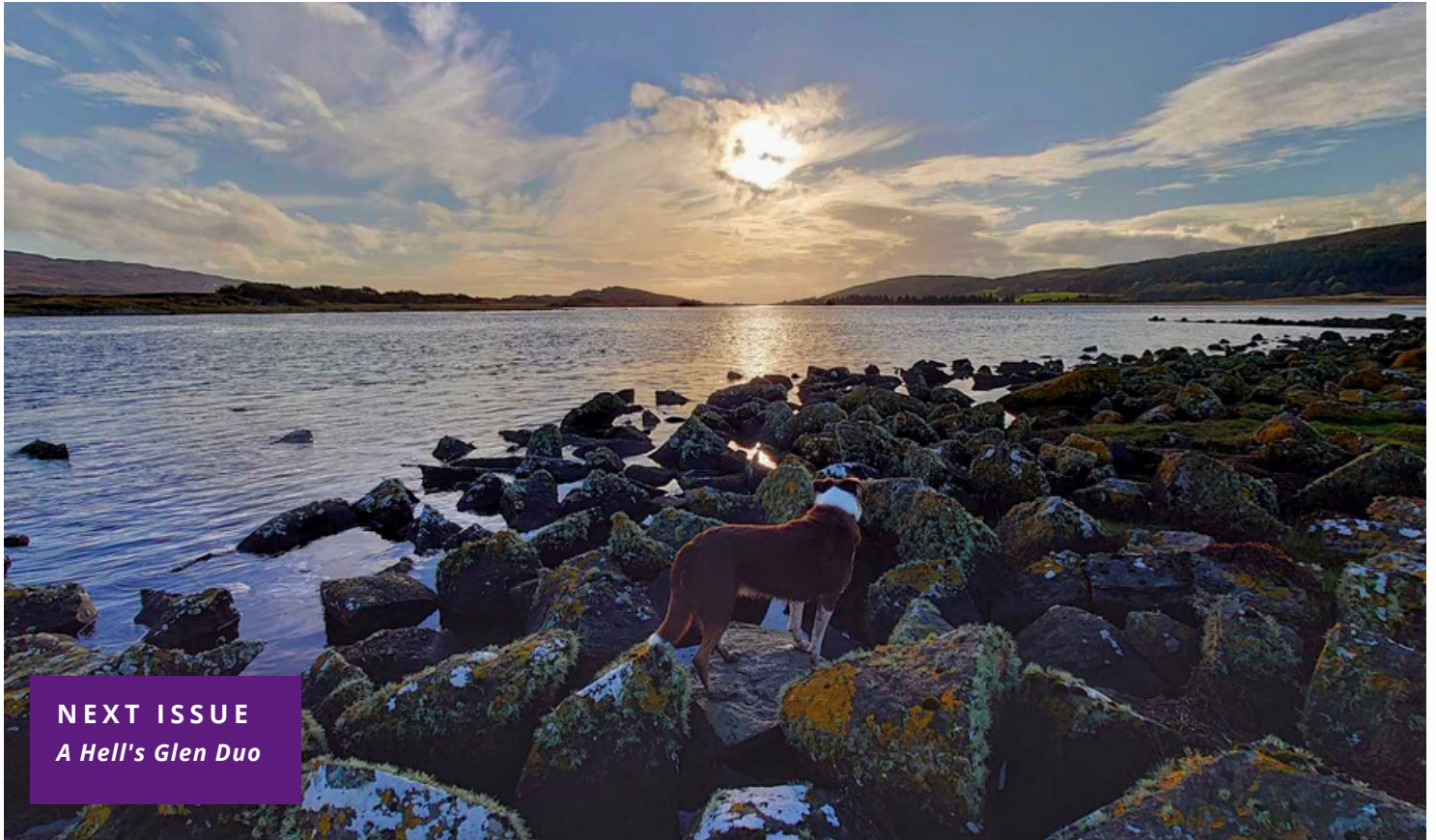




OCTOBER 2021

HEATHERY HEIGHTS MONTHLY

Articles, walks and news



NEXT ISSUE
A Hell's Glen Duo

BARR MOR, THE PIGGERY, ATLANTIC WOODS AND TAYNISH MILL

Taynish; a place of history and nature...

This beautiful National Nature Reserve in this stunning part of Argyll is a real treat for the senses. The clean air and damp west coast climate make it a perfect habitat for lichens, liverworts, fungi, mosses, ferns, and wildlife amongst its ancient Atlantic oak woods. The geology creating the knaps on this coast - the small ridges that run in a north-easterly/south-westerly direction - also contain freshwater lochs/lochans, sea lochs and salt marsh. These habitats are an important home for many species of mammals, birds, amphibians and insects, including otter, spotted flycatcher and the marsh fritillary butterfly. According to NatureScot this important temperate rainforest is estimated to be some 7000 years old making it an incredibly valuable habitat.



The Piggery

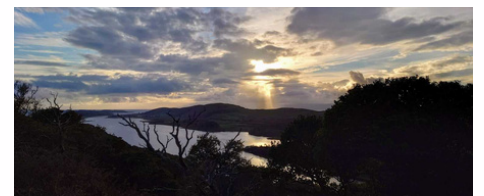


Within this precious landscape man too has made his mark. It is thought there was an Iron Age fort atop Barr Mor; Tainish House was built by the local Laird, MacNeill, in 1650; the ruins of Tainish Mill – built in 1724 - nestles in the trees, a reminder that once local farmers brought their oats and grain here to be milled. Later, in the late 18th Century, the Campbells of Inverneill bought Tayvallich Estate and added the amazing Piggery and Gatehouse (source NatureScot).

To explore the reserve, I highly recommend undertaking the full circuit including Barr Mor and a visit to the Piggery. Autumn is a lovely time to enjoy the rich tapestry of colours as the oaks turn a rich gold.

The walk

1. **To summit Barr Mor:** from the Nature Reserve carpark walk north back up the road for 1km past Lochan Tainish and the entrance to Duntaynish House. The road bears sharply left then right. After a short distance you will see a wooden signpost with an eagle on your right pointing to the path leading up to Barr Mor on your left.
2. Turn left up the path. Initially meander through the woods before starting the steep ascent to Barr Mor. Steps lead steadily upwards until at last the ground eases allowing you to emerge from the trees with just a short final pull to the summit. The reward of the panoramic views over Tainish and Knapdale are fabulous.
3. From the summit the grassy path undulates south to the slightly lower south top where you might wish to sit awhile to enjoy further views.
4. Descend the path southwards into the trees (a path to your right leading down the western flanks can also be used). Descend to a wall where the paths join. Head southeast for 130m to rejoin the main track in an area of open fen covered in heather and bog myrtle.
5. Head southwest (right from Barr Mor, straight on from carpark) and follow the track for 1.25km until you reach buildings and small meadow on your right. Look out for a signpost for the coast walk at the other end of the meadow.



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, bylaws and laws that protect areas including National Nature Reserves (NNRs) and Sites of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSIs).

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6. Turn right then immediately left at the signpost. This takes you south, parallel to the main track to Tainish House, skirting the tall trees and walls of Tainish House, before briefly veering southwest through scrub and willow. Ahead you will see a gate through the wall and a path left. (You can also take the 150m detour signposted right to a viewpoint and picnic spot.)
7. To visit the piggery turn left keeping the wall on your right, it is just a couple of minutes' walk and well worth looking around. You can then return to take the path through the wall down to the shore and bird hide. This is a really special spot, if you are lucky you may see otters.
8. Return up the path to the main track. Turn right towards Tainish House. After 140m you will reach a gate. Go through this and turn left following the waymarked path southeast across the field. Belted Galloways often reside here. At the other side of the field you will reach a gate.
9. Go through the gate and turn left. This takes you through birch woods and oak before a further gate leads you onwards into the wonderful Atlantic oak woods.
10. The path initially skirts high above the coast with tantalising glimpses of Loch Sween before slowly dropping you towards the ruins of Tainish Mill a couple of kilometres to the north.
11. Enjoy the woods before Tainish Mill waterfalls greet you feeding into the leat that served the mill. From the mill you can also drop down to the shores of Loch Sween on a small path leading southeast from the picnic area.
12. The final section heads northwest from the north side of the Mill back to carpark. En route there is a fine viewpoint over the ecologically important wetlands forming the south end of Lochan Tainish to your right.



The described route and accompanying information are there to be used as a guide and do not replace the use of map and compass and the skills required to use them. Whilst every effort is made to ensure the route is accurate at the time of going to print please be aware that track and path closures can happen at any time. All walks are undertaken at your own risk.

Walk Information

Route: Barr Mor, The Piggery, Atlantic Woods and Tainish Mill

Distance: 5.2 – 10.5km (3 ¼ - 6 ½ miles)

Ascent: 130 - 270m

Time: 2 - 5 hours

Terrain: A mixture of good forestry tracks and paths. Some stepped, steep and slippery sections (especially if ascending Barr Mor).

Map/s: OS Landranger 55 (1:50 000)

OS Explorer 358 (1:25 000)

Start/Finish/Parking: Small carpark in Tainish National Nature Reserve, south of Tayvallich.

You can also park by the Public Toilets in Tayvallich village and walk along the minor road to either the start of the Barr Mor path for the full circuit (1km each way) or to the NNR carpark (2km each way).

Grid reference: NR737852 (National Nature Reserve carpark)

Public Transport: Bus 425/426 to Tayvallich

Toilets: At south end of Tayvallich Village (2km from NNR carpark)

