

The Corbetts might not be quite so high as the Munros but these majestic mountains are just as mighty when it comes to challenging walks and breathtaking views.

Walking a round of Scotland's 282 highest peaks, the Munros, is a big enough ordeal in itself.

It takes most people many years to bag every mountain with a summit of more than 3000ft.

Yet there's a shorter list of smaller mountains that makes for an even tougher challenge.

The Corbetts total 221 Scottish mountains with a summit of between 2500ft and 3000ft.

A Corbett must also have a drop of at least 500ft between each listed hill and any adjacent higher one.

They are named after John Rooke Corbett, who first identified the 2500ft mountains.

In the early 1900s, the Bristol-based walker was looking for a new goal after becoming only the second person ever to bag all the Munros.

Today, Corbett-bagging is an increasingly popular pursuit.

Dave Broadhead is clerk of the list at the Scottish Mountaineering Club, who hold a record of Munroists and

“Corbett-bagging is becoming ever more popular with walkers”

Corbetteers – the names given to people who have completed a full round of the mountains.

Dave says: “There are just over 500 Corbetteers compared with almost 5500 Munroists. But while the numbers of new Munroists holds steady year on year, there has recently been a distinct rise in Corbetteers.

“The Corbetts are definitely catching on with walkers.”

The theory is that with more people completing a Munros round, the next objective becomes the Corbetts.

Keen walker and writer Alan Rowan completed his first Munro round in 2000, then focused on the Corbetts.

He bagged his final Corbett summit, Beinn Bhuidhe, in 2009.

Alan said: “The Corbetts are different from the Munros and while each round has easier climbs, I'd say many of the Corbett summits are harder to reach.

“They're also more widely distributed across Scotland, with Corbetts in southern Scotland, the far north-west and on islands such as Jura and Harris.

“If people think that the Corbetts will be an easier bag because they are fewer in number and smaller, they are in for a big shock.”

Munros record breaker Steven Fallon has bagged, on average, a full round of Munros every year for 15 years. It took

RECORD Manny Gorman at the peak of one of his Corbetts. His trip lasted 70 days



CHALLENGE Manny running in the Corbetts



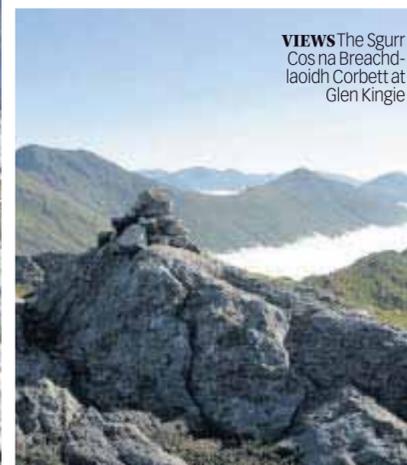
SUMMIT Alan Rowan on Beinn Bhuidhe



COUNTING CORBETTS

John Corbett's original list has been subject to change over the years because of more accurate measuring devices. Most notably, since 2009 two Munros, Sgurr nan Ceannaichean and Beinn a'Chlaidheimh, have been demoted to Corbetts status. The current tally of Corbetts is 221.

VIEWS The Sgurr Cos na Breachlaoidh Corbett at Glen Kingie



More about the Corbetts

■ For Corbetts walking routes see www.walkhighlands.co.uk and www.munromagic.com

■ Read *The Corbetts and Other Scottish Hills: Scottish Mountaineering Club Hillwalkers' Guide*.

■ For a record of Corbetts round holders see www.corbetteers.blogspot.com and www.smc.org.uk

■ A new book, *The Corbett Round*, by Manny Gorman is available at www.mannygorman.co.uk

■ Three of the easiest Corbetts include the Cobbler, Ben Ledi and Ben Rinnes.

IT'S A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION FOR RUNNING SHOES



A popular Salomon trail running shoe has been treated to an upgrade. The iconic Salomon XA Pro 3D shoe now boasts a closer fit, thanks to a one-pull lacing system. Improved durability and enhanced grip are created in the new Contragrip sole unit.

An innovative 3D chassis offers more foot support which, in turn, helps to reduce fatigue. The XA Pro 3D is available for men and women. The collection is available at Cotswold Outdoor, £100. See in store and at www.cotswoldoutdoor.com/xapro

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LOOK FOXY IN ROXY

Fashion, performance and funkiness are combined in a new summer fitness clothing range. Bright colours and designs are the highlight of the 2014 Roxy Outdoor Fitness collection. A spokesman for the brand said: “Our mission is to inspire and celebrate a new generation of women who live the active, outdoor lifestyle.”

Thoughtfully designed, athlete-tested and beautifully fitted, fabrics in the range include Xtra Life Lycra and recycled elements. The range includes clothes for running, surfing, swimming and yoga. See www.roxy-uk.co.uk

SANDISON'S SCOTLAND

BRUCE SANDISON IS A JOURNALIST, ANGLER AND AUTHOR OF A STRING OF BEST-SELLING BOOKS ABOUT SCOTLAND'S OUTDOORS. HE LIVES IN SUTHERLAND.



BEAUTY AND NATURE IN THE KINGDOM OF THE SALMON

A few miles west from Thurso in Caithness along the most northerly main road on mainland Britain, the A836, lies Forss House.

An old grey building, built in 1810, it nods sleepily over the little River Forss.

It's the ideal starting point for a riverside walk to the sea at Crosskirk, perhaps three or four hours there and back, depending on how much time you choose to stand and stare.

The house stands amid 20 acres of natural woodland and an arboretum that is carpeted in springtime with celandine, snowdrops and bluebells.

A pair of buzzards rule the glen from the throne of a new plantation above the banks of the river, close to where brown and white peat-stained waters dash over the shining black rocks of Forss Falls.

This is where magnificent wild Atlantic salmon hurl themselves in silver bars at the cascading torrent, urgent to reach their ancestral upstream spawning grounds. Forss House is now a comfortable hotel (www.forsscountryhouse.co.uk), home for passers-by and for the fishermen who come to do battle with salmon in the narrow little river.

To the left of the house, a path leads to a promontory overlooking the falls. A thoughtful seat comforts you as you wait and watch for the sudden splendour of the king of fish rising majestically to challenge the stream.

The largest salmon taken from the river was a huge

fish weighing 42lb, caught in August 1954 by local angler David Couper.

Early one morning, while I was sitting there, I watched an otter sidle cautiously into the pool below the falls.

His eyes sparkled and whiskers twitched as he sniffed the air for the scent of danger but the wind was right for me.

I watched him slide below the waves and pursue, capture and land a salmon of about 9lb, rushing the doomed fish into the undergrowth, anxious for breakfast.

Wish I could catch them so easily. Forss slides gently seawards through green meadow lands, decked with purple and spotted orchid, tormentil, bugle, milkwort and primrose.

Grey and pied wagtails dip and bob by the stream as it hurries under a footbridge to greet the cold Atlantic in Crosskirk Bay.

On the cliffs above the west shore and within the confines of a walled burial ground cluster the ruins of one of Scotland's oldest places of worship, the 12th century St Mary's Chapel, built in about 1100AD and the oldest church building in Caithness.

To the south of the chapel is St Mary's Well, from which the church derives its name and, nearby, a Pictish symbol stone was discovered and signs of 8th century occupation.

Long, wave-washed rocky ledges wed the river to the sea in an ever-changing pattern of crests and tiny storms. And in warm corners primula scotica, the rarest of Scottish plants, blushes purple in early summer sunlight.

After your walk, you can return to Forss House in time for afternoon tea.



NORTHERLY Spectacular views of the house across the River Forss

RISE OF THE CORBETT BAGGERS



FIONA RUSSELL

him 20 years to finish the Corbetts, although he says this is because the Munros are his first love.

Steven, who is now a Scottish mountain guide, said: “There's nothing as technical involved in the Corbetts as the Munros, with the Aonach Eagach, the Cuillin and An Teallach.

“But lots of the Corbetts don't have paths so navigation is often trickier.”

Another challenge is the singular nature of the Corbetts.

Steven added: “The re-ascend rule, that is the 500ft drop, means there is not the same chance to bag as many Corbetts in a day compared to Munros.

“Probably the maximum most people could manage is the round of five Corbetts north of Tyndrum and a few two and three groups.”

But for many Corbett baggers, while the challenge is mightier, the rewards are plentiful.

Alan, who writes as the Munro Moonwalker, says: “I really enjoyed visiting new and further-flung places in my pursuit of the Corbetts. I went to

places and saw views I might never have known about. The Corbetts are often quieter than the Munros too.

“Some of my favourite summits in Scotland are Corbetts, especially Foinaven in Sutherland.”

For Manny Gorman, the only round he had in his sights was the Corbetts.

The Kingussie fell runner wanted an extreme challenge.

In 2009, he became the record holder of the fastest nonstop, non-motorised Corbetts round in 70 days.

He did 2408 miles and the accumulative ascent was 543,642ft.

Manny, 45, said: “I knew about the Munros and I have run many of them but I thought that doing the Corbetts all in one would be a tougher outing.

“I wasn't disappointed. Reaching these spread-out mountains by boat and bike and then climbing to their summits was very challenging.

“But I thoroughly enjoyed it. I would recommend the Corbetts to anyone who likes doing things differently in the great outdoors.”

WWW.FIONAOUTDOORS.CO.UK

PICTURE OF THE WEEK



Leading Scottish landscape photographer Colin Prior tells us about a spectacular view from Loch Beinn a Mheadhoin, Glen Affric.

This was a morning without exception. I waited patiently for the remnants of the mist to clear from the surface of the water, knowing that in the blink of an eye this moment could be lost with the

appearance of the slightest wind. Fortunately, luck was with me on this particular morning and I captured this rich autumnal scene of the surviving remnants of the Caledonian Forest.