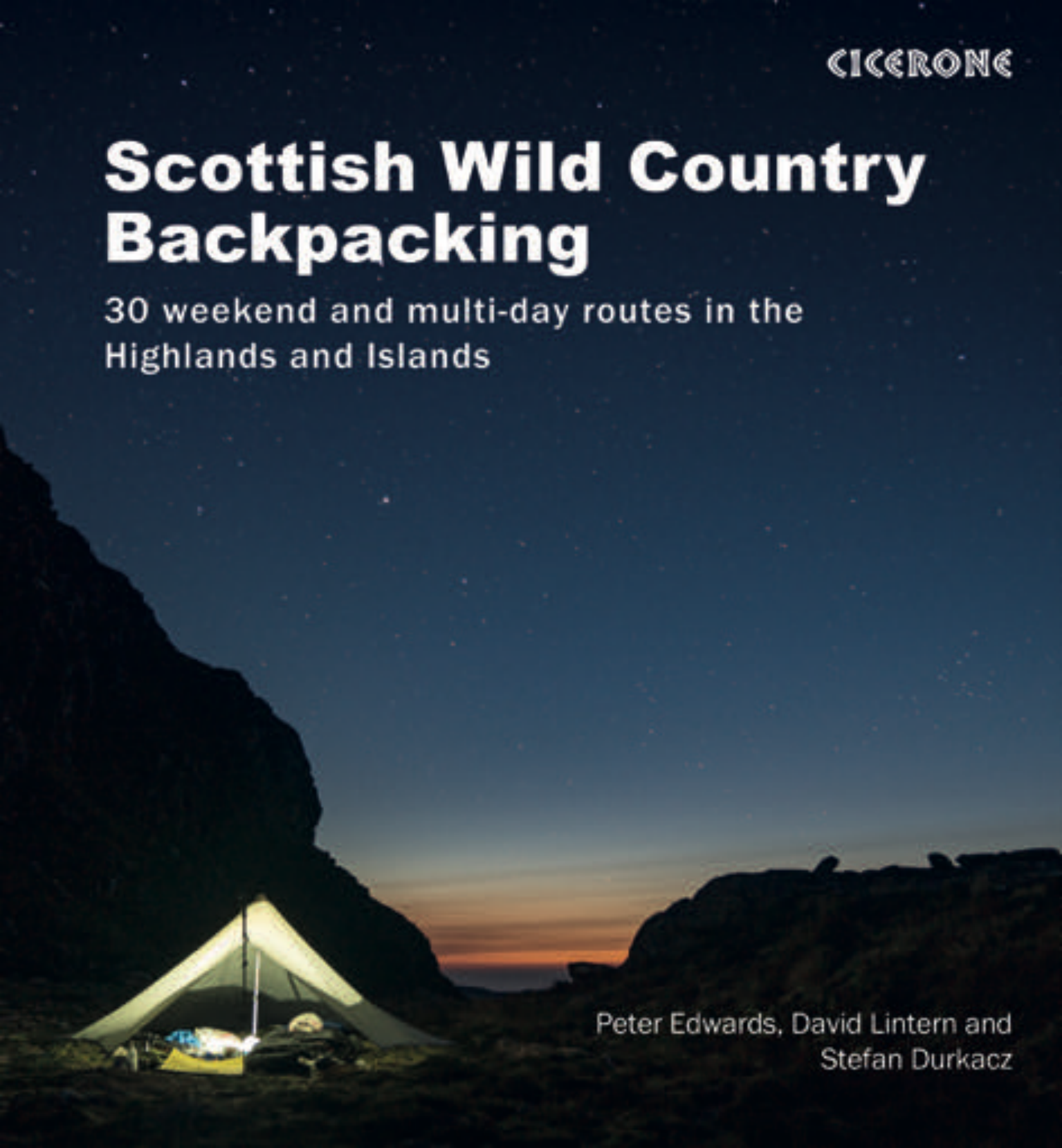


CICERONE

Scottish Wild Country Backpacking

30 weekend and multi-day routes in the
Highlands and Islands



Peter Edwards, David Lintern and
Stefan Durkacz

SCOTTISH WILD COUNTRY BACKPACKING

30 weekend and multi-day routes
in the Highlands and Islands

by Stefan Durkacz, Peter Edwards and David Lintern

CICERONE



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and David Lintern 2022

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◀◀ *Front cover:* A Coigach camp
(Route 21)

◀ *Pages 2–3:* Summit of Lurg Mhòr
(Route 16)

▶ *This page:* The ridge towards Sgùrr
Ghiubhsachain (Route 2)

▶▶ *Page 7:* By the Scavaig River - the
outflow of Loch Coruisk (Route 6)



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UPDATES TO THIS GUIDE

While every effort is made by our authors to ensure the accuracy of guidebooks as they go to print, changes can occur during the lifetime of an edition. Any updates that we know of for this guide will be on the Cicerone website (www.cicerone.co.uk/904/updates), so please check before planning your trip. We also advise that you check information about such things as transport, accommodation and shops locally. Even rights of way can be altered over time. We are always grateful for information about any discrepancies between a guidebook and the facts on the ground, sent by email to updates@cicerone.co.uk or by post to Cicerone, Juniper House, Murley Moss, Oxenholme Road, Kendal, LA9 7RL.




























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ROUTE SUMMARY TABLE

ROUTE NO.	ROUTE TITLE	START	FINISH	DISTANCE	TIME	ASCENT	DESCENT	PAGE
1	The Glen Etive Five	Glen Etive road NN 136 468	Glen Etive Road NN 136 468	26.5km (16½ miles)	2 days	2485m (8150ft)	2485m (8150ft)	46
2	Fort William to Glenfinnan via north Ardgour	Camusnagaul Pier NN 095 750	Glenfinnan station NM 899 810	43km (26¾ miles)	2–3 days	2585m (8480ft)	2455m (8055ft)	50
3	Streap and Braigh nan Uamhachan	Car park A830 NM 929 798	Car park A830 NM 929 798	23km (14½ miles)	2 days	1775m (5825ft)	1775m (5825ft)	55
4	The west coast of Jura	Kinuachdrachd Harbour NR 705 982	A846 at Tarbert NR 606 823	50km (31 miles)	4 days	2210m (7250ft)	2210m (7250ft)	59
5	Around the coast of Rùm	Dibidil Pony Path NM 404 911	Kinloch Castle NM 401 995	40km (25km)	3 days	1295m (4250ft)	1295m (4250ft)	66
6	Isle of Skye: Glen Sligachan, Loch Coruisk and Camasunary	Sligachan NG 487 298	Elgol NG 520 139	21.25km (13¼ miles)	2 days	775m (2545ft)	715m (2345ft)	72
7	Ben Alder: Tour of the ridges	Dalwhinnie station NN 634 849	Dalwhinnie station NN 634 849	61km (38 miles)	3 days	2620m (8595ft)	2620m (8595ft)	78
8	Blair Atholl to Kingussie	Blair Atholl station NN 870 653	Kingussie station NH 756 004	52.5km (32½ miles)	2–3 days	2270m (7450ft)	2150m (7055ft)	83
9	The Mòine Mhòr Munros	Achlean Glen Feshie NN 850 983	Achlean Glen Feshie NN 850 983	49km (30½ miles)	2–3 days	2250m (7380ft)	2250m (7380ft)	89
10	Ben Avon and Beinn a' Bhuird	Car park by Tomintoul NJ 164 176	Car park by Tomintoul NJ 164 176	50km (31 miles)	2 days	1625m (5330m)	1625m (5330m)	95
11	Northeast Cairngorms	Tomintoul NJ 169 186	Tomintoul NJ 169 186	93.5km (58 miles)	3–4 days	2230m (7315ft)	2230m (7315ft)	99
12	Inverinate Forest and the Gates of Affric	Parking off A87 NG 947 212	Parking off A87 NG 947 212	39km (24¼ miles)	3–4 days	3110m (10,205ft)	3110m (10,205ft)	108
13	Affric Haute Route	Car park for Loch Beinn a' Mheadhain NH 243 262	Car park for Loch Beinn a' Mheadhain NH 243 262	50km (31 miles)	3 days	3860m (12,665ft)	3860m (12,665ft)	112
14	Killilan Forest: Sgùman Còinntich, Faochaig, and Aonach Buidhe	Parking at road end Killilan NG 939 303	Parking at road end Killilan NG 939 303	39.5km (24½ miles)	2–3 days	2010m (6595ft)	2010m (6595ft)	117
15	The Applecross Peninsula: Sgùrr a' Chaorachain and Beinn Bhàn	Bridge over the River Kishorn NG 836 423	Bridge over the River Kishorn NG 836 423	27.5km (17 miles)	2–3 days	1420m (4660ft)	1420m (4660ft)	121
16	Achnashellach, Bendronaig and West Monar	Parking just off A890, Craig NH 038 493	Parking just off A890, Craig NH 038 493	41km (25½ miles)	2–3 days	2785m (9140ft)	2785m (9140ft)	125
17	Coulin Forest	Achnashellach station NH 002 484	Achnashellach station NH 002 484	36km (22½ miles)	3 days	2990m (9810ft)	2990m (9810ft)	132
18	The Fannichs	Car park on A832 NH 313 626	Car park on A832 NH 313 626	57km (35½ miles)	2–3 days	3275m (10,745ft)	3275m (10,745ft)	137
19	Fisherfield and Letterewe	Layby on A832 at Corrie Hallie NH 114 850	Layby on A832 at Corrie Hallie NH 114 850	39.75km (24¾ miles)	2–3 days	2865m (9400ft)	2865m (9400ft)	141
20	Flowerdale Three: Beinn Eoin, Beinn Dearg and Baosbheinn	Car park on the A832 called 'Red Stable' NG 856 720	Car park on the A832 called 'Red Stable' NG 856 720	35km (21¾ miles)	2–3 days	2375m (7795ft)	2375m (7795ft)	145
21	The Postie's Path and the Coigach group	Road end parking off A835, Blughasary NC 134 014	Road end parking off A835, Blughasary NC 134 014	33km (20½ miles)	3 days	2610m (8565ft)	2610m (8565ft)	152
22	Glencoul, Gleann Dubh and Beinn Leòid	Parking by A894 NC 240 292	Parking by A894 NC 240 292	41.5km (25¾ miles)	2–3 days	2170m (7120ft)	2170m (7120ft)	156
23	Ben Klibreck, and the Ben Armine Forest	The Crask Inn NC 524 247	The Crask Inn NC 524 247	56.5km (35 miles)	3 days	2360m (7745ft)	2360m (7745ft)	160
24	Around Strath Dionard	Parking on A838 west of Carbreck House NC 330 591	Parking on A838 west of Carbreck House NC 330 591	37.5km (23¼ miles)	2 days	2250m (7380ft)	2250m (7380ft)	166
25	Cape Wrath, Sandwood Bay and the Parph	Parking at Blairmore NC 194 600	Parking at Blairmore NC 194 600	55km (34 miles)	4 days	1425m (4675ft)	1425m (4675ft)	170
26	A circuit of Mingulay	Landing place NL 567 828	Landing place NL 567 828	13km (8 miles)	5–6hr	825m (2705ft)	825m (2705ft)	178
27	Hecla, Beinn Mhòr and South Uist's wild east coast	Parking Loch Sgiopot road NM 827 386	Parking Loch Sgiopot road NM 827 386	34km (21 miles)	2 days	1915m (6285ft)	1915m (6285ft)	181
28	Harris Hills, Loch Rèasort and Cravadale	Amhuinnsuidhe NB 053 077	Amhuinnsuidhe NB 053 077	36km (22½ miles)	2–3 days	1860m (6100ft)	1860m (6100ft)	185
29	Isle of Lewis: Uig Hills and coast	Brèinis NA 993 264	Brèinis NA 993 264	24km (15miles)	2 days	1830m (6005ft)	1830m (6005ft)	190
30	Isle of Lewis: Paicr Peninsula	Parking near Eishken Lodge NB 325 124	Parking near Eishken Lodge NB 325 124	45.5km (28¼ miles)	3 days	2155m (7070ft)	2155m (7070ft)	194

SYMBOLS USED ON ROUTE MAPS

-  start/finish point
-  start point
-  finish point
-  alternative start point
-  direction of route
-  route (Day 1)
-  alternative route (Day 1)
-  route (Day 2)
-  alternative route (Day 2)
-  route (Day 3)
-  alternative route (Day 3)
-  route (Day 4)
-  alternative route (Day 4)
-  footpath
-  track
-  water feature
-  peak
-  building
-  bridge
-  parking
-  railway station
-  youth hostel
-  bothy
-  shelter
-  castle
-  lighthouse
-  ferry

SCALE: 1:100,000
 0 kilometres 1 2
 0 miles 1

Contour lines are drawn at 50m intervals and labelled at 100m intervals.

GPX files for all routes can be downloaded free at www.cicerone.co.uk/904/GPX.

MOUNTAIN SAFETY

Every mountain walk has its dangers, and those described in this guidebook are no exception. All who walk or climb in the mountains should recognise this and take responsibility for themselves and their companions along the way. The author and publisher have made every effort to ensure that the information contained in this guide was correct when it went to press, but, except for any liability that cannot be excluded by law, they cannot accept responsibility for any loss, injury or inconvenience sustained by any person using this book.

International distress signal (emergency only)

Six blasts on a whistle (and flashes with a torch after dark) spaced evenly for one minute, followed by a minute's pause. Repeat until an answer is received. The response is three signals per minute followed by a minute's pause.

Helicopter rescue

The following signals are used to communicate with a helicopter:



Help needed:
raise both arms above head to form a 'Y'



Help not needed:
raise one arm above head, extend other arm downward

Emergency telephone numbers
999

Weather reports
The Mountain Weather Information Service (MWIS) www.mwis.org.uk
The Scottish Avalanche Information Service (SAIS) www.sais.gov.uk

Mountain rescue can be very expensive – be adequately insured.





INTRODUCTION

The Highlands and Islands of Scotland are home to the most ruggedly beautiful, expansive and challenging backpacking country in the British Isles. Out among the mountains, moors, glens and along the wild coastline it is still possible to walk for days without encountering roads, settlements and other people. Herein lies the purpose of this guidebook: the unifying theme for the 30 backpacking routes gathered here is that they are designed to make the best of the wildest, most remote and most spectacular landscapes the Highlands and Islands have to offer.

Of course, the Highlands and Islands are an immensely popular destination attracting a wide range of visitors, including many hillwalkers, climbers, cyclists, kayakers and other outdoor enthusiasts, drawn by the near-limitless possibilities for adventures great and small. There are, however, places that remain accessible only on foot, which may take days of walking to reach and require resourcefulness and planning to do so. Such places are the preserve of those willing and able to carry their own shelter and supplies, with enough experience and self-reliance to navigate proficiently and otherwise stay safe in an environment which can easily become inhospitable.

Proper equipment, careful planning and grounded experience open the way to the joys of backpacking in those less-visited hinterlands of the Highlands and Islands. This then is not a guidebook of routes for beginners; rather, our aim is to appeal to more experienced backpackers and those who want to work up to the challenging routes included here. For the latter, this guidebook includes comprehensive yet concise sections on the various practicalities of backpacking in Scotland's wild backcountry. Equipment, access, weather, safety and first aid are all covered, while sections on wildlife, geology and plants and flowers are intended to enhance readers' appreciation of the environments they are walking in.

For some of us, few things are as exciting and liberating as packing your rucksack ready for a backpacking trip. Obviously, planning your own routes is one of the most

enjoyable parts of the whole deal for many backpackers and, although the routes included here are real gems polished over many years of experience backpacking throughout the Highlands and Islands, most include plenty of scope for adapting, expanding or curtailing to fit your own agenda. In this sense the routes are intended as an inspirational template – there to be modified at will.

The routes are spread throughout the region, covering geologically and topographically diverse landscapes, from the jagged gabbro peaks of Rùm and Skye to the whale-backed massifs and tundra-like plateaux of the Cairngorms; from the vast raised beaches and cave-riddled cliffs of Jura to the *loch*-speckled blanket bog of the Flow Country. The routes are of varying lengths with at least one night out and as many as five, though the majority are one or two nights and therefore two or three days' walking. In several cases routes can be combined with a little adaptation here and there. Many of the routes include overnighting at a bothy or two as an option – see the section on mountain bothies, below. In all cases the overnighting options for camping and bothying are intended to make the most of some exceptionally beautiful landscapes, but also to avoid undue exposure to the elements. Fine-weather options for bivouacs on mountaintops or *bealachs* are included in some cases.

Because of the challenges involved, these routes are, by definition, less-frequented – with less livestock and land management, fewer roads, hill tracks or other infrastructure – and therein lies a significant part of the appeal. The kind of infrastructure we prefer is a crystal-clear burn for your water supply, a beach or loch to pitch your tent by or a mountain bothy for shelter.

Having used these terms several times in this introduction it's worth noting here that at present the words 'remote' and 'wild' in the Scottish context are freighted with cultural and environmental controversy – with good reason, as described in the following section.

THE SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS

WILDNESS AND WILDERNESS IN A SCOTTISH CONTEXT

Picture the scene. We stand on the edge of a crag, high above a landscape untroubled by tower blocks and traffic, studded with sunlight-jewelled *lochans* (small lochs) threaded with a sinuous, silvered river flowing through a vast sea of dusty purple heather. Further up, our mountain's slopes are bronzed and treeless, before giving way to sharp, angular granite shadows. Our gaze is soundtracked by only the wind, the caw of a raven, the chatter of ptarmigan and the sharp bark of a hind. These sunlit uplands are ours and ours alone. The difference to our urban life could not be more marked. Is this not a timeless wilderness?

Forgive the slightly formulaic setup. There's a tension in writing a book like this one, a tension in the language we will use to describe the experience of being out there in Scotland's backcountry. The concept of wilderness is particularly controversial in the Scottish Highlands. The wild and remote places we visit in this book have their roots in the history and politics of the past.

The Clearances

From around 1740 to 1880, at least 170,000 crofters and small tenant farmers were forcibly evicted from their homes by their landowners to be replaced by sheep. It's likely to have been many thousands more. The beginning of the Clearances marks the end of the clan system and the expansion of enclosure to land north of the border. Common law rights were replaced by the arrival of industrial capitalism in the Scottish countryside, but it was pre-existing feudal landownership that allowed that to happen.

This period also marks the beginning of the modern Scottish diaspora. Thousands were indentured to colonial landowners and sold onto ships bound for the New World, while others were burnt out of their homes. The people were replaced by an industrial-scale sheep economy, at least until the global wool market collapsed.

There followed a period of attrition, with the sheep replaced by deer for 'sport' and many of the remaining inhabitants experiencing disease and famine on poorer reservation-like plots after relocation. It might be tempting to attribute this all to the English, but Scottish lairds, lawyers, clergy and soldiery were often the executors and sometimes the beneficiaries of this upheaval. It is a gruesome period in the history of not just Scotland, but the whole of Britain.

Alongside this grew an idealised vision of Scotland as 'wilderness', popularised by Queen Victoria's visits to her Balmoral holiday home, which helped sell it as a retreat to the old elites and a newly wealthy industrial middle class. Sometimes referred to as Balmoralisation, this legacy still fuels much of our tourism today.

The concept of 'wilderness'

The concept of wilderness as 'pure' and without people that we often use in the UK is heavily borrowed from the North American writings of Muir, Thoreau and others, but more recently has been questioned there and elsewhere. Historians are demonstrating that indigenous Americans were cleared into reservations to facilitate the first national parks, and ethnographers are unearthing new evidence showing the farming of rainforests dating back thousands of years. We continue to learn more about landscape terraforming by native peoples using fire and controlled grazing, from the great plains of Missouri to the even greater plains of Mongolia.

In Scotland, as elsewhere, the vast majority of the highest, most mountainous land was always free of any full-time settlement – it simply isn't productive enough to support human life in large numbers. That is not to say that humans never visited these places, or left a mark, or that they do not bear our signature in name, trail, shieling, song and story. This specific intertwining of natural and cultural history is the reason many conservationists in Scotland make a distinction between wildness and wilderness.

Who owns Scotland?

Some of these tensions and inequities remain today. According to historian Jim Hunter, Scotland still has "the most concentrated pattern of land ownership in the developed world", with over 50% owned by fewer than 450 people. There's a growing call for land redistribution and resettlement in places that were previously cleared, as well as a thriving community land movement. Community-owned land now makes up at least 2.5% of the total and continues to grow.

On the other hand, some traditional estates are using their power and influence to repair and restore land in their care.

A brief history of access in Scotland

These days, Scotland has some of the most enlightened access laws in the world. The Land Reform (Scotland) Act (2003) enshrined in law the right to roam, camp and use lochs and rivers for boating and swimming. So not only does Scotland boast



spectacular scenery, it affords the self-powered traveller the freedom to explore it fully.

The modern struggle for access rights has its roots in the broader social upheavals occurring around 250 years ago. The pacification of the Highlands after Culloden and the development of a road network helped facilitate the birth of tourism, and interest in exploring the Highlands grew. However, the Highland Clearances soon began and a centuries-old way of life vanished, replaced by sheep farming and deer stalking. Landowners jealously guarded this newly emptied 'wilderness', and conflict inevitably developed on two fronts: access to ancient through-routes and, later, open access to mountains and moorland.

In 1845 the Scottish Rights of Way Society was formed, leading to many legal actions that secured access to a number of ancient tracks. Key battles occurred in 1847, when the Duke of Atholl was prevented from blocking access through

Glen Tilt after a confrontation with a professor and his botany students, and in 1888, when local shepherd Jock Winter defied the landowner over access to the drovers' route between Glen Doll and Braemar. This latter confrontation demonstrated it wasn't always the prosperous urban establishment fighting for access – the ensuing legal case relied heavily on shepherds' testimonies.

Establishing a right to roam off the path took much longer. Tolerance prevailed in many areas with a tradition of open access developing organically, but ultimately access still depended on landowners' whims. The formalisation of rights via the 2003 Act was hugely significant and long overdue.

Nowadays, Scotland still has a highly concentrated pattern of land ownership; some landowners try to defy the Act and seasonal restrictions on camping in Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park are seen by some as an erosion of rights. Eternal vigilance is undoubtedly the price of freedom regarding access.

ROUTE 1

The Glen Etive Five

Start/finish	Informal car park on the Glen Etive road (NN 136 468)
Total distance	26.5km (16½ miles)
Total ascent	2485m (8150ft)
Time	1 very long day or 2 more leisurely/winter days
Terrain	Track, rough path, steep slopes and one short but moderately airy scramble.
Key summits	Ben Starav 1078m (M), Beinn nan Aighenan 960m (M), Glas Bheinn Mhòr 997m (M), Stob Coir' an Albannaich 1044m (M), Meall nan Eun 929m (M)
Maps	OS Explorer 377 Loch Etive & Glen Orchy; OS Landranger 50 Glen Orchy & Loch Etive
Note	Work is under way on several run-of-river hydro developments which will impact on the walk in and out, in the future.

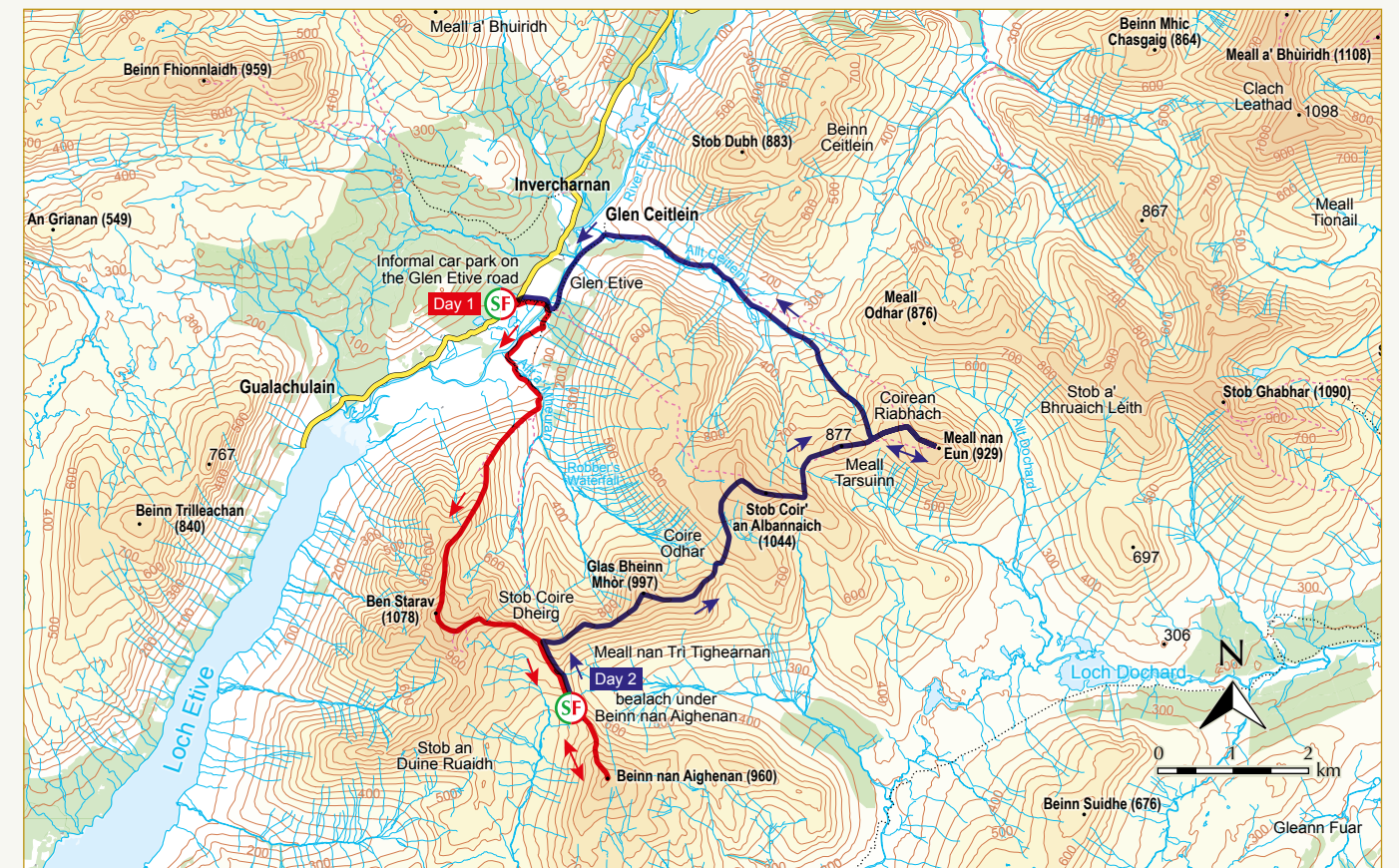
Glen Etive is a spectacular and relatively accessible place, and is deservedly popular with walkers, kayakers and campervan enthusiasts, but away from the busy single-track road, there is a palpable sense of remoteness and solitude. Old shielings line the rivers as water tumbles freely through natural gullies and over granite slabs, while birch and pine cling to the steep-sided hills. Go higher and you'll find a wealth of fine, rocky summits linked by short arêtes and *bealaichean* (mountain passes) strewn with glacial erratics, with some of the finest views in the Southern Highlands.

Etive is a great example of Scottish wild country; a tightly woven mix of nature and culture. Alongside the riches described above, it's stuffed full of Irish mythology, old drove roads and song-poems by 18th-century bards (see below). Along with neighbouring Glen Coe, it was originally earmarked as a National Park. Although it is recognised as a National Scenic Area, protected for its 'wild land' qualities as well as for being a breeding ground for golden eagles, it has recently seen the development of run-of-river hydro schemes.

Glen Etive makes an early appearance in Irish mythology as a rich and fertile farming settlement where humans lived in balance with nature. It is described in *Deirdre of the Sorrows*, a ballad sung by the tragic heroine Deirdre as a "Fruitful glen of pools and fishes... Glen of hawks, blue eyed, crying."

According to Irish literature, Deirdre escaped betrothal to Ulster's King Conchobar by fleeing to Scotland and founding Glen Etive along with her lover, Naoise. They were later joined by Naoise's brothers and their partners, finding peace in the valley. When they eventually returned to Ireland, all were murdered by the king for their disobedience. Deirdre committed suicide rather than marry him.

► Showers and a rainbow looking east from camp under Beinn nan Aighenan



DAY 1**Car park for Ben Starav to bealach camp**

Start	Informal car park for Ben Starav (NN 136 468)
Distance	11km (6¾ miles)
Total ascent	1445m (4740ft)
Time	6–8hr
Summits	Ben Starav 1078m (M), Stob Coire Dheirg 998m, Beinn nan Aighenan 960 (M)

Exit right from the small parking area and head towards the loch for a few metres. Take a left through a gate onto a track, which descends to a bridge over the **River Etive**. Cross the bridge and turn right, following signage directing walkers around the fenced enclosure of the smallholding of Coileitir on an extremely boggy path. Relocating the riverside path, follow it to a footbridge over **Allt a' Mheuran**. Cross this and turn left, following the track alongside this river, up towards the enormous north ridge of



Ben Starav. There are some beautiful pools here of the kind alluded to in the song-poem Deirdre of the Sorrows.

Where the path splits, take a right fork onto the north ridge and follow it for nearly 3km to the summit.

The corrie bowl to your left was a hiding place for reivers (cattle thieves) who would ambush traders and their herds on the drove road between Fort William and the south – note the Robber's Waterfall marked on the OS map.

It's a long, tiring climb and the final metres to the flat summit of **Ben Starav** (1078m) are stony and steep.

Continue southeast around the head of Coire an Fhir Lèith and descend to a thin, blocky arête which joins Starav with Stob Coire Dheirg. The arête is a moderately exposed but non-technical scramble best tackled with a fair head for heights and with walking poles and cameras stowed away. After the summit of **Stob Coire Dheirg** (998m), descend easily, taking a faint path that forks right onto the *bealach* which adjoins the next Munro of **Beinn nan Aighenan** (960m). Cross here and ascend approximately 300m to its summit, using a rough path tucked in slightly to the east of the mountain's northerly spur. Return to the *bealach* for an atmospheric camp in beautifully remote surroundings. There is usually plentiful water nearby.

**DAY 2****Bealach camp to car park for Ben Starav**

Start	Camp at <i>bealach</i> (in the vicinity of NN 143 416)
Distance	16km (10 miles)
Total ascent	1045m (3430ft)
Time	6–8hr
Summits	Meall nan Tri Tighearnan, Glas Bheinn Mhòr 997m (M), Stob Coir' an Albannaich 1044m (M), Meall Tarsuinn 877m, Meall nan Eun 929m (M)

Rejoin the trail to the north and then continue in a north-easterly direction on a broad grassy ridge over **Meall nan Tri Tighearnan**, to the bulky Munro of **Glas Bheinn Mhòr** (997m). Descend east over rockier terrain to the *bealach* at the head of **Coire Odhar**. Climb the switchback path to the north, accessing a large, sloping plateau under our fourth Munro. The summit of **Stob Coir' an Albannaich** (1044m) is a veritable crow's nest,

with superlative views back to Ben Starav and the route so far.

Carefully descend its sharp, easterly ridge and, where the slope eases, turn left and descend a clear rake north to another flattened area dotted with pools and glacial erratics, which offers good views southeast to Loch Dochard. Go over **Meall Tarsuinn** (877m) and cross another *bealach*, from which you will shortly make your escape. Climb the slopes of **Meall nan Eun** (929m) and head southeast for its rather nondescript summit.

Return to the *bealach* (between Meall nan Eun and Meall Tarsuinn) and descend northwest, following the burn into **Coirean Riabhach**. The headwaters of Allt Ceitlein are

wonderfully dynamic, bubbling vigorously through deep natural channels before dispersing over smooth granite slabs.

Further down the atmospheric Glen Ceitlein you'll find remains of summer shielings. It's here, in the well-known 18th-century song-poem Song of the Ewe that the game-keeper and bard Donnchadh Bàn Mac an t-soir (anglicised to Duncan Ban Macintyre) partakes of whisky from a scallop shell. His poem is in the tradition of a 'waulking' song, usually sung by women as they washed and compressed woollen cloth at a table. Scotland has one of the largest repertoires of these songs in the world. In 'The Song of the Ewe', Donnchadh Bàn has fallen on hard times. A fox has killed a prize sheep and so he asks his neighbours for their help. The song follows him as he circles the community asking for gifts of wool to make a coat. It's the story of the people he meets and the places he visits on the way – a *songline* in which people and place are completely intertwined.

Crossing the bridge at the foot of **Glen Ceitlein**, head southwest on a track to a wooded junction just before the house at Coileitir. Turn right, cross the bridge over the **River Etive** and return to the car park.

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