



Cioch Mountaineering Club (Dunfermline)

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Meet Report – Mill Cottage, Feshiebridge 2nd / 3rd November 2012

With contributions from Chris Butcher and Richard Christie.

Jim Donald won the battle for the key since he would be first up to Mill Cottage. After dumping his gear at the hut and mopping up the pond of water on the kitchen floor – more on this later – he took to his bike and cycled down Glen Feshie to climb the Corbett Leathad an Taobhain. Richard and Wattie were next to arrive at the Cottage, switched on the electricity and opened the water stopcocks. At this point the source of the aforementioned water pond in the kitchen became obvious – the gland on the stopcock below the sink streamed water as soon as it was opened. Richard had a spanner in the car and just managed to tighten the gland enough to stop the water – it turned out that Jim had also identified the problem but he did not have a spanner so he had phoned Olly and asked for an appropriate tool to be brought up. Richard and Wattie then drove further north to Nethy Bridge and then east up a dead end road to Dorback Lodge. Since it was now midday they ate lunch in the car, which allowed a sharp shower to pass by, before heading off to climb Geal Charn – a Corbett rather than the Munro version Ian was climbing. The river near the start of the walk



was crossed easily and then a reasonable old landrover track was followed up the lower slopes of the hill. Higher up a light covering of snow was encountered along with a cool breeze. The views to the north were good but the Cairn Gorm plateau was hanging on to a thick layer of cloud. Richard huddled behind the cairn to reply to a work email [*one of these days he will learn not to look at incoming emails!*] whilst Wattie carried on over the top to make a circular walk, picking up another landrover track running on the north side of the Alt Mor. Just before they reached the car they walking past the old lodge which is sadly all boarded up now but had been a fairly substantial building in its day. By the time they got back to Mill Cottage Jim was already back and had a welcoming fire lit.

Chris and Janice were making a welcome return to a Cioch meet and had also decided to take a Friday holiday; Chris describes their Friday and Saturday below:



Chris and Janice both had the day off of work on Friday and hoped to make the most of a reasonable forecast before timing their arrival at the cottage for just after the fire had got the place warm. Plans were amended slightly in order to have work done on the old boiler. Feel free to make up your own puns at this point. One thought was to maximise the short daylight by walking in the Ochils. However, when driving across the bridge into Fife, these hills were hidden in cloud so we continued to drive into the rain which did not ease until the Spey Valley. Referring to the Corbetts book, the best option was offered by Carn an Fhreachadain, the highest point on the backdrop to Kingussie. Looking at the map while we

were waiting to be served soup in Betty's Pantry, one of its attractions was that a good landrover track goes all of

the way to the summit. While this might detract from an exciting and challenging day on the hill, it did offer a reasonable prospect of keeping dry feet with the light summer boots and rule out any need for the crampons and ice axes that were still hanging up in the garage. Seeing such a lot of snow on the Drumochter hills had been a bit of a surprise. Much of the ascent was completed in sunshine, with only occasional light snow showers intruding from the surrounding cloud. The snow was a bit heavier as we headed back from the summit, encouraging us to keep going until we reached the bothy that has been recently built about half way up. While we ate our sandwiches much heavier snow blew in and kept us company for some of the way down.

Fearing that we may be arriving a bit too earlier for the fire to have had its chance to break the ice, we popped into the Suie Hotel for a quiet pint. Unfortunately for us, the place was hoaching and we couldn't get a seat by the fire in the bar.

Chris and Jim had a great night sleep, although Jim was lucky to wake up. His snoring had kept Janice awake for hours and filled the other room occupant's thoughts with murderous intent - Kill Jim! Kill Jim! Kill Jim!

The four headed off together aiming for an easy day on Sgor Gaoith. This was pretty uneventful once the misleading tracks in the forest had been navigated. Jim found the rough ground and the murderous looks too much and turned back at the foot of the climb [either that or Jim's dodgy knee had started to play up]. The winter conditions again highlighted the folly of venturing out in November



equipped for Spanish conditions. Even the GPS did not want to be there, and had to be reprogrammed to the OS Grid, before a bearing for the summit could be got. It was one of those days when there was no ice and we got away with being inadequately equipped. It was only on the last few hundred meters to the summit that the snow got a bit crusty. Returning to the Cottage for an early shower before the rush, the choice was a long evening with Dave's choice of music or a drive out to satisfy Janice's need for coffee. After coffee there was still plenty of time for a pint, but the door to the bar at the Suie Hotel was locked. The Ossian Inn, just round the corner, was suggested as an alternative. The lights were on and the bar door opened. After a brief growl the dog and the bar man were friendly, but the hospitality could not compensate for the lack of heating so after a single drink we retreated to the fire waiting back at Mill Cottage.



But we have jumped ahead a bit now. The other meet attendees were: Iain Hay, Steve Gadd, Vicky, Dave Thomas, Jim Davidson, Dave Paton and Jan (making her annual Mill Cottage meet appearance). In addition Bill and Joyce were making light of the weather forecast and camping on the lawn. Olly was also supposed to be on the meet, giving Dave Paton a lift but Dave arrived under his own steam explaining Olly had had to go to the rescue of one of his recently sold cars which had broken down.

In addition to Chris, Janice, Jim and their sleep deprived companion; Jim Davidson and Dave Thomas also headed for Sgor Gaoith - setting off from Achleen with the intension of bagging Mullach Clach a' Bhlair as well. The walk took them longer than planned and in the end Mullach Clach a' Bhlair was left for another

day. Iain Hay did stay on plan and climbed Bynack More from Glenmore Lodge, managing to beat the aforementioned duo back to the cottage. Bill and Joyce set off bright and early to climb Creag Meagaidh. They enjoyed a pleasant walk in but after a bit of a slog up slippery snow to the top of the window they decided on plan B and turned right instead of left, climbing Stob Poite Coire Ardair and Carn Liath instead of carrying on to Creag Meagaidh, this still added one Munro to Joyce's bagged list. Having heard Janice extolling the virtues of the Suie Hotel on the Friday evening, Bill and Joyce called in on their way back to the cottage. Fortunately they were a bit later and found the door unlocked and the fire burning welcomingly – Bill also found a good selection of real ale on tap and Joyce recommends the Whisky Mack! Steve

and Vicky had a lengthy discussion over breakfast over what hill to climb – eventually Vicky was persuaded to climb Carn Gorm (again) with the promise that Steve would treat her to a hot drink at the Ptarmigan restaurant - they then rounded off a good day with a circumnavigation of Loch Morlich. Jan opted for a low level walk round the loch and then paid her traditional visit to the local leisure club. Dave P had come equipped with his bicycle which he used to good effect cycling along the side the aqueduct en-route to climbing Meall Chuaich, thankfully a gale was not blowing like the last time he had attempted the hill.

Richard and Wattie had arranged to meet up with Alison and Bruce at Bridge of Avon in Glen Livet which was roughly equidistant between Mill Cottage and Fortrose. A short confab by mobile phone was necessary before the two cars actually arrived at the same spot. The cunning plan was to traverse the Corbett Ben Rinnes so one car was left near the driveway to Ballindalloch Castle and the other used to drive round to the east side of this popular hill – judging by the well maintained motorway of a path which lead them quite quickly to the summit. A bit like Friday, there were good views to the north and east but the cold breeze was also present so they were glad of some shelter from one of the summit tors whilst they stopped for a bit of lunch. The continuation of the traverse then left the motorway behind and they headed off into the breeze across rougher ground. A couple of map consultations were necessary to hit the right ridge for the descent and then an all-terrain track was followed which in turn met up with a landrover track. The final part of the walk was through managed woodland liberally dotted with blue plastic drum, pheasant feeding stations. There was a bit of wildlife to be seen in the woods with Snowbunting, deer and ‘eagle eyed’ Alison even caught sight of a Short Eared Owl skimming just above the ground. The good walk was rounded off by a pleasant drive back through Glen Livet past its various distilleries (the Tormore Distillery being a very fine example) and a picturesque old bridge. An area neither Wattie nor Richard had visited for some time thanks to its lack of Munros.



With everyone safely back, showered and fed it was time for Joyce to be embarrassed..... She asked Richard to stand guard at the kitchen door whilst she put candles in the carrot cake she had baked especially for Dave Paton's birthday - which she had been told coincided with the Mill Cottage weekend. The cake was then duly paraded into the lounge and Joyce let the room in a chorus of Happy Birthday Dave. Dave was very grateful but looked slightly abashed as he pointed out that his birthday was on the Sunday and that it was actually Richard's birthday on the Saturday. This caused Joyce's face to turn a colour similar to her sweater and quickly reprise the song with a subtle name change..... both Dave and Richard then jointly blew out the candles. Everyone agreed the cake was very good. As an aid to digestion they all ventured outside to watch the now traditional multi shot fireworks supplied by Dave and Richard.

Aldi once more proved value for money although one of the four multi shorts did turn out to be a damp squib.

The fourth occupant from Chris and Janice's room swapped bedrooms on the Saturday night in an attempt to avoid Jim Donald's snoring only to encounter a lesser impression from Iain Hay – who had been quiet as a mouse on the Friday night.....

Winter Slide Show Programme 2013 - 2013

| Date | Show | Date | Show | Date | Show |
|----------|----------------------------------|----------|-------------------------------|----------|--|
| 18/10/12 | Richard Christie Corsica GR20 | 15/11/12 | Bill Gray Round the World | 22/11/12 | Chris Butcher Spanish Picos |
| 17/01/13 | Cioch 25 Pub Quiz Night | 24/01/13 | John Warnock Cioch Musical | 21/02/13 | Wattie Ramage The Last Year & 20 years ago |
| 14/03/13 | Available | 21/03/13 | Available | | |

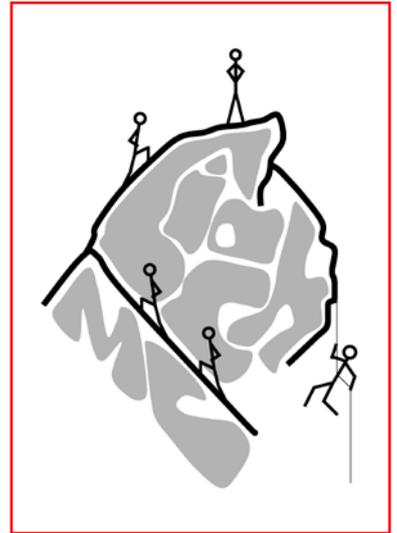
Cioch 25 Update

The Cioch 25 Logo competition has been won by Dave Paton who has come up with a great new take on the original design:

Michelle is in the process of finalizing prices for Tee Shirts and Sweat Shirts; in black with this logo (appropriately adjusted) on the front and 2013 meet dates on the back headed "Cioch 25: The Tour". Sizes will be S, M, L, XL & XXL. Final details and prices will be posted on the website as soon as possible – hopefully next week – orders to go directly to Michelle. A great solution to your Christmas present quest?

The date for the BBQ at the Watering Hole in Dunfermline has been provisionally set for Saturday 24th August.

The first Cioch 25 event of 2013 is the Quiz Night on the 17th January



2013 Meet Dates

| | | |
|------------|---|---|
| Jan | 4 th / 5 th | Ochils Hut, Crianlarich |
| Feb | 8 th / 9 th | Strathspey Mountain Hostel, Newtonmore |
| Mar | 1 st / 2 nd | Lagangarbh, Glencoe |
| Mar | 15th / 17th | Clan Cioch Gathering, Blair Atholl |
| Apr | 5 th / 6 th | Sail Mhor, Dundonnell |
| May | 3 rd / 4 th / 5 th | Llanberis, North Wales |
| June | 14 th / 15 th | Morvich Outdoor Centre, Kintail |
| July | 12 th / 13 th | Strawberry Cottage, Glen Affric |
| July | 26 th / 27 th | Lake District (extra meet) |
| Aug | 9 th / 10 th | Inver Croft, Achnasheen |
| Aug | 24th TBC | BBQ, Dunfermline |
| Sept | 6 th / 7 th | Glenbrittle Memorial Hut, Skye |
| Oct | 4 th / 5 th | Muir of Inverey, Braemar |
| Nov | 1 st / 2 nd | Mill Cottage, Feshiebridge |
| Dec | TBC | Christmas Meet, tbc |



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year



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