

#### Black Dog Meet

**No. 243 Pitlochry (**“**The Annual Bash”)**

**Friday 18th - Sunday 20th November 2022**

**In Attendance**

Charles Alexander, Davie Cameron, Peter Robertson, John McGill, Lorna Smith, Tony Smith, Val Inglis, Wull Clark, Matthew Spencer, Yuka Spencer, Richard Marwood, Ruth Cranswick, Owen Clark, Gillian Clark, Rachel Yeats, James Yeats, Jan Patience, David Mackay and Liz Kennedy

(Apologies from Alan Sewell and Gerry Feeney)

**Routes and summits**

**Friday**

Due to the extremely poor weather (intense and persistent rain) and extensive areas of road flooding particularly from those coming from the east of Scotland, there are no reports of any walks on the Friday. Indeed, several participants had to delay their journey until the next day for safety reasons.

**Saturday**

Circular Bealach Route (Walk Highlands) + additional spur to Meall an Daimh (772m):

Tony Smith, Lorna Smith, Val Inglis, Wull Clark, Davie Cameron, and Liz Kennedy

Circular Bealach Route:

Charles Alexander, David Mackay and Ruth Cranswick

Bealach route (part) with return via Loch a’Choire (below Ben Vrackie):

Richard Marwood and Jan Patience

A’Choinneach (1017m) (Munro Top on Bynack More):

John McGill

**Sunday**

No reports received of walks en route home on the Sunday.

**Summary Meet Notes**

This was an unusual meet because of the terrible weather initially and because of the choice of hedonism (group walking, fine food, drink and song) over headbangism (high mountains were ignored in favour of group walking, aside from John McGill’s effort)

*Richard:*

The Bealach route started with me setting off a few minutes early because of reduced fitness. I was joined by Ruth and Jan. The other Bealach walkers became the hounds to chase this initial party. Plenty of scotch mist, no other term better describes it. Great path all the way. The main party caught us, and then Jan and I headed into the mist toward the lochan on a sludgy path. Later Jan and I met a lone volunteer path-restorer not far below the lochan and were able to thank him for his good work.

*Tony:*

We left the hostel a little later than the intended 08.30 and in less than ideal conditions following the road to Moulin. Ben Vrackie signage leads to a good track from which we took the left fork for the planned Bealach circular route (as per Walk Highlands). Approx 2k further on we located the path heading north towards the target summit. Here the group split with Ruth, Charles and David M carrying on directly to Killiecrankie whilst the others agreed to accompany me on the detour to the Simm (a decision which some may have, at times, regretted later in the day!). In poor visibility we approached the summit from the WSW following an old boundary wall up a very steep heather clad slope. Some relief was gained by using an animal trail, but this proved awkwardly slippery given the recent heavy rain. Eventually we reached the rock summit (with a cry of "is that it!?") and promptly retreated to a more sheltered spot for a quick lunch stop.

We took a longer and, probably, less steep northerly loop back to the main track and hence down to the Killiecrankie visitor centre where Liz, Lorna and I stopped for a hot drink whilst Val, Wull and David carried on back to the hostel. Thereafter the ‘cafe crew’ elected simply to walk back along the road but half a mile later were tempted by a signed route (to Moulin) leading up under the main A9 and onto a parallel and rather pleasant forest road. Probably wrongly we ignored the next up-hill fork, and continued on a lower road. Consequently our day ended with an unpleasant short walk along the A9 and then, in fading light, the much longer and rather tedious link road back into Pitlochry centre.

*John:*

To Glenmore Lodge, then setting off just before 09.00 in good weather. I quickly reached the Green Lochan, which looked superb. Once across the bridge over the river Nethy, I followed the path up the east bank of the river/stream. The weather closed in at this point with light rain and the cloud dropping. Further up the valley he handrailed (following a feature, rather than a bearing) a burn up the steep heathery slopes to the summit of A’Choinneach. I then retraced his route back.

*Saturday evening:*

Pitlochry Youth Hostel was ours alone (under the HS winter RentaHostel scheme). This allowed enough space for group cooking, the fashioning of a large dining table for us all, some musical activities later on, and plenty of other room to relax.

All thanked Owen for his fantastic group meal for twenty people. There was superb teamwork supporting Owen in his task of producing and presenting a truly memorable feast.

Musical entertainment:

Richard started to become concerned as to whether this was to be a trio (as rehearsed), or a duo, or in all probability now a solo. Flying by the seat of his hillwalking pants he started off solo, only to be joined in dramatic fashion by Matthew with his fiddle. Thanks to Yuka, Matthew had made it through the night and the floods of Angus, and stepped on stage to a rapturous welcome, well after Richard’s normal bedtime. We truly missed Alan’s input.

Reviews of the performance were mixed:

“A five-star tour de force” (a close friend)

“It was untroubling from the more distant living room” (anon)

“Riddled with cultural appropriation” (The Guardian)

“Typical whiny woke snowflake rubbish” (Suella in the Mail on Sunday)

(RM)

**Next Meet**

Braemar 16th – 18th December

Organiser Valerie

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