

Ptarmigan Hillwalking & Mountaineering Club



Website: www.ptarmiganmc.org.uk

Monthly Newsletter

March 2025

The Meet on Sunday 2nd March is to Cairndow via Butterbridge

DETAILS OF THE MEET

The bus will leave Waterloo Place at 07.30 going via Shandwick Place (bus stop opposite Boots), Haymarket, Roseburn and PC World. Arrival time at Cairndow should be about 10.30 after a short stop at Balloch where we may stop for refreshments on the way home. A refreshment at the Loch Fyne brewery is on the cards for those going to Cairndow.

The bus will leave Cairndow at 17.30 prompt. Bus convener: Alistair Haig: 07402 580588

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

Main map required: Map required: OS 1:50 000 sheet 56 Loch Lomond & Inveraray

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

Please Note: The long range weather forecast is presently unpromising and that if, towards the end of next week, it looks really bad for next Sunday the committee will consider an alternative venue in the east of Scotland.

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."

Members are reminded that the mountains are now in full winter mode. Ice-axe and crampons must be carried if you're walking above the snow-line.

Route Options

Munros

Beinn Bhuidhe (948m) [NN 203 187] is one incentive for those taking the bus to its final destination at Cairndow. Approach is by way of a private vehicles road leading up Glen Fyne past the Lodge to the cottage at Inverchorachan. From here head west by following the south side of the burn up into a small corrie – cross the burn just before its source to head north west to the upper corrie. From here head up one of the gullies to the summit crest. **This is a fairly demanding route in the time available and is recommended for faster parties only.**

The **Munros Beinn Narnain** (926m) [NN271066] and **Beinn Ime** (1011 m) [NN255084] are possible in various combinations and with a variety of possible start and end points. Ben Ime can be combined with the **Corbett** Beinn Luibhean (858 m) [NN242079] and/or Beinn Chorrnach (885 m) [NN255096] from Butterbridge.

Corbetts

Ben Arthur/The Cobbler (884 m) [NN259058]: a **Corbett** whose unusually shaped top is due to a major landslide after the last glaciation and provides an “interesting” little scramble to the summit. Routes up include starting from Succoth, the pier between Succoth and Ardgartan, Ardgartan itself and from point [NN 243060] on the A83 just south of the Rest and be thankful.

On the west side of Glen Croe are three **Corbetts** - The Brack (787 m) [NN245030], Ben Donich (847 m) [NN218043] and Cnoc Còinnich (762 m) [NN233007] (formerly a Graham) - which can be tackled from Ardgartan on Loch Long [NN272033].

A traverse of Beinn an Lochain (901 m) [NN218078] (once a Munro, now a **Corbett**) from the Rest and be thankful [NN230073] to Butterbridge gives an interesting ridge walk with excellent views.

The ridge of Binnein an Fhìdhleir (811 m) [NN215108]/Stob Coire Creagach (817 m) [NN 230109] (**Corbett**) can be done from Butterbridge, with a possible return route along Glen Kinglas or down the ridge to meet the bus at the Cairndow.

Grahams

The Luss hills are a compact range of smooth grassy hills, including no fewer than eight Grahams. These, in combination with neighbouring hills, give a variety of interesting possibilities starting and finishing at Luss. The hills accessible from Luss include, on the south side of Glen Luss, Creag an Leinibh (658 m) [NS 311919] and the neighbouring Beinn Tharsuinn (655 m) and Beinn Chaorach (713 m) (**Graham**), plus Beinn a’ Mhanaich (689 m)[NS 269946] (**Graham**).

On the north side of Glen Luss are Cruach an t-Sidhein (684 m) [NS 275965] (**Graham**); Doune Hill (734 m) [NS 290971] (**Graham**) sharing a ridge with Beinn Eich (702 m) (**Graham**); and Beinn Dubh (643 m)[NS 336954].

Mid Hill (657 m) [NS321962], Doune Hill and Beinn Eich (all **Grahams**) offer a horseshoe round above Glen Mollachan.

On the north side of Glen Douglas are two more **Grahams** , craggier than their southern neighbours: Tullich Hill (632 m) [NN293006] and Beinn Bhreac (681 m) [NN321000].

Lower level

From the terminus there are various possible routes in and around Glen Fyne. The upper reaches of the glen offer a pleasant sense of remoteness along with traces of old roads and dwellings.

Low-level possibilities include a walk up Glen Kinglas from Butterbridge to “Abyssinia” - an interestingly named empty cottage in the upper glen, lying at the foot of Gleann Uaine. Other possible low- level walks include Glen Luss or heading south on the peninsula beyond Ardgartan (at the foot of Glen Croe).

The Club’s Code of Good Practice (available at our website <https://ptarmiganmc.org.uk> under the Membership tab) lists the clothing and equipment to have on the hills. It is important to have warm clothing, good quality waterproofs and robust boots and to carry food, water, map, compass and a mobile phone. A first aid kit, survival bag, whistle and torch should also be carried.

Disclaimer: We do not have walk leaders, our groups walk as equals with shared responsibility for navigation and safety. The routes suggested 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 walkers to go on these routes. It is the individual and sole responsibility of each walker to choose a route that is within their capability.

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> "

What we did last month

It was the first Ptarmigan walk of the year and we had an almost full bus. 25 Ptarmigans looked at the options and the short journey from Edinburgh saw 23 choosing to get off high in Glen Devon to traverse to either Alva or Tillicoultry. That left Jean (on her first Ptarmigan walk) and me to stay on the bus to Alva.

The path up the Glen from Alva was closed with a fiercer than usual closure notice promising a "25 metre gap" and "danger of death", so Jean and I took the high path up the Alva Glen before striking off west up steeply up through the crags and onto the top of Bengengie Hill. So far, so clear and dry, but the push onto Blairdenon Hill took us into the wet snow and the clag. At times we had a faint ATV track to help us, but it wasn't consistent. Gaining the top was welcome, but the snow, cold and clag left us with no desire to spend time there imagining the views.

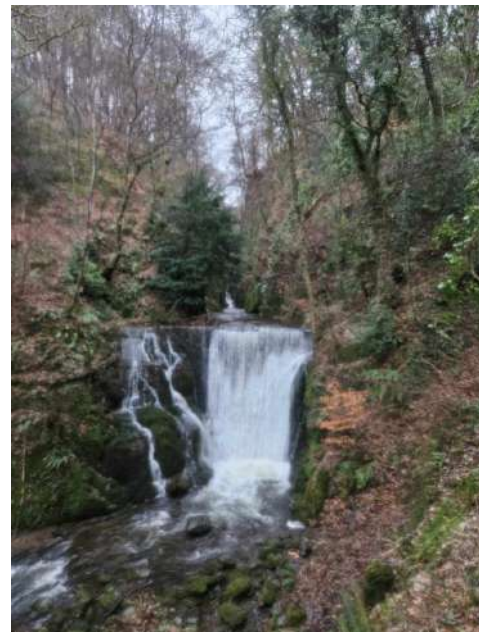


Looking over Alva to the South & the top of Blairdenon Hill: Pictures by Alex Williamson

We had thought we might take in Craighorn on the way back. We worked our way towards the head of Silver Glen across featureless terrain in thick mist. We were reliant on compass and GPS to navigate through a succession of bogs covered with snow. It wasn't icy enough to walk across the top of, so we regularly went through and found the water underneath. After what seemed like an age (actually less than an hour) we arrived at the good track which took us down Silver Glen and back to the bus.

You take your chances with Winter walking, it can be glorious, it can be horrible. This was a bit of in between, at times really nice, at times really horrible, but overall an enjoyable day out. (Alex Williamson)

Bottom of Glen Alva: Picture by Alex Williamson



Justin Elliot writes: A through walk feels like a bonus on any Ptarmigan outing. You get to try routes which aren't available if you're driving yourself, and you avoid an out-and-back. So it was no surprise that 21 of us got off the bus beside the Glendevon reservoir to walk to Ben Cleuch, and then on to Tillicoultry or Alva. Four of us (Lynn, Tim, Tod and Justin) decided to add on a little loop at the beginning, for a bit of added fun.

So it was that we four set off up Common Hill and Wether Hill, before coming down between the two reservoirs to join the main route towards Ben Cleuch. Those first couple of hills were nice walking, with some views to the North and West, not too much bog underfoot and a scenic smattering of snow.

The route south from the reservoir was a bit different. We went through the Burnfoot windfarm along the service road – easy walking. For me, at least, the wind turbines don't diminish the hill – from close-up they have a magnificent grandeur. Time passed quickly as we climbed up towards Ben Buck. Cutting off the road after the windfarm was a different matter. Suddenly the snow came up to mid-calf, the wind was up to ~30mph, and the cloud came down to give us white-out. It was hard going, a world away from the views and scenic smattering of an hour earlier.



After reaching the top of Ben Buck we decided to bypass Ben Cleugh and head straight towards the Ben Ever and then lower ground. We wanted to get out of the strongest wind before having lunch and Tim remembered there were some 'geological formations' lower down. We headed for them, incautiously forgetting to clarify what 'geological formations' meant – is that just a rock? Anyway, a nice lunch spot was found and we then descended through the spectacular Tillicoultry Glen to the Woolpack Inn.

This walk was a perfect illustration of how a simple 10-mile walk in the Ochils can still be plenty challenging in winter conditions. And it was also an illustration of how doing such a walk in the company of experienced Ptarmigans is the best way to build your own capabilities – which is, for me, a great strength of the club.

Tim & Lynn going up Ben Buck: Picture by Justin Elliot