

17 LOCH ARKAIG to LOCH HOURN

The terrain of this leg is extremely remote. Even the starting and finishing points are each some twenty miles from real habitation. Fortunately, both can be reached easily by car. The leg covers about 17 miles, and climbs four ridges, amounting to some 6700 feet of ascent. Depending on the weather conditions, the complete route will require 8 - 10 hours. This part of the Highlands has a reputation for bad weather. Conditions here can be atrocious, when they are quite acceptable just a few miles away. This route is a serious undertaking, and should not be attempted by the inexperienced, ill-equipped or unfit.

Strathan to Glen Kingie

Landranger Map: 33 or 40
OS Maps Central Grid Reference:
NM 950 950

The route begins by taking the track from Strathan up Glen Dessary. Just before the wooden bridge over the first stream, the path to Glen Kingie is easily found on the right. The path strikes steeply up the hillside, and is in good condition. It follows Dearg Allt very closely. In its lower reaches, the stream cascades down steep chasms. There are very few places, where it may be crossed. The troops would certainly have taken advantage of this natural barrier by leading the cordon up the eastern bank. The fugitives would therefore have clambered up the opposite bank.

Eventually, the path reaches level ground, where both the stream and path disappear. Even in mist, there is no difficulty in finding a way along the wild moorland valley between the flanks of Fraoch Bheinn and Sgurr Mhurlagain.

For the descent to Glen Kingie, there are good paths on both sides of the Allt a Chinn Bhric. It is wiser to take the path on the left bank. Otherwise, there may be difficulties in

crossing the stream lower down.

Distance: 4 miles (6 km)
Height of ascent: 1220 feet (370 m)
Naismith time: 1 hour 49 mins

Glen Kingie to Loch Quoich

Landranger Map: 33 or 40
OS Maps Central Grid Reference:
NM 950 990

From the bottom of Allt a Chinn Bhric, the route goes westward along Glen Kingie. There is no continuous path on the south bank. The ground is very wet with boggy stretches. In contrast, there is a very clear path along the north bank. After about a mile, this path begins to zig-zag diagonally up the steep north side of Glen Kingie. The cordon undoubtedly followed this line. Charles' route continues along the valley floor, eventually climbing the gully at the head of Glen Kingie. The route then turns north up a wide ridge to the summit of An Eag. The next objective is the wide ridge of Druim Buidhe. The most direct route to it is round the rocks at the base of the summit of Sgurr nan Coireachan.

The descent to Coire nan Gall from Druim Buidhe is down a long gentle slope. On the corrie floor, there is a good path down to the dam at the head of Loch Quoich. Immediately in front, the rocky slopes of Druim a Chosaidh tower above. It was in one of the outcrops that Charles and his friends found a cave in which to spend the day. The army camp, that caused so much alarm, was some distance to the east, on a site that is now submerged in the loch. In Charles' time, there was no dam, and the head of Loch Quoich was some two miles further east than it is nowadays.

Distance: 7 miles (11 km)
Height of ascent: 1580 feet (480 m)
Naismith time: 3 hours 0 mins

Loch Quoich to Gleann Cosaidh

Landranger Map: 33

OS Maps Central Grid Reference:

NM 950 990

First, it is necessary to climb due north directly from the dam to the top of Druim a Chosaidh. Then, it is possible to descend straight down into Gleann Cosaidh. An alternative is to walk some way westwards along Druim a Chosaidh before descending.

The exact place where the fugitives broke through the cordon in Gleann Cosaidh is not known. It is intriguing to walk along the glen exploring the possibilities. There are very few places where there is any kind of gully running across the glen. Indeed, most of the glen is a very open and flat, with hummocks that would make excellent vantage points for sentries.

The most likely place is at the head of the valley, just west of Loch an Lagain Aitheich (NG 910 028). Near two small footbridges across the main stream, there is a gully sloping up the north bank for about a hundred yards between two rocky promontories. Despite the bonfires, the bottom of this gully would have been in shadow. It does look possible to crawl

along it unseen to a point a good way up the hillside.

Distance: 3 miles (5 km)

Height of ascent: 1720 feet (520 m)

Naismith time: 1 hour 52 mins

Gleann Cosaidh to Kinloch Hourn

Landranger Map: 33

OS Maps Central Grid Reference:

NG 950 050

The route taken by Charles is just a two thousand foot trudge straight up the hillside on the north side of Gleann Cosaidh. At the top, a line of rusty boundary posts leads along the ridge to the summit of Sgurr nan Eugallt.

The narrow ridge from Sgurr nan Eugallt is now followed all the way round Coire Shubh to the second main bealach, just below the summit of Sgurr Dubh. At this point, a path on the right is taken into Coire Shubh, and thence down to the main road near Loch Coire Shubh.

Distance: 3 miles (5 km)

Height of ascent: 2180 feet (660 m)

Naismith time: 2 hours 6 mins

Gaelic Place Name Details

<i>Name</i>	<i>Pronunciation</i>	<i>Translation</i>
Allt a' Chinn Bhric	alt a khinn vreec	of the speckled head (hilltop)
An Eag	an ek	the gap or notch
Gleann Cosaidh	glyown koshy	steep valley
Coire nam Gall	kora nam gahl	corrie of the foreigners
Dearg Allt	jerak alt	red stream
Druim Buidhe	drooim boo-ye	yellow ridge
Druim a' Choisidh	drooim a khoshy	steep ridge
Fraoch-bheinn	fraokh vehn	heather mountain
Loch an Lagain	lokh an laggin aan-ikh	lake of the hollow of Aitheich
Sgurr nan Eugallt	sgurr nan eg-allt	peak with streams in its gaps
Sgurr Dubh	sgurr doo	black peak
Coire Shubh	kora hoo	corrie of the berry