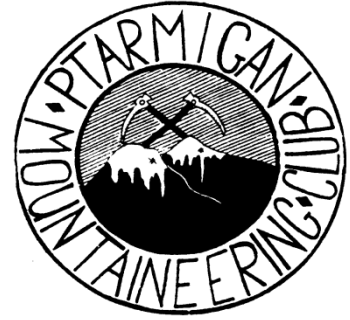


Ptarmigan Hillwalking & Mountaineering Club



Website: www.ptarmiganmc.org.uk

Monthly Newsletter

September 2026

The Meet on Sunday 6th September is to Kinlochleven

DETAILS OF THE MEET

The bus will leave South St Andrew's Square at 07.30 and travel via Shandwick Place (bus stop opposite Boots), Haymarket, Roseburn, PC World, M9, Callander, Tyndrum (comfort stop), arriving at Kinlochleven around 10.45.

Please Note: Due to scheduled roadworks at Waterloo Place, the bus will now leave at South St Andrews's Square at the loading bay next to the restaurants.

The bus will leave Kinlochleven at 17:00

Bus convener: Morbhen MacRath

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

Main map required: OS Sheet 41 Ben Nevis

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."

Route Options

En route

The long road to Kinlochleven offers a huge choice of Munros and Corbetts along the way. In the first section to Killin there are Ben Ledi, Stuc a' Chroin and Ben Vorlich and the Lochearnhead Corbetts Meall an t-Seallaidh and Creag MacRanaich. On the next stretch to Crianlarich, there are Sgiath Chuil, Meall Glas, Beinn nan Imirean and Ben Challum to the north of the A85 and Ben More, Stob Binnein and Cruach Ardrain to the south. From Dalrigh there is access to Beinn Dubhchraig and Ben Oss, Beinn Chuirn and Ben Lui. Beyond Tyndrum there are groups of Corbetts both east and west of the road, plus the Munros Beinn Dorain, Beinn an Dothaidh and Beinn Mhanach. Beinn Chreachain and Beinn Achaladair can be approached from Achallader farm.

Of the Blackmount hills, Meall a' Bhuidh and Creise should be within range. In Glencoe itself, on the south side, there are the two Buachailles, Bidean nam Bian and Sgor na h-Ulaidh, and the Corbett Beinn Maol Chaluim. On the north side there is the serious challenge of the Aonach Eagach or a gentle stroll (usually) up Beinn a' Chrulaiste.

There are also plenty of low-level options. There are cycle or footpaths from Callander to Killin, and through-routes between Lochearnhead and Callander and Ledcharrie and Balquhidder, notably by Kirkton Glen. Further west large sections of the West Highland Way are accessible, with possible detours east into Auch Glen or west from Victoria Bridge. In Glencoe there is a possible – though potentially boggy – circuit of Lairig Gartain and Lairig Eilde.

From Kinlochleven

Munros

The Mamore Group can be climbed singly or in clusters from Kinlochleven where a path starts next to the church at NN 188623. The path splits at the start, the right branch working south of Na Gruagaichean and heading up past Coire an Lochain giving access to **Sgurr Eilde Mor (1010m), NN 230657; Binnein (Mor 1130m), 212663; and Binnein Beag (943m), 221677**. The first is better climbed from the N side of the lochan (firmer ground and less steep). The other two can be climbed from the bealach between them – if there is enough time for both.

Na Gruagaichean 203652 (1056m)/NW top 1041m is also best climbed from the above path by going straight up the SSE ridge of the mountain to its main top. From there, descend into a rocky gap and up steeply to reach the NW top. It is easily combined with **Stob Coire a' Chairn (981m), 185660** and **Am Bodach (1032m), 176651** to form a round of Coire na Ba. **Stob Coire a' Chairn** can also be linked with **An Gearanach (982m), 188670** by way of the fine crested ridge (exposed in parts) over An Garbhanach (975m): please note that some easy scrambling may be required.

Although the other Mamore Munros are best left for a trip to Glen Nevis, **Stob Ban (999m), 147654** is possible from the West Highland Way path which runs through the Lairig Mor. Leave the path at Tigh na-sleubhaich, 136643 and climb the ridge to the S of the SW Corrie. In poor visibility keep to the left side of the ridge, as the slopes on the right fall away sharply in rocky outcrops. The quartzite cairn is fairly close to the huge crags which face Coire a' Mhusgain, so care must be taken.

Corbetts

Mam na Gualainn (796m), NN115625 can be climbed from the West Highland Way. Leave the track at 123640 (Lairigmor) and follow the path SW for a mile and a half to a point where another path goes steeply up to the left for a short while; carry on in a SE direction to reach the SW ridge and follow to summit – it is an easy walk to the E top at 755m, then down to the bealach before climbing the narrow but easy W ridge of Beinn na Caillich (764m). Carry on along E ridge to regain WHW track back. From Caolasnacon (143607), you can climb **Garbh Bheinn (867m), 169601** and carry on W to catch the West Highland Way path to Kinlochleven. This hill can also be climbed in conjunction with part of the Aonach Eagach ridge.

Glas Bheinn (792m), 258641 is reached by the path from the church in Kinlochleven and then the track towards Loch Eilde Mor for a short distance, followed by a path right and finally left at a junction skirting the S bank of the loch. Head up right gradually to the small lochan on Meall na Cruidhe. From there walk NE up easy slopes to the summit.

Grahams

Sgorr na Ciche (742m), NN125594 – aka Pap of Glencoe – can be combined with the Clachaig hotel or climbed on its own. **Beinn na Cloiche (646m), 285650** can be climbed from Kinlochleven in combination with **Glas Bheinn** for very fast parties or on its own. A variation for fast parties would be to approach the hill via the Devil's Staircase and the Blackwater dam.

Low Level

Various sections of the West Highland Way are possible, the best being over the Devil's Staircase, courtesy of General Wade, from Altafeadh to Kinlochleven or vice versa. There are also walks by Loch Eilde Mor and the path to the Blackwater Dam.

"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

"The Monadliaths are perhaps not the most spectacular of Scotland's hills but they offer a good sense of remoteness and are, for the most part at least, relatively easy walking. My suggestion, which was taken up by Janice, Ursula & Neil had been a "there and back" from the bus drop off at the Glen Banchor car park to do the two Munros, A'Chailleach and Carn Sgulain. I recollect doing them on a previous Ptarmigan outing when the river Allt a' Chaorainn was in spate and the usual ford was unfordable. No such problem this time after the recent dry spell as can be seen from the picture.



River crossing no problem & on way to A' Cailleach & Carn Sgulain: Pics by Douglas Tullis

Instead of doing a "there and back" we decided to head SE from Carn Sgulain to follow the river back which involved a certain amount of heather hopping but got us back in very good time to find the bus had waited all day at the CP.

My plan to fill the time was to walk down the Wildcat Trail by the River Calder to Newtonmore for a refreshment at the Glen Hotel for which Janice joined me. After disregarding a somewhat over cautious "Path Closed" sign we got to the hotel only to find it is now closed on Sundays. Asking a local where you could get a drink in Newtonmore on a Sunday we were directed to the Balavil Hotel at the opposite end of the village to which we duly repaired. (Douglas Tullis)

A recipe for a fine Sunday

Ingredients:

Carn Dearg (or a similar hill)

10 Ptarmigan (Agnes, Alex B, Christine, Jo, Kathy, Petra, Tim, Toni, Wendy and Justin)

A "Tim" route *

Sunshine (can be omitted)

* "Tim" routes connect two remote locations in a novel way.

Timing:

About 6½ hours

Method:

First, ensure your Ptarmigan are prepared – your local bus convenor may be able to do this for you. Deposit them at the side of the A86, vaguely close to Cluny Castle. Leave them to make their way up a fine track towards the River Calder. Do not rush this stage – the good conversations to be had improve the final result.

At the river trust your "Tim" and strike out up a pathless valley. The sunshine helps here; so do bilberries (if available). Enjoy a snack beside Loch Dubh. Some people marinate their Ptarmigan in the surprisingly deep bog available there; others believe that this step is not necessary.

Then turn up the heat to ensure Carn Dearg is done properly. At the top, allow the Ptarmigan to relax for 30 minutes before descending via Gleann Ballach towards a reviving paddle in the River Calder and the bus in Glen Banchor. Finish with a pint in Pitlochry as garnish. (Justin Elliott)



Sitting on the edge & on the summit: Pictures by Wendy Farmer & Jo Duncan

Groups of Ptarmigans got off the bus early to do the Western Drumochter Munros & the Graham 'Creag Dubh'



Drumochter group: Pictures by Richard Waudby & Anya Martin

A Walk of Two Halves – Newtonmore 2nd August

A full bus of 30 Ptarmigans for the August Meet and 10 decided to walk up Creag Dubh. Colin had set out a route which looked interesting and had the added frisson of excitement that none of us had walked the route before. So, Colin, Alex, Emma, Ewan, Lesley, Jo, Lynn, Elsa, Richard and Jean walked into the unknown. It sounds intrepid, but we followed an estate track for the first few kilometres. We could have followed it a considerable way up the hill, but diverted east to visit a monument.



The memorial & the climb to the summit: Pictures by Colin Shepherd

From there we followed a rough path through bracken at times steeply up the slope until we joined the “official” path to the summit. Creag Dubh is “black rocks” and the path was certainly rocky, just short of a scramble it made for an interesting and none too easy ascent. The Creag part of it refers to a set of superb climbing crags. But we were walking and after some food and water on the summit while enjoying the superb views in the glorious sunshine we continued along the ridge. The ridge was lovely walking, but all too soon we had to descend by some very steep and eroded paths. We exited the hill at Bianaid and found our way to the A86 at the Spey Bridge. Colin had said that Creag Dubh would be a short day and we now followed his master plan to give ourselves a complete contrast in terrain and walk the eastern half of the Wildcat Trail.

This section of the Wildcat Trail follows the banks of the River Spey as it loops from Spey Bridge to rejoin the A86 at the Highland Folk Museum. An option was to visit the museum, but the heat of the day persuaded us to carry on to our final refreshment stop. Ewan and Emma had foregone the second of the two halves and scouted out a pub which was actually open given that our intended target of the Glen Hotel was closed. They found The Apiary, sister establishment of The Apiary in Dalwhinnie and we settled there for some cold beer until it was time for the bus home.

After a string of Ptarmigan days in pretty poor weather, it was nice to get a superb, dry and warm day. (Alex Williamson)



Views to the Cairngorms & the summit of Creag Dubh: Pictures by Colin Shepherd