



ELLON HILLWALKING CLUB

Newsletter August 2017

Secretary: Irene Jamieson, Mains of Leask, Slains, Ellon. AB41 8LA. irenemjamieson@hotmail.com

Programme:

No Monday evening meeting.

Sunday 20th August 2017

Creag Meagaidh

Focal pt. Tony Richardson: Tel. 07507 746124

Riverside Car Park 07.00

Creag Meagaidh Mike Taylor OS Maps 34 and 42

Creag Meagaidh (Crag at the Bog) is a complex mountain, taking the form of a flat summit plateau from which five ridges radiate, with spectacular cliffs surrounding Coire Ardair on the north-eastern face. It has several designations, testament to its diverse range of habitats and important features - National Nature Reserve (NNR), Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC). This has led to the control of the number of grazing animals which has led to a regrowth of the native woodland of birch, alder, willow, rowan and oak and the site is also an important breeding ground for many species of birds.

The walk starts at the car park at Aberarder off the A86 between Laggan and Spean Bridge, from where a track follows the Allt Coire Ardair up to Lochan a'Choire. From here it climbs steeply to a bealach known as The Window, a glaciated gap in the rock curtain. A couple of hundred metres through the bealach a faint zig-zag path leads up to Mad Meg's Cairn, a huge mound of earth covered in stones, which is often mistaken for the summit on misty days. According to local legend, this cairn marks the grave of an 18th Century suicide who was denied burial in the local kirkyards. Her family apparently buried her up here, high on Creag Meagaidh, covering her grave with stones and sandy soil. A little further on, after the final climb to the summit, is one of the best views in Scotland - on a good day.

The easiest return is by the same route, which gives a round trip of 18km with 880m of ascent. This is likely to be a 6/7 hour day at our usual walking speed and the walk should be within the capabilities of a reasonably fit hill walker.

If you're interested in taking part in the walk, please let Tony Richardson (07507 746124) know by Thursday 17 August

Forthcoming Events

Sept. 11th talk by NEMT
Sept. 17th Little Glas Maol to Cairn o'Claise
Oct. 9th TBC
Oct. 15th An Socach
Oct 28th/29th Sail Mhor Dundonnel

October Bunkhouse Weekend. Mike Taylor.

This year we are returning to one of the club's favourite bunkhouses – Sail Mhor Croft Hostel at Dundonnell : www.sailmhor.co.uk.

We first visited here over 30 years ago. It is still run by the same couple and has been very well-maintained. We are hoping for a good turnout and that some of the more senior members of the club might feel inclined to join us. We could have a good weekend of reminiscing and there are plenty of interesting low level walks nearby. We have booked the entire hostel (16 beds) for the nights of Friday 27 and Saturday 28 October. The cost for the weekend will be £40 per person. There are lots of interesting mountains nearby: An Teallach, Beinn Dearg, The Fannichs and many more.

If you would like to join this club weekend, please let MikeTaylor(lochaneilein@gmail.com), know as soon as possible. Payment, which is non-returnable, is required by September 22nd, at the latest.

Please make cheques payable to Ellon Hill Walking Club and if you can't catch up with Mike in person send them to Loch an Eilein, Newmachar, Aberdeen, AB21 0UQ.

Tiso promotion

Extract from Tiso email introducing their Boot Club – (details below), also highlighting that EHWC members are entitled to 10% off all purchases including sale items and special orders.

“Tiso Aberdeen are pleased to introduce our new Boot Club. Boot Club will give your members an opportunity to make use of our specialist fitting service to get the best out of their existing boots, wherever you bought them. Our staff will refit your boots, make any modifications necessary and provide tips on maintenance with no charge for our time or labour. In addition, we will provide advice on socks, insoles and all the other accessories that complement your boots. We will also offer a discount on any professional repairs that your boots may require.

In short, Boot Club will do everything possible to maximise the comfort and performance of your boots.

Our specialist staff are always on hand but Boot Club will be our focus between 5pm and 7pm on a Thursday and 3pm and 5pm on a Sunday.”



Cairn Toul. Dan Carr.

Seven souls met in July with the intention of heading up Cairn Toul. We had one new face and the weather forecast was dry and breezy, so we had walked in worse.

True to forecast, at the Linn of Dee car park there was more than enough wind to keep the midges away. On meeting two cars on the track to Derry Lodge we wondered if the hostel/café/whatever was open yet, but it's still got all the anti vandal shutters up.

The walk to the Luibeg Burn was uneventful, and we detoured up to the bridge to cross it, as it's no fun falling in at the start of a long day. As we came round the south of Cairn a Mhaim we were rewarded with fine views of the glen and the bothy. At least we knew we were in the right glen! We could see a tiny bit of cloud clinging to Cairn Toul but it soon dispersed. When we got to the bothy we stopped for something to eat and then headed straight up into the Coire Odhar.

The sudden inclination highlighted the differing abilities of the group and the walk started to resemble the Tour de France, with some competitive sportspersons forming a breakaway from the peloton and others dropping off the back. Gus and I decided to sit in the sun and take photos for a while. Taking a leaf from Nan Shepherd's book *The Living Mountain*, we decided not to fight the environment but enjoy it. The journey is as important as the destination and all that. The wind had died, the sun was out and we had a great view of The Devil's Point. Once we were back at the bothy we started to speculate how the others were faring.

We were a bit surprised to see a lone walker descending the path nearly an hour after us. Kat had fallen behind the other four but had made it to Cairn Toul, then turned back when she couldn't see the others.

Reasoning that they must have carried on to The Angels Peak we tried to estimate how much longer they would be, but it wasn't long before we saw some people coming down. Keith's (new guy) white shins were visible from afar and we could make out Emma and Irene, but what of Neil? Had he carried on to Braeriach? No; the visibility was excellent so they'd all decided to go at their own pace and Neil came down not long after. Some expressed their relief at having done Angel's Peak,



Cairn Toul and Devil's Point and so would not have to make this pilgrimage again. We headed back out of the glen, powered by liquorice allsorts and team spirit.

At the Luibeg Burn we skipped across the stones this time rather than go all the way to the bridge and back, as time was getting on. Then we crested the rise and could see the Lodge (yay!) and the bog just to the west of it (boo!). I wish they'd put down duck boards or something there.



Photo - Dan Carr

At the Lodge we sat on the large log and posed for a photograph, and then set out on the last three miles. The wind died away once we crossed the bridge a mile north of the Linn of Dee and the midges harried us as we de booted.

As it was late we decided to just head straight to Ellon as most people were working the next morning.

All in all it was a really good day. The weather was pleasant, as was the company, and I had a very relaxing time in the hills, which is not always the case 😊