



# Cioch Mountaineering Club (Dunfermline)

Established 1988

## Newsletter #69

### January 2016



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## Meet Report: Christmas Meet, Inchree Centre, Onich 4<sup>th</sup>/ 5<sup>th</sup> December 2015

Contribution by R Christie

The wet and warm weather prevalent towards the end of 2015 made itself felt at the final meet of the year in no uncertain terms. Not only was it very wet for those driving up to Onich on the Friday afternoon / evening, there was also an extremely gusty wind to contend with. I was certainly glad I was driving something reasonably big with a nice new set of tires as I gave Steve and Mags a lift up to the meet. As we crossed Rannoch moor I just opted to sit a safe distance behind the car in front and cruise along at 45mph. Wattie, who was already safe in the Chalet at Onich, even phoned back to warn about the gusts of wind through Glen Coe – he wasn't exaggerating.



The weather was a disappointment considering this was the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Club holding its Christmas Meet at Inchree. Thankfully all 28 meet attendees arrived safe and sound and congregated as usual in the Four Seasons pub on Friday evening where the category judging for the annual club photo competition took place. The competition entries were up to the usual standard both in quality and quantity giving those casting their votes plenty to think about. With the forecast for Saturday promising more rain some stayed late in the pub ambling back to the Chalets a bit after 1am.

Indeed the rain was continuing to fall on Saturday and only a few hardy souls ventured out to actually climb something. Jim and Janice were among them, heading off into the Lost Valley to find it contained a small loch rather than the normal stream. Others opted for car trips out for lunch at various establishments. Jogging in the local forest was the choice of some to keep the lethargy at bay, and work up the necessary appetite for the evening meal. Finally some just opted for a walk in the local forest to look at the waterfall – Wattie and I met up with Dave P, Marion, Stuart and Hazel doing just that. They extended their walk where as Wattie and I just turned for home once we had admired the cascade.

The meal on the Saturday night was up to the usual good standard and the serving was well organized. Unfortunately this potentially allowed more time for

Chairperson Brian's 'review of the year' speech - in the end the speech was well received and there was some good banter thrown back and forth. The overall winner of the photo competition had been voted on during the meal and the prize winners were announced after Brian's speech, see last page of this newsletter for the results – special mention though for Dave Thomas who was a first time category winner with his photo of the Kelpies taking the Open prize. There was then a group photo to mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary - complete with a celebration cake which Brian and Jane had rustled up.

The usual Ceilidh dancing was slightly shorter than normal – I obviously have lost the persuasive touch to get people up and dancing.... Control of the music selection was then handed over to Ollly who had prepared a good play list that hit the mark, not so sure about the 'Alice Cooper in drag' get up though.

The group photo is on the next page of this Newsletter – for Stuart and Reg's sake, rumors that a number of snipers were on the loose around Onich are totally unfounded....



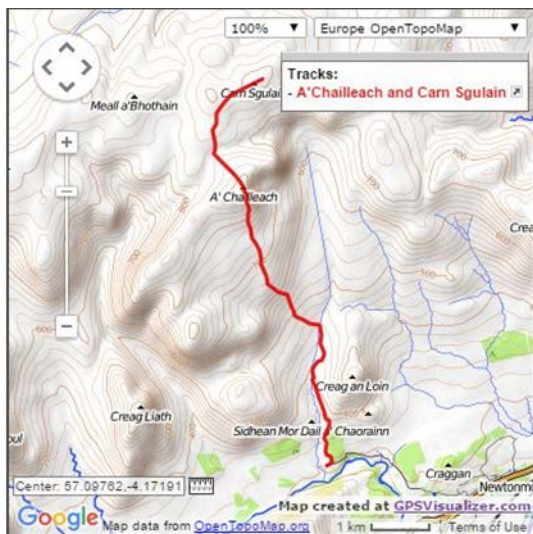
## Meet Report: Strathspey Hostel, Newtonmore, 8<sup>th</sup> / 9<sup>th</sup> January 2016

Contribution by Calum Craigie

There were two reasons I came along to join Cioch. This first, and most obvious reason, was to meet other hillwalkers from around Dunfermline. I have been accompanied by my son for the majority of hillwalking in recent years but as he has progressed through his teenage years he has been less inclined to give up a weekend long lie in bed to accompany me on long drives to hills with strange names. This has left me increasingly on my own for days in the hills. This in itself is not a problem as I, like most hillwalkers, am happy enough to walk solo but it's also good to be able to share the experiences with others.

This segues well with my second reason for joining which was to gain from other members' experience. I have only really been a three season walker and by three seasons I mean that I only tend to venture out when there is little chance of experiencing significant snow and ice on the hill. Last year this effectively turned me into a two season Munro walker as the snow lingered on until almost summer. So the opportunity to tag along to meets during the winter was a real motivation for joining. I got my first taste of a winter walk on the Laggan meet last February when a group assembled to trudge up a boggy Geal Charn. Although not a full winter walk the conditions on the plateau were challenging from a navigational perspective and there was a definite crunch of ice and snow underfoot.

The weekend at the Strathspey Mountain Hostel in Newtonmore offered an opportunity to do a more adventurous winter walk. The daylight hours in January meant that some of the longer walks were not to be advised - especially as fitness had waned during an over indulgent festive period. So on Friday night, and with the possibility of a decent window of weather on Saturday, Steve Gadd and I scoured the local maps and agreed on the manageable challenge of the two of the three Munros that lie to the North of Newtonmore - A'Chailleach and Carn Sgulain.



It was -7C when we got to the carpark at the top of the Glen Road from Newtonmore. The sky was clear and what cloud we could see was resting on the floor of the frosted Glen Banchor. We spoke to a couple of lads who were going to tackle Carn Dearg - one that I will need to get back to one day.

Initially on a forestry track and then onto a rough muddy path we followed the course of a burn for about 2.5km looking for an old rickety bridge I had read about that would give us access to the slopes of A'Chailleach. Unfortunately there was no bridge, this turned out to be a misunderstanding on my part as the bridge was on another burn -

sorry Steve, and we had to find a safe passage across the very icy burn. Once across it was simply a case of following the paths up the slopes, past an old bothy, to gain height towards the summit. Looking back we enjoyed some magnificent views over towards the Cairngorms.



The snow line started at around 550m but by 700m it was a lot deeper and we were tracking our way by following paths that had recently been taken by mountain hares. As we got higher it was easier to walk on the heather that was showing through the snow as this provided a route with the shallowest snow. I got this shot of Steve taking the lead up the final slopes of A'Chailleach. As we approached the top we did see a lot of Ptarmigan in their winter plumage. This always brings a smile to my face but the Ptarmigan

appeared to be less impressed with us than we were with them. They just waited until we got a bit close and shuffled off.



We managed to summit A'Chailleach after just over two hours. The clag was down and the breeze up so not a lot to see and do other than take on some food and water, get the money shot and move on to Carn Sgulain. There was a lot more snow between the hills than we had on the initial climb so it was fairly slow navigating to the cairn at Carn Sgulain. After around 50 mins we eventually found the fence posts that lead us to the summit cairn. We did have to be careful as there is a cairn about 250m short of the real top and as it was low visibility it would have been easy to stop short.

Again, given the weather we didn't linger, forced a couple of mini pork pies down and simply followed our footsteps all the way back over A'Chailleach and down the icy track to the start.

The pictures below are of Steve at A'Chailleach and me on Carn Sgulain.



### 2016 Meet Dates

|   |   |
|---|---|
| January 8 <sup>th</sup> /9 <sup>th</sup>                        | Strathspey Mountain Hostel, Newtonmore      |
| February 12 <sup>th</sup> /13 <sup>th</sup>                     | Tulloch Station (12 places)                 |
| March 4 <sup>th</sup> /5 <sup>th</sup>                          | Lagangarbh, Glencoe (14 places)             |
| April 8 <sup>th</sup> /9 <sup>th</sup>                          | Muir of Invery, Braemar (18 places)         |
| April / May 29 <sup>th</sup> /30 <sup>th</sup> /1 <sup>st</sup> | Inchnadamph (14 places)                     |
| June TBC  | TBC   |
| July 8 <sup>th</sup> /9 <sup>th</sup>                           | Strawberry Cottage, Glen Affric (12 places) |
| August TBC  | TBC   |
| September TBC   | TBC   |
| October TBC   | TBC   |
| November 4 <sup>th</sup> /5 <sup>th</sup>                       | Mill Cottage, Feshiebridge                  |
| December TBC  | TBC   |



## 2015 Photographic Competition Results



Summer Winner – Richard Christie



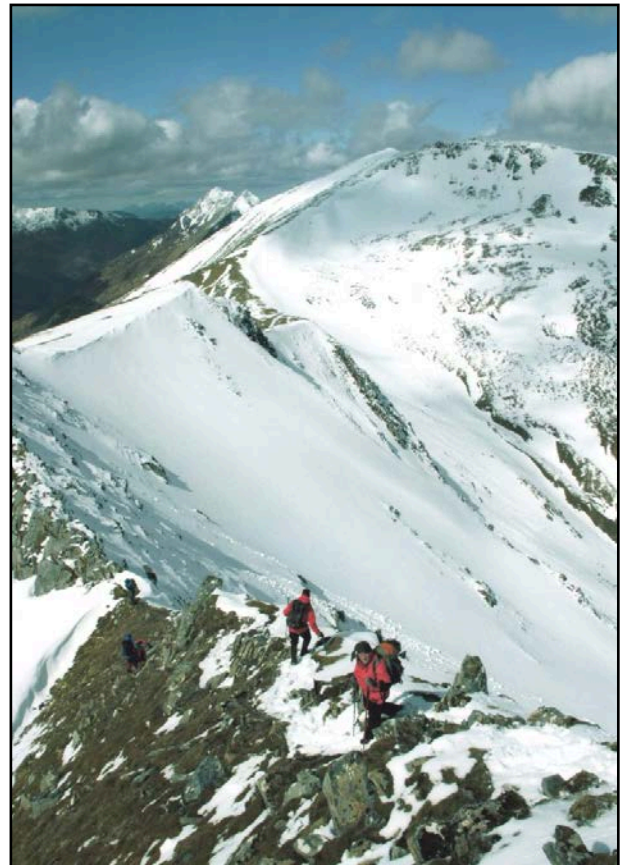
People Winner – Wattie Ramage



Open Winner – Dave Thomas



Nature Winner – Richard Christie



Overall and Winter Winner  
– Dave Paton