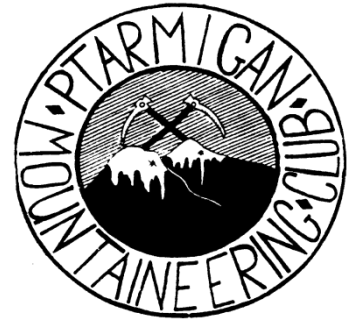


Ptarmigan Hillwalking & Mountaineering Club



Website: www.ptarmiganmc.org.uk

Monthly Newsletter

May 2023

The Meet on Sunday 7th May is to Coire Cas

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, Pitlochry (short stop), A9 north to Aviemore and Loch Morlich. The bus will park for the day at the Ski Centre Car Park at Coire Cas. Estimated time of arrival at Coire Cas: approx. 10.45.

The bus will leave Coire Cas at 17.30 prompt and stop for 30 min in Pitlochry on the way back.

Departure times:	Coire Cas	17.30	Coylumbridge	17.45
	Aviemore road end	17.50	Dalwhinnie	18.15
	Bruar	18.30	Blair Atholl	18.35

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 36: Grantown, Aviemore & Cairngorm

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.

Members are reminded that the mountains may still be in full winter mode. Ice-axe and crampons must be carried if you're walking above the snow-line.

Route Options

Munros

The Coire Cas car park (NH985074) offers access to several good high-level walks. The most obvious is over **Cairn Gorm** itself (1244m; NJ005040) and along the Northern Corries to **Ben Macdui** (1309m; NN989989).

Another possibility is to climb Cairn Gorm, then descend south-east to The Saddle and climb over A' Choinneach to **Bynack More** (1090m; NJ042063). From here there is a good path leading north past Bynack stable (now demolished) and An Lochan Uaine to Loch Morlich. Bynack More can also be reached from Glen More Lodge via the reverse of the last part of this route, perhaps returning down the soggy Strath Nethy.

Beinn Mheadhoin (1182m; NJ024017) can be done direct via Loch Avon, which involves a punishing descent and re-ascent in both directions. This route is recommended for faster parties only.

Braeriach (1296m; NN953999) is another possibility but a very steady pace will be required to climb this hill in the available time. It is probably best to leave the bus a mile or so before the Coire Cas car park and take the path through the Chalamain gap, down to the Lairig Ghru and up the Sron na Lairige ridge. To vary the return, fast parties can stroll over to Einich Cairn, make the long descent into Glen Einich and walk out to Coylumbridge.

Possible Munros en route include **Beinn Dearg** (1008m; NN853778), **Carn a' Chlamain** (NN963m; 916758) or one or more of the three **Beinn a Ghlo** Munros from Blair Atholl.

A round of the four Drumochter Munros **Geal Charn** (917m; NN597783), **A'Mharconaich** (975m; NN604764) **Beinn Udlamain** (1010m; NN579740) and **Sgairnech Mhor** (991m; NN599732) to the west of the A9 might be possible but there is nowhere suitable other than the A9 roadside to wait for the returning bus.

A' Bhuidheanach Beag (936m; NN661776), **Carn na Caim** (941m; NN677822) and **Meall Chuaich** (951m; NN716879) on the east of the A9 are further possibilities but also lack anywhere obvious to await the bus at the end of the day.

Corbetts

Meall a'Bhuachaille (810m; NH990115) can be accessed from Loch Morlich Visitor Centre. Take the track ENE to Ryvoan bothy, then the path west to the summit. Continue over Creagan Gorm and Craiggowrie and return via Badaguish or carry on along the ridge before descending to Coylumbridge.

Creag Mhor (895m;) lies to the east of Bynack More and can be climbed in an out-and-back route from Loch Morlich via Lochan Uaine and Bynack Stable but this is a long route and a close eye will need to be kept on time. Very fast parties could combine Creag Mhor with either Cairn Gorm or Bynack More.

The Fara (911m; NN598842) makes a good day out from Dalwhinnie

Lower level

There are good low-level walks in the Rothiemurchus Forest and The Queen's Forest. Various approaches from Inverdrue and Coylumbridge will take you to circular walks around Loch Morlich, Loch Gamhna and Loch an Eilein, the latter containing the ruins of Inshriach Castle.

The Loch Morlich walk could be extended to take in the beautiful An Lochan Uaine by passing Glenmore Lodge on the road towards Ryvoan Bothy.

A track leads south from Coylumbridge via Whitewell into Gleann Einich.

Your Chairman writes: "After the April outing some members have asked for clarification as to whether it is in order for a large group to split up to enable different smaller groups to go at their own preferred speeds. In a word "YES". We do not have "led" walks with a leader in overall charge but we walk as equals with shared mutual responsibility for matters such as navigation and safety. For obvious reasons of safety our Code of Good Practice says that "parties should normally comprise at least two and preferably three people". So, where members who set off together in a sizeable group to do a particular hill and it becomes appropriate to split into smaller groups there is no problem but it is not usually sensible for members to walk alone."

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.

What we did last month

Outing to Ballachulish – 2nd April

Douglas Tullis:

We had a good number on the bus for this outing – 24 in total – splitting into five different walking groups. First off the bus were Ronnie and Richard who has done a separate report on their activities for the day. A big group of 8 comprising Alex T-M, Catherine, Edu, Emily, Marta, Peter, Rowan and Wendy set off up Buchaille Etive Beag from the “Beehive” cairn in Glencoe and reported that they had a good day although the idea of making it to the Kingshouse to slake their thirst before being picked up by the bus was over optimistic. Another group of 8, Alex W, Cheryl, Colin, Elsa, Emma, Ewan, Lesley and Lynn R set off to do the Pap of Glencoe and Sgorr nan Fiannaidh. I think I am right in saying that the latter target was abandoned in favour of an early arrival at the Clachaig Inn. Five of us, Alistair, James, Lynn Y, Katerina and I stayed on the bus all the way to Kentallen, intending to do the traverse of Beinn a’ Bheithir taking in the two Munros of Sgorr Dhonuill and Sgorr Dhonuill ending up at Ballachulish where the bus was parked. The ascent from Kentallen is pathless and punishingly steep initially through bracken. The day never quite cleared as we had hoped. It was frustrating to have periodic views of Mull in sunshine and our first summit was in the mist. At the bealach between the two hills I decided to opt out and went to Ballachulish and the waiting bus via Gleann A’ Chaolais and its forestry tracks. The other four stuck to Plan A and, deciding not to descend the scramble on the Schoolhouse track, ran into some more rough country descending the northern ridge from Sgorr Bhan – getting to the bus (not quite) on time but, by the time we were ready to depart, the road was clear having been closed for much of the day by the accident we passed in the morning.



Visited Glencoe yesterday and it didn't quite live up to early promise with banks of low cloud obscuring tops much of the time. We climbed the Pap of Glencoe. Quite a challenge, unrelentingly steep & scrambly at the summit. We finished in the Clachaig Inn for fish n chips & a nice pint. (Colin Shepherd)

Left: The Pap Of Glencoe: Picture by Colin Shepherd

Below: Emma & Ewan descending the Pap of Glencoe: Picture by Cheryl Ford



Meall a'Bhuiridh by Richard Love

Ronnie, who had been experiencing a minor hamstring problem, and I, recovering from a low level bug, decided to tackle the Black Mount two, Meall a'Bhuiridh and Clach Leathad. This was in the vague hope that, if needed, we could hitch a lift down on the Glencoe Mountain ski lift.

The day started unpromisingly as, just before we were dropped off at the ski centre road end, we witnessed the aftermath of a single car accident at the bridge 100 metres away where the car in question, lying below us, had hit the bridge parapet and landed on its roof before flipping back over. One male occupant was injured and the road was closed for nearly seven hours, causing major diversions via Oban.

On our way up the hill by the ski lift, steep and very eroded, the cloud was down and rain was falling, so we were a bedraggled pair by the time we'd emerged at the top of the first, and only active, section of the lift. We were aware of the wail of sirens from emergency vehicles heading to the accident but these were soon behind us in the mist. This obscured our vision and caused us to miss a crucial path soon after which led, away from a mountain bike path, towards our first summit. Following a certain amount of retracing our steps, we were soon back on track across mixed terrain and onto a steady ascent with very few remaining snow patches. We did have quite a few stops to regain our breath and admire the non-existent view.

Ahead of us came the piping calls of the lesser spotted urchin: three young boys who'd walked with their dads all the way from the car park, arriving at the top shortly after we'd passed them. The dads both apologised for them disturbing our peace and I said it made a change from grouse and ptarmigan (usually silent by the way) but secretly pleased to see kids starting their hill walking careers early.

Following a relaxed lunch at the summit, we both agreed that further progress in such (in)visibility was pointless and I was already feeling wabbit, so back down we went. As we descended, inevitably the cloud started to lift until we could see the whole of the Buachaille exhibiting itself in all its foreboding glory. By this time we could also see the trucks and caravans stacked up behind the police road block, so started a phone and text message system, aided by Traffic Scotland's online updates, to keep our colleagues and Jim Mcleod informed of progress at Kingshouse, where we were by now installed.

As an insurance policy we made sure we had had a hot meal with our drinks before we were picked up at the road end. Very fortunately the A82 had reopened shortly before and we were on our way with time to spare for the usual refreshment in Callander.

Sophie Younger

Club members will be saddened to hear of the death of Sophie Younger on 3rd April following a long and determined battle against cancer.

Sophie's first outing with the Club took place on a wonderful day on 8th May 2016 when the destination was Loch Arkaig. Sophie, Richard Love, Michael Good and myself opted to climb the Corbett Beinn Bhan above Achnacarry and we were rewarded with excellent views as the photograph below shows. She enjoyed her day out and became an enthusiastic member of the Club, though sadly she wasn't able to participate in our more recent outings due to the effects of her cancer treatment and also because of Covid restrictions.

Sophie spent her early years in Gran Canaria where her father was then working as a scientist. This was at a time long before it had become a tourist destination, when it was a very remote location, largely unknown to the outside world, but it afforded her a great deal of freedom to enjoy the outdoor life. Her mother hailed from Moniaive in Dumfries and Galloway but had worked as an outdoor instructor at Glenmore Lodge. With that background it is hardly surprising that she developed a passion for the outdoors.

Sophie was a classically trained dancer, working with the Royal Swedish Ballet and Scottish Ballet and in later years she ran dance classes for people suffering from Parkinson's Disease at Dancebase. She was devoted to her family and had four sons of whom she was extremely proud. Despite her 'posh' English accent, a consequence of having been sent to private school while her parents were working abroad, she was immensely proud of her Scottish roots and also of her Jewish heritage from her father's side. She had a strong sense of social justice, volunteering with the homeless charity Crisis and also a great commitment to LGBT rights. Above all she loved the Scottish countryside, whether it was wilder regions of the Highlands or the more gentle landscape of the Pentland Hills.



There will be a memorial service on Friday 12th May at 11:30am at St Vincent's Chapel, Edinburgh, followed by a reception at Caledonian Hall in The Royal Botanic Gardens from 1pm, to which Sophie's friends will be welcome.