



ELLON HILLWALKING CLUB

Newsletter November 2014

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Programme:
Monday 10th November 2014
Another Six of the Best – Allan Brown
Station Hotel Ellon 19:30

Sunday 18th November 2014
Cairnwell Area Munros
Focal Pt Susan Robertson (01358 711242)
Community Centre Car Park 07:30

Ben Tirran (OS Sheet 44)

Mike Taylor

Ben Tirran is the highest point on the plateau between Glen Clova and Glen Esk. At 896m it is not far off Munro height; it certainly qualifies as a Corbett.

The start of the walk is at Wheen on the B9555 about 4 km east of the Clova Hotel. A track leads north, eventually becoming a footpath climbing up the side of the corrie to the east of Loch Whirral. This path peters out somewhat after crossing the burn at the top of the corrie and from here the highest point is about 1 km to the east and is called 'The Goet'. Ben Tirran itself is the slightly lower bump on the Clova side to the south west from which there is a grand view along Glen Clova.

The distance from Wheen to the highest point is 5 km with a climb of 650 m: 2-3 hours of walking. The return route can be made more interesting by going along the Craigs of Loch Whirral and down a path to the west of the loch. This is about 6 km so should take 1-2 hours making a total of about 5 hours.

This is a very pleasant, not too demanding, walk which should be suitable for any reasonably fit member of the club but do remember that winter weather is very likely in November so lots of warm clothes, good footwear and plenty food are essential.

A minibus has been booked for this outing and we plan to have a bar supper at the Finavon Hotel on the way home. If you intend to go, please text Susan Robertson (07774755440) by Thursday 13 November.

Forthcoming Events

Dec 14th Conachcraig
Jan 18th Ben Aigan

Cairnwell – Not Today

Irene Jamieson

Nobody reached for their packs but sat quietly in the bus looking out to fog, howling wind and rain. The suggestion of a lower level walk instead of the planned Cairnwell Munros was quickly accepted so it was down the road again to the Linn of Dee.

It was not cold but waterproofs were needed as 10 of us (including potential new member Hazel) set off along the road towards Mar Lodge. Mist clung to the tops but the autumn trees were afa bonnie!

We thought of trying a path through the hills which came out to Glen Quoich near the junction to Clais Fhearnaig but after a short way it disappeared. Due to weather conditions the favoured option was to stay on the road towards Linn of Quoich. Leaving the trees we chose the path which cut the corner away from the water, but a warning sign informed us of flooding farther on, indicating we may not be able to continue. It was now drier and the sun had come out so with renewed optimism all agreed to carry on until forced to turn. Some of us took off the waterproofs but that didn't last long! The river was fast and high and the flooding in the valley was quite spectacular but we felt quite hopeful, as the path remained stable for a good distance. Stopping for elevenses we were met by two walkers who had seen erosion farther on but were confident there would be a way round. The path did disappear into the water but we managed to climb up the bank then negotiate a short

boggy stretch of floodplain before rejoining a muddy but decent enough track along Glen Quoich.

After a few encouraging "just about 2kms to go", we passed the end of the track we had looked for earlier, then turned towards Clais Fhearnaig where a strong wind and heavy shower forced us to turn our backs to the weather to eat our lunch. We then made our way along the path, sometimes through running water, by the lochans. Weather conditions did not make for stopping long to admire the scenery as we descended to the comparative shelter of the Derry Lodge track. Fortunately the rain eased again to let us dry off slightly on our walk back to the bus.



It was then on to a busy Kinnord Hotel for some refreshment, fine to feel warm and dry again but having enjoyed a good walk through the hills.

Thank you very much to Mike for driving the minibus.

2015 Membership Card Photo Competition

Allan Brown

As you will all be aware the Club annual membership card carries a superb photo taken by one of our members from one of the club's walks. If you have an impressive, interesting or comical photo that you think is worthy of carrying on that tradition please send it to Allan Brown (allan.brown@tiscali.co.uk) in jpeg format. Allan will seek the services of an independent adjudicator to select the picture to be used for the 2015 membership card. There is, of course a prize; the winner will have the honour of their name printed on all of the cards acknowledging their skill and craft in being in the right place at the right time and having an eye for a worthy photograph.

Entry criteria: it is of an Ellon Hillwalking Club outing, stating the name of the photographer, the location and date the photo was taken. Photos from 2014 would be preferred but photos from other club outings can be considered.

The Walk to Easan Dorcha

Allan Brown

Having considered many variables Les, Malcolm and Allan B decided to take the easier option and take the relatively flat walk along Lochs Clair and Coulin and on up to the Easan Dorcha bothy. Heavy showers passed over several times throughout the day ensuring the waterproofs got a thoroughly good airing. However, between the showers the weather was quite fine and we even got our jackets off a couple of times.

The car was parked a few miles down Glen Torridon close to the end of Loch Clair. From there it was a gentle warming-up stroll along a tarred road towards Coulin Lodge, which separated Lochs Clair and Coulin. We noticed from the information board that the area was a favourite for anglers and canoeists as any gear that had been used abroad in the previous week had to have been sterilised before use. It is a good job swimmers were not included in their list! The tar became a forest road and then became a narrow footpath following quite close to the shore line. Several burns fed into the loch and would normally be a little hop to cross. However, with all the rain of the previous days they required a bit more than a hop, skip and a jump to reach the other side. After about two hours and two lengthy discussions about a gate with no fence and a venting tube rising out of a river, we took refuge under a sturdy bridge for a spot of lunch.

As the weather was sort of holding out and time was on our side we decided to continue beyond Loch Coulin and up the glen to the Easan Dorcha bothy. We passed a great long pile of felled logs and a highland cow with beautifully coloured hooves, curving stripes of dark brown and beige. A mile further on we joined up with the track from Achnashellach and then started to climb up the glen. The Gaelic term Easan Dorcha means dark waterfalls. Well, they were anything but dark. They were white with torrents of raging water. You could see why this was a favourite spot for kamikaze canoeists. It was a good job the bothy was empty as three was comfortable but four would have been cosy. It was not until we started out on our return journey that we discovered just how much we had climbed up the glen. With gravity and the wind in our favour we made it back to the car in under two hours. It was a super walk worth repeating on a dry day but after wet weather.

In spite of the dreadful forecast, all ten of us turned up at Ledgowan Bunkhouse near Achnasheen on a wet and windy Friday evening.

Ledgowan Bunkhouse Weekend

Mike Taylor

The three folk in Allan Brown's car had always intended to do a low level walk to the Easan Dorcha and Tea House Bothy. The rest of us had hoped to climb something but it was generally agreed that any attempt to go high the next day would be unsuccessful as winds up to 80mph were forecast. We decided a drive over the Bealach na Ba to Applecross and a walk up the River Applecross glen might be interesting.

The Bealach na Ba road is very spectacular: narrow and very steep in places with the sort of hairpin bends which have been removed from most roads for Health and Safety reasons! We also got some wonderful views, as even though it was windy and showery, it was still reasonably clear. We took morning coffee in the bar of the Applecross Hotel where we were visited by a local taking her morning dram and a large dog - very West Coast.

The walk was pleasant enough. We went along the glen and then found a small circuit of paths in the hills at its head. Fortunately, they are well used which meant the raging torrents we had to cross were mostly bridged. The weather wasn't too unkind to us. We were rained upon two or three times and towards the end of the walk found it difficult to walk in some of the gusts of wind - at sea level! We were puzzled to find a few stone slabs by the side of the track which looked like gravestones but had no marks on them. Most of them looked very new but one had been there a long time. The 'Scottish Hill Tracks' book says that this was an old coffin route used by burial parties going to the church at Applecross and a little googling told me that there are various cairns along the route which indicate where the procession would have rested and possibly drank to the deceased. Perhaps the slabs are marking graves of those who never made it to Applecross.

We had a good drive back using the new road around the coast then through Torridon where we had some good views of Liathath. We got back to the bunkhouse at dusk to find that the other party had also had a good day out.

We had an excellent bar supper in the hotel, followed by some merriment back in the bunkhouse which lasted a little longer than usual as there was to be an extra hour in the night. Many thanks to Susan, Gordon's wife, for the Hallowe'en cupcakes.

Sunday's weather was even worse than Saturday's so no walking was attempted. We didn't even visit the Falls of Rogie because we would have been soaked by the rain!

As always, the company and banter made for a good weekend even if the weather was a bit on the poor side.



North East Mountain Trust
Winter Lectures

**"Cairngorm John: A Life in
Mountain Rescue"**

John Allen

Wednesday 19th November 19:30

Sportsman's Club
11 Queen's Road Aberdeen
Admission £4



North East Mountain Trust
Winter Lectures

**"Book Launch: *The Great
Mountain Craggs of Scotland*"**

Guy Robertson and Adrian Crofton

Wednesday 26th November 19:30

Sportsman's Club
11 Queen's Road Aberdeen
Admission £2