

Ptarmigan Hillwalking & Mountaineering Club



Website: www.ptarmiganmc.org.uk

Monthly Newsletter

September 2023

The Meet on Sunday 3rd September is to Braithwaite, Northern Lake District

DETAILS OF THE MEET

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 arrive at Braithwaite around 10.45.

The bus will leave Braithwaite at 17.00

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

Bus Convener Colin Shepherd : **Mobile Number 07769 199150** This number can 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 1:50 000 sheet 90 Penrith & Keswick. All grid references are preceded by NY

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.

Route Options

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 Appletrewhite 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 1 directly to the main summit (Hallsfell Top) or via Sharp Edge and the top of Tarn Crags. Descend by following the

ridge to the far end of Knowe Crags [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** 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 37 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

Lochnagar

With rather time limited, six of us (Ronnie, Jan, James, Ptarmigan first timer Pat, former Club member Richard on his first outing with us for several years, and myself) set off in overcast but dry conditions to climb Lochnagar via the Allt-na-giubhsaich path. We made good progress up the the gravelly track and the well-constructed mountain path

taking us to the edge of Lochnagar's magnificent north east facing corrie. Making use of some well positioned boulders we sat here for lunch whilst admiring the cliff girt corrie wall with the impressive loch below us.



Lochnagar Laggards: Picture by Ronnie Hinds



Lunch with a view: Picture by Colin Shepherd

We then continued our climb up through a boulder field and onto the plateau for the clifftop traverse round the top of the corrie wall to the summit. The views from the plateau were superb and we could see all the way to the Angus coast. Unfortunately just before we reached the summit for a bank of cloud swept over and it started to rain, although at least that did not last long. Though we weren't able to get any views, we did share the summit with a family of fairly tame Snow Buntings who had clearly realised that where hillwalkers gathered, there was a good prospect of crumbs to be eaten.



A claggy summit: Picture by James Robertson

Shortly after leaving the summit we bumped into the group tackling the traverse from Auchallater to Glen Muick, who had made good progress. With the cloud clearing our party decided to vary the descent route by taking the path leading to Glas-Allt-Shiel. After crossing the plateau, this descends steeply beside an impressive waterfall and down to Loch Muick. This section proved rather slow going and by the time we reached the lochside track, we realised we were going to be pushed to make it back to the bus by the scheduled departure time of 5pm.

A bit of a route march ensued but despite our best efforts we were around 20 minutes late at the car park. This led to the gloomy prospect that we wouldn't have time for a stop in Blairgowrie but fortunately Jim made good progress on the return leg, in spite, or perhaps because of inadvertently taking the South Deeside road to Balmoral, rather than going back through Ballater and joining the main road there. As a result we were able to have our full 30 minute break, the only dampener on an otherwise excellent day being that the Erich Alehouse was inexplicably closed.

Colin Shepherd



The triumphant Broad Cairn Baggers: Picture by Cherie Hamoudi