

6 BENBECULA to SOUTH UIST (1)

Although Charles started his walk to Corodale from Rairnish, only the last stage from Loch Dobhrain will be described here. The route from Rairnish to Market Stance is already covered in Chapter 4. The only route possible from Market Stance to Loch Dobhrain is to follow the A865 south for 13 miles. Unfortunately, the terrain is flat and lacking in interest. Many people will prefer to do this stretch by car.

Bed-and-breakfast accommodation is available in many private houses along the whole length of the road. There are also conveniently placed hotels on Benbecula and South Uist.

The route that Charles used from Corodale to Loch Boisdale was never recorded by any of his contemporaries. He may have made the journey by boat. Therefore, no attempt is made to describe the route in this chapter.

Loch Dobhrain to Corodale

Landranger Map: 22

OS Maps Central Grid Reference:

NF 800 350

Loch Dobhrain (NF 767 345) is right against the west side of the A865, about eight miles from the end of the causeway between Benbecula and Sout Uist. The three peaks that dominate the eastern skyline are Hecla on the left, Ben Corodale in the middle, and Beinn Mhor on the right. The immediate objective is Bealach Hellisdale (NF 815 324) between Ben Corodale and Beinn Mhòir.

The route begins at a track leading off to the east, opposite the house between the north end of Loch Dobhrain and the bridge over the Abhainn Roag. After about two hundred yards, the track veers right, and it is necessary to take to the heather. After

entering Glen Dorchay, there is an easy climb to Bealach Hellisdale. The route then continues down into Glen Hellisdale. After passing Loch Hellisdale, on its northern side, the shortest way to Corodale is to climb the shoulder on the left. From the crest, there are fine views across the whole expanse of Corodale Bay. The ruins of two cottages, which must be the remains of those used by Charles, can be seen below on the far bank of the stream running down Corodale to the sea. The descent to the stream is steep but easy through heather and bracken.

The return can be made up Corodale itself. The path starts on the south side of the stream. At the head of the glen, a steep, but easy, grassy slope rises to the summit of Ben Corodale. Here, there are clear views to the sea on both east and west.

The western side of the summit is bounded by two rock buttresses. The grassy gully that separates them is too steep and greasy for a descent. The easiest way off the summit is by another gully about fifty yards north-east of the cairn. This gully is on the northern slopes overlooking Glen Usinish. Although steep at first, this gully is dry and safe. Eventually, it opens out on to a scree slope, where, it is possible to contour round to the bealach between Ben Corodale and Hecla.

The descent from the bealach to the A865 begins by following the stream westwards into Glen Dorchay. The final two miles across a featureless moor of peat and heather may require the use of a compass in order to arrive directly at the original starting point.

Distance: 11 miles (17 km)

Height of ascent 2710 feet (820 m)

Naismith time: 4 hours 46 mins

Gaelic Place Name Details

<i>Name</i>	<i>Pronunciation</i>	<i>Translation</i>
Abhainn Roag	ahvin ro-ack	river of the small promontory
Beinn Mhòr	behn vohr	large mountain