

THE MUNRO SOCIETY

EXAMPLES OF COMPLETED MOUNTAIN QUALITY INDICATOR REVIEWS

Mountain name(s) and Section :	Lochnagar – Cac Carn Beag	7
Grid reference(s) & height(s) in metres :	N0243861	1155m
Date of ascent :	13th July 2006	
Brief note of route followed : Glen Muick car park; Glen Gelder track; footpath to col below Meikle Pap; followed corrie rim to summit; SSW to bealach @ 240852; contour E to meet path to Glas-allt-Shiel; then back to carpark via Loch Muick tracks.		
Brief note of prevailing weather : Very good, westerly wind 15-20mph in a.m. decreased considerably p.m. – dry, some patchy cloud & spells of bright sunshine, good visibility – cool at times above 2500ft but pleasantly warm by mid-afternoon		

MQI	Notes	Level
1.	Accessibility : access to route good; no evidence of restrictions; much path building/renovation in progress on ascent & descent routes; used Harveys map – very good; car park in Glen Muick £2 per day.	4
2.	Fauna : rather disappointing though for 90% of day on paths – mountain hare, many deer, a few grouse, several wheatear – no raptors or crow family observed, or other high-level birds such as ptarmigan. Reasonable variety of inverts – beetles, spiders, ants, millipedes, caterpillars, slugs. No agricultural livestock seen.	3
3.	Flora : reasonable variety overall esp. below 1500; above 1500 meagre range of flowers – Alpine Lady’s Mantle, Spotted Orchid, Bog Asphodel near plateau springs. Overall a good range of lichens, mosses/clubmosses, liverworts, ferns. Very little regeneration of trees until well down Glas-allt Shiel path.	3
4.	Drainage pattern : natural pattern essentially complete from plateau springs-burns-corrie lochans-streams-waterfalls: good feature of Lochnagar area. Evidence of erosion mainly due to severe weather on cliffs/gullies of N-facing corrie.	4
5.	Past human influence : part of Balmoral estate with 19thC pine plantations, shooting lodges, keepers cottages etc. old estate routes/RoWs; habitat change mainly for maintenance of grouse moor/heath with well-managed muirburn. Overall visual impact of tracks/roads, buildings etc is considerable.	2
6.	Recent human influence : above 1500’ work on paths is very evident but indications are that regeneration of vegetation is being assisted. In areas muirburn is well-managed but regeneration of trees/shrubs negligible when grazing by deer also taken into account. Adjacent to Loch Muick, on N side of estate road from Glas-allt Shiel, recent controlled burning has been done “to assist the regeneration of broad-leaved trees” – it remains to be seen if this will be successful. Now within Cairngorms National Park	3
7.	Degree of wildness experienced : a very accessible mountain & very popular – several parties seen included youngsters enjoying the weather & montane experience. Tourist route not challenging terrain but following the corrie ridge does add a worthwhile feel of wildness! At times aural pollution due to military aircraft training over the area – also machinery for path-making.	2
8.	Degree of aesthetic / physical response : enjoyed a good ascent with my son – his first time on Lochnagar – excellent walking weather made up for some of my pretty rough sorties in the past. Plenty of good views/geological features & resultant photography etc.	3
	***	24
	Total MQI Score	

Survey completed by :

* denotes plant species observed in flower

Mountain name(s) and Section :	An Stuc	2
Grid reference(s) & height(s) in metres :	NN 639431	1118m
Date of ascent :	15 September 2007	
Brief note of route followed : NT car park to col between Beinn Ghlas & Meall Corranaich then path to col between Beinn Ghlas & Ben Lawers, then contour NE to Creag an Fhithich & N to An Stuc. Descent from col on S side of An Stuc to Lochan nan Cat, then Lawers Burn paths to A827 & Ben Lawers Hotel car park. Distance 16 km; ascent 850m; descent 1000m; time 8.5 hours.		
Brief note of prevailing weather : Intermittent rain – light to moderate – brief clearances p.m. – very strong SW winds gusting to 60-70mph on ridges, cols etc; significant wind chill [down to –4C], 1C at 900m rising to 8C in afternoon – cloud level 800m rising to over 1000m for periods in afternoon.		

MQI	Notes	Level
1 Access	Good parking at NT visitor centre. Good paths as far as col between Beinn Ghlas & Ben Lawers – also from Creag an Fhithich to An Stuc; indistinct from col S of An Stuc to Lochan nan Cat ; thence to hydro scheme at 662427. Good paths down to A827 at Lawers village. No seasonal restrictions noted.	4
2 Fauna	Very limited observation due to severe weather – black & red grouse seen near NT car park. Hill sheep farming still well in evidence. Faint sounds of stags rutting in high corries near Lochan nan Cat. One raptor seen on E slopes of Ben Lawers in afternoon – not an eagle; - a buzzard?	2
3 Flora	Glens / Lower Slopes : Encouraging regeneration in protected areas between NT car park & up to shielings below Coire Odhar – nature trails apparent. Also good wooded areas from 350m down to Lawers village on A827	3
	Alpine Zone : Again very limited observation due to severe buffeting from wind above 600m – general impression was of a reasonable montane flora. [Lawers NT Reserve is famous for rarer alpines]	
4 Drainage	Part of hydro scheme catchment for Lochan na Larige dam on minor road from Loch Tay to bridge of Balgie in Glen Lyon –evident on Burn of Edramurchy & at 600m on Lawers Burn. Overall little impact on natural drainage pattern.	3
5 Past Human Influence	Shielings well in evidence on route to Coire Odhar & then again between 600-700m on Lawers Burn & again lower at 500-550m. Lawers Burn 'path' constructed to give access to shielings. Also old hydro paths & associated 'roads/tracks'. Coire Odhar recorded as an original area for skiing in Scottish Highlands.	3
6 Recent Human Influence	NTS visitor centre & car park at 609379. Nature trail area en route to Coire Odhar – fenced off to deter grazing from prevalent hill sheep farming (and some deer) – regeneration very apparent here and in protected areas on descent route to E of Lawers Burn.	3
7 Degree of wildness	Prevailing weather emphasised this on way to An Stuc. Ridge of Creag an Fhithich & then to An Stuc was particularly difficult due to high wind from W. Steep descent to Lochan nan Cat. In morning met several groups heading for An Stuc – I was with Ian MacAskill - all part of a completion by Stuart Roxburgh (Grampian Club) – about 25 made it to the summit eventually but some 6 or so gave up on Lawers.	4
8 Aesthetic / physical response	An Stuc is the most attractive summit of the Lawers range – an excellent hill but a very real physical & psychological challenge on this occasion. Physically by far the hardest 'completion' that I have experienced! The aesthetic response was also of a high quality despite the weather limiting views and photography etc. The 'party' held in a sheltered hollow on the lee side of the summit was a success.	4
Total MQI Score		★★★ 26

Survey completed by :

☼ denotes plant species observed in flower

Mountain name(s) and Section :	Ladhar Bheinn	10
OS Map, Grid reference & height :	33	NG 823039
Date of ascent :	Saturday 27 September 2008	
Brief note of route followed : From Inverie, by the Mam Uidhe 4WD track, taking R track at junction in forest after 2 miles, into Gleann na Guiserein to Folach, then by unmade hillwalkers' path by stream NE into Coire Garbh, onto An Diollaid, then following ridge to summit, and out to Stob a'Choire Odhair, then returning to main ridge following it over Bealach Coire Dhorraicail, Aonach Sgoilte, and c500m E of Mam Suigheid. From there descended N into lower part of Coire Torr an Asgaill, crossing Allt Coire Torr an Asgaill to join stalkers' path back to Folach, thence returning to Inverie by outward route.		
Distance – 20 miles	Total ascent – 1400 m	Time taken – 10 ½ hours
Brief note of prevailing weather : Overcast, base lowering to 700mand persisting thus, with continuous rain from 0900 to 1500, SW wind, veering W. Gradually clearing from 1500, becoming clear and sunny by 1700.		

MQI	Notes	Level
1 Access	Knoydart Foundation / JMT land. No stalking on Sat / Sun. Declared open access policy, although there was stalking in this area on Friday. Stalking activity posted in the estate office at Inverie daily on weekdays. 4WD track to Folach, then unmade boggy path up to ridge. Ridge path to summit and Aonach Sgoilte, but more intermittent thereafter. Stalkers' path down Coire Torr an Asgaill.	4
2 Fauna	Glens / Lower Slopes : Divers in Inverie Bay. Stalking ponies. Meadow pipits, black slugs, northern egg caterpillars, fox scats, roaring stags, raven, crane flies, Highland midge, frogs. Birdsong in wood. Montane Zone : Roaring stags, deer droppings, black slugs, meadow pipits, frogs.	3
3 Flora	Glens / Lower Slopes : Conifer plantations (larch, sitka spruce, lodgepole pine). Some felling and replanting with native species. Grass dominated on almost treeless landscape outside forest, with some heather☼, bell heather☼, devils bit scabious☼, clover, birds foot trefoil, tormentil☼, sphagnum & polytrichum moss, parsley fern, bracken, soft rush, cross leaved heath☼, blaeberry, foxglove, woolly fringe moss, bog asphodel, bog myrtle, eared willow, browsed spruce & birch saplings, gorse, rhododendron saplings, violets☼, purple saxifrage☼, broom, bramble, ragwort☼, fungi, cotton grass. Isolated rowans, alder, oak & birch by river. Cladonia, alpine lady's mantle, butterwort. Montane Zone : Grass dominated (little or no heather except in steep gullies). Alpine lady's mantle☼, sphagnum & polytrichum & moss, blaeberry, violets☼, woolly fringe moss, cladonia, parsley fern, stiff sedge, tormentil☼, bog asphodel, fir clubmoss, roseroot, fungi, thrift, deer grass, purple moor grass. On Aonach Sgoilte, cowberry & crowberry.	3
4 Drainage	Natural throughout. Some local erosion on ridge path especially between summit and Aonach Sgoilte. Some very boggy areas and peat hags in Coire Torr an Asgaill. Bridges across streams and over 4WD track. Allt Coire Torr an Asgaill crossed dryshod on descent.	4
5 Past Human Influence	Old drystone sheep fanks. Old stalkers' path in Coire Torr an Asgaill. Old rusty fence by 4WD track. Old pine roots exposed by 4WD track indicative of past deforestation. Old ruined shepherd's cottage at Folach. Old cylindrical triangulation pillar at SH 1010.	3
6 Recent Human Influence	Estate bought out by Knoydart Foundation in 1999. New bridge and deer fence at Folach (funded by Knoydart Foundation members). Plantation forests. Recent logging of non native species by Knoydart Foundation in Inverie Wood, and commencement of replanting with native species – part of an ongoing programme. 2 or 3 planes heard. Trig point at SH 1010 partly demolished. Peat built shooting butt by stalkers' path by Allt Coire Torr an Asgaill. Stalking ponies at Folach. Occasional passage of Landrover on 4WD track. Well used ridge path with some local erosion.	3
7 Degree of wildness	A moderate walk in and a long and fairly arduous walk in total, with numerous reascents on the ridge after passing the summit over fairly rough ground. Some scrambling made awkward by the wet rock which was slippery. Only 4 other people seen on the route (at summit), although this may be partly accounted for by the mist, which along with the rain, added to the wildness on this occasion. A splendidly remote hill. The grandeur of Coire Dhorraicail could be seen only to a limited extent through the mist. A fine airy ridge from SHs 1010 to 1020, and out to Stob a'Choire Odhair. Single small cairns at each summit (except SH 1010, which has a trig point). A triple summit on main ridge. Wildness enhanced by the sound, and later sight, of roaring stags at the start of the rut. The ridge over Aonach Sgoilte might aptly be nicknamed the "Palamino Ridge". Aptly named the "Rough Bounds of Knoydart".	4
8 Aesthetic / physical response	A magnificent hill, although not seen to best advantage by this route. In the mist, the views (recalled from earlier ascents) could only be imagined. Has the added attraction of being a coastal (and peninsular) hill climbed not only from sea level, but from the sea itself. Views of the Skye Cuillin on descent.	4
	Total MQI Score	★★★★
		28

Survey completed by :

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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

Mountain name(s) and Section :	Geal-Charn (Loch Pattack)		4
OS Map, Grid reference & height :	OS Sheet 42	NN470746	1132 m
Date of ascent :	13 April 2010		
Brief note of route followed : Dalwhinnie to Culra Lodge by bike then WNW bearing directly to summit of Carn Dearg then to Geal-Charn via tops Diollard a Chairn and Sgor Iutharn. (This was part of a traverse of Carn Dearg, Geal-Charn, Aonach Beag and Beinn Eibhinn and their tops and a long walk back over Bealach Dubh to Culra Lodge and bike back to Dalwhinnie)			
Brief note of prevailing weather : Clear, cold, little wind with occasional sunshine. Snow underfoot in parts on the top.			

MQI	Notes	Level
1 Access	Parked at the railway crossing at Dalwhinnie. Notice says residents only but no restrictions on the day. Plenty of parking in Dalwhinnie. Railway crossing does state authorised use only but nothing to prevent its use. Met three vehicles on un-metalled road to Ben Alder Lodge who all gave a friendly wave. Not far from Dalwhinnie there is a Lodge with a substantial gate which looks like it could be locked and prevent progress during presumably the stalking season. Rail station provides public transport. Just past Ben Alder Lodge there is a gate with a notice "no cars beyond this point". Estate Road excellent for bike. Paths of good quality and bridges in good order. Information up to date.	3
2 Fauna	Glens / Lower Slopes : Only fauna seen on cycle to Culra Lodge were plenty of Red Deer and three ponies. Occasional bird at side of Loch Ericht. Mode of transport and estate road route followed precluded chance of seeing much in the way of Fauna. No agricultural livestock. Alpine Zone : Nothing seen on Geal-Charn. Early morning, snow lying, temperature cold. On return saw two grouse and frogs and insects in ponds. Many Red Deer. Fox scats.	2
3 Flora	Glens / Lower Slopes : Estate road to Ben Alder Lodge surrounded by a variety of trees with a lot of non-native pine. Beyond Ben Alder Lodge landscape has a very moorland feel but forestation to the north boundary. Evidence of new planting. Too early in season to see flowering plants. One joint Estate/SNH sign seen directing walkers to avoid an area where dwarf birch was growing. Alpine Zone : Mainly grass, mosses, heather. Terrain quite stony. Too early in season to see flowering plants. No evidence of regeneration.	2
4 Drainage	Natural Drainage patterns complete. Erosions due to natural causes.	4
5 Past Human Influence	Some evidence eg Culra Lodge (now a bothy) of previous human influences. Some evidence of indigenous tree felling from old roots embedded in peaty ground. No evidence of old fences or walls seen on route taken.	3
6 Recent Human Influence	No modern structures on the mountain. No evidence of major habitat changes. No evidence of sheep/cattle. No human influences above 1500 feet. Plenty of evidence of new building of lodges (albeit to a very high external standard) on estate road to Ben Alder Lodge.	3
7 Degree of wildness	Good feeling of remoteness. Culra Lodge is 10 miles from Dalwhinnie. Mountain presented no great challenge but the snow traverse across Diollaid a Chairn to Sgor Iutharn and the two frozen lochans below enhanced the walk. Flora and fauna didn't add anything to the experience.	3
8 Aesthetic / physical response	The quality of experience was good . (Note: this is in contrast to the "whole day" experience which comprised a long approach followed by 4 Munros and 4 tops, deserving of a rating of 4)	3
Total MQI Score		★★★
		23

Survey completed by :

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