

Ptarmigan Hillwalking & Mountaineering Club



Website: www.ptarmiganmc.org.uk

Monthly Newsletter

February 2025

The Meet on Sunday 2nd February is to the Ochil Hills

DETAILS OF THE MEET

The bus will leave Waterloo Place at 07.30 going via Shandwick Place (bus stop opposite Boots), Haymarket, Roseburn, Drum Brae, Queensferry Crossing, M90, Kinross Services (short stop) and Yettis o' Muckhart. From there we will take the A823 as far as the Lower Glendevon Reservoir road-end at NN948053 for those wanting to start in the heart of the Ochils. Then the bus will turn round, rejoin the A91 and go on to Dollar, Tillicoultry & park for the day at Alva.

The bus will leave Alva at 16.30 prompt.

Bus convener: Alex Williamson 07931 371985:

Bookings and cancellations: Email bookings@ptarmiganmc.org.uk

Main map required: Map required: OS 1:50 000 sheet 58 Perth to Alloa

The fare will be £25 and, while cash can be taken in the bus, it would be preferred if you could pay by bank transfer IN ADVANCE of the outing. The day before is fine. Please pay to:

PTARMIGAN MOUNTAINEERING CLUB (note name is not yet changed); 80-17-68; 00248765

Bus departure times - a reminder

We always aim for our buses to leave Waterloo Place promptly at 07:30 am on the day of an outing. It is difficult to predict the times at which the bus will arrive at other pick up points which will depend on traffic, any roadworks etc but the roads are usually very quiet at that time of day. We have a note of who is due to be joining the bus at Waterloo Place and the other pick up points. If anyone is missing, the bus will usually wait for two minutes at any pick up point but will not normally wait for any longer than that."

Route Options

Higher level (including one Graham, five Donalds, all in bold)

For those getting off at the Reservoir Road End, a track takes you past a few small farms and Lower Glendevon Reservoir to the southern inlet of Upper Glendevon Reservoir at Backhills. Thereafter the route is largely trackless and leads east for a short distance before turning south back to Tillicoultry. From Backhills you can climb Backhill itself (584m) [NN904025], 584m) and Ben Buck (677m) and come back via **Ben Cleuch** (721m) (Graham; also a Donald) and The Law (638m). *(Please note: This route uses a track, not shown on the OS 1:50 000 map, to go back to the eastern end of the reservoir. This route would avoid a potentially difficult river crossing, but adds distance - probably more than 15 mins).*

You could also start from the same point and extend the above route by first walking the hills north of the two reservoirs – starting with Common Hill (415m) [NN940050] and going on to Wether Hill (502m) and Craigentaggert Hill (491m), then descending to the Glen Bee track where a path continues round the reservoir to Backhills.

An excellent traverse starts a mile or so down the glen at [NN967053]. Cross the River Devon and climb Ben Shee (515m). Descend and climb the gradual slopes to Scad Hill, Cairnmorris Hill and Skythorn Hill. Finish this traverse by continuing over Andrew Gannel Hill (670m), **Ben Cleuch** (721m) and Ben Ever (622m).

Even further down the valley, you can get off at Borland where a path leaves the road at [NN984047]. Head for the grassy ridge which can be followed as far as **Innerdownie** (611m), Whitewisp Hill (643m), **Tarmangie Hill** (645m) to Skythorn Hill (603m) where the path to **Ben Cleuch** via Andrew Gannel Hill (670m) can be picked up.

The usual Dollar to Tillicoultry rounds taking in Bank Hill (344m) and **King's Seat** (648m) with Andrew Gannel Hill (670m) and **Ben Cleuch** are justifiably popular. Alva Glen is always worth a visit and this could be included in a Tillicoultry return round including **Blairdenon Hill** (631m), Ben Ever and **Ben Cleuch**. A pleasant woodland track leads between Alva and Tillicoultry.

Dumyat: A fine wee sub 2000 Hill that can be reached easily from Menstrie. **Blairdenon Hill** can also be reached from Menstrie & Alva.

Lower level

A low-level walk starts at Borland from where you can walk up Glen Quey past the reservoir and Maiden's Well. This path then continues down past the wooded Hillfoot Hill and into the excellent Dollar Glen.

There's also The Devon Way (an old railway line) between Tillicoultry and Dollar which can be extended to Pool of Muckhart.

The Club's Code of Good Practice notes that parties should comprise two, preferably three, people and those members must have a map of the area and compass and know how to use them. A first aid kit, survival bag, whistle and torch should also be carried. The group should stick together and be alert for signs of anyone feeling unwell or getting into difficulties. For those members who have one it does no harm to carry a mobile phone, though it is important to understand that there is no guarantee of signal availability and this should never be relied upon.

Disclaimer: The routes outlined above are merely descriptions of walks in the area; they do not represent invitations or recommendations by the Club or any of its Officers to members to go on these routes. It is the individual and sole responsibility of each club member to choose a route that is within their capability taking due account of the timings given and the weather conditions prevailing.

'Everyone should be aware that the Scottish hills can provide more challenging days than the height and distance alone may indicate. Preferably robust boots should be worn and clothing worn or carried suitable to deal with wet, windy and cold weather at any season. A change of clothing in the bus is also advisable too. See additional advice for winter conditions.'

WhatsApp Group

You are reminded that we have now set up a WhatsApp group to enable members to exchange plans for the day in advance which may take some pressure off the bus convener. If you have not already joined and would like to do so, please email secretary@ptarmiganmc.org.uk

Highways Hillwalking Club

For many years we have had an informal association with the Highways Hillwalking Club in terms of which our members are welcome as guests on their outings and vice versa without restriction of the number of such outings that can be attended. The HHC operates a programme very similar to ours, also using MacLeod Coaches, but usually on the second Sunday of the month. The combined programme for both clubs can be found in the Meets section of our website and full details of the HHC including how to sign up for their outings are available at their website: <https://sites.google.com/site/highways3102/home> "

“Our proposed programme for 2025 is:

Feb 2 - Ochil Hills - Bus to Alva, travelling via Glendevon, Dollar & Tillicoultry.

Mar 2 - Cairndow via Butterbridge

Apr 6 - Glen Creran

May 4 - Ben Lawers parking at Lawers Hotel if possible, or lay by at east end of Lawers Village

June 1 - Auchlean, Glen Feshie

June 29 - Bunkhouse weekend, Inchnadamph

July 6 - Glen Nevis

Aug 3 - Loch Muick

Sep 7 - Glencoe, parking at Ballachulish

Oct 5 - Braithwaite, Lake District

Nov 2 - Blair Atholl (High Tea at Atholl Arms)

Dec 7 - Moffat

What we did on the last Meet

Campsie Fells, December 1st 2024

Our occasional December visits to the Campsies are always enjoyable – not least for the opportunity of a stop at the excellent Fintry Inn where the bus waits for us at the end of the day.

Eight of us (Anya, Christine, Diahann, Don, Jo, Michael, Petra and I) decided to do the classic walk to Fintry from the Glengoyne Distillery which was closed at that hour on a Sunday morning or we might have been tempted to fortify ourselves for the day ahead. From the distillery there is a short and sharp haul up to the top of Dumgoyne (427m) which had its head in the clouds depriving us of the normally tremendous view of the hills to the north. Next stop was Earl’s Seat (578m) after which the path eastwards pretty much disappears. From then on it was a highish bog factor walk in deteriorating weather, picking our way over the moor to Allanrowie (493m) which offered views through the mist into the impressive crater like Corrie of Balglass. On via Monach Moss and Dunmore and then down to Fintry where we were the first group to arrive at the Inn where their Sunday afternoon folk music session was in full swing. Not a great day for photography but my few photos convey the flavour of the day.

Douglas Tullis



Scotland on a clear day: Pictures by Douglas Tullis



Refreshments: Picture by Douglas Tullis

Here is Richard Love's account of his group: Whittled down from 27 at the beginning of the week, the hardy seventeen who ventured to the underrated Campsie Fells soon split into three groups. Our group (Alex, Colin, Elsa, Lesley and myself) persuaded our driver to pass through Fintry a further 6 km to Todholes, the start of a good track, which headed up to the nearby windfarm, just visible in the low cloud.

We headed north, abandoning the track after a mile or so and striking across rough ground towards the Endrick Water, where we fortunately found a good wooden bridge to cross (one of several water crossings of the day). We picked up a reasonable track above the Backside Burn (sounds painful!) but hoped that this by now good track would either have another bridge or a shallow ford to allow the crossing of Gourlay's Burn.

There was a 'ford' but the raging torrent would have swept us off our feet so, despite Elsa's suggestion of using a fragile looking wire fence to cross, we opted to follow the water course upstream until narrow enough to be jumped or forded safely. Alex and I with our longer legs just managed to leap over at one point but the others continued a good deal further till finding somewhere safer to cross, then had a swampy trek to meet up with us back at the track. We continued to follow this for a short while before heading west over more boggy ground towards the Spout of Ballochleam. This involved another leap over troubled water and not everyone was happy.



Time for a short energy boost before we tackled the gentle westward slopes to Stronend, the summit of the day, which sports a fine shelter cairn of mossy rough stone. As Lesley sat to gather her strength for the descent, I asked her which bit so far she'd enjoyed most. 'None of it!' was the firm reply. Heading south and dropping down and through the rough, steep crags above Fintry wouldn't have cheered her spirits much either, as we had a mossy dyke and another fence to cross before we found the marked track which zigzagged its way down through a farm to the village.

On the Hill (sort of) Picture by Colin Shepherd

There we found the welcome sight of our bus with the promise of dry socks. An hour of jaunty folk music in the bar of the Fintry Inn made up for the lack of IPA, which ran out after the first pint. But by this time, even Lesley seemed to be enjoying the day. This route was harder than expected, with occasional rain and wind but not too cold, so most of us felt a grim satisfaction in mission achieved.

Richard Love

Important part of the day: Picture by Douglas Tullis



Some Ptarmigans have been out enjoying January snowy conditions.



Sunrise from Allermuir Hill: Picture by Alistair Haig



View North from Beinn Bhuidhe on the 2nd Jan. Picture by Norman Phipps