



ELLON HILLWALKING CLUB

Newsletter October 2012

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Programme:

Monday 8th October 2012

**Cycling the Canal du Midi – Barbara Wyatt
Station Hotel Ellon 20:00**

Sunday 14th October 2012

Geal Charn (Nethybridge)

Focal Pt Alan Murray (01224 865515)

Community Centre Car Park 07:30

Geal Charn (OS Sheet 36)

Mike Taylor

According to Drummond, (Drummond, 1991) there are 19 hills called Geal Charn (white hill) in the Spey and Laggan valleys – the only area in Scotland in which the word geal is used to describe hills. The fair, pale colour of these hills is a result of late-lying snow which prevents the growth of darker heather at the expense of the lighter grasses.

Four of these hills are Munros and two Corbetts. The one we are visiting this month, in Abernethy, is one of these.

Our route up the hill will depend on the state of the streams in the area as in wet weather some may prove impractical to cross. Whatever route we choose the starting point will be at Dorback Lodge which is reached via a minor road which turns off the link road between Nethy Bridge and the A939 Tomintoul to Grantown road.

The route which we would prefer to take involves dropping down to cross the Dorback Burn then working over towards the narrow pass of the Eag Mhor, which, I am told, is well worth a visit. From here we would go SE to the col to the south of Carn na h-Ailig then up Geal Charn. According to the SMC Corbett Guide 'the views Northwards are pleasing: the Hills of Cromdale, Ben Rinnes and distant Morven in Caithness'. This is about 7 Km with about 500 m of ascent and will probably take about 3 hours, as much of it is trackless. We could return to Dorback Lodge by reversing one of the two routes which follow.

The route recommended by the SMC Corbett Guide (Johnstone et al, 1990) is to cross the Dorback Burn and go to Upper Dell where a bulldozed track heads towards Geal Charn past a series of kettle lochs. This is 4.5 km with 450m of ascent – about 2 hours.

The wet weather route recommended is to follow the estate track up the Allt Mor as far as the watershed then climb SE to reach Geal Charn. This is 6 km with 450m of ascent – about 2.5 hours.

This walk should be suitable for any reasonably fit member of the hillwalking club. If you're going please let Alan Murray (01224 865515) know by Thursday 11 October.

Drummond 1991:

Scottish Hill and Mountain Names, Peter Drummond, SMC, Johnstone et al, 1990:

The Corbetts, S Johnstone, H Brown and D Bennett, SMC

Forthcoming Events

Oct 27/28th Sail Mhor Bunkhouse Weekend
Nov 18th Monamenach & Bar Supper
Dec 16th The Buck and Tap o' Noth

Cairngorm and Shelter Stone

Malcolm Leach

Our outing this month took the club on a fairly challenging walk involving about 1250m of ascent and while only covering a distance of 14km it would take us to a very remote area of the Cairngorms. Our starting point was the Cairngorm ski car park and after changing we set off up the track. This part of the walk was a bit of a slog up the steep track to the Ptarmigan restaurant. We decided to make a brief stop to use the facilities. This involved ringing the bell at the walker's door, signing the visitor's book, leaving our rucksacks in the designated area and before leaving signing out.

We continued to the summit and stopped at the weather station to get some shelter from the wind and have a quick snack.

The visibility had deteriorated and the GPS was switched on to confirm the route to follow to meet the path that would take us down the Allt Coire Raibert. We had been walking for less than 10 minutes when the visibility improved and the way ahead became clear. We soon reached the junction and headed down the east side of the burn along a good path which seems to have a good deal of work done to it, at least on the upper part. As we descended further the path became steeper and rocky but the ground was sound with no loose rocks. By now the sun was out and we were sheltered from the wind.

We then caught our first sight of Loch Avon simmering in the sunshine and then the shelter stone crag came into view. We crossed the burn and stopped to admire this wonderful location the loch with its beaches and the crags towering above it. We could see ahead the many boulders which lie below the shelter stone crag and made our way to them trying to decide which was the shelter stone. After missing the path we scrambled over some large boulders to the shelter stone. The small entrance could easily be missed and I did initially walk past it expecting it to be bigger. Inside the chamber is larger than we expected and you could see how this refuge could be very welcome in bad weather as any way out from here was going to involve a steep ascent and long walk.

This thought made us think of our return and after looking up at the path up the Allt Coire Domhain we decided to return the way we had come. We knew the path, although steep, was sound and would not present any problems.

We ascended the path back to the plateau and as the weather was still fine thought we would return via the Cairngorm summit as we had not had any views from there on the outward leg. We got back to the weather station and enjoyed excellent views in all directions. The wind was getting up and it was cold so we did not stay long and started on our decent following our outward route. We had some rain just below the Ptarmigan restaurant but this soon cleared and we arrived back at the car park just after 4.30. The walk had taken just over 7 hours and we agreed that this had been one of the most satisfying walks we had done taking us to a wonderful place.

October Bunkhouse Weekend 26-28

October Sail Mhor Croft Dundonnell

There are still some places left for our annual bunkhouse visit at the end of October. We are returning to Sail Mhor Croft at Dundonnell.

Sail Mhor is situated 1.5 miles west of Dundonnell on the A832 (GR 064893 on OS Sheet 19). We have booked the whole hostel for the weekend. It can accommodate 16 people in three dormitories. All bedding is provided and there are self catering facilities. There is a pub in Dundonnell which offers bar meals

If you want to go, please let me have £29, which is non returnable, by Monday 24 September. Please make cheques payable to Ellon Hill Walking Club and if you can't catch up with me in person send them to Loch an Eilein, Newmachar, Aberdeen, AB21 0UQ.

