

GUMC MATCH REPORT

PRESIDENT WELCOME:

Welcome! Willkommen! Bienvenue! To the first of (hopefully many) GUMC monthly newsletters! Hopefully you enjoy the scenic pictures and (if you're interested) you'll be able to find out what fool of a fool forgot their crampons, what the elusive committee have actually been up to, and what mystical adventures lie ahead. Highlights this month include the birth of the 2015-16 Winter ~~season~~ a GUMC nativity baby, and an over-crowded trip to Glen Coe's smallest village hall. Read on!

COMMITTEE ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Recently we have been in talks with GUSA to reallocate some of our funding to areas which will benefit more members of the club, such as subsidised training courses for nav, winter and climbing. We also were lucky to be able to meet with an MCoFS representative, Jamie Smith, who will be helping us out with our chats with GUSA! The club also ran a super-safe-safety-skills-course at our Glen Coe meet this month!

GUMC ACTIVITIES:

New Year's Meet – Mike Snape

The end of 2015 saw the GUMC celebrating the arrival of the new year in the customary manner – booking a hut in the middle of nowhere, setting off fireworks, drinking excessively and generally making a mess. This year the Grampian Mountaineering Club's hut in Glen Etive was the location for this firestorm of debauchery.



On New Year's Eve I joined a group for a walk up the nearby Buachaille Etive Beag. Setting off at the extremely Alpine time of 11am(ish) we soon caught up with Alice and Katie, who had gone to do the neighbouring Buachaille Etive Mor, changed their minds, got halfway up the Beag and were sitting by a medium sized boulder contemplating their life choices when we found them. Gentle peer pressure and mockery were applied however, and they joined us for the rest of the walk. The rest of the route up to Stob Dubh climbed up a boulder-field, which had a thin layer of a snow/ice composite and made going slow. After regrouping at the summit it was decided that daylight was running out and the second peak would have to be abandoned. The walk down the ridge to the bealach was amazing however: one of those rare occasions on a Scottish hill when there is no wind and visibility is excellent; the lightly frosted mass of the Aonach Eagach brooding in a sharp line across the

river Coe. This inevitably petered out to a disappointing and damp end, as the rain came in and the wind picked up for the return back to the hut.

Arriving back I found a group in firm possession of the few comfy seats round the fire, but quickly managed to dry off and collapse into one myself – armed with a bottle of Jura I thought would be appropriate for the occasion. At this point a grand epidemic of board games broke out – with the timeless classic of scrabble alongside against a very dated version of Trivial Pursuit. As the night wore on things were beginning to get out of hand. My free and easy drinking style, which works fine with watery beer, was not at all adapted to the strength of the Jura. Discipline under outside stimulus is essential with this drink, and I was dangerously pushing my luck. News filtered through that midnight was near and fireworks were happening. I stumbled outside into a confusion of dark shapes, sparklers and mud. Shadowy figures trudging to and fro across the grass, sparks flying and explosions in the night sky. Noise, sound, flames... fires across the ground, people running through them and stamping. I tried to write my name in the air with a sparkler I was handed but got distracted and let it burn out... more flame jumping. I became aware I was babbling senselessly, lurching up to groups and yelling random gibberish at them.

Hours passed and events occurred. Finally, at some point in the morning, I awoke to the terrifying, and entirely unplanned prospect of a nasty hangover. The only thing to do was to wait it out. Eventually I picked up the courage to venture downstairs, and the rest of the day was spent playing scrabble trying not to let the nausea gain the upper hand.



A Holiday in Glenfinnan – Katie Bowen

On the 2nd January we trudged up the path from the North Face car park. Eventually we found no. 3 gully buttress in the fog and by chatting to climbers on Sioux and Gargoyle wall we located Thompson's route, which had come recommended as “doable without ice” and a “summer diff sometimes used in descent”. There was no ice to be seen, but everything was well rimed. Wanting to get his first IV lead out the way, Liam went up the chimney with the

freezing level in close pursuit. With the lack of ice it was quite tricky and the section just beyond the chimney wasn't particularly endowed with protection. Luckily the second and third pitch were more straightforward as the route joined No. 3 gully buttress. Topping out in the dark we set the compass to 282 and charged forthwith down the bog back to the car.

We then went to Glenfinnan to meet Alice and Lise who were at a folk session in the hotel. A map was drawn on in a paper napkin showing where we would find a bothy to crash for the night. However before we could leave we were intercepted by two exceptionally friendly locals who said we could take their spare room. When another friendly local tried to offer us his spare room they were met with a defiant "they're ours!".

The next day it thawed, so we drank a lot of tea and went for a woodland walk, before heading up to the bothy. The next day, Liam slept and I took over the bothy table with cardiology notes and ECG printouts. We had a visit from a walker who after a brief introduction brewed up in the next room, muttering to himself, before writing a slamming and in our opinion, completely unwarranted condemnation in the bothy book. We visited Lise again, resupplied with chips, gas and Soreen in Fort William, before walking into the CIC... well, putting a tent up on the grass next to the wind turbine. It was a tad breezy, but I could get 4G and caught sight of a rumour on UKC that there was ice on Good Friday climb.

We started off soloing the traverse in and up until the point where the lean-looking direct variation went straight on up. However, there was not really anything in sight to belay off of, so I trailed a rope over to the chockstone belay. Liam followed then led through the next pitch of really nice ice, and being early season, it wasn't stepped out and we had the route to ourselves. We topped out to see people on the summit in jeans, then descended back to the tent via the CMD arete in time for cous cous and tea.

The next morning we woke up at 6am, ate breakfast then went back to sleep until 8.30am, when we decided we should maybe go and look at something. We wandered up to south trident buttress to look at the Clanger but it was fairly windy and spindrift and grim conditions to be belaying in, let alone taking clothing off to get through the chockstone. North gully, however looked nice (the easterlies had scoured the powder off of everything) so we took the rope and rack for a walk, bombed back down No. 4 gully, took the tent down and returned to Glasgow.



Dundonnell Meet – Liam Anderson

Still battling his hangover from New Year's Meet Mike bravely organises the Dundonnell Meet and so the GUMC went for an adventure in the wild, wild NorthWest.

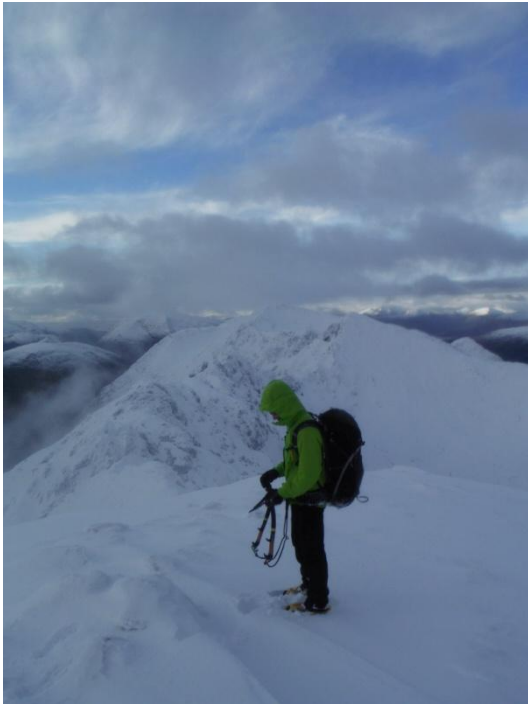
Although for some daring mountaineers the excitement started early with a quick trip to the brand spanking new Creagan nan-Coire winter venue. The sun being high in the sky before crampons were even fitted they were sure to have a productive session! So after a quick lunch we abbed into the venue. Andrew and I making the most of the fact the routes still had turf due to being new so clocked up a couple of grade IV's. K-Bo and Victor being less successful as Katie treated her rope like a bungee and clocked up fall after fall and bailed off route after route before sending the crag classic Anvil Gully.

Later that night the GUMC arrived in Dundonnell, after successfully not killing any of the numerous suicidal deer on route, and besides a team heading up to bag Sgurr nan Clach Geala, Sgurr nan Each and Meall Chraisgaidh everyone had their sights set on one goal: An Teallach Ridge. The next day teams drifted out at all different times heading to the ridge with all but one taking it from East to West. Andrew, Victor, K-Bo and I approached it from West to East after climbing Hayforks Gully, atmospheric gully to say the least. Topping out of the gully left us with a cracking view of the pinnacles of the ridge poking through the cloud, which had decided to be the only one in the sky that day and sit all day on top of the ridge! All teams had a great day out on the ridge with Euan kindly adding to the top soil of the ridge in his bid to preserve turf for future generations. Also everyone learned how fun icy walk outs are!



Aonach Eagach

On the 12th January Robert Giddy, Euan McIntosh and Alexander Stevenson spent the day climbing the Aonach Eagach Ridge.



Skiing

Alice Butler, Katie Bowen and Megan Kate Priestley spent the first weekend of the 2nd semester enjoying the snow whilst skiing.



Glen Coe Meet/ Winter Skills Course – Lauren Strickland

On the 22nd January a convoy of mini busses and cars set off for Glen Coe. The following morning we woke early, begging the day with an 8 o'clock meeting with Kenny, our guide before we set off for the first day of training. After about 2 hours of walking uphill through a valley strewn with sparkling blue waterfalls and cliff faces the size of skyscrapers, we hit the snow line. From there we took our our Ice axes and began zigzagging up a steep snow covered gully. Then we reached the top the mountain opened out and we were in a magnificent amphitheatre of rock and ice.

We trudged through the snow for a few hundred meters, excitement ever building. Kenny began to teach us the ways of a mountain warrior, we learned how to dig snow holes and to attach ourselves to the mountain using an ice ax as an anchor. We were all baffled by how much weight it could hold, taking the weight of 5 people pulling on it with all there might before it finally decided that it had had enough and we collapsed into a tangled, snowy heap. After we had learned these skills we took them higher. A hundred meters later we put our crampons on, willfully attached ourselves to a length of rope and began to climb in threes up onto the ridge from where we could see miles down to Kinlochleven and the sea. We then put our snow skills into practice, lowering a member of our group off a cornice and down into the gully below.

Being back in the town hall, people took to the kitchen cooking up haggis neeps and tatties for their tea. Alice managed to convince herself and about 20 stragglers to go for a moon lit swim in the lock. After some trouble finding an appropriate point of entrance, we ran en mass into the freezing water. With much excitement we all then scampered back to the hall for whiskey and hot chocolate.

Sunday was equally as fun, despite the torrential rain we went walking up one of the valleys and were refreshed on our navigation skills by Swifty, our guide for the day. As we reached the ridge the wind hit us pretty hard and was forecast to reach 50mph, so we made a group decision to go back down to the valley bottom, stopping off to watch the power of the waterfall on the River Coe.

