



# ELLON HILLWALKING CLUB

## Newsletter April 2010

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### Programme:

Monday 12<sup>th</sup> April 2010

**New Zealand – Mike Taylor**

Station Hotel 20:00

**Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2010**

**Lochnagar**

**Focal Pt Barbara Wyatt (01358 711733)**

Community Centre Car Park 07:30

### Lochnagar (OS Sheet 44)

#### Mike Taylor

The committee felt that another visit to this old favourite was due.

The gaelic name of this mountain was Beinn nan Ciochan, the mountain of the breasts, referring to the granite tors on its corrie rim. Lochnagar comes from the name of the lochan in the corrie below, Loch na Garr, the loch of noise or laughter. Gradually, over the years the loch 'ran uphill' displacing the summit's original name. This name change achieved the 'By Appointment' seal when Queen Victoria wrote in 1848 of the 'beautiful surrounding hills of Loch-na-gar' (Drummond, 1991) References to the 'Mountain of the Breasts' go back a long way. In an atlas in 1654 it appears as Ben Chichues and over the years took various forms, for example, Binchichins and Benchinnans. One of the earliest recorded ascents of it was on 14 July 1810. One Rev. Keith (reverends got around in those days) measured its height as 3,800 ft (not bad) and after dining (sic) and admiring the view from the summit for three hours descended in thick fog 'our descent was accompanied by a number of awkward tumbles, and one of the gentlemen was rolled nearly 100 feet; but no accidents happened to any of us... After 12 hours absence, we returned...completely drenched with rain..' (Mitchell, 1998).

The usual tourist route up the mountain starts at the Spittal of Glen Muick. A rough private road goes 1.5 km NW to a burn, the Allt na Giubhsaich, beside a small shooting lodge. The path to Lochnagar starts at the bridge over the burn, goes through a plantation then curves above the dry gorge of Clais Rathadan to a col at 678m. The Lochnagar path, which used to be seriously eroded but is now a well constructed path, goes west here past a spring called the Foxes' Well to a col between the Meikle Pap and Cuidhe Crom. The summit path turns left to zig zag up 'The Ladder' before the col but it is well worth going on to have a look at the NE corrie with the dark Lochnagar below. The Ladder takes you up to the plateau and the route continues along the cliff top from where there are some magnificent views down and along the cliffs. The lower but larger of the summits, Cac Carn Mor (1150m) is reached first. There is a short stroll from here over to Cac Carn Beag (1155m). The indicator on the summit was built by the Cairngorm Club in 1924 and shows the wide range of hills, including Ben Nevis, which can be seen on the right kind of day. This walk is 9km long with 800m of ascent, 3-4 hours of walking.

The return is usually made via the Glas Allt past the waterfall to the Glas Allt Shiel, a lodge belonging to the Balmoral estate on the shore of Loch Muick. From there a walk along the northwest side of the loch is the route back to the carpark.

The walk should take 6-7 hours and is suitable for any reasonably fit member of the club but after the winter we have had there could still be some snow around so it might take longer.

If you are planning to join the walk, please let Barbara Wyatt (01358 711733) know by Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> April.

References:

Drummond 1991:

Scottish Hill and Mountain Names, Peter Drummond, SMC

Mitchell 1998:

Scotland's Mountains Before the Mountaineers, Ian Mitchell, Luath Press

### Forthcoming Events

May 15/16<sup>th</sup> Skye Weekend

Jun 20<sup>th</sup> Fairy Glen

Jul 18<sup>th</sup> Derry Cairngorm

Aug 15<sup>th</sup> Ben Wyvis

### Skye Weekend 14-16 May

#### Mike Taylor

As usual, the club will be going to Skye in May.

We have provisionally booked 16 beds in the Waterfront Bunkhouse at Carbost for the nights of Friday 14<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 15<sup>th</sup>. This is a bunkhouse which the club has used a number of times and found to be very good. It costs £14 per night which includes all bed linen. Breakfast and evening meals can be bought in the Old Inn which is next to the bunkhouse.

If you want more details go to [www.carbost.f9.co.uk](http://www.carbost.f9.co.uk).

If you want to reserve a bed at the bunkhouse for the weekend, send a cheque for £28 to Mike Taylor (Loch an Eilein, Newmachar, AB21 0UQ), by Saturday 24 April. Beds will be allocated on a first come, first served basis on receipt of the £28, which is non-refundable.

### Sgor Mor

#### Alan Murray

Twelve Club members met up at Aboyne and then set off in convoy to the Linn of Dee ready for the long walk in to White Bridge. The weather was cold but mostly dry- just the odd annoying shower which had everyone wondering whether to put overtrousers on and then whether to take them off again. However, we reached White Bridge and stopped for a short break on the bridge for elevenses before heading up the east bank past the waterfalls at the Chest of Dee.



*Chest of Dee – Photo Alan Murray*

Then we made our way further up the Dee to a point where we decided it was time to start the ascent of Sgor Mor. The party spread out a bit at this point – different groups deciding on alternative routes, mainly to deal with a burn crossing. We coalesced further up the hill and headed for the summit. As we approached we could see someone sat just below the cairn and as we got nearer the face became recognisable ..... it was Kenny! He had set out slightly before the rest of those leaving from Ellon but thought he was behind and had been trying to catch us up. When he saw a large party making its way up the hill he realized his mistake and waited to see if it was, indeed, the Club. The party then made their way along the broad ridge to Sgor Dubh with a short bum slide at one point



*George Takes The Easy Way Down*



*Summit of Sgor Mor*

From Sgor Dubh we descended to meet the Derry Lodge track just south of the bridge over the Lui Water; from there it was an easy walk back to the car park. It was a classic winter's walk which was rounded off with a very pleasant meal at the Bridge Inn in Aboyne.



*The party spread out on the ascent*



*The Cairngorms from Sgor Mor*