

## Mayar and Driesh

### WALK FACTS

**Distance:** 9.2 miles/14.8kms. Allow 5-6 hours

**Map:** OS Landranger 1:50,000 Sheet 44 or Explorer 1:25,000 Sheet 388.

**Start / Parking:** To complete this walk, without having a lengthy road walk at the start, it is best if two cars can be used. Leave one car in the new car parking area at the Glen Clova Hotel and the second at the Glendoll Car Park Grid Ref NO284760. There is a parking fee of £1.50 here (*August 2004*) and an opportunity to complete a Route Card that can be left in the box outside the Ranger's Office. Remember to complete a Return Card when safely back.

**Grading:** This is a reasonable straightforward, scenic hill walk in a popular area, on a mix of tracks over sometimes rough, steep terrain, including two Munros and two tops. It is recommended for reasonably fit and energetic hill walkers and older children. A good summer route but in winter weather or low cloud, a map and compass, and the ability to navigate with them effectively may be required. Dogs should be kept on the lead where livestock are grazing.

Glen Clova is, without doubt, the most popular and best known of the Angus Glens with forests of larch, spruce and pine and open views along fast-flowing rivers to the high corries and mountain tops. It extends some 18 miles north then north west from Kirriemuir before finishing at Glendoll. The public road ends effectively at the Glen Clova Hotel but a narrow single track road continues further north west into Glendoll. The Glendoll campsite once operated by the Forestry Commission and the SYHA Glendoll hostel are now closed. There is accommodation available at the Glen Clova Hotel with its climbers' bar and bunkhouse.

Since the roads within Glen Clova are single track, an 'unofficial' (clockwise) one-way system operates on both sides of the valley with traffic heading north encouraged to use the western side, while that returning south is encouraged to use the eastern side. There is no guarantee, however, that there will be nothing coming the other way, but it does tend to make life easier for everyone. At weekends Glen Clova and Glendoll in particular can be very busy; and it's not unknown for the car park by the ranger station to overflow into what used to be the camp site. But it's very easy to leave the crowds behind, for spectacular mountain scenery lies in every direction.

The route described here heads north to ascend the spectacular Corrie Fee to access the two Munros - individual mountains over 3000ft high - of Mayar to the north west and Driesh to the east.

From the car park head north into the glen past Acharn Farm on the left and the former SYHA hostel on the right to where the path divides right on a narrow track to Jock's Road, an ancient hill route to Braemar, and left on a wider road down to a bridge over White Water at Grid Ref NO267757.

Once over this bridge the route ascends steadily through the forest, narrowing at Grid Ref NO258754, before opening into the Caenlochan National Nature Reserve on the edge of the open bowl of Corrie Fee. Progress is easy through the base of the corrie follows the Fee Burn. A considerable amount of path repair work is in progress (*August 2004*) and much already sympathetically completed. As the route progresses so does the gradient and some easy scrambling is required to reach the edge of the high plateau. The climb is a mix of wet grass and loose stone so care is required to avoid a slip or fall. The route heads south westerly from the top of the climb up to the wide bouldered summit of Mayar.

To continue, back-track northeast for a short distance and join the wide path that follows the line of a former fence easterly towards Driesh. At Grid Ref NO253738 the path crosses the Kilbo Path - a former hill pass linking Glen Clova and Glen Prosen. Follow the line of the fence from here for approximately 820 yards/750m before turning first southeast, dipping then ascending to a lesser top, then east to reach the triangulation pillar on the cairned summit of Driesh.

Descend gently east northeast at first from the summit following the now broken line of fence towards the Sneck of Farchal where there is a fairly steep drop followed by an equally steep ascent - but still following the fence line - up to the flat summit of Hill of Strone. Take care on the first, steep part of the ascent not to get too close to the edge. From Hill of Strone the path continues to follow the line of the fence up to the summit of Cairn Inks before dropping to the bealach below Cairn of Barns. From this point on, the route is all downhill!

From the bealach descend north northeast, with the fence to the right, until near the small stand of trees. Cross the fence and follow the 4x4 wheel tracks through the boggy grass past the trees to join the wide gravel path out through a gate onto the B955. Turn left and walk the short distance over the bridge and past the church to the hotel car park.