



ELLON HILLWALKING CLUB

Newsletter November 2011

Secretary: Alan Murray, 2 Batchart Steadings, Aberdeen, AB12 5YQ. Tel: 01224 865515 email: alnj.murray@gmail.com

Programme:

Monday 14th November 2011

**Geysers, Mountains and Arches from
Yellowstone to Moab – Allan Brown
Station Hotel Ellon 20:00**

Sunday 20th November 2010

**Mount Blair and Duchray Hill
Focal Pt Alan Murray (01224 865515)
Community Centre Car Park 07:30**

Mount and Duchray Hill (OS Sheet 43)

Mike Taylor

These two hills can be climbed together from the high point on the B951 road which connects Glen Shee to Glen Isla.

Mount Blair (Hill of the Plain) has been reported as a favourite of Sir Hugh Munro, probably because it is a wonderful viewpoint. It has a long history with prehistoric sites, some famous wells and a suicide grave reputedly under the summit cairn. There are also some legends associated with it. One of these is about a giant called Colly Comb who lived in a cave on the south slope of mountain. At times he went into great rages, picked up large rocks and threw them at people in the glen below. The Gled Stane and Sow Stane are two of these rocks. He was finally stoned to death by a band of locals for robbing from their corn mill. After this nobody went near his cave for a long time but two brave men eventually plucked up sufficient courage to explore it.

After some time their voices were heard from underground about two miles away from the cave and they were never seen again!

The OS map has a path up Mount Blair starting from the road at GR157643 but this is not mentioned in either the SMC 'Corbetts and Other Hills' or A Dempster's book on the Grahams. If we go up from this point, with or without path, the round trip is about 3.5 km with 380m of ascent – 2 hours at the most. The summit has a telecommunication tower, trig point, large cairn and circular stone viewpoint – sounds quite crowded!

Duchray Hill is also called Mealna Letter on the OS map but I could not find a meaning for either of these names anywhere. The suggested route up from the road is first to the edge of the forest at GR157658 and then to follow a stone wall over Cairn Derig to the summit. The round trip is about 6km with 340m of ascent – 3 hours at the most. A minibus has been booked for this outing and we will stop at the Boat Inn in Aboyne on the way home for a bar supper.

This walk should be suitable for any reasonably fit member of the club but it is winter, so take plenty warm clothes including hat and gloves, full waterproofs and plenty food. If you want to join us please let Alan Murray (01224 865515) know by Thursday 17 November

Forthcoming Events

Dec 12th Christmas Party
Dec 19th Craig nan Gabhar
Jan 9th AGM

Kinlochewe Bunkhouse Weekend

Mike Taylor

The weather forecast for the weekend wasn't great but seven folk turned up at Kinlochewe bunkhouse on the Friday evening. Three of us, Gordon, Ingrid and I, came via the Munro *Moruig* and the demoted Munro *Sgurr nan Ceannaichean*. We had a good day. It was a bit windy but was clear and not too cold. As there were only seven of us in the bunkhouse, we could use the two lower bunks of the sets of three and didn't have to use the 'bunks in the sky'.

On Saturday we all set out on a circular route to climb the two Munros on *Beinn Eighe*. My car was placed at the end of the walk and Malcolm's at the car park at the start. We had a very pleasant walk around the back of *Liathach* – impressive as ever – and up into *Coire Mhic Fhearchair*, which has to be one of the most impressive corries in Scotland. After some discussion, it was decided to take the direct route up to the summit of *Ruadh-stac Mor* rather than walking through the corrie and up what looked like a much eroded track to a bealach then back to the summit. The weather, however, was worsening. The wind seemed stronger here and it was starting to rain. After climbing for a while and stumbling around on very shoochy rocks, Ingrid,

Margaret and I decided we would go down. We reckoned it would only get worse as we climbed and we didn't fancy the walk along what was promising to be a very windy ridge. We would return to the cars by the outward route and walk along the road to my car. Half an hour later we saw the party of four on the hill split into two. Two were continuing up and two following us down but we couldn't make out for certain who was doing what.

It was quite a long, but not unpleasant walk, back to the car park but the 2 km along the road back to my car was a bit of a trial. As we approached the car we could see two figures coming off *Spidean Coire nan Clach* and they looked like Gordon and Barbara. They arrived a couple of minutes after we reached the car at the same time as Malcolm and Les appeared along the road in Malcolm's car. Perfect timing! Gordon and Barbara confirmed that it had been windy on the ridge but they had had a good enough walk.

A very pleasant evening was spent eating in the Kinlochewe Hotel and sampling the very good selection of whiskies in the bar. This was followed by sampling our own wine and whiskies in the bunkhouse and an extra hours sleep.

Gordon and Ingrid climbed *Moal Chean-dearg* on Sunday while the rest of the group, apart from their chauffeur, made their way home.

All in all, a fine weekend.



En route to Beinn Eighe; Picture Barbara Wyatt

2012 Hillwalking Programme

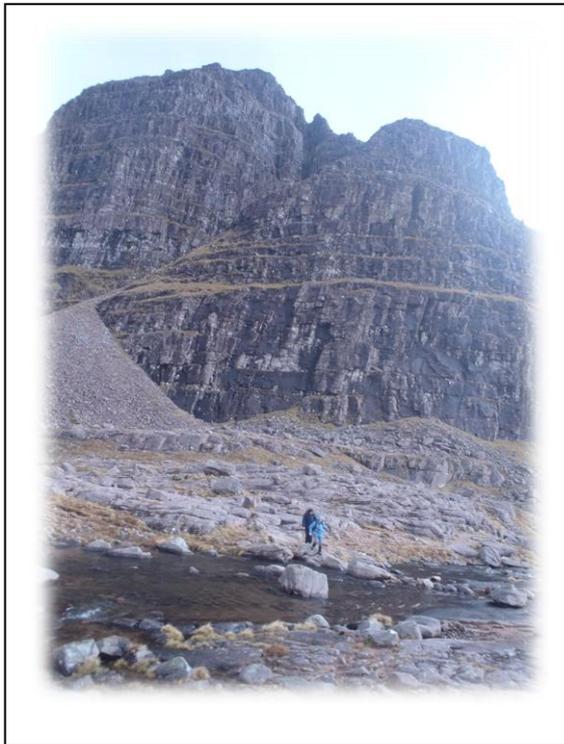
The committee is busy putting together the walks and talks programme for next year; if anyone has any suggestions for walks they would like to do, or talks that they could give (or know of someone that could give an interesting talk), please get in touch with any member of the committee as soon as possible.

2012 Membership Card Photo – Competition

As you will all be aware the Club membership card now carries a superb photo taken by one of our members – usually from one of Club walks of that year or a previous year. If you have an interesting or impressive photo that you think is worthy of carrying on that tradition please send it in to Allan Brown (allan.broon@tiscali.co.uk) in jpeg format or hand in a copy at a forthcoming meeting. Allan will seek the services of an independent adjudicator to select the picture to be used for the 2012 membership card. There is, of course, a prize involved; the winner will have the honour of their name on the card acknowledging their skill and craft in being in the right place at the right time and having an eye for a beautiful photograph.



Barbara on the summit of Beinn Eighe



Coire Mhic Fhearchair



All Photos Barbara Wyatt