

Ptarmigan Hillwalking & Mountaineering Club



Website: www.ptarmiganmc.org.uk

Monthly Newsletter

February 2024

The Meet on Sunday 4th February is to Glen Doll (Glen Clova)

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, Queensferry Crossing, M90, with a comfort stop at Kirriemuir, to arrive at Glen Doll Car Park around 10.15.

The bus will leave Glen Doll at 16.00 prompt. Bus convener: Alistair Haig 07402 580588

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

Main map required: Map required: OS 1:50 000 Sheet 44 Ballater and Glen Clova

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

For those without access to this facility, please post a cheque payable to the club to Justin Elliott, 16 Carlton Street, Edinburgh EH4 1NJ.

Subscriptions

The subscription is unchanged for the coming year and payment is now due. The subscription is £30 for an individual or £50 for two members at the same address which includes membership of Mountaineering Scotland, to which we are affiliated. For those who already have membership of Mountaineering Scotland there is a reduced subscription of £17.50. For non-walking associate members the annual subscription is £10 with no membership of MS. Payment should be made by bank transfer to our bank account 00248765 and sort code 80-17-68 giving the reference SUBS SURNAME.

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

Dreish, 947m, [NO271736]

Mayar, 928m, [241738]

Access: bridge over the White Water at [276763]

Tom Buidhe, 957m, [213787]

Access: summit of Jock's Road

Broad Cairn, 998m, [240815]

Access: though 7 miles distant, it is reachable via Bachnagairn up an excellent approach track.

Corbett

Ben Tirran (The Goet), 896m, [373746]

Access: [353715], just past Wheen on the B956 on the east side of Glen Clova. A return via Loch Brandy to the Clova Inn is recommended. This ancient hostelry used to boast that it was the only pub in Scotland to mix (Loch) brandy with its whisky!

Low Level

Jock's Road: an ancient trading route between Glen Clova and Braemar, which was the subject of a famous court judgement. In 1888, a Scot, Duncan Macpherson, who had made his fortune in Australia, bought the Glen Doll estate and tried to close it to the public. The Scottish Rights of Way Society took him to court and proved that Jock's Road had been a trade route over many years. The legendary Jock was a local shepherd who had taken refuge in a bothy on the pass after an altercation with Lord Aberdeen, then owner of the estate.

A most enjoyable expedition is to link the two glens of Doll and Clova via Loch Esk, a hidden jewel tucked into the landscape, but on a windy day it's no place to shelter, or as John Brown (Queen Vic's ghillie) once remarked, "There's no' a quiet place to hae yer piece".

A number of paths go up the east side of Glen Clova from Ween and Clova to the hills and lochs above the glen.

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 secretary@ptarmiganmc.org.uk with your mobile number and **you** will be sent a link.

What we did on the last meet

Angie Main writes: A nice big group of intrepid Ptarmigan walkers got dropped off by Jim at the lovely start of the walk in Dollar Glen. It was to be a day in the wonderful Ochils - a perfect spot for winter as it is a short drive from Edinburgh. The weather was fine if a little on the cold side.



We all wandered up the Glen with Douglas telling us a fabulous story about Castle Campbell on the way up when we stopped to admire the view and take a nice group photo. The path joined the road for a short part here and some young lads were struggling to work out how they'd get back down the slippery road they'd just driven up. Some parts were a bit icy!

Ptarmigans in Dollar Glen: Pic by Douglas Tullis

A little further up groups split off to take in slightly alternative routes in the Ochils. The day was clearing nicely with pretty white paths through the hills emerging!



A rather gloomy looking Castle Campbell & the memorial to 2 Spitfire pilots killed during WW2: Pics by Colin Shepherd.

One group decided to head towards King's Seat while the other headed towards Saddle Hill (1716 feet). The hills had a nice coating of icy snow and the ground felt really hard! Emily and Angie fell behind a little but managed to find Agnes' bank card which had fallen out of her pocket so she was delighted to be reunited with it later in the day! Layers were put on slowly after the initial climb up as the temperature dropped a little on the top. On reaching Saddle Hill a smooth walk took us to White Wisp then Andrew Gannel Hill (2198 feet). On googling Andrew Gannel Hill to find out to whom this hill owed his name I came upon this explanation "**Andragannel** is a hill which overlooks the Gannel Burn - from the Gaelic 'An Sruth Gainmheil' - the sandy bottomed burn -(Tillicoultry Glen) /OR the Gannel

Burn and Andragannel might be named after a man who lost his life thereabouts about 1860, but many people dispute this. We called it Andragannel then. Nowadays it is marked on the OS map as Andrew Gannel Hill." At this point we met the second hill runner of the day. It did seem a top spot to run some trails!

Whitewisp Hill: Pic by Douglas Tullis



We then did the final pull up to Ben Cleuch (2365 feet) where we met some of the others. Some were coming back down via The Law (2093 feet) and others were doing a roundabout route via Ben Ever (2041 feet). Agnes was delighted to be reunited with her bank card at this point. It felt quite cold up at the Cleuch so we decided to head a bit lower down for some late lunch, having had snacks earlier in the day. The descent via The Law is pretty steep and we skirted the main path which has some hard snow to find better grip by the sides. We then took the path which skirted the hillside rather than the riverside path and got back to Tillicoultry just a little while before the bus left. Others made it back a bit earlier and so had some

time for a pint in the Woolpack. Another fun day in the hills was had by all!



The Ochil Hills: Pictures by Angie Main & Viktoria Nemeth

Early winter

We've become used to milder later winters recently, so it was a pleasant surprise to have a truly icy, wintry day in the hills, albeit with little lying snow where we were. Sixteen of us all set off from Dollar, having to divert from the Dollar Glen path, because of a broken bridge I think, to take the metalled road to Castle Campbell car park. We passed a car half way up which appeared to have ground to a halt on the thin layer of frozen snow and further on Douglas regaled us with tales of what is sometimes known as Castle Gloom, where his brother had once been the custodian for Historic Scotland.

At this point we split into two groups, the larger group of seven continuing up to Whitewisp and Tarmangie Hills, while my group (Lesley, Colin, Alex, Elsa and me) wended our way inexpertly round the circuitous paths skirting Dollar Glen. We unintentionally (and sorrowfully) got ourselves onto the wrong side of the Burn of Sorrow before finding a route which led to a bridge which led us back onto our intended route up Kings Seat Hill. From there we made steady progress, eventually passing the memorial Douglas had told us about to three Commonwealth Spitfire pilots who had crashed near the top in 1943. Two had been killed and the other had managed to crawl down to Dollar with a broken leg: some feat, let alone on a cold January day.

We arrived at the first summit after two hours, where there was some shelter for a quick coffee stop, before continuing to the other top, maybe slightly higher. My hands had got extremely cold and had to be held next to my body alternately till they warmed up again and thereafter were fine. We had spotted the larger group on the ridge of Tarmangie Hill and duly met up with them at the summit of Andrew Gannel Hill, where they were waiting for two of their party (Angie and Emily, who were apparently taking many photos) to catch up. However, before they arrived, we duly carried on as a larger spread out group to Ben Cleuch, where we lunched and admired the views through fleeting mist. Some of the group opted to descend by a route over Ben Ever while six of us took the tried and tested route down The Law, having ascertained that the rocky section above the bridge at the bottom was ice free. The final section along Gannel Burn over many bridges was open this time, although the path had washed away at one point causing us a descent onto the water's edge. Most of us got down to The Woolpack pub shortly before 3.00, which gave us time for a drink or two before Jim returned with his bus to get us back before 5 pm. (Richard Love)



The Woolpack inn: Picture by Douglas Tullis

Programme for 2024

- 3 Mar Forest Lodge - Bridge of Orchy
- 7 Apr Fersit/Tulloch
- 5 May Glen Falloch
- 2 Jun Linn of Dee
- 7 Jul Ben Lawers (see below)
- 4 Aug Glen Etive (see below)
- 1 Sep Coire Cas
- 6 Oct Tyndrum
- 3 Nov Trossachs (High Tea at Lade Inn, Kilmahog or in Callander)
- 1 Dec Campsies

Note: It is possible that Jim's bus may have problems with the Glen Etive and Ben Lawers roads and we are awaiting confirmation. If so we will substitute Rannoch for July and Kinlochleven/Glencoe for August.