



SEPTEMBER 2022

HEATHERY HEIGHTS MONTHLY

Articles, walks and news



NEXT ISSUE
Time out on Gigha

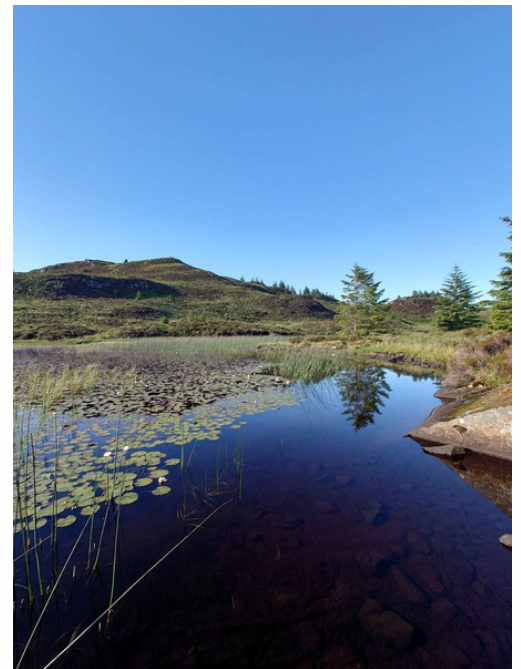
CNOC NAM BROIGHLEAG

Hill of the Blaeberry...

Many know and regularly climb the Scottish Munros, sometimes unwittingly because the hill is there or, with the hill bagger's intent to complete a round. Many also know and ascend the many Corbetts (Scottish hills with a height of 2500 – 2999' with a 500' drop all round). Then there are the Grahams, Donalds, Marilyns, Tumps, Humps.... Of these the Marilyns make a fine list. Compiled by Alan Dawson the Marilyns are hills with at least a 150m drop all round. They include many Munros, Corbetts, Grahams and sub-2000 hills. There are 2009 of them in the British Isles and 1218 of them in Scotland. Argyll alone has 174, with 15 lying on the mainland between Inveraray and the Mull of Kintyre. The wee hill of Cnoc nam Broighleag is one of them.



Cnoc nam Broighleag



Lochan Dubh



Blaeberry picking in summer

Reaching its summit is not entirely straightforward due to the forestry plantations but once up it has fine views and is a mass of purple heather and blaeberrys in summer. In autumn and winter the bracken dies back making parts of this hill easier to access, and even with the bilberries and heather flowers gone the hues of golds and browns offer a subtle colour palette that is delightfully accentuated by a crisp frost or the sun's autumnal rays. This round also takes in the West Top (a Tump) and the smaller hilltops to the south and west which show off the interesting geology of this small corner of Argyll.

The walk

1.From the carpark head west along the road towards Loch Glashan taking the righthand fork after 350m. The road drops you under the dam. Ignore the first right and left (dead ends) and continue down to the hairpin bend over the burn before heading NW to the top end of the dam. Your first view down Loch Glashan offers a good view of the dam, part of the Loch Gair Hydroelectric Power Scheme. Back in the 1960s, when the reservoir was partially drained, evidence of an old Crannog, an early Christian-Viking dugout canoe, paddle and many other remains were excavated harking back to an age when it was just a small loch.
2.Continue past the dam for 150m and turn sharp right onto a forest track heading SE. Follow this for 850m to another fork.

3.Turn left onto the less used track, now a haven for wildflowers, butterflies and bees. Keep your eyes open for wild strawberries! Continue for a further 850m. The track rises gently, crossing a burn on a zig-zag, passing a turning area on your right before reaching a small tributary burn.
4.Directly after the burn (at NR933931) you will see an overgrown heathery track with a ditch to its right heading straight up into the forest*. You will need to take this, but it is easier to follow the ditch initially to get past a few overgrown trees. Hopping onto it higher up deer have created a narrow path through the long heather before the track enters the forest. Keep going until you emerge from the trees.

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).

www.heatheryheights.co.uk



Cnoc nam Broighleag and Lochan Dubh

5. Look ahead and up to your right (east) you will see a small col you need to reach to the right of some craggy ground. It is easy enough to contour straight across in winter but when the bracken is up it is easier to drop right then up the side of the bracken joining a bit of a deer track (this also come up from the firebreak*) which meanders up to the col.

6. Once the ground flattens out at the col keep left beside the high ground heading NE until you reach a fence corner. Now head left along the fence over a small rise (60m). To the north you will now see Cnoc nam Broighleag's West Top and Cnoc nam Broighleag summit to the right, above Lochan Dubh. It is easiest to head for the col between them then ascend each from this point (although a direct ascent can be made the heather is very long!) starting with the West Top. You are now in blaeberry heaven; when in berry your walk may be delayed if you like them as much as we do!

7. After summiting each leave the trig point heading north along a pleasant meandering ridge to Creag Chaise, just 0.75km away. It is very pretty when the heather is purple against the lush greens and the small ridges are lovely on a summer's day but equally lovely in its golden autumnal and winter coat. Its small summit lies above a small col over a fence.

8. From Creag Chaise you can see your next target, a small hill across a lush green valley and some small ridges to the southwest. Return along the ridge for 120m to the small col and fence. You can follow the north side of this down to the valley bottom, go through the gate then head east to where the fence goes over a small ridge ahead. It is best to keep south of the fence nearer the trees where it is drier underfoot before veering to the tiny col.

9. You are essentially following the fence SE then SW but it is drier to head south straight up onto the small ridge from the col. Follow this to its end before dropping south back towards the fence and heading up the righthand side of the valley.

10. Where the fence and valley come together after a bend in the fence cross it after 10-15m and head south up through the long heather to the small summit of Creag Fheargach. There are fabulous views up and down Loch Fyne.

11. From the summit head north to the fence, keeping slightly right is easier underfoot but beware of holes in the heather! Cross the fence and head left (SW) on the col and drop down. Keep right and head towards Lochan Dubh. This has hundreds of waterlilies in early summer and is also a haven for wildlife.



View up Loch Fyne from Creag Fheargach

12. Skirting southward on the eastern edge of the Lochan - directly next to it is easiest for the most part - you will cross its outflow then after 200m reach its SW corner. Continue SW and you will reach the fence you originally ascended to. Follow it left until you reach its corner and cross to retrace your steps back down to the forest track or firebreak*.

*An alternative to 4 (as also noted in 5 & 12) is to walk on for a further two minutes and take a firebreak on the left just after some logs lying across a ditch. Keep left until the ground opens out, then a route can be made up to the col, evidence of a deer track helping through the bracken. Whichever route you use it is probably easier to use the same one coming back.

Walk Information

Route: Cnoc nam Broighleag from Loch Glashan car park

Distance: 10 km (6.25 miles)

Ascent: 480m

Time: 4 - 5 hrs walking

Terrain: tracks, road and rough pathless terrain; uneven and steep, walking poles useful!

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

OS Explorer 358 (1:25 000)

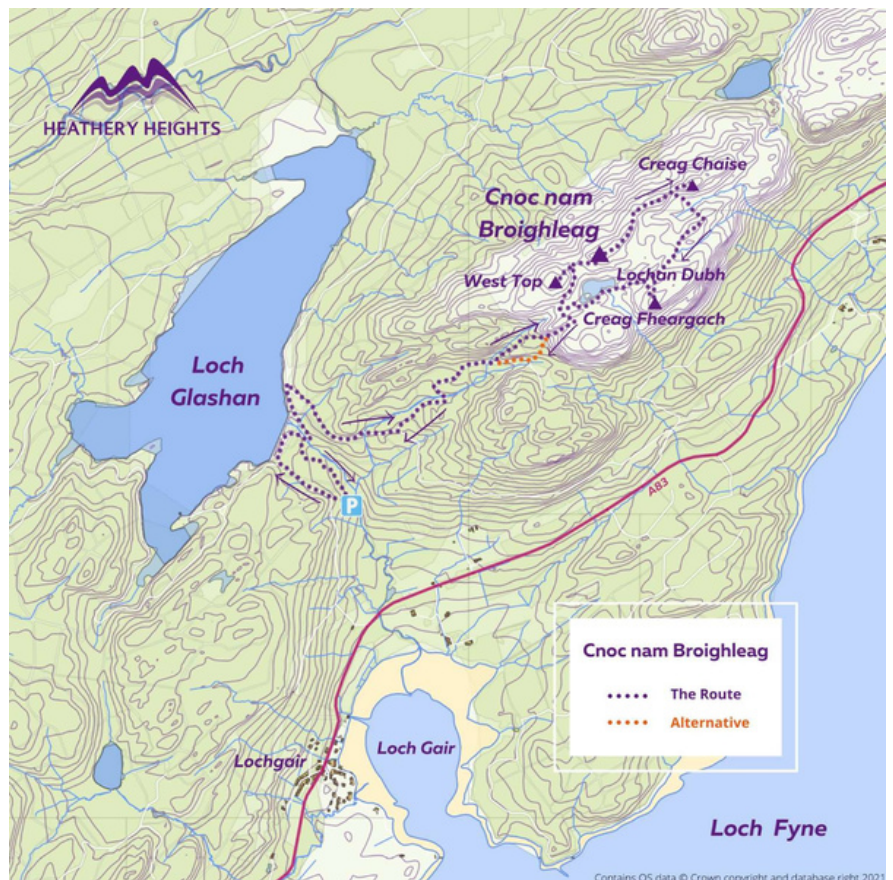
Start/Finish/Parking: forestry car park

Grid reference: NR 923922

Public Transport: nearest bus routes 428, 926, Lochgair Hotel

Toilets: No

[OS Map link](#)



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.