



ELLON HILLWALKING CLUB

Newsletter March 2013

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Programme:

Monday 11th March 2013

St Kilda – Alan Donaldson and Charlie Allan

Station Hotel Ellon 20:00

Sunday 17th March 2013

Ailnack Gorge Castle from Dorback Lodge

Focal Pt Barbara Wyatt (01651 862234)

Community Centre Car Park 08:30

Ailnack Gorge Castle from Dorback Lodge (OS Sheet 36)

Mike Taylor

The finest gorge in the Cairngorms is that of the Water of Ailnack. Along a 9 km section of valley lie three gorge sections, each with a slot-like canyon set within steep valley sides cut into schist and smooth pelite. The power of water flow through these canyons at high flow is huge - sufficient to move boulders up to 1 m long. Water levels rise rapidly in response to rain in the headwaters of the Water of Caiplich. (From a website on Cairngorm landscapes). The Ailnack Gorge is particularly striking as it runs through surrounding countryside which is gently undulating and devoid of crags.

The club has walked in this area a few times but has not always managed to reach 'The Castle' at the head of the gorge - a striking pinnacle of rock whose summit you can easily reach from the neck connecting it to the steep hillside behind (SMC Cairngorms Guide).

This time we will start from Dorback Lodge (GR 077168) rather than our usual starting point at Tomintoul. The road to Dorback Lodge is signed for Dorback from the A939 Grantown-Tomintoul road. At the very end of the public road is a large turning area with a no parking sign, but it should be possible to park carefully without obstructing the turning circle in any way.

We will follow the Land Rover track which goes south east from the Dorback Lodge area towards the Ailnack Gorge. This becomes a footpath a km or two from the gorge - exactly where depends on which map you look at! Exploring the gorge and finding the castle should be interesting. The route to and from the gorge from Dorback is fairly undulating. It is a round trip of about 18km with a total ascent of around 600m - about 6 hours. Given reasonable conditions, this walk is well within the capabilities of any reasonably fit member of the club.

We will stop for a bar supper on the way home - probably at The Haugh in Cromdale.

If you plan to go, please let Barbara Wyatt (01358 711733) know by Thurs 14 March.

Forthcoming Events

Mar 29-31st Tyndrum Bunkhouse Weekend

Apr 14th Lochnagar

May 18/19th Skye Weekend

May 19th Mount Keen

Morven – A New Route

Alan Murray

The Club has climbed Morven many times in its 34 year history but always from the east; a new approach was suggested to get us out of old habits - go west - or, at least start from the west.

Ten Club members duly met up at Lary to the north west of Ballater and, after a bit of shuffling of cars to get everyone into the parking space, we set off at a fairly brisk pace up the snow covered track. That pace soon settled down as we slipped and slithered a bit on the slippery surface but we made steady progress north towards Morven Lodge - a fairly impressive clutch of buildings, even from a distance. Shortly after turning right off the Morven Lodge track we encountered a small hindrance but splashed across the burn only to realise it was a small tributary of the main burn a few metres further on. However, some kind soul had

improvised a bridge from an electricity pole and, one by one we shuffled across only pausing to admire the sign nailed to the pole warning us of "Danger of Death"! - a welcome thought as we balanced precariously over the fast flowing burn



Crossing the Burn (All Photos Gordon Spence)

The Taylors decided on a more direct wading approach and Dan ran across the pole but all arrived safely at the other side. From there it was a straightforward walk gaining height slowly but steadily at first before heading up the hill on a secondary track towards the misty summit. Mike's weather planning had, however, paid off - the cloud parted as we arrived at the summit to give us glorious views across Deeside and Donside.



It was bitterly cold though and we didn't linger long on top before retracing our steps. Right on cue the cloud rolled back in as we headed down - a superb bit of timing on our part.

The return journey gave us much softer snow and significantly less snow on the lower parts of the track, but also a much higher and swifter flowing burn to cross. There were more folk opting to wade this time - only 30 minutes of wet feet to suffer - and Dan impressed us all again with his run across the pole. Then it was an easy walk back to the cars and home with the customary stop - this time at the Loch Kinord Hotel for various refreshing beverages and a bit of shortbread in some cases. It was a classic winter's day walk and an interesting way to climb Morven - no doubt to be repeated.

2013 Subscriptions Now Due

if you haven't yet renewed your membership subscription please send a cheque for the appropriate amount (£15 for an individual, £30 for a family and £1 for juniors) made payable to Ellon Hillwalking Club to Allan Brown at 8a Riverview Place, Ellon, AB41 9NW as soon as convenient. Many thanks.

St Kilda Presentation 11th Mar

Alan Donaldson and Charlie Allan

This month's evening meeting at the Station Hotel is a presentation from Club members, Alan Donaldson and Charlie Allan, on a trip they made last year to St Kilda - and amazing archipelago of islands in the Atlantic, 40 miles west of Benbecula. It is the remotest part of the British Isles, with exceptional cliffs and sea stacks forming the most important seabird breeding station in north-west Europe. The evacuation of its native population in 1930 brought to a close an extraordinary story of survival.

Do come along to the Station Hotel on Monday 11th to hear and see more of this unique place.

Skye Weekend May 18/19th 2013

The annual pilgrimage to Scotland's answer to the Alps is on May 18th / 19th. We have secured a limited (14) number of spaces at the Sligachan Bunkhouse (<http://www.sligachanselfcatering.co.uk/#/bunkhouse/4558326351>) at a cost of £16 per person per night - not including linen (i.e. you provide your own sleeping bag). These will be allocated on a first come first served basis with full payment required up front. This is not refundable unless we are able to re-allocate your space. Please send cheques payable to Ellon Hillwalking Club to Alan Murray, 2 Batchart Steadings, Aberdeen AB12 9LQ. Thanks

2013 EHWC Programme

Month	Date	Event*	Time	Focal Point
Jan	14 20	AGM & Tuscany – Allan Brown Monagowan	20:00 08:30	Irene Jamieson
Feb	11 17	Falkland Islands – Linda Davidson Morven from the west	20:00 08:00	Mike Taylor
Mar	11 17 29/31	St Kilda – Alan Donaldson & Charlie Allan Ailnack Gorge - The Castle - walk from Dorback Lodge & Bar Supper Bytheway Bunkhouse Tyndrum	20:00 08:30	Barbara Wyatt Mike Taylor
Apr	8 14	Via Ferrata – Heather McCabe? Lochnagar	20:00 07:30	Malcolm Leach
May	13 18/19 19	West Highland Way – Mike Taylor Skye Weekend Mount Keen	20:00 07:30	Alan Murray Irene Jamieson
Jun	10 16	Windy Hills (Fyvie) Evening Walk Jock's Road – through walk (taking in Tolmount and Tom Buidhe)	19:00 07:00	Malcolm Leach
Jul	8 14	Bennachie Evening Walk Schiehallion	19:00 07:00	Alan Murray
Aug	12 18	Railway Line Walk Carn an Righ	19:00 07:00	Gordon Spence
Sep	9 15	Cycling in Southern India – Barbara Wyatt Cairngorm and Ben Macdui	20:00 07:00	Gordon Spence
Oct	14 20 26/27	First Aid in the Mountains – Mike Taylor An Socach Loch Ness Bunkhouse Weekend	20:00 07:30	Malcolm Leach Mike Taylor
Nov	11 17	Wildlife Protection Cannes Glen & Bar Supper	20:00 07:30	Irene Jamieson
Dec	9 15	Christmas Party Cruidhie Crom and Little Pap	20:00 08:00	Allan Brown

*Please note that a number of the evening meeting events have not been agreed and are subject to change.