



SCOTTISH ARCTIC CLUB

*To Encourage Adventurous Endeavour and Interest in
the Science, Culture and Protection of the Arctic*



NEWSLETTER May 2025

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SUMMER SOLSTICE MEET

21 June

Farleiter, Kincaig

Invite from Myrtle Simpson

ANNUAL GATHERING & SUPPER

31 October – 2 November 2024

Ben Nevis Hotel, Fort William

NEXT NEWSLETTER

**Articles sought: members' expedition reports old &
new, items of Arctic interest, etc.**

Deadline 30 September

SUMMER SOLSTICE MEET

21 June 2025

Our popular annual Summer Solstice Meet **will actually take place on the solstice this year, Saturday June 21st!** Myrtle Simpson has again very kindly agreed to host the event at her home Farleiter, near Kinraig. It's a wonderful opportunity to meet up with club members and chat about past or present plans in the Arctic.

As a new idea we were wondering if there were any musicians who might like to bring their instruments along to play while we all sit round the fire after the BBQ? Please do bring your instrument along if this is you!

There will be opportunities to walk, run, climb, swim or canoe on both Saturday and Sunday. Over the years we have done many things on the Sunday, but canoes/ kayaks on Loch Insh are often involved, as is swimming. Mountains are also available!

If planning to come along, please let Stella Spratley know:

Email: Spratley42@hotmail.com



The 2024 BBQ

ANNUAL GATHERING & SUPPER

31 October - 2 November 2025

This year's Supper will take place at the Ben Nevis Hotel, Fort William on the weekend of 31st October- 2nd November 2025.

The Hotel has offered us the following rates: £50 per person per night for B&B, with an additional £20 per room for single occupancy.

They will provide a bar meal in the restaurant for our party on the Friday night. The Dinner on the Saturday evening will be £27.95. Please contact the hotel to make a booking.

Enquiries and Reservations:

salesbennevis@strathmorehotels.com

Phone Number 01397 702331

If there are problems try the Events Manager:

bennevisevents@strathmorehotels.com



Report of April 2025 Spring Meet at Attadale

Kathleen Cartwright reports that this year's Spring Meet at Attadale enjoyed excellent weather (and no midges); the two cottages booked were near the Attadale Gardens.

Eleven members attended, with visits to the Gardens, local walks, and sorties to Applecross and Torridon. An enjoyable week.

Two pictures of Attadale below



Douglas Peacock

From Jinty Smart

It is with great sadness I am getting in touch with the news that long time club member Douglas Peacock passed away on the 27th April at the age of 97. His funeral was held on May 22nd at Mortonhall Crematorium in Edinburgh.

Douglas will be sadly missed by the club as he was one of our stalwarts, having joined the club back in the mists of time and holding office over an 11 year period, 1984 – 1995 as committee member, Vice President, President and Past President. He was also one of our Polar Medal holders having received the honour for his involvement in the British North East Greenland Expedition 1952 – 1954.

He will be remembered as a charming, unassuming and entertaining man, full of wonderful stories from his long and eventful life, a sad loss to the club. There will be a full obituary in the next newsletter.

Jane Craxton says of his funeral: Personal tributes were given by Duggie's surviving brother, Neil, and his nephew, Malcolm. His professional achievements were commemorated by Professor Jim Rose and Jack Daniels. All underlined the warmth and wit of Duggie's personality and his continuing enjoyment of life well into his nineties. The service, with beautiful music chosen by Jane, was well attended with several members of the SAC present. It was truly a celebration of his life.



REPORTS FROM SAEF-SUPPORTED EXPEDITIONS

Finnmark

Callum Hargrove

Our expedition to the fjords of Finnmark was a resounding success, even if not everything went to plan. Over ten days, we explored remote terrain by sailboat and skis, beginning in Alta and weaving through a series of strikingly wild fjords including Indre and Ytre Lokkarfjorden, Tverrfjorden, Ullsfjorden, and the mountains behind Øksfjord. In total, we skied over 84 km and climbed almost 9,000 metres of vertical ascent.

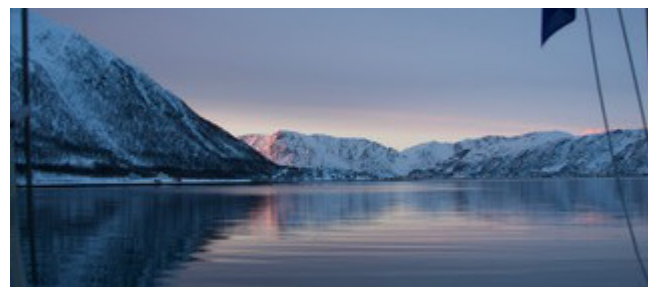
Early in the trip, we took full advantage of the boat's mobility to chase the best weather windows, skiing long, committing lines and learning from the expert guidance of our captain and more experienced team members. From snowpack assessments to emergency protocols, we made space each day to refine our avalanche safety

skills and group decision-making – both of which became vital as the conditions shifted mid-week.

We faced everything from warm temperatures and rain to significant avalanche risk, which meant two rest days aboard the boat. But these were far from idle – sauna stops, fishing cod for dinner, and poring over maps kept morale high. These pauses also gave us time to reflect on our approach and refine our planning for the days ahead.

The final leg of the trip was based from a hut near Øksfjord, where we applied everything we'd learned – from interpreting avalanche bulletins and weather changes, to planning and executing safe, rewarding routes in complex terrain. Highlights included tree-lined descents, summiting hidden peaks, and even building a kicker to make the most of deep snow near the hut.

The expedition brought its share of challenges, but the combination of sailing, ski touring, and skill-sharing made it an incredibly rich and rewarding experience. We're already looking ahead to future ventures—with bigger ambitions and stronger legs!



Snowshoeing in Sweden

Clare Ballantyne

As the first trip to the Arctic for the nine of us, nobody knew quite what to expect. Our apprehension was not reassured by online blogs about snowshoeing on the Kungsleden trail, which were predominantly negative. Nonetheless, we were excited to give it a go! Having met through our university walking club, my friends and I had little collective skiing experience so we'd decided on snowshoeing as a lower risk and cheaper alternative method of travel.

I flew out of Edinburgh to Stockholm on 11th April before heading to Sweden's northernmost city the next morning. My first walk in the Arctic took me through an industrial estate. I enjoyed the snowy scenery between Kiruna's tiny airport and the new town centre, enhanced by the knowledge the views would pale in comparison to those to come. My body was protesting about my 24kg backpack but I resolved to stay positive by reminding myself that it would get lighter every time I ate some of my weeks-worth of food.

Upon arriving at Abisko, I found my team there busy comparing their varied food and gear strategies. The trip offered many opportunities for experimentation, resulting in learning experiences that will be invaluable for future Arctic expeditions. One friend made the last-minute decision to rent a pulk, quite sensibly, as her backpack came to half her body weight. We learned quickly about the differential speeds associated with dragging it, as she shouted for us to "get out the way!" as the pulk chased her down the first hill before slowing her pace significantly on the following uphill. As a group we took turns to add 'afterburners', using our walking poles to push against the rear of the pulk to maintain its momentum, as well as attaching ropes to control it on steep downhill sections.

Another friend had a more creative plan to convert a cracked plastic sled she had been offered into a functional pulk using duct tape, static cord, bin bags, and a pen knife. Two demoralisingly slow hours into our first day on the trek, as the makeshift pulk overturned and careened off-route every few minutes, it was looking unsuccessful. However, improvements were made after consulting a guide leading twelve Spanish snowshoers on the route, and for the remainder of the trip it worked impressively well!

The trail began by winding through a birch forest before crossing a 4km stretch of the frozen Lake Abiskojaure. Despite initial hesitancy, being overtaken by dogsleds

and skidoos put everyone's minds at ease about snowshoeing on ice. The following day, we ascended above the treeline onto a glistening plateau with unbelievably stunning views out to the jagged peaks near Tromsø. I could have studied that landscape for hours. Unfortunately we did not have the benefit of so much time, as two passing skiers informed us that the previous day had seen our location enveloped in a whiteout blizzard with 20 m/s winds. Feeling the winds picking up, we pressed on.

Our brains struggled to adjust to the vastness of the Arctic landscape. We learned this the hard way when agreeing to have lunch at the refuge that had come into view, only for it not to appear any closer for the following hour. On the third day the scenery changed just once in six hours, as the route traversed two frozen lakes punctuated by a small hill. The sky did frequently change, however. We saw high, wispy clouds get replaced by thick, descending grey blankets that eventually merged with the surrounding snow, leaving us in a world of white. At other times the clouds were hurriedly blown past the sun, dappling the mountains with shifting light. We were lucky that good weather accompanied most of our trip. Though during the final three days, there was definitely a sense that spring was arriving imminently. We passed huge avalanche debris cones, heard the thunderous rumbles of collapsing cornices, and stayed well clear of vibrant blue meltwater pools on the lake surfaces where the ice could be heard creaking occasionally.

In the evenings I took advantage of the long daylight hours to explore the area, discovering tracks in the snow made by elk and hares. I often found myself under observation by ptarmigans perched on rocks and interrupting the serene surroundings with amusingly loud clucks. Then I returned to the hut to help with fetching fresh water, chopping up wood for the stove, and making dinner. Each day concluded by sitting around long wooden tables with my friends, contentedly playing cards and chatting in the glow of flickering candlelight.

After seven days of snowshoeing, we arrived at the small Sami village of Nikkaluokta that marked the end of our adventure. I headed home with not only incredible memories but also increased knowledge, experience, and inspiration for future Arctic expeditions... watch this space!

See the pictures on the next page.



Breaking trail



The author – Clare Ballantyne



Crossing a frozen lake



On the trail



Fetching water

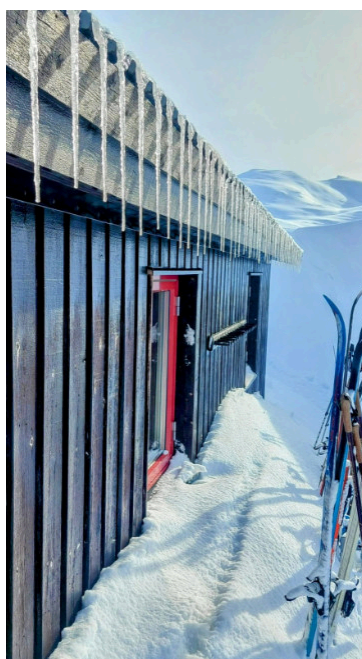


Passing the dramatic slopes of Liddubaëkti



In the mountains

Snowshoeing in Sweden



The mountain huts

Arctic Paintings

The artist Georgia Rose Murray tells us that she recently had an Arctic exhibition 'A Piece Of Sky', and at the end she gave a talk which can be [seen here](#).

Five years ago, during a visit to Ny Ålesund (Svalbard), she produced some concertina watercolours of the surrounding landscape, which have recently been reproduced and photographed *in situ* at Ny Ålesund. [See here for details](#).

Georgia is planning a return trip to Svalbard this summer and is seeking funding through [Kickstarter](#).

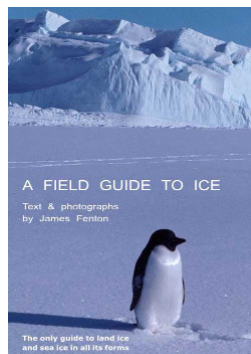


New edition of 'A Field Guide to Ice'

James Fenton

I have produced a new booklet edition of my *Field Guide to Ice*, with about 150 photographs of ice in all its forms. It is the only such easily accessible guide (A5, 40 pages), illustrated with photographs from the Arctic, Antarctic and Scotland.

Available as a free download [here](#). If you would like a printed copy @£5 (p&p included), then contact me at james@fenton.scot



The full length edition is available from [Glacier Books](#)

Cairngorms self-catering accommodation:

Juniper Bank – self catering two bedroom cottage in Insh, between Kingussie and Glen Feshie near the Cairngorms. Sleeps 8. Please mention SAC when enquiring about availability and rates.

Susie.allison@gmail.com



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Election of a new Vice-President

At the Gathering later this year the Club will be looking for a new Vice President. In the interests of democracy the Committee would be happy to receive nominations for this position.

Please send any proposals for Vice President to the Club Secretary so that they can be considered at the next Committee Meeting in September.

President: Noel Williams Vice President: Anthony Walker

Secretary: Jinty Smart Treasurer: Mandy Peden

Membership Secretary: Jane Craxton Gathering Secretary: Bethany Carol

Other Committee Members: Mike Bauermeister, Louise Hollinrake, Hannah Mortlock,

Henry Lodge, Anne Bartle, Tuppence Mellish (co-opted)

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 website for an application form.

www.arcticclub.scot

Contacts:

Club Secretary: jintysmart@btopenworld.com

Newsletter editor: James Fenton

We are always on the lookout for articles: please send them to james@fenton.scot

