

Ptarmigan Mountaineering Club



Website: www.ptarmiganmc.org.uk

Monthly Newsletter

September 2019

The bus on 1 September is to Braithwaite (Lake District). Fare £20.

REMINDER: if you cancel your booking after 8 am on the Friday before the meet, or if you fail to turn up, our Code of Good Practice expects you still to pay your fare (to the Treasurer) unless the reasons for your cancellation or non-appearance were beyond your control.

The bus will leave Waterloo Place at 07.30, going via Lothian Road, The King's Theatre, Holy Corner, Morningside Station and Fairmilehead.

The bus will leave Braithwaite at 17.30.

Bus Convener: Douglas Tullis

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

Emergency Number 075 49 48 0321 must be taken on the hill with each party.

Map required: OS 1:50 000 sheet 90 Penrith & Keswick. All grid references are preceded by NY.

Members are reminded of the Club's Code of Good Practice on page 2.

Route Options

Braithwaite is ideally situated to give numerous options at all levels. The following is a selection. Further suggestions - and views - at <http://www.braithwaite-walks.co.uk/>. The guidebooks by Alfred Wainwright, *A Pictorial Guide to the Northern Fells* and *A Pictorial Guide to the North Western Fells* tell you absolutely everything you need to know about the Lakeland Fells.

High level

Skiddaw (931m) [261291] can be approached by using any of the numerous paths to the north of the A66 or to the north-east of the A591. The easiest way is by starting at [270244] and taking the path which skirts woods to the west of Latrigg to join other paths at the car park. From here the route is straight up via Jenkin Hill and Little Man (865m) (worth an easy detour from the main path).

There are other interesting routes from Applethwaite and Millbeck, either of which can be used as quick descents.

Grasmoor (851m) [175204] can be reached from Braithwaite via Stile End, High Moss and Crag Hill (839m), returning via Coledale Hause and the track on the north side of Coledale Beck. You can also add Grisedale Pike (790m) [198225] to this round, descending by way of Sleet How.

Blencathra (868m) [323277] is best approached from Scales, following the path up Scales Fell and then going either

directly to the main summit (Hallsfell Top) or via Sharp Edge and the top of Tarn Crag. Descend by following the ridge to the far end of Knowe Crag [312266] and, from there, going straight down to Threlkeld. **NB: Do not underestimate Sharp Edge in poor conditions.**

Lower fells

Lonscale Fell (714m) [285271]: use the same approach as for Skiddaw, but cross Whit Beck soon after passing the Hawell Monument and climb steep grass to the top. It can also be approached via Jenkin Hill.

Catbells (451m) [244199]: from Braithwaite follow the road south to Swinside. Turn left at the T junction and then right for the car park at [247213]. The middle path leads directly up the ridge to the top. The path can then be followed to Maiden Moor if time permits.

Causey Pike (637m) [217209]: the path starts at Stoneycroft Farm (about 2 miles south of Braithwaite) and takes in Rowling End (433m) and Causey Pike before joining the Craig Hill path which can be used for a direct descent to Braithwaite.

Through-Walks and Lower Level

There are a lot of low-level routes around Bassenthwaite Lake (the only "lake" in the Lake District) and Derwent Water, including parts of both the Cumbria Way https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cumbria_Way and the Allerdale Ramble <http://www.allerdaleramble.org.uk/ramble.html>

Bishop's Rock or The Bishop is well worth a visit: approach via Thornthwaite, then a small back road for half a mile to a path. The Bishop [216265] is a large whitewashed rock set high on a scree-covered hillside. It marks the spot where, according to local legend, the Bishop of Derry was killed falling from his horse in 1783, after drunkenly betting he could ride up the hill. Both the Bishop and his horse are said to be buried near a smaller stone, The Clerk, at the base of the hill. The stone was whitewashed each year by staff at the nearby Swan Hotel, until the hotel was converted to apartments. The whitewashing is now carried out by members of Keswick Mountain Rescue.

There are other walks in the Whinlatter Forest above Thornthwaite and east of Keswick on the Keswick Railway Path. The latter is now part of the Sustrans walking and cycling coast-to-coast Route 71.

The Club's Code of Good Practice

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.** 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.

What we did last month

Last month we went to Arran, which meant an earlier-than-usual start. Michael thinks early starts must affect the brain because quite a comedy of errors ensued, as related in this composite contribution from Michael, Bill and Richard.

The road journey

Richard reports that this got off to an inauspicious start when the coach driver didn't turn up at Waterloo Place at 7 am. "Some hurried phone calls to Jim (no reply) and Douglas and Colin down the road gave us some back-up options,

including the later ferry to Arran. However, our transport did turn up at 7.10, driven by Jim's son, who had been waiting at Waverley Bridge (the Highways departure point), and we sped westwards. Next, we were surprised that Elsa wasn't at PC World. Luckily Colin spotted her waiting at the Marriott Hotel (a Highways pick-up place) but we were going too fast to stop, so we hung a big U-ey over the Gogar roundabout, hoping that Elsa was still there...she was.

"Somewhere outside Glasgow we seemed to be heading towards the Erskine Bridge – nooo! - and, by the time the driver realised, further minutes were off the clock. Next up, there was a diversion at Dalry due to the unfinished construction of a new bypass." Somehow, though, all difficulties were overcome in time for the party to catch the 09.45 ferry from Ardrossan.

The walk

Once safely on the island, around ten Ptarmigans teamed up with Jennifer, who was spending a few days with family on Arran, and set off up the road to connect with the Glen Rosa path, a childhood favourite of Jennifer's. This was planned mainly because the cloud was still well down on the tops but was forecast to clear later (which it nearly did).

Where the Garbh Allt flows into the Glenrosa Water, Bill and Tim split off and headed west, then north-west, across a well-defined, if not boggy, path towards the summit of Beinn Nuis. Bill says, "From there, it was a short walk to the top of Beinn Tarsuinn our first Corbett, before we descended steeply across the large boulders of Bealach an Fhir-bhogha. We had heard tales of the A'Chir Ridge and I did not think myself suitably prepared, though Tim later admitted to having done it in reverse!

"Skirting to the west of the ridge the path drops down to around 550m and connects to a saddle at Fionn Choire. We reckoned we had a two-hour walk-out from this point, and so we checked our clocks - a short half an hour later and we had gone up and down Cir Mhor, our second Corbett of the day.

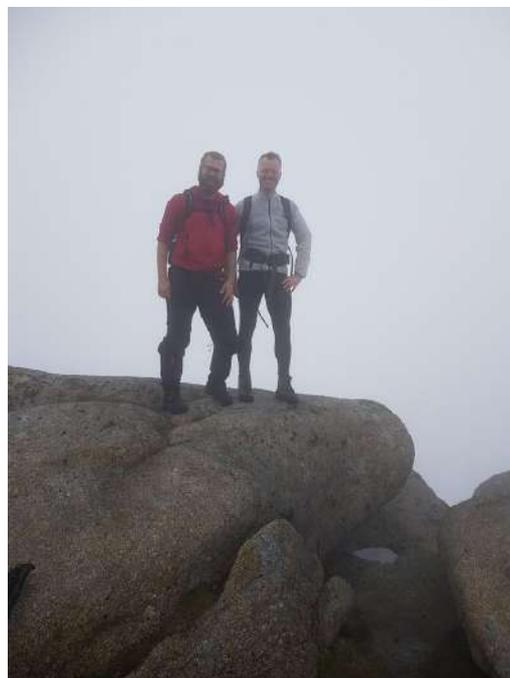
"Returning back to The Saddle we dropped quickly into the head of Glen Rosa and the views started to open up, giving us an idea of how steep North Goatfell was! We made good time walking out and managed to get some beers and a takeaway before the return ferry home."



Adrian, Elsa and Jennifer set off up Glen Rosa. Photo by Bill



Between Beinn Nuis and Beinn Tarsuinn: an angry Muppet? A beluga whale? Photo by Bill



Bill and Tim on Beinn Tarsuinn

Meanwhile, the rest of the Glen Rosa party had checked at The Saddle (col) whether they had enough energy to climb grimly dark, cloud-capped North Goatfell and Goatfell itself. Elsa, Adrian and Michael decided the severe heights looked intimidating and turned back down the same route they had climbed up. Michael says, *“Jennifer’s superior knowledge of the island discouraged us from descending into Glen Sannox as the steepness in the upper reaches is again severe. As we made our way down Glen Rosa the clouds lifted from all the ridges except Goatfell and we could appreciate the stunning scenery.*

“It’s a long and somewhat tedious route back to Brodick, and we dived into the first hostelry to quench our thirst. We were very surprised and delighted to meet Christine and her husband Roy outside the pub. They were not walking with us but having a good look at the Carboniferous rocks of Arran instead!”

The remaining four, Richard, Kathy, Colin and Jennifer, decided to attempt the rocky spur to the top. Kathy set the upward pace and Richard followed at a short distance which grew longer by the minute as Kathy’s afterburners switched on. *“My excuse was that I wanted to keep Colin and Jennifer in sight (true). Kathy made the top but I decided to turn back near the top, as there was an awkward rocky cleft which others might have struggled with, so I dropped down to warn the others and we retreated down to the col and Glen Rosa again.*

Richard goes on, *“When we four gathered again for a final coffee break to admire the view, we saw Kathy also coming back down the glen. She had waited 35 minutes for us before deciding to retrace her steps. Anyway we all enjoyed a couple of beers at one or other watering holes and left Arran more than pleased with a good day’s effort.”*

Sannox to Lochranza

Elsewhere on the island, Cheryl, Lynn and Douglas decided to give the cloud-shrouded peaks a miss and walk part of the Arran Coastal Way instead, from Sannox to Lochranza. Along the way they admired Fallen Rocks (an impressive landslide); the ruins of Duchess Anne’s Salt Pan, where salt for preserving food was extracted from seawater; “Ossian’s Cave”; and the desert sand-dunes preserved as these lovely red rocks (right) at the Cock of Arran (*photo by Cheryl*).



At the end of the day, everyone managed to catch the last ferry back to the mainland where the coach driver complained to Michael of constant and heavy rain (while Arran had had none). The route back confused him so much that he drove several times around Dalry, even doing a three-point turn in the Main Street, owing to all the diversions. He finally delivered a flock of tired Ptarmigans to Edinburgh at about 10.30 pm.

Farewell to Arran: *photo by Adrian*

