the conservationists was the stronger.

The most important point, though, is that, regardless of whether or not expansion would be a good thing, it is, in the meantime, the responsibility of the developer to limit the intake to what the resort can carry on any one day.

In foreign ski resorts, numbers are limited by controlling the size of car parks and not permitting their over-use; the Cairngorm Chairlift Company actually runs a free shuttle bus between car parks at busy times, taking even more skiers from Coire na Ciste to the busier Coire Cas.

So far, the only reason offered by the CCC for not introducing safety measures is that they would be unpopular, or unfair to those who have come far. What they do not seem to consider is how unfair this is to those they do let in and are exposed to unnecessary risk; and to those who are sold tickets for a full day's skiing but do not get what they paid for, because of the overcrowding.

It is the developer who makes the choice - conservationists cannot be held responsible for decisions over which they have no control.

Andrew Gordon
Newsletter Editor

THE NORTHERN CORRIES OF CAIRNGORM - A CAUSE FOR CONCERN

Six corries cut into the Cairngorms above Glenmore. The ridge of Fiacail a' Choire Chais divides the eastern corries, where ski-ing has been developed since 1961, from the three undeveloped Northern Corries of Coire an t-Sneachda, Coire an Lochain and Lurcher's Gully.

There was no major conflict between ski developments and other hill users until 1980, when an application was made to expand uplift facilities into the Northern Corries. Since then, the site has been the subject of a long drawn-out battle between conservation and ski development. Jim Conroy, General Secretary of the NEMT, explains why the Northern Corries are so special to other hill users:

The Northern Corries form an extensive wild area unique in Britain, combining high mountain scenery and a sense of isolation with relative ease of access. This attracts many diverse groups such as mountaineers, cross country skiers, educational parties and walkers. Ski developments intrude into this feeling of isolation. Because of their outstanding beauty, the Countryside Commission for Scotland designated the area as part of a National Scenic Area.

The corries contain the most diverse examples in Britain, and possibly in the European Community, of pre-glacial, glacial and post-glacial landforms, and the best acid-cliff and acid-scrub flora in the Cairngorms. Thirty years of reduced grazing have allowed native pine, other trees and juniper to regenerate up to the natural tree line, the best example of this change in Britain. Coire an Lochain has a greater variety of bird life and physical features than any other corrie in the Eastern and Central Highlands. These are the main, good reasons why the NCC designated the area a SSSI.

The corries also act as a buffer zone, protecting the Cairngorms National Nature Reserve, Britain's foremost area for nature conservation, from public pressure. The high plateaux and the corries of the Cairngorms contain the best and most extensive arctic-like land, wildlife and wilderness in the EEC countries.

For these reasons, it is an area of great importance for recreation and education. Because of its high altitude,

severe climate and infertile soils, it is particularly sensitive to human disturbance, and damage to vegetation and soils takes a long time to recover.

No other area of Britain has received as many demands from International Agencies for protection as the Cairngorms, of which the Northern Corries are part. Delegates at the 15th meeting of the International Union for Conservation of Nature recommended that the UK government "take all practical steps to secure for the Cairngorm Mountains protection appropriate to their international significance".

Delegates at the 3rd World Wilderness Congress urged that a World Heritage site be created in the Cairngorms area as a matter of priority. Subsequently, the first list of sites produced by the Government for nomination to World Heritage status gave no place for the Cairngorms.

The Government's response to the World Conservation Strategy stated that "the spirit of the WCS is manifest in the Wildlife and Countryside Act. The Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981 is the lynchpin of our countryside policy". The Northern Corries SSSI was notified under that act, and if it is to fulfil its obligation to WCS under this Act it cannot permit ski developments within the SSSI.

With so much concern being expressed about the Northern Corries, both nationally and internationally, we would expect that the Highlands and Islands Development Board (which owns the Corries), Highland Regional Council, and, above all, the Scottish Office,

would take due note and prevent any development in the area. Alas, there is no sign whatsoever of their doing this. Rather, their decisions show a clear support for these ski developments which are highly damaging to the interests of many - both now and in the future.

THE BAILIES OF BENNACHIE

The Bailies recently joined the membership of the Trust, and we asked them to provide us with some information about themselves, for the newsletter. They kindly sent the following extract from one of their publications ("A Guide to Bennachie" by James R. MacKay), and a plea for volunteers:

The Bailies of Bennachie is a conservation society formed in 1973, largely through the boundless enthusiasm of Dr. Daniel Gordon, who remained Senior Bailie until 1978. Membership has grown from about 40 to over 3,000. The Society is run by a council of members elected annually plus all the landowners, and the Conservator, North Scotland, Forestry Commission. Through the medium of the Bailies all developments taking place on Bennachie can be discussed and notice taken of the interests of all parties.

The aims of the Society are:-

1. to preserve the amenity of the Hill and to discourage litter and vandalism.
2. to maintain footpaths and rights of way.
3. to study plants, animals, rocks and their interaction.

4. to collect and preserve the legends, ballads, customs, literature, poetry, art and music relevant to Bennachie.

5. to encourage and stimulate public interest in and care of the Hill.

Paths on Forestry Commission land have been constructed by the Forestry Commission personnel, some of them at the suggestion of the Bailies who share the role of maintaining the paths, the provision of a viewpoint indicator on the Mither tap, litter collection and so on.

If you feel sympathy with these aims and activities then please contact Mr Mike Davidson, Clerk, Averans, Whiteford, Pitcaple, Inverurie, Telephone Pitcaple (04676)671 or Mrs Helen Fraser, Membership Secretary, 30 Barclay Road, Inverurie, Telephone Inverurie (0467)20397 or you may join at the Bailies' room in Inverurie Town Hall which is manned from June to September inclusive.

The individual life membership at present is £1 or £3 for family membership. This entitles members to receive the annual Council Report and details of all current activities, to wear the badge (a replica of a brass badge of the Bennachie Club of 1807) to purchase a scroll, to attend the Summer Rally and to vote at the A.G.M.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Because of the large number of people who climb the various tops of Bennachie throughout the year, there is an increasing problem with footpath erosion. If you would like to do some practical conservation and

repair some of the damage caused by your feet why not volunteer for our regular work parties by telephoning Bert Cadenhead on Inverurie 20287?

MASS EVENTS - ERRATUM

Oops! At the end of an article I (the Editor) wrote for the Spring Newsletter, in which I criticised plans for a sponsored walk through the Lairig Ghru, in aid of the Cairngorm Mountain Rescue Team, I added an NB which incorrectly stated the walk had been transferred to the Capel Mounth after the article was written. In fact, the Capel Mounth walk, which was held on 6th June (in Glen Mooick, according to one radio presenter!) was in aid of Aberdeen Mountain Rescue. Cairngorm Mountain Rescue went ahead with their walk, as planned, on June 20th.

The situation, then, was even worse than I thought, despite the fact that numbers on the Lairig walk had to be "limited" (for safety, not environmental, reasons) - to 600! It is my view that if events like this are encouraged in Scotland we may well, in future, be facing a situation which already prevails in England, where hundreds of thousands of pounds are having to be spent on the eroded footpaths of popular walks such as the Pennine Way and the Three Peaks. Indeed, some of the damage done there is already irreparable.

Besides this, as a result of the walks, many will be left wondering whatever happened to the peace and quiet of the hills. Whilst it is true that if one of the reasons you go

hillwalking is to "get away from it all" you will probably steer clear of the Cairngorms over the summer solstice anyway, I am sure that there will have been quite a few folk there that weekend who will have thought the intrusion of 600 people all playing follow-my-leader on the same route (especially if it is the Lairig Ghru) and on the same day, was way over the top.

NEMT has shown, with its sponsored cycle, that there are more acceptable ways of raising money. There is no reason why Cairngorm Mountain Rescue should not be able to follow their example.

Apparently, the Rescue Team have held a sponsored walk through the Lairig every 2 yrs since 1975. Let's hope that by 1989 they will have thought of something more original - and a lot less harmful to the hills.

(The above article is the personal opinion of the Editor and not an NEMT statement.)

ON THE HILL by David Ewen

Amid the snowy wastes of northern Scotland live the landed gentry. Acres of moorland afford little security for either investors or the many inhabitants and only revenue from grouse shooting and deer stalking keeps these estates solvent.

The following is a sketch of fictional characters involved in the running of such an estate. Any resemblance to specific persons living or dead is unintentional.

WILDLIFE

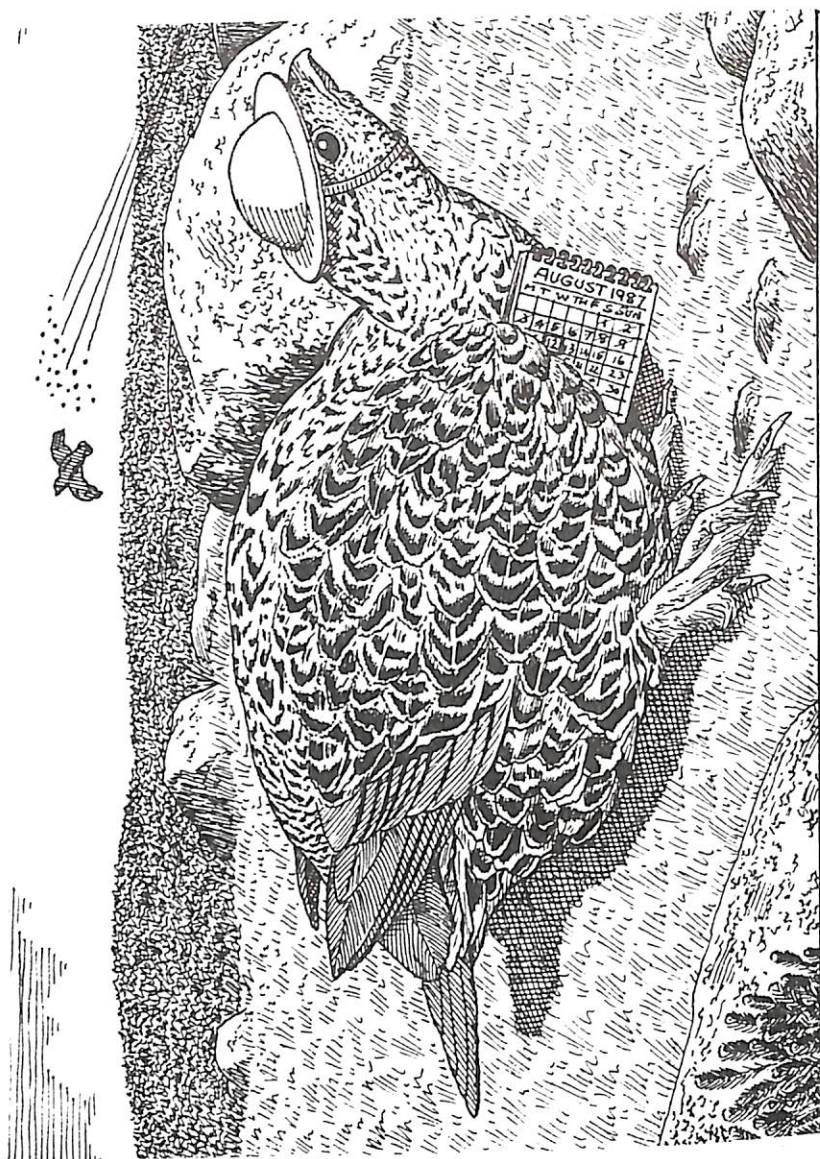
The deer get the best deal of all; the extinction of the wolf deprived them of a natural predator so without control of numbers, from stalking, a population explosion would occur. The martyrdom of the elder stags gives successive generations the chance to lead a healthy life - evidenced by the fact that few deer die of heart disease, lung cancer or cirrhosis of the liver.

The grouse is a bird of the moorland whose entire vocabulary comprises of 'tuk' and 'tuk'. This modest repertoire is strung together with genius, compassing every nuance of sound from the gentle cadence 'TUK-tuk-TUK' (feeding) to the harrowing 'TUUU...KK!' (being shot).

The grouse and fox do not get on. Foxes eat grouse and this does not make for friendly relations. The media has unfairly given the fox a bad name, it being neither sly nor cunning.

"Why do humans look for their own traits in others?" asks one local vixen. "Do you think if we were sly and cunning we'd spend twelve months of the year in a hole in the ground, eating grouse?"

The fox is also unpopular with the estate, as it is unwilling to pay £500 a week for this privilege. That is the prerogative of the guests.



WHEN AUGUST COMES IT'S THE EARLY BIRD THAT CATCHES THE SLUG.

THE GUESTS

There are two types; those born with a silver spoon in their mouth, and those who later have their tin one electro-plated.

The former have been brought up on blood sport - hunting foxes is, for them, as much a part of growing up as hunting women (the fox playing marginally harder to get). Their speech is littered with indiscriminate epithets - the weather is either "absolutely marvellous" or "absolutely atrocious" (their shooting invariably the latter).

THE CARETAKERS

They take care of the laird and lady. Husband Peter tends to the feeding of the gun-dogs, the upkeep of the garden and other outdoor tasks, while wife Rosemary is obliged to drink coffee and watch him from indoors.

She is a slight, sickly woman, of pallid complexion, and was once shot mistakenly for a grouse.

Country life disagrees with Rosemary and she often seeks solace in the local malt (after several hours her legs, too, begin to disagree with her).

THE HEAD STALKER (Mr Parsons)

The link between soil and bureaucracy. The head stalker must bring the men to the beasts, though at times it would be easier to bring the beasts to the men.

Much of the year is spent dealing with vermin (foxes, wildcats, hillwalkers). 'Protected Species' laws make the extirpation of all but the fox difficult.

Mr Parsons has a secret desire to be a writer; his as yet unpublished works include 'The Life of the Wildcat and How to End It' and 'What to See and Shoot on Royal Deeside'.

THE FACTOR (Mr Hanson)

Oversees the work of the employees and must ensure the estate does not lose too much money. The job requires calmness, confidence and a good background in fraud.

THE LAIRD (Col. Lawson)

Seniority personified. A man who knows when to shout at an employee and when simply to beat him senseless. Years of whipping have left his arms weak and now he only employs masochists.

LADY WILTON

Her union with the laird was one of inconvenience - a specious fusion of noble lineage and hard cash. Her parents had made the beginners' mistake of equating years with maturity.

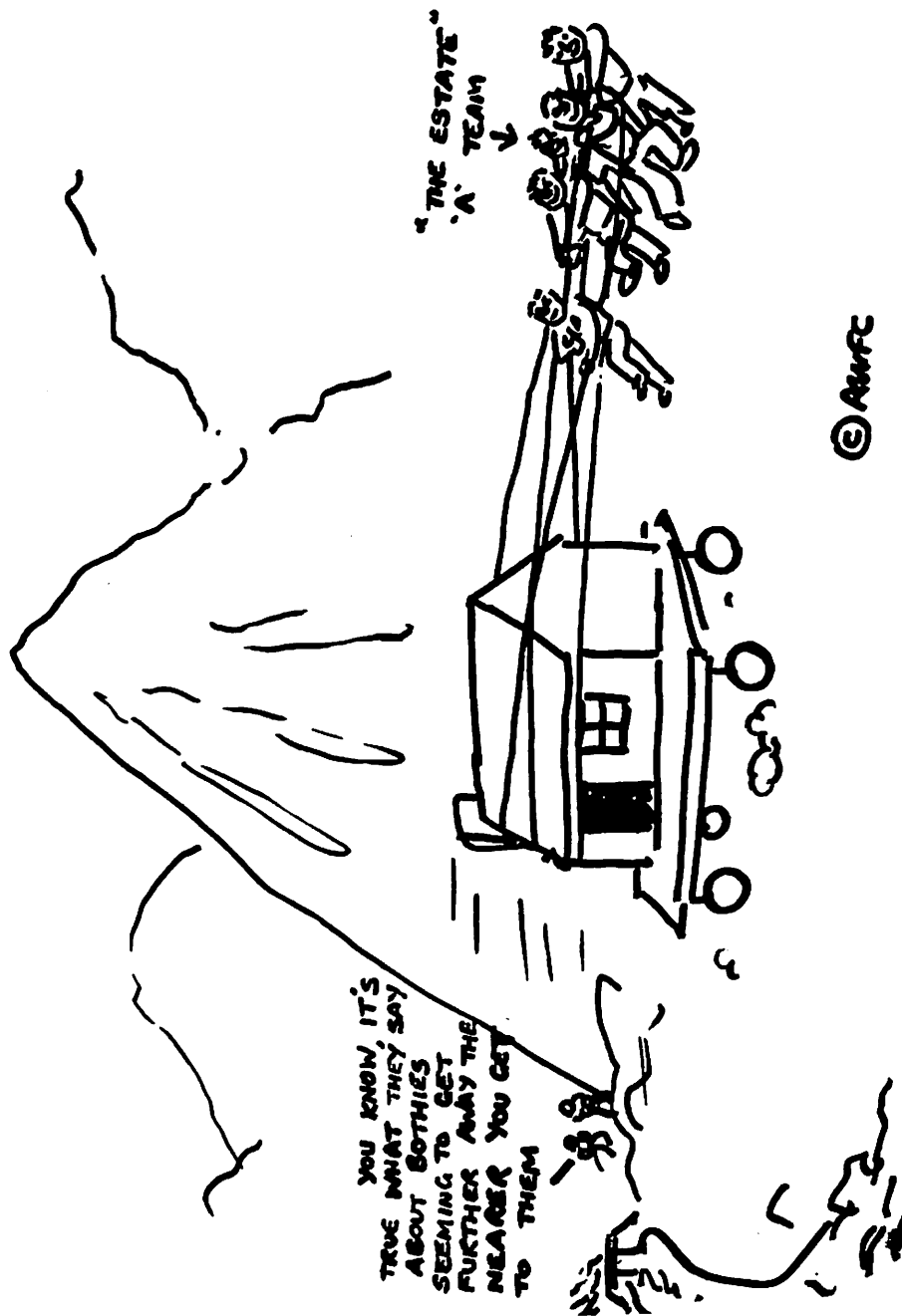
"An older man will see you in good stead" they had assured, as the Colonel arrived to wheel her pram around the family manor.

Bitter about the adolescence she never had to misspend, she frequently derides her husband.

"Failings are the foundation of character", counters the laird, cleverly citing herself as an example.



"NEITHER SLY NOR CUNNING."



III. NEWS ROUND-UP

PROPOSED SKI DEVELOPMENTS AT THE LECHT

NEMT recently commented on the proposed expansion of uplift facilities at the Lecht Ski Centre. The Trust did not object in principle to the plan, but pointed out to the District Councils involved (Moray and Gordon) that the proposals were outwith the Ski Company's own Management Plan, introduced only last year, and that before the Councils consider the application, the Ski Company should be asked to produce a revised Management Plan. As yet, we have heard no further, but we know that a meeting took place between the District Councils' officials, the Ski Company and the Nature Conservancy Council, at which the above suggestion was again put forward.

NEW BRIDGE PROPOSED

We reported, in the Spring newsletter, on the lack of progress being made in the Scottish Rights of Way Society's attempts to have a new bridge built over the River Geldie. The latest information we have about this is that Kincardine and Deeside District Council's Director of Legal Services, Mr Keith Jones, is now hoping for a site meeting with the landowner, Mr Gerald Panchaud, in August.

Meanwhile, the Trust was concerned to hear of a proposal to build a bridge over the Fords of Avon, on the Lairig an Laoigh route.

The Army has agreed to carry out the work as part of its Military Aid to the Civilian Community Scheme, purportedly on grounds of its benefit to hillwalkers. The Trust believes, however, that hillwalkers are more likely to be opposed to the idea than in favour of it, and it is very likely NEMT will object to the plan.

Construction work will not begin until next year, if it goes ahead at all so, in the meantime, the Trust would like to hear what its members think of the proposal.

CONFERENCE ON THE CAIRNGORMS

The Centre Of Scottish Studies are planning to hold a one day conference on the Cairngorms. The meeting, which is planned for 24th March 1988, will be held in Aberdeen and the Trust has been asked to advise on the programme. Further details will be given in a later Newsletter.

NATIONAL PARK CONTROVERSY

The Scottish Wild Land Group has criticised suggestions made by the Countryside Commission for Scotland that a national park could be created in the Cairngorms. They say Scottish national parks would be set up along the same lines as the English system which, they claim, has allowed landscapes to suffer from excessive publicity, quarrying and other disfiguring developments.

FIRE NEAR CORROUR BOTHY

A hill fire was accidentally started by campers, near Corrour Bothy, at the end of May. Around ten miles of land were affected, from the slopes of Carn a' Mhaim southwards. The fire was eventually brought under control after a civilian helicopter dropped water bombs onto it. Although no one was hurt in the blaze, there are fears that some birds may have died, as well as rabbits and deer.

CAIRNGORM CLUB GATHERING

Although the Cairngorm Club cancelled plans for a fireworks display on Beinn MacDhui, close on 100 members gathered on the summit of the Cairngorms' highest mountain, during the weekend of the summer solstice, then made their way down to the Shelter Stone, at the Head of Loch Avon, to celebrate the centenary of the founding of the club.

EVER TRIED HEATHERHOPPING?

Yes, another Heatherhopper season is here and bus operators Northern Scottish and Stagecoach will have been gearing up (or engaging low gear?) for 8th July when this popular mountain bus service headed for the hills once more.

Ballater is the hub of the Heatherhopper network, providing links with Pitlochry, Blair Atholl and The Cairnwell (Tuesdays, Thursdays till 27th August); and Corgarff, The Lecht, Tomintoul and Speyside (Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays till 31st August). At

Tomintoul, the newest service in the timetable gives connections for The Speyside Way, several distilleries, Aberlour and Elgin. A day trip to any of these points costs only £5. Just ask the driver for a "Bluebird Rover" day ticket -- these are even available on Northern Scottish "Citybus" services in Aberdeen. The Bluebird Rover is valid on all Northern Scottish services including the 0740 journey from Aberdeen to Ballater and the bus back at night arriving in Aberdeen at 2036.

Designed for hillwalkers and hostellers, as well as the general tourist, the Heatherhopper gives unprecedented scope for day trips, travel to or from a cross-country expedition and tackling some of those alluring plateau, ridge and right-of-way walks that usually mean complex car logistics or lengthy road walks. The bus sets down and picks up passengers at any point along the route where it is safe to do so. Timetables are available at the Bus Station, so pick up a leaflet and try Heatherhopping this year.

CLOVA AFFORESTATION

NEMT is currently looking into proposals for further afforestation in upper Glen Clova. 314.5 hectares of land around Milton of Clova will be affected. The Trust fears that more of the type of carpet forestry which already exists in upper Glendoll would lead to a further deterioration in the quality of scenery in the area.

It is interesting to note that the Countryside Commission for Scotland is taking a strong line against these proposals. This could be as a result of the recent CCS management changes which, it is hoped, could lead, in the future, to a stronger, more effective Countryside Commission.

WANTED. Karrimor child carrier. Suitable for 1 year old+.

Waterproof cape for above.

Phone 0464 20795

A. Phillips.



©Amfc

NORTH EAST MOUNTAIN TRUST

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please enrol me as an Associate Member of the NEMT.

I enclose £ (not less than £5) as my annual fee. (Subscription Year runs from 1st October to 30th September.) Cheques should be made payable to North East Mountain Trust.

NAME

ADDRESS

PHONE

If you have any particular skill which may be of use to the Trust please let us know. We need not only Members with specialist academic skills but also word processors, enthusiastic organisers, fund raisers, advertising specialists, solicitors and accountants. In other words, everyone has something to offer. Please use the space provided below

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DON'T FORGET - ARTICLES WITH YOUR NEWS, VIEWS AND EXPERIENCES ARE ALWAYS WELCOMED FOR THE NEWSLETTER.

Please return this form with your remittance to:

Jennifer A Cook, NEMT membership Secretary
Top Flat, 288 Hardgate, Aberdeen. AB1 6AD.

SLIDE SHOWS AND TALKS BY NORTH EAST MOUNTAIN TRUST

1987-88 SERIES

This years series has been fairly successful, though it is not possible to choose topics and speakers that suit everybody. For next year, it would help greatly to have your opinions and guidance. Could you therefore give your suggestions below. Just leave the form at the door, or forward it to Mr W.D. Brooker, Extra-Mural Dept, The University, Old Aberdeen. Many thanks.

What topics would you like to have speakers on next year?

- (1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

Have you any suggestions for speakers for next year?

- (1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

Have you any other suggestions for improving these evenings or other comments

