

Ptarmigan Hillwalking and Mountaineering Club

Chairman's Report 2020

As you will all appreciate, this has not been a normal year for the club, or indeed any of us, with only three outings taking place before national lockdown began in late March. Nevertheless we experienced a cross section of Scottish winter hill conditions during these months.

In December, a wonderfully sunny and frosty day with temperature inversion belied the hard, tussocky trek ahead and late finish at Fintry, despite the prior warnings, which I well recall from a previous outing 20 years ago. In February, following a threat to cancel because of low numbers, we made a return to St Fillans, this time on a day of continuous snow. A small group made the best of Ben Ledi but most of us picked up routes around Glen Tarken, crowned with the warmest of welcomes at the Achray Hotel in the village. In March, our final outing before 'you know what' was heralded by a forecast which was enough to put off the hardest of us – and indeed several did call off. The expected high winds and snow became unremitting rain and spectacular waterfalls instead, ending once again in an early bath – externally as well as internally at local hosteleries.

At the beginning of the year a small subcommittee met to explore and agree on a format for our new website. Angus Miller acted as a consultant and helped steer us towards the version which we now use. I will leave it to others to comment on this process later.

Since the Covid pandemic took over our lives, we decided, if there was any choice, to suspend all club activities, including the June weekend in Kintail, so, other than an occasional online committee meeting, apologies for the lack of other events to report on. However, as we are constitutionally required to have an AGM before the end of November, we hope as many of you as possible can join in with the discussion about how we conduct our activities over the months ahead.

Finally my usual thanks to my colleagues, including Dave and Kev who now share the secretarial duties, not made easier by their recent relocations out of Edinburgh. Thanks to Christine for offering to act as membership consultant; Adrian for treasurer duties and ongoing battles with the mysterious machinations of modern banks; Colin for helping to coordinate the postponed summer outing; all the bus conveners for their roles and advice, especially Douglas for his ongoing skills in keeping our documentation up to date; and to Tim for his new role as webmaster in addition to bus bookings convener. John Townshend, former webmaster, also continued to have some input into the handover process.

After an eventful year for the country and the whole world, we hope that we will be able to take forward at least some of our unused 2020 programme into the year ahead. Thanks for your patience and understanding.