Glenfinnan Munros and a Streap ascent – August 26th

I had nipped up A’Mharconaich at Drumochter a few days earlier and the walk felt very Autumnal, in fact it could have been November – cold, damp and mist = not much fun. Was my love for the mountains waning?!?!?!?!

So when the forecast for Sunday changed from torrential rain to a finger of high pressure, it looked like a long delayed trip to Glenfinnan would be the order of the day. Would this be the trip to regain my love of the mountains after damp Drumochter!!:) .

An early start was planned with me leaving the east of Scotland at 06.00 along with my brother leaving Glasgow at the same time. Alarm set and a bright and breezy start saw me at Glenfinnan at 08.15 with quiet roads. I must admit I was expecting to be eaten alive by the midge when parked up, however when getting the bike ready and shoes on etc. – there were absolutely zero of the wee buggers!! There was a slight breeze which may have helped but they have had me running wild in stronger winds! A nice start!

We got everything ready and left the smaller car park at the bottom of the access road to Glenfinnan lodge about 08.40. There were a few other cars about and I reckon we met and saw about 4 or 5 other parties on the Munros.

The road up to Corryhully bothy is fantastic and tarred nearly all the way and you could get away with a road bike as far as the bridge just before the bothy. We had mountain bikes so elected to take they as far as we could and perhaps got them another 1.5km past the bothy until the sign post for the first Munro was reached (as in video). This did involve a wee bit of pushing but was more than made up for on the way home!!!

We left the bikes about 09.15ish and set off for our first target – Sgurr a’Choire Riabhaich. The ascent seemed to be going well and not much ascent. I thought we had passed this peak easily leaving the Munro to be bagged. However I should have believed in the map – the steep pull to what I thought was the munro was actually to Sgurr a’Choire Riabhaich!! For this part of the ascent the path does skirt a wee bit past and round the peak to the south west before turning sharply NE to the summit. This was more like it – a steep calf busting ascent. At the top I realised this was the subsidiary peak and we could see the first Munro – Sgurr nan Coireachan. The views were great over to the Munro and beyond to Sgurr na Ciche and into Knoydart- what fantastic views. Skye and Rum were now in view as were the three Corbett’s around Rois Beinn to the west. Fantastic!!!

THE hike up to Sgurr nan Coireachan was ok but was no walk in the park! We reached the summit around 11.00am and had it to ourselves. We watched a herd of deer being spooked by a loan walker heading over the ridge t Beinn Garbh and also a few other walkers starting to appear over the shoulder of – Sgurr a’Choire Riabhaich. Time to get moving.

The hike over to Sgurr Thuilm makes a number of descents and re ascents over Meall an Tarmachain, Beinn Garbh and Bealach Leathann to the minor top before Sgurr Thuilm. I reckon in the mist the map and compass would be coming out. However given the stunning weather the only issue we had was when to remove and re apply layer of clothing to keep comfortable!!

We reached the summit of Sgurr Thuilm at around 12.30 ish. All along the ridge and continuing on the summit of the second munro the outline of Streap across the glen was fantastic – it does resemble a shark fin and I can see how it has been referred to as this in some descriptions.

I was feeling good and whilst lingering on Sgurr Thuilms summit soaking in the views (in all directions – Knoydart, isles, loch arkraig etc etc) I had decided I was going to head up Streap – it does involve descending down to around 275m and then re ascending over 600m. So I was a little nervous on how tired I’d feel.

We headed off down the Druim Coire a’Beithe, and I was constantly looking for ways off as soon as possible to try and reduce how much height I would lose!! However I did have to drop off the should nearer the bottom before a safe descent to the glen could be made. At this point I was now on my own as my walking partner headed south to get home…

The ascent to Streap was steep and pathless but I kept a moderate (read slow!) pace and soon reached the geological platform which I had picked out on the descent as the best route up.

I was soon facing the Shark Fin!! I had read some accounts that the final ascent on the “fin” was a scramble. There were a couple of places where hands were used but not too sure if it could be described as a scramble. Nice steep descents on both side and care required though.

I did meet another party from Skye on the summit who had come up from Gleann Dubh Lighe. It was now bang on 15.00. I waited for about 15mins on the summit and then headed back down towards the bikes using the same geological platform to descend into the upper reaches of Glenfinnan. By the time I reached the bike it was 16.10, however the bike allowed quick progress down Glenfinnan and under the mighty Viaduct and I was back at the car for 16.45.

A great day and mojo regained for the mountains…….