



# Cioch Mountaineering Club (Dunfermline)

Established 1988

## Newsletter #33

### February 2012

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## Meet Report: Strathspey Hostel, Newtonmore, 13<sup>th</sup> / 14<sup>th</sup> January 2012

After being let down by the hut custodian succeeding in double booking the Muir of Inverey, Olly managed to book the Strathspey Hostel in Newtonmore as an alternative at fairly short notice. It is a few years since the club has been to Newtonmore - which used to be the traditional February meet venue – the Strathspey Hostel does not have the character of the Muir but there was some compensation from having pubs in easy walking distance. There were a few call offs as a result of the change of venue but these places were gratefully taken up by the reserves.

With a good forecast for the Friday, Wattie and Richard set off at 08:00 to make the most of the weekend. They opted to climb the Graham Creag Dhubh just south west of Newtonmore for something different but not too taxing. After parking beside a partially frozen Lochain Uvie they set off steeply up the hillside over some large bolder scree skirting round the popular climbing crags. The sky was blue and the views from the summit were as good as they had hoped for. They varied the descent by visiting the monument which is visible from the A9 and were still back at the car shortly before 14:00. Unfortunately this was too early to get into the Hostel, the



door was locked and there was no answer from either of the phone

numbers Olly had been given. There was nothing for it but head to Aviemore for a coffee and an acceptably large slice of Victoria Sponge. Back at the Hostel there was still no answer on the phones so they settled in to wait. After 20 minutes, Wattie decided to try the door once again – just in case - and found it was open this time.... Then as they were unloading their gear the cleaner arrived with a car full of dogs having been out walking her and the Hostel owner's dog. She had come by earlier to pick up the dog, open up the Hostel and put the heating on so at least it was nice and warm.



Jim and Jamie were also walking on Friday but had a more leisurely start arriving at Bolsporron Cottages just before 2 o'clock.

Jamie takes up the story. There were clear skies and luckily it was frozen underfoot. Reaching the top of Geal Charn in just over an hour there were great views all round in particular to the Alder range. We decided to head to A'Mharconaich even though we knew we would be coming off the hill in the dark. There were some cracking sunset shots taken on the camera as we descended off the north ridge getting back to the car at half five.

The living room fire was lit and starting to emit a welcoming glow (along with a fair bit of smoke) when Steve and Mags arrived. Every time they opened the porch door as they brought their stuff in a nice cloud of smoke was sucked out into the room. Evening meals were eaten and dishes washed by the time the other attendees rolled in: Olly, John W, John R, Dave P, Neil, Sharon, Iain Hay, Cath Guest, Jamie, Jim D, Jan, Brian M, Stuart Orr, Jenny Sharp. Jean and Alan Turner were also in Newtonmore as 'satellite' meet attendees staying B&B in The Glen Hotel.



Sadly the clear skies of Friday were replaced by thick cloud hanging around at about munro level on Saturday morning – but at least it was dry and not blowing a gale! First out of the Hostel at around 07:15 were Neil and Sharon who had the most adventurous plan for the day, in support of Neil's bagging requirements: Beinn na Lap, Chino Dearg and Stob Coire Sgriodain.

Neil Reports: Arriving at Tulloch Station at 8:11 am, Neil and Sharon were aboard the 8:13 am train south to Corroul before they had time to tie their boot laces. Buying one way tickets before alighting 400 m above sea level around 8:30, they were soon picking up the pace in an effort to escape an over attentive canine stick carrier [better than an over attentive ankle biter!]. With almost no breeze, a gentle slope and good visibility below 850 m, easy progress was made on the 2 hour saunter to the Beinn na Lap cairn (935 m). Heading due west almost on the fall line they dropped below 600 m to cross Allt Feith Thuill before turning NNE into a rising traverse up over Meall Garbh to Chino Dearg (1046 m), arriving around 1:40 pm after a little crampon action and a lunch break. Now continuously in poor visibility with a cooling wind, the compass needle was followed to reach Stob Coire Sgriodain (979 m) around 3 pm. Gratefully, the cloud base was still 850 m, well above the crags on the way off, allowing an easy descent to the railway bridge at Fersit before dark. Tulloch Station was reached at 5:30 pm after a 2k hike up the railway in the dark - no trains were encountered. Not surprisingly Neil and Sharon were the second last to arrive back on Saturday evening.



There were two main groups who set out on Saturday; Olly, Dave P, Stuart Orr, Jenny Sharp, Cath and John R who tackled Geal Charn, the western Munro of the Mondaliath group. Unfortunately the cloud was down so no views from the summit but at least Cath managed to arrange everyone for a summit cairn group photo.



The other group outing was to the Creag Meagaidh group which involved Richard, Wattie, Mags, Steve, John W and Brian M. The aim was to start by climbing Carn Liath and then see how far they could get. The going was initially good on the well maintained path heading into Coire Ardair with Mags striding out in front – straight past the faint turn off uphill towards Carn Liath. They were soon all back on the right route which was a mixture of icy mud and squidge under foot. Higher up this changed to hard ground with a slight snow cover and then on into the cloud. There was a bit of a cold breeze at the summit cairn so they did not hang around setting off west along the undulating ridge towards Stob Poite Coire Ardair with Steve pointing to way with his preprogrammed GPS. The first of the two gullies in the ridge

provided enough shelter to allow a stop for lunch and a short rest. The snow cover was quite thin thanks to all the gales in January so they had to watch where feet were placed on the stony ridge. Climbing out of the second gully presented a slight challenge with a small cornice to be negotiated which saw John W resort to some step cutting. As the second munro summit came into view the cloud started to break a bit and there were atmospheric views of cloud imitating a waterfall on the slopes of Creag Meagaidh. Three fellow walkers with two dogs walked up from the direction of the Window having climbed Creag Meagaidh after a bit of a struggle to find the summit. One of the dogs (a Boxer) turned out to be a munro compleatest and the other (a Westie) had climbed 107 – not bad going for short legs.



Looking at the time the group decided to leave Creag Meagaidh for another, hopefully better, day and headed to descend via the Window. Crampons were the order of the day for the descent since all the snow that was not on the ridge was lying in the Window. On the way down they stopped to look over to the climbers on a couple of routes. After another rest stop beside the lock at the base of the Window all that was left to do was stroll out of the Corie on the excellent path. Although easy going it still took some time before the buildings at Aberarder came into view. The heated toilet beside the interpretation building at Aberarder was awarded top marks by Steve.

Ian Hay had a solo walk up the easterly two Mondaliaths, A'Chailleach and Carn Sgulain. He had a good day but came back with a warning for fellow walkers. Due to the low cloud Ian had to use his compass and started to follow its heading

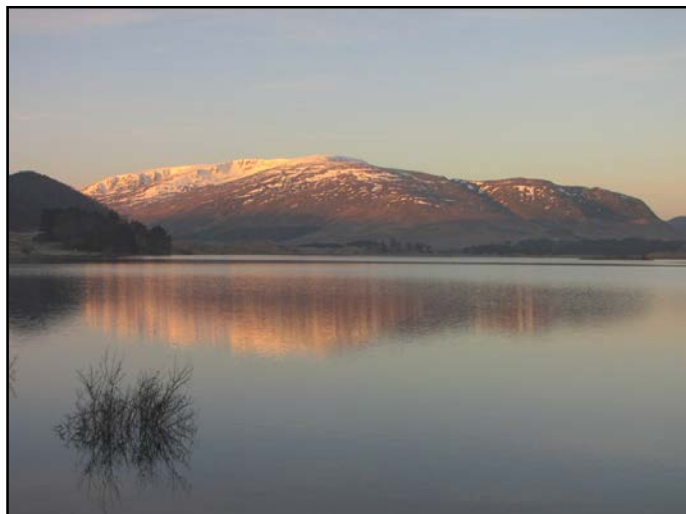


when he felt something was not quite right. Fortunately he was carrying a spare compass and when he compared the two he found the older of the two had reversed its polarity and was trying to take him 180 degrees from where he needed to go. So before you next venture out - check your compass and make sure it is still pointing true.

Jan was happy to be away on a club meet again having had to cancel her last outing thanks to a bad cold. However since she had not been out walking for a while she opted for the 'Wildcat' trail around Newtonmore and a visit to the local café.

Earlier in this newsletter it was suggested that Neil and Sharon had the most adventurous day planned – however Jim D was on the meet and had a willing victim, sorry accomplice in Jamie – as Jamie explains:

On the Saturday we went to the east of the A9 to Aviemore which early on looked to be the best choice for the day as we quickly got above the clouds and could see the west would be covered in clag for the rest of the troops. We headed off to Ben Macdui first of all which had great views over to Angels Peak and Braeraich. Once reaching the top it was decision time, how big a day would we like to have, Beinn Mheadhoin was the next target. Walking over a frozen Loch Etchachan we had a quick photo stop before ascending Mheadhoin. Once reaching the top we decided to climb the frozen Torr, I found it a bit difficult as my winter boots struggled for grip but eventually got there. We descended down the very steep slopes, which required crampons, into Loch Avon. Time was getting on so any thoughts of adding Bynack More were scuppered as we ascended up the steep slopes of the Saddle. We finally got to the summit of Cairn Gorm at 16.45. We could see a number of walkers descending into the coire picking up the bulldozer track which we followed finally arriving back at the car at ten to six. This was my first adventure into the Cairngorms and although it was a tough day I was delighted to get brilliant weather and conditions. I can't wait to go back [ah the enthusiasm of youth!].



The numbers staying in the hostel on the Saturday night were reduced by two since Stuart Orr & Jenny Sharp, who had got a lift up with Cath, opted to take the train home on Saturday evening. They couldn't face another night in the company of the thunderous snoring team of Dave P and Jim D!

It turned out that Stuart and Jenny were not the only people associated with the Club who were on the train. Jean Turner turned out to also be a passenger. She and Alan had walked in with the aim of climbing A'Chailleach. Unfortunately on the way Alan came a cropper thanks to the icy ground and fell his length. Fortunately he was unhurt by the fall but they turned back later on when his ankle started to get sore. They were still happy with their day until they got back to the car and Alan went to take the keys out of his top coat pocket and they weren't there. The only explanation was that the keys had fallen out of the unzipped pocket when he fell. It was too late to go back up the hill and look for them so they phoned the hotel who kindly organized for a taxi to come up to the car park and pick them up. There was just time for Jean to then catch the train back to Dunfermline, pick up the spare keys and get the later return train back up the Newtonmore. Alan explained all this when he joined Wattie, Jan and Richard who had opted for an evening meal at the Glen. Also eating out were Neal, Sharron, Jim and Jamie who were on the adjacent table in the dining room.

Back at the Hostel there was a choice of cake – ASDA reduced price ‘Cheeky Monkey’ chocolate cake provided by Brian M [who turned out to be a bit of an ‘animal’ when he dissected it] and home baked cake provided by Sharon. After sampling some cake a few of the group headed back for a nightcap at the pub in time to greet Jean arrived back safe and sound at 22:30 for a well-earned refreshment. Mags and Steve arranged to give Jean and Alan a lift to pick up their car in the morning.

The thick cloud had gone by the time Sunday morning so Wattie and Richard left bright and early to climb a small hill on the south side of the Spey Dam which offered good views down the length of Lock Lagan. The good views as they drove in past the Spay Dam were sadly watered down by a bank of high cloud which drifted in from the east by the time the trig point at the summit was reached - certainly a hill to return to on a better day. Cath also decided to walk on Sunday climbing Sgor Gaioth which, being a bit further east was unaffected by the cloud bank. Her start was delayed a bit until she had sorted out a problem of the driver’s side window of her car which had frozen up.



### Cioch Winter Slide Show Programme 2011 – 2012

Date	Show	Date	Show	Date	Show
15/12/11	Wattie Ramage: Same Old - Oct 2010 - Sept 2011	05/01/12	John Warnock: Cioch the Infotainment 2011	26/01/12	Richard Christie: Dolpo - Nepal's trekking secret
16/02/12	Jim Donald: Atlas Mountains	08/03/12	Dave Paton: Elements – Live	22/03/12	Chris Butcher: Picos de Europa

**Thinking Ahead:** the Club will be 25 years old next year and it has been suggested that this could be a good excuse for a celebration. One suggestion is that we organize a special meet along the lines of the twentieth anniversary meet at Inchnadamph – if you have any suggestions please let a member of the committee know.

### 2012 Meet Dates

13 <sup>th</sup> / 14 <sup>th</sup> January	Strathspey Bunkhouse, Newtonmore	Full
3 <sup>rd</sup> / 4 <sup>th</sup> February	Lagangarbh, Glencoe	Full
9 <sup>th</sup> / 10 <sup>th</sup> March	Aite Cruinnichidh, Roybridge	Possibly 3 places
13 <sup>th</sup> / 14 <sup>th</sup> April	Inver Croft, Achnasheen	Full
4 <sup>th</sup> / 5 <sup>th</sup> / 6 <sup>th</sup> May	Strontian, Ardgour	Full but possibly could book more
8 <sup>th</sup> / 9 <sup>th</sup> June	Sligachan Bunkhouse, Skye	Booking opens: 15 <sup>th</sup> March
13 <sup>th</sup> / 14 <sup>th</sup> July	Ling Hut, Torridon (note date change!)	Booking opens: 19 <sup>th</sup> April
10 <sup>th</sup> / 11 <sup>th</sup> August	Causewayfoot Farm, Keswick	Booking opens: 10 <sup>th</sup> May
7 <sup>th</sup> / 8 <sup>th</sup> September	Invergarry Bunkhouse	Booking opens: 14 <sup>th</sup> June
5 <sup>th</sup> / 6 <sup>th</sup> October	Sail Mhor, Dundonnell	Booking opens: 12 <sup>th</sup> July
2 <sup>nd</sup> / 3 <sup>rd</sup> November	Mill Cottage, Feshiebridge	Booking opens: 15 <sup>th</sup> Aug
7 <sup>th</sup> / 8 <sup>th</sup> December	Onich (Christmas Meet)	Booking opens: 13 <sup>th</sup> Sept