

Fraoch Lodge meet, February 12-14, 2016
(all photos Stefan Bott & Nick Ambrose)

An additional meet organised when the main winter programme had filled up, this weekend was a return to a venue in Boat of Garten that the Club had used in the past. Instead of the usual climbing club hut or commercial bunkhouse, Fraoch Lodge provides bed and breakfast accommodation with the possibility of an evening meal.



We had the exclusive use of the Annexe which gave us room for 6. This cosy (elite?) arrangement worked well.

We gathered at the Lodge early on Friday evening after various retail excursions. Stefan was returning to the Lodge for his second ESTC meet and old hands Brent, Lindy and Hamish welcomed Nick Ambrose and his brand new skis to what was his second meet. A communal meal was quickly prepared and despatched before we retired to sit in front of the fire, hatch plans for the next day and chat to other guests.

An early start after the provided porridge breakfast found us setting off from the Cairngorm car park before the first lifts ran. The half term crowds were quickly left behind as we set off up Lurcher's Gully to investigate conditions. The day had dawned sunny with the forecast predicting the winds would drop by midday.



It was certainly bracing as we skinned up in the hope that the wind would ease which it did to some extent.



Looking back north towards Loch Morlich



Hamish leading Lindy & Brent up Lurcher's



Lindy & Nick (happy with his new boots, skis & skins)



The wind eases higher up



Still wind chilly



A bright but not warming sun



On the way to MacDui, the mountain to ourselves

A bracing but great day with good light making for the wonderful photos taken by Nick and Stefan.

The evening meal provided at the Lodge was very good as was the company of the other guests who all escaped being recruited in to the Club by virtue of not being skiers.

The light was not so good on Sunday, so we practised our navigation finding the Cairngorm summit in the clag. Parking in the Ciste car park, we skinned up Coire Laogh Mhor without seeing (sensing) another soul. Lindy used her new 'map on screen' GPS' Stefan used an old style devices, Nick was dead trad with his map and compass while Brent worked from memory. All four methods worked as we ended up on the summit with a large group of hill walking navigation students. The route finding continued due north to the Ptarmigan café where warm drinks were taken before the ski down the piste.



Lindy in the clag

Two great days out demonstrating that both a later arranged event and a small group can work very well, ringing the changes.