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PETER HOWGATE	Cairngorm Club (and Observer for the Mountaineering Council for Scotland)
GREG STRANGE	Etchachan Club
ALLAN MURRAY	Ellon Hill Walking Club
SELWYN ROBERTS	Hash House Harriers
GORDON MILLER	Aberdeen Telephones Hill Walking Club
CHAS SMITH	Aberdeen Mountaineering Club
CHRIS BARTON	Aberdeen Mountaineering Club
ANDY WIGHTMAN	Aberdeen University Lairig Club
PHIL TOWNSEND	Hash House Harriers
PAUL NESBITT	



ANNUAL REPORT

TO

30th SEPTEMBER 1985

INTRODUCTION

The Executive Committee of the Trust has pleasure in presenting this, its Fifth Annual Report to the Members. It is a little difficult to assess the work of the past year. When looked at as the achievement of a few part-time volunteers, we hope Members will find it respectable enough. On the other hand, compared to what needs to be done to achieve a better balance of priorities in land-use over the broad sweep of hills and mountains of the North East it remains inadequate. To begin to meet this problem, as Members will read, the Trust has reorganised itself somewhat this year, and will probably change even further in the year to come.

Many of the problems we face at a local level, such as inadequate control of development in National Scenic Areas, are simply the local expression of national problems and can only be tackled effectively at the national level. Thus we have increased our co-operation with other voluntary bodies in Scotland. We have also reached a long arm into Parliamentary affairs, presenting evidence to Select Committees and lobbying increasingly through Members of Parliament.

Of the issues facing us that will need greater attention in the coming year, probably forestry is the most pressing, and we have therefore spelt out, in this Report, the problems we are encountering in this area. The year ahead will undoubtedly see us in action to achieve better protection for the Cairngorms.

THE NORTH EAST COASTLINE

1. BANFF AND BUCHAN COASTAL AREA STUDY

In an attempt to formulate a management plan for the whole Banff and Buchan coastline the District Planning Department, in 1983, undertook a survey of the coastline from Cullen in the North to Whinnyfold in the South. The Trust provided information concerning cliff areas used for rock climbing and also agreed to submit our completed survey on access routes in the Longhaven area. The report on the coastal survey was issued in September 1985 with just one month allowed for comments. The Trust is at present studying the report.

2. LONGHAVEN RIGHTS OF WAY SURVEY

All information for the Trust's survey (mentioned above) has now been collected and a report is being prepared for submission to Banff and Buchan District Council. Initial observations indicate that the survey will show a continued use over the last 20 years for several access routes to the cliff areas between Cruden Bay and Boddam.

3. ACCESS TO CLASHRODNEY, THE MINCER CLIFF AND SICKLE ROW

After an exchange of several letters between the Trust and the Department of Law and Administration at Aberdeen District Council the Council agreed that there may be grounds for pursuing an action to have the pathway declared as a right of way if such should prove necessary, but that in the meantime the scrap metal dealer has ceased prohibiting access to the cliffs. The situation is being monitored.

4. CLIMBERS' GUIDE TO NORTH EAST OUTCROPS

This excellent guide appeared in January 1985 and a new routes supplement followed almost immediately. A combination of poor summer weather (precluding climbing on the traditional mountain crags) coupled with the publication of the guide appears to have resulted in a noticeable increase in the number of people climbing on certain sea cliffs. There is still no significant progress to be noted with regard to the proposed Slains Castle development or the dumping of industrial waste at Bridge of One Hair.

THE MOUNTH

BULLDOZED TRACKS WITHOUT PLANNING PERMISSION - GLENEY

In September, Members informed the Executive Committee of the bulldozing of a large track in Glen Ey, from near its mouth to the old ruins at Ruighe an t-Seillich. Site visits revealed the track was within a National Scenic Area (NSA), and one of the worst designed Members had seen. In our view, it had been cut without regard to the unsightly scarring that would result, with much detritus and boulders tipped downhill. In places it was wide enough to accommodate two buses side by side, the old path to the Colonel's bed had been cut off, and the above ruins simply and needlessly bulldozed. A letter detailing such points was sent to the Kincardine and Deeside District Council (KDDC).

Thereafter, it was reported to the Trust, the estate had justified its action on the grounds that -

- (a) The estate's factors claimed ignorance of the statutory requirement for planning permission for such tracks within NSA's.
- (b) The estate claimed that it was not creating a new track, but only upgrading an old one.
- (c) The estate claimed the track was for agricultural purposes and that it therefore did not need planning permission.

The Trust found it difficult to believe (a) since the firm of estate agents involved were highly experienced. It refused to accept (b) and advanced evidence that (c) was an untenable assertion. KDDC interviewed representatives of the Mar estate at a meeting of its planning committee, and examined the track on site. While the Council disapproved of the action and insisted on receiving a planning application, there was also obvious disapproval of the manner in which the estate had proceeded and of the crudeness and unsightliness of the construction. Nevertheless retrospective planning permission was finally given, with detailed conditions for 'restoration' of the ground. In the circumstances this was the only possible option. During early site visits Trust Members had noticed that a second track had been newly constructed on the other (east side) of the glen, leading up towards the open hill for a considerable distance, and then turning back towards forestry plantations. The construction and design of this track seemed, if anything, worse than that of the western track. It seemed also to members that if the track was truly for forestry purposes a shorter, better screened route could have been taken. When challenged about this track by KDDC after the Trust had made representations to the Council, Mar Estate claimed the track was exempt from

planning control since it was for forestry purposes. This claim was eventually accepted.

We chronicle these events in some detail as they demonstrate much that is wrong with the planning control over tracks in NSA's, namely that it can be evaded with ease and ignored with impunity.

GLENSHEE - See under Ski Development.

THE CENTRAL CAIRNGORMS

1. BOTHIES

Bob Scott's Bothy. Reports that Mar Lodge estate intended to knock down Bob Scott's bothy at Luibeg, caused the Trust to write to the estate asking for assurances that this would not happen. We received a reply stating that the estate had no such intentions.

Corrour Bothy. The Mountain Bothy Association announced that it intended to carry out alterations to this bothy, including bricking up the fireplace, and concreting the floor. It asked for the views of interested parties. The Trust supported the view that the fireplace was best bricked up, but advised against the concreting of the floor, suggesting instead a sand floor. The MBA eventually bricked up the fireplace and concreted the floor.

Jean's Hut. The Trust supported the retention of this hut in the Northern Corries, pointing out that, if it was removed, there would be a great lack of any cheap, overnight accommodation in the area. The future of this hut seems still, at present, unclear.

2. ROTHIEMURCHUS

"Happenings" on Rothiemurchus Estate, as usual, took up a significant part of the Trust's time during the year. During a visit to the area in May by the Chairman and General Secretary notices were observed at the Visitor Centre stating Loch an Eilean was now a stocked loch, and fishing permits were available from the estate. Further enquiries revealed that this arrangement was about to extend to nearby Loch Gamhna, and that fishing huts were apparently to be erected in the forest for this activity. Since both lochs are within the Cairngorms National Nature Reserve, and since the forest protected by that reserve is intended to include not just the trees but also the entire system of soils, rivers, lochs and bogs, this seemed an unacceptable arrangement. A letter was therefore sent to the Nature Conservancy Council enquiring whether the NCC intended to permit this development. An assurance was received that this would not be permitted on the reserve. We are therefore keeping a close watch on events at Loch an Eilean.

While on the same site visit, it was found that half the Visitor Centre at Loch an Eilean had been converted to a souvenir shop without planning permission. This Centre was built entirely at taxpayers' expense by the NCC. The cost of the Centre and nearby public toilets was around £20,000. The NCC had provided

over £9,000 for the running costs of the Centre up until 1984. The facilities were handed over to the estate at the termination of the NCC lease in 1984, but no compensation was provided to the taxpayer.

The Trust enquired by letter to the local planning authority, Badenoch and Strathspey District Council, as to what steps were to be taken to regularise the situation. A proper planning application has since been lodged. The Trust has objected to this application on the grounds that the development would partially remove a facility that the area already lacks, namely interpretive centres to inform the public about the area's wildlife and history, in order to replace it with a facility which is already in superfluity within the entire Aviemore area, namely souvenir and sweet shops. It also seemed to an inappropriate development in Rothiemurchus Forest. We still await the Council's decision.

At the time of writing we are also investigating another incident on Rothiemurchus, namely events surrounding the laying of a power line from Inverdrue to Cairngorm. Negotiations with the Hydro Electric Board had led to an agreement that a sizeable part of this line would be buried where it passed through the best parts of Rothiemurchus Forest. However, after and even during the work, the Trust received complaints about the extensive vegetation damage caused during the operation, and the appearance of yet another section of bulldozed track. We are still investigating this situation. Nonetheless, it is this sort of unending, time and money-consuming trouble and agitation outlined here that is rapidly persuading Members of many organisations that it would be better if Rothiemurchus were simply bought for the nation as was Creag Meagaidh. Given the cost of the time spent on these problems and of the compensation paid to the landowner, it would probably be cheaper in the end. At least it would halt what many regard as the gradual degradation of the resource and time money spent on it would have positive results

EVIDENCE TO THE SCOTTISH SELECT COMMITTEE'S INVESTIGATION INTO THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Our 1984 Annual Report noted the Trust submitted evidence, plus a further memorandum, to the House of Commons Select Committee on Scottish Affairs regarding its investigation of the HIDB, and concerning the Board's handling of its Cairn Gorm Estate. This led to considerable publicity regarding the Trust and its activities in 'The Scotsman', and surrounding it a 'brisk' exchange of letters with the Board and others, stretching from October into January. In April the Committee's Report was published. The Committee largely rejected the Trust's criticism of the Board's management of its land, largely on the grounds of Dr Adam Watson's evidence. This ignored Dr Watson's evidence that the improvement in the upper slopes of Cairn Gorm was due to several summers with fewer tourists and good growing seasons.

However, the Committee took a much more favourable view of other parts of the Trust's evidence. It accepted the Trust's recommendations that the HIDB withdraw from its heavy involvement with the Cairngorm Chairlift Company by withdrawing from its shareholding and directorships in the company. It also recommended that the Board and the chairlift company declare that they would not attempt to expand ski development into the Northern Corries or Lurcher's Gully, a measure which the Trust and other organisations had supported. It also supported the Trust's recommendation

that a management plan be prepared for the entire Forest Park, including the Board's part of it, and the contiguous areas, including the Cairngorms National Nature Reserve. The Committee also recommended that the NCC accept the HIDB's offer of ownership of the upper parts of the Northern Corries and Lurcher's Gully, without any obligation towards supporting or acquiescing in ski development in the lower areas. By a narrow margin the Committee did not support the Trust's recommendation that the areas of the Board's estate now developed for skiing should also be transferred to the NCC as a caretaker organisation, while remaining outside the National Nature Reserve. On the whole, the findings of the Committee were a considerable victory for the Trust.

Sadly, the Government's response to the Select Committee's Report gave no encouragement to these matters, apart from stating that the HIDB develop a management plan for its estate, though this in itself was a measure that the Trust had been pressing for. However, the Select Committee's Report also recommended that the HIDB establish links with voluntary conservation bodies within its area. As a result of this and other events surrounding the whole affair, the newly appointed Deputy Chairman of the HIDB, Mr R Cromond, sought a meeting with office bearers of the Trust. At this meeting the Deputy Chairman of the HIDB sought to assure the Trust that the Board saw its role as attempting to bring development to the Highlands while giving due regard to the need to conserve resources such as landscape and wildlife, and that greater regard would be given to such aspects in the future. The Board continue to favour ski development in the Northern Corries.

OTHER AREAS

BENNACHIE

In our 1984 Annual Report we described how, in our comments on a Forestry Grant Scheme Application on Bennachie, we urged Gordon District Council to formulate a Management Plan for the mountain. This proposal was taken up by the Baillies of Bennachie. We are glad to report that the District Council had now adopted this proposal. This, however, by no means solves all the problems in this important area.

In September the Trust received a request for aid from the Baillies in their investigations into new developments on the mountain. A private landowner has fenced off land he has recently acquired, and refused to allow public access. A joint site visit by Members of the Trust and the Baillies revealed a rather dismaying scene. Even Members well familiar with forestry and agricultural land-use practices could make no sense of the way a steep hillside had been ploughed. Indeed the operation appeared to endanger the soil on the slope, leaving it very vulnerable to rapid erosion in any downpour. A bulldozed track around the area seemed to fulfill no clear function, and was poorly constructed - so much so that its steeper stretches were already eroding rapidly. The whole operation had badly marred the view from a popular viewpoint. It is depressing to note that in such a highly valued area, the public are helpless to prevent or even influence what seemed to the inspecting team thoroughly bad land management. The Trust has continued to support the Baillies in their attempts to have a Management Plan for Bennachie which would discourage incidents like this.

4/5/8

RIGHTS-OF-WAY AND ACCESS

The chief activity of the Rights-of-Way Working Party during the year was to continue its extensive survey of the condition of rights-of-way in North East Scotland, and this large undertaking is now drawing to a close. The results are to be published shortly in a full report. This work has, latterly, been carried out under Ray McCourt as Director of Survey.

The Working Party also provided advice and help on rights-of-way problems at Newtonhill, Boddam and Banchory-Devenick.

A survey of usage of the access routes to the cliff areas between Boddam and Cruden Bay was also completed (see section on North East Coastline).

FORESTRY

1. CREAG MEAGAIHDH

In our Annual Reports for 1983 and 1984 we outlined the progress of the situation on Creag Meaidh where Fountain Forestry had purchased the land for planting. The Secretary of State for Scotland, as stated in our 1984 Report, handed down a compromise decision restricting planting to part of the area originally intended for afforestation. In the same Report we expressed doubts as to whether even this area would be planted. On 21 March it was announced that the Nature Conservancy Council had purchased the whole area (Moy Estate 3,940 hectares) for £430,000. The main aim of the NCC's management will be the regeneration of the birch woods through the control of deer numbers and fencing off of some areas. The press release also announced that, since Creag Meagaidh is an important area for climbing, mountaineering, and hill-walking, consultation would take place with recreation bodies on the needs of such people.

2. GENERAL

During the year the Trust made detailed comments on applications under the Forestry Grant Scheme for planting in areas of importance for landscape and outdoor recreation.

These were -

- (i) Application for clear felling of mature woodland at Linn of Dee (Mar Estate) on the south side of Deeside road.
- (ii) Application for planting on MacRobert Estate on Pittendreich and Craigliach and Leadlich hills.
- (iii) Application for replanting along the Derry road, Glen Luis (Mar Lodge Estate) and planting of a small block near Mar Lodge.

It would be too lengthy a process to give details of the Trust's comments in each of these cases, but in each case an attempt was made to assemble a statement that took account of all viewpoints rather than simply the needs of hillwalkers and climbers. Nonetheless, the Trust has now commented on sufficient of these proposals to draw some general conclusions. Our findings have not been encouraging.

One of the worst features of applications is the lack of adequate integration of land-uses they reflect. Planting may remove traditional deer wintering grounds or block them off from these grounds. Felling may remove important shelter for them. Yet usually no corresponding reduction in deer numbers is proposed in line with the reduced feeding or shelter available. The effects on the deer are inevitably cruel.

The striking aspect of this lack of integration is the inadequate regard for wildlife and landscape. In many of the areas concerned, by far the most important industry is tourism, with a heavy emphasis on outdoor recreation and based on landscape, wildlife and public access. Yet applications continue to take too little account of these aspects.

Forestry is now creating a whole series of problems for the public wishing to gain access to the countryside for recreation. Long lengths of plantation are allowed to spread for kilometres along roadsides, cutting walkers off from extensive areas of upper hillside. Forest tracks are bulldozed along old footpaths, reducing once pleasant walks to tramps along muddy trenches. Some of the impacts on access are less obvious, though widespread. Recent years have seen a switch from Scots pine as the most commonly planted species on Deeside, to Sitka spruce. However, to achieve establishment of young spruce it is necessary to have much more drastic ground preparation often with deep ploughing. Since walking across the resultant, heavily ridged terrain is like negotiating an unending series of tank traps, and since Sitka spruce plantations are soon almost impenetrable, the public is to all intents and purposes excluded from the area permanently.

The design of plantations seems, at times, barely competent. There is doubt as to whether the Sitka spruce now being planted on some of the drier sites reflects a wise choice of species, given its greater susceptibility to drought. In other cases hardwoods are mixed with conifers in a manner that seems to ensure the shading out of the hardwoods supposedly set there for the benefit of landscape and wildlife. Examining other proposed plantations it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that they are simply thinly disguised deer shelters financed, in considerable measure, out of the public purse.

Particularly unsatisfactory aspects of the whole process of public consultation are the haste with which comments must be made on proposals which must surely have been planned far ahead, and above all the lack of information that is supplied with the applications. Public comment on large scale, publicly financed changes in land-use are made, based on little more supplied information than plantation boundary lines drawn on a badly photocopied map which may be up to 20 years out of date in the present-day distribution of woodland upon it, and on a form containing no more information than could be accommodated on the back of an average post card.

The Trust has therefore decided to produce a policy document on forestry in the coming year to guide its comments on future applications, and the change it wishes to see in forestry practice and policy.

SKI DEVELOPMENT

The Trust considered five applications for ski development this year; one in Coire na Ciste Cairn Gorm, one at the Lecht, and three at Glenshee. No objection in principle was lodged against any of these but the application for a ski tow on the northern slopes of Glas Maol, which was one of the

five, continued to concern us.

In our 1984 Report we described how the Trust, in its comments to the local planning authority, pointed out that the original application did not consider major aspects of the proposed development or its impact. These included problems created by access of large numbers of downhill skiers to the Caenlochan plateau, control of avalanche hazards, evacuation of skiers from the glen of the Allt Coire Fionn, and the control of soil erosion and landscape scarring.

Planning permission was given for the development by KDDC after very little discussion of what was a very contentious issue. Since the NCC maintained its objection the application had to go to the Secretary of State for Scotland, and pressure was exerted by various organisations to persuade him to call in the planning application. In March the Secretary of State wrote to KDDC stating that he wished to have before him the views of the interested parties on the Environmental Impact Assessment and the Development and Management Plan produced by the Glenshee Chairlift Company, partly at the instigation of Grampian Regional Council.

A site visit followed by a meeting of interested parties was arranged by KDDC. This was a large, rambling affair that in the end fulfilled no obviously useful purpose. A representative of the Trust attended. KDDC confirmed its intention to pass the planning application, which it eventually did, subject to some sixteen conditions approved at the Council meeting on 17 July. The Trust again wrote, at length, to the Secretary of State, pointing out how even the Environmental Impact Assessment and Development and Management Plan still failed to meet the fundamental points originally raised by the Trust and again urged that the application be called in. Eventually the Secretary of State decided to let the District Council's decision stand, and did not call in the application.

From the beginning there was no doubt that the development intruded inside the Caenlochan National Nature Reserve. The National Planning Guidelines on Ski Development state there should be no significant intrusions inside nature reserves by ski development. For objectors opposing the development on these grounds, the issue turned on what could be called significant and this has not really been defined satisfactorily. To the Trust the problem centred on the basic impracticability of the proposals, the sheer amateurishness of the attempts at an Environmental Impact Assessment and a Development and Management Plan. This remains our view. All in all, the affair demonstrated the poor level of planning control still exercised over ski development in Scotland, and for this the Scottish Development Department must take a considerable part of the blame.

GENERAL

1. EVIDENCE TO SELECT COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND INDUSTRY - INVESTIGATION INTO TOURISM

This Committee visited a selection of sites in Scotland, one of which was Cairngorm. This was evidently held out as an example of a potential and beneficial growth point in tourism. The Trust therefore sent written evidence (1) to the Committee on its views regarding the development of tourism in Scotland and as it affected matters such as landscape, wildlife, and public access.

In its evidence, the Trust noted that "tourism can bring benefits or harm to rural communities depending on how its development is managed. In

Scotland, tourism is based on scenery and wildlife within a sensitive environment over large areas, much of which are wholly resistant to 'mass tourism development'. Within this scene, outdoor recreation in various forms plays an increasingly important role.

In Scottish tourist development and mountain management inadequate attention has been paid to lessons learned abroad. Where the best compromise between the costs and benefits of tourist development has been achieved, it has been within a planning system that has placed a high priority on environmental protection, integrated land use, and restraint on undesirable development.

In Scotland, the planning framework for such an achievement is, to a considerable extent, lacking. The result has been spreading damage to the very resources on which the industry is based.

The North East Mountain Trust therefore urges the Select Committee to impress the importance of lessons learned elsewhere for Scottish tourism on the industry, encourage a more positive approach to the conservation of landscape and scenery in Scotland, a strengthening and better integration of relevant land uses, and the production of a management plan for the Cairngorms at a national level."

The Trust elaborated on and substantiated these basic points, with reference to the situation here and abroad, and then recommended that the Committee:-

- (i) Take note of the recommendations for Scotland made in the Report "Tourism, Land-Use and Mountain Communities - the Swiss Approach and its Relevance to Scotland" (3), since many of these are equally applicable to the uplands of England and Wales.
- (ii) Recognise that the development of rural tourism in the Highlands is inextricably linked to the land-use question, and that far-reaching changes in farming and forestry policy are needed to encourage the integration of land-uses, and a positive approach to the conservation of landscape and wildlife.

These changes should include, we felt, effective guidelines for the development of private forestry.
- (iii) Urge the Government to take greater note of the relevant parts of recommendations number (74) 7, (76) 34 and resolution (74) 7 of the Council of Europe, and to take advantage of Article 10 (2) of the EEC's Less Favoured Areas Directive.
- (iv) Strongly recommend the Government to strengthen the National Scenic Areas legislation to take more note of the conservation of wildlife and scenery over the broad sweep of the countryside, and to protect the recreational use of land.
- (v) Urge the Government to examine and act on the whole problem of the Cairngorms, and produce an integrated management plan for their protection at the national level.

The Report of the Select Committee has yet to be published.

2. VISIT BY CHAIRMAN TO CONSERVATION ORGANISATIONS IN SWEDEN

While in Sweden in business in April, the Chairman had discussions with

leading representatives of a range of voluntary and statutory organisations concerned with wildlife and landscape conservation. These were the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC), the Swedish Touring Club, the Swedish Environmental Protection Board, the International Acid Rain Secretariat, and the Institute of Wildlife Ecology and the College of Forestry at Upsala University.

The philosophy and approach of the voluntary bodies is particularly instructive for us here in Scotland. The SSNC is the only large conservation organisation in Sweden, and has nearly 100,000 members and is still growing.

The Society asserts that each and every discipline such as agriculture and forestry must accept its share of the conservation responsibility. Secondly, it asserts that all human use of land must combine sound ecological principles and practical land-use planning. Thus, since the vast majority of forests in Sweden are not protected as part of nature reserves, the protection of wildlife and scenery must be built into the general forest law. Recently, the SSNC has been growing concerned at the neglect of what it calls "gene conservation", especially the variability within plants and animals.

Behind such concerns is the Society's belief that one must always consider the whole environment, and this cannot be done by looking at small areas or small periods of time. Environmental issues must be considered in the broadest sense in time and space, for example over a time-span longer than the forester's rotation and over wider areas than he thinks in.

The Swedish Touring Club are another large organisation (300,000 members) involved in publishing, running hostels and mountain huts, outdoor holidays, and advancing the education and interests of its members. It is involved principally with active outdoor recreation. In particular, it is concerned with the quality of its Members' experience, rather than the economic value of their activities. The slogan which best describes its philosophy is "See your country first". By this it means know your country first - appreciate fully its culture and natural history. The Club does not make a clear distinction between nature and culture, but rather sees them as a part of one another. Interestingly, though involved in many issues and land-use conflicts, the most enduring and fundamental conflict that they have to deal with is in how to preserve the balance between the open door for the public, and the need to preserve the resource. Partly, of course, this conflict is created by the result of the pressure of use by their own members, encouraged by the Club's own activities.

It is a particularly interesting point that both bodies place great importance on close co-operation politically and in other spheres, and there are lessons in this for Scotland.

Both the voluntary workers at the International Acid Rain Secretariat and the senior civil servants interviewed at the Environmental Protection Board made plain their dissatisfaction at the British Government's refusal to reduce sulphur emissions in line with other EEC countries. While it would be wrong to say that there was a great deal of anti-British feeling, all made it plain that they looked to conservation organisations in Britain to exert pressure on the UK Government to reduce the emissions which they are certain are destroying large areas of their forests, and the life in considerable numbers of their lakes.

These findings were assembled in a short report (2).

3. ORGANISATION OF THE TRUST AND LIAISON WITH OTHER BODIES

During the year the Aberdeen Telephones Hillwalking Club and the Banchory Field Club joined the Trust, and we greatly welcome these additions to our ranks.

The Executive Committee also took steps to improve the internal organisation of the Trust. Among the measures that it took was the setting up of a Sub Committee with the task of increasing the Membership and enhancing the services to Members; and a Sub Committee to run and improve the administration of the Trust. Further steps to improve our internal organisation and running will probably be taken this year.

The Executive Committee also took steps to improve the liaison between the Trust and organisations with which it has common interests. To this end it continued to support and strengthen the Round Table Meeting of organisations concerned with the protection of wildlife, landscape, and facilities for outdoor recreation in Scotland. Several meetings of this ad hoc body were held, at which co-ordination and co-operation of their efforts was improved. A seminar on forestry to obtain information on the views of various bodies involved in forestry and upland land management is now being arranged for October, for members of the Round Table.

To improve co-ordination with local bodies, Roger Owen agreed to act as a link with the local branch of the Scottish Wildlife Trust, Fred Gordon of the Scottish Wildland Group agreed to act as a link with that organisation, and Adam Watson agreed to act as a link with the Raptor Group. Lastly, mutual affiliation was arranged with the local area of the Ramblers Association.

In February, following a letter to 'The Scotsman' from the President of the Scottish National Ski-ing Council, intimating that Council's desire for discussions with conservation and outdoor recreation groups with which it was apparently in conflict, the Chairman and General Secretary had discussions with the SNSC President. With the approval of the Trust's Executive Committee, a letter was sent stating the Trust's desire for such a meeting, and offering to meet the Council. Other voluntary bodies made similar offers. Unfortunately, no reply was received by the Trust or, apparently, by other bodies.

In June, approximately 80 people took part in the Trust's annual sponsored bike-ride to Ballater, followed by the usual celebrations and football match against a local team. This yielded a great deal of fun to many people and nearly £800 to the Trust. We are grateful to Selwyn Roberts (Harriet Street Group) for organising the bike ride again.

In May the RSPB Council visited Scotland to view the general situation, and the Chairman and General Secretary spent some time with the Council discussing matters of mutual interest and concern. The Chairman was invited to give a short address to the Council on the work of the Trust, and stressed the need for co-operation and mutual support. This was well received. This meeting improved relations with the RSPB.

In November the Chairman was asked to present a paper on recreation and amenity on the River Dee to a Symposium held by the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, at Banchory, on the River Dee. This paper outlined the pattern of recreation along and on the Dee by various groups such as canoeists, walkers, and car-borne tourists, the impact of other land-uses on these activities, and made recommendations for the future management of the area (3).

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PUBLICATIONS

1. Evidence to the Select Committee on Trade and Industry - Investigation into Tourism. March 1985.
2. Visit to Selected Voluntary and Government Organisations in Sweden (Report). Watson R D. Pub NEMT May 1985.
3. Amenity and Recreation on the River Dee. Watson R D. (Nov 1984) in Symposium on the River Dee. Edit. Jenkins D. Institute of Terrestrial Ecology.