

Ptarmigan Hillwalking & Mountaineering Club



Website: www.ptarmiganmc.org.uk

Monthly Newsletter

March 2026

The Meet on Sunday 1st March is to Glen Clova/Angus Glens

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.

Bus convener: Alex Williamson 07931 371985

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

Main 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

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

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.

"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> "



What we did last month

Heading up Stuc a' Chroin: Pic by Lewis Tattersall

Be prepared

You have to admit, there's a geek lurking inside some of us Ptarmigans. We love to walk in the hills, but the associated dressing-up isn't a downside. Buying kit isn't the point of hill walking, but it can be a little bonus. When we heard that there was plenty of snow on the hills, I wasn't the only person to see this as a

golden opportunity to play in the snow – and to use my ice-axe. So it was that Lewis T, Michael C, Morbhen M and I left the bus at Ardchullarie More on a February morning and headed off for a through walk past Beinn Each, over the top of Stùc a' Chròin, down its south-eastern shoulder and then round to Callandar (and straight to the Waverley Inn).



The gang at the summit of Stuc a' Chroin: Pictures by Lewis Tattersall & Justin Elliott

The promised snow appeared soon enough: once we were up at 600m there was plenty about. At times we could walk across the crust; at times we went through it. The going got harder. The steepest slopes took genuine effort to ascend safely. But it was enjoyable. Enjoyable because it was a challenge – it's nice to be stretched a small step beyond the normal. But crucially, it was only a small step beyond, thanks to the kit. Spikes were useful. Michael's crampons were even better. We seized the opportunity to practise our ice axe arrests: I found childlike pleasure in throwing myself down a slope before rolling over to stop.

The kit genuinely helped, but what helped rather more was the opportunity to practice - to walk in less favourable conditions than normal, in the company of experienced people who know what to do. It turns out that software matters more than hardware. We learn from those around us: as many times before, I returned from a club walk more aware of how to cope, and aware of what might be too much. It wasn't the prettiest walk ever: there was little visibility from the top, with rain and snow showers which quickly chilled us. But it was a very satisfying walk, which leaves us prepared, and eager, for the next one. (Justin Elliott).

A group of Ptarmigans took the traverse from Balquhidder to Kilmahog over Ben Vane & Ben Ledi & judging by Alistair's pic, the weather played ball on a fine ridge walk. (Picture by Alistair Haig)



Walk Report – The Stob 1st February, 2026

It was the first Ptarmigan walk of the year and although we had an almost full bus, by the time of the Walk, numbers had diminished. 8 of us decided to go all the way to Balquidder and attempt The Stob. The Stob is a 753m summit involving a bit of a road walk from Balquidder and then ascent on a forestry track followed by a section across country to the summit. Alex, Colin, Tim, Lynn, Don, Catherine, Tod and Lesley decided that was just the walk we wanted for a wintery day. At 753 metres we calculated that we would be above the snowline, but only just and that any snow hazards encountered would be easily overcome – and that is about how it all turned out.

Alex advised that we should head up to the bealach before ascending the summit ridge so as to avoid the numerous crags. There was some fun negotiating the occasional deep snow drift. It took a lot of energy, but deep drifts were few and far between and didn't prevent the 8 of us reaching the summit. There were no views at all, so after a cold bite to eat we descended. Lynn, Tim, Tod and Catherine decided to carry on and cross the ridge into Kirkton Glen while Alex, Lesley, Don and Colin elected to return the way had they come up. The descent wasn't quite a reverse of the ascent as Alex ignored his earlier sound advice and led the party on a more direct descent which gave a frisson of excitement negotiating a 3 foot rock step to bypass the extensive crags on the direct route. The excitement passed,

everyone coped fine. The descent down the track was pleasant and conversation flowed amongst good company. The day was much drier than anticipated and we actually got some sun while waiting in Balquidder. (Alex Williamson).



The Stob group: Pic by Tod Van Gunten