



JANUARY 2022

HEATHERY HEIGHTS MONTHLY

Articles, walks and news



NEXT ISSUE

Beinn Odhar from Tyndrum

BEINN BHAN; KILMARTIN'S SHY MARILYN

The 'White Mountain'...

This hill may not be as tall as its Corbett counterparts in Applecross and the Great Glen, but it is a Marilyn – a hill with a prominence of 150m or more - and it has some cracking views that offer a full 360-degree panorama. Nestled unassumingly behind Kilmartin and the glen's rich diversity of historic monuments, you would be forgiven for not knowing of its existence.

Undertaken from Kilmartin this hill presents its own challenges over rough, rugged pathless terrain. Yet this makes the views even more worthwhile when you reach its surprisingly airy summit. The going is slow and due to potential mud, bogginess, and bracken, it is best tackled on a crisp winter's day when the ground is firm (or during a dry spring/early summer). Competent navigational skills are required; all part of the fun.



View towards Jura



The old lime kiln



Nature's art - ice crystals

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).

www.heatheryheights.co.uk

The walk

1. Leaving the carpark cross the road over to the Kilmartin Hotel with care. Head east along the track in front of the line of cottages above the main road. After the last house, the track will curve left for 100m to a gate.

2. Go through the gate and up the hill. You will pass a fine waterfall and track to your right, a second gate and a cattle feeding area before reaching Ballibrad Barn. Although the barn has been converted note its triangular vents (now windows) that were typical of the barns in this area from the 18th-19th centuries.

3. Continuing for 300m the track leads through a third gate and past another feed station (sometimes VERY muddy) to a stream and a sharp right-hand bend. Up to your right you will see a lime kiln with a couple of trees emerging from it, worthy of a short detour either now or on your return. The kilns were used to heat limestone to very high temperatures to produce quicklime which had many uses, including for building purposes and improving soil.

4. Follow the track over the stream then look immediately to your left. You will see that the cattle and deer have created a rough path skirting below a rock up to a natural shelf that contours above the righthand side of the stream. Follow this northward, keeping the stream and fence below on your left and the steeper hillside to your right. It is rough going so take your time. After 380m the stream does a sharp turn towards you and enters a small gorge on your right.

5. Cross the stream just below the gorge. Ahead and up the slopes some 50m to your right you will see a large squared off boulder. Aim for this (NE) and a rough path created by the deer will lead you diagonally up the steep slopes to a wall above (you can also ascend via a tiny stream bed 40m further on via a large Ash tree). When you reach the wall look for a gap where the stones are missing just to your right.

6. Go through the gap and take a north-easterly bearing up the steep slopes, skirting directly up over the end of a rough manmade track (not marked on the map). Again, deer tracks help lead the way up. You will come out near the end of another manmade track. Cross this and look for a gap in the dense scrub up the steep slopes ahead/just to the left. You will now need to head in an easterly direction zigzagging for 500m through rough heather keeping the higher ground to your right until you can aim directly for a notch in the hillside above you (marked on the 1:25000 map or Grid ref NR852997). Although the small valley to the left looks tempting it is very boggy so progress through the heather is generally drier but slow.

7. Go through the notch and drop down veering left 100m towards a corner in the wall ahead. There is a barbed wire fence so this is the easier point to cross, then it is just 350m east to the summit ridge and up to the Trig point. Enjoy the view! It is worth going slightly north of the Trig point for the best vista towards Ben Cruachan and Loch Awe.



View to Scarba and Mull



Carnasserie Castle and Mull

8. Leaving the summit head SSW along the ridge for 300m until it drops down then gain the less boggy ground ahead before veering slightly right (W) towards the wall/fence ahead. You will want to follow this west until you can cross on your left just before a stream (NR851995). Head south down the east bank of the stream before dropping down to where it turns west (it is easier to descend to the left).

9. Follow the stream west for just under 100m then turn left to head SW down the valley for 550m, ensuring you cross to its eastern side to keep a wall further down on your left. You are aiming to keep on the right side of the small stream that takes you SW down to the end of the track you left earlier. It does steepen but drops you out onto the track quite suddenly. You will notice that the track goes further south than is marked on the map.

10. Turn right (N) onto the track and it will veer back round the sharp left-hand bend south, past the lime kiln and back to Kilmartin on the same route as you ascended.

Alternatives: You can ascend via the descent route to avoid the barbed wire fence and some of the rougher ground but keep a close eye out for the tiny stream where you need to leave the track if you do so, it is not as easy to spot in reverse. Others may prefer to ascend from the north. You can head up the track from just south of Loch Ederline and Stroneskar (marked on the OS maps). You can also make use of the tracks that head up from the B840 between Eurach and Old Glennan (not marked on OS maps).

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: Beinn Bhan circular from Kilmartin

Distance: 6km (4 miles)

Ascent: 360m

Time: 2.5 -3.5hrs

Terrain: tracks and pathless rugged and steep terrain. This route requires good navigation skills. Be considerate of livestock.

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

OS Explorer 358 (1:25 000)

Start/Finish/Parking: Kilmartin

Grid reference: NR835988

Public Transport: Bus routes 23, 421, 423, 429

Toilets: Yes

[OS Map link](#)

