

Creag Mhòr and Beinn Heasgarnich

by Andy Crawford

WALK FACTS

Distance: 20km/12½ miles.

Map: OS Landranger 50 and 51 required / OS Explorer 378.

Start / parking: Kenknock. Grid Ref NN 466365.

Grading: An exceptionally strenuous, but rewarding day over mostly trackless, grassy terrain with some steep ascents and descents to contend with, therefore suitable only for VERY fit walkers. Without a mountain bike allow 6 - 9 hours. Sheep and cattle graze in the lower parts of the glen therefore dogs must be kept on a lead and under strict control.

Creag Mhòr and Beinn Heasgarnich are, by all accounts, two big hills in the Forest of Mamlorn that present a challenging days walking. They are a bit remote but offer a good day's walking on huge expanses of grassland away from the hordes on the nearby Lawers range. There are no distinct paths leading to the summits.

The road leading in to the original starting point at Badour is now closed to vehicles and so an extra 14.5km/9 miles of road is added to the walk. A mountain bike is perhaps the best form of transport to get to Badour but the walk is not at all unpleasant. The choice of a mountain bike, of course, means having to return to where it has been left rather than following the route given here.

The nearest available parking, for about ten or a dozen cars at most, is at Kenknock in Glen Lochay some 17km/10½ miles west of Killin. From here, either use a mountain bike or walk westwards along the road to Badour and Batavaime and follow the rough road uphill on the west side of the Allt Batavaim. Where the track crosses the burn, go left through a wooden gate and up the steep grassy bank to Sron nan Eun then continue on the same heading to the summit of Creag Mhor 1047m/3,435 feet Grid Ref NN390361. Traces of a reasonably clear path can be found up here on the ridge between Sron nan Eun and the summit.

Head northwest away from the summit, then north, down a broad ridge for about 500m/550 yards towards Meall Tionail then turn east, down to and across the col at 650m/2,132 feet. The col can be a bit boggy in places and, although there is a feint path, it's just possible to keep losing it.

Pick a way up the steep grassy slope over Sron Tairbh then along the broad undulating ridge to the flat summit of Beinn Heasgarnaich 1076m/3,530 feet Grid Ref NN414383. As this walk progresses, don't forget to take a few looks backwards to fully appreciate the bulk of these hills.

The easiest route down from the summit of Beinn Heasgarnaich, and perhaps the most direct, is a south-eastwards, straight line, undulating descent through Coire Ban Mor past the southern end of Creag na h Achlarich to reach the footbridge near the dam at Grid Ref NN430359 from where it is a fine walk out, on a higher level track than the one walked in on, to join the tarmac road, leading down from the hydro electric dam, back to the start.

If using a mountain bike, be sure to back track from the footbridge near the dam to where it was left on the inward part of the journey.