



ELLON HILLWALKING CLUB

Newsletter – July 2011

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Programme:

Monday 11th July 2011

Haddo and the Prop of Ythsie

Meet Ellon Community Centre carpark 19:00

Sun 17th July 2011

Carn an t-Sagairt Mor and the Stuic

Focal Pt Malcolm Leach (01358 723314)

Community Centre Car Park 07:00

The Stuic OS Sheets 43 and 44

Mike Taylor

Following on from last month's theme of interesting ways up local mountains, the walk this month is another 'interesting' one up a peak a couple of km west of Lochnagar – the Stuic. According to the SMC Cairngorm guide 'the jutting nose of the Stuic provides an interesting summer scramble'. The Cicerone guide 'Walking in the Cairngorms' says that this scramble was used by Byron on an ascent of Lochnagar and, as he had a club foot, it must be reasonably easy. The scrambling route is described as follows:

The ascent is an easy scramble on piled granite blocks. There is a small path to show the way: the easiest line is a few feet left of the crest. The ridge steepens to a final tower. The last step of this is steep and exposed, but can be avoided by walking 5m to the left and then slanting back up right on a ledge."

This walk starts at the Invercauld Bridge on the A93 (GR185910). There is parking at Keiloch or at the roadside a little past the bridge in the Braemar direction. From the bridge take the road past the end of the old Bridge of Dee to a cross roads at 188905. Go straight across and then straight across the next cross roads at 194899 and on to the Falls of Garbh Allt, in the Ballochbuie natural pine forest, which are well worth a look. They are reached by a track off to the left of the road. Shortly after this at 197895, the road which follows the Feindallachar Burn is taken and left at about 204874 to strike off SE across the heather towards Sandy Loch. South from the Sandy Loch, the Allt Lochan nan Uan is followed into the Coire to the buttress which is climbed to get to the summit of the Stuic. This is about 9km with about 800m of ascent – probably 4-5 hours allowing time for the climb. The return could be made over Carn an t-Sagairt Beag and Mor then back down to the Feindallachar Burn to give a total distance of 18.5 km with 950 m of ascent - probably about a 7 hour day.

As with last month this walk should be suitable for any reasonably fit member of the club with a good head for heights. If anyone is keen to go on the walk but does not fancy the scramble, then he/she could carry on up the Feindallachar Burn to Carn an t-Sagairt Beag and on to the Stuic from there.

In any case, I suggest that the scramble up the Stuic is only undertaken on the day if there is someone present who is happy to lead the group up it.

If you plan to go on the outing please let Malcolm Leach (01358 723314) know by Thursday 14 July.

Prop of Ythsie Evening Walk – Monday 11th July

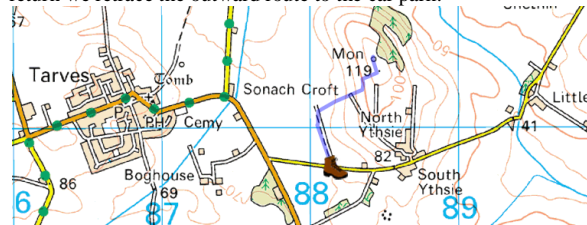
We will meet at the community centre car park in Ellon and then head out to the car park for the Prop of Ythsie on the B999. From the car park we follow the signed path across a grassy area and then turn right onto a track. This can be muddy at times. A path leads through trees on the right and we follow this uphill at the edge of a field.

Crossing a farm track we continue uphill on the left side of a stone wall with the square tower of the Prop of Ythsie now clearly in view. Going through a gate we follow the final section of path and another gate which leads to the tower itself.

The Prop was built in 1861 from subscriptions raised by the tenants of the Haddo Estate to George Hamilton Gordon, the Fourth Earl of Aberdeen, and owner of Haddo House. He was a prominent

statesman who became Prime Minister during the Crimean War and is also credited with persuading Queen Victoria to purchase the Balmoral Estate during a visit to Haddo.

The 91 spiral, stone steps of the tower can be climbed if you don't mind the dark and the increasing amounts of bird mess as you climb. There is a metal chain, but a torch would be handy. Once out on the square, castellated top, there are extensive views over the countryside, particularly to Tarves, which has a lovely village square surrounded by stone cottages and is worth a visit. Nearby Haddo House, now managed by the National Trust for Scotland, can also be clearly made out, as well as the surrounding parkland which is a Country Park managed by Aberdeenshire Council. To return we retrace the outward route to the car park.



Lochnagar and the Left Hand Branch

Malcolm Leach

Fourteen of us made the trip to Lochnagar. The weather forecast was reasonable and we set off in fine conditions. We followed the usual path to the col below Meikle Pap where we stopped to enjoy the view of the spectacular cliffs and the loch below.

The Black Spout is the largest gully on the cliff and looked to be a steep ascent. The left hand branch remained hidden from view, the only clue to its existence being a shaft of light shining into the Black Spout gully about half way up. Everyone in the party decided to try this alternative route to the summit and we headed down into the corrie making our way through the boulders till we reached a Mountain rescue 1st Aid box. The weather was very pleasant and we watched as a party of climbers prepared to climb a more serious route.

We skirted below the cliffs and round towards the Black spout gully. The ascent of the gully was steep but not quite as steep as it had appeared from the col. The LHB came in to view and the initial reaction is "how do we get up there?" The route is barred by a large slab of rock which would appear very difficult to negotiate. On closer inspection a way forward is possible involving a short scramble with a twist. Everybody made it and continued up the last steep section to the plateau just a short walk from the summit.

After a well earned lunch break we made our return using the main path but making a slight detour to see the LHB from above. The weather remained fine except for one shower and we were back at the cars just after 5.00.

All in all an excellent day on a grand mountain with an interesting ascent.

Forthcoming Events

Aug 14th Cairngorm and the Shelter Stone

Sep 18th Carn an Righ

