

MOONWALKING

Alan Rowan's new book, *Moonwalker*, details his experiences climbing Scotland's Munros by night. We invited him to nominate Scotland's finest peaks for moonlit mountain walks

1 BEINN A'GHLO

The 'mountain of the mist' gives a superb night-time expedition – and you get three Munros into the bargain. Take the track from Loch Moraig, then a good path north-east up Carn Liath and when you hit the rocky summit plateau you are greeted by the sun pushing up from beneath the horizon straight ahead. The next two peaks look stunning in stark silhouette against the morning sky, and the constant colour changes and rivers of cloud washing over the ridges as you walk round in a clockwise direction put a spring in your step.

2 SEANA BHRAIGH

A superb mountain from any direction but the Inverlael approach just edges it for a night walk. Good paths lit by moonlight lift you on to the Druim na Saobhaidhe spur and when the dawn starts to rise, the light on An Teallach and the Fannichs behind you is a real head-turner. The line of little lochs in Coire an Lochain Sgeirich sparkle like jewels and the short-clipped grass underfoot has a yellow wash. The summit cairn at the edge of the cliffs is a superb breakfast spot with views over the corrie bowl to Creag an Duine. Just watch out for the local goats trying to grab your food!

3 STOB COIRE SGRIODAIN

Sitting high above Loch Treig and the West Highland rail line, this summit is one of the very best for an early breakfast. Start at Fersit just off the A86 east of Spean Bridge and take the path south by the stream tumbling down down from Lochan Coire an Lochain before breaking off west to hit the main spine of the ridge. The Easains are prominent on your right and it's a short, easy walk over stony ground to the little rocky eyrie where you can sit in the sunshine and watch the early trains, looking more like Hornby miniatures, running along the loch-side 3,000 feet below.

4 CREAG MEAGAIHDH

An old favourite, bringing superlatives at any time but even better by moonlight. The excellent

path into Coire Ardair gives a fast and comfortable approach with new joys appearing at every twist and turn, and the deep V notch of The Window lures you on with every step. The little loch under the cliffs is the first to catch the early rays of sunlight and is a perfect rest spot before the steep climb to the vast expanse of the summit plateau. And there is no anti-climax to this walk – the stroll down the long north-east ridge into the rising sun is a magnificent way to finish the day.

5 GLEOURAICH

Superb paths, a grand feeling of space and a fast ascent make this an ideal candidate for a moonlight yomp. From the shores of Loch Quoich on the Kinloch Hourn road, a stalker's path wends its way up by the easiest line, gaining height quickly, until it pushes out on to the south-west ridge. You are now looking down on the curious little sliver of the loch thousands of feet below. The beehive cairn at the top is a great place to sit and watch the day wake up, with Ben Nevis and the Aonachs showing on the far horizon. The walk round to the next peak, Spidean Mialach, keeps a great day alive.

6 SGURR NAN CEATHREAMHNNAN

This massive mountain dominates its surroundings deep in the heart of the Glen Affric area, with all the other peaks looking as if they are bowing to its superiority. Okay, it's a long way in, but it's well worth all the effort. Coming over from Mullach na Dheiragain many years ago, the fiery early sky made it look as if Ceathreamhnan was on fire, the slopes burning red as I made my way up to the summit, while behind golden rays of sunlight burnished the whole landscape. The views from the top as the emerging day washes over the jumble of peaks are superb in every direction.

Moonwalker: Adventures of a Midnight Mountaineer is published on 15 May by Backpage Press. Look out for a longer feature article in the next issue of *The Great Outdoors*



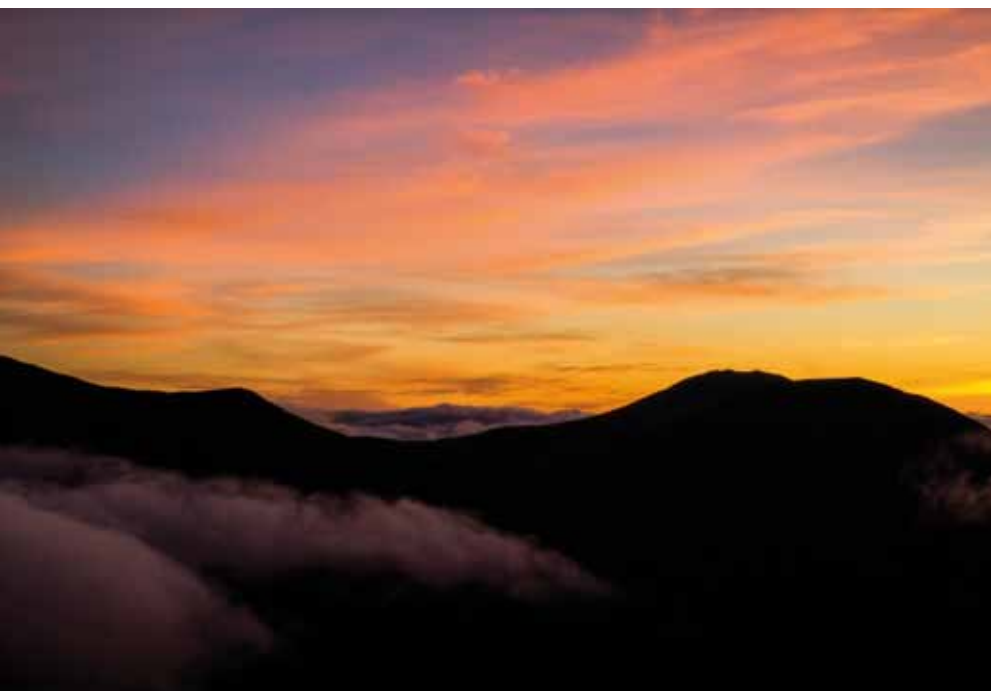
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ABOVE

Rising sun seen from summit of Carn Liath on Beinn a' Ghlo

RIGHT

Technicolour skies over Beinn a' Ghlo peaks



SUNRISES & SUNSETS

ULLAPOOL (WESTER ROSS)

May 1 05.26 → 21.08
 May 15 04.55 → 21.38
 My 28 04.32 → 22.03

LLANBERIS (WALES)

May 1 05.41 → 20.45
 May 15 05.16 → 21.09
 My 28 04.59 → 21.28

AMBLESIDE (LAKE DISTRICT)

May 1 05.32 → 20.45
 May 15 05.05 → 21.10
 My 28 04.47 → 21.31

TRURO (CORNWALL)

May 1 05.54 → 20.39
 May 15 05.32 → 21.00
 My 28 05.17 → 21.17

WHITBY (NORTH YORKS)

May 1 05.22 → 20.36
 May 15 04.56 → 21.01
 My 28 04.37 → 21.21