

ClubSpot

Cairn Ban Mountaineering Club



Offers a Warm Welcome Celebrating 30 Years

By Ian Collinson

All Photos: Cairn Ban MC



“Where else can you get so much fun for less than 40p a week?”

...Asks Ronnie Williamson, Treasurer of Cairn Ban Mountaineering Club, who celebrate their 30th Anniversary Season this year.

Cairn Ban Mountaineering Club exists for folk with a love of the great outdoors, exercise and camaraderie amongst like-minded folk. The Club's core activities are for those who choose to climb or hill-walk with a variety of other sidelines in cycling, kayaking, currying, drinking and the occasional boogie.

There is no attempt whatsoever by the club to embrace too much in the way of formality and stravaigers who venture onto the club's website – www.cairnban.org.uk – will most certainly get the drift of the nature of our Club. All interested newcomers are invited to contact us.

Bob Gardner, original member and 'El Presidente' in this landmark year observes: "With

four of us kicking off a wee hill walking club back in 1979 we never really considered it would still be going strong thirty years later and continuing to grow every year. When I think back to some the scrapes, misdemeanours and occasional eccentricities it all does lend itself to paraphrasing Winston Churchill... "Never in the field of human Munro bagging, has so much been owed to so many by so few!"

Cairn Ban is based in the Renfrewshire village of Kilbarchan, however members are spread throughout Scotland and even travel from as far away as Devon.

Worldwide Appeal

Whilst the Club spends much of its time on snowy Scottish Hills, there is a decidedly international feel to the club, with members venturing to far flung peaks in the Himalayas, Alps, Rockies, Pakistan, Andes and the Lake District.

The Club has a few Alpinists in its midst and an early attempt on Mont Blanc by two members, Crombie & Bert, led to a month in France, resulting in no climbing and not much washing either.

More recently, nine members of the Club summited Mont Blanc on the same day in June 2007 after a week acclimatizing to high altitude Pizza, Pasta & Beer. Members of the party noted that most of the alpine guides wore some pretty ridiculous moustaches and in homage to the fraternity of guides, Cairn Ban members set up a rival 'Beard of the Week' won by Ian Collinson.

Alan Wade ventured onto the North Col of Mount Everest in 2007 and is now booked onto a 2011 attempt for the summit of the world's highest peak. Readers of the website reports can get all the gripping details of his terrifying, freezing and vegetarian North Col trip. Not one to hog the limelight he stripped off at 26,000 feet to promote a T-Shirt celebrating a member's then recent Munro completion.

Sheena & Stewart McKie were the first club members to bag a Himalayan peak on Stok Kangri in 2008.

The Club's President himself, Bob Gardner, has trekked all over the world and recommends the outside air to everyone and anyone... "except



Birthday sung to the tune of every National Anthem the team could muster. The details, not for the faint hearted, are on our website reports.

A' Chuill bothy in Glen Dessary is also a favourite destination where whisky, song and mouse baiting have been accompanied by some fine hills.

You may have encountered a highland bunkhouse near Laggan with an outside jacuzzi – Cairn Ban recommends seeking permission before twelve of you dive in!

Perhaps uniquely the club has had sponsorship from leading whisky brands in the past for trips – how many climbing clubs are as marketable as Cairn Ban? Ardbeg on the Inaccessible Pinnacle was definitely a highlight.

Social Animals

There is more to life than blisters and boots and Cairn Ban regularly enjoys itself in a variety of social outings. Included in this celebratory year are a Christmas Curry Carry On, Burns Night and a 30th Anniversary Dinner and Celidh.

And Finally...

There are many climbing clubs throughout the land and Cairn Ban is but one – there will be better climbers, better equipment and maybe even taller stories (unlikely) to be had elsewhere but Cairn Ban recognises that it's the people we meet that enrich our lives.

We look forward to celebrating our 30th in style and, of course, to the future but, more importantly, welcoming new members to the club and getting out there! Enjoy yourselves!

www.cairnban.org.uk



Strictly Come Bagging

Age is clearly catching up with some of our members – John McGill completed his Munros in October 2009 and as the party got into full swing at the Invergarry Bunkhouse some members slumped in front of the telly so as not to miss out on Strictly Come Dancing. Hell-raisers eh?

Bothies

Like most clubs, Cairn Ban enjoys its fair share of bothy nights where rustic accommodation can come to life amidst sodden Gore-Tex, too much food and, on occasion, a liberal dash of sherry.

Most notable bothies from Cairn Ban memoirs are Steall Bothy, Glen Nevis where atrocious weather conditions led to two days of bothy festering, way too much alcohol and renditions of Happy

the Rockies – I was convinced a Grizzly bear would get me!"

Homecoming

International jet setters we may be, but the club's core activities centre on the 'Scottish Winter Scene' with, dare it be said, the usual sprinkling of Munro Baggers.

In historical order we salute Alan Leeman, David Gray, Ian Collinson, Alan Forsyth, and in this celebratory year John McGill, Campbell Crombie and Douglas Collinson have also become Munroists with finishes on The Saddle, Ben Lomond and Sgor Dhonuill respectively.

ClubSpot
Does your club have a story to tell? Use this feature in Scottish Mountaineer's Members News Section to highlight your club activities, history, achievements or forthcoming events. Simply send details to the Editor Kevin Howett