

FEBRUARY HAPPENINGS

PRESIDENT WELCOME:

Hello and welcome to the February newsletter. Hope everyone has recovered from the flat crawl. I think the main event of this update is the stunning victory of the men's BUCS team over Edinburgh and Strathclyde. Also, the AGM is looming ahead – if you are keen to be involved running the club, be at the GUU for 8pm on the 15th with a speech.

GUMC ACTIVITIES:

DINNER MEET – Mike Snape

And so there was dinner meet... A strange fixture in the GUMC calendar, for two very different scenarios can play out, depending on weather, psyche and the always elusive 'state of winter'. If, like in 2016, snow is abound and the weather holds, then expect the serious winter climbers to be all tucked up in bed early on Friday night and too exhausted to ceilidh on Saturday, leaving festivities to the usual faces. If, on the other hand, the weather's bad and the various winter gurus have sagely decreed that 'nothing is in', then carnage usually ensues...

This year the latter scenario was what mostly played out, though a few folk still braved the arduous walk in to Coire an t-Sneachda to see if anything could be done. I was suffering from the general malaise this year's winter (or lack thereof) has caused, and refused to believe any of the positive chat. What did the gurus know anyway? Besides, I had other things on my mind – in addition to ensuring the dinner and ceilidh ran smoothly, I had to make sure Katie was prepared for her presidential address, and run shuttles of inebriated Gumclubbers between Laggan and Newtonmore. All of this led to myself and Duncan (who was also on shuttle duty) to devise the cunning plan of doing the meet backwards: since we wouldn't be drinking on Saturday anyway, we would 'do something' on Sunday – which of course left Friday open to compensate for our, albeit financially motivated, sobriety.

And so Friday night disappeared in a beerio-cart induced haze (courtesy of Tom's N64 and a TV from the upstairs room) and I awoke on Saturday hungover and in need of a pick-me-up. A visit (and perhaps a swim) to Loch Morlich sounded fun, but what about before that? Fortunately, a solution was found in the form of Meall a' Bhuachaille, a hill described by Andy Bonham as 'the ultimate hungover corbett'. Perfect. I gathered a motely gang of the hungover and lazy and set off.

The dinner itself is odd to experience from the position of VP, as there aren't any surprises. You've picked a few options for food from the list the hotel gave you (how much haggis is too much?); helped pick the award winners; booked the band, and most importantly provided a costume for the president. All you can hope for is that nothing unexpected happens and everyone makes it through



the ceilidh in one piece. Thankfully this seemed to be the case, except for the injury free ceilidh part – Kasia’s ankle swelling up to a nasty size after taking an accidental stomp.

As for the awards, they were as follows:

Climber of the year – Rob Giddy

Mountaineer of the year – Liam Anderson

Golden Boot – Rob Giddy

Returning to the hall the usual singing, dancing and ratchet-screwdriving broke out and very quickly my carefully laid plans to avoid drinking were abandoned. Always next year, I suppose. On Sunday a large group of us made the traditional pilgrimage to the Newtonmore Grill to reminisce about the previous night’s antics over a cooked breakfast and milkshakes, and soon it was time to begin the epic clean-up of the hall. Not much mountaineering got done, really, but a great weekend nonetheless.

BUCS MEET – Adam Visick

On the 17th of February two cars set off from Glasgow with one goal in mind: to beat every other Scottish University at the Sheffield BUCS, of course! Three cups of espresso and a mind-numbing drive through the North of England later, we arrived at the standard Chinley Scout hut in the heart of the Peak District. Instilled with the presence of the greatest of all bouldering rocks, (and having finally woken up Eoin without injury to others) Yorkshire Millstone Grit (Torridonian sandstone coming a close second of course), we arrived in Sheffield amid a swamp of down-jackets and ‘trendy’ beanie’s. We shrugged off the vibrant colours of intimidation and entered the superbly set Sheffield Works. After a nippy jog around the beautiful industrial estate, Caroline and David went off for their judges briefing, nerves were high, hefty forearms were being flashed left, right and centre and then it begun. 25 problems were our fun for the day, each more daunting than the last. With the final problem being a full bat-hang, progressing through a roof with vicious toe-hooks, culminating in a hideous rock over on millimetre wide ledges to a lovely finish.... Suffice to say it was not completed, although Hamish made a more than respectable stab obtaining the bonus hold. With it being a national competition you would have thought that a tense, quiet atmosphere would have permeated through the centre. What happened instead was quite the opposite, people giving beta to other competitors, and much shouting! (Allez! Allez!)

Afterwards Hamish and Eoin quickly scarpered off to the peaks whilst the rest of us loitered around Sheffield scaring the locals with Caroline’s various yoga antics. After an interesting altercation with one of the locals we scurried back to our apparently not so auspicious parking space to discover some lovely yellow stickers on our cars demanding money. Cycle lanes can house cars surely? Back in the centre it was found that both Hamish and Eoin had qualified 2nd and 3rd respectively out of a pool of 300! And that whilst we were gone Hamish had been and done Black Asteroid (7c+) leaving behind most of the skin on his ankle and hands. Despite this, the preparations were completed and the stage set. The lights darkened on the comp wall and some very excited GUM clubbers sat on the sidelines. Four tense problems and some fantastic commentary later, the results were in! 2nd for Hamish and 4th for Eoin! The men’s team also managed to obtain 3rd place overall! So proud of everyone who competed!

The victory meal was a delightful pasta concoction inevitably followed up by cake. What a spectacular day! Wet conditions resulted in the abandoning of any climbing (we're coming for you Deliverance), so a slight detour to Smardale was undertaken to see Freya's spectacular mass of dogs and ponies. A few hairy moments through the fog in the peaks (thank god for anti-lock brakes) and we made it back. Had a spectacular time and a massive well done to the women's team with Freya, Anna, and Alicia all coming in the top third of their category! Hopefully we can get some club kit next year (you've got to notice us now GUSA), and do it all again!



TORRIDON MEET – Duncan Butler

The live blog

“Hey Duncan, can I ask you a favour? Could you write an article for the newsletter about the Torridon meet?”

“The one this weekend?”

“Yeah, I don't know who else to ask, no-one else is going.”

“Sure, but I doubt much will happen. The weather's pretty naff and like you say, no-one's going.”

So it was that I found myself writing a report about what I expect will be a fairly eventless meet, but let us view this as an opportunity: What could happen, and what does happen, when your meet is a washout? Welcome to Torridon: The live blog:

00:10 We've arrived in Kinlochewe. I count a grand total of seventeen people. Team Extreme (Emily, James and Nick) are planning a sunset hill for tomorrow afternoon, when the apoplectic weather will have passed. Others are – I assume naively – looking at maps and planning. A PA system is playing music and the heaters are on full whack.

- 00:25 Predictably, everyone is now holding either a can of beer or a glass of wine.
- 02:06 People have made their plans. The music is still playing. We are still drinking and being obnoxiously loud.
- 02:17 Serious scientific discussion about the conversion rate from bawhairs to inches. I'm adamant we should be converting to SI, or at least Metric.
- 02:49 The music stopped a while ago, but the chat has grown louder and, regrettably, more testicular.
- 10:20 I'm awake. I have been for a while, listening to the faff and stomping, which seems to have been to no avail, because everyone is still here. I have a headache. Soon I will get out of my sleeping bag and make some eggy bread. Not yet though.
- 11:04 It seems this experiment isn't as worthwhile as I'd hoped. I wanted solutions to the "it's too rainy to go outside." conundrum. Everyone seems to be going outside anyway – which by definition means my conundrum doesn't exist.
- 11:42 A local with an English accent has appeared to tell us about money and to ask us to move the minibus.
- 11:56 Six of us are the last to leave the hall. We are going to Fionn Bheinn. We have heard nothing good about it but we feel today deserves a crappy hill.
- 12:17 We are leaving the bus in Achnasheen and heading towards our brown lump, it is still raining.
- 13:04 The sun has come out and we are in a bog, trying to get everyone across a river. Dare I admit I'm enjoying myself?
- 14:27 We are on the summit, which is shrouded in clag, and it has started hailing. Time for some micro-nav to get back to our bog!
- 15:52 There's a small dam with a cable stretched across the river. I will now attempt to cross the wire.
- 16:15 We agree that Fionn Bheinn doesn't deserve its poor reputation. It's a lovely little hill.
- 16:37 Back at the bus, we are watching a lorry which is carrying some piece of railway machinery and reversing through a tight gate, thrilling stuff.
- 17:48 I've been at the hall for almost an hour, and now I want my dinner.
- 19:28 I've eaten my dinner. Now I'm full. James, Webbo and Emily are notable by their continued absence. 80s Synth 3 is playing through the PA system and no-one is talking to anyone else... bizarre.
- 19:35 I'm watching Webbo eat a cucumber, as he stares into the middle distance.
- 19:48 Karma Chameleon has ignited conversations throughout the hall, ending the conspicuous silence.

20:05 Team Extreme returns.

21:06 Empty Tennents can bowling.

21:55 Nick produced a pan of mussels, as he sometimes does, when I asked he told me they were cooked in "Tennents, tomato ketchup and stolen garlic granules".

22:05 I drank beer inside Mike's bothy bag for a while, he joined me until it became unpleasantly warm.

22:10 "Pub?"
"Pub."

23:15 We lost Nick in the pub.

00:56 Sopio happened, and has now finished. Bed time.

12:16 Today's weather is far worse. The freshers are off on their nav course, three others are on Fionn Bheinn. We are in the café in Gairloch.

12:56 Iain wants a lift from Fionn Bheinn but he can jolly well hitch back.

14:11 Iain has successfully hitched to Gairloch from Fionn Bheinn, with an off duty police officer who, according to Iain, "Didn't drop below ninety the entire way". I'm on my second coffee and have run out of psyche for my report on solar physics.

14:52 Time to return to the hall, maybe we'll get away early.

15:42 The Welsh Guards Military Choir is singing 90s Christmas hits as we sweep and pack.

16:04 This music is getting tedious.

16:50 The bus is packed, the hall is clean and the lights are off. Thus ends another meet, now for the long drive home.