



# ELLON HILLWALKING CLUB

## Newsletter April 2013

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**Programme:**  
**Monday 9th April 2013**  
**The Eiger – Beckoning Silence**  
**Station Hotel Ellon 20:00**

**Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2013**  
**Lochnagar**  
**Focal Pt Malcolm Leach (01358 723314)**  
**Community Centre Car Park 07:30**

### Lochnagar (OS Sheet 44)

#### Mike Taylor

The committee felt that another visit to this old favourite was due.

The gaelic name of this mountain was Beinn nan Ciochan, the mountain of the breasts, referring to the granite tors on its corrie rim. Lochnagar comes from the name of the lochan in the corrie below, Loch na Garr, the loch of noise or laughter. Gradually, over the years the loch 'ran uphill' displacing the summit's original name. This name change achieved the 'By Appointment' seal when Queen Victoria wrote in 1848 of the 'beautiful surrounding hills of Loch-na-gar' (Drummond, 1991)

References to the 'Mountain of the Breasts' go back a long way. In an atlas in 1654 it appears as Ben Chichues and over the years took various forms, for example, Binchichins and Benchinnans. One of the earliest recorded ascents of it was on 14 July 1810. One Rev. Keith (reverends got around in those days) measured its height as 3,800 ft (not bad) and after dining (sic) and admiring the view from the summit for three hours descended in thick fog 'our descent was accompanied by a number of awkward tumbles, and one of the gentlemen was rolled nearly 100 feet; but no accidents happened to any of us... After 12 hours absence, we returned...completely drenched with rain..' (Mitchell, 1998).

The usual tourist route up the mountain starts at the Spittal of Glen Muick. A rough private road goes 1.5 km NW to a burn, the Allt na Giubhsaich, beside a small shooting lodge. The path to Lochnagar starts at the bridge over the burn, goes through a plantation then curves above the dry gorge of Clais Rathadan to a col at 678m. The Lochnagar path, which used to be seriously eroded but is now a well constructed path, goes west here past a spring called the Foxes' Well to a col between the Meikle Pap and Cuidhe Crom. The summit path turns left to zig zag up 'The Ladder' before the col but it is well worth going on to have a look at the NE corrie with the dark Lochnagar below. The Ladder takes you up to the plateau and the route continues along the cliff top from where there are some magnificent views down and along the cliffs. The lower but larger of the summits, Cac Carn Mor (1150m) is reached first. There is a short stroll from here over to Cac Carn Beag (1155m). The indicator on the summit was built by the Cairngorm Club in 1924 and shows the wide range of hills, including Ben Nevis, which can be seen on the right kind of day. This walk is 9km long with 800m of ascent, 3-4 hours of walking.

The return is usually made via the Glas Allt past the waterfall to the Glas Allt Shiel, a lodge belonging to the Balmoral estate on the shore of Loch Muick. From there a walk along the northwest side of the loch is the route back to the carpark. The walk should take 6-7 hours and is suitable for any reasonably fit member of the club but after the weather we have had recently there could still be some snow around so it might take longer.

If you are planning to join the walk, please let Malcolm Leach (01358 723314) know by Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> April.

References:

Drummond 1991: Scottish Hill and Mountain Names, Peter Drummond, SMC

Mitchell 1998: Scotland's Mountains Before the Mountaineers, Ian Mitchell, Luath Press

### Forthcoming Events

May 18/19<sup>th</sup> Skye Weekend  
May 19<sup>th</sup> Mount Keen  
Jun 16<sup>th</sup> Carn an Righ  
Jul 14<sup>th</sup> Schiehallion

### Ailnack Gorge

#### Barbara Wyatt

There's the castle!!! - that "striking pinnacle of rock" as described by the SMC Cairngorms Guide.



*The Castle - Ailnack Gorge - Photo Les Pratt*

We'd plodged in a south easterly direction thru heather which was wrapped in snow, along undulating land rover tracks and paths, narrow in places too. We'd felt the sting of the chilly air and snow on our faces and tugged our feet up from our sunken snow steps along the way. How high up should we climb to relieve this drudgery? The sun had peeped at us at the start of the walk but had then snuggled down behind the snow clouds for the remainder of the morning. George raced along at full throttle as usual ..... Barbara asked him to ease the pace a bit ....

Seven of us had set off in two vehicles. Welcome Wilson - it was a bit cheeky of us to allow you to drive two of us to Dorback Lodge on your first outing. Please join us again; we should certainly enjoy your company. We didn't go down the snow riddled steep valley sides of Ailnack gorge to the icy water - was it flowing at all? That was far too uncomfortable a prospect. Nor did we see the waterfall shown on the map. We did sit and inhale the fine views of the gorge and castle and beyond as we munched away on our treats. Then we turned back towards the two parked cars and my thoughts skipped forward to the smell and taste of the fish and chip supper I'd ordered for all of us, for 5pm, at the Haugh hotel in Cromdale. We'd better hurry or we'll be late!

We climbed higher than on the inward trek and probably did ease the torment of the sticky snow and heather. We rejoined the land rover track; the sun accompanied us back. We arrived at the Haugh hotel shortly after 5pm (just a few minutes late) where a fire and the usual choice of drinks awaited us. There was even a pudding on the menu. Of special note was the dual role of the barman/chef ....one minute in his ordinary barman's clothing ....the next minute in his white chef's outfit....and so on! A warm finale to a chilly, but very enjoyable day's walking.

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## Tyndrum Bunkhouse Weekend

### Mike Taylor

The small group of six who took part in this weekend were cheered by the wonderful weather forecast but concerned that there might be so much snow around that we wouldn't be able to get to the top of anything.

Ingrid, Susan, Dan and I met Gordon and Kayleigh in Paddy's Diner in Tyndrum on the Friday evening to hear that they had had a wonderful day on Ben Vorlich. There had been a lot of snow about and it was icy on the top so they hadn't managed to go on to Stuic a'Chroin. We moved into the By The Way Bunkhouse which is quite comfortable - clean and warm with a nice kitchen/common room but with dormitories which don't have much space for anything but the bunks.

We decided not to be too ambitious. We would go for Munros which weren't too long a walk and had no sharp ridges or deep corries which could be difficult or dangerous in the snow. Ben Challum was earmarked for Saturday. We woke up to one of those beautiful winter mornings. The air was clear, the sky blue, the mountains white and there was no wind. After a short drive, we started our walk and were soon walking in snow. The scenery was magnificent. The lower ground was etched out by the patchy snow and the higher ground pure white. The big mountains to the south of us, Ben More, Ben Dubhchraig, Ben Oss and Ben Lui, were very striking. It wasn't easy going through the snow but there were people in front of us so we could follow in their steps. A lot of people had made the same choice of hill and about twenty of us were milling around the North Top at the same time along with a Labrador which didn't look very amused. The descent was quicker but hard on old legs!

Paddy's Diner provided us with food again, followed up with more refreshment and the very tasty cupcakes which Gordon's wife provides whenever he goes on a bunkhouse weekend. The clocks were to move forward in the middle of the night so we weren't too late to bed.

Meall Ghaordaidh in Glen Lochay was the choice for Sunday and the weather was still fine. It is about 900m of ascent in about 4km and I had climbed it a few years ago so I decided to explore Killin and its coffee shops and read the Sunday papers. The young folk had a fine walk and told me that I would have enjoyed the views of the Tarmachans and Ben Lawers. Dan very kindly produced an Easter Egg for everyone on the summit, which marks Gordon's half way point in his Munro adventure, I think, and brought mine all the way back to the car for me.

Good company, good weather, interesting walking, targets achieved - a wonderful weekend!

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### Skye Weekend May 18/19<sup>th</sup> 2013

The annual pilgrimage to Scotland's answer to the Alps is on May 18<sup>th</sup> / 19<sup>th</sup>. We have secured a limited (14) number of spaces at the Sligachan Bunkhouse (<http://www.sligachanselfcatering.co.uk/#/bunkhouse/4558326351>) at a cost of £16 per person per night - not including linen (i.e. you provide your own sleeping bag). These will be allocated on a first come first served basis with full payment required up front. This is not refundable unless we are able to re-allocate your space. Please send cheques payable to Ellon Hillwalking Club to Alan Murray, 2 Batchart Steadings, Aberdeen AB12 9LQ. Thanks

## 2013 EHWC Programme - Updated

Month	Date	Event*	Time	Focal Point
Jan	14 20	AGM & Tuscany – Allan Brown Monagowan	20:00 08:30	Irene Jamieson
Feb	11 17	Falkland Islands – Linda Davidson Morven from the west	20:00 08:00	Mike Taylor
Mar	11 17  29/31	St Kilda – Alan Donaldson & Charlie Allan Ailnack Gorge - The Castle - walk from Dorback Lodge & Bar Supper Bytheway Bunkhouse Tyndrum	20:00 08:00	Barbara Wyatt  Mike Taylor
Apr	8 14	The Eiger – Beckoning Silence Lochnagar	20:00 07:30	Malcolm Leach
May	13 18/19 19	Red Squirrel Protection or The Life of Guide? Skye Weekend Mount Keen	20:00 07:30	Alan Murray Irene Jamieson
Jun	10 16	Windy Hills (Fyvie) Evening Walk Carn an Rìgh	19:00 07:00	Malcolm Leach
Jul	8 14	Bennachie Evening Walk Schiehallion	19:00 07:00	Alan Murray
Aug	12 18	Railway Line Walk Jock's Road – through walk (taking in Tolmount and Tom Buidhe)	19:00 07:00	Gordon Spence
Sep	9 15	Cycling in Southern India – Barbara Wyatt Cairngorm and Ben Macdui	20:00 07:00	Gordon Spence
Oct	14 20 26/27	First Aid in the Mountains – Mike Taylor An Socach Loch Ness Bunkhouse Weekend	20:00 07:30	Malcolm Leach Mike Taylor
Nov	11 17	West Highland Way – Mike Taylor Cannes Glen & Bar Supper	20:00 07:30	Irene Jamieson
Dec	9 15	Christmas Party Cruithie Crom and Little Pap	20:00 08:00	Allan Brown

\*Please note that a number of the evening meeting events have not been agreed and are subject to change.