

ST MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS RAMBLING CLUB

MAY BREAK TO PITLOCHRY

15th – 18th MAY 2018

Recollections from Joan, Gerry, Sue and Henry

The journey:

Gave us options for activities on (or near) the scenic route: The Birks of Aberfeldy, Castle Menzies and /or a good walk, or Cluny Gardens.

Some reflections from Joan en route: *“We set off for Pitlochry going via the Cluny Gardens, with its fine displays of primulas and trilliums amongst other plants, a new delight at every turn in walled and woodland gardens with huge and very old trees.”*

Pitlochry:

A town much loved by the Victorians as a spa which remains as popular today with many activities on offer. James and Sue had found the lovely Dundarach Hotel, situated just outside the centre of town. There was an excellent camp site located within easy walking distance to accommodate the members of the group who were camping, and caravanning.



The Dundarach Hotel:

Joan recalls *“It was very comfortable, with views over gardens, fields and hills in the distance across the river. The food was good throughout the stay, with our camping and caravanning friends joining us for dinner on a couple of evenings”*.

Gerry reminisces *“We all (31 of us) gathered at the hotel for pre-dinner drinks followed by an excellent dinner served in the large dining room overlooking the hotel gardens. As is usually the case when we all get together, the hum of chatter rose steadily as the evening progressed. Sophie had joined us from the Borders for a short stay, so it was lovely to catch up”*.

The Walking

There are lots of walks around Pitlochry of various lengths and difficulties, we did the following:

Day 1 Pitlochry to Moulin via the Black Spout. A warm dry day!



We all got ourselves to the Moulin Inn for coffee, most of us walking via the 60m Black Spout waterfall, impressive, even after a relatively dry spell. We were joined by Maureen, Brian and Jo, just for the day, then we divided into three groups, one to climb the Corbett Ben Vrackie (841 m), one to Craigower (500m), and one to explore by car.



The Ben Vrackie group mostly got to the top, or close enough to feel the view was good enough from a bit lower down the very rocky path - *but see Gerry's comment below!*

Gerry recounts “we made our way up to the summit of Ben Vrackie



past pretty Loch a'Choire on a very well-maintained path. It was a beautiful day which did make the going quite tough because of the intense heat. The views on the way up were stunning, on reaching the cairn and the marker stone we were treated with a 360° vista! How lucky were we to be able to spot Ben Lomond, Ben Nevis and Schiehallion so clearly. It was amazing just sitting and enjoying lunch overlooking such wonderful scenery.”



The Craigower group followed a more sedate route to a viewpoint for their picnic, then walked back to Pitlochry in the sunshine.

Day 2 Faskally Wood to Killiecrankie: 4 km each way by way of Loch Faskally, the River Tummel, the River Garry and Killiecrankie.

We parked in Faskally Wood,



I think part of an old estate given the variety and size of the trees around us. The route undulated by the riverside for some time,



Gerry adds “We came across a group of ‘Bungee Jumpers’ under the Garry Bridge – all I can say is ‘Why?’

Once again, the distance walked could be adjusted to suit and Pitlochry offered other attractions for anyone not wanting to walk. Arrangements had been made for us to all meet up for lunch at the NTS Visitor Centre at Killiecrankie, a welcome break under the shade of the trees.

On crossing the river some of us were also treated to an impromptu botany lesson on the abundant wild flowers by Joan and Sue following Trevor's remark that "*there didn't seem to be too many of them around*".

As Gerry puts it "*The sun shone on us throughout the day, so it was lovely walking along the riverbank. James had an 'add-on' walk which took us a little higher*".



So we were reassured to find that we had a pretty long hill to climb, which eventually led us to a superb viewpoint over the glen with Killiecrankie to our left and Pitlochry on our right.



Gerry "*another stunning view across the valley and beyond to Ben Vrackie.*"

Joan also recalls "*Three of us walked back along a more leisurely route but even this had at the start a very long hill which seemed to go on for ever, then down again, passing a very interesting wood shed with a roof made from logs. I wondered how they used it without it collapsing. We also passed a tiny Church of Scotland in the middle of nowhere which boasted a service every Sunday, we wondered where their congregation came from. We enjoyed the peace and tranquillity, and the sunshine*".

Oh, and we mustn't forget the chat, over breakfast, on the walks and every evening!



St M's Ramblers – Worn Out Legs?

By Sue Ashby

Our thanks to James and Sue for their recce, for planning and organising and keeping us all together and happy.

Our thanks to everyone for their fellowship. Now where shall we go next year?