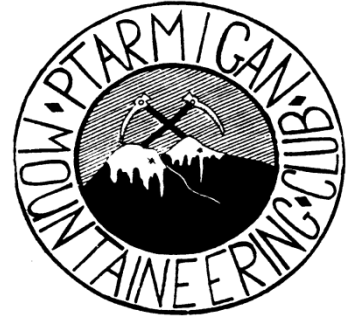


Ptarmigan Hillwalking & Mountaineering Club



Website: www.ptarmiganmc.org.uk

Monthly Newsletter

June 2023

The Meet on Sunday 4th June is to Innerwick in Glen Lyon

DETAILS OF THE MEET

The bus will leave Waterloo Place at 07.30 and travel via Shandwick Place (bus stop opposite Boots), Haymarket, Roseburn, Drum Brae, Forth Road Bridge, M90, A9, Dunkeld (comfort stop), Aberfeldy.

Bookings and cancellations: either 1. (Preferably) Email bookings@ptarmiganmc.org.uk
or 2. Text and phone Tim Featherstone 075 49 48 0321

Emergency Number 075 49 48 0321 must be taken on the hill with each party and should be used to advise the bus convener of any problems or significant changes of plan.

Main map required: OS Landranger Sheet 51 Loch Tay and Glen Dochart. All grid references are preceded by NN.

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 Adrian Casey, 8 Succoth Place Edinburgh EH12 6BL.

Given the significant rise in our costs, primarily the fee we pay to the coach operator, we must, regrettably, increase our fares and subscriptions for 2023. The subscription for 2023 is £30 for an individual, £50 for partners sharing the same address, £17.50 for those who are already members of Mountaineering Scotland, either individually or through another club, and £10 for non-walking members.

Route Options

Munros

Carn Mairg group: access from Invervar

Carn Gorm, 1029 m, 635500; Meall Garbh, 968 m, 647517; Carn Mairg, 1042 m, 684513; Meall nan Aighean, 981 m, 694496. **NB: a circuit of all four would suit fast parties only.**

Lawers group: access from Invervar

Meall Greigh, 1001 m, 674438; Meall Garbh, 1118 m, 644436; An Stuc, 1118 m, 639431; Ben Lawers, 1214 m, 635414; Beinn Ghlas, 1103 m, 625404; Meall Corranaich, 1069 m, 615410; Meall a' Choire Leith 926 m, 612439.

Corbetts

Cam Chreag, 862 m, 536491; Beinn Dearg, 830 m, 608497. Access from Innerwick.

Graham

Meall a Mhuic, 745 m, 579508. Access from Innerwick.

Lower level

An interesting circuit starts at the west end of Fortingall village. Take the access road to Glenlyon House, going right past some cottages; a track goes ENE, then NW to the east of the Allt Odhar. It climbs about 600m to reach Glenmore Bothy at 712527, sheilings, a cave (Uamh Tom a' Mhor-fhir) at 708534 and waterfalls after about 8km. To return follow the outward track, then go S into Gleann Muillin, where a path follows the Allt Odhar SE and then S to Glenlyon House. The most ambitious return route avoids the outward track altogether, going south to climb Meall nan Eun 874 m, 708509, before dropping ESE into Gleann Muillin.

Drummond Hill has a network of forest tracks accessible from Fortingall or 786487.

The Kirk Road goes from Innerwick north to Loch Rannoch.

The Post Office at Bridge of Balgie is highly recommended for tea and scones.

***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*

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. The group currently has 17 members. 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.

Missed buses

Members are asked to let us know as soon as possible if, for any reason, you are unable to take up a booked place on the bus. If someone has booked a place and isn't at the designated pick up point by the time the bus arrives and we have had no such message, we will normally wait for no more than five minutes which is an inconvenience others on the bus. You can intimate cancellation by email to bookings@ptarmiganmc.org.uk, by text or phone to 075 49 48 0321 or through the WhatsApp group. While happy to look at the circumstances giving rise to a cancellation, the Club normally expects those who cancel after the Thursday before the meet, to pay the fare.

What we did last month

Douglas Tullis:

Nine of us were still on the bus when it finally reached the ski centre car park where the sun was out for us, but the hills still had their summits in the clouds. Jim, our driver, was a bit concerned about his maximum hours when I confirmed that we would be back for a departure at 5:30. Walkhighlands gives an estimated timing of 6 to 8 hours

for our intended circuit taking in Ben Macdui and Cairn Gorm. So, maintaining a good pace, all nine of us, Alex T-M, Catherine, Dave, Jan, Katerina, Ronnie, Rowan, Paloma & I, set off together at 10:45 hoping that our timing would be nearer Walkhighlands' 6 hours than the 8. Rowan and Paloma peeled off early to take in the more challenging Fiacaill Ridge scramble, the rest of us sticking to the main route. With a well-maintained path and relatively dry conditions underfoot making good progress was not too hard but we were all quite surprised by the amount of snow still remaining. It was a wonderful feeling to be up on the Cairngorm plateau in sunshine, having left Edinburgh in mist and drizzle only a few hours earlier in the morning. The forecast was that the day would clear as it went on but, when we reached the summit of Ben Macdui at 1:15, it was still in the cloud which was disappointing. After lunching with occasional tantalising views over the Lairig Ghru towards Braeriach, we set off down, meeting Rowan and Paloma on their way up. Soon we were back in the sunshine with the most attractive part of the walk from Lochan Bhuide to Stob Coire an t-Sneachda ahead of us and looking glorious. Stopping at the edge to admire the impressive northern corries below us we headed up to the summit of Cairn Gorm, meeting up with Jan who had gone directly there and where Rowan and Paloma rejoined us. We sat for a while at the cairn from which the views were terrific but with only a phone camera and some summer haze it's difficult to do them photographic justice. Our hopes that the Ptarmigan Restaurant might be prevailed upon to offer free food and drink to members of the Ptarmigan Hillwalking and Mountaineering Club proved to be misplaced - it was closed. But we had the time to descend along the Sron an Aonaich ridge which is much to be preferred to a quick dash down through the ski area. To Jim's relief we were all back at the bus by 5:15 and headed down to rendezvous with the other Ptarmigans. A great day to be doing one of Scotland's classic walks in good weather and in good company.



Ptarmigans en route & at the summit of Cairngorm (Pictures by Douglas Tullis)

Richard Love writes:

Mind The Gap (A royal metaphor?)

Over the coronation weekend King Charles and Queen Camilla warned in a recorded announcement for Transport for London passengers to 'please mind the gap'. This could have applied to our walk/scramble/slide around our chosen outing in the Cairngorms.

Colin's suggested route, starting at the first car park on the road to Coire Cas, was joined by eight of us (oh sorry, that should be ten: I forgot about Hamish and Ted, so I hope you haven't) on a bright and breezy day, which didn't start that way in Edinburgh.

We followed in the wake of the faster party heading for Braeriach but we also needed most of our seven hours too. Our first challenge was the Chalamain Gap, which required much scrambling over rough boulders for longer than I remember from years ago. This was thoroughly 'enjoyed' by some ('This is proper hillwalking': Elsa) and perhaps less

by others. Onwards to the Lairig Ghru, another gap where we lingered briefly before heading up the initially steep Braeriach path onto the flanks of Carn Odhar for a relaxing lunch stop.

The northward crossing of this plateau-like top was through a mix of grit, short vegetation and the occasional lochan. A long dog-leg east took us to the next gap between this hill and our target for the day, Carn Eilrig, which is graced with two pointy peaks close together. After a brief discussion about where to descend, we headed down the north ridge towards the Rothiemurcus woodlands. However, this was increasingly not looking like the easiest route, as we had to deal with long, leggy heather, rocks and yet more gaps, this time under the vegetation: heffalump traps for the unwary. I wasn't the only one to take several unplanned nosedives.

Again this was not everyone's cup of tea but we did eventually reach the Allt Druidh, flowing down the Lairig Ghru, which was crossed with many a damp sock to show for it. To the despair of all, we realised that the shortest route to reach the path to Coylumbridge involved two quite steep ascents, by which time we had split into two parties. The first group (myself, Emma, Graham, Angie, H & T) went ahead and surprisingly I later managed to text Colin to discover that the other four were not that far behind us. When I arrived at the main road, I sat down on a wooden bench for a bite, expecting the rest of my party, who had been 100 yards behind me, to appear shortly. They never did, although twenty minutes later the second half of our group (Colin, Elsa, Cherie and Lesley) did arrive, closely followed by the Braeriach party. My erstwhile companions had managed to sneak past and were found having a well-earned drink at the Coylumbridge Hotel.

The final mystery is the gap in the space-time continuum, which allowed three people to have passed one other with neither party being aware of this. I blame the coronation.



Ptarmigans heading up the Chalamain Gap & taking a breather. (Pictures by Cherie Hamoudi)

Colin Shepherd: A wonderful day for the Ptarmigan outing on Sunday with blue skies and bright sunshine over the Cairngorms, in contrast to the damp grey mist which had shrouded Edinburgh at 7.30 in the morning. The fog persisted for much of the journey as far as Perth, leading to some despondency on the bus, but it had cleared by the time we had our stop in Pitlochry. From then on the weather just got better and better!

Our party of eight (Angie, Cherie, Emma, Elsa, Lesley, Graham, Richard and myself) were aiming for Carn Elrig and got off the bus at the Punch Bowl car park, along with a group of four who were heading for Braeriach. With their tighter schedule, they quickly left us in their wake as we followed the excellent path leading over Utsi's Bridge and on up towards the Chalamain Gap.

The route through the Gap itself involved a significant amount of boulder-hopping, more popular with some in the party than with others. The well-maintained path continued down towards the Lairig Ghru, over the Allt Druidh and

then up onto the shoulder of Sron na Lairige, where we turned off westwards across an area of short cropped heath leading towards Carn Odhar and onto Carn Elrig. This gave good underfoot conditions, though it would no doubt be much boggier after periods of sustained rain. The summit of Carn Elrig provided stunning views across Rothiemurchus and Upper Strathspey, with Ben Rinnes visible in the distance towards the northeast.

The descent proved rather more challenging, over steep, rough, uneven ground and deep tussocky heather, followed by a recrossing of the Allt Druidh and a short but tough re-ascent to pick up the Lairig Ghru path towards Coylumbridge. The river crossing was reasonably straightforward but would be difficult in spate conditions.

From then on it was plain sailing, although the party did split into two groups to ensure that there would be someone at the pick-up point when the bus arrived at Coylumbridge. As it turned out we were all back in time, despite the early arrival of the bus. Sadly however only three of the advance party were sufficiently early to grab a quick drink in the Coylumbridge Hotel.



Higher crossing of the Allt Druidh & the group of Ptarmigans on Carn Elrig. (Pictures by Colin Shepherd)