

Route(s)	Carn Aosda, Carn a'Gheoidh, The Cairnwell
Elevation(s) (ft/m)	Carn Aosda (ft /917m) Carn a'Gheoidh (ft /975m) The Cairnwell (ft /933m)
Date(s)	July 19 2018
Partner(s)	Dave H.
Elevation gain/loss (ft/m)	+/- 1,964 ft / 599 m
Distance (miles/km)	7.5 miles / 12.07 km
Total time (hours/mins)	3h 30m
Equipment	Trekking poles, snacks and water.
Weather Forecast	Partly sunny and cloudy.
Weather Actuality	Bluebird start with clouds increasing in the afternoon. Light breeze.
Flora/Fauna	N/A
Wildlife	N/A
Starting Point/Trailhead	Glenshee Ski Resort
Grade/Rating	Walking
Accommodations	N/A
Tourist Attractions	Merry Berry fruit stand
Motto for the day	N/A

Day 1	
Daily 1 Distance	7.5 miles / 12.07 km
Daily 1 Elevation	+/- 1,964 ft / 599 m
Day 1 Daily Time	3h 30m
Rise and Shine	7.00am
Depart Dunblane Tesco	8.05am
Leave car	9.45am
Summit of Carn Aosda	10.20am
Summit of Carn a'Gheoidh	11.15am
Summit of The Cairnwell	12.35pm
Arrive car	Est. 1.15pm
Home, home	4.00pm
The Story	

I ended up in another conversation with someone from MeetUp, to talk about getting out into the hills. Dave H. was originally planning on a Corbett in the Cairngorms, and so I deferred, but he said he'd be willing to try a few of the Munro's in the area, and since I had the day wide open, I thought I should give this MeetUp thing another chance. I will admit though, that I was a little hesitant. My experience not two days prior was distinctly odd, and I had been thankful that there were three of us so that I had a little buffer, but in this instance, it'd just be me and another gent. Ever hopeful, I decided to give it another try. Dave and I exchanged a handful of messages and agreed to meet at the Tesco in Dunblane at 8.00am before heading out towards the Glenshee ski area in the Cairngorms. Kyle dropped me off at the Tesco on his way through to work, and only minutes later Dave pulled up and waved me down. I

figured if I waited near the front with my backpack and poles I'd be recognizable enough, and such was the case. I hopped in his car and away we went. I swear, I did learn about stranger danger in school! But, Dave seemed nice enough and we got to conversing. Good thing, as it was nearly a two-hour drive to get to the ski parking area. And not a moment too soon! Dave drove like a local and took the winding, twisty, up and down, hilly roads at speed. I started to get car sick! I didn't want to ask him to stop when the time on the GPS said we were ten minutes out, but lord... there were a couple stomach rolls in there! But luckily, we made it without incident because that wouldn't have been making the impression I was going for.

On the way up, Dave had casually mentioned that it'd only take us twenty minutes to summit the first peak (Carn Aosda). I thought he had used a bit of hyperbole there for sure. I mean, we were starting higher, but I was expecting it to be a little longer than that. But, in actuality, it wasn't too far off the mark. The ski area (and I use that word instead of resort deliberately) is quite small, one might even say quaint. There was lots of parking and toilets though! I asked about starting in gaiters. If we were going to be on a trail I might forgo them, but if we were going to be in tall grass I thought I'd put them on. I'm a little bit on the paranoid side for ticks. The paranoia must have come across pretty strong because I think I got a look. *Okay... breathe. Don't scare off the locals just yet! Go native!* No gaiters. As it was, starting out from the road, it was a big, wide, rocky road that wound itself West up towards the low point between The Cairnwell and Carn Aosda, and from there it snaked up the eastern arm up to Carn Aosda. Turns out there was a little 'turn off' that cut directly uphill, but it had more grassy sections and I was breathing hard enough as it was, so I was fine taking the slightly winding path. I was breathing so heavily it was hard to talk. *Yikes!! Guess that's the drawback to eating all those boxes of cookies!*

The trail was rocky but straight forward to the top. We stopped, I added a rock to the cairn and we moved on. As we were ascending, a group of older gents had been descending, and now on the descent we passed them. Side note – they were the epitome of cute older gents! We backtracked to the low point between the Munros then ascended a short distance up the NNE arm of The Cairnwell, but very shortly after we started the ascent we took a right and veered West. The trail then ascended a short steep section before gaining a broader ridge. The ridge initially tended in a Southwesterly direction until just after a couple of small tarns, and then when the ridge widened, it turned west for the final ascent up to Carn a'Gheoidh. Generally, a good trail and nice views. *If it's not a downright bog-fight it is hard to complain these days.* Since it was going to be a straight-forward and quick day, I was keen to sit and enjoy being outside, so we sat down and had a little bit of a snack and visited with a few of the others up top. One of the gents asked if I was American, and I paused just long enough for a knowing chuckle. My accent generally identifies me as such, but, occasionally, I get Canadian and other random places. I hesitated just long enough to garner a few chuckles. Then he told me one of the young dogs with him was being trained, and I asked him what the dog was being trained for. Another pause, this time coupled with the confused look of something trying to parse through an idiotic statement. Turns out, the dog was being trained as a hunting dog. Dave seemed to think this was an easy and natural conclusion as well. *Call me unsophisticated, but that was not my first guess!* The guy gave me such a look that I immediately countered with, "Well she could have been a special needs dog!". *There was some sort of a miss there. It might have been cultural, or it might have just been me.*



At any rate, we didn't stick around too long. I chucked my food back in my bag and we started back off the way we'd come. Dave mentioned that Carn nan Sac was a Munro before it got downgraded to a Top, and since it was on the way, we stopped by. While there, we admired some birds, possibly ravens, circling around. Such gorgeous birds. It was easy and straight forward going back to The Cairnwell arm. We ascended it, and true to my out of shape form, I couldn't keep telling stories and walking. But, perhaps it was a good save. The conversation was turning towards the paranormal and I didn't want to scare Dave off too soon. The chairlift that stopped near the summit was running and Dave told me that it runs most days of the year, so people can catch it to the top if they want. *Hunh*. The top of this peak is littered with buildings, towers etc. It felt positively industrial. We walked over to the southern side of the summit, slightly away from all the traffic and outbuildings, to sit down and enjoy a spot of sun and a snack. *It'd been a whole thirty minutes since I ate after all. PR!* There was a sweet gent with his grandson there as well, so we briefly visited with them. At some point, I made the offhand comment about being surprised about having such good 4G and pondering that, and then Dave laughingly said something to the effect of, "Look where you are!" and waved to the large towers and antennae behind me. *Some days I have a hard time believing I'm an adult too Dave.*



Despite enjoying the lovely views and weather, we packed it in and headed back off downhill. Dave mentioned something about just cutting across the grass downhill. Well... it looked more like heather so maybe I could do it without gaiters. We got most of the way down, and then I called it like a crazy person and stopped to put my gaiters on. Fortunately, they were on the outside of my backpack and it only took me a minute to get them on. It felt like almost immediately after that we arrived at the car. Some habits

die hard, so I stripped my shirt off with impunity and put on a clean dry one. *Curtesy change!* Dave did the same, so I felt like I was in good company. A quick trip to scope the toilet and we were off down the road. On our way up, Dave had mentioned he religiously gets a coffee after a trip, and he feels it bordering on rude to not go for coffee, so he hoped I was game. *Well, he was driving, so I was going*

wherever he was really... I told him I was game. I was out to enjoy a nice day, so why not? We agreed on a little café south of the pass that he said he'd never been to before. I was hesitant to have something to drink, because that usually means I'll have to go to the bathroom within the hour, and we had a two-hour drive back. *Be rude or be ridiculous?* I went with ridiculous and had the drink, and sure enough had to pee before we made it back. I felt bad. We stopped at a place that had Port-a-potties outside, but they were locked. Alas, we ended up having to go down to Perth and stop at a gas station there.

All said and done, it was a lovely, laid-back day out with good company! And given that one of my good climbing partners in the States was a Dave, he had that going for him. I guess I am just predisposed to think well of Dave's. *And that's all I have to say about that.*

