

Mountain name(s) and Section :		Sgùrr nan Eag (Cuillin)		17
OS Map, Grid reference & height :		32	NG 457195	924m
Date of ascent :		Wednesday 29 April 2009		
Brief note of route followed : From Coruisk (landing by boat opposite the landing stage) then climbing by Allt a'Chaidhe (the "Mad Burn") into An Garbh-choire and upover the boulder field to the main ridge at Bealach a'Gharbh-choire south of Caisteal a'Gharbh-choire. Continued S over ridge to Sgurr nan Eag summit. Descended along ridge S to bealach (773m) and continued over Sgurr a'Choire Bhig, and Gars-bheinn. Then descended steeply along E ridge over scree and through crags back to Coruisk.				
Distance – 4 ½ miles		Total ascent – 1090m		Time taken – 6h
Brief note of prevailing weather : - Broken cloud. Bright with sunny intervals. Light SE wind. Excellent visibility. Cloud base above summits. Quality of light excellent during sunny intervals.				
MQI	Notes			Level
1 Access	No road access into Coruisk. Access taken on this occasion by boat into Loch Skavaig. No access restriction. No paths into corrie, although traces of path in places below the Dubh ridge. Some rough scrambling on peridotite boulderfield. Some traces of paths on the main ridge, with some false trails. No trace of any path on descent route from Gars-bheinn until near sea level.			4
2 Fauna	Glens / Lower Slopes : Seals on rocks in the bay. Mussels and worm casts on the beach. Oystercatchers, shags and gannets on Loch Skavaig. Numerous spiders and webs. Meadow pipit.s. Bees, crane flies, moths. Deer droppings. Alpine Zone : Ravens' calls echoing across An Garbh-choire. Ring ouzel (unconfirmed) heard high on the ridge. Beetles. Two eagles seen from above taking off and gliding from the Gars-bheinn ridge below.			4
3 Flora	Glens / Lower Slopes : Wrack on the shoreline. Grass dominated with some heather, especially on the E ridge of Gars-bheinn. butterwort, purple saxifrage*, bog asphodel, deer grass, cross leaved heath, cotton grass, thrift* (at low levels), dog rosa, parsley fern, violets*, heath milkwort*, blaeberry*, thyme, dwarf rowan, woolly fringe moss, dwarf juniper, heath spotted orchid, bell heather, dwarf willow, house leek, roseroot, alpine lady's mantle, foxglove, primroses*, bog myrtle, soft rush, brambles. Generally treeless. Alpine Zone : Sparsely vegetated bare rock, except on Gars-bheinn E ridge, which is grassy. Short grasses, woolly fringe moss, blaeberry*, alpine lady's mantle, parsley fern, liverworts, fir and alpine clubmoss, polytrichum moss, house leek, occasional short heather, cowberry, stiff sedge.			4
4 Drainage	Natural drainage at all levels. No erosion seen. Numerous streams in An Garbh-choire, all easily crossed, and some running underground in places on lower ridge of Gars-bheinn. Loch Coruisk, Loch Coir' a Ghrunnda.			4
5 Past Human Influence	Climbing hut. Long historical association with Scottish climbing. Long established footpath round the coast. Little other evidence of past human influence.			4
6 Recent Human Influence	Crampon marks on rock. Several stone built bivouac shelter sites on the ridge. Coruisk climbers' hut. Several boats seen landing in the bay during the day. Group walking round Loch Coruisk, and group of geologists at Coruisk. Marker cairn above Coruisk. Traces of paths in places in the corrie and on the ridge. Overall, however, unspoilt.			4
7 Degree of wildness	A short, but rough, walk in up the mad Burn, with a wild and remote feel to it due to the closeness of the sea, uninhabited coast, no road access (and indeed no roads visible from any part of the route), and the imposing sight of Caisteal a'Garbh-choire dominating the head of the corrie on ascent. An Garbh-choire a very wild place comprising unvegetated peridotite boulders. From the ridge, Coir' a Ghrunnda has an exceptionally wild feel to it – a vast boiler plate of gabbro with little vegetation except a small grassy area above the loch. Some easy boulder scrambling in An Garbh-choire and scrambling on N ridge. Very rough descent over scree and picking a route avoiding numerous crags on Gars-bheinn E ridge, involving some reascents. The sight of the eagles below greatly added to the wildness. Single well constructed cairn at summit, overlooking the Coruisk wilderness. An airy ridge over Sgurr a'Choire Bhig to Gars-bheinn.			4
8 Aesthetic / physical response	An excellent day in perfect weather conditions with excellent visibility, quality of light and colour saturation, giving some indescribably beautiful wild mountain landscapes. Another day on this superb hill which will be remembered for a long time to come. One of the finest mountain experiences in Scotland, through the boulderfield of An Garbh-choire, dominated by the aptly named Caisteal a'Garbh-choire. On reaching the ridge the superb views of the ridge suddenly open up (especially the great boiler plate of Coir' a Ghrunnda, Alasdair, Thearlaich, Mhic Choinnich, the Dubhs, Bruach na Frithe, Am Basteir, Gilleann, Bla'Bheinn, Red Cuillin etc., the mainland, the small isles, and the seascape bounded to the west by the Outer Hebrides). Added attraction of starting and finishing the climb on the beach on the black sand, emphasising the special qualities of climbing island and coastal hills – particularly in this case as access was gained by boat. A splendid outpost at the end of the ridge commanding a very special position directly above the sea. Must be one of the finest viewpoints of the Munros, and a superbly remote spot. By taking this route, descending over Sgurr a'Choire Bhig and Gars-bheinn, the true character of the mountain, and the true start / finish of the main ridge is fully appreciated. No other walkers seen (except two on Sgurr Alasdair). A finer situation is hard to imagine, and was further enhanced by the flight of the two eagles below. Unsurpassed magnificence.			4
Total MQI Score			★★★★	32

Survey completed by :

* denotes plant species observed in flower