



Cioch Mountaineering Club (Dunfermline)

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Meet Report: Morvich center, Kintail 3rd / 4th June 2011

With contributions from Brian Mitchell, Dave Paton and Richard Christie

Eighteen attendees made their various ways to Kintail on the Friday night, this was two short of maximum attendance following call off's from Kirsty and Wattie. Although not a full meet it was great to see three new faces: Lorna Duncan, Jim Davidson (no not the comedian) and Scott Barrie (no not the politician). Most people had traveled north to the meet but Richard had spent the previous week in Ullapool and enjoyed a quick, traffic free run south via Achnasheen after a final meal out with friends at the Ceilidh Place. Alison and Bruce had also been on holiday the week before touring the Hebrides and stopped off to camp at Kintail on the way home. Fortunately their tent had survived being blown flat by the gale force winds the previous Wednesday night - forcing a retreat to the kitchen floor of the adjacent hostel. They dropped in to say hello on the Friday night and climbed Sgurr an Airgid on the Saturday morning.



Brian starts off the description of Saturday:

Morvich, has always been one of my favourite venues, and the facilities are hard to beat anywhere, although a few more teaspoons and beer glasses wouldn't go amiss now. With only one Munro to do in the local area, my target for the day was always going to be A' Glas Bheinn. Three years ago I was able to do Ben Attow, but the windy conditions on the day, and having walked the whole of the mountain, meant I didn't do A' Glas Bheinn, and I got the usual slugging from Olly for just doing a part day.

This time with snow showers forecast (I hear laughter), the plan was to go clockwise round A' Glas Bheinn, and if time permitted, to continue and climb Ben Attow again.

As all who were on the meet know the forecast was much better than expected, so who knows how it would work out. It was nice to have a couple of new members along on this meet, but as is the norm, they don't really know anyone, and Scott was unlucky enough to get landed with me. We set off around 10.00am, and proceeded up the track towards the Falls of Glomach. We quickly found out that we had similar jobs in IT, so a quick discussion got that subject out of the way, and the day improved from there. As it turns out, we've also got a very similar number of Munros to finish, so we had had some good tales to exchange. On reaching the stone bridge, there is a long and relentless slog of an ascent to gain the upper plateau of the hill, and after a series of false summits, we eventually found ourselves on the summit some 3 hours after we left Morvich - a good effort for Scott, since he had been out walking the previous day. The visibility was not bad, and we could certainly see Skye and Rum in the distance. We decided that just "the one" was good enough, and we made our way back at quite a leisurely pace, meeting Dave C making his way up from the Bealach, having already been to Ben Attow. The path back reminded me of the made up paths which are becoming all too familiar in our own highlands, and are already all over the hills in the Lake District and Wales. I suppose it's a price you have to pay for popularity, but oh, they're hard on the feet. A cup of tea, a snack and the inevitable refreshing beer at the front door (it's almost becoming a tradition), and we were all set for the evening, which was as enjoyable as ever. Great company, looking forward to next year.



Neil, Stuart, Graeme, Lorna and Jim headed off to climb the Forcan Ridge en route to the Saddle and then on to Sgurr na Sgine. Thankfully the weather was much better than the last time Stuart had climbed these pair of hills when he completed his first round of munros. By all accounts (since Neil has taken a sabbatical from submitting copy for this Newsletter!) all five enjoyed a great day - although the descent from Sgurr na Sgine proved as relentless as ever.



Richard's first duty for the Saturday morning was to act as chauffer giving Steve and Mags a lift to the west end of the South Shiel Ridge. Although Mags has previously climbed these seven munros Steve was a south shiel virgin. Richard then opted for a (mainly) solo day just east of Sgurr na Sgine, tackling two corbetts; Sgurr a Bhac Chaolais and Buidhe Bheinn. Olly happily later informed Richard that Buidhe Bheinn has been deleted – whether this is true or not it is still in the latest version of the SMC Corbetts book and is a very fine view point, whatever its status. A fairly good stalkers path allowed speedy progress on the walk in and climb up to Bealach Duibh Leac between Creag nan Damh and Sgurr a Bhac Chaolais. Richard caught and passed a couple with a very obedient chocolate coloured Labrador en-route – they were heading for the South Shiel Ridge and had stashed a bike at the east end the night before. The cloud was well broken and there were good views towards Knoidart from the summit of the first Corbett. After a quick break Richard then set off on the undulating crescent walk southwards to Buidhe Bheinn. The panoramic views continued as progress was made past a number of lochans demanding regular stops to take photos. Half way along Richard stumbled upon a Ptarmigan and her chicks. Panic stations resulted from this encounter, with the chicks scattering in all directions and their mother doing her best to distract

Richard's attention. The view from the second Corbett was even better, looking directly down Loch Huron towards Ladhar Bheinn and on to Skye and Rum beyond [photo on previous page]. Time for another break and to enjoy the peace and quiet of the apparently remote location - sadly all too soon the return journey had to be started.

A fellow walker was encountered half way back along the ridge just before Richard accidentally stumbled on the ptarmigan family once more – this time the mother bird ran at him hissing loudly which allowed the chicks to safely disperse once more. Richard was back at Bealach Duibh Leac by 15:00 which left plenty of time to tag on Creag nan Damh since the weather remained good. Just as he was descending a short steep section near the top of the munro Richard unexpectedly saw Steve and Mags ahead and was just about to call when his left foot slipped stretching the ankle ligaments further than they wished to stretch. By the time he recovered his composure, and issued a few oaths, Steve and Mags had disappeared out of sight. Failing to then find them at the top Richard headed north to descend as suggested in the munro book - still no sign of Steve and Mags which meant they must have headed east retracing their ascent route – as Richard had recommended to Steve that morning – shame Richard had not followed his own advice! As the steep and slimy north ridge started to ease off, Richard looked over and up to see two figures at the top of the crags guarding access to the start of the stalkers path and the easy way down. Oops Richard had forgotten to tell Steve the far from obvious secret about how to negotiate the crags. Modern technology came to the rescue and a phone call to Mags soon had the pair on an intercepting route to join him at the start of the stalkers path. All that then remained was the tramp down the path and the two deer fences to climb to avoid the forest trap at the bottom. Steve repaid for the morning lift by giving Richard a lift back to his car and then transported a couple of walkers he and Mags had earlier met on the ridge back up to their cars at the Clunie Inn.



Sam Martin and Ernest had also been out on the South Shiel Ridge, climbing the three westerly munros, east to west, having previously bagged the easterly four. They had a good day but on the way down also fell foul of the crags which had sought to thwart Steve and Mags. Olly opted for a shorter day, climbing the single Corbett, Sgurr Mhic Bharraich above Sheil Bridge.

Dave Paton describes a family outing on Ciste Dubh:

It took a lot of persuading but I finally managed to convince Marion to 'do' a Munro. I thought one would be enough so I chose Ciste Dubh, one I had not done since Richard finished his first round when I was still young [*it wasn't that long ago!*]. (Ian Hay almost talked her into doing a neighbouring Corbett as well - a top too far I felt.)



Ian decided to join us for the day. One in which the forecast was not great, but as so often it turned out much better.

We started walking from the Cluanie Inn at 9.00am and set to establish 'Base Camp' just below the coll, where we sat for something to eat. After a bit of route finding at the coll (the path wasn't too obvious) we set up an advanced base camp above the first steep section.

After a bit of acclimatisation we set off for the summit. Ian and Marion chose the direct route, while I took in a minor top (a two minute detour if truth be told). There were a couple of people at the cairn, but we chased them off, where we relaxed for a while, enjoying the view. This was especially good for me as it was my third time here and the first time I actually had a view.

From the top we retraced our route to the car, taking just 9 HOURS IN TOTAL! (is this a record for 1 munro?).

One final note - true to form Marion was up to her knees in mud 100m after leaving the car! - yes, she's hard work (a bit of sympathy for me required here please).



With everyone back at Morvich, as Brian indicates earlier the pleasant evening weather was conducive to sitting outside with a pre meal imbibement righting the wrongs of the world, and there were no midges to be seen (or rather felt). First to drag themselves away were Neil, Dave C and Graeme who headed off to eat at the Kintail Lodge Hotel. Steve, Mags and Richard opted to eat slightly closer and went to the Jack-O-Bite at the end of the road. Whilst possibly not the best name for a restaurant, there was good beer on tap, good house wine, excellent freshly cooked food and great service. The waitress even offered to give them a lift back to Morvich if Mags wanted to have a glass of wine and leave the car.

The weather on Sunday was not so bright and it is assumed most just headed for home – no one has let the editor know anything different anyway.... Another great trip to Kintail however.



Foot Notes:

There was a good turn out for the AGM at the end of May and the following have been elected to the committee:

Dave Paton	— Chairman
Alison Wells	— Vice Chairman
Steve Gray	— Secretary
Jim Donald	— Treasurer
Olly Simpson	— Meets Secretary
Sharon Rankin	— Membership Secretary
Richard Christie	— Newsletter Editor
Samantha Northcott	— Webmaster
Michelle Sweeney	
Neil Anderson	
Brian Mitchell	

[Note subscriptions are now due for the new membership year – beat the surcharge by paying before the end of July.](#)

email contributions to newsletter@cioch.co.uk

Bill Gray's Last Munro

By Joyce Booker

Friday 3rd June dawned bright & sunny and by the time Bill, Joyce & Mark left Fife for Oban the temperature had soared to 24C – a perfect start to a perfect weekend. Mark has been Bill's Munro partner since 1987 & having suffered gales & torrential rain on so many previous occasions, he couldn't believe his luck as he sipped his "Kilt-lifter" beer on the deck of the Mull ferry. The blue sky above Ben More beckoned us, but first we were headed to the Sheiling campsite, beautifully situated overlooking the sea & only 500m from the Craignure Inn, a vital factor in Bill's planning.

We quickly met up with 5 friends from Manchester & Mary from Rannoch who'd already enjoyed adventures of their own & started the party early. Once settled in our own marquee we were ready to greet the other 12 participants arriving from the 6.00pm ferry. Each marquee sleeps 6 en suite, with small kitchen and most importantly a large seating area, where all 21 of us congregated after dinner &, with wine & beer flowing freely, we enjoyed a very jovial reunion till the early hours.

Bill's strict departure time of 8.00am appeared an impossibility but with the aid of Andy's gas BBQ many sausage & bacon rolls were wolfed down & we all set off at 8.10 am! Bill's good friends Andrew & Ron had opted for a cycle along to Fionnport & so enjoyed a much more leisurely start. Later we were green with envy as they were the only ones to see a pod of 20+ pilot whales swim past the campsite.



Iain (our resident piper), Joyce's brother Bill, Steve, Corinne & dog opted for the easy route up & as they waited for the main contingent to arrive, 2 other groups of final Munroists summited. Iain duly piped each of the "compleaters" & all enjoyed the very fine group hospitality as well as the fabulous views.

Meanwhile the main group was very happy to enjoy the bright, clear weather as they tackled the more interesting scrambly route. Although we were a group of experienced walkers it was our novice, Ishbel, who ensured we took our time & fully appreciated the fabulous surroundings. With Iain's pipes playing the final few steps to the top was an emotional time for Bill, nothing to do with mountains, all to do with the company. We celebrated in traditional style with lots

of bubbly & photos, but as the midgies also joined in, we didn't dally too long. We descended via the easy route, all at our own pace, & with the bright sunshine glinting over the water it was a magical end to the walk.

We can highly recommend the food, drink & the particularly good-natured service at the Craignure Inn, a 16th century drover's inn, providing a great dinner to a very lively bunch. Bill received some great cards & presents & we finished our celebration with a proper iced fruit cake with candles(283) & sparklers. The merriment continued back at our tent till we all flaked out about 12.30 am – a very happy bunch!

Once again Sunday was bright & clear and the BBQ breakfast rolls were on offer before people started to head home, some more weary than others. Some of us enjoyed a trip to Iona but as the skies opened late afternoon we soon returned to the pub for dinner. Mary stayed on Mull for a well-earned rest, having just previously completed The Great Outdoors Challenge in the worst weather in the history of the challenge.

On Monday evening Mark flew back down to Bristol. It had been a glorious & eventful weekend & one we'll all remember for a long time, probably more for the mirth & laughter in good company than for the mountain. Bill's sense of achievement was perfectly complemented by that of our novices Ishbel & brother Bill. A fitting end to the completion of Bill's Munros.

