

Ptarmigan Hillwalking & Mountaineering Club



Website: www.ptarmiganmc.org.uk

Monthly Newsletter

July 2024

The Meet on Sunday 7th July is to Carie (Loch Rannoch)

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 Road Bridge, M90,A9 to Dunkeld (comfort stop), then Aberfeldy & B846 to Tummel Bridge, Kinloch Rannoch & Carie.

The bus will leave Carie at 17:30: Bus convener: Alex Williamson 07931 371985 (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 51, Loch Tay; 42, Loch Rannoch; 52, Pitlochry to Crieff.

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."

Route Options

Munros

Schiehallion, 1083m [713547] is well-known because of its isolated position and conical appearance from the east and west. It has a unique place in the history of hill walking and mountaineering as the place where contour lines were invented in the course of an experiment in 1774 to estimate the mass of the earth.

Access: Braes of Foss car park, which will entail a road walk from the B846 before Loch Kinardochy. Alternatively the traverse from Coshieville to Kinloch Rannoch is recommended by experienced Ptarmigans.

The 'Glen Lyon' Munros, Meall Garbh, 968m [647517], Carn Gorm, 1028m [635500], Carn Mairig, 1041m [684513] and Meall nan Aighean, 981m [694496], can be achieved from Carie by fast parties, with the proviso that there is a longish road section (3 miles from Fortingall) at the end back to Coshieville. The pub that used to be there is now a B&B and so you have an outside wait for the bus.

Corbetts

Farragon Hill, 783m [840553] and Meall Tairneachan, 787m [807543] can be done singly or together, starting from [780562] on the B846 road. Fast parties could continue on down to Weem & Aberfeldy.
Beinn a' Chuallaich, 892m [684617] Starting from the B846 road. [707614]

The Glen Lyon Corbetts, Cam Chreag, 862m [536491] and Beinn Dearg, 830m [608497], are reached via the Lairig Ghallabhaich (the Kirk Road) but the SMC handbook warns against trying to do them together.

Graham

Meall a' Mhuic, 745m [579508]. Fast parties could combine this with Beinn Dearg and Carn Gorm for an aesthetic and demanding circuit with bail-out options.

Through-Walks and Lower Level

The starting point for Schiehallion can be used for lower-level routes around Schiehallion, either to Kinloch Rannoch or returning to Coshieville via Glenmore bothy [712527] (but note the river crossing!).

There is a network of paths and tracks off the road along the south of Loch Rannoch, including the Black Wood of Rannoch and the Kirk Road over Lairig Gallabaich towards Innerwick in Glen Lyon.

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

Colin Shepherd writes: It would difficult to imagine a better day for our visit to Linn o'Dee than yesterday, with near perfect visibility, a cloud level above all but the very highest tops, no rain and a wind sufficiently strong to keep the midges at bay but not strong enough to impede movement. Our small group comprising Coney, Alex, Richard and myself opted to do Sgor Mór, the centrally placed Corbett lying between Glen Dee and Glen Luibeg, which affords magnificent view in all directions, from Lochnagar in the east, through the Glen Shee hills, and on to Ben a'Ghlo and An Sgarsoch, with main Cairngorm massif dominating the vista to the west and north.

The initial climb from Glen Dee was quite hard going through long, tussocky heather but before too long we reached the broad shoulder forming Carn an 'Ic Duibhe and from there on the going was good, over short cropped heath and lichen, with occasional boggy sections where sphagnum moss predominated. Striding out we soon reached the trig point on the summit of Sgor Dubh where we stopped to eat lunch in the shelter of the small cairn. We then proceeded along the broad gravelly ridge and up through some rocky outcrops to the summit of Sgor Mór, from where we had a superb view of the mouth of the Lairig Ghru lying between the Devil's Point and Carn a Mhaim.



The broad gravelly ridge & main Cairngorm massif: Pictures by Colin Shepherd

Descending south down grassier and damper slopes than the ascent route, we eventually picked up the footpath along Glen Dee. This in turn joined the vehicle track from Glen Geldie at White Bridge, where we had a second stop to finish the remains of our picnic lunch.

Happy Ptarmiqans at the summit: Picture by Colin Shepherd



From there it was an easy stroll back to the carpark along the track, passing on the way the remains of a number of townships no doubt cleared in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries, a reminder that this was once a very much more peopled landscape than it is today.

As we were the first group to return we had time to explore the magnificent water sculpted gorge at Linn o'Dee before the others got back. We didn't see too much in the way of birdlife on the hills but we did hear a cuckoo calling by the woods and there were a number of willow warblers singing amongst the trees. We did however see quite a lot of mountain and moorland flowers, including Chickweed



Wintergreen, Lousewort, Butterwort, Milkwort and Training Azalea. There was also a lot of Dwarf Birch on the hill, testimony to the beneficial effects of reduced Red Deer numbers as a result of the current land management policies of the NTS National Trust for Scotland.

The day was only enhanced by a fine pint of Mór Ish Ale in the Ericht Alehouse in Blairgowrie on the way back, where it seems cash is still king as they don't currently accept card payments! I didn't have any money on me but fortunately Alex rode to the rescue!

Gorge at the Linn o'Dee: Picture by Alex Williamson

Here is Richard Love's take on the same walk. All seventeen who had booked for Linn of Dee turned up, nearly boosted by an additional member of the public who boarded at Haymarket with a wheelie case thinking we were the airport bus. We all opted to go to the terminus, where Jim was unable to park within the car park, so saved a tenner by using a convenient space nearby. There were a few heart stopping moments north of Blairgowrie as we passed confusing signs that the road was closed at Bridge of Cally. Luckily we pressed on and Jim was able to steer his vehicle through the 3 m gap to great applause.

My group of four (Alex, Colin, Coney and me) headed west towards White Bridge, then very soon climbed NW through the trees, heather and the occasional short section of path, till we hit upon a convenient gate through a deer fence onto Carn an 'Ic Duibhe. Thereafter we trekked across the wide expanses of short and brushy vegetation till we picked up a vague track leading towards Sgor Dubh, our first destination and a useful lunch stop. There is a neat hollowed out cairn and a trig point from which the views were excellent all round (see Colin's pics).

The next 3 km were on good ground along the flat ridge line to Sgor Mor, our Corbett for the day, where there was a similar hollow cairn. A cooling breeze had kept us from getting too warm in the bright sun, a rare event so far this year. The ground was surprisingly dry after all the rain but the granite based soil is very free draining. A gentle descent through heather and occasionally wetter ground to the north of a steep sided gully brought us down to Glen Dee. After a coffee stop at White Bridge we had a relaxed stroll to Linn of Dee to await the other two parties who both rolled up on schedule. A great day for all, I think.

The only downside seemed to be the demise of Ron's boots which chose to lose their soles en route to Carn a' Mhaim. Rather than being a lost soul, he seemed remarkably sanguine about the premature end to his day.

The other Ptarmigan group on Carn a'Mhaim: Pic by Diahann Whitefield & Bob Scott's Bothy by Wendy Farmer

