**Black Dog Meet**

**No. 256 Mull**

**1st – 4th December 2023**

**In Attendance**

Charles Alexander, David Cameron, Owen Clark, Wull Clark, Valerie Inglis, David Mackay, Lorna Smith, Tony Smith and James Yeats.

# **Hills Climbed**

**Friday**

Lorna, Charles & Tony Barra Mor (92m) & Cnoc Carnach (128m)

James, Owen, Val, Wull & David C Dùn da Ghaoithe (766m)

**Saturday**

Lorna, Charles & Tony Bearraich (432m) & Creach Bheinn (492m)

James, Owen, Val, Wull,

David M & David C Ben More (966m)

**Sunday**

Lorna, Val, Charles, Wull, David & Tony Beinn Liathanach (81m), Cnoc Mor (94m) &

Cnoc Knockvologan (65m)

Lorna, Charles & Tony Cnoc Mor (Erraid) (75m)

**Monday**

Charles & Tony Druin Mor (81m)

**Weather**

Could not have been much better! Clear and cool with wonderful views and great early morning and evening sunlight colours on the hills.

**Notes / Highlights**

**Friday**

**James:** After an overnight stay in the Oban Youth Hostel (“nice, quiet and well kept” to quote David), Owen and I caught the first ferry to Craignure and were off the boat and at the start point for Dùn da Ghaoithe, just after 10:00, being early allowed us to get to a parking space which is limited. We set off up the track which came to an end at the second mast. From this point on the weather had come in and visibility deteriorated, and we followed the ridge line up to the summit. Sadly, no views from the top, so we headed back the way we came up and met Val, Wull and David C who had set off a bit later as they had hoped to have breakfast at Craignure after getting off the ferry (but café closed).

**Tony**: Lorna, Charles and I arrived in Oban well ahead of the ferry time so as to allow a short, but good, little walk up the two minor hills just to the north of the town. A nice tracked woodland stroll for the first and more open views from the second.

**Valerie:** On arrival at the hostel on Friday, after a very cold day on the hill and no heating at the hostel, we took refuge in the pub next door where we enjoyed an open fire, beer, whisky and merry japes until the heating was sorted out (regrettably only temporarily). Thanks to Owen who arranged pizza slices for us all as an appetiser.

**Saturday**

**James:** We set of from the Dhiseig car park following the track uphill which, after a short distance, ended at the house. From here the path was very wet and muddy with patches of ice, it did however improve higher up as the mud changed to stone. The views across to A'Chioch ridge were fantastic as were the views across to the mainland with the white high tops sticking up above the clouds. The return journey required us to stop and put on spikes as staying upright on the ice was becoming increasingly difficult.

**Tony**: Bearraich is billed (by some) as the best hill on Mull. That’s quite a claim but it did not let us down as an exceptional viewpoint despite modest height. A very rough ‘road’ took us to the parking area by Tiroran House from where we continued, on foot, along the Tayool House track for about 4k. Thereafter it was uphill generally following an ATV trail pausing to take in the ever-improving views of higher inland mountains and out to the western isles. After crossing to Cnoc Carnach we took a higher (and as it turned out rather rough) route east, intending to rejoin the outward track. A miscommunication resulted in Charles taking a detour to third top, but we all made it back to the car before sunset (just!).

**Sunday**

**Tony:** A group of us headed down the Ross of Mull to explore some of the many lesser hills on the coast just east of Fionnphort. The first two north coast hills are, as the map suggests, rocky, so route finding was ‘interesting’ at times, but we reached both summits without incident (apart from one failure to avoid a localised area of very wet and muddy ground!).

Having joined us initially for the walk in David (M) had meanwhile decided to take the opportunity to explore Iona. He reports – “There were very few travellers to Iona as it was the sabbath. Took a look round the abbey, paid my respects to John Smith MP and explored some of the wonderful beaches on the island. Stunning views from the hill looking over harbour. The only passenger on the ferry on the way back.”

We, the group, then travelled a short distance with the objective of reaching Erraid, a small tidal island in the Sound of Iona. After reaching the dizzy height of 65m on Knockvologan a scramble down though trees took us to the beach. Here Val, Wull and David elected to return whilst Lorna, Charles and I crossed the wet sand to the island and then onward to the summit.

**Monday**

**Tony:** Most headed home early but our booking on the later ferry gave Charles and I the opportunity for a short walk directly from the terminal car park to ‘claim’ the minor summit a mile or so south.

The great weather made this weekend, but an obvious downside was the very disappointing continued failure of the general hostel heating (the lounge log burner was a life saver) and the consequent lack of hot water - far from ideal after a winter day on the hill!

*Tony*