



Fife Walking Club

October 2024



Committee 2024

Chair and Newsletter Editor	Barbara Fotheringham	Margaret Cumming
Treasurer	Clare Darling	Emma Hulme
Secretary	Angela Drennan	Karin Laurie
Walks Convenor	Mike Livesey	Leslie Drennan
Membership Secretary	Brian Clark	Frankie Johnston
Webmaster	David Thomson	Alison Stewart

Fife Walking Club is affiliated to HF Holidays

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I hope you have had lots of enjoyable walking over the summer, despite the unpredictable weather. Last week I actually saw fields being irrigated near Crail while down south many places are still drying out after record rains over the summer months.

Below you will find accounts of the Melrose mini-break kindly organised by Alison Stewart and Bill Fernie. They even managed to organise perfect weather.

You should already have noted on your calendar the FWC **Christmas Lunch on Saturday 7th December, 12:30 for 1pm** at the Pitlessie Village Inn. All the important details can be found below, and note that I have to receive your **food orders and payment** by **Monday 25 November**. For those who have not been before, we hope you will join fellow members for a pleasant, relaxed afternoon with great food, a raffle and plenty of good cheer.

For everyone over 60, the cost of a 2-course meal is £20.95 or a 3-course meal is £25.95.

If you are lucky enough to be under 60, your cost will be £25.95 for 2-courses or £29.95 for 3 courses. However they have never yet asked to see a bus pass as proof of age. **All**

dietary restrictions must be noted at the time of ordering.

We hope you can join us there.

The Fife Walking Club Christmas Lunch is an event not to be missed

The appetising menu is below. Angela has attached the order form as a separate document to this newsletter. You can return this form by email, or in the post if you prefer. Just send an email with all the details if you have trouble completing the form.

There are lots of options on the order form, so please check that you have provided all the details.

Payment is required in advance, as usual. The club has already paid a deposit. Treasurer Clare asks that you pay by bank transfer where possible, giving your name as reference. If you do not bank online, please send a cheque payable to Fife Walking Club to Clare Darling, 57 Moray Park, Dalgety Bay KY11 9UJ

Sort code: 80-16-84, account number 00195346

The deadline for booking and paying is Monday 25 November

Annual Raffle Our annual raffle, drawn after the lunch, is a fun event and all proceeds are given to charity as part of our donations to be decided at the AGM. Donations of prizes are gratefully received. Tickets are £1 per strip and exact change is helpful

We hope you can join us there. Non-members are welcome to join us as guests.

Book your place by Monday 25 November, remembering to note any dietary restrictions. Questions? Please get in touch with Barbara

barbara_fotheringham@hotmail.com



Drinks, wine, teas and coffees can be purchased from the bar.

As usual, Clare will have envelopes on each table so that you can contribute a tip for staff if you wish..

A date for your new diary

Right now 2025 seems a long way off, but the weeks pass quickly and we are already thinking ahead to the **AGM on 11 January 2025.**

The Lomond Centre is booked for the meeting to start at 10:15 (the centre opens at 10am). Angela has arranged a speaker from the Fife Coast and Countryside Trust for just after the AGM, followed by our traditional lunch at the Beijing Banquet. Information about the AGM will be circulated mid-December. Clare and Brian will be on hand after the AGM to take annual dues in cash or by cheque, though Clare prefers payment to be made online

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Three days of walks in the Borders, 10 – 12 September

Twenty club members set off to the Borders for a mini walking break. Three days of walking were on offer and members were free to choose which to attend. The Borders has so much on offer that non-walking options were also very appealing. All participants were most grateful to Alison and Bill who led these walks having reced them during the summer

We were based in **Melrose**, a lovely compact market town that still retains local shops, hotels and services. I saw the butcher's, the baker's but no candlestick maker, though candles were on sale in gift shops. There was plenty of accommodation centrally, including hotels, AirBnbs, studios and apartments. Angela and Leslie even rented a flat in a National Trust for Scotland property.

The meeting place each morning was the marketplace, where buses also stopped. Bill and Alison had arranged three full-day walks, Day One's plan was to go up the Eildon Hills, the impressive backdrop to the town.

From the town we headed uphill, stopping for a water break at a memorial dedicated to Thomas the Rhymer, a 13th century Scottish poet and prophet. The legend goes that as he was sitting under the Eildon Tree, he heard the tinkling of bells and the sound of a horse's hoof. A beautiful lady appeared on horseback, none other than the Queen of Elfland whom Thomas followed deep into the Fairy Otherworld beneath the Eildon Hills. He stayed there for seven years and gained the gift of prophecy before returning to the mortal world, where he apparently foretold many significant Scottish events. Sir Walter Scott (whose beautiful house at Abbotsford we would later see across the River Tweed) collected many of these Border ballads.

The only person to join us in Rhymer's Glen was not mysterious in any way, just a farmer with his dog .

From there we had a long steep ascent up a rocky path to the summit of 422m or 1385ft. The walks programme had promised a "99.9% chance of mud" as prophesied not by Thomas the Rhymer but by Bill and Alison. We duly encountered some but fortunately not much due to the beautiful sunny weather.

The 360 degree views from the top were stunning, looking down over Border communities, the fertile undulating landscape and the River Tweed



Bill informed us that where we were standing there had been, centuries previously' Scotland's largest Iron Age hill-fort extending over 39 acres, and the base of the local Selgovae tribe. The hill-fort was a substantial defensive site, home to approximately 2000 people. The Romans would later establish a signal tower up there, probably after the fort had been abandoned.

From the summit we had a gentler descent, dropping down to Cauldshiels Loch where we encountered a large herd of cows and calves coming down to drink from the loch. We were careful not to get between heifers and calves, and smartly made our way across to the fence which we climbed, only to realise that was just to allow us to regroup. So we crossed back into the field to make our way up the hill, hugging the fence. We picked up our pace noticeably as we caught sight of the most enormous white bull joining his harem. At 12 miles, in glorious sunshine and with superb views, it was a very satisfactory day.

The following day saw us piling on to the bus for Galashiels to start our Day 2 walk. We set off through the town, past the new gallery built to house the Great Scottish Tapestry, and we then picked up the Southern Upland Way round Gala Hill to Yair Bridge. Again we were spoiled with lovely scenery and great weather. Our picnic lunch was on the banks of the Tweed—a perfect spot.



We followed the Tweed to Boleside and Galashiels, before returning to Melrose via the Southern Upland Way and the route of the disused railway line.

That evening, we all (18 of us) enjoyed a very convivial evening at Monte Cassino, the excellent Italian restaurant in the middle of Melrose. We were lucky enough to have a room to ourselves where we all ate (and drank) well and chatted happily. Very many thanks to Clare who not only arranged the meal for us but also collected in everyone's payment and balanced the books, leaving a generous tip for the helpful staff.

The next day we had to work off those extra calories so headed off across the Melrose Chain Bridge and then up Goats Brae (no goat sightings but plenty of brae) for a super coffee break site overlooking the Eildon Hills and the town way below, bathed in sunshine.



This walk was slightly shorter than the other two but no less scenic. The enormous Leaderfoot Railway Viaduct, built in 1865, is very high at 38m/126 ft, (ie 8 metres higher than the Glenfinnan viaduct) and consists of 19 arches.



Close by is Trimontium, the site of a large Roman fort named after the three peaks of the Eildon hills. The site was only discovered when aerial footage was taken of the area during a drought, making visible the contours of the fort. It even included an amphitheatre built around 80 AD that held 1500 spectators. No buildings remain above ground, but the scale of the fort is nevertheless impressive. The fort was in use until the Romans retreated around 100 years later.

To get back to Melrose we again followed the Tweed and headed into town past the abbey, still beautiful despite being a ruin. And after seeing so much water flowing past, we headed to the pub to replace some liquid before heading off.

It was an excellent break and it will be hard to better. But let's hope we are all up to a similar challenge next year. Glorious weather of course can never be guaranteed, but we were all so fortunate to experience it in and around Melrose.

Enormous thanks to Bill Fernie and Alison Stewart for organising and leading such lovely walks, and to Clare Darling for arranging the group feast.

But in the meantime we can all look forward to April's **Keswick Week, 26 April to 3 May 2025**

Printers not Sprinters *by Wanda Elder*

We are a group of ladies who enjoy a printing class on a Monday morning, and who were inspired to undertake a more physical effort..

Our very inspiring, encouraging and supportive tutor keeps us all challenged and engaged.

Unfortunately she was diagnosed with cancer a few years ago which was treated successfully but then she developed another cancer now being treated. Some of us have also had experience of cancer, hence our decision to take part in the Shine Night Walk in Edinburgh.

There was a great atmosphere at the Mound where over 900 people had gathered to take part. Already over £110,000 had been raised. Plenty of stewards guided us round the route and as the light faded we lit up the streets with our glow-in-the-dark tee shirts and glow sticks.

Many thanks to all who generously sponsored me - I was quite overwhelmed!

My final total was an amazing £505!



The Club Walks Programme

We are really fortunate to have so many interesting walks on offer for us.

We are very grateful to Mike Livesey for putting on such a variety of walks to suit every level of walkers.

But he can only do this if members continue to offer to lead walks. You can submit walks to Mike at any time of year and he will fit them into the programme. Give him blackout dates or you can specify a range of dates that would suit you. Don't worry about offering walks weeks ahead – if a better offer comes along, you can always ask Mike to change the date of your walk to accommodate you

Walks of any length and difficulty will be welcomed. Favourite walks, old or new, long or short, midweek or weekend, whatever you would like to offer, just contact Mike at netteville@gmail.com

You don't even need to wait until his next shout out to submit walks



A fitting chainsaw-carved memorial to Jack Jones, founder of the Earlston Paths Group, at a spot he loved