

FORT WILLIAM AND GLEN COE

Outstanding Circular Walks

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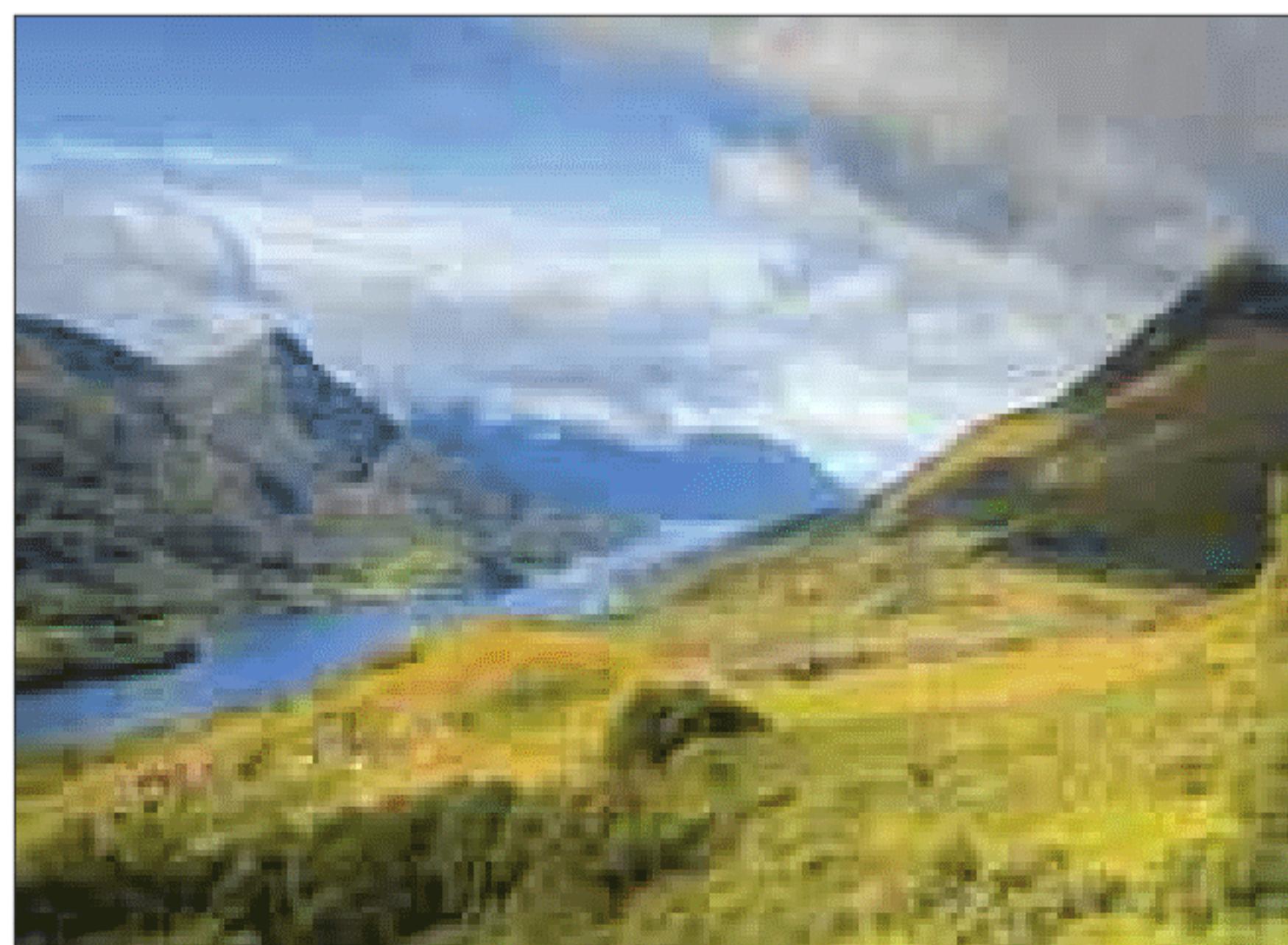
aluminium company when they built their works next to the previous lodge, in what is now Kinlochleven. King Edward VII was its most famous visitor (1909) and the Bibby family, of shipping fame, were long-time tenants.

Turn right on a descending track that passes to the left of the now boarded up building, which was latterly a hotel. The track soon becomes tarmac, bends right and angles steeply downhill. Follow it until you reach the West Highland Way marker post **C** and here turn left back downhill. Retrace your steps to the waterfall car park, turning left along Wade Road after the road bridge.

Kinlochleven is well geared up for walkers with a range of places to eat and stay. The Ice Factor is the major attraction with the World's biggest indoor ice climbing wall offering adventure to all from beginners to

experts, as well as a bar grill restaurant. It is on the site of what was until 2000 an aluminium smelting works. The Post Office houses free displays and a video telling the fascinating 'Aluminium Story'. Walk 21 'The Heights of Kinlochleven' gives a little more detail on this unexpected presence in a remote Highland village.

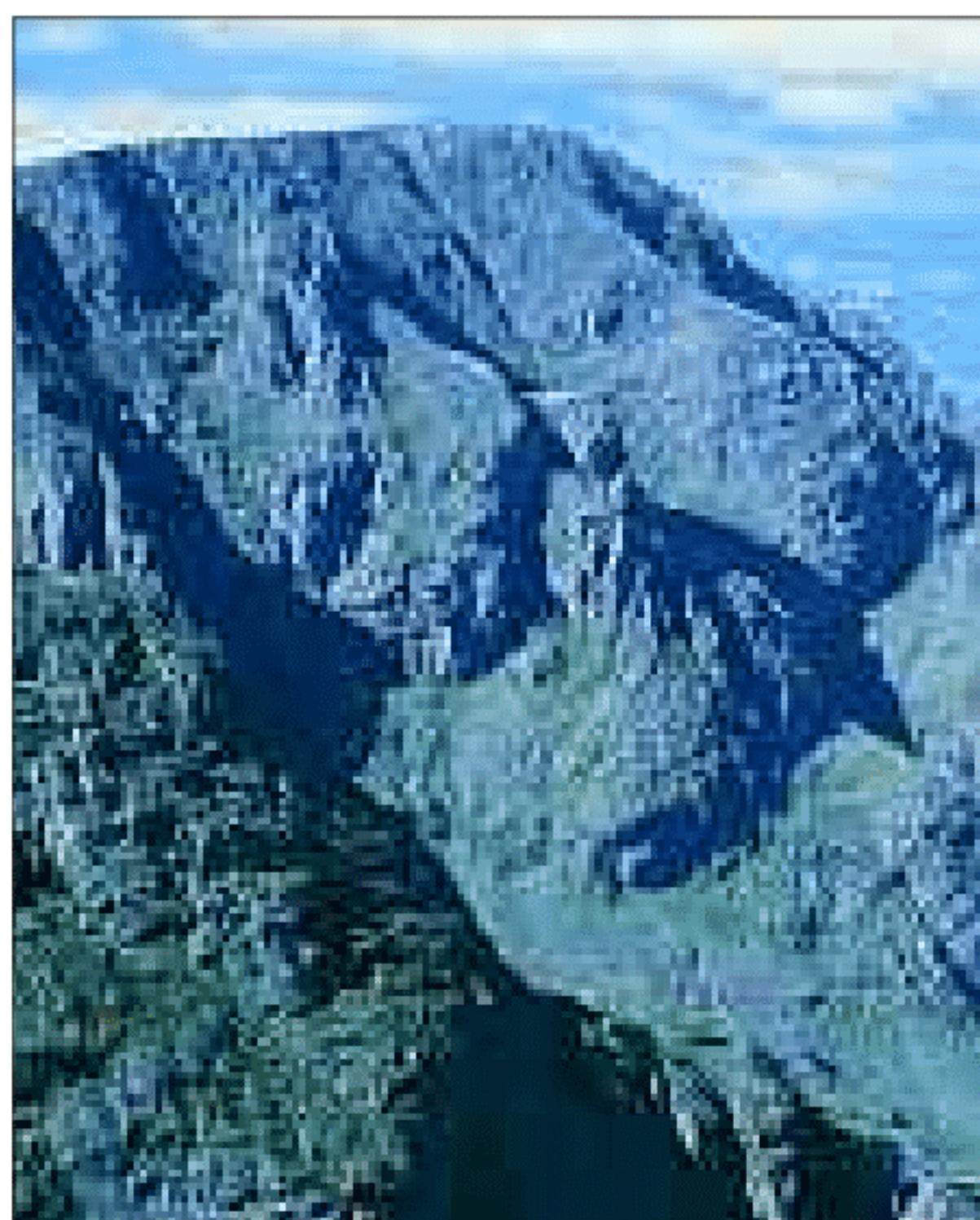
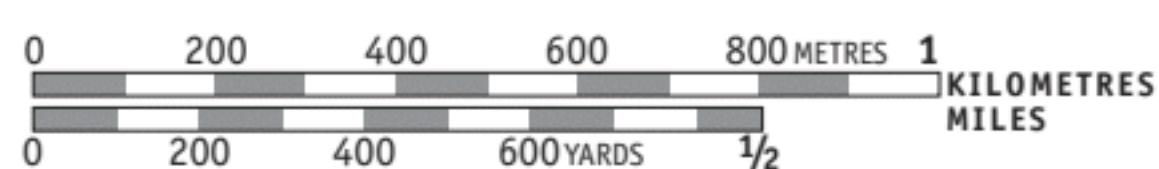
Pap of Glencoe, Beinn na Caillach and Loch Leven from the Mamore Lodge track



Ahead lies 1,000 feet (305m) of stone and scree with the path gaining height in seemingly endless zigzags **E**. Keep to the path. When the angle relents you are on the summit plateau **F**, a huge, featureless area of boulders (or snow) at varying levels, across which one tramps for $\frac{1}{2}$ mile (800m) to gain the summit. *In places the path is very close to the cliffs, and if there is snow on the ground and bright mist, the edge can be almost impossible to see.*

There is no mistaking the summit **G**. There is a triangulation pillar on a cairn, the remains of the observatory buildings with a tiny emergency shelter on top, numerous unnecessary cairns, and a deal of litter – but what a place to be! Half of Scotland seems to be in view.

Ben Nevis's real fame is as a climbers' hill and as such it is world famous. A glance down the cliffs will demonstrate why. A vast array of precipices, ridges and gullies falls 2,000 feet (610m) to the Allt a' Mhulinn valley. The observatory operated from 1883 to 1904. There is no clear indication of the meaning of the name Nevis, which could have its roots in the Gaelic words



The magnificent cliffs of Ben Nevis – Britain's highest peak

meaning both 'heaven' and 'hell'.

The initial progress downwards may call for taking, and following, a careful compass bearing. *The summit plateau can be a highly confusing place, and more people go astray leaving it for the descent than in any other way.*

The upward route is reversed in full, a three-hour descent for most, with *care still needed at every step*. There will be a grand feeling of achievement when the ascent – and descent – of Britain's highest hill is over, a fitting climax to walking in the Lochaber area.



up the glen.

The pipe carrying water from the intake to the turbine is buried on the lower side of the road most of the way, but is visible where it spans side streams. Much of the forest has been felled, giving views to the east end of Loch Arkaig and beyond. About 1½ miles (2.4km) beyond **A**, you pass the intake dam and continue ahead on an old, rough track, soon entering dark forest.

At the top of the forest, cross a stile over the deer fence on the left. Follow a faint path, initially running beside the fence before dipping closer to the Abhainn Chia-aig. Cross a bridge over the river **B** and about 100 yards later fork left to follow the Allt Tarsuinn.

Follow the north bank of this stream through Gleann Tarsuinn, past many small falls and pools, and crossing many side streams. There are traces of a faint path, worn as much by deer as

people. In summer, the green sward is full of wildflowers, especially the yellow spikes of bog asphodel. Yellow saxifrage grows by rocky streamlets. Where the Allt Tarsuinn flows steeply from a narrow glen on your right, cross the stream **C** and keep ahead over the watershed, staying left of the lowest, wettest ground as you turn to follow the valley of the Allt Dubh. A rough track, initially only path width, traverses the side of the glen and provides easier walking as it improves.

At a ford by a hydro intake dam, join a surfaced track **D**, down the glen, enjoying a view all the way up Loch Arkaig as you descend more steeply. At the bottom go through two gates – either side of the turbine building **E** – and soon after meet the public road.

Turn left along the quiet single-track road, which climbs over a rise before descending to run along the wooded shore of Loch Arkaig. The waterfall and car park are reached after about 1½ miles (2.4km).

The shores of Loch Arkaig



The Two Passes

Start Upper Glen Coe

Distance 9 miles (14.5km)

Height gain 2,200 feet (670m)

Approximate time 5 hours

Parking Car park at the start of the walk

Refreshments None

Ordnance Survey maps Landranger 41 (Ben Nevis, Fort William & Glen Coe), Explorer 384 (Glen Coe & Glen Etive)

GPS waypoints

-  NN 187 562
-  NN 182 557
-  NN 170 534
-  NN 171 516
-  NN 183 529
-  NN 213 559
-  NN 212 560
-  NN 197 563

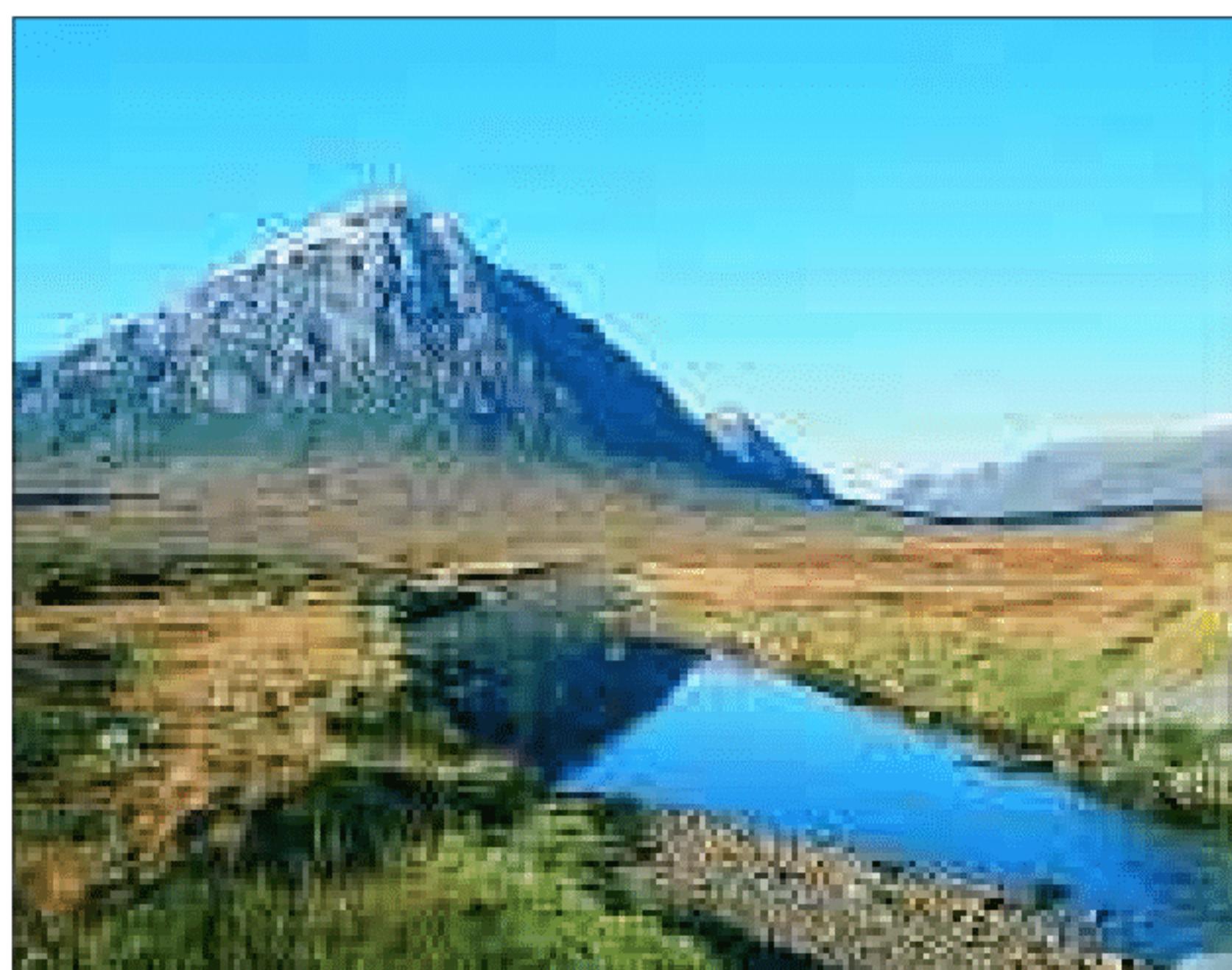
This is probably the finest walk in the Glen Coe area that does not entail climbing a summit. There is still an ascent of 2,100 feet (640m) to be made, however, and the scenery is on the grand scale. The passes of Lairig Eilde ('pass of the hinds') and Lairig Gartain ('pass of the ticks') form a circular walk right round the elongated peak of the Buachaille Etive Beag ('little Etive shepherd'), and both are classic glaciated U-shaped glens. This is quite a rough walk, and every bit as demanding as a summit. It is recommended only in dry conditions, as several streams are crossed and these can be dangerous in spate.

 A large cairn on the other side of the A82 and a SRWS signpost indicate the start of the walk, 'Path to Glen Etive by the Lairig Eilde'. The path angles up to cross the Allt Lairig Eilde (dangerous in spate) **A**, follows its north-west bank along under Beinn Fhada for a mile (1.6km), then crosses again for the final pull up to the top of the pass **B**, a rise of 800 feet (244m) from the road. Stob Dubh (3,130 feet/954m) rises steeply to the left, the highest summit of the Buachaille Etive Beag. Jagged Stob Coire Sgreamhach at 3,497 feet (1,066m)

dominates the other side; it is an outlier of Bidean nam Bian, the highest peak in Argyll.

The burn flowing down to Dalness in

Buachaille Etive Mór



The Stalker's Path on Beinn na Caillich

Start Kinlochleven

Distance 7½ miles (12km)

Height gain 2,920 feet (890m)

Approximate time 5 hours

Parking Opposite The Ice Factor in the centre of Kinlochleven

Refreshments Centre of Kinlochleven

Ordnance Survey maps Landranger 41 (Ben Nevis, Fort William & Glen Coe), Explorers 392 (Ben Nevis & Fort William) and 384 (Glen Coe & Glen Etive)

GPS waypoints

-  NN 187 619
-  NN 183 623
-  NN 171 630
-  NN 163 632
-  NN 134 626
-  NN 144 638

This hill on the northern shore of Loch Leven dominates the view on the final section of the West Highland Way. The steep climb to the summit is eased by a fine stalker's path. On the ridge beyond there is delightful walking and panoramic views. If you walk this route in the stalking season (August to late October), contact the Mamore and Grey Corries Hillphone Service on 01855 831511.

SCALE 1:25 000 or 2½ INCHES to 1 MILE 4CM to 1KM

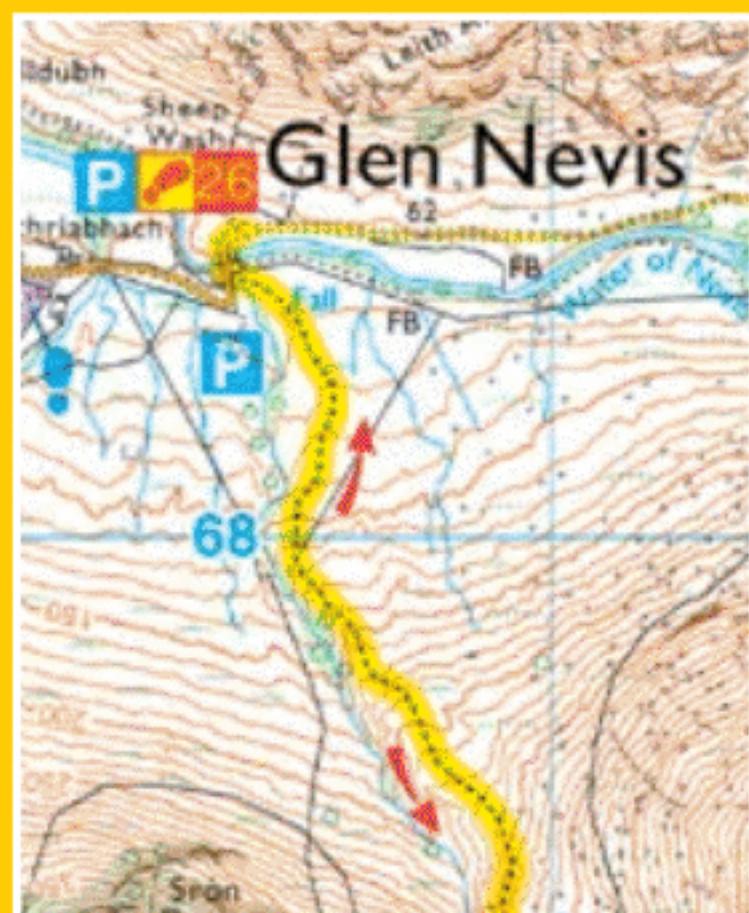




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