

Route(s)	Ben More and Stob Binnein
Elevation(s) (ft/m)	Ben More (3,852ft /1174m) Stob Binnein (3,822ft /1165m)
Date(s)	October 14 2018
Partner(s)	Kyle Finnegan
Elevation gain/loss (ft/m)	+/- 4,249ft / 1295m
Distance (miles/km)	6.65 miles/ 10.7 km
Total time (hours/mins)	5h 5m
Equipment	Trekking poles, snacks and water! <i>I don't really know.. Kyle packed!</i>
Weather Forecast	Sun with a slight breeze dying off towards the afternoon.
Weather Actuality	Partly cloudy and one brief bit of rain. <i>A Scottish sprinkle!</i>
Flora/Fauna	N/A
Wildlife	Kyle noted 3+ different species of spider... <i>Yucky!</i>
Starting Point/Trailhead	Benmore Farm (Portnellan) right off A85.
Grade/Rating	Walking.
Accommodations	N/A
Tourist Attractions	N/A
Motto for the day	N/A

Day 1	
Daily 1 Distance	6.65 miles/ 10.7 km
Daily 1 Elevation	+/- 4,249ft / 1295m
Day 1 Daily Time	5h 5m
Rise and Shine	8.30am
Depart Home	9.10am
Arrive Benmore Farm	10.15am
Depart Car	10.30am
Summit Ben More	12.40pm
Summit Stob Binnein	1.50pm
Arrive Car	Est. 3.30pm
The Story	

For whatever reason, and I suspect there may be more than one, I've been having a difficult time getting the energy and motivation together to get out the door these days. It has been an odd feeling, one so completely apart from who I like to believe I am, and difficult to overcome. But, today, Kyle was going out with me! He'd put together the basics in our packs the night before and was responsible for getting us out of bed in the morning. I did give him the pre-talk saying that I would likely be hard to wake up and that he was just going to have to stick with it! *It was the first test of the day!*



And, a testament to his effort, we got out the door! With the heat on and music playing, I was barely awake for the drive out, but I did note that the skies were grey and not the promised sun! *Oh well. It's Scotland. If it's dry... celebrate... outside!* We rocked up, put on our boots, set our poles and get going. We walked along the road, briefly, until we encountered an old wooden sign that pointed the way to Ben More. We crossed over a stile and through another to reach an old gravel type road. We followed the road as it switch-backed uphill. I was nervous since I had a lingering cough from a cold that I didn't want to exacerbate. I started off

in my puffy just to stay warm, but that quickly came off. Normally I'd like a bit of a breeze to keep the body temperature down, but today it just felt cold on my chest. So, I ended up nicking Kyle's buff off him to wear around my neck and mine around my head for a bit but the breeze was nippy. Another stop was required to put on my shell jacket, to brace against that. And finally, with that magic clothing combo, we started making progress upwards. But, it felt tediously slow with my erratic and heavy breathing and stop-and-go progress. Kyle alternated between asking if I was okay and telling me not to be so stubborn that I couldn't back down. *Who drove us out here?! Well, we're here now. This is happening! Unless I really start wheezing...*

As we got a little higher the breeze picked up. *Go figure.* But, I didn't have any better solutions and que sera sera and all that, so we pressed onward. As we crawled upward, the clouds moved slightly around us and I could see there was some moisture in the air and the beginnings of a Brocken Spectre phenomenon were coalescing. There were more people on top than I was expecting. If I could have detached my mind from the struggle of one foot in front of the other, I would have been awed at just how lovely it was. From down below I'd only noticed a few other people making their way upward, which is why I was surprised when we reached the top and there was a veritable party happening! Kyle snapped some pictures. I was feeling very surly and temperamental about always being the one to take pictures so he was in charge of that this go. *Though I hadn't told him that...*

Because marriage is full of surprises.

Photos snapped, we hopped onto the wind-sheltered side and pulled out a sandwich. There was a group of four gents we briefly struck up a conversation with. They headed out a minute before us, but Kyle and I caught them shortly thereafter. I danced and weaved around them to get slightly ahead. I was aware that Kyle was behind me but not moving as fast as I giggled my way along. There is some, almost primal need, that when I see



people moving, I have to get moving. And I like to be towards the front! Haha! That probably means something if I dared to look into it!

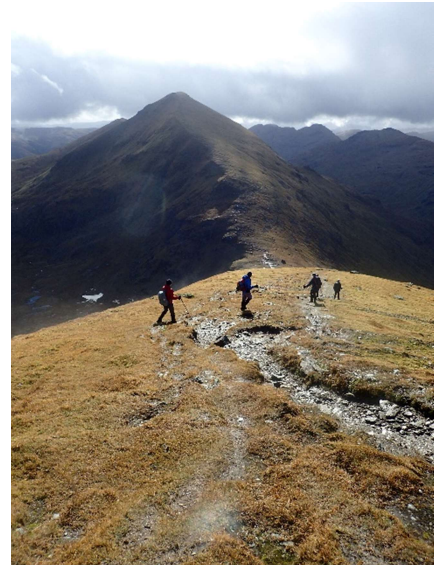
In the end we got interspaced between the gents and Kyle and I both ended up striking up conversations with them. One gent asked where I was from and I told him to guess. *Because I get amusement out of some of the funny guesses.* He thought American, but someone piped in that it could have been southern Irish sounding! *For the win!* Once we got to the bealach their party decided to drop backpacks and ascend Stob Binnein at varying speeds. Kyle and I kept our packs on and ascended, once again, between their party. But, we did slowly fade to the back! *Ouch!* Visual confirmation we weren't whipping these peaks out for sure. I think I hissed something back at Kyle to the effect of, "The old people are beating us!!" to which he just shrugged. Normally his indifference would get me whipped up a bit crazier, but I just didn't have it in me today. *He got lucky!* As we ascended the clouds rolled in and out a little bit. There was blue sky beyond, so overall, I'd classify it as a nice day! We tagged the summit and then promptly turned around and headed down. I could feel the breeze on my chest a bit still and figured it'd be best to keep moving, both because I'd stay warmer and it'd get us to the cars sooner. On our way back down, we observed some more Brocken Spectres.

Once we got back to the bealach we parted ways from the Glenrothes gents. They appeared to be taking a break and Kyle and I were inclined to continue along our way. We followed the faint trail as it headed back in a northerly direction under Ben More on the western flank. It was definitely wet here. Poor Kyle bit it a couple times on the descent. He briefly mentioned that I was 'on a mission', which I



took as a subtle hint to take it down a notch. It was slippery on the wet grass and muddy sections of eroded trail. To make things a little wetter it started to precipitate on us as well. Nothing severe, but enough to notice and to see my jacket start to change color as the rain coated it. We had made it down and back to a gravel road. We'd been on it for maybe twenty meters before I heard Kyle yell out and impact the ground. I whipped my head around and I could see his face scrunched up in pain as he laid on his side with his hand was holding his leg. From where I was ahead of him my brain started to rapid fire thoughts. Kyle's on the ground. He's not getting up. Clearly he is in pain. There is red between his fingers. F*ck!! Will he be able to walk out? Luck was on our side at least a little bit. The red between Kyle's fingers turned out to be one of his silicone wedding rings. It just so happens that he'd put on his crimson one last. *So not a compound fracture...* Fortunately, Kyle wasn't that hurt. Bruised up a bit for sure, but he was able to get up and get going again. *I can't go anywhere with this kid!*

We followed the gravel road back around towards the north side of Ben More. We could see the Glenrothes gents descending, doing the slippery wet section of trail higher up. There was also a solo guy ahead of us a bit. We eventually caught up to him as he'd stopped to smoke. From the north side of Ben More the road was really quick and easy to descend back to the car. All in all, it was a tough day to get back out, and I was worried about aggravating my cold and cough, but it did feel refreshing to get moving again. Bonus was, we got out early enough that we were able to get to Tesco before they closed early on Sunday. A hillkwalk and groceries! *It is the little things some days.*



Lessons Learned	
Getting out of shape is way too easy!! Ouchie!	
Two clear sun pictures in Scotland translates to some rain also. <i>Figures.</i>	

