



# Cioch Mountaineering Club (Dunfermline)

Established 1988

## Newsletter #37

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### Meet Report: Strontian, Ardgour 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> May

With contributions from Pamela Binny, Dave Paton and Richard Christie

Pamela starts off the meet report with an account of why she's "quite tired....."

On Friday morning, Michelle, Stuart, Jim and I set off to climb Creise and Meall a' Bhuiirdh via the Grade 1 scramble, Sron na Creise. When Jim did not arrive at the pre-arranged time, the rest of us set off soon after 9am from Blackrock Cottage and were soon to be impressed by the sterling effort Jim put in, yomping commando-style across the bog to catch up. Part way up the scramble, I realised I was following a trail of blood (disconcerting when it's your first time on the route!). Luckily Jim was at hand with his first aid kit (usually a roll of black electrical tape!).



The scramble was good, conditions were fair and we all agreed it was a good choice for Stuart to celebrate a momentous occasion (with a nip of whisky supplied by Michelle)...only 50 left to do on his 2<sup>nd</sup> Munro round.

Day two, the same intrepid four set out for a horseshoe walk around Fuar Bheinn and Creach Beinn from west to east. All agreed it was a stunning walk and the best way to approach the two corbetts. Near the summit of Creach Bheinn, the look-out post, built during the Napoleonic wars provides some interest as do the remains of a crashed aircraft on the east ridge.



Grazing black goats appeared and re-appeared as we descended. Descent is probably a mis-leading term since there were so many lumps and bumps on the ridge that sometimes it felt as if we were never going down. The phrase of the day was "Are we nearly there yet?" and my trusty old altimeter (spot on every time!) was being accused of all sorts of mischief. At last, a steep descent down to the road where we all rated the walk as pretty high on 'the list of grand days out'.

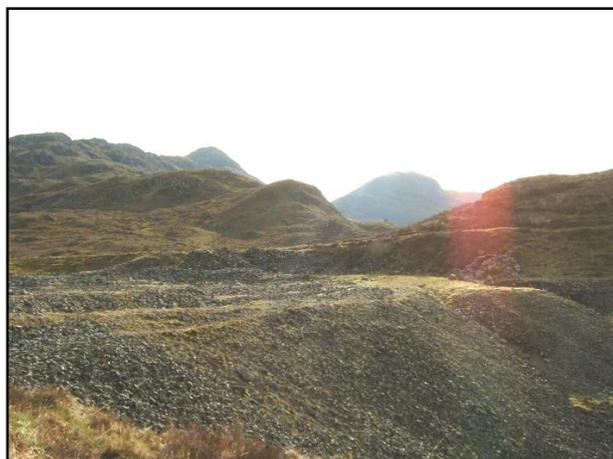


Day three, Jim, Michelle and I did Beinn na h-Uamha (which locals later told us is pronounced ben na whooha). There wasn't much whooha-ing heard on the steep ascent apart from the moment I discovered a 'snake' about 30 cm long... "What do you call a snake with no markings?" - "A slow-worm" was the reply. My first sighting. We didn't linger long on the summit because after applying the suncream, the wind could suddenly be heard roaring up the valley before a few flurries of snow fell whilst the sun continued to shine through (four seasons in one minute, never mind one day). Waiting for us on the bridge by the car was a large 'welcome home' party.... or so we thought. A local explained the villagers were out for a yellow rubber duck race (a charity event as opposed to a regular weekly, they hastened to

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add). Never mind, on our return, we had our own wee party sitting outside the bunkhouse in the sun with the usual supply of beverages.

By day four, I was secretly praying for rain which the forecast assured me was coming. We had been in our own little weather pocket in Ardgour while the rest of the country was having it rough. The rain did come but not until 1.30pm and by that time, Stuart, Michelle and I had done Sgurr Dhomhnull via Strontian Glen, a really great hill particularly descending by the south ridge and pausing to see the remains of mine workings. Another 'momentous 50th' quietly celebrated ....50 corbetts left to do. For now.... let's hope this rain continues... I'm knackered!



#### **Dave continues with his view of the weekend:**

I missed the meet the last time the club went to Strontian and was therefore looking forward to it. It's not too far to travel to, but having to get a ferry across to Ardgour makes it feel remote

I've been to the area before, but have not done much walking there, and was hoping for good weather to enjoy the hills I've seen so often from the distance. The hills looked impressive in the evening sun as we arrived at Strontian. Now I was REALLY looking forward to walking the next day!

Usually I don't indulge too much on the Friday evening, for obvious reasons. Sad to say I was led astray by Steve, who encouraged me to have too many 'nippy sweeties'. Luckily I wasn't too bad the next day, but did get a little thirsty late on.



A few of us decided on a traverse of Beinn Resipol for Saturday. One group opting for an East to West traverse. Olly, Jim Davidson, Lorna and myself opted for the West to East route. After a few minutes walking Olly realised that he had 'lost' his phone and went back to the car to get it. While he went back to look for it we carried on slowly to let him catch up later. I carried his rucksack, which being Olly's wasn't heavy. It took longer than expected for Olly to catch us as he actually drove back to the bunkhouse to look for the phone, failing to find it.

The walk was rather pleasant with good views of the top on the way up. We opted for an ascent of the ridge to the South of the top which proved to be pretty steep, with each of us opting for slightly different routes. Olly met the group coming from the opposite direction, although the rest of us missed them.

We had great views from the top, but there was a cold wind and we soon started to feel it, moving on after a good rest and something to eat. The rest of the day continued in the same way, with good views and good walking back to the bunkhouse. Olly forged ahead on the descent and opted for a direct route whilst the others followed the path and road. Although he arrived quite a few minutes ahead, Olly's cross country route left him somewhat more muddy than the others and complaining about the crap way down - and still worried about where his phone was.



Marion, Jim and I opted to eat in the on-site restaurant that night, which I would highly recommend.



The next day a group of us opted for a low level walk and headed for the dramatic setting of Castle Tioram and a coastal walk near it. It really is a dramatic place and the scenery is wonderful. This was followed by a trip to see the Seven Men of Moidart (historically interesting, but not much to see) then a trip down to Kentra Bay, which was beautiful and worth the effort.

Despite the impressive hills around us some decided to forgo them and opted for a short maritime adventure on Saturday, led by Captain Iain Hay. He was accompanied by Boson John Robertson and able seapersons Hazel Tout and Marion Paton on a trip to Staffa and Fingal's Cave. Despite having to make an early start to make the ferry I know that this was something that Marion had always wanted to do and she loved it.

All in all I had a brilliant weekend and would jump at the chance to go back to the area.

P.S. For those of you who were wondering about Olly's phone - it was

in his boot bag in the boot of his car all along!

The group traversing Beinn Risipol from east to west consisted of Steve, Mags, Alison, Bruce and Richard who were joined by Wattie. Although not on the meet, Wattie and Maureen were starting a week's break at a holiday cottage in Ardgour and had stayed in the Balahulish Hotel on Friday night. Whilst waiting for Wattie to arrive Bruce and Richard went in convoy to drop a car off in Risipol village which turned out to be a longer drive than Richard had imagined.

Following the route described in the SMC Corbetts book they set off up the road and after a couple of kilometers swapped tarmac for rough track when led up to a col and then dropped away to some old mine workings. Leaving the track at the col there was a reasonably easy angled grassy ridge leading to the main ridge of Beinn Risipol. As height was gained the views opened out and there were plenty of photo stops along the undulating ridge. Although the sun was shining brightly the breeze was definitely on the cool side as the group sat to



eat lunch in the shelter of the summit outcrop. The descent westwards was steeper than the eastern ascent had been so they reckoned east to west was the best choice – but each to their own. Not long after leaving the summit they came across Olly on his way up who asked if anyone had seen his phone in the bunkhouse that morning..... the rest of his group were nowhere to be seen. Lower down there was a pleasant walk through woods beside a stream although one set of tree roots caught Alison by surprise sending her head long and resulting in a nasty graze to her shin. The walk finished at the Risipol caravan site when Alison treated everyone to a very welcome ice cream at the shop. Maureen, who had spent the day walking in the oak woods near the bunkhouse and exploring the old mine slag heaps above, was waiting to chauffeur Wattie to their cottage when they reached Richard's car.



Whilst Dave and Marion dined on site; Mags, Steve, Alison, Bruce and Richard opted to walk down to the Hotel in Strontian to eat. The walk down was very pleasant and the view out of the dining room window was beautiful – the food was good but it sounds like it was matched by that served up at Ariundle Center.

Having survived the traverse of Beinn Risipol unscathed, Mags ended up with a blister from walking to the hotel in her 'evening' boots. This meant that she and Steve decided for a more relaxing Sunday and mirrored Maureen's exploration of the oak woods and mine workings just up the road from the Center. They discovered an old tunnel amongst the workings but failing batteries in their head torches curtailed the exploration.

Alison, Bruce and Richard headed north of Ariundle driving over the steep and twisting single track road to Loch Doilet. Parking at Kinlochan they first had a 2km walk along the base of Glen Hurich to a small holding reminiscent of the 'Good Life' complete with chickens, geese and ducks. From there the forest track proper started and they began looking for the route through the trees onto the ridge of Carn na Nathrach. Unable to find the proper path they bush whacked their way up steep ground to eventually break through onto the ridge complete with pine needles down their necks and various other places. The views were excellent as they made their way along the ridge although it was a bit of an 'are we there yet' walk thanks to some false summits. There was time to admire a number of, fortunately distant, snow showers around Ben Nevis from the summit before turning and



heading back along the ridge. They did manage to find the proper path down through the trees and emerged back onto the forest track to find the telltale cairn they had missed on the way up - it was hidden behind a track side baby fir tree. They got back to the center at just after 14:30 in time for Richard to pick up Steve and Mags and hit the road back to Dunfermline whilst Bruce and Alison left for Frotrose to make final preparations for their house move the following week.



### 2012 Meet Dates

8 <sup>th</sup> / 9 <sup>th</sup> June	Sligachan Bunkhouse, Skye	One place available
13 <sup>th</sup> / 14 <sup>th</sup> July	Ling Hut, Torridon	Three places available
10 <sup>th</sup> / 11 <sup>th</sup> August	Causewayfoot Farm, Keswick	Check with Olly
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

