

# The Glen Lyon Corbett round

*Designed and completed by Yiannis Tridimas on 1st/2nd May 2012*



Loch Lyon dam

*"Glen Lyon is little known, and less visited, and it is only when you seek it out on a map that you begin to realise just how significant a presence it is in the central Highlands. The glen extends for some 25 miles from the pretty village of Fortingall in the east to the head of Loch Lyon in the west".* This eloquent introduction to Glen Lyon is given in *Undiscovered Scotland* together with a plethora of useful information about access and facilities in this beautiful part of Scotland.

## Background information

Corbetts are hills between 2500ft and 3000ft with a re-ascent of 500ft on all sides. There are 221 Corbetts in Scotland. "The re-ascent rule ensures that they are well-defined and fairly detached summits, in contrast to the Munros, where there is no obvious criterion for deciding on separate Munros" (*Andrew Dempster, the Munro Phenomenon, 1995*). "Where you can often climb three or four, or on one occasion seven Munros in one single walk, there are few Corbett groups where you can climb more than two or three on a single walk" (*Cameron McNeish, the Corbett Almanac, 1999*). "By their very nature, Corbetts rarely form themselves into self-contained and manageable groups" (*Andrew Dempster, the Munro Phenomenon, 1995*). There are very few clusters of Corbetts that can be tackled in a single 24-hour challenge. Those areas are Ardgour, the area around Loch Arkaig and that around Loch Lyon.

In June 2011 I completed a challenge of 12 out of the 13 Corbetts that form a cluster around Glen Lyon starting and finishing at Tyndrum, details in the summer 2011 *Fellrunner*. It was

my first visit to the area and although I enjoyed navigating my way round in mixed weather conditions, I had to leave out one of the Corbetts in the group so as to complete the circuit in under 24 hours. I resolved then that I would revisit the area and attempt to include all 13 hills so as to produce a definitive Corbett round. In order to improve the route design, I moved the start/finish to Glen Lyon. This produced a more compact circuit, all of it lying in some beautiful and remote country, away from centres of population.

## The Glen Lyon Corbett Round

I travelled to Scotland on May 1st and arrived at my destination in mid-afternoon. After a brief rest I sorted out the food deposit near the Loch an Daimh dam and drove the short distance to Stronuich reservoir and made a start at around 6:30pm. The weather was as predicted, settled with clear skies and a cool breeze.

The first hill, Beinn nan Oighreag, is the highest of the 13 Corbetts and has two cairns a short distance apart with a shallow dip in between them. Although the OS map shows the smaller SW cairn on top of a large rock as the summit, I visited them both as they looked to be about the same height (Great End in Cumbria has also got two cairns, the smaller SE cairn is the OS summit, the larger NW is the Harvey summit).

I made swift progress over the second hill and following a rough track along Gleann Da Eig I arrived at the quiet hamlet of Camusvrahan just as it was getting dark, which provided me with some cover for a bit of trespassing by climbing over a couple of gates, going through a field and

through a rough wood to gain a forest track that went part way up the longest climb of the round to Beinn Dearg.

It was a clear night with a three quarter moon shining overhead. As I was climbing with my torch off, deer were silhouetted against the illuminated sky, watching me for a while and then disappearing in the darkness. This helped pass the time and soon I reached the top. The large expanse from there to the next forest track is one of the rougher areas with a fair amount of peat and heather. There I made use of the torch and for the only time, my compass, in order to maintain a straight line towards the forest gate, more than a mile away. I normally dislike tracks but the track that goes down the forest and winds its way up Cam Chreag is one I do like. The eastern flanks of Cam Chreag are covered with thick heather and without the track the going would be hard and slow.

I quickly descended the grassy and slightly boggy hillside to my food stash. There I sat for over 15 minutes consuming a whole flask of hot noodle and leek soup and picking up more supplies to last me to the end. The sky was now getting cloudy and as the moon was moving west, darkness was setting in while I was running along Loch an Daimh. A very steep climb at the end of the loch was over and twilight was making things easier now. Over the next hill and down to Loch Lyon and along the long track, which, although not shown on the map, goes all the way round the loch. The long climb on soft grass to Beinn nam Fuaran was being made harder by the warm sunshine. Down the very steep SW side to the bealach and a relatively



Loch an Daimh

easy climb to Beinn a Chaisteil, the hill I had left out in my first visit.

Although a bit tired by now I enjoyed the good grassy descent to Glen Coralan, while surveying the line of ascent of Beinn Odhar. I opted for the NE ridge where there was a fair amount of rock in order to avoid the springy grass. At this easternmost point the route turns for 'home'. I had made very good time thus far and was happy with my performance. The next couple of hills are quite close but the last but one, Beinn nan Imirean, is particularly steep. That over, I got down to the long track, not all of it shown on OS maps. In this short foray into Glen Lochay I felt the heat of the sun more than before. The cool wind had dropped and it was seriously hot. But I kept pushing on and looking forward to getting Meall nan Subh out of the way. This is an odd hill, with many knolls and little valleys between them, a real nightmare in bad visibility. In my first visit in 2011 it was just

like that and I thanked my gps which pointed me to the summit cairn. I would not like to have to find it in an event like that using map and compass! After a telephone call home (no signal in the Glen) I negotiated the descent down the craggy eastern side and made my way to where I had started from 22 hours and 42 minutes before, still in good condition although tired and thirsty as the water in the streams in the closing sections was peaty and not very tasty.

Unlike other 24-hour challenges, the Corbett round only takes in Corbetts and no other hill, large or small. The area is mainly grassy with some small stretches of heather, peat and tussocks. Soft grass is great for descending but makes climbing hard. Most of the ascents are steep and long. The average climb per hill is over 1500ft, varying between 800ft and 2000ft plus.

Some of the Corbetts are adjacent to one another, separated by deep bealachs and others are a long distance apart. The 13 hills are

almost completely pathless but around a third of the overall distance is on rough tracks and lanes along the Glens and the Lochs. Transition between Corbetts along high level routes is not a practical option.

The challenge can easily be supported at a number of points along the route with very little driving involved and the support team would have a great time enjoying the beauty of the Glen and refreshing themselves at the cafe/shop near the river by the Bridge of Balgie.

If the question is: *Why a round of Corbetts?* My answer is: *Why not!* The 13 Corbetts present almost as much of a challenge to the fellrunner as the 23 (24 initially) Munros of the Ramsay round; there are no easy climbs in between to lessen the toil and everyone of the 13 Corbetts is as intimidating as Yewbarrow, some even more so.

**Note:** Photos taken on Saturday 28th April 2012 during a flying visit to sort out access to the Glen.



Above: Poster at Glen Lyon.

Below: View from the cafe at the Bridge of Balgie



## Schedule

**13 Corbett Round** Completed by **Yiannis Tridimas** in **22:42** on 1st-2nd May 2012, starting at 6:30pm

Corbett number	Corbett name	Time	Cumulative time	Notes
	Start: Glen Lyon by Stronuich reservoir			
1	Beinn nan Oigchreag	01:11	01:11	Light
2	Meall nam Maigheagh	01:09	02:20	Light
3	Beinn Dearg	01:58	04:18	Dark
4	Cam Chreag 2	01:57	06:15	Dark
5	Sron a Choire Chnapanich	02:45	09:00	add 16 min stop
6	Meall Buidhe	01:03	10:03	Light
7	Beinn nam Fuaran	02:21	12:24	Light
8	Beinn a' Chaisteil	00:49	13:13	Light
9	Beinn Odhar	01:23	14:36	Light
10	Beinn Chaorach	01:05	15:41	Light
11	Cam Chreag	00:46	16:27	Light
12	Beinn nan Imirean	02:05	18:32	Hot
13	Meall nan Subh	03:03	21:35	Hot
	Finish: Glen Lyon by Stronuich reservoir	01:07	22:42	add 6 min stop

