



Cioch Mountaineering Club (Dunfermline)

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Meet Report #1: Kinloch Castle, Rum, 29th April to 1st May 2011

With contributions from Neil Anderson, Brian Mitchell, Dave Paton and Richard Christie

Following good feedback after the Club's first visit to Rum, as an unofficial meet over Easter 2009, Olly decided to book a return visit as a part of the 2011 meet calendar. Despite the Friday not being a public holiday the meet booked up quickly – and then Wills and Kate decided to tie the knot on the 29th making the logistics a lot simpler; avoiding the need for sickies or having to travel across on the Saturday. Some people took the opportunity to extend the long weekend even further.



First to come up with a cunning plan were Jim D, Neil, Olly, Michelle and Sharon who decided to visit the Isle of Eigg en-route to Rum. All 5 members of the Eigg group crammed themselves and all their luggage and Olly's bike into/on to Olly's specially purchased Mazda people carrier at 6 am on Thursday for the journey from Rosyth to Mallaig. Thankfully the drive north went without a hitch and the Cal Mac ferry to Eigg was comfortably met. The sound of bagpipes welcomed visitors up the pier at Galmisdale where the team were soon met by Simon from the Glebe Barn hostel, who kindly transported the heavy luggage directly to the hostel while the team made the 20 minute journey on foot and by bicycle. The Glebe Barn has been renovated to a good standard with well proportioned bunk bedded rooms, a large kitchen and a large combined dining/lounge area. The luggage was quickly organised and the walk up An Sgurr commenced in the early afternoon. Conditions were ideal in the warm sunshine and gentle breeze. The 393m

An Sgurr summit was reached in around 1.5 hours, where the team enjoyed an hours relaxation while appreciating the 360 panorama to the islands and mainland. Whilst most of the team ignored paths to hike a direct line back to the hostel, Olly demonstrated his speed walking ability by going the long way round to arrive within minutes of the others. Sharon took charge of group catering to produce Spaghetti Bolognese while the excellent hostel showers were tested by all.

Wattie, Maureen and Richard also opted to extend the weekend, this time by sailing directly over to Rum on the Thursday. This involved slightly more complicated logistics since Cal Mac do not land on Rum on Thursday's. Fortunately however, Arisaig Marine offer a wildlife cruise and ferry service on their boat the Sheerwater - which does call at Rum on Thursday's. The trio set off from Dollar at 06:30 and arrived at Arisaig just after 09:30. With the Frelander safely parked out of the way in the boat yard there was plenty of time for coffee and bacon rolls in the Arisaig Café.

Helen, who some of you will have met when she tagged along with the Cioch as part of her munro bagging quest, and her husband Richard keep their boat at Arisaig and by luck were at anchor in the harbour so they were able to come ashore for a coffee. After catching up with Helen and Richard (who Richard C had been skiing with in Norway in March) it was time to board the Sheerwater for a very pleasant trip to Rum. There was time to spot some marine life with basking seals and then a pair of porpoises, who were trailing in the wake of a fishing boat. The trio were met at the pier in Loch Scresort by the Kinloch Castle van which transported the main luggage, allowing a gentle unburdened stroll to the Castle. The hostel staff were very welcoming, and after a slight fight with what appeared to be an overcomplicated computerised booking system, a free bedroom was identified. The room had not been made ready so, despite the protestations of the member of staff the trio insisted on helping her change the bedding. All this was achieved by 13:30 leaving plenty of time for the 10 mile round trip to Kilmory where a late lunch was enjoyed beside the beach watching the deer – not as sunny a spot as others had later in the weekend but still well worth the effort. With only a few other people staying on the Thursday night, self catering was easy and unhurried and then it was time to test out the Castle bar.



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Back on Eigg: having climbed to the highest point on the Thursday, the team set there sites on visiting one of the lowest points on Eigg - The Massacre Cave - on Friday morning. With the Simon once more agreeing to shift the heavy luggage back to the pier, it allowed the team to head off with light packs to the southern tip of the island to find the cave just above the tide line. Head torches are necessary to avoid stumbling in the large dark void once beyond the low entrance section.

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Considering the cruel history, there were no religious symbols marking this cave. With the early morning exploration under their belt, the team had plenty of time to head direct to Galmisdale to sample the delights of the Eigg Tea Room, before sauntering down the pier to re-unite with luggage and meet up with Olly before the ferry arrived. The much anticipated "Wills and Kate Show" provided travel entertainment on the ferry from Eigg to Mallaig.

Jane and Brian actually managed to get away from Dalgety Bay at their planned time for once, and had good drive to Mallaig without hold up or incident. Mallaig was busy and their car had to be parked a long way from the pier - like so many others. They then joined the rest of the meet contingent in enjoying a very pleasant crossing. The socialising part of the weekend appears to have started on the ferry and then continued with gusto once everyone reached the Castle.



Whilst everyone else was still traveling across to Rum, Wattie and Richard decided to take advantage of the excellent Friday weather to climb the Corbetts just in case the weather took a turn for the worse later in the weekend?!? They set off around 9:00, initially accompanied by Maureen for the first section up the Pony Track. Maureen then opted to go at her own pace for as far as she wanted. The weather could not have been any more different from the previous time Richard had climbed Haillival and Askival – instead of full water proofs, Wattie and he were able to wear tee shirts and shorts under a clear blue sky. An eagle cruised over high above and there were lots of stops to take photos as the pair made their way over the rocky terrain. Although the going was much easier

in the dry, they still had to pick the best route amongst the rocks to reach the summit of Askival around 11:30 where they stopped for some food and to wave to the Cal Mac Ferry as it headed from Eigg back to Mallaig. A steep descent on loose gravel then followed to reach Bealach an Oir where the first fellow walker was met; he was wild camping a bit below the bealach. A steep climb was then made to take in the shapely rocky top of Trallval, made worth the effort for the views. Another steep loose descent was made to Bealach an Fhuarain before a traversing ascent on a narrow path lead to the grassy top of the second Corbett, Ainshval. It was time for a welcome second food stop at the cairn and a discussion on whether to head for home or to go on to Sgurr nan Gillean at the south end of the ridge. Fortunately there was a cooling breeze to keep the heat of the still shining sun in check. Since it seemed a shame to have come this far and not to do the rest of the ridge they headed off and soon encountered two other walkers heading the other way. The guys were staying in the Dibidil Bothy and had made the steep ascent up the south ridge of Sgurr nan Gillean. After taking yet more photos,



it was then time to retrace steps back to Bealach an Fhuarain and then traverse below Trallval to Bealach an Oir. There then followed the less than entertaining traverse of Atlantic Corrie below Askival, at least the Primroses were pretty. Loch Scresort was a welcome sight once Bealach Bairc-mheall was eventually reached. Their feet were burning hot by the time they arrived back at the Castle at around 17:30 to be greeted by the somewhat merry Cioch contingent enjoying the afternoon sun on the lawn at the rear of the Castle.



Being a holiday

weekend the bunkhouse accommodation was full with members of another walking club from near Breichin joining the Cioch meet attendees. The accommodation was in fact more than full which meant that Stuart and Hazel had to be down graded to a small poky room in the Castle itself once occupied by Lord Bulloch.....

Saturday dawned just a sunny as it had been on Friday although the forecast predicted that it would be windier. This persuaded some people to wait until Sunday to tackle the main ridge. However, Neil, Brian M, Sharon, Dave P and Olly were not put off and left at 08:45 to head directly to Ainshval (781m) via Atlantic Corrie and Bealach an Fhuarain.



Brian contributes: Having climbed Askival on the last visit (2009) in very poor conditions, Saturday's conditions were a very welcome, and complete contrast. With excellent visibility, it was possible to get a good feel for the layout of the entire ridge. We made good time in the warm, if windy, conditions, and were able to spend an hour just lazing about on the summit. The wind being quite strong, it was necessary to keep a low profile, to stop from getting chilled - we sank to the challenge. After our sunbathe we descended to the Beallach between Ainshval and Trollaval, where Dave and Neil decided to continue to Askival to complete the ridge. Dave and Neil having set off, Olly fancied the Graham, Trollaval, so Olly and I scrambled to the Summit, whilst Sharon retraced our steps back to the Beallach an Oir between Askival and Trollaval. The Graham proved to have an interesting and exposed summit ridge, which we had to negotiate twice, once going and once returning. It therefore took slightly longer than anticipated, and Sharon had a little wait. We then made our way back



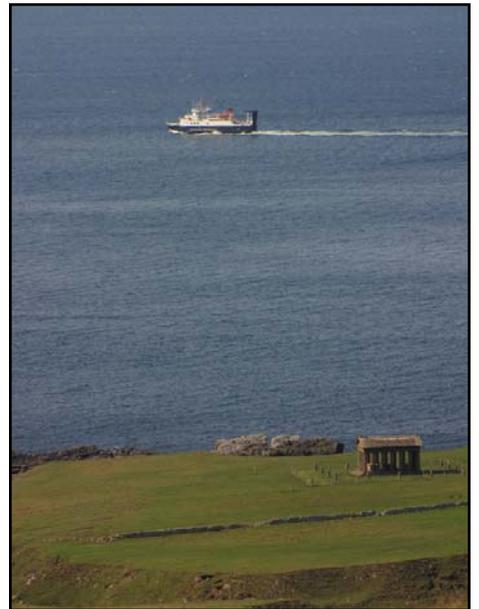
via Atlantic Corrie, by which time the wind had dropped and the temperature risen. It was bakingly hot but a great day however.

Bill, Joyce, Karen and Gillian also headed to the ridge this time going out over Hailival and Askival. Gillian waited at Bealach an Oir, bumping in to Sharon, whilst the other three climbed Ainshval. All had a good time although their feet were also red hot by the time the various parties arrived back at Kinloch on Saturday afternoon. Ian Hay walked on his own, managing Hailival (723 m) and Askival (in that order).

On Saturday Jane walked with Marion and Hazel to Dibidil, however the path was poor and surprisingly wet and muddy in places. This resulted in Marion slipping which resulted in a sore and quite swollen wrist. The walk was shortened somewhat by the incident, however, Marion seemed to have recovered ok later. Stuart, Jim D and Michelle decided to head west over Ard Nev and Orval on route to Bloodstone Hill where they caught sight of a Sea Eagle. Alison and Bruce also opted to visit Bloodstone Hill, but by the direct route, where Bruce spent some time doing water colour sketches before Alison persuaded him to descent to look at the Bothie at Guirdil. The pair



then returned towards Kinloch via the path up Glen Shellesder on the north side of Fionchra. Bruce's feet were slightly on the tender side when they reached the Castle. Having woken up on Saturday with tender feet, Wattie and Richard happily agreed to Maureen's suggestion of the straight forward, but still longish, return trip to Harris to look at the Bulloch family Mausoleum. Good views were again to the fore with wildlife in the form of horses, deer, goats and highland cows all being seen at some time during the day. Pam and Jonathan headed for Kilmory via a cross country outward route taking in the top Mullach Mor. Once back at the Castle Pam



magically produced a large chocolate birthday cake to celebrate Jonathan's birthday which she had managed to smuggle onto the island without her husband noticing.

On Sunday - for the third day in a row - the sky was blue and the sun was shining. With slightly less breeze than on Saturday, Alison, Michelle, Stuart, Pam and Jim D set off for the main ridge following it over the two Corbetts and all the tops out to Sgurr nan Gillean. At Michelle's suggestion they had a cunning plan for the return route by descending westwards from the slopes of Sgurr nan Gillean towards Harris. Jonathan met the party as they crossed the valley floor to reach the track leading up from Harris and provided fresh water supplies. Although longer in distance all agreed this was more than compensated by the easier return walking on the Landrover track rather than traversing back across Atlantic Corrie.



There was a bit of a breeze but this was welcome as Dave and Marion set off for Kilmory Beach. Since it's a good track it didn't take too long to cover the five miles there and the walk was definitely worth it as they arrived to see the tide out and a lot of beautiful white sand, blue sea and superb views over the sea to sky [cue for a song?]. The beach was empty apart from Bruce and he seemed to be sleeping. So without disturbing him Dave and Marion found a sheltered spot in the dunes and sat back. It was just a perfect day for 'chilling' and that is exactly what they did. Dave went for a paddle along the shore with his camera and flew his kite. Brian & Jane also headed for Kilmory and knew they were not alone when they arrived and spied Dave's kite. The two couples joined up to sunbathe and watch the deer paddling in the sea – something you won't see many other places. They were also entertained by a Sand Piper trying to lead them away from its nest - so naturally they retraced its foot prints right back to the nest. Natural selection still has a bit of work to do Dave fears! By the time Brian and Jane arrived, Bruce had awoken from his nap and was painting in a secluded sand dune – Brian reports very good water colour too. Brian comments that they enjoyed a fantastic day and believes they saw almost every bird it was possible to see on the island [bet they didn't see a Grasshopper Warbler though!]. It was Olly, Neil and Sharon's turn to do the nice low level walk to Harris to see the mausoleum, except that Olly cycled most of the way there and back.



Wattie and Richard's feet had recovered sufficiently for them to accompany Maureen and Hazel out to Bloodstone Hill. Richard nipped up to the top of Fionchra from Bealach a Bhragh Bhig before catching up with the rest at the final climb up to Bloodstone Hill. Fantastic views were again to the fore and after some lunch admiring the views Hazel and Maureen set off back along the path. Wattie and Richard opted to return over Orval and Ard Nev before rejoining Hazel and Maureen who were waiting at the bridge where the Bloodstone path meets the Landrover track to Harris – a location burned into Richard's memory after missing it on the Club's previous visit to Rum!



The third day in a row on the Isle of Rum walking in tee-shirt and shorts and it did not end there – the sun was shining just as brightly on Monday morning. With the ferry not arriving until 15:00 there was plenty of time for just chilling. At various times people wandered round the nature trail just outside Kinloch, dropped into the Village Hall for a coffee or just sat around in quiet contemplation wondering if such a meet on Rum could possibly be bettered - or on a wider front what the future in general holds. Stuart enjoyed an even quieter day sitting on the picnic table outside the hostel after the 'socialising' of the night before. Most people had opted to sample the Bistro food on Sunday night which had meant that the bar area was pressed into service to accommodate the overflow diners. There was a bit of confusion on who should sit where, and Richard lost his cool [if he possessed any in the first place] for a while when he felt Olly was stirring a bit – they kissed [metaphorically!] and made up of the ferry back to Malai.

The return ferry trip was a fitting end to a great weekend with a calm sea and expansive views. The only sad sight was the large plume of smoke rising from one of the brush fires which hit various western coast areas that weekend. Ignoring the views, Olly set up shop in the ferry cafeteria to try and sort out the finances for the weekend. The hostel had added all the various extra nights, meals and breakfasts up and presented a total invoice. Once everyone had paid over what they thought they owed, Olly was in profit to the tune



of around £290! A cheque for this amount has since been sent to the hostel who gratefully



acknowledged the Club's honesty. When Malai harbour was reached all that was left to do was pick up the various cars and drive back home. Alison & Bruce and Brian & Jane kindly transported Maureen, Wattie and Richard to Arisaig to pick up Richard's car [thanks very much]. The only event of the return journey was that Olly's Mazda got a we bit bouncy on the way down the A9 - common opinion was a duff shock absorber at offside rear - as opposed to anything anyone was doing on the back seat.

Meet Report #2: Lake District, Causeway Foot Camping Barn, near Keswick 21st / 22nd May 2011

With contributions from Neil Anderson, Steve Gray, Bill Gray and Ian Lord.

The full Cioch attendance list was: Jim D, Neil, Olly, Sharon, Dave P, Bill & Joyce; Ian H, Ian L, Steve & Mags and Jan. Call offs: Kirsty & Ernest, Vicky S, Michelle and Marion

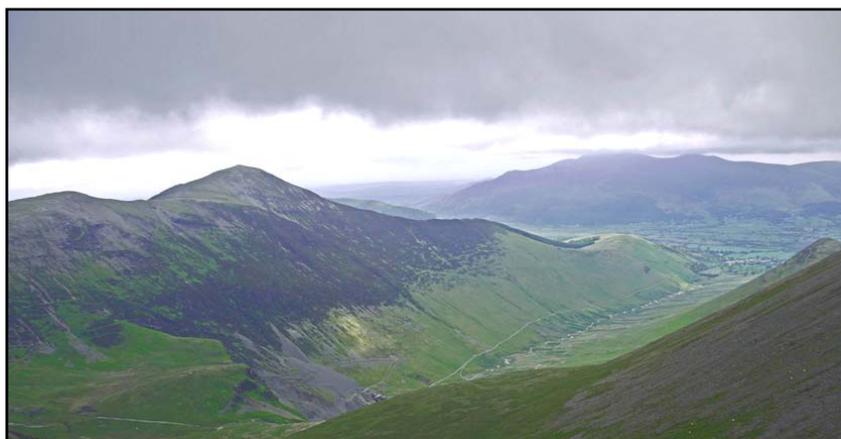
Thursday/Friday

Jim D managed to win the race to Cumbria, having left Dunfermline straight after work on Thursday afternoon. By the time Jim arrived at the camping barn around 6 pm on Friday he had already climbed Skiddaw and Hellvellen [*not the most obvious pairing of hills?*] with the only downside being a slightly damp sleeping bag after his overnight stop somewhere up a rainy hill.

Friday

Steve and Mags had already dropped off their luggage by the time Neil, Sharon, Joyce, Bill, Jan and Ian arrived at the barn around 5 pm. The outdoor conditions were quite reasonable at this point and views of local fells were appreciated while snacking and socialising at the picnic table. Most people were pleasantly surprised to find the camping barn, although fairly basic in its facilities, acceptably comfortable. The place was a bit cold to begin with, but soon built up some heat. Fortunately Mags & Steve had fed £ coins into the electric meter and turned on a heater or two before heading off on their shopping trip to Keswick. More cars trickled in throughout the evening, with Olly and Dave P finally arriving after sunset. Optimism for a good Saturday on the hills was still high despite the poor forecast. A few beverages were enjoyed throughout the evening although it had gone fairly quiet by midnight.

Saturday



Ian L was up for a very early start to do the Coaldale horse shoe north of Keswick. Ian has a lot of experience in the Lakes and chose this walk as one of his favourites. He was pleasantly surprised how quickly he progressed round the horseshoe, with this effort several hours quicker than previous. Jan and Ian H climbed Skiddaw. Olly, Dave P and Jim D parked at Seathwaite Farm and headed for Scafell Pike. Jim however discovered an injury playing up and decided his previous conquest of Scafell was still fresh enough in his memory to delete the need to complete it again, so Olly and Dave completed the climb on their own.

Steve spills the beans on his Saturday: The four of us (Bill, Joyce, Mags and Steve) climbed Skiddaw by the 'quiet' route suggested on a piece of paper cut from one magazine or another that Bill had in his possession. The map showing the route was 3" x 3" - not nearly clear enough to navigate from. Unfortunately the early part of the route from Mireside House suggested on the rag of paper was just off the blown-up map supplied by Richard [*who had suggested a very good alternative way of climbing Skiddaw to accompany the map, but this advice was ignored...*]. So after much discussion we finally opted for Steve's route (being a bit forceful on the issue - as you can imagine). This it transpired was not the correct route as suggested on the newspaper article but it did give a good and steady approach to the hill from where excellent views across Keswick and Derwent Water were had. This route eventually joined up with the 'motorway' route from Keswick but not long before the coll just before the summit. We saw no-one else before this point and as was suggested in the article - it was a very quiet route. The summit of the hill was very cold and windy and after a brief food stop and photograph we headed off back down the hill, meeting up with Jan and Ian Hay on their Keswick route to the summit. We descended westwards from Skiddaw via Longside Ridge which offered spectacular views looking out towards the Solway Firth and beyond. We finally arrived back at the cars - which were very carefully parked in a make-do layby to avoid the £6 car parking charges levied in the main car park just 50 metres away [*yes they certainly know how to charge in the Lake District*]. Once we were sorted the rain started and so we retreated to the Farmers Rest in Portinscote where the four of us, but especially Steve & Bill, had a jolly old time. Once we had drunk our fill we all then had to push Bill & Joyce's car out of the car park where Bill had abandoned it overhanging a Pub neighbour's garden and when it resolutely refused to go into reverse Joyce dragged Bill from behind the wheel and relegated him to pushing duties only. A great day, great company and even better beer was had by all - well some of us anyway.

Neil describes his and Sharon's day: Neil and Sharon arrived in Cumbria well prepared for an attempt at climbing the famous rock pillar called Napes Needle on the S slopes of Great Gable. The Needle is an often photographed icon of Lakeland climbing and its first ascent in the 1880s by P Hasket Smith is credited with the birth of English rock climbing as a sport. Parking email contributions to newsletter@cioch.co.uk

places were plentiful at Seathwaite Farm at 8:15 am on this grey morning. The larger than normal rucksacks were loaded up with walking and climbing gear before heading south through the farm on the way to Styhead pass. The optimism had not entirely faded away as the first drips of rain fell; there was a good strong breeze blowing through with the potential to sweep away the low cloud. The climbers traverse path is poorly defined at its origin at Styhead but becomes more obvious after a few hundred yards as it rises gently westward across the south slope of the Gable. Clambering over the many boulders below Kern Knotts crag, the path continues across several scree slopes to finally arrive at the Napes crags around 2k from Styhead. The Needle eventually revealed itself through a thin veil of mist as we carefully picked our way along the path. Ascending above the traverse path to around 2000 feet above sea level, we sat there just below the base of the Needle contemplating the climbing conditions over some hot drinks and a snack. We gave it half an hour to improve, but then with the thin mist still coming and going and the wind randomly changed direction we took the disappointing but sensible decision to leave our desired conquest for another day. The least difficult routes up the Needle are graded HS (hard severe) in dry, wind free conditions; given current conditions the grade would be significantly higher - and besides even if we had climbed it, we would have had to come back another day to get some decent photos standing on the summit anyway. With that thought in mind, we decided to descend directly into the valley below and return to the car at Seathwaite. The Needle has escaped us for now but we'll be back.

Back at the accommodation, the toilet block is around 100 m from the camping barn. There are separate facilities for ladies and gents. The gents' toilet was clean and had hot and cold running water in the basins. The water in the shower was hot but the flow rate was very low.

Saturday Evening

Joyce booked a table for 11 of us at the Twa Dugs pub in Keswick. With the taxis due to arrive at 7pm mid rain shower, the phone box provided the only shelter at Causeway Foot roadside. It can get a bit claustrophobic with 4 in a phone box but no-one volunteered to leave. A fine meal was served up between drinks at the Twa Dugs. Being multilingual, Joyce is the natural communicator in the group and soon had the locals drumming up a return taxi for us, even when none was apparently available.

Sunday

Weather turned out to be worse than Saturday. The only outdoor challenge contemplated was running back and forward to toilet block without getting too wet and then loading luggage into cars. Most people headed north to be met by sunny weather in Scotland while Ian L took the opportunity to hook up with family members in the south before his eventual return to Fife.

