

# Ptarmigan Hillwalking & Mountaineering Club



Website: [www.ptarmiganmc.org.uk](http://www.ptarmiganmc.org.uk)

**Monthly Newsletter**

**February 2021**



## **Our Chairman writes:**

A new year and it doesn't look as if much has changed. But does that put off the ardent hillgoer? Not in my case. When lockdown started, I found that I needed to get out every day, alternating walking with cycling, which certainly kept up my physical, as well as mental, fitness. I'm sure many of you did the same, if only to justify all that comfort eating of freshly baked bread and cake.

As some of you know, a group of us (informally known as the Pentland Puffers), many being Ptarmigans or ex-Ptarmigans, have been keeping up our regular Thursday trips to the Pentlands. Initially this had to be limited to solo 'one hour' walks before we could meet up again in larger groups, keeping social distancing,

not always successfully. Once we had got our act together and walked within the current guidance, we were again able to explore parts of the Pentland Hills we used to visit.

This Pentland Puffers group was started a few years ago by Michael Good, who many of you will have known from his regular Ptarmigan outings. As notified in a recent email to members, Michael died in unfortunate circumstances a couple of months ago on his return from a regular hillwalk. We now know that he had an underlying heart condition and that he didn't suffer. A few of us attended his funeral recently and, as a long term friend of his, I read the following poem, which I wrote in his memory immediately after his death (see below).

We must hope that the rapid introduction of anti-Covid vaccines will allow some form of normal activity to return later in the year. We cannot promise any definite start date for club outings at present but enclose the proposed programme agreed at the November AGM. However, as soon as things loosen up, we will let you know when it is safe for hillwalking trips to begin either by our usual Ptarmigan bus or by other means. Meanwhile, please continue with any regular walking and other physical activity so that we're all hill-fit for that time.

So, in the words of the great Prof Jason, remember FACTS:  
Fit As you Can Till Sunday meets resume.

Richard Love

### **Farewell Proud Puffer**

You were our walker, you were our talker,  
You were our guide with us by your side;  
You put your routes out, so we got our boots out  
And joined you each week for the 101\* ride.

Come rain, wind or snow you'd be raring to go  
On a trek in the Pentlands once more.  
Over hill, scrub or bog, hardly fit for a dog,  
You'd drag us through mud, slush and glaur.

You became the first Puffer and then had to suffer  
Our gradual growth to two dozen.  
From a tight-knit small team it soon came to seem  
We were Jock Tamson's bairns AND his cousin.

The map was your friend but sometimes the end

Of the walk was nowhere in sight.  
You had mental strength but what was the length  
Of the route? We hadn't got all night.

You kept your good grace while we kept up the pace,  
You were fit as a pork butcher's whippet.  
But your legs sometimes went, with your energy spent,  
And you stumbled or occasionally slippit.

As we now know so well, last Thursday you fell  
But we all hope that you didn't suffer.  
You'll still be our friend, striding out to the end,  
As we sail on without our Good Puffer.

\*101 is the number of the Stagecoach bus to Carlops and West Linton

### **A reminder from the Treasurer**

We don't know yet when we'll be able to operate normally, but we want to be ready when that time comes. It would greatly help the club if you could pay the reduced subscription for 2020-21 as a gesture of good will. This enables us to maintain our membership list and insurance with Mountaineering Scotland.

The reduced membership subscriptions are currently £15 for one person, £30 for two people at the same address, and £10 for associate non-walking members

The club's banking details are:

Ptarmigan Mountaineering Club (The name on the account has still not changed!)  
Bank of Scotland  
Account: 00248765  
Sort Code: 80-17-68

Don't forget to provide your name as reference so that I know who has paid.

Many thanks.

Adrian Casey  
Treasurer

### **This year's programme as agreed at November's AGM**

It may seem a bit academic to put out a programme this year, but we live in hope that the combination of social restrictions with vaccinations will enable us to return to something like "normal" in the later months.

January 2021 No meet  
February Howgill Fells  
March Lowther Hills/Wanlockhead

April Taynuilt  
May Loch Arkaig  
June Coire Cas  
July Glen Creran  
August Glen Muick  
September Kinlochleven  
October Linn of Dee  
November Luss/Arrochar (High Tea at Balloch)  
December open for suggestion. If February cannot go ahead, we can shift Howgill Fells to here.

**Bad-weather alternatives:** Angus glen; Aonach Mor (for Loch Arkaig)

**Weekend away 2021:** The NTS Kintail Outdoor Centre has been provisionally booked for the weekend of Friday 25 to Monday 28 June 2021.

**Some words & pictures from Kevin:**

This current lockdown has been completely different to my first one cooped up in a flat in the Edinburgh Urban Jungle. Having moved to Cockburnspath back in October, those of you will know it as the end of the Southern Upland Way, I have been able to get out on 2 wheels exploring the lovely Berwickshire coast & the local Lammermuir Hills. Two recent pictures show Oldhamstocks Parish Church on a snowy, low level walk into the Lammermuirs & one of my favourite dog walks, above the lovely Cove Harbour on the Southern Upland Way:



Please email us & let us know what you have been up to. Send us pictures and stories from your local walks to be included in the next newsletter [secretary@ptarmiganmc.org.uk](mailto:secretary@ptarmiganmc.org.uk)