



ELLON HILLWALKING CLUB

Newsletter December 2014

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Programme:

Monday 8th December 2014
Christmas Social
Station Hotel Ellon 19:30

Sunday 14th December 2014

Conachcraig
Focal Pt Allan Brown (01358 722438)
Community Centre Car Park 08:00

Conachcraig (OS Sheet 44)

Mike Taylor

This is a hill which is passed on the way to Lochnagar. It lies on the west side of Glen Muick and is quite prominent in a number of well-known views of Lochnagar from Deeside.

According to my book on names (Drummond, 1991), the meaning of the prefix con- is together or with. The many Cona Mhealls (or Conivals) are basically shoulders of bigger hills i.e. 'cona' (joined on); 'meall' (used to describe a lump of a hill). Conachcraig is, therefore, likely to mean joined on to the crags - of the bigger mountain of Lochnagar.

The route follows the Lochnagar path from Spittal of Glenmuick past the rocky gorge of Clais Rathadan to the 700m col where the Lochnagar path branches off to the left. The summit of Conachcraig is a short climb NE from here. The walk is about 5km with 470m of climbing - just over 2 hours. The Corbett guide (Johnstone et al,1990) points out what is obvious from the map; the highest point at 865m is not the point named by the OS as Conachcraig at 850m, 1km NE of the true summit.

Rather than simply retracing our steps on the return, a traverse of the summit ridge can be made along to the 850m point and then down the east ridge of Caisteal na Caillich to a col at Carn na Daimh. From here a route SE down the hillside will take us back to Allt na Giubhsaich and Spittal of Glen Muick (1-2 hours). This gives a total time for the walk of about four hours.

If you're wanting some exercise before the inevitable over indulgence of the Festive Season then this walk will be ideal for you. It should be suitable for any reasonably fit member of the club but remember it can be very cold in December so wear warm clothes and bring plenty of food. If you want to join us please call Allan Brown (01358 722438) by Thursday 11 December.

References:

Drummond 1991: Scottish Hill and Mountain Names, Peter Drummond, SMC

Johnstone et al, 1990: The Corbetts, S Johnstone, H Brown and D Bennett, SMC

Forthcoming Events

Jan 18th Ben Aigan

Ben Tirran

Alan Murray

The day started well with a coffee stop at the Finavon Hotel; we had popped in ostensibly to put in our orders for the post walk bar supper but, given that we were there and it wasn't too long a walk, why not have a coffee? Some people even had a fine piece - well, it had been hours since breakfast!

Finally we tore ourselves away and headed off up Glen Clova. The first problem was to find somewhere to park; this was made worse by there being two possible options for the start of the walk. However, the forestry work at the start of the western path convinced us that the other path was better - and there was a place to park within a couple of hundred metres of the path start.

The weather was cloudy but fairly dry and the path was good all the way up to the loch (Loch Wharral) where, much to our surprise there was a relatively recently constructed stalkers bothy. Unfortunately, it was secured with a combination lock - but maybe it was an obvious

code? As one member took a look at the lock (no names) another one sighed audibly and pointed out that although there was a padlock it wasn't actually obstructing the operation of the bolt - a quick flick of the wrist and the door was open! The wood burning stove wasn't on but, apart from that, it was a most comfortable place to stop for a quick snack. Well done to the person holding the door in the photo below for his observation skills!

The summit was still waiting, so we headed outside and up the hill on a less well defined track to the cairn at Ben Tirran and off again into the mist to the summit trig point of The Goet. The weather was closing in so it was off again heading widdershins, as opposed to dieseil, which was the source of a fair amount of discussion - so to, hopefully, clear things up here's the Wikipedia definition of Widdershins:

Widdershins (sometimes withershins, widershins or widerschynnes) is a term meaning to go counter-clockwise, to go anti-clockwise, or to go lefthandwise, or to walk around an object by always keeping it on the left. i.e. literally, it means to take a course opposite the apparent motion of the sun viewed from the Arctic Circle, (given the centre of this imaginary clock, is the ground, the viewer stands upon). It is cognate with the German language widersinnig, i.e., "against" + "sense". The term "widdershins" was especially common in Lowland Scots.

And from "Stack Exchange":
<http://english.stackexchange.com/questions/60703/etymological-origin-of-deosil-and-widdershins> :

Before clocks were commonplace, the terms "sunwise" and "deiseil" and even "doecil" from the Scottish Gaelic language and from the same root as the Latin "dexter" ("right") were used for clockwise. "Widdershins" or "withershins" (from Middle Low German "weddersinnes", "opposite course") was used for counterclockwise.



So there you are!

As we made our way widdershins around the corrie of Loch Wharral it started to rain, so it was head down across the boggy bits until we hit the path back down towards our outgoing track at the nice new bothy. After another quick snack inside we made our way down and back to the minibus.

Malcolm then drove us back to the Finavon Hotel (thanks for driving Malcolm) where we had a fine bar supper served very efficiently; a great end to a good walk.

2015 Bunkhouse Weekend

The committee have investigated the possibility of booking the SYHA hostel at Loch Ossian for a Club weekend. As we will have to book the whole hostel we need to ensure that we have 20 people interested to cover costs. This will be about £60 per person for the 2 nights - a little pricier than our normal bunkhouse but it's a unique and magical place. Please let Mike Taylor know as soon as possible if you would like to join us so that we can make an informed decision as to whether we go ahead.

Club Donation

The Club has a tradition of making a donation each year to a charity associated with local hillwalking interests. In the past we have given donations to, among others, local Mountain Rescue Teams, the Mountain Bothy Association, National Trust for Scotland and the John Muir Trust. This year we have agreed to give £100 to COAT - the Cairngorm Outdoor Access Trust - to help repair eroded paths in the Cairngorm National Park. As regular users of paths there we felt it was right that we take the opportunity to give something back.

There is more information on the COAT website from where I have taken the following:

"The Cairngorm mountains are a place of incredible natural beauty and diversity. This area attracts visitors from all over the world. Almost all the paths are now suffering from some level of erosion. The erosion is caused in part by walkers, the Scottish climate and a lack of resources to carry out essential footpath maintenance."



COAT can plan the on-going maintenance and upkeep of mountain paths. Without regular maintenance footpath erosion can become severe and access becomes restricted. In some cases mountains now bear deep and very wide erosion scars. A maintenance programme that repairs stonework and re-surfaces paths will consolidate erosion and encourage re-vegetation."

We hope you will agree that this is an appropriate and worthwhile charity for the Club to support.



North East Mountain Trust
Winter Lectures

"Scottish Winter Climbing"

Simon Richardson

Wednesday 10th December 19:30

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