

GUMC MATCH REPORT

PRESIDENT WELCOME:

I have hazy memories of something happening in the GUU the other night. It might have been an AGM? Alongside the bureaucracy that surrounds the GUM club, it looks like members have been out and about. Spring is in the air – I heard a rumour that people went to Starry the other day? Meanwhile, winter is hanging on (though maybe not on Creag Meagaidh – get well soon Robert!) and folk are honing the alpine psyche for the Écrins.

GUMC ACTIVITIES:

Ballater Meet – Robert Giddy

Back at the beginning of March the Southern Cairngorms Meet took us to the village of Ballater. On arrival, we were shown around the grandest village hall I have encountered with the GUMC, featuring: free wifi, sound system complete with a selection of cassettes, mounted stag heads, coffee lounge, boxing pads, boxing



gloves and a boxing ring. In our attempts to make plans and get organised for the next day, it became clear that most of us had gone for the 'someone else will bring a rope' strategy, which led to a House of Cards-style game of politics to make a friend with a rope – it all worked out in the end though. Despite such a huge hall, we all crammed into the coffee lounge for warmth and wifi, with a couple of outliers sleeping in the boxing ring.

Saturday saw almost everyone head towards Lochnagar, with four teams heading into its huge North East Corrie to attempt some winter climbing. The teams dispersed on reaching the corrie, Emma and I headed for Polyphemus Gully and dispatched the first two pitches without any real drama. The crux of the route was the horrendously spindrift grade 1 top-out which made me feel like my face was coming off. After some winter bouldering



and a quick whiteout summit trip to test our nav, we met James, Sarah and Emily, so we descended with them. At the minibus we learned the fate of the other teams: Alice and Alex couldn't find their route so had a look at ours, but decided against it, having only one ice screw that I had begrudgingly lent them, so they finally climbed Central Buttress; Euan and Jack encountered some vertical powder, and after a head first factor two fall, decided to ab off and also climb Central Buttress; the fate of Liam and Duncan was unknown....

Turns out they were only ten minutes behind us, but couldn't contact us to wait for them due to dodgy reception.

After retrieving Liam and Duncan, a discovery was made amongst the cassettes: 'Doon in the Wee Room' was found to Duncan's and Jack's delight. Unfortunately, Duncan assured me it was the worst rendition of it he had ever heard. I look forward the proper experience! On the meet we had the luxury of free guiding by 'Sir' Nick, provided by Saint John Scotland. Nick put on a great presentation about his adventures and mishaps in the mountains, the theory being that we could learn from his mistakes.

The next day only two teams headed out for winter climbing, the others opting to hill walk, ski tour or revise. On the walk into the corrie was the dream team (Emma and I) as well as Alice and Jack – Alice hoping to do her first winter lead under the watchful eye of Sir Nick. Emma and I climbed Parallel Gully B. This was good apart from Emma getting mild hypothermia, and some guidebook incompetence from me, meaning that instead of the described start, we climbed a section that the guide didn't grade but instead described as 'hard and serious' – still one of the best climbs I've done though! Alice got her first lead, and Jack modified the club tech axes while bashing in a peg – it now has an adjustable hammer! He assured us all there were also many large spikes available.

We were all tired when we got back to the hall, with other teams bagging remote Munros in the eastern Cairngorms. The slow tidy-up was ignited into life when someone discovered a panpipe rendition of ABBA in the cassette collection – I am now seriously considering investing in a tape deck! All-round a great meet, can't wait for next year!



Reunion Meet (11th-13th March) – Geoff Cooper

Every year the club has a reunion dinner where members from as far back as the 40s and 50s gather at the Kingshouse Hotel (owned by a former GUMC member until recently) for a get-together and a meal. This year's reunion was a little



more special than usual in that it was the 75th Anniversary of the signing of the club's first constitution in 1941 (the club existed unofficially since 1938). By lucky coincidence, the constitution was written up on the 12th of March so it was exactly 75 years old when we had our dinner on the Saturday!

There was a good turn-out from the usual 'oldies', though Alan, Evelyn and her sister were not present at the dinner since Evelyn had broken her wrist a couple of days before. Evelyn is a former president of the club (perhaps the first female president?) and often a spokesperson for the original GUMC members. Also, she always comes to the Reunion with stories of adventures from the previous year, despite being in her 80s! There were also a few members from the 90s including Brian Doogan, who organised the 50th Anniversary celebration and is keen to record and preserve the club's history. As usual, the Kingshouse provided a tasty (and generous) dinner after which we had short speeches by Bobby Baxter (as the current club secretary, soon to be president) and Brian (on the history of the club). After all that, we retired to the hotel lounge for drinks, music and chatter.

Sunday saw the traditional pick-nick at Clashgour Hut – I had a hurried breakfast and left ahead to make sure it was tidy and I hang up the flowers in old climbing helmets that I've provided for in the last three years. Luckily, the previous users had left it nice and tidy so I was able to sit and drink tea while the rest turned up. Brian, who is a former Hut Custodian, was pleased to see the state of the hut and the new refurbishments (I was relieved), but was sad to find the original Horny Golock had been lost – there is a new version, but it's apparently 'not the same'. Hugh Dinwoodie was able to provide a picture of the original, so perhaps it will make a re-appearance...



AGM (Annual GUMC Mess) – Roxy Barry

This year's messy antics started by navigating into the depths of the new hive, following the call of the karaoke machine. Unfortunately (or fortunately), the GUMC was not fated to karaoke this evening. The evening was off to a slow start, members trickling in, wary about the new hive-headquarters of the committee. The hive rang with shouts of 'Robert Giddy' and 'second' for almost every position...perhaps a one-man committee would be simpler! Votes were cast, names were called. A well-needed intermission led to a preliminary pint for myself and the new president, 'just to line our stomachs' for the dirty pint yet to come. And so I delightfully, wholeheartedly, magnificently announce the members of the new GUMC committee:

The B.I.G P: Katie Bowen

The V.I.P: Professor Snape

Secretary: Iggy Czajewski

Treasure-hoarder: James Newton

King of the Bus Lists: Liam Anderson

Safety Sec: Duncan Butler

Barbara's BFF: Megan Priestley

Gear Sec: Robert Giddy

Holiday-Planner: Euan McIntosh

'I'm-studying-computer-science': David Southgate

Journal Sec: Anna Bruvere

Hut Custodian: Geoff Cooper

Competition Sec: Ted Collins

Multi-Tool-General-Fool: Paul Thomas

(Although Alice may not be Internet Sec from 4300 miles away, she will live on, through the high tales we tell all new freshers of our year-abroad-members-who-they-will-love-when-they-come-back!)

After the votes were cast and people rejoiced in their new positions of power, there was a moment of calm before the storm-to-be, as Mike took to his V.I.P-ing and rallied the troops, collecting way too much money than necessary for two dirty pints. In they came, plastic cup goblets held high, presenting Katie Bowen and I with some dark, murky thing that was sure to be evil in a cup. A few gulps down (was that cinnamon I could taste?),

pleasantries ensued as we nursed our dirty pints like champagne at a wedding, trying to stomach whatever we consumed (sambuca?!?).

To Dram! And everyone piled out of the GUU, heading to the homeland. The dirty pint seemed to have little immediate effect, with Katie and I stumbling gracefully towards Dram! Another pint? Of course! Something happened, I probably spoke to people. Suddenly it was 6am, bright lights were blinding me - but oh, I had just fallen asleep atop my bed with the lights on. Perhaps that dirty pint had some effect after all.

Peace out.

SSS Climbing Championships 2016 – Vivian Vu

Vivian here. A few weeks ago I had the opportunity to participate in the SSS bouldering competition held at our very own TCA. Students from all around Scotland came to compete, some travelling even as far as Aberdeen! I came there early to get warmed up, to calm my nerves and get excited for the event. Once 11am rolled around, streams of students started coming in. Some entered the intermediate division. I, being a complete newbie with competing, stuck to the intermediate division as well. We had three hours to complete 20 problems that ranged in difficulty, with problem #1 being fairly easy to #20 feeling seemingly impossible. Let me tell you, three hours is really not very much time to finish 20 problems. It's all about how you approach the routes and your strategy behind it. If you start off with hard problems too soon, you'll burn out and won't be able to do routes you normally can do. If you do all the easy/medium problems and skip the hard ones, you'll end up being unable to get any points on the harder stuff. It's all about balance and how you make use of the three hours you have.



So in the three hours of bouldering, I stuck with Gabbie, and we both managed to flash most of the easier problems, finish the medium stuff and get a few bonus points on the harder ones. By the time 2pm came by, we were knackered. I had forgotten all about finals until Tancredè announced it! Needless to say, I was incredibly surprised when my name was announced as one of the finalists for the intermediate division. Gabbie qualified as a finalist

for the advanced division, woo hoo! Since this was my second-ever competition, I was excited/anxious/nervous/terrified – all at once. I didn't know what to do, and I was NOT prepared to climb in front of a large group of people! Not to mention, I was also already tired from having climbed all day. However, the time came and Tancredè called my name to the front. Let me tell you: it was an exhilarating experience. I don't know about you, but climbing makes me forget everything and everyone around me. I'm 100% focused on the wall, where the next holds are, how my body is positioned. So, as I got to the comp wall and began my problem, all my nerves washed away.

Whether you're a complete newbie or a veteran at bouldering, I highly recommend that you go and sign up for some competitions. It gets you motivated to train, and although there are some really good people out there (I mean REALLY good), at least you get to compete against yourself. I did the best I could out there, and was never really competing against anyone but myself. Gabbie and I cheered each other on, and we made new friends along the way. Competitions are great events, and we couldn't have had this experience without Tancredè's awesome leadership!

Ben Nevis Adventures – Katie Bowen

Winter climbing is overrated. Waking up at some ungodly hour to travel to the only crag that might be in, rain on the walk-in, trudging through knee-deep powder, spindrift, spending hours digging at verglass for questionable gear, or waiting for your partner to do the same, then topping out in the dark. Spring climbing, on the other hand, is where it's at. Long days, bomber ice, hero neve and bluebird skies... right?

So, aiming to re-enact something like Smith and Marshall's week on the Ben (but cheating by modern equipment and less nights in Police custody), I set up camp with Liam behind the CIC. We started off by having a lie-in and hot cross buns, followed by heading up into Coire na Ciste for a look at Comb Gully, nearly tripping into a crevasse at the bottom of No. 3. However, we couldn't see the route for the spindrift coming down it. There was a team on the cascade opposite, however, and 'going for a look' ended up with me halfway up the steep first pitch with hot aches, disco leg and cramp all at the same time. We finished up Raeburn's not so easy, and thankfully Liam's screw-placing technique improved before he got to deal with the cornice.

Getting blown around on the summit and not being able to see much, we got out the compass (suspiciously already set to 282 degrees) and wandered back via the tourist



track for Liam's favourite meal (cous cous). With a somewhat limited selection of reading material, we quickly fell asleep, woken only by the tent flapping and occasionally collapsing on top of us.

We were woken by a thud which heralded the arrival of Ron 'I'm too old to go hill-walking in the rain' Dempster, who, in his new guise as 'sponsored athlete', was going for a wander up Coire Leis (in the drizzle-sleet).

Bribed by Soreen and duct tape for a broken tent pole, we went up to the summit shelter where we met lots of inappropriately dressed tourists. Ron, being somewhat sensible, went down. The tent was getting a touch damp. Later, we checked the forecast and the summit wind speed had increased from 80mph (like it had been the night before) to 100mph. If things couldn't get any worse, Liam started singing the Smiths.

Then about 11:30pm, the tent had a major disagreement with the forces upon it, it blew down and refused to bounce back up. Quick decisions were made, and we ferried our gear into the CIC 'airlock'.

The CIC folk very kindly invited us in for tea and then to stay the night, which really was a realisation of how the other half live. It seemed that by staying in the hut you would no longer have to worry about wet kit or your phone dying or the hazards of cooking pasta practically in your sleeping bag. One of the most impressive occupants was a nine year-old girl who'd been clocking up routes with her dad. Hearing tales of near-misses and avalanches over cups of tea, we were glad to have gone for Coire Leis. However, it was so civilised that we failed to do anything on Sunday, except walk down to the car and find a place to stay in fort William (thanks Adam and Ailsa!).

We settled for some relaxed munroing on Monday with a round of Surr nan Caoraichan and Sgurr Thuilm near Glenfinnan. No crampons were required, but there was some technical unfrozen turf – those mystical Spring conditions we'd been waiting for.

