



# ELLON HILLWALKING CLUB

## Newsletter August 2018

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

### Programme:

**Monday 13<sup>th</sup> August 2018**

No evening meeting

### Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> August 2018

Through walk - Lairig Ghru

Leave from Riverside CarPark 07.00

Focal Point – Ingrid Taylor 07870 469653

### August Walk Lairig Ghru Mike Taylor OS Sheets 36 and 43

This walk, through what is probably the best known pass in Scotland, goes through the very heart of the Cairngorms and a rich variety of mountain and woodland scenery.

Rothiemurcus Forest on the Aviemore side is one of the finest natural forests in Britain and the pass itself carves a deep, distinctive 'V' in the great masses of Braeriach and Ben Macdui.

The name is thought to come from Drudhadh which means oozing. Presumably this refers to the oozing of the water from the ground at the Pools of Dee just before the summit which used to be called Lochan Dubh na Lairige – black tarn of the pass. At least one of these pools is reputed to contain trout in spite of these pools having no obvious outflow, nor inflow.

Historically the Lairig Ghru has been used simply as a route between Deeside and [Strathspey](#). It is often referred to as a [Drove Road](#), and while it's not wrong to do so, this over-emphasises one specific use. The Lairig Ghru has been a route used by many different people, for many different purposes and was in regular use long before the height of the droving trade in the more peaceful times after the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

One interesting feature on the walk is a group of ribbed stones called Clach nan Taillear on the east side of the track shortly after you turn north into the pass. Literally "stone of the tailors", it is named after certain tailors who for a wager attempted to dance, during the hours of a winter day, at the "three Dells" - the Dell of Abernethy, the Dell of Rothiemurchus and Dalmore in Mar. They danced at Abernethy and at Rothiemurchus and had crossed the most exposed miles of the Lairig when a blizzard overtook them in Glen Dee, and they succumbed as they vainly sought shelter behind the stone that is their memorial.

The walk is 28 km long with a total ascent of about 800m. It is likely to take between 8 and 10 hours.

We will start at the Linn of Dee and finish at Whitewell (GR 916 086). This is a demanding walk so anyone taking part needs to be prepared for a long day out.

We have a minibus arranged which will leave the Riverside Car Park in Ellon at 07.00, drop walkers at Linn of Dee and then be driven around to pick everyone up at Whitewell.

If you want to take part in this walk please get in touch with Ingrid Taylor (07870 469653), as soon as possible. The bus will cost £20 per person and numbers are limited to 12.



Photo Richard Paton

### Forthcoming events

Sept.10 – Cambodia – Allan Brown

Sept.16 – An Socah Glen Cluny

Oct 8 – Via Ferrata – Tony Richardson

Oct14 – Ben Rinnes

Oct 26/28 – Corran Bunkhouse Fort William



Loch Morlich - Richard Paton

## Ben Macdui Walk Report - Alan Murray



*Photo Richard Paton*

It was a very healthy turnout for July's Club trip to Ben Macdui. Eleven of us travelled in the Ellon minibus and three members travelled independently and met us at the Cairngorm carpark including one lapsed member who flew in from Houston especially to join us (at least that's what he said!) It was the Club's first use of the Ellon minibus after long negotiations with the Academy committee that manages it to get permission at a reasonable cost. It's quite a new vehicle with lots of warning systems which caused some frustration on the outward journey; the 'rear door open' buzzer kept going off on right hand bends despite several stops to ensure that it was properly closed (a rucksack pressing against the door may have been the culprit).

One of the drawbacks of the Ellon minibus is that an additional (local) licence or a full blown bus licence is required to be able to drive it; currently Mike Taylor is the only Club member who can do so as he has a bus (PCV) licence and he had volunteered to be the driver for the trip. Given that it was an early start, a long walk and five hours or more driving Mike had decided not to join the main group but to go on a shorter walk and build in a recovery snooze for safety's sake. As I was recovering from a chest infection and still wheezing a lot I joined him for a more leisurely day. So as the main group headed off to Macdui, we made our way to the café!



There is an excellent path from the carpark so the Macdui group made good progress up towards Lurcher's gully with the northern corries to the group's left. The path became less distinct just as the group entered the cloud; however, there is a series of well spaced cairns marking the way so the summit of Macdui was reached without problem.

*Photo Richard Paton*



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*Photo John Biggins*

Meanwhile Mike and I had torn ourselves away from our morning coffees and decided to do a circular route up to the summit of Cairngorm using the so-called “Windy Ridge” path up Sron an Aonaich to the Ptarmigan lodge then up the roped off highway to the summit. From there we headed off using map and compass in the mist towards Fiacail a Choire Chais picking up a well worn path as we came out of the boulder field. An easy and well worn path then took us back to the carpark in plenty of time for a rest before the drive home.

The others had decided to split up once they reached Macdui with five opting to return the way they had come and the remaining seven heading across the plateau to Cairngorm summit before descending via the Windy Ridge path. The Cairngorm contingent reached the Ptarmigan lodge just as it was closing and Kat had to use all her powers of persuasion to gain access to the toilet; the rest of the group weren't allowed in – yet another example of the operators' customer friendly attitude.

Once all the different groups had reassembled we set off home with a refreshment stop at the Mash Tun in Aberlour to reflect on a great day out in an amazing mountain environment which is only a couple of hours away – how lucky we are!



*Photos John Biggins*