

Ptarmigan Hillwalking & Mountaineering Club



Website: www.ptarmiganmc.org.uk

Monthly Newsletter

January 2020



The Ptarmigans will not be meeting in January. However you could walk off the excesses of the festive season by joining our sister club, the Highways Hillwalking Club for their first outing of 2020. On the 12th of January they're off to the Lomond Hills & the popular West & East Lomond. Afterwards they are having their annual January high tea at the suitably named Lomond Hills Hotel at Freuchie. For further details and booking, contact Euan Robertson, email robertsonejr@aol.com, tel. 0131 443 6664. The bus will leave Waverley Bridge at 07.30 prompt.

Our next Meet on Sunday 2nd February is to St Fillans via Lochearnhead.

This is a rallying cry to get our numbers up for the trip. As well as an increase of £20 for the bus hire this year, McLeod Coaches will now be charging £200 if we ever have to cancel a hire. The Committee has decided for the time being not to increase the individual bus fare of £20 or the annual subscription of £25 but may have to look at either or both of these possibilities if we can't get the numbers. So do what you can to spread the word about our club & let's get a big turnout for February. Details of this outing will be in the February newsletter.

Ptarmigan and Highways programmes for 2020

Month	Date	Club	Walk
January	Jan	Ptarmigan	No bus
	12 Jan	Highways	Lomond Hills (High Tea at Falkland)
February	02 Feb	Ptarmigan	St Fillans via Lochearnhead
	09 Feb	Highways	Newtonmore
March	01 Mar	Ptarmigan	Inversnaid
	27-30 Mar	Highways	Great Glen Hostel, Loch Lochy (Weekend away)
April	05 Apr	Ptarmigan	Taynuilt
	12 Apr	Highways	Cruachan
May	03 May	Ptarmigan	Glencoe/Balachulish
	15-18 May	Highways	Aultguish Inn (Weekend away)
June	07 Jun	Ptarmigan	Coire Cas
	14 Jun	Highways	Linn of Dee
	26-29 Jun	Ptarmigan	Kintail (Weekend away)
July	05 Jul	Ptarmigan	Glen Nevis
	12 Jul	Highways	Glen Etive
August	02 Aug	Ptarmigan	Glen Muick
	09 Aug	Highways	Victoria Bridge
September	06 Sep	Ptarmigan	Kinlochleven
	18-21 Sep	Highways	Glen Affric (Weekend away)
October	04 Oct	Ptarmigan	Linn of Dee
	11 Oct	Highways	Farragon Hills
November	01 Nov	Ptarmigan	Luss, Arrochar (High Tea at Balloch)
	08 Nov	Highways	Glen Esk

December	06 Dec	Ptarmigan	Lowther Hills / Wanlockhead
	13 Dec	Highways	Ettrickdale

NB: Ptarmigan Buses depart Waterloo Place; Highways Buses depart Waverley Bridge.
Buses leave at 07.30 prompt

Subscription reminder :

If you haven't yet paid your subscription for 2020, here is a reminder from your Treasurer, Adrian Casey, who will be delighted to hear from you!

PMC subscriptions remain unchanged at £25 for an individual, £40 for a couple at the same address, an option of £15 per member with Mountaineering Scotland membership registered elsewhere, and £10 for non-walking associate members who will not be signed up as Mountaineering Scotland members. Please either pay cash on your next bus outing, or pay by bank transfer (account 00248765 and sort code 80-17-68), or post a cheque payable to "Ptarmigan Mountaineering Club" to Adrian Casey at the address in the covering email.

Club Weekend, 2020:

Following our earlier email asking for expressions of interest in a Club weekend at Kintail, we have now booked the National Trust for Scotland's Outdoor Centre at Morvich in Kintail for 26 to 29 June 2020. The Centre accommodates up to 20 people and is configured over two wings in a combination of 2, 4 and 6 bunk bed rooms. We will have exclusive use of the building which is centrally heated and has a fully equipped kitchen, dining room, lounge with wood-burning stove, a laundry and a drying room. The charge is £20 per person per night, so the total cost for the accommodation for the weekend will be £60 per person. To secure the booking we have already paid a 20% deposit with the balance being due by 1st May 2020.

There is no option to buy meals or drinks on site, so we will need to take all our own food and drink. Should we decide to go out for an evening meal, the Kintail Lodge Hotel is just over two miles away and the Dornie Hotel is about 7 miles in the opposite direction. The bus from Glasgow to Kyle of Lochalsh and Skye passes the road end on the A87, but this leaves a walk of around one mile to reach the Centre, so we intend to operate a car share system to get there

For those unfamiliar with Kintail, it was described by the late W H Murray as being 'the epitome of the West Highland scene', an area where 'nothing lacks; all things culminate'. There are 21 Munros in Glen Shiel alone. The Centre itself lies just below the north end of the Five Sisters ridge, near the junction of Strath Croe and Glen Lichd. It is possible to climb the Five Sisters Group and some of the other hills on the north side of Glen Shiel directly from Glen Lichd. Ben Fhada and A Ghlas Bheinn can also be tackled on foot from the Centre, as can the westernmost hills in Glen Affric. The Corbett Sgurr an Airgid lies just to the north. Car share will allow access to the remaining hills in Glen Shiel, Beinn Sgritheall and potentially Skye.

A number of you have already expressed an interest in joining us but in order to confirm your booking, please can you now send an email headed "Weekend Meet" to enquiries@ptarmiganmc.org.uk where Christine Thompson will pick it up. At the same time pay

your deposit of £12, telling her that you have done so. You can pay by bank transfer into the Club's account (Bank of Scotland a/c number 00248765, sort code 80 17 68), with the reference Wkd followed by your surname. Or you can send Christine a cheque, payable to Ptarmigan Mountaineering Club, to her address in the email accompanying this newsletter.

Looking forward to those bookings pouring in!

Christine Thompson and Colin Shepherd, co-organisers.

What we did last month

Blue sky, cold clear, crisp, inversions & sunshine. What more could you ask for on a Ptarmigan hillwalking day. As Douglas writes.

“There are days when Scotland is really unbeatable. 14 of us decided to do what the club newsletter described as the 'finest expedition' in the Campsies - starting at Blanefield, following the track past Cantiwheery, up the short sharp ascent (and descent!) of Dumgoyne, along the ridge to Earl's Seat and thence to Fintry where the bus was waiting to pick us up. We might have paid more attention to the warning 'DO NOT underestimate the time it takes to do this walk or you will be coming down in the dark'. It may have been the distraction of the spellbinding panorama of Scotland's hills to the north or the conviviality of the company but, although we all got to Fintry before dark, we did keep the bus waiting for a little while. A great day nevertheless.”



Happy Ptarmigans on the summit of Dumgoyne: Picture by Douglas Tullis

An atmospheric morning: Picture by Bob Turner



Heartfelt Plea and Great Success

“Last week the numbers of Ptarmigans intending to take flight on our 1st December walk had dwindled to 12. This is considered to be uneconomic and we nearly had to cancel. With a few days to go Christine sent out a heartfelt plea and another seven signed up, making the trip feasible.

I checked my map and had noted twenty years ago Richard Love and I, amongst others, had walked from Lennoxton via Earl’s Seat to Fintry in "hard conditions" in December 1999 through snow and rain. In Edinburgh this Sunday had looked similarly miserable.

Our group of 16 dismounted near Strathblane and were delighted with a start from Blanefield along a well maintained path towards Blairquhosh. We could see steam rising from a concealed distillery nearby. Trees were sparkling with heavy frost, the air was crisp in glorious sunshine. All the glens were filled with cloud inversion with bright sun at upper levels. We climbed the abrupt and steep-sided volcanic plug of Dumgoyne for superb views in all directions. We could even see the hills on Arran westwards and Ailsa Craig to the south-west.

Climbing down the east footpath from this outcrop was tricky with ice on the path itself though carefully selecting tufts of grass allowed us to descend, (some of us sitting down), without mishap. We were able to pick up well-worn paths to Earl’s Seat for more panoramic views. Other groups were around including a walking club from Milngavie who rushed off down in the direction of Clachan of Campsie.

In discussion we thought at Earl’s Seat we had sufficient time to reach Fintry and the coach before 3.30pm, as well-warned in the newsletter. To our disappointment the terrain was very rough and tiring. Large areas of tussocky grass, spongy moss and boggy parts severely slowing our progress. Between Earl’s Seat and Fintry we saw no defined footpaths to speed our journey, as in the first section. We split up as time went on and gritted our teeth to finish downhill at Fintry. Douglas had warned us of his past walk ending at Fintry through somebody’s private garden! Damme, the same thing happened to most of our party as we failed to see any obvious way signposted. We got to the coach about 3/4 hour late but just before darkness had settled. A brief stop for a fish supper on the way back made a pleasant finish to an outstanding day.” Michael Good.

Meanwhile, Kevin, Graham, Walter, Dave, Alex & Tim got off the bus slightly earlier and were

greeted by an inversion over the South towards Glasgow as Kevin explains. “Having did the traverse the last time the bus went to Fintry I was keen to get off abit early and take a different approach to Earl’s Seat Hill. Therefore a few of us got off at Ballagan Farm, where we were greeted by an inversion South to Glasgow & headed directly for Dumbreck 508m. We then traversed across to Fintry where we found a warm welcome with local ale & live traditional music in the Fintry Inn.



Above the morning clag: photos by Kevin Russell



The Southern Highlands from the Campsie Fells, Picture by Kevin Russell