

TDARS

Newsletter

Issue 225

Sept. 2007

www.TDARS.org

Programme

www.telfordhamfest.co.uk

- Sept. 19 Hamfest Preparations—please be there...
- Sept. 26 Making a proper omelette. Samples available! G0EYX
- Sept. 30 TELFORD HAMFEST at ENGINUITY, COALBROOKDALE. Prep. Sat pm.
- October 3 Usual First-in-the-Month + C.M.
- October 10 Telford Hamfest De-Brief and Ideas Sharing Session.
- October 17 Nostalgia Night. Something odd or interesting (*not* Grandmas/Mothers-in-Law)
- October 24 TDARS Project for Enginuity 'Hands-on-Exhibition'. Brainstorming session.
- October 31 Club Project. Finish the Old—Bring in the New
- November 7 HF OTA and Open House & Committee Meeting
- November 14 Affil. Soc. Contests discussion 07/08. Who's going to join ?
- November 21 Surplus Equipment Sale. Family entertainment.
- November 28 Video Evening. Hubble Space Telescope DVD
- December 5 HF OTA (3657 KHz etc), Open Evening and Committee Meeting.
- December 12 Mince Pies and Mulled Wine. Repeat of popular event last year.
- December 19 Christmas Dinner—Allscott Inn. Price same as previous two years held!
- December 26 On-The-Air 144.600 MHz +/- 25KHz. 8pm onwards monitoring.
- January 2 2008 Why not start the year at the Club QTH ? + C.M. etc.

G3ZME

Telford & District Amateur Radio Society. Founded 1969
Dawley bank Community Centre, Bank Road, Dawley, Telford, Shropshire. TF4 2AZ

G6ZME

QJC? News & Information

Telford HamFest is just around the corner—September 30th. TDARS Committee (which makes up the HamFest organising Committee) has asked for Members to try and persuade other family members, as well as friends, to give an hour or two on that Sunday to assist in some way or other. The help we particularly need includes....

Taking admission money at the door (£2.50 this year), tea/coffee stand for exhibitors up to 10:15 am, helping in the Aga car-parking site (just down the road from Enginuity), helping in the other car-parking areas, helping traders to unload and load their merchandise before/after the event.



The TDARS **Expedition to the Isle of Arran** was successful, and enjoyed by those who travelled north: M0FHM (+ Norma), M1RKH, G4NKC (+ Kim, Will and Lucy), G3UKV (+ Tim M3UKV), M0ECM, M0EMM. Microwave propagation was flat, and not all the SOTA mountain tops climbed, but touring the island and scaling Mount Highvein were all highlights of the event. In return, Richard provided the native insect life a rich harvest with his bare legs and arms.

Also enjoyed by many members was the **visit to the SpaceGuard Centre** near Knighton. Our guide for the evening really knew his stuff about asteroids threatening earth, and put it all over clearly and with humour. The site itself was excellent, so much so that two of us (G8VZT & G3UKV) returned a few weeks later to evaluate its portable microwave possibilities. Not quite as good as the Brown Clee, but promising. Two other artefacts on site also shown below—a little strange, perhaps.



Spaceguard Centre



About a dozen stones in a circle, one having the inscription “Diana’s stone circle built in the year 1997”. The shiny steel sphere was at the centre of the circle.



A Cairn Too Far - trials and tribulations on Arran

"I listened, motionless and still; And, as I mounted up the hill, The music in my heart I bore, Long after it was heard no more" – Wordsworth.

What have whiskey, jumpers and beer got in common? Well on the Isle of Arran, you can buy a jumper, get some whiskey from the Distillery and pop by the brewery on your way back home.

The Isle of Arran, it was decided, would be the host of our DX-pedition. TDARS made the journey on the 19th, returning on the 23rd. I decided I would go up earlier and take a bit more time in the Mountains. Arran's best known peak is Goat Fell, it has a well defined track that will take you to the summit from the Port at Broddick. It is a long one though, and takes you from sea level to its highest point at 874m. It is one of several peaks in the NW part of the island that can be reached in various orders. This range forms the set of the highest peaks on the island. We were staying on a site on the far South of the island (you can drive around the island in a couple of hours, it's about 60 miles). It was a packed site, well packed, in as much as they left far too little space between people. This was obviously the reason they lost their Caravan club rating. Health and Safety would have made good overtime on this site. The site was next to a hotel which served some simple meals, saving cooking evening meals, for all except Martyn who lived off cucumber and jam sandwiches and curried Dog food so I have been led to believe.

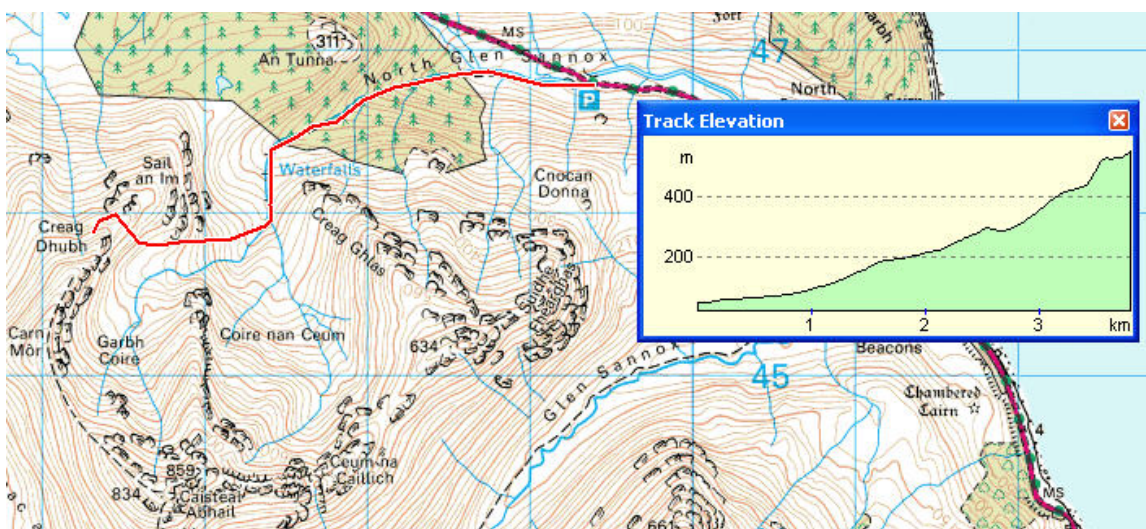
My primary objectives were to do some SOTA summits, there are 10 on the island, 6 of which have not been activated. Chris and Dave were to do some portable radio, Martyn and Mike the same, but then using the Sunday for some microwave work. On the Saturday Chris, Dave, Martyn, Tim and I were to attempt to get to the summit of Teighvein, a previously unactivated peak in the Southern part of the island.

Before doing this I decided I would do some walking on my own on some of the other peaks. Last year I did some walking in Wales and Cumbria, so I was well set up with the right equipment for some time in the Mountains. Also this year I had started doing some SOTA activations, mostly with Jim, so I had been getting used to portable operation, what to carry, operating etc.

July 19th: Caisteal Abhail (7.56km, elev 557m)

I arrived at the car park, still suffering with my cold I had acquired at the start of the week. I was hoping this would burn it off, so I packed plenty of water, expecting a sweaty ascent. This summit sits to the NE of Goat Fell and can be accessed from it by a series of ridge walks. I decided that I would access it from the North, starting out on North Glen Sannox, following the stream uphill from the road car park. This is a great start to the walk, the stream quickly dips down into a high sided ravine, where there are waterfalls and pools, of crystal clear water. As you get higher the stream is getting narrower, it forks, and at this point I made a crossing of them, heading east towards the start of the upland section and to find the path taking me along the back of the ridge, past Carn Mòr. The section moving away from the glen has no path, you have to make your own way, this is typical of much of the terrain up there which is largely untouched. It was a real trudge over boggy heather, with constant run off down the hill into small streamlets. As you get higher, the ground becomes slightly more rockier and firm under foot and now you have to head around the back of the ridge in front of you to find the track to the summit. As I was making my way over this higher ground I was conscious of the clouds now blowing in across from the North. The other side of North Glen Sannox was becoming less visible, I made my way up to some well defined outcrops I could identify on the map, hoping to be there as the cloud came down. I rested at Creag >>>>>>

Dhubh, behind a rock, watching the clouds close in. I was just over 500m above sea level, and in the clouds, with another 300m of ascent to go on a path I had not yet found the start of. At this point I decided to withdraw and head back down hill. There's no point risking anything, particularly when you are walking solo. I took a compass bearing, visibility was below 10m, and headed East, hoping to hit a small stream, which I could follow on down to the glen. I could hear the stream well before I got to it. I used this to retrace my steps back down onto the familiar path. At the bottom, disappointed at not getting close to the summit, the time was about 12:30. Since this was the road going across the top of the island I decided to follow it around to the distillery, where I took a tour. The Distillery is only 12 years old, so has only just started selling its 10 year old single malts. The first 10 years for someone starting to make whiskey must be particularly tough as you don't really have a proper product to sell. It gets its water from the hills and produces whiskey that is not peated (where the barley is roasted on peat to impart a smokey flavour). It produces a number of whiskeys aged in port/sherry/bourbon barrels and has just done a special brew to mark the retirement of its head distiller. Time to head back down the West side to meet up with the rest of the gang who would be arriving by now.



July 20th: Meall nan Damh (14.9km, elev 438m)

I drove up the West coast road to the car park at Fairhaven and parked where Glen Catacol enters the Sea. The walk starts by following the path at the side of the glen as it gently slopes uphill, at the cairn, keep right and continue to follow it up. In the distance you can see it rising and



forming some waterfalls in the distance. It is certainly sobering to think that you are now the only person in this part of the country. The glen fords over some streams coming down the valley sides in picturesque waterfalls. I followed the stream for about 5km, hoping to go around the South side of the summit where it would be easier to ascend. The point where I forded the glen was at 300m ASL and had a really steep ascent to the top of the ridge, it was real hands and feet crawling up for about 110m but lead to a path that contoured around the ridge. Once again, the clouds were descending, but this time from the East over the ridge on the other side of the valley. I was hoping that since this summit was a bit lower I would not be in the clouds again. Unfortunately

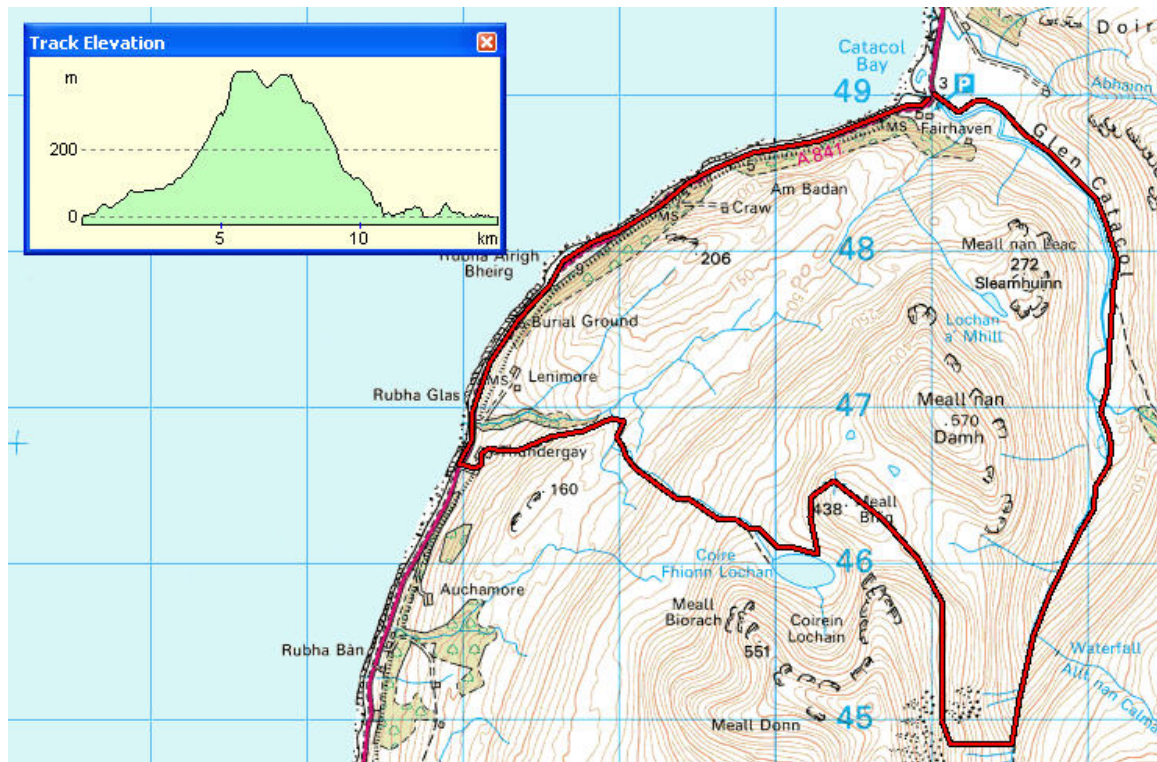
I was wrong, the clouds were rolling in and obscuring the summit at 570m. the clouds were down to about 400m, and I had no >>>>>





real points from which to take a bearing around me so I kept on following the path to a cairn, in the plateau I spotted some water in a pool and assumed it was Lochan a Mhill at the base of the summit so decided to ascend. At a cairn I had found a sheltered spot and had my 2m beam up and pointing south. With momentary mobile phone connections I spotted myself and txt'd bob and base camp to let them know. unfortunately I was ascending to Meall Bhig (438m). I only realized this when in a gap in the clouds I could see the Loch and realized my mistake. I couldn't contact anyone except for someone mobile on 2m fm on the mainland. My plan on this trip was to operate 2m SSB

and FM, which based on my successes in SOTA in the UK I thought would be good enough. It turns out Scotland is not really that active on 2m and HF would have been better. This was a long trip, but more enjoyable than the previous day, I decided to descend down to Coire Fhionn Lochan and follow the path down to the road. This was a pleasant route down, well marked and gave great views down to the coast. On the way up I passed an old lady, close to 80 who was asking how far the loch was. I told it was a good few miles. "Ay" she said, "I haven't got proper shoes on so I wont go all the way then". I made it down to the road and had a long slog on tarmac back to the car.

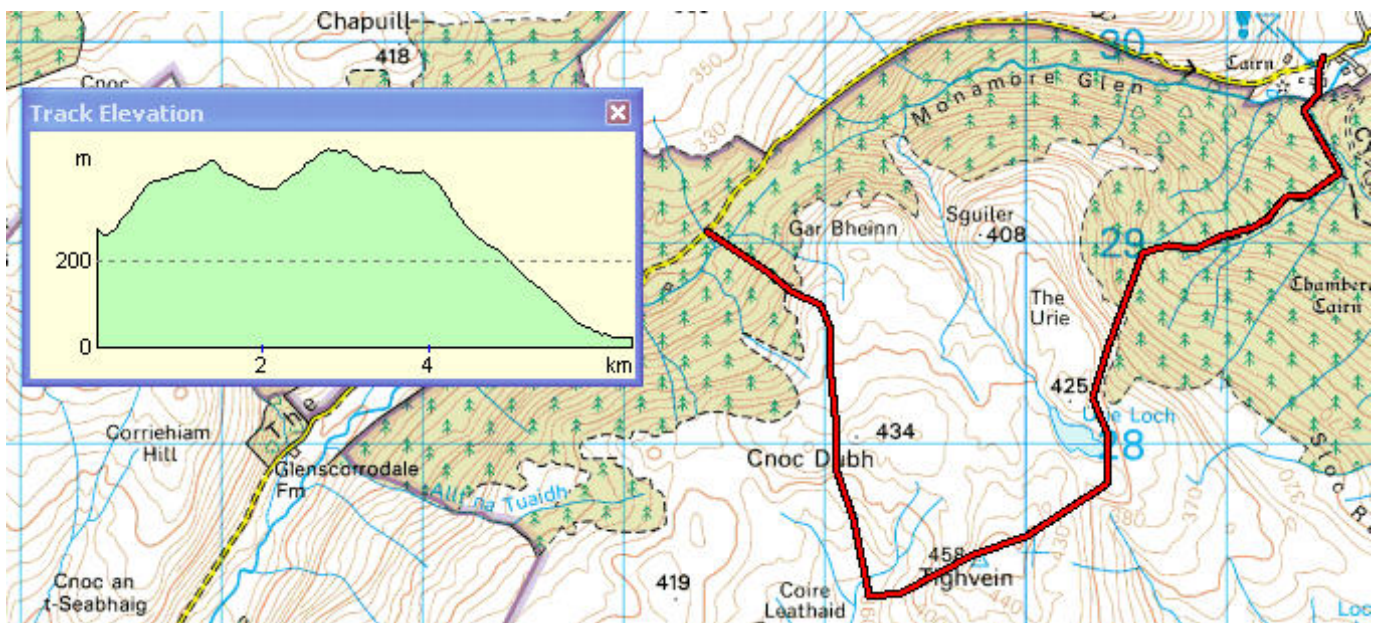


July 21st: Tighvein (6.44km, elev 458m)

The third day out was to be a group affair, Chris and Dave, together with Martyn and Tim joined me. We picked this peak in the Southern part of the island at 458m as our goal. In all it would take us close to 3 hours to get to the peak. Parking at the side of the road next to some fenced off forest we had to cut through this make some height and get on to the plateau. This was particularly dense forest, with no direct paths so we followed a stream up on to the top. We were under attack – from the midges. Time was of the essence to get into the open and with some wind get rid of the blighters. I am not like many people, everyone gets bitten, it can't be helped, I however react badly to the midge venom as many people will have seen on my arms and legs subsequently. Once again, there were no marked paths so it was a yomp across the moor. We headed across the plateau heading too far right, realizing this we >>>>>>



headed straight East to the summit on which we could see the trig point and Cairn. We were prepared this time with more equipment between us. I was quickly up on 2m with my simple set up and contacted Don at 12:24 on fm with a booming signal. This marked the start of the activation of Tighvein! Chris and Dave were setting up a 6 ele quad for 2m and martyn was erecting a pole to hang his 40m inverted V from. By the time I had the contact with Don and had tried a few CQ's Martyn was up so I went over to borrow his mic. I took over in the middle of a contact he was in with Graham G4NVH in Staffordshire, who was in his own sked, which we hijacked (with his permission). There followed a pile up of over 30 contacts, who had seen our spot on the SOTA site. Obviously this peak was being sought after and HF was giving a good skip into the southern part of the UK. We made contact with many club members including Dave G8VZT, Bob M0RJS, Jim G8UGL, Dave G0CER and Don again on HF. Martyn then continued with some Morse under the club call sign and Chris and Dave persevered to try and make some contacts locally and with club members. We stayed at the summit for a good couple of hours making the most of our time. The clouds were higher today, the Cumulus clouds sitting in a patchy blue sky. It wasn't too windy and we had food and water to keep us going. This peak made my trip, we had all got to the summit despite the effort, and had activated this peak for the first time. We genuinely enjoyed our operating at the top, it was interesting to see how everyone was set up to operate portable. To descend we had to make our way across the plateau to Urie Loch and head down the track through the woods. On the way down Chris pointed out the Hen Harrier flying into the tree line. At the bottom we decided to call Don and ask him to pick us up to take us back to the cars parked further up the road. >>>>>

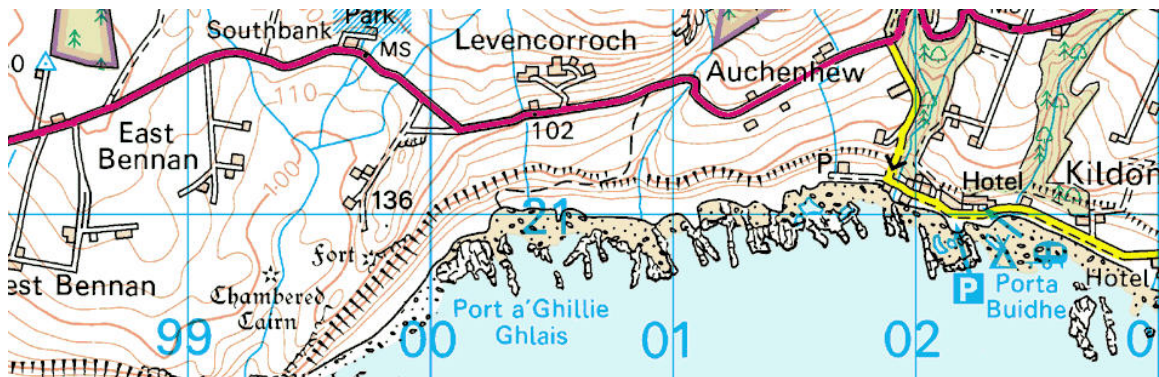




Never ones to pass up a photo opportunity.....

July 22nd: Operating Day

On Sunday we headed off to a location about 3km outside of Kildonnan to a trig point at 160m with an uninterrupted view down to the sea. Martyn and Mike were out to do some microwave contacts through the bad English weather at the time. The rest of us up there were on lookers and did our own things. Chris and Dave had the long wire out. I decided to fiddle with my radio to see why it had been misbehaving recently. This resulted in me stripping out my front seats on the hill top with Chris helping me plumb back in my radios. Faulty leads and loosed connectors were the cause. The radio up to now has been ok, I had my first M to F contact this weekend to validate it



July 23rd – Returning Home

We packed up, I managed to fit in the microwave gear into my caravan and we made our way down the ferry, where everyone deserted me on the quay to make their way on. Unfortunately this ferry was too small for me and my caravan so I was on my own. We all made it off eventually and even managed to talk on 2m between us on the way down through some torrential weather, contrast this to the 5 days of perfect weather up there with plenty of sunshine. All in all we all got what we came for, a chance to get out really portable and do some radio. A good time was had and we learnt a lot.



