

The Cairngorm Club – Muir Cottage, Inverey

Booking Sec.: David Kirk, Greenhowe Farmhouse, Banchory Devenick, Aberdeen
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Cheques should be sent to the above address, with cheques payable to 'Cairngorm Club'. It's £12 per adult and £5 per child per night (Cairngorm Club members and some special groups qualify for half price). All bookings MUST be paid a FULL MONTH before arrival date.

Booking Policy:

Book no more places than you are SURE you can definitely fill, or would be happy to pay for anyway in the event that you can't fill them. If you want to book more places nearer the time, contact the Booking Secretary to see if there are still some available. You MUST fully pay for ALL places booked a month or more before your day of arrival. Any bookings made less than a month before going must be fully paid for to secure the booking. The full address, mobile and land line numbers of the main booking representative is required with the initial booking.

Cancellation Policy:

We don't expect groups to book and then cancel, and as per the first line of the Booking Policy above. We expect groups to definitely intend to use and pay for all their booked spaces when they initially book. We appreciate that circumstances can change however so we are tolerant of cancellation and reductions in numbers up to six months before a booking. Beyond that point, we expect you to honour your booking. We do not offer credits due to winter road conditions, as there is usually some way of getting to Muir (even if it's up Deeside). For cancellations due to extreme circumstances beyond normal control, we may offer a part credit, at the discretion of the Custodian and / or Booking Secretary. We cannot offer cash refunds. For groups or individuals who make bookings and don't honour them, we reserve the right to place them on a 'Black List' and ask them to pay in full up front for their next booking(s).

Information that you should be aware of before you go

The Club provides –

- space heating in the main common room, kitchen, washrooms and drying room
- hot water for both washing and consumption
- 9 bunk beds (18 beds) with mattresses, pillows and blankets, in 4 dorms (6, 6, 4 & 2)
- cookers, microwaves and fridges, and lighting throughout the hut.
- crockery, cutlery, toasters, kettles and a wide range of pans, oven dishes, etc.
- kitchen and toilet cleaning equipment and liquids, dish towels & toilet rolls.
- dormitory heating available through 20p coin meters

You should bring your own –

- pillow case and sleeping bag or sheets to use with the blankets
- towels
- 20p coins for the dormitory heaters

Whilst there are payphones and mobile phone coverage for most networks in Braemar, mobile phone coverage west of Braemar is patchy Vodafone seems to work outside the gate. The payphone nearest to Muir is about 1¼ km back towards Braemar, just east of the humpback bridge.

There is a small 4-bedded room for Cairngorm Club members. This cannot be booked or used by non-Club visitors. It is not much used, but means that even if you have booked all 18 bunk places, there may be others there.

Finding Muir

The OS 1:50,000 map shows the name Muir Cottage and also a youth hostel symbol. Some editions of the map show the hostel symbol where Muir Cottage is and some show a name “Muir” nearer the Linn of Dee that is not our Muir. The former youth hostel is close to the road, and now known as Blackburn Cottage. Muir Cottage is the next building to the west, about 200m on, signed as Muir Cottage, and further back from the road.

Winter access

The A93 from Aberdeen to Braemar is rarely impassable even in severe snow, and the road from Braemar past Muir to the Linn of Dee is better serviced than one might expect - with a snowplough usually up by mid-morning if conditions require it. Those travelling to or from the south by the A93 from Braemar to Blairgowrie need to be more circumspect; the road can be blocked by drifting snow even when there has been no fresh snowfall, and if the authorities are in doubt about the road remaining passable the snow gates at Braemar and Spital of Glenshee are closed.

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Information for while you are there



On arrival

Enter by the main door, to the left as you approach the building. This door has a key-safe to its right, with a black rubber cover, flip the cover back, enter the code that you were given and press down both side buttons the front panel will open. A Muir key should be inside. Once the door has been unlocked, the key-safe front panel, **along with the key**, should be closed and the dials turned to hide the code and the protective cover should be flipped up. In the unlikely event that no key has been left inside, contact either David Kirk or Kees Witte.

There is no-one living near to Muir who holds a key and has authority to release it or to open up for anyone arriving without a key or the key-safe code.

Take your clothing etc. in by the main door. If you wish to use the other door to take food through the kitchen to the common room, you have to open it from the inside. In windy conditions ensure that if both outer doors are in use at least one inner door between them is kept shut.

Switch on the upper immersion heater if needed (the timer switches are in the cupboard on the north wall of the common room), the solar thermal panel will heat the water on sunny days; if you anticipate a large need for hot water, switch on both.

Space Heating

The kitchen heater, if needed, may have to be switched on and re-set.

The common room has low power electric heating and a wood burning stove; if you wish to use the stove, please see the separate notes about it, and use it with due attention to fire safety.

The washrooms have panel heaters which in winter serve as frost protection; if heating is needed these can be switched to a suitable setting. The washrooms also have high-level radiant heaters controlled through time switches in the hallway outside; these are regarded just as “top-up” heating for those having showers.

The drying room is usually amply warm from the hot water cylinder. It also has fixed floor-mounted heaters which can be brought into play through a switch and a 20p coin meter; the coin can be recycled, the meter being essentially a safeguard against the heaters being left on after a party has left. There is also a dehumidifier which can be switched on if there is a large quantity of wet gear to be dried.

The dormitories have panel heaters powered through 20p coin meters; it is for users to provide the coins if they wish their dormitories heated; about 5ea 20 p coins will be enough to keep a heater on overnight. On no account must the dormitory heaters be used for drying clothes.

In winter (November to March) you must not on departure leave the washroom and kitchen heaters switched totally off; leave them set in accordance with the signage on or beside them.

Lighting

There is adequate electric lighting throughout. If you wish to bring lighting for emergencies, please restrict this to torches, not candles or gas lamps, which could be a fire hazard.

If any bulbs need to be replaced, other than the fluorescent tubes in the kitchen, there should be replacements in the wooden cabinet in the entrance hallway.

If any of the kitchen lights is flickering unacceptably, switch off, remove the starter, and then make do with the lights that remain and notify the hut custodian.

If replacing any of the bulbs in the common room, please use the low-consumption bulbs provided.

To replace a bulb for the lighting in the hallway and disabled toilet, you will have to unscrew the cover and replace the tube with one of the same type.

If you use the last of any type of bulb or have a problem with the kitchen lights, please report it.

Kitchen

The kitchen has two microwaves, two four-ringed electric cookers with oven and top oven, (please note that the clock on the black cookers needs to be switched on for the oven to work) a large refrigerator and a large fridge-freezer. There are two sinks, two kettles, two toasters and a plumbed-in dispenser for hot water for drinking.

The hot water at the sinks can be very hot (eventually), so take care.

The master switches for the cookers and cooker hoods are not labelled but if they have been switched off by the last users they should be obvious enough.

The kettles should not be needed unless there is a problem with the hot water dispenser or a particular surge in demand.

The worktops are heat-resistant but not proof against damage from particularly hot pans and oven dishes. Please keep the heat-resistant glasses or metal trivets alongside the cookers and place really hot pans or oven dishes only on them or on some other heatproof item such as a bread board.

There should be stocks of washing up liquids, cleaning cloths and sponges below the right-hand sink. If the stocks in the kitchen run out there should be more in the wooden cupboard in the hallway. Do not use other washing up liquids that you have brought with you – for the reason see Environment below. There are dishcloths in one of the drawers.

Water

The water quality is checked by the local authority annually. We have a UV treatment facility on the feed to the kitchen cold taps.

If the kitchen cold taps are not running check that the main cock under the right-hand sink has not been turned off; if it has been, turning it anti-clockwise will open it. If the main cock is open and there is still no water, there must be a problem with the supply pipe and you should alert the Custodian.

The taps in the washrooms and toilet cisterns are fed from water storage tanks in the roof space above the common room. If they should dry up but the kitchen taps still run, alert the Custodian. If you hear sounds of water above you in the common room that does not signify any problem.

Environment

Drainage at Muir is to a septic tank. Many household cleansers, bleaches etc. will prejudice its operation, as will excessive water or solid objects. Please therefore –

- do not use any toilet or kitchen cleansers or bleaches other than those provided, and use latter only in moderation
- do not run needless quantities of water down the sinks

- do not use the loos as waste disposal points.

Refuse

You are expected to take your refuse away with you.

For general refuse we provide bins in the kitchen and robust black sacks. There are re-cycling bins for glass, paper, plastic bottles and tins both in Braemar and at the car park at Inverey about 1½ km away (cardboard excluded at the latter). There are roadside refuse bins at various locations between Muir and Braemar, but the capacious old ones were recently replaced by less generous new ones.

Please do not think that you are helping future visitors by leaving your cardboard boxes behind. They just become clutter.

Stove

The stove in the common room can provide all the heat needed in that room.

The rules for operating it are not necessarily what you would expect.

Before leaving, the last occupants should have ensured (as you should do before you leave) that there are logs and kindling in the baskets to the left of the stove. Logs are kept mainly in the small shed at the back. There may also be logs stacked along the south wall of the larger shed. At any particular time there may be signage directing you to the other, according to the dryness of the wood that is in stock. Do not use them unless they seem dry. Key for the wood shed is hanging on the vestibule wall.

A wood burning stove works perfectly well with the wood sitting in a bed of ash. Indeed having ash with embers still aglow will help keep the stove from going out completely, so the ash does not need to be cleared all that often.

Please do not gather firewood or cones from the land round about. The estate owners, the National Trust for Scotland, see fallen wood and cones as a biodiversity resource.

Bike shed

A new bike shed has been built behind the cottage and can be used to securely store (mountain) bikes. The key for this shed is hanging on the vestibule wall with the wood shed key. Please keep the shed locked all the time.

Fire Safety

We are alert to the Fire Safety Regulations 2006.

Please remember that Muir does not have a resident warden and that your group, for the duration of your stay, will have “control” of the premises in terms of the Act and Regulations. Your group therefore should make its own assessment of safety aspects attuned to the details of the party, taking account, for example, of any who are blind or deaf or lack full normal mobility or lack a sense of smell, (any of whom might be less alert to an outbreak of fire or less aware of others raising the alarm or less able to exit the cottage without assistance).

We believe that we do all that we reasonably can to meet our obligations under the Regulations to minimise the risk of fire and the consequences if a fire should occur. However, it has to be for those using Muir to avoid any thoughtless or careless activity which might occasion an outbreak of fire.

We provide a fire blanket and alarm sounder in the kitchen, three foam extinguishers (beige) in the hallway with another in the vestibule, a powder extinguisher (red) in the kitchen with another in the hallway, and a smoke alarm in the hallway

In the event of a fire, your priorities should be to –

- ensure that everyone in the hut is alerted to it
- ensure that everyone in the hut who cannot safely do anything useful to fight the fire leaves the hut (with help given to any who need it)

- if the fire has the potential to get out of control, take steps to call the Fire Brigade (999 or 112)
- do what you can to contain or extinguish the fire without undue risk to yourself or others

In relation to calling the Fire Brigade please remember (a) many mobile phones do not work at Muir (though 112 should get you through to any network, even if yours does not cover you for ordinary calls), (b) the nearest public telephone is at Inverey, just on the far side of the humpback bridge, and (c) you may be able to access a private phone and other help closer to hand at any of the other properties between Muir and Inverey.

General Safety

We believe that we maintain Muir as a generally safe place for the accommodation of visitors. There are hazards, but in general they will be obvious and in many cases no different from what is to be found in a home. Thus many of the floorings may be slippery if footwear is wet; the hot water can be extremely hot; the stove when on will be extremely hot; the bunks and their ladders if not sensibly used harbour obvious risks; and the Midgeater (in season) could cause harm if interfered with. Whilst we welcome children as guests, the cottage is maintained as a hut primarily for adult walkers and climbers, and we make no special effort to conceal from children's view things which could be abused by them (such as cleaning fluids, and the axes in the woodshed). We have a basic first aid kit (kept in the cupboard where the immersion heater switches are), as we assume that walkers and climbers tend to carry their own.

Changeover of Groups at Muir

On hut departure / arrival days, a departing group have priority up to 6pm and an arriving group has priority after 6pm. An arriving group should not arrive before 4pm and a departing group should have fully left by 8pm. Courtesy to and consideration of other hut users will, we are sure, prevail.

Items left behind by mistake after your group leave

Please ensure that you take all your belongings away with you when you leave Muir as neither the Booking Secretary nor the Custodian are able to collect and return left items. If you leave anything behind, you may return to Muir to see if it is still there. Please check with the Booking Secretary before doing this to ensure that the key safe code is the same, and that there are no vulnerable groups using it. The best principle to follow is: **If you leave it, you've lost it.**

Damage and Breakages

Please report to the custodian any damage or breakages either found when you arrive or caused by someone in your party. The booking person / organisation will be held responsible for damage caused by their group, and liable for the cost.

Other Problems

At reasonable times of day (not too early in the morning and never in the evening or overnight) you could contact the Custodian Kees Witte on 01224 732738.

Leaving

There are two notices at Muir about aspects of leaving - one next to the exit door and the other on the notice board. Please read them and observe them when the time comes. In particular, particularly during the winter months, please heed the instructions about leaving the heaters in the kitchen and washrooms on and at an appropriate setting.

And finally

We hope that your stay at Muir will be an enjoyable once. But we are always open to ideas for improving our facilities, so if you have any please be sure to let one of us know.

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