



JULY 2023

# HEATHERY HEIGHTS MONTHLY

*Articles, walks and news*



**NEXT ISSUE**

*Historic Kilbride*

## **BEINN AN TUIRC: 'HILL OF THE WILD BOAR'**

*A visit to Kintyre's highest summit*

Kintyre's highest point sits well back, the summit of this Argyll Marilyn quite well hidden from the lower reaches of Kintyre itself, yet its bulk can be readily seen from out at sea, nearby Deer Hill above Carradale or the hills of Arran. For over two decades the large windfarm that skirts its western flanks has been supplying power to the national grid whilst far below its waters flow down to power the 99kw hydro scheme at Beinn an Tuirc Distillery on Torrisdale Estate. The Estate has been in the Macalister Hall family since 1872 and has shown much innovation with self-catering, the formation of Beinn an Tuirc Distillery, eco-friendly lodges, tree planting and green electricity, including a biomass boiler. Their award-winning gin and lovely café make it a great place to stop off after the walk as the Kintyre Way - which starts the walk - leads you from the coast through the Estate's mature woodland and right past the Distillery. In fact, the initial section has been nicknamed the Gintyre Way with good reason!



Gin anyone?



The ascent route leading towards the windfarm

Above the Distillery much of the hill's lower flanks are covered in forestry, planted over the last 50 odd years, but its higher slopes are mainly made up of lush mosses, lichens, heather and blaeberry which offer a wide-open aspect with views over to Arran, Ayrshire and Islay. The lower slopes are also seeing a takeover from bracken which loves the mild damp climate, but this is kept cut back on the section of path where it would be troublesome. The tracks up to Beinn an Tuirc make it a fairly easy walk until the last section of open hillside, which is steep, rough and boggy under foot but short lived. To make it into a circular rather than returning the same way I have offered a route that takes you across from the summit to join another track to the north, but this does involve some bog hopping at first – if very wet underfoot it may be prudent to return the way you came!



### **The walk**

1. From the car park by the shore at Torrisdale Bay turn right up the B842 back towards Carradale. After 250m you will see the entrance to the Estate on your left with a sign for the Kintyre Way. Take this, being mindful crossing the road. You will be following the Kintyre Way for the first 4.5km. The section through the Estate is signposted the Gintyre Way.

2. The route leads you through the Estate veering left under the lovely Torrisdale Castle, dating back to the early 19th Century, and over the Lephincorrach Burn before turning right and up towards the Distillery. The Distillery itself was built in the old piggery and houses a gin school and café, which offers a good selection of cakes, lunches and refreshments (and gin).

3. The Kintyre Way/Gintyre Way signage leads you through the distillery buildings and out onto a track that climbs the hillside above. After the initial climb the track evens out and skirts upwards to a Y junction where you need to keep left towards the burn.

4. Follow the track to within a short

distance of its end, the path you want to take is just to the right of the fence ahead - obvious once on it. This will take you along the side of the burn, over a wooden bridge and up a rough grassy path to the forestry track above. A sign will also tell you that you are now leaving the Gintyre Way – you are, however, still on the Kintyre Way!

5. On reaching the forestry track turn left and follow this on a southwards curve for the next kilometre until you reach a junction. Here the Kintyre Way heads left but you want to turn right.

6. Continue, now westwards, staying on the main track (ignore the new track after 800m on your right). It takes you right to the head of the valley before eventually leaving the forestry behind and out onto the open hillside. You will soon see the turbines off to your left and ahead.

7. Continue past the building on your right until you meet a junction in front of Turbine 19 with a track to the right. The track is signposted 'Control Point and Windfarm', take this.

### **Safety in the Outdoors**

*Please exercise responsibly and use appropriate clothing and equipment for your chosen outdoor activity. Inform a contact about your route/whereabouts and don't forget your phone, snacks, drink, medication and first aid supplies. Check the forecast and mountain 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](http://www.heatheryheights.co.uk)

8. After going through a gate continue up past the first main set of turbines. The track passes these dropping slightly before crossing a small stream. To your right there is a fenced area. Continue to where the fence line finishes and then leave the track to head right, up onto the rough open hillside beside it. Follow the fence up onto the higher slopes before heading in a northeasterly direction from its top corner towards the main summit cairn and trig point. It is boggy and steep in places.

9. The summit offers great views (save this hill for a clear day!) up and down Kintyre as well as over to the Ayrshire coast, Arran, Jura and Islay. Below the windfarm sprawls northwards towards Cnoc Donn and the ridge\* that lies above Torrisdale Water.

10. From the summit cairn you can either drop down to the wind farm road to your west and return the way you came OR take our alternative route off the hill to the southeast.

11. To undertake the latter head southeast across a boggy area for 300m then veer down the eastern slopes of Beinn an Tuirc until you reach the bottom left corner of the forestry plantation ahead (Grid Ref NR 757 358). Follow the bottom edge of the forest eastwards keeping the stream down to your right. You will soon find yourself walking alongside a bit of a track by a ditch which turns north after 300m. Follow this past shooting platforms and it soon reaches a forestry track which will take you north, dropping quite steeply down the hill towards the upper reaches of Torrisdale.

12. When the track veers right continue east then southeast for 2km ignoring a track that drops off to the left down to Torrisdale Water and another new track which switches back to the SW on your right (which would take you back to your earlier ascent route). The track eventually meets back up with the Kintyre Way/Gintrye Way which you can now follow back down to the Distillery and café for a well-deserved cuppa.

13. To finish you can either return along the Kintyre Way and drop back down to the car park or follow the Estate's drive down to Torrisdale Bay and turn left where you will see the car park is just ahead on your right.

\*If time allows and you are into 'Tump' bagging there are five within reach/on the ridge on the north side of Torrisdale, but it is rough going until Meall Donn. A track then makes access easier towards the east and down to the road above Dippen.

## Walk Information

**Route: Beinn an Tuirc (Argyll Marilyn - 454m)**

**Distance: 16km (10 miles)**

**Ascent: 548m**

**Time: 5 - 5½ hrs**

**Terrain: Estate, forestry and windfarm tracks; open hillside, boggy and uneven.**

**Map/s: OS Landranger 68 (1:50 000) OS Explorer 356 (1:25 000)**

**Start/Finish/Parking: Torrisdale Bay**

**Grid reference: NR 797 359**

**Public Transport: Bus, 300 & 445**

**Toilets: Nearest Public Toilets are at Carradale Harbour**

**[OS MAP LINK](#)**

