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2007/08 SEASON 7

August 2008

Dear Members

2007 - 08: DAY TRIPS

November 16 Arrochar Alps

Remember to contact John Berry to find out where the more informal Sunday meets are going or check your email.

2007-08: WEEKEND TRIPS

The intended programme is as follows:

26-28 September 2008	Inchnadamph (organiser Frank)
24-25 October 2008	Tulloch Station (Organiser: Eunice Coop)
January 2009	Tranearth (organiser Eunice)
8-10 May 2009	Ling Hut (organiser John)
22-24 May 2009	Cannich (organiser Frank)
3-4 April 2009	Ratagan (organiser Frank)
25-27 September 2009	Sail Mhor (organiser Sandra)
October 2009	Alex Mac Hut (organiser Sinclair)

Bookings: The Committee decided that, in future, weekend places will be booked for 8 beds rather than the former practice of booking 12, with the opportunity (perhaps) of increasing the number as members finally stir themselves. So if you wish to be sure of a place, get moving.

All bookings for weekend trips must now be accompanied by a £5.00 per night deposit to the trip organiser to secure a place (i.e. £10.00 for a 2-night stay or £15.00 for a 3-night stay). The reason for this change is to supplement Club funds as many hostels now require either full payment in advance or a higher level of deposit. We have to plan well in advance (sometimes over a year) to secure locations and ensure variety in the Club's weekend meets. Early bookings appreciated to give ample time to adjust numbers, if necessary. Late cancellations will have to pay full accommodation costs, unless this is waived by the hostel concerned.

SOCIAL EVENTS

The BBQ was a great success due to the hard work of Sue, Frank and I'm sure many others. Our thanks go to Frank and Linda for hosting this year's event and those of future years. One lesson learned was don't leave a loaded purse any where in the vicinity of Sandra.

A slide night is proposed for Thursday 13 November.

A curry night will be arranged for Thursday 9 October in the Ashoka Kirkintilloch if there is sufficient interest. Could you contact me to indicate such interest.

Xmas dinner is proposed for the Tormaukin Inn as in recent years.

REPORTS

Only a couple of reports this newsletter from our everywhere correspondent Steve Turnbull. My own report on the trip to Knoydart can be summed up in one word... pain!

Muir Cottage, May 2008 (by Steve Turnbull)

Time passes and it is easy for forget the detail of club outings. KMC enjoyed an excellent outing at the beginning of May based at the Cairngorm Mountaineering Club's Muir Cottage at Inverey on Deeside. In fact, KMC has not stayed here for at least 8 years. The cottage is well placed for the eastern Cairngorm area and it has been improved with a large modern kitchen.

In search of new corbetts to climb, I drove north late on the Thursday evening after work camping out in the car north of Braemar. Charmian did likewise (from south of Doncaster) parking up near Spittal of Glenshee. Friday morning was bright though the forecast was for showers and possibly thunder later. The morning target was Sgor Mor, west of White Bridge - an easy hill with great views into the southern end of the Lairig Ghru. After this trip using the bike, I motored to the car park near Invercauld House and used the bike again to access the track that winds its way through the forest and onto the open countryside. I climbed Carn Liath (touching its several tops to make sure I had reached the true summit) and Culardoch. A squall passed overhead and thunder could be heard to the south but the weather did not deteriorate too much - in fact, this was the only time I'd have to put on my rain gear on this trip. Meanwhile, Eunice and John met Charmian and they climbed Carn an Righ and Glas Tulaichean. Jean and Iain had also been out climbing the Corbett to the east of Mar Lodge (Carn na Drochaide). I arrived at the cottage with the key at about the same time as Frank and Jean and Iain and a few beers were downed on the porch in the sun. Peter and Richard cycled to Derry Lodge and walked to Corroun Bothy for the night.

On Saturday, Charmian, John and Eunice cycled up Glen Ey and climbed Carn Bhac, Beinn Iutharn and An Socach, Jean, George and Helen climbed the Carn Liath and Culardoch corbetts, Peter and Richard climbed up into the corrie above Corroun Bothy, and Iain,

Frank, Jimmy and Joyce climbed Cairn Toul, Angels Peak and Devils Point. I drove north up the Tomintoul road with a view to climbing some of my remaining corbetts in this area (Corryhabbie Hill in the morning and Carn Mor and Carn Ealasaid in the afternoon). The walk to Carn Mor starts at the Well of Leachd where there is the remains of a manganese processing mill (for those mineral and geologists in the club) - the only manganese mine in Scotland, apparently. The mine was short lived. We enjoyed a monstrous communal meal in the evening accompanied by my "liquid" jelly, lots of laughter and banter.

On Sunday, the weather was windy with clag on the high hills around the Lairig Ghru. Charmian had a "moment" near the summit of Braeriach when she was blown off her feet. Nonetheless, she succeeded in climbing a brace of new munros. A number of the party cycled in to Derry Lodge to climb Carn a' Mhaim and/or Derry Cairngorm leaving Iain, Jean and Frank to cycle to Geldie Lodge to climb An Sgarsoch and Carn an Fhidleir. Peter walked up Glen Quoich and climbed Beinn a' Bhuird meeting an old friend in the process. I climbed the rather uninspiring Brown Cow Hill and also Carn na Drochaide later in the day.

The sun shone all day on Monday. Some folks returned home but Iain and Jean climbed Sgor Mor near White Bridge allowing Jean to complete her corbetts in this area. I climbed Creag nan Gobhar and Morrone to do likewise and John and Charmian climbed Beinn Bhrotain and Monadh Mor. A party from West Lothian arrived at the cottage during the day and were kind enough to let us stay for another night.

On Tuesday morning, Charmian, John and I cycled to Derry Lodge and enjoyed a walk to Beinn Bhreac and Beinn a' Chaorainn and back down attractive Glen Derry. They returned south while I continued my tour and climbed Beinn a' Chuallach, near Kinloch Rannoch, in the late afternoon. Another camp in the car and up early to climb the 2 corbetts north of Loch Rannoch via the long hydro road using the bike. The view from the summit of Stob an Aonaich Mhor was superb - the snow capped peaks of Ben Alder and Beinn Bheoil reflecting on the still waters of Loch Ericht far below. It was like a Colin Prior panoramic - a 'wee' camera wouldn't do it justice. The next hill, Beinn Mholach was even more remote with a slog across many miles of moorland. Nonetheless, a good summit with excellent views. A nice meal in the pub at Weem completed a very good day. I parked up at the western end of Glen Lyon that night.

On my final day walking, I climbed the excellent Sron a' Choire Chnapanich and Meall Buidhe round which gives superb views over Rannoch Moor and also Meall nan Subh on the road over from Glen Lyon to Glen Lochay. So ended a most enjoyable first week of May with good weather throughout. A haul of new munros for Frank, John and Charmian, new corbetts for Jean and I cleared my corbetts east of the A9 along with others in the Grampians.

Knoydart and Glen Dessary, May 2008 (by Steve Turnbull)

Was it too much to expect the KMC to benefit from sustained good weather in Knoydart? The last trip to the peninsula was in September 2002 when Jack celebrated climbing his final Corbett. The quality of the Inverie hostel on that occasion left much to be desired. We were joined on this trip by David and Jennifer Short and their friend Graham from Colne, Lancashire.

Charmian and I drove north after work on the Thursday. I parked up a couple of miles to the west of Glenfinnan (with a view to climbing Sgurr an Utha next morning) while Charmian parked a few miles to the east of Glenfinnan with the intention of cycling in to climb Gulvain. West coast - welcome to midge country! Friday morning was a little misty and I retreated to the visitor car park at Glenfinnan in an attempt to eat breakfast away from the midges - some hope! Looking at the map of the route to Sgurr an Utha, I was reminded of a colour photograph in my collection showing two hard working steam locos climbing out of Glenfinnan with a Mallaig train in April 1956 towing their train of colourful carmine and cream (blood and custard) coaches. I mention this in passing as the landscape has changed significantly (and not for the better, in my opinion). In 1956, the hills were bereft of trees. I set off on the walk through forest at 6.10am (I have never started a walk so early before!!!). The summit of Sgurr an Utha was clear when I reached it and I was back at the car by nine. There is a real contrast between the rugged west coast corbetts and those climbed earlier in the month on Deeside and surrounding areas. David and Jennifer had been in Scotland for a few days concentrating on some corbetts south of Glenfinnan. They welcomed me at the car park in Mallaig before they caught the morning mail boat to Inverie. Not long after, Charmian appeared having climbed Gulvain as planned in what must have been a record time. During the course of the next hour or two, the other KMC members arrived in Mallaig. The effort of carrying one's gear, complete with food and drink, from Inverie pier to the hostel was exhausting. The hostel has improved and we were told the community plans to make more improvements in the future. Remarkably, we discovered that the village has well over 200 bedspaces to accommodate visitors. David, Jennifer and Graham appeared around teatime having climbed Sgurr Coire Choinnichean behind the village. We ate in the Old Forge where a pint of refreshing Calders went down well.

On Saturday, a hot and sunny day, David, Jennifer, Graham and I set off for Beinn na Caillich on the north side of the peninsula (Jennifer claiming her 40th Corbett), Chris, Mike, Molly, Sandra and Sinclair attacked Ladhar Bheinn from the west, Liz walked to the west of the peninsula and Eunice and Charmian walked up Gleann Meadail to climb Meall Buidhe and Luinne Bheinn. Peter left early for his 2-day trek to climb Ben Aden and Sgurr a'Choire-bheithe. These two remote corbetts were a key target on this KMC trip. The weight of foodstuffs brought in to Knoydart decreased significantly after the communal meal that evening - the rhubarb crumble proving popular.

The sun shone for the next few days. On Sunday, Charmian and Eunice climbed Ladhar Bheinn, Liz and Sinclair walked along the coast, Graham set off on a similar trek to Peter and David, Jennifer, Sandra, Chris and I walked to Mam Meadail then west along the undulating ridge of Beinn Bhuidhe before dropping back down steeply to the village. On route, we met Graham who also climbed the Corbett via a shorter ascent. The view to the islands was superb. Peter arrived back tanned and thirsty from his successful trek. Another visit to the Old Forge ended a first class KMC weekend.

On Monday, while David and I lifted backpacks for the third great trek to Ben Aden, everyone else geared up for the homeward journey. Walking from sea level to nearly 2'000 feet at Mam Meadail, all height is lost again by the time one reaches the ruined village of Carnach. On the descent from the col, I heard the calls of ravens and watched as two of them harried a golden eagle. Fascinating. Ben Aden (remote and

nestled among larger hills) was now in view but it is still a long walk along the River Carnach to the foot of the rugged mountain. We picked our way steeply up its lower slopes bearing west above and through the crags onto the north west ridge. The angle of the slope in places (with a heavy pack) is no joke. Altogether, it took us over seven hours to reach the summit. We planned (somewhat ambitiously it has to be said) to also climb Sgurr a' Choire-bheithe the same day. We continued eastwards towards Loch Quoich and brewed up by a burn not far from the dam. Climbing the next ridge to the north, we cut diagonally up to a low point on the ridge and dumped our packs. It was 6.30pm and we thought it possible to walk lightweight along the ridge to the summit and back before finding a camping spot which would prepare us for an assault on Sgurr nan Eugallt to the north next day. Setting off, we soon realised the ridge is much longer and significantly more undulating than envisaged. The sun was dipping in the west and there are two large rocky tors to negotiate before the summit. Common sense prevailed and we turned around and walked for another hour before picking up our packs. By this time, it was after 9pm and we descended towards Gleann Cosaidh hoping to pick up a burn to replenish water. A total lack of water higher up meant there was no option but to descend to the valley floor. Even then, the main burn was low. We ate pasta and sardines and drank cups of tea before settling down for the night behind a low rise out of the breeze contemplating our 13 hour day. Sleeping rough without a tent was a new experience for me - I slid into the snug orange bivvy bag while watching David's amusing Houdini act. I swear he looked like an escapologist trying to escape from his zip up bivvy bag. I didn't sleep much as it got damper and colder due to the build up of condensation inside the bag! Nonetheless, it was magical lying there looking up at the stars.

We moved off about eight next morning, west up the glen and slowly back onto the ridge thoughts of climbing Sgurr nan Eugallt laid to rest. The two tors seen at dusk the previous evening were negotiated (we made the right decision to turn back) and the summit was won - stunning views down to Barrisdale, Arnisdale and along Loch Hourn to the west. After some time lying in the sun, we dropped steeply down the ridge towards Barrisdale, stopped for a brew by a stream and then plodded up to Mam Barrisdale, having one final snack stop before walking out to Inverie and some well deserved pints of chilled Calder's ale.

Light rain arrived on Wednesday afternoon when David and I arrived back in Mallaig. We replenished foodstuffs and picked up the vehicles and headed off for the next stage of our planned adventure - a drive to the west end of Loch Arkaig to meet Graham who had walked out of the Rough Bounds via Glen Dessarry. I spotted a shingle beach beside the road about 5 miles east of Strathan so we based ourselves there for the next 4 days. As Graham had twisted his ankle on the walk along Glen Dessarry and was in some discomfort, we drove into Fort William next morning to have it checked. No lasting damage but Graham was forced to rest that day. The dull weather improved and David and I drove to Strathan to climb Fraoch Bheinn and Sgurr Mhurlagain on the eastern side of Glen Dessarry. On the Friday, we all returned to Strathan again. Graham set off to climb the same two hills leaving David and I to cycle through the forest dropped the bikes near A' Chuill bothy. We continued on foot through another part of forest along a pleasant track by a burn then into open countryside and a steep climb onto the undulating and rocky ridge leading to remote Sgurr na h'Aide which Graham had climbed on his walk out from Ben Aden. This is an excellent hill with a short scramble to the summit and super views to the west. There is a slightly lower craggy

top to the west but we decided not to climb it. Graham phoned us and there was a summit to summit conversation.

On Saturday morning the gas ran out and David was set upon by swarms of midges while changing the gas bottle of the camper van. A significant number accompanied him back into the van. We were using my car to shuttle backwards and forwards to Strathan. We all walked through to A' Chuill bothy and climbed Carn Mor, the other Corbett on the west side of Glen Dessarry. It was hot and sticky on the climb to the ridge but there was a light breeze from the west on the summit. Terrific views down onto Loch Morar and the islands. On the south side of the summit is the impressive landslip described in the Corbetts book. We got a better view of this from the ridge leading to Monadh Gorm. David decided we should descend south into Glen Pean rather than taking the shorter route to A' Chuill. This was an interesting choice for the following reasons: (a) it was relentlessly steep (grass then thick bracken), (b) ticks by the score and of all sizes were brushed off the bracken onto us (we literally had to wipe them off); (c) we spotted 4 wild boar (probably escapees) race across the hillside through the bracken into the forest and; (d) we followed a steep streambed in the dim forest emerging into the sunlight at Glen Pean bothy. It was a long march back along the forest track to Strathan. Fishermen fae Fife had arrived near our encampment equipped for a weekend's fishing and drinking. Their cans of beer were corralled in the cool Loch Arkaig waters. We benefited from their generosity!

On Sunday, the wind increased. BLISS - "no midges". One final journey back to Strathan, this time to climb our last target in the area, Sgurr Cos na Breachd-laoigh. Walking to Glen Dessarry Lodge, we took the stalkers track that heads towards Glen Kingie then up at the bealach onto the ridge leading to Druim a' Chuirn. Mist drifted in from Glen Kingie and on this top there was temperature inversion to the south and east. A final view towards the islands then the steep drop back to the Lodge and Strathan, ending an excellent 10-day outing with like minded company and great weather. We shared a pot of tea in the van at the Commando Memorial near Spean Bridge before I headed home happy at having bagged all but one of the corbetts in the Knoydart/Rough Bounds area and David and Graham went to the camp site at Roy Bridge. Next day, they returned to Loch Arkaig to climb Meall na h-Eilde and Geal Charn near Clunes before they headed home to Lancashire to plan their next foray to the Scottish hills.