



# ELLON HILLWALKING CLUB

## Newsletter April 2014

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**Programme:**  
**Monday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2014**  
**Mountain Video**  
**Station Hotel Ellon 19:30**

**Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2014**  
**Mount Keen from Glen Esk**  
**Focal Pt Susan Robertson (07774 755440)**  
**Community Centre Car Park 07:30**

### Mount Keen from Glen Esk OS Sheet 44

#### Mike Taylor

The most easterly Munro, Monadh Caoin, gentle hill, is indeed a gentle, smooth mountain unbroken by any real cliffs.

Of the two main routes up Mount Keen, the one from Glen Esk is generally judged to be the more interesting. The route starts in the Car Park where Glen Esk divides into Glen Lee and Glen Mark (445803). Glen Mark is followed for just over 3km to the Queen's Well, a memorial commemorating Queen Victoria's crossing of The Mounth in 1861. A track is then followed up the narrow glen of the Ladder Burn out on to the open hillside. A little further on, the track forks. The Mounth road goes North and our track, slightly to the East of this, goes to the summit. There is a large summit cairn so even if it is misty we should know when we are there!

The walk is a total of 18 km with about 700m of climbing - probably 6 - 7 hours. It is straightforward without any steep climbs and should be suitable for any reasonably fit member of the club.

If you're going to join us, please let Susan Robertson (07774 755440) know by Thursday 17 April.

### Forthcoming Events

Apr 20 <sup>th</sup>	Mount Keen
May 17/18 <sup>th</sup>	Skye Weekend
May 18 <sup>th</sup>	Clachnaben
Jun 15 <sup>th</sup>	Cairngorm and Ben Macdui
Jul 20 <sup>th</sup>	The Eag

### Cromdale Hills Walk Report

#### Alan Murray

The weather forecast for Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> March was not too encouraging - threat of rain and high winds - but it should be an improving day. Despite this seven of us made our way in the minibus to Cromdale and met up with Susan there making a party of eight. The plan to call into Haugh Hotel and let them know how many we would be for a post walk bar supper ran into an issue immediately as the hotel was closed; but that was a problem for later in the day. Off we set up the road taking a detour to Lethendry Castle - the site of the Battle of Cromdale:

"Early on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 1690, under the cover of darkness, the government army of mounted dragoons, led by Grant guides crossed the River Spey. They by-passed guards in the vicinity of Cromdale Kirk and, upon the Haughs of Cromdale at Lethendry, made a surprise attack on the main body of the sleeping Jacobite army. Killing some 400 and capturing about 100, the Government troops forced the remainder to flee, many of whom were near naked having been compelled to abandon their plaids in the confusing circumstances. This complete rout ended the first Jacobite war in the Highlands and destroyed any chance of King James regaining the throne, occupied jointly by his daughter, Mary and her Dutch husband, William of Orange." (From the plaque at the location)

However, the actual castle was slightly disappointing being in an advanced state of dereliction and very much part of a working farm, so, having taken a walk round the crumbling walls (protected by fencing), we retraced our steps and set off along a landrover track round Claggersnich Wood hunting for the Piper's Stone where,

according to legend, Hamish, a wounded piper, managed to play a tune to try to rally the troops before dying. This was a slightly more impressive site and it was interesting to see that someone had left flowers in the recent past.

Then it was uphill to the ridge in a steadily increasing wind. We reached the Coronation Cairn, built to commemorate the coronation of Edward VII in 1902, and took in a grand view, including the ridge leading to the highest point on the ridge, Creagan a Chaise. Unfortunately the route was head on into a wind gusting in excess of 50mph; we decided this would be distinctly unpleasant and revised our plans. With the wind at our backs we headed northeast towards Carn Eachie and then dropped down to meet up with the Speyside Way before making our way back to the minibus in Cromdale. We arrived there a little earlier than we had anticipated and there was still no sign of life in the Haugh Hotel so we drove on to Aberlour and a very good bar supper in the Mash Tun. Although not the route or the bar we had planned, it was a good day in the hills rounded off with a very pleasant meal.

### Skye Weekend 16-18 May 2014

#### Mike Taylor

The annual pilgrimage to Scotland's answer to the Alps is on May 16<sup>th</sup> -18<sup>th</sup>. We have booked 12 spaces at the Sligachan Bunkhouse at a cost of £18 per person per night - not including linen (i.e. you provide your own sleeping bag).

<http://www.sligachanselfcatering.co.uk/#/bunkhouse/4558326351>

Spaces 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 for £36 payable to Ellon Hillwalking Club to Allan Brown, 8a Riverview Place, ELLON, AB41 9NW.

### Tyndrum Bunkhouse Weekend Report

#### Dan Carr

Seven perverse people arrived for the 2014 March bunkhouse weekend in April, returning to Tyndrum. Gordon, Kayleigh and Callum (Team Spence) had already put their heads in the clouds on Ben More and Stob Bennein during the Friday and enjoyed a warm, windless day on snow. Malcolm, Susan, Tony and I joined them at the Tyndrum Inn that evening for supper before repairing to the excellent By The Way bunkhouse to plan the weekends' activities.

The forecast being less than perfect we decided to postpone Ben Cruachan until the views could do it justice, and instead to head to the Bridge of Orchy on Saturday and help Malcolm with some unfinished business. Walking on the Sunday was deemed unlikely due to the forecast of high winds, low cloud and lashing rain (January's Mona Gowan was mentioned as an example of walking in the rain). Instead we wondered whether the Cruachan Dam might provide a fun (and dry) mornings entertainment. Saturday arrived, retaining the previous days cloudy nature but none of its underwear. Once we had broken fast we departed north and parked by the Bridge of Orchy hotel. The walk up to the bealach was quite straight forward, if slippery.

It was decided to walk to Beinn Dorain first as it was further away so south we headed, across snow and wet grass, constantly checking we hadn't lost anybody as we were soon in the cloud. We came upon a ridge with a cornice, but Team Spence had wisely taken the lead and their footsteps kept us well clear. After the first false peak ("no, we're not there yet") we dipped and rose to the true summit! Our efforts were validated!

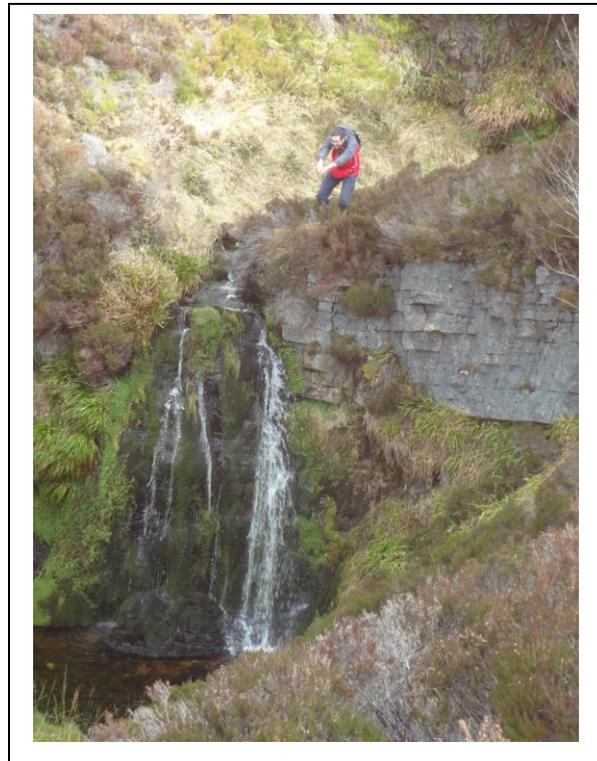
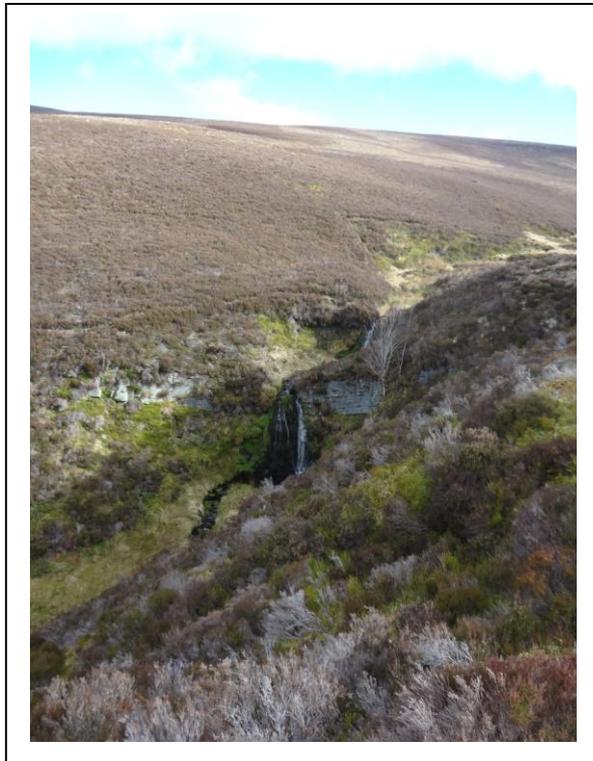
After some victuals we headed back to the bealach retracing our footsteps in the snow and started towards Beinn an Dothaidh. This was a shorter excursion with a short steep bit leading to a snow filled valley. At the head of the valley we headed left up the ridge and huddled round the summit for a club photo as proof. The wind had picked up so we decided to head back to the bealach before ingesting more nutrients.

After heading off ninety degrees in the wrong direction (my fault entirely) we crossed the ridge and headed down the correct valley, finding our footsteps again and then losing them on the rock, but finding the path anyway. I can't remember if it was here or further down that it rained briefly, but the rainy Mona Gowan was mentioned again in passing.

The last section to the train station seemed even slipperier and boggier than on the way up and much care was taken, especially by me as I wasn't wearing waterproof trousers.

After a quick shower we realised it was only five o'clock but with nothing else to do we headed to the pub anyway. Once again the food was excellent (apart from a meat surprise pasta) and we relaxed and passed judgement on the locals. Then we remembered we had plenty of alcohol at the bunkhouse so back we went for beer, wine, whisky, cheese, biscuits, fudge and cup cakes (thank you Mrs Spence!). Cue much reminiscing of fond hills and talk of starting a rainy Mona Gowan support group.

We finished off the weekend at the Cruachan Dam Visitors Centre, where the wonders of the dam are explained. Not only are most of the workings hidden in the mountain (an impressive excavation, almost 50 years old) but when demand is low excess power is taken from the grid to pump water back up the dam. A reversible hydro electric dam. And it is inside, as the ticket lady pointed out when she guessed we were fair weather walkers hiding from the rain. This led to mutterings of how there should be a certificate or medal for the survivors of rainy Mona Gowan. This report is dedicated to those nine brave souls.



*Cromdale Hills (Photos Alan Murray)*

