



JUNE 2022

HEATHERY HEIGHTS MONTHLY

Articles, walks and news



NEXT ISSUE
Keills, Knapdale

BEINN BHREAC

The Speckled Mountain...

This Argyll Marilyn (a hill with a drop of at least 150m all round) nestles between Loch Awe to the west and Loch Fyne to the east. It offers a fine vantage point for views towards many of the better known Munros and Corbetts over an expanse of moorland that gives it its own sense of remoteness. This feeling of isolation is perhaps slightly spoiled by the wind farm to the southwest, but the giant turbines remain far enough away that they do not detract too much.

Why it is called the Speckled Mountain I am not entirely sure but the array of lochans that surround it could well be one reason, for speckled with bodies of water it most certainly is. It also has several rocky outcrops which stand proud of the heather - another reason perhaps.



Looking over Lochan Allt an Sgadain



Summit views



Descending to Loch Awe

Although the summit can be approached via forestry tracks and the wind farm from the Loch Fyne side this route follows the more open track from Loch Awe before crossing over the open moorland to reach the summit. It does require navigation skills to meander through the lochans, particularly on the return or in poor visibility.

The walk

1.You can tuck into the layby at Loch Awe at NM 980120 (by a bin) where there is space for a couple of cars. Failing that there is more limited parking to the south (please don't use passing places).

2.Head north for 150m to the track just south of Ardchnonnell. Turn right over the cattle grid (or use the side gate, but please close), follow the track for 110m and turn left, continue for another 50m then bear left at the fork and drop down to a big gate. Go through this then immediately turn right and through another gate to join the track on the south side of Ardchnonnell Burn. (An alternative is to head directly east from the fork up the field to its northeast corner where a track will lead you round the top of a wood then eastwards to join the other main track, but best avoided in lambing season.)

3.Continue up the track for the next 3.5km where it comes to an end having brought you up to just over 330m in height. Briefly head northeast and cross over the boggy stream to your right as soon as you can. Walking poles can be useful!

4.You will now need to head southeast for 1km directly towards Lochan Eisce Mhoir (Loch of the Great Fish). There are faint deer and Land Rover tracks that help but don't be fooled into going the wrong way. It is rough moorland and boggy in places but with care it is easy enough to miss the worst bits.

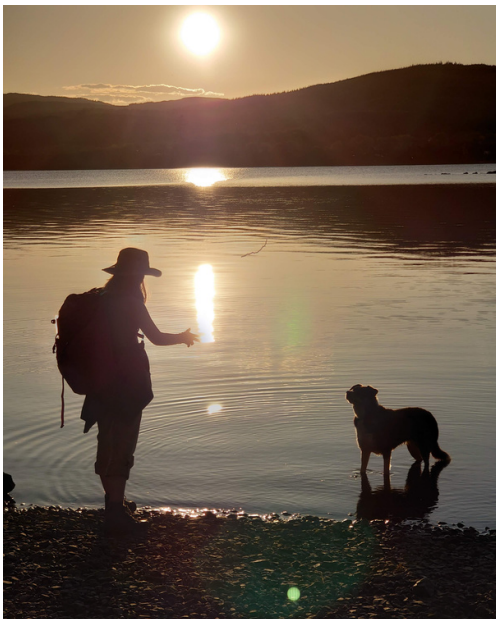
5.On reaching the Lochan skirt its north end on higher ground above a boggier section, then southeast between Lochan Dubh Mhuilinn (Loch of the Black Mill) and Lochan Allt an Sgadain (Loch of the Herring Burn). The Lochan translations are the best I can find; old shielings are dotted around the lower slopes, so man has been using these moors for some time.

6.It is now just over 1km to the summit, heading in a south-easterly direction. It is really a case of picking the best route through the heather below a couple of rocky outcrops; using small grassy sections by small burns makes the ascent easier.

Safety in the Outdoors

Please 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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Evening light on Loch Awe



Clear views to Ben Cruachan

Walk Information

Route: Beinn Bhreac (Marilyn)

Distance: 13.7km (8.5 miles)

Ascent: 586m **Time:** 3½ - 4 hrs

Terrain: Track from Loch Awe then open hillside, boggy and uneven

Map/s: OS Landranger 55 (1:50 000) and OS Explorer 360 (1:25 000)

Start/Finish/Parking: Loch Awe (very limited space, further parking 700m south)

Grid reference: NM 980 120

Public Transport: No

Toilets: No

[OS Map link](#)

7. On reaching the trig at the summit you are suddenly rewarded with a panorama to the east, which has been hidden throughout the ascent. This a great spot for a break if the weather allows.

8. To return carefully retrace your steps back to the track end – navigating back to a track end is always trickier so it is best to regain the west side of Lochan Eisce Mhoir then head northwest from there, taking care to keep the unnamed horseshoe shaped lochan to your north.

9. Once on the track it is an easy 4km walk back with great views down Loch Awe and to the west. This also makes for a pleasant afternoon walk to catch the sunset on Loch Awe at the end.

On longer summer days another Marilyn to the northeast, Cruach Mhor, could be added. There is plenty of boggy and lumpy moorland between which will be slow going but you could then descend to the track by the Allt Blarghour at NN021130. This drops you out just south of Blarghour. This route is 15 miles with long rough sections which could easily add on 5-6 hours. I have yet to try it but happy to hear feedback if you do!

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.

