



Cioch Mountaineering Club (Dunfermline)

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Meet Report: Muir of Inver, Braemar, 10th & 11th April

Contributions: Dave Paton and Richard Christie

Dave starts of the story of the Muir meet:

Taking the advantage of my holiday I set off quite early with the plan to do Ben Avon and Beinn a'Bhuird. I was persuaded to cycle despite the suspect nature of my brakes. It proved to be a good plan as it did save me a lot of time and walking. Unfortunately the brakes proved to be even worse than I had thought, with me on the bike and the added momentum, they didn't work at all! I had to get off the bike even for the downhill parts or risk death. Fortunately the path was pretty flat and I did save me a lot of time. I did mean that I couldn't cycle as far as I might have done and it gave me a much longer walk.



Anyway it was a good day for it and the path was good. Obviously a lot of work had been done on it since my last visit and it made me wonder how much time I could have saved if I could have taken the bike further.

At the big rock (Clach a'Chleirich) I decided to head straight up rather than head for The Sneck. It was a bit of a slog but I soon made more level ground and the going became much easier, just a plod to the summit tarn. By the time I got there they wind was much stronger and the scramble to the top was not pleasant. Of course the inevitable happened, I looked across at another part of the tarn and convinced myself that it was higher. So I had to climb that as well, only to find that once I had done it the first top looked higher anyway. Oh well better

save than sorry.

The wind seemed to drop again as I made my way back to The Sneck, meeting my first walker as I was about half way there. At The Sneck I decided that I would just head for the bike and out (lazy or what!).

The other people out walking on the Friday were Jim Donald and Dave Thomas who climbed two Corbetts. They started off with Creag nan Gabhar lying between Glen Clunie and Glen Callater and then drove round to Glen Muick to climb Conachcraig beside Lochnagar.

First to actually arrive at the Cairngorm Club Hut – although calling the Muir of Inver a hut does it a severe injustice – were Steve and Mags. They were in the process of unloading their car when Wattie and Richard arrived. Next across the threshold were Kenny and Cath who were joined during the rest of the evening by: John W, Neil, Sharon, Vicky, Steve Gadd, Olly and new member Chris Selly. There two unfilled places when John R and David Currie had to call off at the last minute. Also in the area were new member Jim who was B&B'ing and Karen & Gillian who were in a chalet in Braemar.



Jim D and Dave T were up at the crack of dawn on Saturday, Jim having persuaded Dave to join in one of his 'epics'. They were first out and last back having had a long day climbing three munros: Beinn Bhreac, Beinn a'Chaorainn and then over to Beinn a'Bhuird [*not a combination I had ever thought of*]. Dave was chuffed but a bit knackered by the end of the day.

Attempting the more normal combination of Beinn Bhreac and Beinn a'Chaorainn were Neil & Sharon who were joined by Samantha and Martin, who drove up for the day from Blairgowrie having stayed with Martin's parents on the Friday night. Bicycles were used for the in and out to Derry Lodge.

email contributions to newsletter@cioch.co.uk

The other main group target for the Saturday were various combinations of The Devil's Point, Cairn Toul and Angels Peak with Steve Gadd, Chris, Jim (who had driven up from Dunfermline on the Saturday morning) and John W all heading off on bicycles towards White Bridge – but not all at the same time. Jim was the first to return having turned back from the climb up deep snow towards The Devil's Point, unfortunately he had to check into his B&B before 6pm which was a bit of a pain but he returned to the Muir later on equipped with a Pietsa. John W was next back also having retreated thanks to the snow. The other two [I think] successfully ticked off The Devils Point and Carn Toul but passed on Angels Peak.

Dave P fills in the details of his and Olly's Saturday:

I decided on an easier day for Saturday and headed, with Olly to do a Corbett just west of the Linn of Dee, Sgor Mor. On hind-sight we didn't pick the best of routes and in truth it was a bit of a plod until we reached the top. However, we were rewarded with fantastic views of the high Cairngorms. Unfortunately it was much colder than the Friday and quite windy. Still we managed to find some shelter and were able to relax a bit near the summit.

For our return we decided to follow the 'ridge'. The going was much easier with the wind at our back but we did get a couple of heavy snow showers. Fortunately they didn't last long and overall it was quite a pleasant day.

Steve and Mags had a good day climbing An Sococh before heading off back to Dunfermline later on Saturday afternoon.



Finally, Wattie and Richard decided to have a short easy day with a gentle wander up Glen Callater to climb Carn an t-Sagairt Mor. Quick progress was made walking up the vehicle track to Lochcallater Lodge. They were greeted on the approach to the lodge by a large barking dog and walking poles were at the ready had it not stopped its bared teeth charge – the dog's owner, who appeared to be staying in one of the buildings, seemed ambivalent to his pet's behaviour? There had been a fall of fresh snow on Friday night which left a light coating on the good stalkers path as they climbed up the side of the Glen above the lodge. As height was gained the wind became stronger and it was decidedly chilly but the snow showers that could be seen in the distance mainly stayed that way and the views were pretty good. Although the wind was still cold the sun had been doing some work

and the snow had disappeared lower down as they descended. Out of the wind in the Glen once more the walk out was quite pleasant. Wattie and Richard were back at the hut by mid-afternoon with time to relax and watch the antics of the Red Squirrel stuffing itself with peanuts from the feeder Vicky had topped up that morning.

The snow showers returned with a bit more enthusiasm in the early evening but the ground was clear on Sunday morning although there were obviously more snow ready to fall. Wattie and Richard were the first to head for home and the road was clear until just below the Ski Center when it suddenly changed to being covered in 3" of fresh snow. Wattie had to work hard to keep the Qashqai moving as he chicaned round a stuck camper van and a couple of cars – there was a Landrover there running out a tow rope to come to the aid of the stationary vehicles. Over the top things were more interesting on the long descent where there were a number of vehicles which had ground to a halt trying to come up from the south, including a Police Landrover and Police Car. By the bottom of the hill all the snow was gone leaving just a wet road – no sign of any snow ploughs heading to clear the road though.



Meet Report: Station Bunkhouse, Plockton, 1st to 3rd May

Contributions: Dave Paton and Richard Christie

Olly had booked the Station Bunkhouse for the early May bank holiday weekend and it was good to be back somewhere the Club has not visited for a while and the meet booked up quickly. In the end all but one bed was occupied with Karen able to attend at the last minute when David Currie again had to call off.

Looking at the forecast the weather on the Friday was a lot more favorable than that on the Sunday so Richard booked a holiday on the Friday so he could continue his Corbett quest. He and Wattie headed off reasonably early for the drive to Fort William and then the twisty drive down Glen Garry almost all the way to Kinloch Hourn. As they drove down the Glen

it was good to see that the Tomdoun Hotel, which has been closed for a while, appears to be undergoing a major refit complete with reroofing.

There was one car already parked up when they arrived near the end of the stalker's path which lead the way to the target hill: Sgurr nan Eugallt. A good stalkers path is often worth its weight in gold [*ok not a great metaphor but you know what I mean*] for gaining height with not too much effort. There were various photo taking stops on the way up to where the path stopped just below the North East ridge. Once on the ridge some snow was encountered – never too deep and starting to soften in the sunshine which meant it was quite slippery and broke away readily from the grass below. Wattie and Richard stopped to chat with a couple who were making their descent down the ridge. The couple had driven across from Inverness in the morning and reported that the snow had been well frozen when they had been climbing up. The ridge was narrow in places and could have been “interesting” if there has been more snow. There were good views from the trig point and on the traverse over to the actual summit. Care had to be taken on the descent back down the ridge since the snow was even more slippery. All in all Richard reckoned it was well worth having taken the day off.



They were not the first arrivals at the bunkhouse – Jim D was already in residence and refreshing himself with the usual small bottle of Leffe. Jim had driven up on the Thursday with a cunning plan to climb the Forcan Ridge and camping high up allowing him to continue walking eastwards on the Friday. As it turned out there were large slabs of snow on the ridge which ended up forcing a retreat and a re-plan – it was also a lot colder than Jim had been expecting. He ended up having quite a cold night camping down in Glen Shiel. All the other attendees arrived during the evening: Kenny and Cath, Bill, Joyce & Karen, Steve Gadd & Vicky, John W, Neil & Sharon, Brian, new member Calum. Last to arrive were Olly and John R – with John commenting on the speediness of Olly's new car. A few headed down to the pub later in the evening joining Neil and Sharon who had gone down earlier for a bar

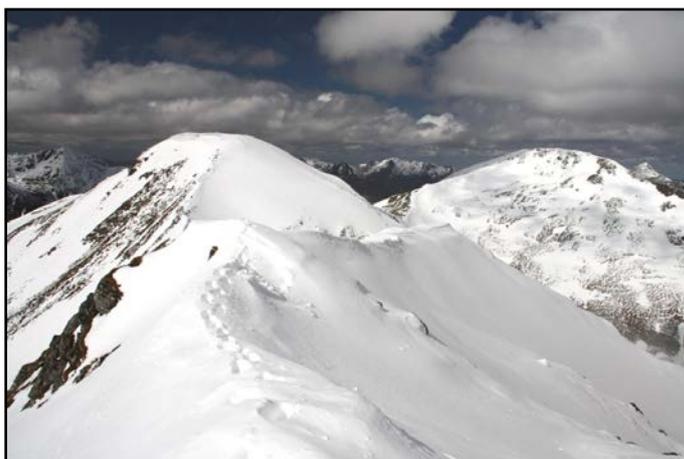
meal. Richard possibly imbibed a bit too much since Wattie remarked he witnessed Richard bouncing off the fridge on return to the bunkhouse.

Dave P takes over describing his Saturday:

I had a couple of options, the Sisters or the Brothers. I eventually opted for the Brothers with Bill, Joyce and Karen. We left a car at the 'sisters car park', to give us the option to do Saileag as well, but started from the lay-by about a mile from the Cluanie Inn.

Bill, Joyce and Karen decided to head straight for the first munro, Aonach Meadhoin, I was keen to do the minor top, Sgurr an Fhuairail as well so we agreed to meet up on the munro before continuing.

The weather was great and the views were superb and I had a great time climbing up (although it was a bit of a slog at first). The ridge between Sgurr an Fhuairail had a bit of a snow arête going, so that was a bit of fun and it wasn't long before I met up with the others. They had only to wait a few minutes.



The going between the two munros was good and we took our time and enjoyed the day. Stopping often to enjoy the views.

I think Joyce enjoyed the scramble along the narrow ridge to the summit of Sgurr a'Bhealaich Dheirg and stopped to pose for a couple of photos on the way.

We opted not to continue on to Saileag and headed for the car.



Neil and Sharon were also in Glen Shiel trying to increase Sharon's munro bagging count, including Creag nan Damh at the West end of the South Shiel Ridge. They climbed The Saddle – avoiding the Forcan Ridge based on Jim's advice - and enjoyed a great bum slide on the way down. Sharon decided that one hill was enough for the day however since they were just at the start of a week's holiday. Not that far away Cath, Kenny and Jim were climbing the Corbett, Sgurr an Airgid above the head of Loch Duich – it was a third time on that particular summit for Cath but she was quite happy with the day.

A contingent consisting of Brian, Calum, Olly and John R headed over to Skye and climbed Garbh-bheinn which was entertaining near its narrow summit ridge thanks to snow cover. Olly headed on and added Belig whilst the others made do with just the Corbett.

Steve headed the other way to Glen Affric and climbed Toll Creagach & Tom a' Choinich bring his outstanding munro count down to 19. Vicky opted for a restful day with a seal watching boat trip and a wander round Plockton. She stopped in at the craft shop and had a lengthy chat with the proprietor who was merrily knitting away and is apparently 83, Vicky felt duty bound to buy something.

Richard and Wattie had come equipped with bikes to assist in bagging Richard's outstanding Corbetts down Glen Elchaig, Aonach Buidhe and Faochaig. The cycle up the Glen was quite good – certainly the first part which is on good tarmac. The remainder involves a bit more climbing than they were expecting but was still ok. There were quite a few deer in the Glen taking advantage of the hay bales put out by the estate. The plan was to leave the bikes at Carnach at the bottom of

the stalkers path they intended to descend on. There was a slight over shoot and when they stopped Richard managed to make a fool of himself. As they discussed where to leave the bikes Richard leaned right, realising too late that his right foot was still in the pedal tow clip....

It then went something like this: why won't my right foot move – oh dear it's still in the toe clip – I can't get it out – starting to fall over – ah this may hurt a bit – oh my right knee is going to smash itself into the nice stony track – ouch that smarts a tad.

Alternative (more accurate) version: S**t I'm falling over, F*** can't get my food off the pedal, lying on the ground !*~#***~! !*~#***~! !*~#***~! that hurts, kick bike, !*~#***~! *~#***~! that hurts a lot, kick bike again, get up and limp about for a while. Wattie knew just to keep quiet and wait for the dust to settle.



After a while the pain died down, the bike were hidden behind a wall and they set off walking along the rest of the landrover track to Iron Lodge. From the name, Richard had expected something bigger and more imposing rather than a normal looking small house. The next bit of fun started as they left the track and started climbing very steeply up the South West ridge of Aonach Buidhe. Thankfully the slope started to ease off and then there was a reasonable easy tramp to the summit. Descent was started via the West ridge before Richard called a halt for a lunch stop when his fuel tank hit empty, he also took the opportunity to take an Ibuprofen. Although lunch was a good idea – stopping wasn't since it allowed Richard's knee to cease up. As the descent steepened so the pain from the knee increased and there were thoughts of calling it a day. Thankfully once the valley floor was reached the Ibuprofen had kicked in so Richard

decided to continue and another stalker's path greatly assisted the climb up to Faochaig. A couple of other walkers could be seen in the distance descending but their route never intersected with Wattie and Richard's. Once over the top the route headed south into a broad corrie and eventually the intended stalker's path was reached which wended its way back down to Carnach. The cycle back down the Glen was made easier with gravity assistance. Back at the car they found John W's van parked adjacent.

John had probably the most ambitious day planned. He also cycled up Glen Elchaig but this time all the way to Iron Lodge, once he realized Carnach was not Iron Lodge! Once there he headed East towards Loch Mullardoch and then south to climb Mullach na Dheiragain. He phoned Brian to report reaching the summit at 15:00 which meant a reasonably late, but successful return back to Plockton.

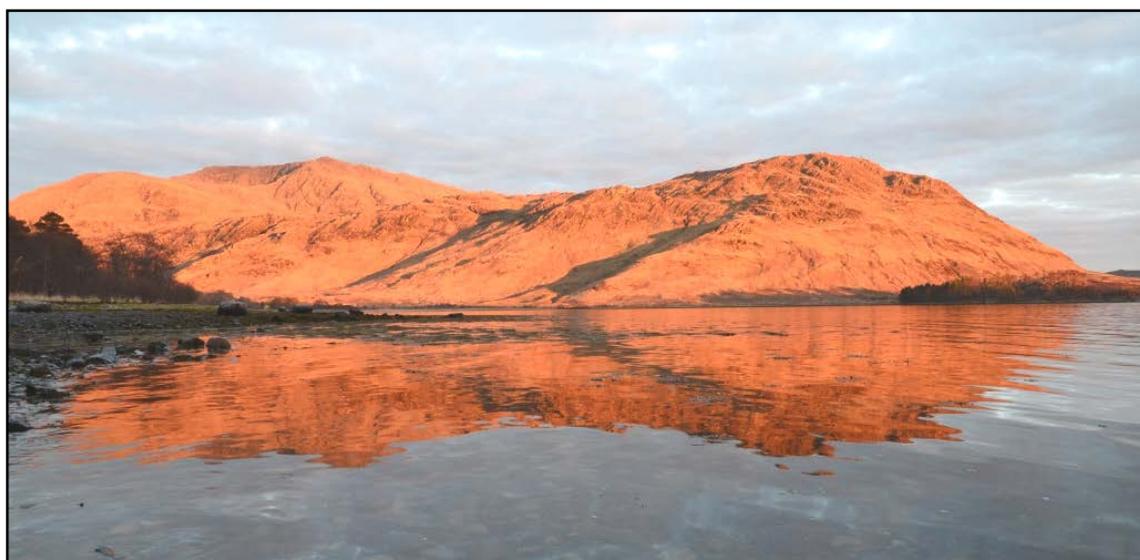
Bill, Joyce and Karen were already booked into the Plockton Hotel for an evening meal and after a bit of table rearranging



Wattie and Richard were able to join them. It was a bit of a squash at the start until all the pre evening meal drinkers had headed off to their homes. Joyce was definitely in her element having looked forward to the primarily seafood orientated menu. She started off with six oyster shooters followed by twelve langoustines which she happily demolished taking no prisoners to make sure there was nothing eatable left on the shells. The other favoured option for Saturday food was the Fish & Chip shed. Joyce was bemoaning the idea of the uphill walk back to the bunkhouse so Wattie offered to call her a taxi – she thought this was a great idea and said yes please – Wattie's reply was "Joyce you're a taxi....." Back at the bunkhouse there was the usual chat and banter until people gradually drifted off to bed.

The weather on Sunday was true to the forecast with wind and rain so Wattie and Richard headed for home, Jim having already left since he had an appointment in Newcastle on the Sunday evening. The others stayed the Sunday night with various groupings doing various outdoor things and getting wet to varying degrees. Wettest were those who went on to Skye but other details are unknown.

2015 Meet Dates	
Jan 9 th /10 th	Calluna, Fort William
Feb 13 th /14 th	The Pottery Bunkhouse, Laggan
March 13 th /14 th	Ling Hut, Torridon
April 10 th /11 th	Muir of Inver, Braemar
May 1 st /2 nd /3 rd	Station Bunkhouse, Plockton
June 5 th /6 th	Ariundle Centre, Strontian
July 10 th /11 th	Strawberry Cottage, Glen Affric
August 7 th /8 th	Glenbrittle Memorial Hut, Skye
Sept 4 th /5 th	Sail Mhor, Dundonnell
October 2 nd /3 rd	Inver Croft, Achnasheen
November 6 th /7 th	Mill Cottage, Feshiebridge
December TBC	Christmas Meet, tba





Corbett bagging trip to Knoydart

