



NOVEMBER 2020

HEATHERY HEIGHTS MONTHLY

Articles, walks and news



NEXT ISSUE

Backpacking with your dog

Lochan a' Ghille-bhlain and view west to Jura

STOB ODHAR - THREE TUMPS AND A MARILYN

Far from the crowds.....

Kintyre and Knapdale may not be known for their Munros or Corbetts. Yet like the backbones of slumbering dragons, the hills and ridges form distinct lines that tail off into the seas beyond offering unrivalled views over to Islay, Jura, Gigha, Arran, Scarba, Mull, north to Ben Cruachan and east towards Cowal and beyond. And it is sunset heaven.

The walk is challenging and takes in three Tumps and a Marilyn – great hill baggers terms – Tumps being tops with a 30m drop all round and Marylins having a 150m drop all round. Stob Odhar, the highest at 562m, is a Marilyn, Tump and even a Dodd and Highland 5! Stob Odhar – the dun-coloured stump – has a profile resembling a mini tabletop mountain when viewed from the north. The two Tumps to make it a trio are Cnoc a' Bharaille and An Gobhlach.



Stob Odhar and Cnoc a' Bharaille from An Gobhlach



View south to Arran from Stob Odhar



View SW to Meall Mor and Stob Odhar

Safety in the Outdoors

Please continue to adhere to current guidelines as set out by the government, exercise responsibly and use appropriate clothing and equipment for your chosen outdoor activity. Consider informing a contact about your route/whereabouts and don't forget your phone, snacks, drink, any medication/first aid supplies you may need and to check weather conditions. Please keep your dog under close control, especially around livestock and wildlife, and be aware some open areas of moorland may have snares in use. Please follow the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

www.heatheryheights.co.uk

The walk

1. From the small pull-in south of Ormsary Water walk south a short distance and take the new track on your left on the south side of the field. This will take you east avoiding the residential area. Ignore the track on your right and continue over a small footbridge past the Ormsary Hydro Scheme. Cross the bridge to the north side of the river (NR742718).
2. Head east on the metalled road as it wends its way upwards through woodland with Ormsary Water to your right. On leaving the trees the road passes a croft to your right and a red roofed barn to your left before going through a gate. Continue straight ahead for 750m, ignoring a track to your right. Soon you will re-cross Ormsary Water.
3. After 450m take the track south that goes uphill, the one on the left (east) leading into the plantation is the one you will be returning by. Continue for 1km and cross the Allt Airigh Sheileach. After a further 250m turn left onto a track. (*this junction is at NR763707, just off the bottom of Map 358)
4. Heading northeast the track leads you the next 5km to just under the summit of your first Tump, Cnoc a' Bharaille. It crosses open ground before following the top edge of the plantation – ignore a new track to your right – down to a ford and bridge over the Allt Creag nan Gobhar then climbs to the ridge itself.

5. On reaching the ridge the track will flatten out as it skirts Cnoc a' Bharaille. Ascend from its north-eastern side just before the hairpin bend. Tump 1: the vista both east and west is fabulous.
6. The next 2.5km to the summit of Stob Odhar follows the ridge NE veering to NNE. Follow the track to its end. Ahead lies the delightful Lochan a' Ghille-bhlain. Keep this and the other small lochans to your left as you now pick your route over rough pathless ground and descend to the col. The odd peat hag and bog needs to be negotiated. The rise of the ridge now takes you towards the steep nose of Sgier Dhubh; it is easiest to skirt round to its eastern flanks and ascend from there. There is also a very steep but short grassy break in its western flanks just 100m north of the nose. Once this obstacle has been tackled the remaining 550m to the summit are straightforward.
7. The summit of Stob Odhar is the highest in Kintyre and Knapdale. Although most reach it from the Meall Mor track to the east not so many make this journey. Enjoy the views! You now have a choice. Both are similar in distance. The slightly quicker way back is to retrace your steps as this is far easier terrain. To gain your next Tump requires confident hill skills, especially in descent.



Rewarding views...

8. For the full circuit descend Stob Odhar's western ridge which lies just 200m NE of the trigpoint. The initial slope - marked as a line of crags - is very steep so it is best to use a line of descent around the north or south of this before regaining the centre of the ridge. Bog trotting is de rigour from now on! The next steep section is a further 300m west but can be negotiated round its northern end before zigzagging down to the col.

9. From the col head west over the somewhat featureless Meall Odhar, its tiny top just a bump, before dropping to the col prior to An Gobhlach. The ground is a mixture of grasses, heather and the odd peat hag. Deer Tracks abound and some usefully take you in the right direction. Ahead An Gobhlach looks quite tricky, but as you get closer you will see an easy line that can be picked up through the heather, grass and rocks. A less steep line can be taken just to the north. The summit cairn lies at the southern end and is reached surprisingly quickly from the col. Tump 3 and an amazing view towards Jura.

10. To the west you will see a track below, this will lead you south to rejoin your earlier route. To reach it carefully pick your way down the hill's southwestern flanks where there is an obvious break. The track will lead you SW for 5km past Loch Dearg, a new track leading to a viewpoint at NR785739 (easily reached), across a river confluence and through the plantation before turning right onto your original route. Now it is just 3km back to Ormsary.

Walk Information

Route: Stob Odhar circuit from Ormsary

Distance: 24km (15 miles)

Ascent: 940m

Time: 7.5 - 8.5hrs walking

Terrain: tracks, road and rough pathless terrain; steep, boggy & uneven sections

Map/s: OS Landranger 62 (1:50 000)

OS Explorer 358 (& 357*see walk)
(1:25 000)

Start/Finish/Parking: just south of

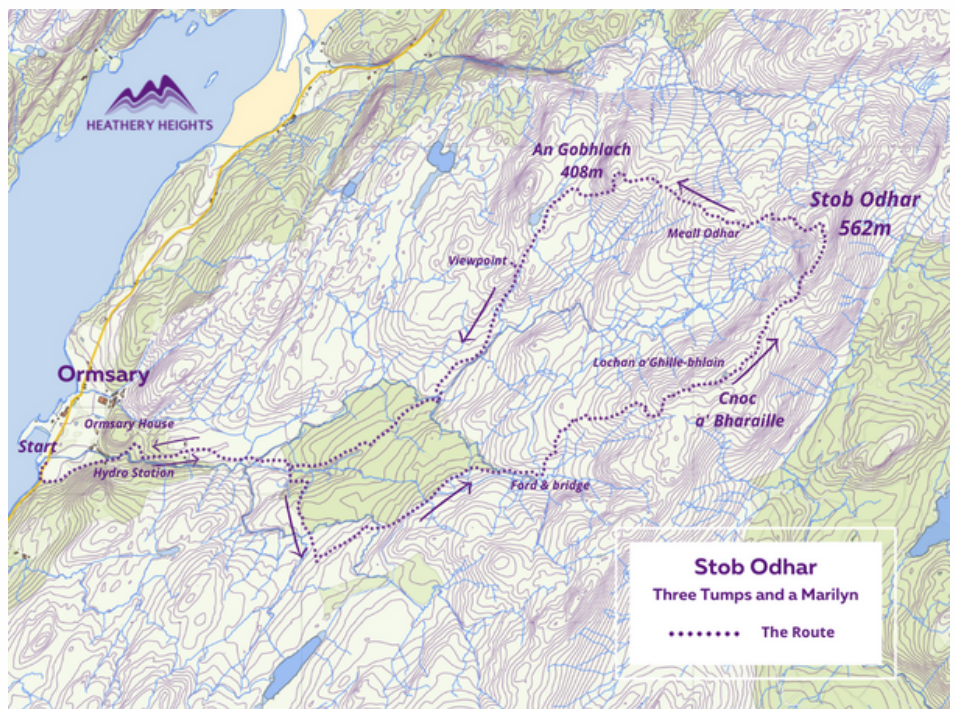
Ormsary Water, keep well tucked off road

Grid Reference: NR 734717

Public Transport: Bus route 421

Toilets: No

Other considerations: Stalking. There are no shooting parties on Sundays; contact Ormsary Estate Office on 01880 770700 to check other days. Generally, using tracks and ridges is not an issue.



OS Map Links:

<https://osmaps.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/route/6563733/Heathery-Heights-Stob-Odhar-Circuit-from-Ormsary>