



SCOTTISH ARCTIC CLUB

Newsletter - December 2014

*President: John Peden,
Vice Presidents: Douglas Anderson and Anthony Walker
Secretary: Iain Allison, Treasurer: Chris Calver,
Committee members: Chris Bartle, Ashley Buchan, Jenny Newall,
David Shaw and Fraser Sutherland*

www.scottisharcticclub.org.uk

New members are welcome: the Club is for people of all ages and nationalities who have an interest in the Arctic, particularly if they have already been, or are planning to travel there. See the web site for an application form.

Important – Date for your diary

44th Annual Gathering and Supper

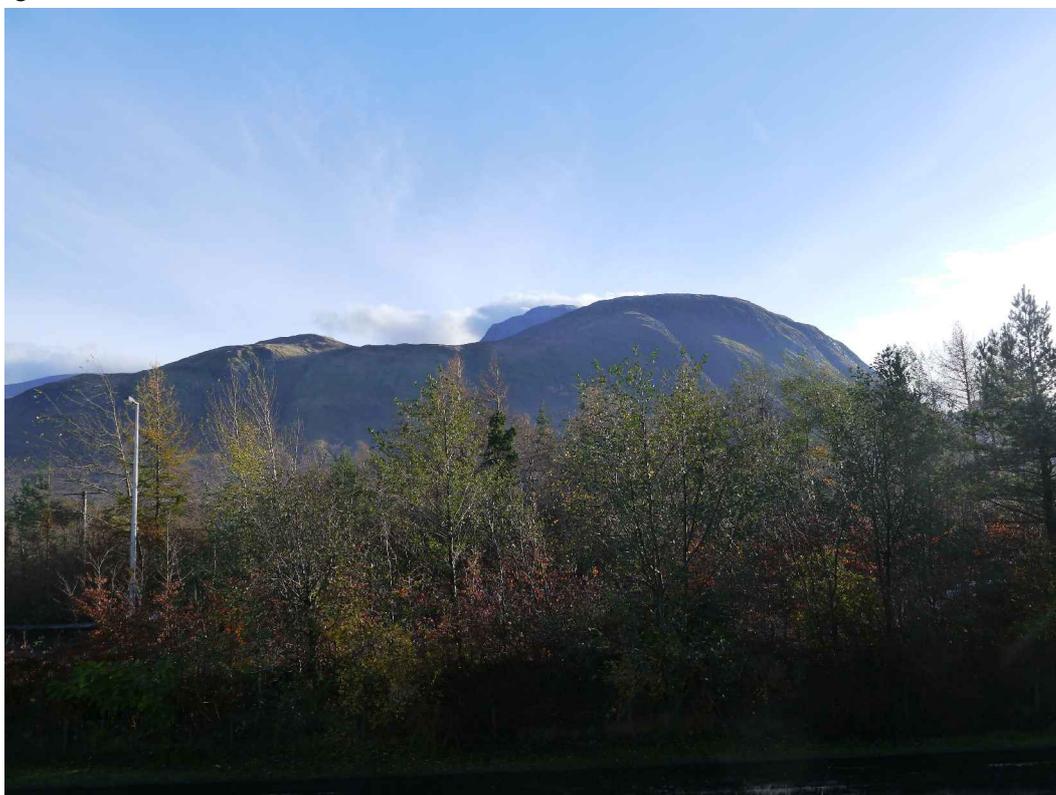
Saturday 21st November 2015

The Ben Nevis Hotel, Fort William

Phone number 01397 702331.

salesbennevis@strathmorehotels.com

The 2014 Gathering and Supper was held on Saturday 15th November. Over 50 members took advantage of the very reasonable dinner, bed & breakfast rates to arrive in time for dinner on the Friday night.



The summit of Ben Nevis from a hotel bedroom on the morning of the Gathering

The 2014 Gathering & Supper

We had a very successful gathering in the afternoon with over 80 members and guests present to hear a variety of presentations. Chris Gilmore once again provided all the technical equipment for projection of images and amplification of voice and also acted as MC for the afternoon keeping all the speakers to their allotted time. We started with summaries from those who had received grants from the Club for expeditions during spring and summer this year. The final presentation in this section provided a link between the grant holders and more experienced Club members with Ashley Buchan and Ronan Dugan, who have held grants in previous years, talking about their late winter expedition to Iceland. The President, John Peden, welcomed members and guests and after a brief introduction to the Gathering handed over to Chris Gilmore for the presentations.

The talks were:

Eleanor Hopkinson: Arctic Finnmark with British Exploring Society

Kirsty Bremner: Harding Ice Field, Alaska, with Banchory Academy

Emily Whyte: Lofoten Expedition with Ocean Youth Trust

Cameron Mackay: Greenland 360 - Climate change, Kangerlussuaq, West Greenland

Ashley Buchan and Ronan Dugan: Iceland, Winter 2014,

Ronan Dugan: Russian Taiga, a short film about his 2013 expedition studying black cock

Brigitte & Hans-Peter Grossman: Arctic Reflections – Scoresbysund, landscape, birds, seascapes

Coffee

Dr Finlo Cottier and Lucianne Marshall: Scottish Association for Marine Science's work in the Arctic

Jim Gregson: North Liverpool Land Expedition 2014

Mike Lea: Maud (a Dundee whaler) in the Arctic

One of the grant holders, **Dr Joseph Cook**, was unable to be with us but he had sent a poster outlining his research on cryoconite holes on the ice sheet's surface and this was on display during the day.



One of the presentations in the ballroom of which we have sole use for the afternoon and evening.

As all speakers kept to time we were able to start the AGM on time at 5 pm. The minutes of the AGM will be attached to the next newsletter. Iain Allison and Fraser Sutherland were due to stand down at this AGM. Susie Ranford was voted onto the committee, *nem. con.*, to replace Fraser and take over maintenance of our website. No volunteers for the role of secretary appeared so Iain Allison continues for the time being. The meeting agreed to co-opt Cameron Mackay onto the Committee to take over the social media aspects of the Club.

Displays at the Gathering

We are grateful to Glacier Books for providing a selection of Arctic books from their extensive collection for members to peruse and purchase. Jim Gregson also had his book, Exploring Greenland, on display and for sale. During the afternoon, the table for raffle prizes became covered with items donated by members. Elizabeth and John Hay very kindly donated a bottle of whisky in their "Guess the Malt" competition which has become a regular fixture at the Gathering. In addition we had a further four generous donations. Hugh Simpson donated to the Club an original Sir Wally Herbert oil painting, "Death of a dog". Jean Stenico donated two prints, a woodcut and a monotype, Anne and Chris Bartle donated two sets of vintage cigarette cards showing polar scenes and explorers, and Kate Lea donated a skirt length of Arctic tartan material. The Committee decided to retain the Wally Herbert painting for valuation and it is now in the safe-keeping of the President, perhaps the only perquisite of the job! The other items would be auctioned after the Supper.

The Supper

Eighty eight members and guests sat down to the annual Supper at 7.30. Once again the Ben Nevis Hotel provided an excellent meal and afterwards members took their coffee through to the ballroom for the auction and raffle and then lingered chatting to friends for the rest of the evening.



A view of the dining room during the Supper



Another view of the diners



And a third view during the Supper

The Auction and Raffle

The President, suitably attired in Arctic tartan, did a splendid job as auctioneer to encourage bidders to dig deep into their pockets. The auction raised £425 for the Expedition Fund; length of tartan- £70, cigarette cards - £45 and £50, prints - £100 and £160. The raffle raised £347, very similar to last years £356. And the "Guess the Malt" competition raised £63. So a total of £835 goes into the Expedition Fund in addition to the donations of over £1200 that the Club received when members renewed their subscriptions.



The President, in Arctic tartan, as auctioneer

Sunday morning walk

We are once again very grateful to Liz Patterson for finding and leading an interesting walk for the few members who take advantage of this opportunity. It was a stunning day as the group of 4 left the hotel at 10 am for Fassfern on Locheil-side. Liz led the group, Jim Barton, David Matthews and Jennifer Sherry, up Gleann Suileag as far as Glensulaig Bothy.



Glensulaig Bothy



David Matthews, Jennifer Sherry and Liz Patterson outside Glensulaig Bothy



Heading home under clear blue skies.
(Photographs courtesy of Jim Barton)



Loch Etive reflections



Autumn in Glen Etive

Polar Medal

Phil Gribbon was awarded a Polar Medal, presented by the Queen, in July this year for his outstanding contribution to scientific knowledge of the northern polar regions in Greenland and Canada. A note appeared in the Northern Ireland News Letter and can easily be found using a web search. Although we know about this award to Phil prior to the last newsletter the committee decided it would be more special to announce it at the Gathering. So, belatedly, the Club sends its congratulations to one of the founding members.

Book review

JETTE BANG - Fra Isbjornens Bug * Nannup Naavanit *
From the Belly of the Polar Bear
Photo book by Leise Johnsen.
Milik publishing 2014. ISBN 978-87-92790-20-0
(the book comes with a DVD of the film "Inuit")

Jette Bang, 1914 - 1964, was a Danish photographer and writer who was educated in Denmark and Paris where she met Eigil Knuth. After travelling widely in Europe she trained as a photographer in the early 1930's before going to Greenland for the first time in 1936 at age 22. She was the first professional photographer to specifically aim to document the everyday life of the people of Greenland - as opposed to recording (largely male) expedition activities.

Although she funded her own 8-month trip, Jette Bang was "commissioned" by the Administration of Greenland to cover a list of some 26 aspects of Greenland life. She travelled out to the West Coast in the company of Eigil Knuth, Paul-Emile Victor, Robert Gessain and Micha Perez, who were soon to embark on their crossing of the Inland Ice. Bang actually helped the men to lay out some of their food caches, and her photographs later appeared in Knuth's book.

After her lengthy journeys up and down the West Coast, Bang exhibited 400 photographs on her return to Copenhagen which attracted considerable interest. In 1937 she returned twice to Greenland, to the East Coast, now as a fully funded photographer to continue her work documenting the transitional changes in traditional Inuit culture before it might be lost. In 1938 the Administration of Greenland hired Bang to make a film. This film "Inuit" is the first Greenlandic documentary and revolves round the seasons of the year. It is a milestone in the history of Greenlandic film as it was the first Danish colour film recorded on 16mm Kodachrome. Bang continued her work in Greenland in several more journeys after WWII, striving to capture the lives of native hunters where they could still be found.

This beautiful slip-cased hardback book showcases a superb portfolio of Jette Bang's lovely photographs from Greenland, with a very high standard of reproduction. There are indexed captions in Danish, Greenlandic and English. The biographical text also comes in these three languages. The DVD of "Inuit" is an excellent bonus which also accompanies the book.

Although expensive (DKK 325.00 - plus surface mail and admin. fee of DKK 197.00 - total DKK 522.00 - and even more by airmail!)[Ed. About £56] the high production values are worth the price. If you are keen on fine photography AND interested in the culture of the Inuit this would be a fine addition to your Arctic library. Highly recommended.
Available via the website of Atuagkat Boghandel ApS in Nuuk.

<http://milik.gl/en/book/jette-bang-from-the-belly-of-the-polar-bear/>
email <ordre@atuagkat.gl>)

Jim Gregson

And while we are talking about books ...

The Big Eye of Summer by Iain Smart

ISBN 9780975574928 2004

Available from Amazon at £5.59 and for Kindle

Iain Smart is a founder member of the Club but the book appears not to be that well known to Club members. Quoting from the cover: "At turns nostalgic, elegaic, rhapsodic, fantastic, philosophical, but always literate and lyrical, the book explores a new variation, if not an independent new line on the roadside crag of mountaineering."

This book is a collection of stories published in the Scottish Mountaineering Club journal about Scotland and North-east Greenland so it is appropriate that it be brought to the attention of those members who have no previous knowledge of such an interesting book. Despite Iain's assertion that: "The intention was to keep it discrete - I am a great believer in protective colouration," our Club membership is much less than that of the SMC so I believe we are sticking to the spirit of his request. If you wish to meet the 'Storm Goddess', learn about 'The anatomy of brachiation' or meet the 'Play Boys of the Western World', ask Santa for a copy for Christmas.

The John Rae Society

The John Rae Society was formed just over a year ago, one hundred years after the birth of John Rae. They held their first AGM in the same week as our AGM, last month. The Society's purposes are to advance the education of the public in the life and achievements of John Rae as the discoverer of the final navigable link of the Northwest Passage and one of the greatest arctic explorers; and also to advance the arts, heritage, culture and science by promoting the life and achievements of John Rae to foster friendship and understanding between members of the public, the people of Orkney, and those in Canada, particularly, but not exclusively, those areas associated with John Rae, through a broad range of activities.

John Rae was a Scottish doctor who worked for the Hudson Bay Company and later explored parts of the Canadian Arctic especially a route for the Northwest Passage. In the 1850's, John Rae was awarded the £10,000 reward for finding the fate of the Franklin Expedition

The Society's President, Andrew Appleby, contacted the Club seeking to promote the John Rae Society to Club members and our Club to their members since our aims overlap. Their website is: www.johnraesociety.com.

Archives

The first Supper in 1970 was held in the Staff Club of the University of Dundee. The Archivist of the University has agreed to house the Club's archive. The secretary received a large box of files from Chris Ravey, the previous secretary, at the Gathering last month. So, once this has been scrutinised and weeded, archival material will be taken to Dundee.

Newsletter

This newsletter is YOUR newsletter so it requires YOUR articles to make it interesting and informative to members. Yes, it also serves to allow the Committee to keep you informed of events and administrative matters but that is not its primary purpose.

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Please remember that the Club is active on both Facebook and Twitter