

Ptarmigan Hillwalking & Mountaineering Club



Website: www.ptarmiganmc.org.uk

Monthly Newsletter

April 2024

The Meet on Sunday 7th April is to Fersit/Tulloch

DETAILS OF THE MEET

The bus will leave Waterloo Place at 07.30 going via Shandwick Place (bus stop opposite Boots), Haymarket, Roseburn, Drum Brae, Forth Bridge, Perth, Pitlochry and Dalwhinnie with a comfort stop at Pitlochry. The bus is estimated to arrive at Fersit at 10.45 approx. and will park for the day at the hillwalkers' car park at the end of the public road

The bus will leave Fersit at 17:30: Bus convener: Alistair Haig 07402 580588 (Be sure to have that number with you on the hill)

Bookings and cancellations: Email bookings@ptarmiganmc.org.uk

Maps required: OS 1:50 000 Sheets 35 Kingussie & Monadhliath Mountains; 41 Ben Nevis, Fort William & Glen Coe; 42 Glen Garry & Loch Rannoch area.

The fare will be £25 and, while cash can be taken in the bus, it would be preferred if you could pay by bank transfer IN ADVANCE of the outing. The day before is fine. Please pay to:
PTARMIGAN MOUNTAINEERING CLUB (note name is not yet changed); 80-17-68; 00248765

Full buses - priority for members

For the first time in ages we had a waiting list for the March bus. We already have 28 booked for the April bus which may again be full and there may be more full buses over the summer. We have always welcomed guests on our outings and our insurance with Mountaineering Scotland's allows guests to join us on up to four trial outings without having to join as members. Where buses have not been full we have had no problem but with the increased competition for places the committee feels that fully paid up members of the Club should have some priority over non members coming along as guests. With effect from the May bus priority will be given to Club members, including members of the associated Highways Hillwalking Club, who put their names down not later than the Saturday two weeks before the outing. Non members who have put their names down before then will be allocated any available places on a "first come first served basis" with, if necessary, a ballot among those putting their names down at the same time - for example on the preceding bus. Within the two weeks before an outing members and/or guests will be allocated any available places in the order in which they apply without prioritisation. This arrangement will not affect the April bus.

Bus departure times - a reminder

We always aim for our buses to leave Waterloo Place promptly at 07:30 am on the day of an outing. It is difficult to predict the times at which the bus will arrive at other pick up points which will depend on traffic, any roadworks etc but the roads are usually very quiet at that time of day. We have a note of who is due to be joining the bus at Waterloo Place and the other pick up points. If anyone is missing, the bus will usually wait for two minutes at any pick up point but will not normally wait for any longer than that."

Members are reminded that the mountains are now in full winter mode. Ice-axe and crampons must be carried if you're walking above the snow-line.

Route Options

Munros

Stob a' Choire Mheadhoin, 1105m, NN316736; Stob Coire Easain, 1115m, NN308730. Access: Fersit, NN350782. Doing these two Munros together is an option **for fast parties only**. If you're not returning by the long ascent route (3 hours), use the NW ridge from Stob Coire Easain into Coire Laire glen, then return via the marked 'dismantled tramway'; or reascend above the forest by Creag Fhiaclach (6 hours walking without stops). There is a track into Coire Laire beyond that marked on some OS maps. A direct return from Stob Coire Easain to Loch Treig is NOT recommended.

Stob Coire Sgriodain, 979m, NN356743; Chno Dearg, 1046m, NN377741. Access: Fersit, NN352781

Beinn Teallach, 915m, NN361860; Beinn a' Chaoruinn, 1052m, NN386851; Access: Roughburn, NN377813

Creag Meagaidh, 1128m, NN418875; Carn Liath, 1006m, NN472903; Stob Poite Coire Ardair, 1054m, NN428888. Access: SNH car park at Aberarder

Beinn a' Chlachair, 1087m, NN471781; Geal Charn, 1049m, NN504812; Creag Pitridh, 924m, NN487814. Access: Luiblea, NN433831

Corbetts

The Fara, 911m, NN598843 may be combined with the Graham, Meall nan Eagan (see Grahams below)

Grahams

Cnap Cruinn, 742m, NN302774

Binnein Shuas, 747m, NN463826; Binnein Shios, 667m, NN492857

Both these hills are outstanding viewpoints. Binnein Shuas has a specially recommended, scrambly summit with one of Scotland's best summer-climbing crags.

Meall nan Eagan, 658m, NN596874: a 'rather retiring' hill above Strath Mashie which may be combined with The Fara or accessed by a track (starting at NN636858) which follows the Allt an t-Sluic shortly after the bend in General Wade's road heading north from Dalwhinnie.

Low Level

Kinlochlaggan to Dalwhinnie: bridge over the River Pattack 1.5km east of Kinlochlaggan (at NN555897), then due south following the river, then east to Ben Alder Lodge and north-east along Loch Ericht to Dalwhinnie (23km). Or in the other direction; or a shorter section there and back from either end.

The through walk via Lochan na h-Earba through remote scenery and native trees is highly recommended.

***The Club's Code of Good Practice* notes that parties should comprise two, preferably three, people and those members must have a map of the area and compass and know how to use them. A first aid kit, survival bag, whistle and torch should also be carried. The group should stick together and be alert for signs of anyone feeling unwell or getting into difficulties. For those members who have one it does no harm to carry a mobile phone, though it is important to understand that there is no guarantee of signal availability and this should never be relied upon.**

***Disclaimer:* The routes outlined above are merely descriptions of walks in the area; they do not represent invitations or recommendations by the Club or any of its Officers to members to go on these routes. It is the individual and sole responsibility of each club member to choose a route that is within their capability taking due account of the timings given and the weather conditions prevailing.**

'Everyone should be aware that the Scottish hills can provide more challenging days than the height and

distance alone may indicate. Preferably robust boots should be worn and clothing worn or carried suitable to deal with wet, windy and cold weather at any season. A change of clothing in the bus is also advisable too. See additional advice for winter conditions.'

WhatsApp Group

You are reminded that we have now set up a WhatsApp group to enable members to exchange plans for the day in advance which may take some pressure off the bus convener. If you have not already joined and would like to do so, please email this link will allow you to join: <https://chat.whatsapp.com/G1wg91LQctt7M5X46SN0Q7>

Highways Hillwalking Club

For many years we have had an informal association with the Highways Hillwalking Club in terms of which our members are welcome as guests on their outings and vice versa without restriction of the number of such outings that can be attended. The HHC operates a programme very similar to ours, also using MacLeod Coaches, but usually on the second Sunday of the month. The combined programme for both clubs can be found in the Meets section of our website and full details of the HHC including how to sign up for their outings are available at their website: <https://sites.google.com/site/highways3102/home> "

What we did last month

Victoria Bridge, Stob a' Choire Odhar and Beinn Toaig

Douglas Tullis writes: There were 11 of us still on the bus at the car park at Victoria Bridge and it is fair to say there was still some uncertainty as to which hills were to be done – the tops were in cloud and there had been a significant recent snowfall above 700m or so which looked fresh. We all set off at 10:30 along the Abhainn Shira river, turning north up the Allt Toaig at the Green Bothy, a former schoolhouse now used by Glasgow University Mountaineering Club.



The Stob a' Choire Odhar group: Pictures by Douglas Tullis

Fiona decided fairly early on that she would stay at low level and walked back to Bridge of Orchy. Tim and Norman decided to do Stob Ghabhar going up Coire na Muic past the waterfalls descending via Clashgour. The remaining eight of us - Andy and Jock (both on their first outing with the Club which we hope they enjoyed), Anya, Lewis, Lynn, Michael and Victoria and I decided to head up to the bealach and do Stob a' Choire Odhar (945m). We had noticed a RAF Mountain Rescue vehicle at the car park and met up with them at the bealach before they set off up the Aonach Eagach – it's a feature of getting older that they appeared incredibly young! We then headed upwards and were soon above the snowline - lovely soft new snow of varying depth and with variable visibility. Sadly no view from the summit and we decided to head for Benn Toaig (834m) dropping down to get out of the cold wind for our lunch stop.



Lunch with a view: Picture by Lewis Tattersall

With plenty time in hand we descended eastwards to return to Victoria Bridge via the West Highland Way. I'm not sure if I was the only one to notice it but the stony surface of that stretch of the WHW did not make for easy walking in the stiff boots I was wearing in the expectation that we might need our crampons. But we were all back at the bus by just after 17:00.

Alistair Haig

Beinn Mhanach from Bridge of Orchy (Kat and Alistair)

I had this hill in mind for a summer day on a mountain bike. Somehow it came to mind as target for a snowy day. Getting up the Auch Glen in winter could be tricky due to river crossings. So access via the Beinn Doran path made more sense. The path up to the bealach was clear of snow and we climbed towards the snow clad towers of Beinn Dorain and Beinn an Dothaidh, their summits disappearing into a white cloud layer.

Over into the glen skirting B and D, we took a line with a gentle decline. This minimised haggis walking for much of the way in. That is until the slope steepened just above the snow line and here there were a few little slips on the soggy moss. Meeting the Auch Glen track required crossing a burn; this was negotiated without wet feet.

The Track soon petered out and we took a bearing to ascend Beinn Mhanach, gently crunching up a layer of snow, probably more than 20cm deep yet not too problematic except for a few drifts. The dome-shaped hill presented a sequence of blind summits. Finally, after over three hours walking we reached the cairn in clear skies. This Munro is lower than most of its neighbours & happily the cloud level stayed just above us almost the whole day and we had views of Rannoch Moor dappled with sun, east down Glen Lyon and south to Tyndrum and the auch viaduct.

Sunday Lunch: Picture by Alistair Haig



After a quick lunch we commenced the decent, retracing our footsteps. Descending the snowy cone was fairly easy and it took barely 30 mins to get down what had been 90 mins up.

The Glen had thawed slightly and we had a better line up towards the Bealach so progress was good even at a more leisurely pace than our outward leg. The decent to Bridge of Orchy was slower though as the snow had now been packed by footsteps. Spikes were useful for a short section. We had been warned that this was a long route for these conditions and that we wouldn't have time for a pint. This was indeed the case as the bus was already en route from the Forest Lodge. A half was made to do.

PHMC outing 3 March 2024

Eleven of us (Alex, Lesley, Elsa, Sheona, Jo, Graham, Ewan, Emma, Pete, Coney and myself) decided to tackle the Graham, Meall Tairbh and its neighbour Ben Inverveigh heading south from Inveroran Hotel. There was light rain falling as we set off which stopped almost immediately and we had a clear ascent of both hills, although we could see that potential Munroists were going to be in cloud on the tops for most of the day.

It's a longish slog up the northern slopes of MT but we had plenty of time available to allow everyone to catch up as we gathered for rest and coffee stops. Having set off at about 10.20, we arrived at a snowy summit somewhat over two hours later and descended an awkward slope covered in loose snow to the col where we took lunch.

A further ascent of 110 m brought us eventually to the second summit, which gave good views all around with a clear snowline visible on the neighbouring hills. The descent caused some of us problems, some much more than others, for which I, as the person in front, own up to. We should have continued along the ridge a little further but I'd been fooled by misidentifying the edge of the forest above Bridge of Orchy, where the WHW enters or, should I say, entered, as a large section had been felled since my map had been printed. Well, Elsa and I enjoyed it anyway.

After a series of explorations, climbing of a deer fence for some and phone calls up the hill, those further back found the correct path and got through the gate onto the short section of WHW back to the welcome delights of the Bridge of Orchy hotel bar.

Many thanks to those (they know who they are) who gave additional help on the descent. (Richard Love)

And finally, a few pictures from the Ben Challum group.

Top: Pictures by Catherine Clay



Below: Pictures by Richard Bennett

