

**Black Dog Meet**

**No. 239 Ullapool**

**Friday 22nd – Sunday 24th July 2022**

**In Attendance**

James Yeats, David Cameron, Tony Smith, Lorna Smith, Charles Alexander, Gerry Feeney, Peter Robertson,

Owen Clark, Valerie Inglis, Wull Clark

**Hills Climbed**

**Friday**

Charles & Gerry: Meall Daimh (532m), Beinn Liath Mhor a’Ghiubhais Li (766m)

James, Owen, Val & Wull: Beinn Liath Mhor Fannaich (954m), Sgurr Mor (1110m),

Meall Gorm (949m) and An Coileachan (923m)

Val, Wull & James: Carn na Criche (961m)

Tony & Lorna:Beinn Liath Bheag (664m)

Peter: Am Faochagagh (954m)

David: Sgurr Fiona (1060m)

**Saturday**

James & Owen: Sgurr nan Each (923m), Sgurr nan Clach Geala (1093m)

and Meall a'Chrasgaidh (934m)

Val, Wull & David: Seana Braigh (926m)

Tony & Lorna: Sgurr an Fhidhlair (705m), Beinn nan Caorach (649m), Conmheall (541m)

Charles & Gerry: Sail Mhor (767m)

**Sunday**

Tony & Lorna: Cnoc na Dail (110m), Cnoc Camescoille (90m), Cnoc Altandhu (110m), Meall na Beiste (168m)

**Weather**

Mixed all weekend. Misty and wet but sometimes sunny.

**Notes / Highlights**

**Friday**

**Charles and Gerry:**

We went up from Loch Glascarnoch. Partly overcast but very clear and good views. We saw five golden plovers on the Corbett and one on Meall Daimh. A lovely three-hour walk.

**Tony and Lorna:**

We parked at the Loch Droma dam on the A835 and headed straight up from there. Reasonable going but, as usual, trackless. Clear views east and west so a fine 3 hour or so break from the drive to Ullapool.

**Peter:**

Friday evening, I took advantage of the previously relatively warm/dry spell to tackle the boggy ground and occasionally tricky river crossing to reach Am Faochagagh on the northern side of the A835. The going across the strath to the foot of the hill was okay and the river crossing was straightforward. Thereafter the ascent was hard going over tussocky steep grass and heather until nearer the top where it became easier on mossy rocky ground. Surprisingly little evidence of any paths considering it is a Munro. Unfortunately, no view was to be had from the top as the mist had come down, a pity since it must be a fine viewpoint. In the event I ever climb it again (quite unlikely given that ascent!) I'll be absolutely sure it's on a day that I'm guaranteed a view from the top!

**David:**

I drove up from the Old School Bunkhouse, Dalwhinnie to Dundonell. From the car park I climbed up to the col and onward to the second Munro (Sgurr Fiona) of An Teallach and then returned the same way, rather traversing the whole ridge.

Very quiet day, some mist over the summits, giving to some airy reveals on the summit. Quite disorientating! Ullapool Youth Hostel quieter than expected.

**James, Owen, Val and Wull:**

**Ullapool**

Ullapool, gateway to the far North West

Where Scotland’s hills match up with the best

We are here in July

But clouds fill the sky

And midges remain quite the pest

Early start from the Old School House bunkhouse at Dalwhinie saw us arrive at the parking place by Torrandhu Bridge on the A835 at approx. 0830. Our route crosses the bridge and follows the road for a short distance before heading southwest up into the forest. Ascending to approx. 400m before losing all the height gained as we drop out of the forest and reunite with the river. Before us lie our hills for the day; unfortunately, at this point blanketed and hidden in the mists.

Soon we leave the path and head in a more westerly direction climbing steadily up the flanks of Creag Dhubh Fannaich (757m). Once on the ridge we pick up a path which leads up through various stone fields before we reach our first Munro of the day Beinn Liath Mhor Fannaich. There are ptarmigan about and we hear snipes piping in the mists.

We leave the summit and bear a little too far south initially in the mists (temporarily misplaced) before correcting our route with cries of “here’s the path Val” as we enthusiastically got back on to the ridge line. At this point the mists are heavily around us and Val spotted a figure briefly appear then disappear within them. None of the rest of us had the sight to see what she saw…

**Val**

At breakfast Val likes to boast

As she spreads butter on her toast

While on Fannaichs high

From the corner of her eye

She spotted the resident ghost

… until at last the figure got close enough to shrug off the mist and revealed a fellow walker heading towards the same hills we were. Supernatural encounter averted, off we went at pace for the summit of Sgurr Mor, pausing briefly to admire a well-constructed roofed stone shelter on the side of the hill. At the summit Owen stopped for a bite to eat while the others went off to catch the top Carn na Criche.

After my second breakfast I (Owen) carried on, dropping off the southern ridge of Sgurr Mor and over Meall nan Peithirean (971m) following the ridge and dropping down to the bealach below Creachan Pairigidh. Here I finally found some sunshine and the views opened up around and below me while the mists stubbornly hung around the peaks above me. Now in the company for frogs (who seemed equally keen to get away from me) I made my way to Meall Gorm which was soon reached. I enjoyed lunch in the sun before a leisurely stroll along the remaining ridge and An Coileachan.

Unfortunately, the last Munro of the day was back in the mists which were now threatening to turn to rain. Fortunately, they never did. The descent from An Coileachan is initially brutally steep and over a stone field that would challenge even the most hardened mountain goat. Aiming loosely towards Loch Gorm I gingerly picked my way down, stopping to briefly wave back at my friends on the ridge as they began their ascend of An Coileachan, until finally the ground eased and a path (of sorts) was picked up.

The return leg of the route crosses some truly awful terrain; wet, boggy, muddy and did I mention wet? 3km before reaching a foot bridge (and finally losing some height) and onto a better path following the river back towards the forest. The track at the forest would have been a welcome sight had it not pointed back up a hill…

Returned to the parking spot approx. 18:00 happy with the day and four Munros.

**Saturday**

**Val, Wull and David:**

Wull, David and I drove round to Oykel Bridge and had hoped to drive all the way down the track to Corriemulzie Lodge, but the landowners had signed a last car park for ALL HILWALKERS 3km before that at The Schoolhouse at Duag Bridge where we obediently parked. The walk from there to the foot of Seana Braigh was good, with a bit of breeze which kept away most of the clegs at bay. The mountain itself was wonderful - clear, and a fantastic ascent up the final curved ridge with great views all around its most amazing corrie. The scramble route that we had in our view all the way in looked interesting - but one for another day. Hard to believe that on a beautiful Saturday in mid-summer that we didn't see a single soul all day and we had the mountain all to ourselves.

**Charles and Gerry:**

On Saturday we went up Sail Mhor (767m) from Ardessie. Good views of the waterfalls but not much water, this made crossings easier. Weather fine and clear except the higher mountains nearby. Great views of the neighbouring mountain horseshoe to the east and Little Loch Broom and the islands to the north and west. Not much wildlife but plenty evidence from the smell and the erosion being caused by the feral goats. Rain started just as we were closing the boot of the car to drive back to the hostel.

**Tony and Lorna:**

We headed round to Achiltibuie to small parking area near the road end. A wet traverse to the hills but an unmarked narrow path offered some relief. Good walking at higher levels over a mixture of short grass, heather, rock and what at times seemed like sandy beaches. A blustery wind was very evident on the ridge of Beinn nan Caorach and on the spectacular summit of Sgurr an Fhidhlair with its awesome cliffs.

**James and Owen:**

A bright and breezy morning sees us parked up above Loch a’ Bhraoin at 07:30. An early start as the weather is forecasted to worsen later in the day. We set off in a southerly direction following the Walkhighlands advice taking the ATV track and crossing a very dodgy looking bridge before re-joining the stalkers path. Here we do the opposite of what Walkhighliands say and head up the glen with the wind in our faces ignoring the option to go straight up the side of the mountain.

The stalkers path makes the going easier under foot and we steadily climb towards the 550m bealach arriving there unexpectedly due to an optical illusion curtesy of the terrain beyond the bealach. A quick bite to eat out of the wind before breaking from the path and picking our way up 250m to reach the ridge. No path initially, merely a suggestion of previous passage, until we are all but at the ridge where a distinct path appears and leads us onwards. Another quick re-fuel and caching sight of a small herd of deer high on the hill. Next, we enter the mists and make our way along the ridge to Sgurr nan Each our first Munro of the day.

The summit is surprisingly bereft of wind and we enjoy another bite to eat before retracing our steps and returning to the bealach to face our biggest ascent of the day up to the lofty summit of Sgurr nan Clach Geala. A roar from the hillside below us as a stag makes early claim to his wee bit of Scotland. Yes; we eat again at the summit before following the ridge down towards a small lochan. Approaching the lochan we meet our first fellow climbers of the day passing us as they head up towards the summit that we had just left.

As we dropped below 850m the mists began to clear and for the first time today we can clearly see a summit before us. Off to our right the summit of the top Carn na Criche looking very fine and much closer than “seeing” it from the other side of the ridge the day before. As we made our final ascent of the day to Meall a'Chrasgaidh we enjoyed some sunshine.

Chocolate brownie consumed it was time to get down off the hill. The slopes soon lose their stoney cap and become soft grasses that make the descent a pleasure. As we bounce along heading for the lowest point on an obvious ridge, we meet a young couple on the ascent. Pleasantries exchanged we continue to a point where the inevitable happens and our springy grass gives way to steep (very steep) heather. Fueled by a brownie we are more than a match for the terrain and we make short work of the initial steep sections and catch up with (and overtake) another young couple who are descending also.

Suddenly we are down back on the ATV track that led us in and another go at crossing the bridge (the extra weight from the brownie might not be an advantage here) without incident. And a wee march back to the car serenaded by some fishermen with a ghettoblaster (did not know that was still a thing) ending our walk at 14:30 just as the rain started.

Side note on Ullapool; the Seafood Shack and its neighbouring popup Gin Shed is a must do. Fantastic food and well-earned Gin cocktail rounded off a fantastic two days on the Fannaichs.

**Sunday**

**Tony and Lorna:**

Back over to Inverpolly in search of unclimbed (well at least unlogged) minor hills given the low cloud blanketing anything and everything over about 400m. In the event we had to adopt "Plan B" although I did become only the 3rd bagger of Cnoc na Dail before we headed round to Achnahaird and Altandhu. Here we walked out along the remote coast of Enard Bay over rough and wet moorland spending 4 hours to bag an 88m hill (yes, I know!) representing possibly the least 'return' for the most effort in my hillwalking experience (Tom Dubh in the Cairngorm probably runs it close). Aside from the hill aspect it was a fine coastal walk by any measure. Unlike Friday we just failed to get off the final hill before the most significant rain of the day and returned wet. Some you win some you lose!

**Next Meet**

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Meet organiser – Tony