

Ptarmigan Hillwalking & Mountaineering Club



Website: www.ptarmiganmc.org.uk

Monthly Newsletter

February 2026

The Meet on Sunday 1st February is to Balquhiddel

DETAILS OF THE MEET

The bus will leave Waterloo Place at 07.30 going via Shandwick Place (bus stop opposite Boots), Haymarket, Roseburn, PC World & the M9: (Comfort stop Callander.) Then onto Balquhiddel.

Bus convener: Morbhen MacRath 07411 626919

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

Main map required: OS 1:50 000 sheet 57, Stirling and the Trossachs & sheet 51, Loch Tay.

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

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

Ben Ledi, 879m [562098] can be reached from the cycle track from Kilmahog and the Stank glen, although this approach could well hold ice and névé on approach to the summit ridge. It can also be done from a mile or so along the Loch Venachar road and from Brig o' Turk taking in Stuc Odhar first. Fast parties can carry on to Ben Vane, 818m [535137] before descending to Balquhiddel through Glen Buckie.

Heading north along Glen Lubnaig, the Corbett Beinn Each, 811m [602158] can be climbed via Glen Ample, with the possibility of reaching Stùc a' Chroin, 972m [617174] for fast parties, but careful timing would be required. On return it would be preferable to return to the ascent point below Beinn Each then up over the bealach of the Graham Sgiath a' Chàise (also an objective) and descend to Strathyre or Kingshouse (Mhor hotel) via forest tracks rather than a return to Glen Ample.

From Strathyre itself the 573m hill Beinn an t-Sidhean (hill of the fairy knoll) [547179] can be climbed. Traverse the wee ridge and descend by the forest edge to the south River Balvag road, where there will be ample time to explore

the paths around Balquhidder further, Loch Voil from Stronvar being well worth it for the views and/or the Manse Rock viewpoint (see below).

From Balquhidder itself the Graham Creag Mhor, 657m [511185] and the rarely climbed remote Corbett Ceann na Baintighearna (The Queen's Head) 771m summit [474163] can be climbed from the Bealach Drisheag above south Loch Voil, returning the same way, as a return to Glen Buckie is made annoying by the barrier of a very high deer fence.

From Kirkton Glen (past Rob Roy's Grave and Balquhidder church) the Corbett Meall an t-Seallaidh, 852m [542234] can be climbed. The best approach is to pick up the faint but waymarked path from Kirkton Glen forest path, shortly after the initial steep ascent levels off (if this is missed then take a right at the next junction). This takes you up to the Manse Rock (aka Creag an Tuirc, or crag of the boar) for one of the finest viewpoints in the Southern Highlands, not to be missed. Returning to the main track by the edge of the forest, followed by an initially very steep grassy hillside (this is the Braes o' Balquhidder after all!) which eases off under a higher crag, take a rising ascent to the summit, using the occasional old fence post as a guideline. From Meall an t-Seallaidh (hill of the views) there is a choice of routes, either over the adjacent Corbett of Creag MacRànaich, returning to the Mhor hotel via Glen Kendrum and the cycle/walkway. Alternatively, (in clear weather), is to head over the delightfully remote-feeling moorland tops of 817 and 791 bearing north-west (keeping the fence line on your right), then follow a steep descending traverse (care in icy conditions) to Lochan an Eireannaich, a beautiful spot, then past Rob Roy's putting stone, a giant boulder, and so back to Kirkton Glen.

Finally, from the destination, determined Graham baggers would have time to climb The Stob, 752m [492231] from the glen road. Although this would mean a couple of miles of road walking both ways, the reward would be excellent views towards Stob Binnein.

"Members and Guests sometimes ask whether there will definitely be a low level walk. The choice of walks is very much a matter for individuals and is very weather dependent. So, there can be no guarantee that will always be a low level walk. But, if you are interested in doing a low level walk or any of our suggested walks, please use our WhatsApp group to share your ideas. If you are not already in the WA group contact secretary@ptarmiganmc.co.uk"

The Club's Code of Good Practice (available at our website <https://ptarmiganmc.org.uk> under the Membership tab) lists the clothing and equipment to have on the hills. It is important to have warm clothing, good quality waterproofs and robust boots and to carry food, water, map, compass and a mobile phone. A first aid kit, survival bag, whistle and torch should also be carried.

Disclaimer: We do not have walk leaders, our groups walk as equals with shared responsibility for navigation and safety. The routes suggested 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 walkers to go on these routes. It is the individual and sole responsibility of each walker to choose a route that is within their capability.

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

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> "

(Carbost, Isle of Skye Weekend.)

24 people have now signed up for our summer weekend on Skye (26th – 29th June) – ie we are full! But we have set up a waiting list, because there are bound to be some changes. So if you are interested and have not signed up, please contact Colin, Wendy or Justin to be added to the list.

In view of the strong bus numbers, we have decided to hold the bus fare for 2026 at £25 per outing and to absorb the increase of some 7% in Jim's bus charge based on our programme for 2026 which will be:

5 January	No Meet
1 February	Balquhidder
1 March	Glen Clova, Angus Glens
5 April	Luss/ Arrochar - Park up for the day would be at Arrochar
3 May	Fersit, Tulloch
7 June	Cruachan/ Taynuilt - park at Taynuilt
26-29 June	Bunkhouse weekend – Carbost, Skye (No transport provided by Clan Macleod)
5 July	Linn of Dee
2 August	Newtonmore
6 September	Kinlochleven
4 October	Inveroran, Bridge of Orchy
1 November	Trossachs (High tea at Lade Inn)
6 December	Sma' Glen, Crieff

What we did in December

PHMC outing to Moffat

Mud and cows plus bog and rain was the order of the day. Ten of us set off from Moffat with Alex who'd decided that the Annandale Way loop was the best option with such poor weather forecast. The route was easy enough to follow for most of the route, unless you forged ahead like me, having missed a vital turning.

Otherwise all went well for the first three hours, following the Annan Water before heading uphill to meet the main A701 near the Devil's Beeftub. Heading along what turned out to be a new forestry access road we encountered a dozen really spooked cattle, which definitely didn't want to pass us to get back down the hill, as there was a large new fence blocking them and us from crossing the A701. They tried to go down the side of the forestry track to get round us but sank up their middles in soft mud at the side of the track. Realising that this was a bad move, we stood still until they plucked up courage to come past us onto safer ground.

However, we then had to negotiate the fence without sinking into the deep mud ourselves to regain the proper route and cursed whoever had been stupid enough to block a recognised right of way. (See recent WhatsApp exchanges which Alex and others shared, indicating that our contact with Dumfries & Galloway access officer had led to the contractors agreeing to restore the path. This land is now owned by Scottish Woodlands.



Heading up the other side of the road towards Hart Fell we followed the ridge along the boundary line, where we grabbed a quick lunch stop, just as the rain started and didn't let up for the rest of the day. We continued along the ridge as far as Spout Craig before dropping down the gully feeding the upper reaches of the Annan Water as far as Ericstane. Close by we encountered another near blockage to the Way, as the brash from felled trees had not been cleared properly. By forestry workers.

There then followed a rather tedious 6 km walk on tarmac in the rain back to the bus, arriving just before nightfall, so a longer outing than I had imagined but an enjoyable one for a' that. Mind you, I was still drying out my kit on Monday.

Richard Love

The walk back: Pic by Alexandra Butler



A couple of Pictures of the Hart Fell Group: By Dilan Eren