



Cioch Mountaineering Club (Dunfermline)

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A bumper double issue!

Meet Report #1: Inver Croft, Achnasheen – 2nd / 3rd September 2011

With contributions from Pamela Binny, Dennis Cowan, Richard Christie and Michelle Sweeney.

A possible 17 attendees had shrunk a bit by the time everyone had wandered into Inver Croft on the Friday evening. This was still a good number since there were other attractions happening the same weekend. It was probably just as well there were not 17 since the potential overflow sleeping space in the 'byre' ended up being occupied on the Friday night by a Jacobite and five guests who were up to take part in the Bealach na Ba cycle event that weekend. This explained why the car park of the Ledgowan Hotel had been full of cars with bicycle laden roof racks when Richard drove past on the Friday evening. First to arrive had been Jim D and Michelle (complete with bag of coal), last to arrive was John W – the full attendance list was something like: Jim D, Michelle, Pam, Lorna, Dennis, Richard (with second bag of coal), John R, John W, Ian H, Jim Davidson and prospective new member Eddie [*there may have been even more but I can't remember and Jim D has since lost the booking list!*]. This visit there was no key broken in the lock for the solar lighting so no major electrical rewiring work was required which allowed everyone to settle in for a night of pleasant conversation in front of a warming fire.

First out of the door on Saturday were Dennis, Pam and Richard who were all heading to Attadale as described below by Dennis and then Pamela.

SUCCESS IS TWICE AS GOOD WHEN YOU HAVE PREVIOUSLY FAILED by Dennis Cowan

At the Inver Meet last year, Neil and I set off from Attadale to climb Lurg Mhor and Bidein a' Choire Sheasgaich, popularly known as Cheesecake. These two Munros are regarded by some as the remotest Munros and a bike is definitely needed on the rough track from Attadale to Bendronaig Lodge. However Neil and I cycled on past the Lodge and on to Loch Calavie. It was a long hard cycle for me as I hadn't been on my bike for about three years. After a bite to eat we set off up the hill only for me to realise that I wasn't going to make it due to the exertions of the long cycle in. I sensibly (as I convinced myself afterwards) decided to return to Attadale leaving Neil to proceed on his own.



That was a major disappointment for me, and as soon as I knew that Olly had booked Inver for September in 2011, I decided that I would have another attempt by the same route. The day duly came, unfortunately coinciding with Sharon's party, but my mind had been made up the year before.

On a wet morning I set off from Inver for the half hour drive to Attadale. It was raining but not as heavy as it had been earlier in the morning and the forecast was that the weather would improve as the day progressed. Richard and Pamela arrived at the car park soon after me as they were also heading in to Bendronaig Lodge to climb the Corbett of the same name. I realised that I had left my mobile behind and Richard lent me his with the intention that I would call Pamela when I reached the summit of Cheesecake, in order to give some indication of my arrival time back at the Lodge.

As I had a longer day ahead of me I set off before them expecting that they would soon catch up, but by the time I reached the Lodge some 12km and an hour and three quarters later, they were nowhere to be seen. However that may have been because I wasn't wearing my glasses due to the rain that was still falling. Not to worry, the weather will soon improve.

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This time my plan was to leave my bike at the Lodge and walk the next 4km or so to Loch Calavie, rather than continue cycling on the increasingly rough and steep track. As soon as I reached the Lodge, I secured the bike and



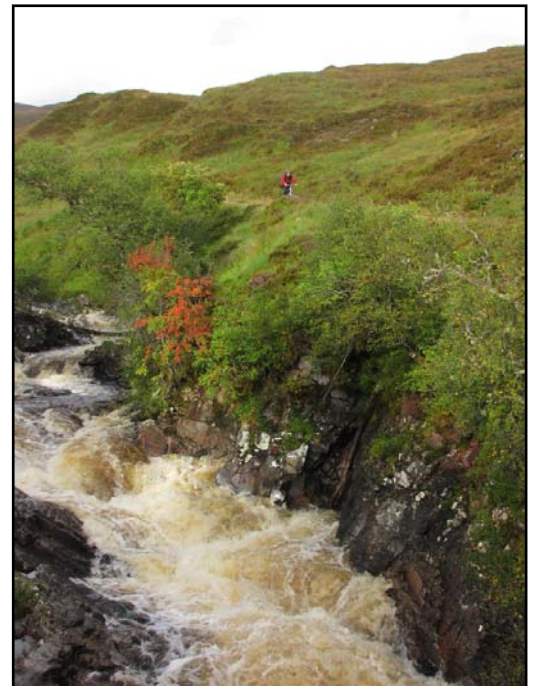
set off on foot. I soon reached the rickety footbridge over the Allt Coire na Sorna which had a significant number of its wooden planks missing. I remember having some difficulty in getting my bike over there the year previously, however no problem this time. It took another three quarters of an hour to reach Loch Calavie, much loved apparently by fishermen. It was still raining. Not to worry, the weather will soon improve.

It was now about mid-day so I had a quick bite to eat before setting off up the pathless hillside following alongside one of the rivers tumbling down to the loch below. The climb up to the bealach between the two Munros was uneventful and as I reached it I turned right, heading up to Lurg Mhor first. There was a path of sorts

now and again, but mostly I was walking through grass and scattered rocks. If there was a good path, I missed it. A short distance before the summit, three walkers appeared before me on their way back down from the summit. Their intention was to carry on to Cheesecake like me, but they were lucky enough to have got a lift into Bendronaig Lodge as they were holidaying in one of the estate cottages.

I got to the top at two o'clock, four and a half hours since leaving my car. I took a quick photo of the summit cairn before immediately heading back to the bealach. It was still raining, but not to worry, the weather will soon improve.

I was soon back down at the bealach and I headed up towards Cheesecake. There was a slightly better path this time and I reached the summit at ten past three. Richard's phone had a strong signal, so I called Pamela to say that I would be back at the Lodge at five o'clock. However she obviously didn't have a signal as I couldn't get through. I reckoned that she and Richard would probably be at the Lodge by now. I took a quick photo of the summit and it was raining even heavier now, but not to worry, the weather will soon improve.



As I headed back down to the bealach once more I bumped into the three walkers that I had chatted to on Lurg Mhor. How did I get ahead of them? We chatted again, but the youngest of the two women looked a bit wobbly by this time. Their intention was to return to the Lodge by going down the south west ridge and over Sail Riabhach, but I was returning by my outward route.

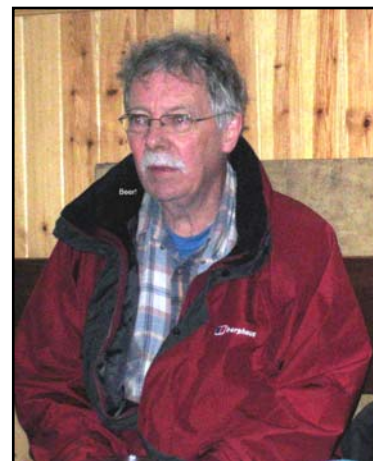
It didn't take too long to get back to the bealach and then down towards Loch Calavie. The river that I was following down the hillside was a raging torrent by now and I began to wonder if the two rivers that flowed into the loch would give me any problems, as I was on the wrong side of them. I had no problem on my way in as there were ample crossing points, but as I got down to the lochside I saw that there was no dry way of crossing so I had to wade knee deep through them. It was still raining and by now I had lost complete faith in the forecast.

As I approached the Lodge at five o'clock I saw that Richard and Pamela were still there waiting for me ensuring that I had got off the hills safely. Then they buggered off! I thought that it was extremely kind of them to wait there for two hours or so and I would only have held them up even more on the long cycle back out. The Lodge is at about 200m and the path back out climbs to 350m before the long downhill stretch begins. Parts of it are very steep on loose stones and with tight zigzags so I seemed to have my brakes on full for a significant part of the descent.

On my way back, the vehicle that took the walkers to the Lodge was returning for them. The driver stopped and I chatted to him for about five minutes and told him that I had left them at just after three o'clock as they were approaching the summit of Cheesecake. He said that they had arranged to meet at six o'clock, but they never overtook me before I eventually reached the locked gate at the cottages and the very welcome smooth track back to the car park, which I reached at a quarter to seven.

Sod's Law, the weather was now improving - the rain had stopped and I could see some hints of blue sky and the tops of some of the surrounding hills. I had been away for over nine hours, it had rained continuously and I had not had any views at all.

But I had been successful and I was rather pleased with myself. I can certainly vouch for the fact that success is twice as good when you have previously failed!



LONELY BEINN DRONAIG by Pamela Binny

Wet! Wet! Wet!... but we knew it would be. MWIS had prepared us for the fact that it was to be a dreich morning followed by a dry period in the afternoon with a 30% chance of cloud-free Munros.



Three of us set off from Attadale, in the rain, for the gruelling 12k cycle to Beinn Dronaig Lodge and bothy. Dennis was set for a rematch with Sheasgaich and Lurg Mhor (a year in the planning after a trial run at last year's Inver meet). Richard and I planned Beinn Dronaig Corbett. Dennis arrived at the start point first and set off promptly, convinced that we would catch up... we didn't! I had woken up that morning with a cold and sore throat (a convenient excuse!) and Richard kindly waited for me to trudge up the hairpin bends. After 12k and a lot of height gain, I began to see how this hill had earned its name in the poem 'Lonely Beinn Dronaig'. As we approached

the bothy, we caught a glimpse of Dennis in the distance striding into battle.

After a change into dry clothes and a leisurely lunch in comfort of the bothy, we set off, in the rain, to climb the steep ascent to the summit. Anyone who has walked with Richard will know that, when it comes to patience, no saint can compare. Although I suspect, due to a forthcoming trip to Nepal, he would have liked to increase the distance between him and my cold bug, once again, he kindly waited to allow me to catch up! At last, the summit... and it was still raining. So far, the only redeeming feature of this hill was the tick (✓) at the top! Are you feeling inspired to climb Beinn Dronaig!? No hanging around, we began our descent. It always amazes me how when you reverse the bearing, a great big crag that you successfully avoided on the way up, appears from nowhere! Not to worry, it provided an interesting descent (a bit of down-climbing, up-climbing, down-climbing etc, etc) and before we knew it we were back at the bothy. What do ya know... it was still raining and our first set of clothes were still soaking. We peered through the bothy windows at the never-ceasing rain (had I mentioned that it was raining?!) and waited for Dennis.



Amazingly, 5pm (still officially afternoon MWIS informed me when I phoned to complain!), the sun came out and Dennis appeared, victorious in battle and very happy. We were indignant to hear that he had met three walkers who had arranged a lift both ways (Attadale to Beinn Dronaig Lodge). I mean what self-respecting Munro-bagger

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would allow him or herself to be driven up a perfectly good track! We set off home sweet home. The cycle back was terrific, the view glorious and all was well with the world until.... Richard, in an attempt to do a bit of one-handed stunt riding while cycling downhill, had an altercation with a large stone and came to grief, banging his knee (that's the one he needs for the forthcoming trip to Nepal remember!). Much to his relief, no-one saw him, not even me because I was in front by that stage (Ha!).

It's been a long time since I was so glad to see the car. Mind you, after drying out, a huge feed and appropriately rehydrated, it didn't seem that bad after all. That evening, in front of the log fire, we invented a game called 'Name this Person'. Every time someone said "It's so quiet", the reply would come "Yeah, its bliss". Then someone would utter a strong expletive in an Olly-like accent and the place would erupt. Olly, we all said how much we missed you!!!

[Michelle later identified the cause of the crash – Richard had been attempting to pull up the zip of his jacket at the same time as cycling – apparently it is a well known fact that men can't multi task? Fortunately the knee only suffered superficial grazing / bruising and Richard also successfully avoided catching Pam's cold so 16 day's walking in Nepal were unaffected and were greatly enjoyed – the front wheel of the bike is slightly out of true now however!]



The next futherest traveled person was Jim Davidson who was also making best use of his bike – in his case it was to cycle in from Craig for a successful ascent of Maoile Lunndaidh. The two John's, R & W, opted for a shorter day and climbed Moruisg. Ian Hay and prospective new member Eddie also headed for Moruisg but the bad weather forced them to turn back not far from the summit. Michelle and Jim D had set off for a circular, lower level walk from Coulags but ended up deciding to climb Ah Ruadh-stac, later vowing to climb the hill again on a good day. Lorna had wanted to climb Sgorr Ruadh but decided to give this a miss due to the weather and visited the Attadale Gardens instead. As Pamela mentions the evening was spent in enthusiastic conversation mostly by just the light of the fire.

The weather on Sunday was the opposite of Saturday with lots of sun and well broken cloud. Jim D, Michelle and Richard decided to climb the Corbett Fuar Tholl via the good stalker's path leading up from Achnashellach Station. They enjoyed a great day with extensive views and all were impressed by Fuar Tholl. Michelle set a good pace on the way in and an even faster pace on the way out meaning they were back at the cars well before 14:00. Lorna returned to plan 'A' and climbed Sgorr Ruadh. Jim Davidson and Eddie also set off to take advantage of the improved weather by climbing Moruisg however they decided to turn back short of the summit. In light of her cold Pamela opted to have a quite day on Sunday and headed off to see friends in Glen Roy where she was due to meet husband Jonathon later in the week.



[Suplimentary report on Sharon's Birthday Bash Weekend by Neil Anderson

Saturday Day

Joyce and Dave P left pretty early, 9 ish (well it was a very relaxed weekend) and done Ben Vorlich and Stuc a'Chroin. After a very leisurely start to the morning Sharon provided the lift from Comrie Croft to park a few hundred yards beyond the Lawers group NTS carpark. Sharon, Sam, Vicky and Neil set out for a nice easy afternoon stroll to the summit of Meall nan Tarmachan. The low cloud gradually elevated to allow 50% of the 2 hour walk up to the 1044m cairn to be achieved in blustery dry conditions. The fact that the cloud never properly cleared was the main reason the ridge was left for a better day, in favour of the group's swift return by the ascent route, followed by a tasty late lunch in the Shutters Restaurant in Killin. Brian and Jane done Ben Chonzie. Marion and Maureen done a low level rural walk near the River Earn that peaked in a nice cake shop in Crieff High Street.

Saturday Night

The Cioch was well represented during an energetic evening of ceilidh dancing to celebrate Sharon's 50th birthday.

Sunday Morning

The weather was significantly better on Sunday morning (as per forecast) and Alison & Bruce had designs on a traverse of the Tarmachan Ridge. Out of respect for the copious quantities of alcohol consumed the previous night, everyone else had a very relaxed start to the morning and eventually headed home after breakfast.]]

Meet Report #2: Sail Mhor Croft – 30th September / 1st October 2011

With contributions from Neil Anderson and Dave Paton

There were 17 people on the meet; Jim D, Stuart, Michelle, Pamela, Ian Hay, Olly, Dave P, Dave T, John R, Neil, Sharon, Steve, Mags, Chris, Janice, David C and Vicky S. With only 16 beds inside the hostel, a well prepared Michelle was happy to camp on the lawn outside the hostel.

Friday
Neil and Sharon left Fife at 8am Friday and drove to Loch Quoich to bag Gairich on a windy day before eventually arriving at Sail Mhor at 8 pm. Despite optimistic use of sun block, Gairich proved to be a long hard grind with several hours of heavy rain during the long trek from the dam to summit and back. Much of the low level walk proved to be very boggy [*strangely most people make similar comments about this particular hill...*] and low cloud prevented any anticipated views from the summit. Stuart, Jim and Michelle left Fife early and climbed some hills on Friday as well, but it is not known which ones.

Saturday
Despite Michelle's earlier declaration to go no where near 'Am F*ck Off' ever again, Jim, Michelle and Stuart did do Am Faochagach and Cona'Mheall. David C climbed An Teallach. Steve, Mags and Vicky climbed Beinn Laith Mhor Fannaich and Sgurr Mor – which completed the Fannichs set for Steve and Mags. Dave P, Olly, Dave T and John R climbed the Fannichs: Sgurr nan Each, Sgurr nan Clach Geala and Meall a' Chrasgaidh – see Dave's report which follows.

Neil and Sharon went down to Craig with bikes and cycled in to climb Maoile Lunndaigh in rain free conditions. A 90 minute push/cycle up the track was followed by a 160 minute hike anticlockwise up round the cloud shrouded corrie to the massive flat summit area of Maoile Lunndaigh for lunch. The slightly longer walk down past the ruin then lodge was followed by a very rapid 45 minute cycle back down some very steep sections of track to Craig.

There wasn't much sunshine around, most people spent a lot of time in low cloud with only Chris acknowledging a bit of a view from a summit.

Sunday
Neil, Sharon and Jim headed home. Pamela, Michelle and Stuart had plans to do something in Torridon area then camp Sunday night. Other's plans are not known.

Other snippets from Sail Mhor:

- Chris only has around 50 munros to go to complete round number 4!
- Stuart brought out a very smooth bottle of malt on Saturday evening that was much appreciated by all those who took a sample.
- Sharon brought a little keg of birthday beer that went down a treat with Chris and Neil on Saturday night.
- Steve and Mags are both approximately half way on there first round of munros.
- There seemed to be a lot of people with ailments on Saturday evening; Dave P got a minor injury after falling on the hill, Olly walked back into the hostel on Saturday like an old cripple and Vicky was a bit deaf (apparently not caused by listening to Steve all day).
- With 28 left to do, Neil is hoping to finish his final munro on the Invergarry Meet in September 2012.

Dave Paton fills in some gaps as follows:

I spent the weekend pretty much joined at the hip to Olly, John R. and Dave T as we travelled, walked, ate and drank with each other. However, at least I'm not married to them!



Anyhoo, to our walk. After our unseasonable, extremely hot weather in the week leading up to the trip, I had hoped for a good weekend's walking (I even packed shorts, hat and sunglasses! - *that's what put the kybosh on the weather then*). Unfortunately the forecast was not too great. After a promising start (see photo), where I thought that the cloud might break up and give us some views, it clagged in and we spent much of the day walking in mist, some of it pretty thick.

Our plan was to do three of 'the Fannichs'; Sgurr nan Each, Sgurr nan Clach Geala and Meall a' Chrasgaidh. As I hinted it started off pleasant enough, in fact the tops were clear, there was no wind and it was
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pretty warm. Unfortunately by the time we reached Bealach to the West of our tops the cloud had fallen ending our chance of good views on top.

It was at this time we spotted a figure descending from the high bealach towards us. At first we thought it was someone who had had an early start. Actually it was Janice, who had started out with Chris earlier to do the same tops, she had sensibly decided that it wasn't the day for it.

However, it was with dogged determination that we plodded on into the mist to do the first two tops on what was a pretty miserable day (mind you, at least it didn't rain). The only notable thing to happen was that I slipped and fell descending from Sgurr nan Clach Geala. At first I thought I had torn a muscle (it was bloody sore!) and would have to get down as best I could. It was awkward to start with, as I found it difficult to bend the leg (not easy coming down then), but by the time I had reached the next bealach it had eased and walking on the level and gentle climbing wasn't too bad. The thought of coming back to do the last (and pretty boring) Munro didn't appeal so I decided to do it there and then. After all I was going to have to descend almost as far if I had started down from the bealach.

We did actually get a view from the last top, as it finally cleared a bit. Not great but a view!

Descending was everything I thought it might be, and coming down a particularly steep section took a while and I was glad to get down to more level ground and head back to the car.

The rest of the night was a fish supper in Ullapool then too much beer, wine and a little Whisky, followed by not enough sleep before heading down the road on Sunday.

Foot Notes:

- ☺ Remember the Autumn Tiso discount nights are approaching fast on the 25th October and 1st November.
- ☺ Annual Photo Competition –
 - ✚ It is time once more to start looking out your entries for the annual photo competition.
 - ✚ As per last year, all photos have to have been taken either after or during the weekend of the 2010 Christmas meet.
 - ✚ There are FIVE categories for 2011: Scottish Winter [has to have snow in it], Scottish Summer [must not have snow in it!], Cioch People, Open and [new category Nature](#) [no Olly not naturist]
 - ✚ Prints of your entries, up to A4 in size, should be given to Richard C either before or by 21:15 at the latest on the Friday evening of the Christmas Meet. Mark your name, the category entered and either 'Y' or 'N' on the back of your entry.
 - ✚ The judging of the five category winners will be on the Friday evening and then the overall winner will be judged during the Saturday evening meal.
 - ✚ Following the success of last year Dennis proposes to arrange for a Cioch Calendar to be printed using a selection of the best of the entries from the photo competition – the 'Y' or 'N' is to indicate whether you agree to your photo being considered for inclusion in the calendar. The hope is to have the Calendar printed in time for Christmas so it would help greatly if you could also either supply a CD with your photo(s) on or email them to Dennis.

