Glen Affric Munros – The Sgurr nan Ceathreamhnan Group

With the rain on the Thursday and Friday, we decided against a bash at the Fisherfield 6 instead opting for three days out of Tomich. We had stayed here a few years back and tackled the five munros at the eastern end of Glen Affric, so this time we thought of doing the Sgurr nan Ceathreamhnan group to the north of the the Allbeithe youth hostel.

We had booked out the B and B for three nights and arrived after work on the Friday evening allowing us to start relatively early on the Saturday. We arrived at the Glen Affric car park and were off round 08.00am cycling along the track to the Allbeithe. We knew this was going to be a big day out and given the amount of fresh snow above about 650m I was a bit sceptical on whether we would complete the three munros. However the forecast was looking ok and it was to brighten up with good air clarity and visibility. The cycle in took roughly 1.5hrs and we left the bikes to climb up to the Coire na Cloche. Before reaching this point we reached the snow level and it was still falling (although lightly ) from the sky. We decided on tackling An Socach first as the thought of doing this last was a little too much!!! It was a relatively straight forward ascent to this summit which is the smallest of the three, however the underfoot conditions were very slippery with the fresh snow starting to melt!! By the time we got back to the Coire na Cloche it was about midday and we had to decide on whether we would go up Sgurr nan Ceathreamhnan first or descend into the Coire nan Dearcag. We decided to have a look at descending into the Coire nan Dearcag allowing us to continue to the outlier munro second. The descent was a bit slippy but not as treacherous as I had thought and soon we were trudging through the snow to get to Bealach na Daoine. This aspect of Sgurr nan Ceathreamhnan is fantastic and you can see the two ridges we were going to be ascending an descending clearly, a fantastic looking mountain…….

Personally the hardest part of the walk was now ahead – the climb over the ridge and top to get to Mullach na Dheiragain. The snow was very soft and up to three foot deep in drifts. The boulders along the top were extremely annoying as you were having to tread carefully not to lose your leg between boulders. Added to this the fact that my platypus had a leak and I was out of H2O, made me a bit tetchy!!

Anyway we reached the summit of Mullach na Dheiragain at 2pm. The weather was ok with snow coming and going throughout the day. We now needed to reach Sgurr nan Ceathreamhnan, the highest peak of the day. To do this we went back over the ridge (again – a pain in the back side) and then started ascending the northern ridge of Sgurr nan Ceathreamhnan. We reached the summit at 4pm and I was desperate to get back to my bike as I had a nice full bottle of juice there!!! The descent down the western ridge is fantastic with great views back down Glen Affric but also to the northern side of the Glen Shiel hills. These were all snow capped giving it a very wintry feel!! A few ups and downs and we were back at Allbeithe for about 5.30. Great – a nice cycle back !!! However I am sure the path seemed to ascend the whole way back (obviously it does not) – think it was tired legs having trudged through all the snow. We were very relived to get back to the car for 19.00. An awesome day, but long and tiring one!!