



ELLON HILLWALKING CLUB

Newsletter August 2014

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Programme:
Monday 11th August 2014
No Monday Meeting this Month

Sunday 17th August 2014
Lairig an Laoigh
Focal Pt Ingrid Taylor (Text to 07870 469653)
Community Centre Car Park 07:00

Lairig an Laoigh OS Sheet 36 and 43

Mike Taylor

This is a wonderful Cairngorm through walk linking Speyside to Deeside. It is less well-known than the Lairig Ghru, which does the same job, but just as interesting. It is an old drove road which would have been one of the arteries of the droving trade and, when droving was at its peak, must have seen thousands of cattle passing every year. The meaning of its name is disputed by the experts: some say it means Pass of the Calves, as it is easier than the Lairig Ghru, but the favoured meaning is that it is the Pass of the River Lui, which is nearby.

A minibus will deliver those walking to Glenmore Lodge where the walk starts. This will then be driven around to the Linn of Dee to pick everyone up a few hours later.

At first the walk passes through some woodland, much of which is natural pines and birch, and then goes by the side of the Lochan Uaine, which gets its green colour from the local fairies washing their clothes in it - this is the only explanation you'll get from locals! The track continues through the Ryvoan Pass after which you take the right fork signposted for Braemar. After a couple of kilometres there is a bridge across the River Nethy where there used to be a corrugated iron hut called Bynack Stable. The path now climbs to the highest point of the route at 790m with extensive views of the Abernethy Forest and Speyside as you climb. Keep left at the fork on the way up as the right fork goes up to the summit of Bynack More. Some of the party may want to make a detour to climb this which would add about 300m of ascent but not much distance.

The track goes up and down for the next 6km before descending to the Fords of Avon. Even if the weather has been dry you are unlikely to get across without wading; if there has been a lot of rain, it can be impassable. The very small Fords of Avon refuge is worth a look.

The path now climbs through the Lairig an Laoigh itself to the second high point of the walk at about 740m. After this it descends into Glen Derry and there is another potentially problematic river crossing at the Glas Allt Mor. After a beautiful walk through the Derry Woods, Derry Lodge, is reached. This was built by the estate in Victorian times and was used as a base for shooting parties. Sadly, the impressive building, which, like the rest of the estate, now belongs to the National Trust for Scotland, is boarded up and unused at present.

From here a land rover track, through Glen Lui following the Lui Water (origin of Lairig an Laoigh?), is followed to the car park at the Linn of Dee.

The walk is 29km long with a total of about 700m of ascent - probably 9-10 hours of walking. This is a long walk and anyone taking part needs to be prepared for a long day out.

If you're interested in taking part in this walk, please let Ingrid Taylor know by texting her on 07870 469653 by Thursday 14th August at the latest. This could prove to be a popular walk so places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

Forthcoming Events

Sep 14th Carn Ban Mor and Sgor Gaoith
Oct 19th Cairnwell Munros (x3)
Oct 25/26th Ledgowan Bunkhouse Weekend

The Eag

Dan Carr

In the end three people set off for a nice relaxing Sunday river walk. After dropping a car off in Tomintoul we headed over the Lecht and parked by Corgarff Castle. Although there was quite a lot of cloud cover it didn't look threatening so we headed west along the Don in good spirits.

There is a smooth if unexciting road that leads past the steadings in the valley and we quickly reached the bottom of Creag Veann. The land rover track curves round the south side of the hill and then suddenly changes into an intermittent deer track. We alternated between following the path when we could see it, contouring and just plain heading for the notch in the ridge, all the while enjoying the great views of the Cairngorms to our left.



The Eag - Photo Dan Carr

We ended up hitting the ridge to the right of the notch as we had been following a path, but our progress was halted by a new looking fence. The path continued, ignoring the lack of a stile or gate, so the fence is a recent addition. Checking to see it wasn't electrified we clambered over and down into the Eag (like a natural railway cutting) to have something to eat. I wandered back up to the ridge and found a stile hidden in a dip complete with yellow "warning electrified fence" signs hanging on the wire! Luckily it hadn't been switched on yet!

We made our way down into the Burn of Little Fergie and onto another smooth unexciting road, this one running beside the river Avon. As we were making good time and the sun had come out we sat by the river for a bit and talked of many things... Rocks, mainly.

Still time and firewood wait for no man so we set off north towards Tomintoul. On the way out you pass through the black gates of Birchwood which do not advertise the fact members of the public are allowed beyond. The lack of "keep out" signs is as inviting as it gets I guess.

After one or two ups and downs and an unusual amount of road kill for such a quiet track we neared the end of the walk. We decided to skip going up to the Queen Victoria viewpoint as the chances of seeing her were slim and instead headed back to the car.

All in all a nice walk along quiet tracks (we didn't see anybody else until the very end) with some route flexibility in the middle.

