



ELLON HILLWALKING CLUB

Newsletter December 2016

Secretary: Alan Murray, 2 Batchart Steadings, Aberdeen, AB12 5YQ. Tel: 01224 865515 email: alnj.murray@gmail.com

Programme:
Monday 12th December 2016
Christmas Social
Station Hotel 19:30

Sun 18th December 2016
Coyles of Muick
Focal Pt Allan Brown: 07745096919
Riverside Car Park 08:00

Bennachie OS Sheet 38

Mike Taylor

Bennachie is probably the club's most visited mountain; it is certainly our nearest. It can be seen from all over the North East and has a distinctive outline from whatever angle it is viewed. The origin of the name is much disputed but the favourite is that it is from *Beinn na Ciche*, Mountain of the Nipple or Breast - fairly obvious when you look at it!

It is really a ridge, about 5km long, with several tops. The highest is Oxen Craig at 528m but the most prominent is the Mither Tap at 518m. The views from the summit ridge are extensive: the rich agricultural land of the Garioch; the hills of Upper Donside; the Cairngorms.

There are various combinations of ascents and traverses. Some people may want to go over some of the tops but Allan Brown is willing to lead a tour around some of the more unusual aspects of Bennachie. This will start at the Rowantree car park and go round the eastern flank of Mither Tap taking in the Mill Lade, Canny Well, Bede and Fog Houses, Esson's Croft, The Colony, Bennachie Centre (toilets), Cup and Saucer Stone, the Graveyard and the Maiden Castle. It is a walk of about 3.5 hours along wee paths little used by the multitudes.

If you're interested in taking part in this walk, please let Allan Brown (07745096919) know by Thursday 15th December.

Forthcoming Events

Jan 9th AGM
Jan 15th Hill of Fayre

Coyles of Muick Walk Report - November 2016 Gordon Spence

Two cars of four left Ellon for Ballater on a very frosty but beautiful morning. After a toilet stop in Ballater we went in search of somewhere to park the cars. We were told at the Monday night meeting that the suggested route would not be possible as the bridge had been washed away and not yet been replaced, so, we decided to start from Glen Girnock instead. Once we had found a place to park and after getting the boots on decided to go straight up the hill and along the ridge and back along a track thus making it a circular walk. As it was -8, this proved a good way of getting the heat up but was not without its difficulties. For a start, we came to a deer fence and after following this for a little bit we noticed a gate back down the hill but as it was locked we had to climb. Once all were over we started up the hill again only to come to another deer fence a few meters up the hill with no sign of a gate or stile. We decided just to climb over then head up the hill making for Creag Phiobaith at the north end of the ridge, from here we had a great view down into Ballater. By now the sun was shining and we were all fine and warmed up. After a quick snack we headed off south along the ridge heading for the Coyles.

At first there was no path to follow, but after dropping down through heathery slopes we gained a good path up to the Coyles and the going became easier. We reached the next top in time for lunch. After lunch it was off to the Coyles and our last top for the day. Just 1 km away with a slight ascent on the way we came on a marker stone with the letter A on one side and the letter B on the other. We speculated that it could be a boundary marker but were not sure. We also found another one at the top, and after some inquiries at home, we were told that they were indeed boundary markers for Abergeldie and Balmoral Estates.

As we had plenty of time and the weather was so fine, we spent some time on the top, enjoying great views across to Lochnagar and down into Loch Muick. After a look at the map to pick the best way down, we headed off, making for the valley below and the track out. We knew we would have a stream to cross and there was what we hoped would be a ford, marked on the map. So, we were heading for that and on the way a repair was needed to one of the party's boot as the sole had come away - luckily we had a spare lace with which to fix it. On reaching the ford we discovered there used to be a bridge, but after looking around to see if there was an easy way across it, we decided to follow the stream down and find an easier place to cross, as it was too wide here. After another 1 km we came to a narrower bit with a couple of stepping stones and we all got across, mostly dry! Then up onto the track and a pleasant 3 km walk back to the cars, six and a half hours after we left. Then it was off to the Boat Inn, Aboyne for our supper and to reflect on what had been a great winter walk. Here's hoping there's more to come this winter!

Annual 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 on a Club walk. 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.broon@tiscali.co.uk) in jpeg format. Allan will seek the services of an independent adjudicator to select the picture to be used for the 2017 membership card. There is, of course, a prize; the winner will have the honour of their name appearing on all 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
- Photographer's name is given
- Location and date of the photo are given

Photos from 2016 would be preferred but those from earlier Club outings will be considered.

Coyles of Muick November 2016



(All photos Gordon Spence)

**North East Mountain Trust
Strategies for Successful Winter
Climbing
*Simon Richardson***

This illustrated lecture is the Aberdeen launch of Simon's new book *Chasing the Ephemeral-50 Routes for a Successful Scottish Winter*. Simon, one of the most prolific pioneers of new winter routes in Scotland over the past three decades, will explore the strategies (route selection; weather; conditions) and tactics (safe and efficient climbing) which increase the likelihood of success on routes of all grades.

**Tuesday 13th December 2016
Sportsman's Club
11 Queen's Road, Aberdeen
AB15 4YL
TIME 7-30pm**

ADMISSION (£4; members and concessions £2.00)

**NON MEMBERS WELCOME
www.nemt.org.uk**