



Cioch Mountaineering Club (Dunfermline)

Established 1988 – 25th Anniversary year

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Meet Reports: Glen Brittle Memorial Hut, Skye, 6th/7th September 2013

Contributions from Karen Fotheringham, Dave Paton and Richard Christie

As is sometimes the case it pays to get up to Skye a day early and weather wise September 2013 was one of these times. Neil, Sharon, Sam, Mark, Jim Donald and Dave Paton were amongst those who took the Friday off and travelled up on the Thursday evening enjoying the best of the weather on the Friday – more about the weather later.

It is a long time since the Club used the Glen Brittle Memorial Hut as the base for a meet so few people knew what to expect. The hut location near the bottom end of the Glen is great for quick access to the heart of the Black Cuillin. There is plenty of space in the kitchen and open plan dining / living area. The bedrooms are also a reasonable size but at first sight the bunks look old and uncomfortable – old is correct but the upper hammocks were solidly built and surprisingly comfortable. The hut is due for a major upgrade in the near future. The only unusual feature is that the hut comes complete with a live-in custodian – fortunately the custodian in residence during our visit was suitably laid back and/or deaf enough not to be upset by the very noisy goings-on on Saturday night!

Jim Donald's plan for the weekend was to do the main ridge with overnight bivy as necessary. Starting off at the south end he progressed quite well but decided he was not going fast enough by the time he reached the In-Pin so decided to call it a day on the Friday evening – just as well considering the weather overnight into Saturday morning.

Neil, Sharon, Sam and Mark climbed Sgurr a' Mhadaidh and Sgurr a' Ghreadaidh on the Friday and enjoyed a good day apart from the challenge of the smoothed off climb out of the An Dorus Gap towards Ghreadaidh.

Dave P struck out on his own on Friday as he describes below:

For me the last couple of years have been a bit frustrating to say the least. Worst of all had been the first 6 months of this year, when even walking was becoming difficult for me. What a change after the op'. All of a sudden I have no pain (or at least virtually none) and am raring to get back into the hills.

Just over five weeks after the op', I was in Skye and determined to do something, I decided on Bruach na Frithe. I got to the top, but was knackered. Possibly just a little too soon! Since then I had been working on some fitness with the aim of doing something on the Skye meet and feeling good after it.



Still technically 'sick' I took advantage of my last few days off work to head up to Skye a day early. This proved to be lucky as the weather on Friday was great. On Saturday it was not.

My target was Sgurr nan Eag, Sgurr Dubh Mor and Sgurr Alasdair and I started off early in sunshine walking in shorts and T-shirt. Wonderful! The walk into Coir a' Ghrunnda took a bit longer than I thought, perhaps I'm still a bit slow, but I was enjoying the views and the warm sun. The climb to the summit was uneventful but it was good to reach the top, which was still in sunshine, where I could sit down, relax and enjoy the view.

From the top I could see that not all of the ridge had the sun I was getting. I had chosen my tops well. Aware of the time it had taken I decided to miss out Sgurr Dubh Mor and head straight for Alasdair, where at last the sun deserted me. Still the top stayed clear and I was able, once again, to sit down and enjoy the view.



After that it was down the stone chute, my least favourite part of the day, into Coire Laggan, where I could sit down and reflect on my day. I was happy that, although I wasn't going as fast as I used to, I still felt fairly fresh and able to enjoy the day.

From there it was a straight forward walk back to the car and back to the Glen Brittle Memorial Hut for food, wine and good company.

Next day after being wakened in the night by (a) Olly arriving at about 3.00am and (b) driving rain on the window, I took a look out of the window and, with the

probability of a good day on the hills zero, decided to head for home. The temptation of a last long lie on Sunday before going back to work was stronger than another night of food and wine. I did miss the company though.

Still I had a great day on the Friday and it was well worth the trip.

Richard, Steve and Mags shared transport to Skye leaving Gowkhill mid-afternoon and drove non-stop to reach Glen Brittle shortly after 7pm. Fortunately this was in time for Steve to produce the presentation size cheque and for Jim and Steve to hand over the Club's donation to the Skye Mountain Rescue Team. The donation was mainly collected at the Clubs 25th celebration BBQ and rounded up from Club funds to £250. The Rescue Team Leader, Gerry Akroid accepted the cheque on the team's behalf.

Karen arrived on the Friday evening complete with two familiar faces who had not been on a hut meet for some time: Ian Robertson and Gillian Ramsay, she explains their weekend as follows:



Having gotten all geared up; gathering ropes, harnesses and Gillian from Sunderland, I had high hopes of getting a crack at the In Pin on the Skye meet. However, it wasn't to be with the gales that were blowing when we got up on the Saturday (part of me was terrified that this wouldn't be enough to put the indomitable Iain Robertson off). We made the most of it with a walk to check out a possible Duke of Edinburgh route for the future. Parking south of Bla Bheinn we walked into the Camasunary Bothy with the intension of carrying on over 'the bad step' to look at Loch Coruisk. The height of the river just beyond the bothy forced a change of plan and since I did not fancy crossing the river by myself I returning to collect the car whilst

Ian and Gillian walked through Strath na Creitheach and Glen Sligachan to the Sligachan Hotel. We were well rewarded in the end as I got to see something I never had before - a double rainbow, one of which was inverted.

It all ended with some good banter in the Slig bar before a night of frivolity which proved that Cioch members need a long day on the hills and limited social time or it all might go a bit pear-shaped...

The wind driving the rain against the bedroom windows acted as an unwelcome alarm clock on the Saturday morning. There were a few glum faces as people gathered for breakfast and looked out through the rain at the cloud shrouded ridge. Sadly the plan for "Lunch on the Cioch" as part of the Cioch 25 celebrations was a definite non-starter in that

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weather – getting out at all would prove a challenge! All opted for a leisurely breakfast and then wondered what could be done. As indicated above, Dave P decided to head for home since he had a good walk on the Friday. Richard then came up with one wind proof alternative – if it was too windy to climb up how about going down underground instead? Remembering a previous wet and windy weekend on Skye he suggested a trip to Spar Cave down near Elgol. Michelle, Mags, Steve, Jim and David Currie liked the idea so off the six set with Jim chauffeuring David in his shiny new BMW 1 series convertible – with the roof firmly in the up position. The only problem with going to the cave, apart from finding the start of the path down to it, is that you can't get there at high tide. High was exactly where the tide was when they looked down on Loch Harport from the Carbost end of the Glen Brittle road – some time wasting was going to be called for. There was a leisurely drive round the island and down to Elgol which both allowed the tide to turn and the weather to show signs of improving. More time needed wasting however so a coffee and cake stop was called for. The Café Michelle remembered in Elgol appeared to have closed but there was a sign pointing to the end of the village hall. It did not look hopeful however since both tables in the small café were already occupied. This was not a problem for the resourceful café owner and a table and chairs were soon put out in the hall itself. Michelle and Mags shared what they agreed was the largest slice of multi layered Victoria Sponge they had ever seen – sadly it was consumed too fast for photographic evidence to be obtained. By the time they left there were another two tables set out in the hall full of happy customers and the sun was doing its best to shine.



After a bit of a bushwhack through ferns they eventually found the right path down to the shore and made their way round the headland on seaweed covered rocks to the next inlet. The cave is not immediately obvious and you have to go right into the inlet before you see the remains of the wall built in a vain attempt to stop the Victorians robbing the cave of its slaglights and staligmites. A torch is a must for going into the cave, fortunately the slippery looking floor, complete with thin layer of running water is deceptively

grippy allowing you to climb up and view the cave in all its splendor. The ascent back up to the car was made easier by keeping to the path which came out just where Steve had said they should have started from.....



By now the wind had dropped and the sun was definitely shining bright, the day was still relatively young so there was plenty of time to do something else. A wander along the coastal track to the abandoned village of Suisnish as proposed by Michelle seemed to be the best idea. There were great views out to sea and back towards Bla Bheinn. The improvement in the weather allowed Jim to put the roof down on the drive back to Glen Brittle. The magnetic attraction of the Slig bar proved too strong and both cars ended up stopping there on the way back. The bar had also worked its magic on Karen's car and she, Gillian and Ian were already half way through their first drink. Richard was grateful Mags chose tea instead of an alcoholic refreshment, allowing her to volunteer to take over driving responsibility and Richard to have a second pint.... cheers Mags.



Having managed some hills on the Friday Neil, Sharon, Sam and Martin opted for low level adventures on the Saturday which included wandering out to Talisker Bay. As Dave P indicates Olly, Steve Gadd and Dave Thomas arrived in the early hours on Saturday – they did something on Saturday but I can't remember what.

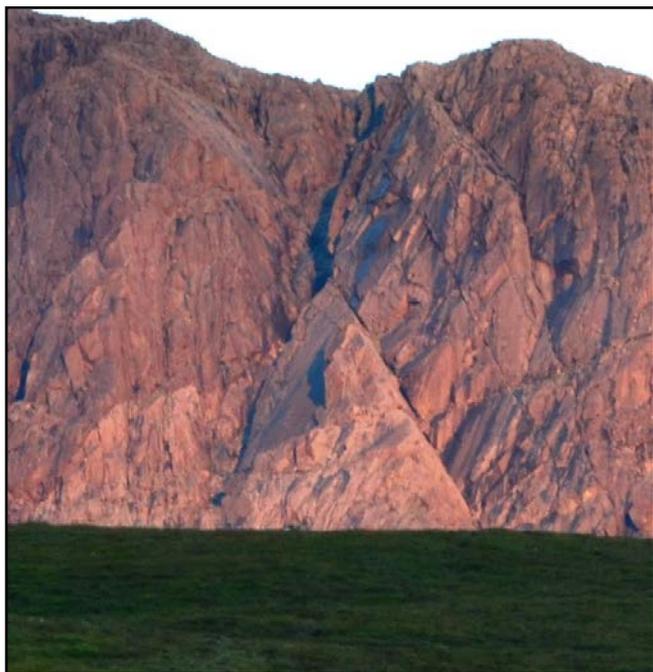
As Karen suggests, with no major walks done on the Saturday (with the exception of Ian and Gillian's traverse of Glen Slig) people seemed to have energy to burn on Saturday evening [especially those fueled by an Ian Robertson home-

made curry]. Someone – possibly Jim – set up a “pick up the empty tin of beer from on top of a plastic bowl using your teeth whilst standing on one leg challenge”. A few people tried before Mags was the first to succeed – assisted by her sober state perhaps – this served as a red rag to husband Steve who eventually succeeded after a number of attempts. Others tried and failed / succeeded, egged on with much boisterous encouragement. Attention then turned to the competitive possibilities offered by the two chairs mounted on castors.....David Currie only suffered mild damage to his ribs.



The weather on Sunday was much improved but most if not all headed for home after a comprehensive clean up job had been carried out on the hut to ensure it was left spick and span to the custodian's approval.

The weather had improved to give a lovely sunset on the Saturday evening allowing tantalizing views up to the Cioch from the Hut – what might have been – but there is always next year – Cioch 26?



2013 Meet Dates

Oct 4 th / 5 th	Muir of Inverey, Braemar
Nov 1 st / 2 nd	Mill Cottage, Feshiebridge
Dec 6 th / 7 th	Christmas Meet, Onich

2014 Meet Dates

Jan 10 th /11 th	Strathspey Hostel, Newtonmore
Feb 7 th /8 th	TBA
March 7 th /8 th	Ochils MC hut, Crianlarich
April 4 th /5 th	Ariundle Centre, Strontian
May 2 nd /3 rd /4 th	Gwern Gof Isaf, Capel Curig, N Wales
June 6 th /7 th	Skyewalker Bunkhouse, Portnalong
July 11 th /12 th	Ling Hut
July TBC	Lake District
August 8 th /9 th	Sail Mhor, Dundonnell
September 5 th /6 th	Invergarry Lodge
October TBC	Inver Croft TBC
November 7 th /8 th	Mill Cottage, Feshiebridge
December TBC	Christmas Meet Inchree, tbc

Winter Slide Show Programme 2013 - 2014

Date	Show	Date	Show	Date	Show
24/10/13	Richard Christie Only a Munro away from the top of the world? Everest North Col	14/11/13	Chris Butcher Austria	21/11/13	Winter Safety Talk By Mick Tighe Pitlochlie Hotel [In conjunction with Mountain Aid]
23/01/14	Bill Gray World tour part 2	20/02/14	Wattie Ramage Last Twelve Months	20/03/14	Available

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