

Meall Na Duibhe (4B)

Report of hill survey carried out by Alan Dawson on 11 April 2012

1. Introduction

The purpose of this survey was to measure the height and drop of Meall Na Duibhe, to determine whether it is a Marilyn or to confirm its status as a Submarilyn. Recent Geograph OS mapping indicates a height of 578m, drop 153m, whereas printed maps give a height of 573m, estimated drop 147m. Heights were measured using a Leica Geosystems 1250 GPS receiver, with antenna on a one-metre pole, and subsequent processing by John Barnard using OS Rinex data to obtain precise measurements. Conditions for the survey were mixed: heavy showers of rain, hail and snow, but mainly free of mist, with light wind and fairly good visibility.

2. Summit Survey

The summit of Meall na Duibhe is about 4km east of Kinlochleven, reached via an excellent path up to the pipeline which traverses the western slopes at about 350m. From there the hill is a typical mixture of heather and tussocky grass. There is a prominent medium-sized cairn at what appears to be the summit of Meall na Duibhe. The first survey point was at the edge of this cairn. The second survey point was at another potential summit point, within a separate 570m contour ring, about 200 metres NE from the main cairn and marked by a very small cairn on a distinct grassy mound. Both summit points were easy to identify. Results:

Main cairn on west top: 90 minutes at NN 22651 62322, height 571.33m

Tiny cairn on east top: 60 minutes at NN 22770 62428, height 570.71m

The survey time on the summit was relatively long, partly to give as accurate a result as possible, and partly due to waiting for heavy hail showers to pass before moving the equipment. The difference of 0.6m between the two tops is sufficient to conclude with confidence that the western top with the large cairn is the highest point of the hill. The 578m spot height shown on Geograph OS mapping appears to be an error, as it is well outside the usual OS margin of error.

3. Col survey

The col for this hill is a typical expanse of boggy ground full of small pools and lumps of short heather and tussock, about 800 metres NE of the summit. Careful observation of the flow of water north and south away from the col made it reasonably straightforward to determine a flat col area of 5-10 metres wide for the survey point. Within that area, it was not easy to decide precisely where to set up the survey point, so two separate survey points were used, with the higher of the two to be regarded as the col location, reflecting the need to measure the minimum descent that would be required from Meall na Duibhe before climbing up toward the next hill (Glas Bheinn). Results:

First col survey point: 60 minutes at NN 23300 62924, height 422.20m

Second col survey point: 60 minutes at NN 23315 62919, height 422.15m

The small difference of 5cm between the two measurements at nearby points was reassuring and made no difference to the status of the hill.

4. Summary and conclusions

Hill:	Meall na Duibhe, section 4B
Categories:	Submarilyn, Hump, Highland Five
Summit:	571.33m at NN 22651 62322
Col:	422.20m at NN 23300 62924
Drop:	149.13m

Meall na Duibhe remains a Submarilyn, with height revised from 573m to 571.3m, and drop revised from c147m to 149.1m.



Survey point by Meall na Duibhe summit cairn, with Sgurr Eilde Mor to the north

Survey point on Meall na Duibhe east top, with Blackwater Reservoir to the south



Survey point on Meall na Duibhe east top, looking south-west to the summit cairn, with Aonach Eagach beyond

Survey point at Meall na Duibhe col, with Sgurr Eilde Beag and Sgurr Eilde Mor to the north

