



Scottish Rights Of Way And Access Society

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24 Armandale Street, Edinburgh, EH7 4AN
www.scotways.com 0131 558 1222

Tom Hunter – a tribute

Our Life Member Tom Hunter, who first came up with the idea of the West Highland Way, died in February at the age of 90. A lifelong enthusiast for Scotland's countryside and for walking, Tom was so modest and reticent that he never sought and has rarely received the credit he deserves as the founding father of Scotland's best known footpath, which now stands high in the international ranks of long distance routes.



Tom spent his working life in organisational management with British Rail, but his ruling passion was always in exploring Scotland's countryside in all its facets. Inspired by the example of Tom Stephenson's Pennine Way, and seizing the opportunity presented by new powers for long distance routes in the Countryside (Scotland) Act of 1967, he led a group of walking friends in working up plans for a route from Glasgow to Fort William, to provide an experience in miniature of the best of our Scottish landscapes. In 1975 Tom then selflessly passed his concept and his notes to the Countryside Commission for Scotland, which progressively developed them into what became the West Highland Way. Commissioned by Constable to write a guide to the route, Tom had

to contend with the difficulty that some details of the Way were not yet finally defined – as indeed was still the case when the opening ceremony took place at Balmaha in October 1980, under a memorable monsoon deluge.

Tom and his wife Margaret, who shared his passion for Scotland's countryside and its conservation, were stalwart supporters of the Society and regular attenders at our AGMs. They were also long-term activists in the Glasgow Group of the National Trust for Scotland, and with the Scottish Countryside Activities Council. We mourn the passing of a quiet hero of Scotland's outdoors, and extend our warm sympathy to Margaret.

Bob Aitken



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Safeguarding access to the countryside for all