

WALK 1 Dalmally

Old Ruined Village* (30 mins duration. NB beware MUD after rain!)

*The site is a little dangerous since Tilhill Construction have harvested trees.

From Station turn left and enter Monument Hill crossing the bridge over the track. Turn left into lane to barrier entrance to forest track. Turn LEFT immediately through fence chicane and climb up through old oak wood to clearing and summit. The ruined dwellings here were inhabited by the MacNab Clan (smiths & armourers to Kilchurn Castle) for more than 400 years. Last inhabitants are said to have come down some fifty years ago. The site is also a prehistoric settlement or 'dun', the outlines of which are clearly visible. Nice views over the glen.

Path continues, skirting the right hand side of the 'dun', through forest to regain the forestry track.

Now you have a choice : TURN RIGHT along track and then, after 300 yards, RIGHT again and you will come gently home.

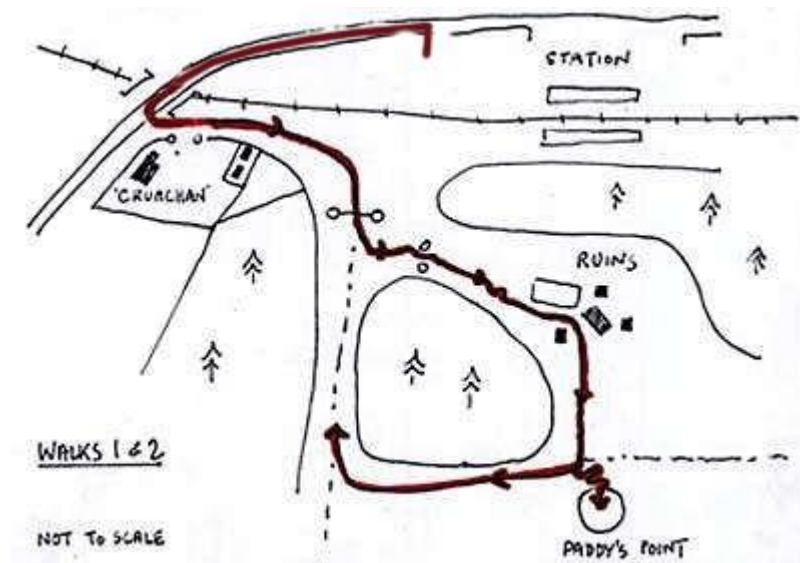
Alternatively, cross over track and climb steps for Walk 2.

WALK 2 Dalmally

Paddy's Point (30 mins)

Cross track and *climb steps up to summit. A stiff climb but worth it for spectacular views over Loch Awe and Ben Cruachan. The old Scots pines and great beeches make it a landmark.

*Trees have fallen and obstructed the steps to Paddy's Point. A longer clockwise approach is advised.



WALK 3 Dalmally

Duncan Ban Monument (1 to 1½ hours)

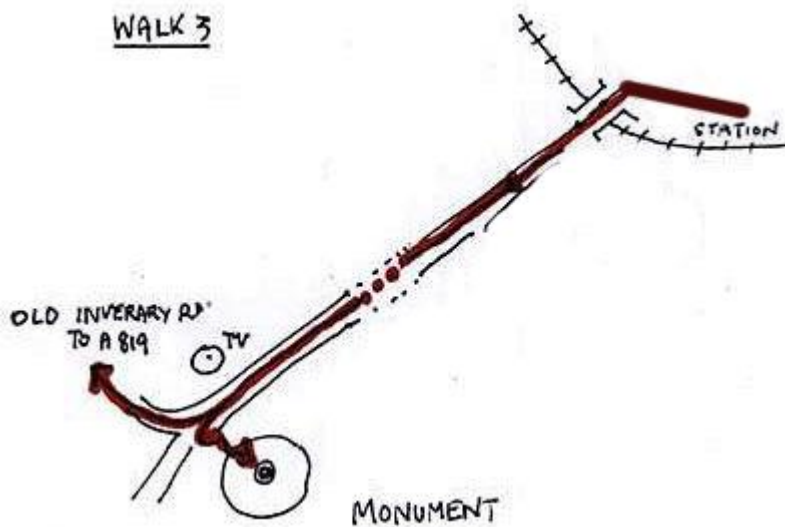
Enter Monument Hill and follow Old Military Road to top. Road was built by English soldiers around 1750 as part of a network aimed at pacifying the Highland clans and is still well-maintained as far as the monument, which stands on the highest point, an old beacon hill (550 feet above sea-level)

The granite rotunda was erected in the 19th century to celebrate Dunchadh Ban McIntyre, the Robbie Burns of the Gaels. 'Fair' Duncan was born in a now deserted township in Glen Orchy, near Loch Tulla, in 1724. He fought ingloriously at the Battle of Falkirk (1745) on the 'wrong' side and composed a humorous song about it which pleased the Earl of Breadalbane, who appointed him stalker on his forest of Ben Dorain. He worked there some 20 years and composed his greatest songs - 'Song of the Misty Corrie' and 'In Praise of Ben Dorain' among others.

We like to think that his popularity was in part due to his spirited defence of people against sheep during the traumatic times of the Highland clearances : (in translation)

'My blessing with the foxes dwell
For that they hunt the sheep so well.
Ill fa' the sheep, a grey-faced nation
That swept our hills with desolation!....

A partly resurfaced track at the bottom of Duncan Ban's hill, skirting the TV mast emplacement, offers a continuation of your walk down to the A819, Inveraray road.



WALK 4 Dalmally

Old Military Road down to A819 (45 minutes)

From the Monument you follow the resurfaced track downhill. You are walking the remains of the old main road from Inveraray (1750) which came uphill as it arrived near Kilchurn Castle to avoid the loch (several feet higher in those days) and marshy ground and went on through Dalmally to either the Bridge of Awe and the furnace or towards Stirling. (The present A819 link to A85 was not constructed until the 1930s)

It is a pleasant down-hill walk (you may need boots). There are fascinating glimpses of life along the high road from the 18th century & 19th century, eg the site of the old chapel of St Chiarain and, opposite, a huge christening stone used by priests 'outed' in the religious strife.

You pass Ardteatle Cottage and then arrive at the A819 about a mile west of Kilchurn Castle. Walking back along the 2 main roads is unpleasant and even dangerous, so, unless you retrace your steps, it's best to arrange for one of your party to pick you up by car at this point.

WALK 5 Dalmally

Parish Church and Old 18th Century Bridges. (45 minutes)

From Dalmally Railway Station proceed down hill past the old Drill Hall on right to main road. At Glenorchy Lodge Hotel (nice pub) turn RIGHT. Pass by cattle mart and shinty field on left to Dalmally Hotel. (Not much left of the original, which was praised as early as 1785 by a traveller as the only decent hotel for miles.) At Hotel turn LEFT.

There are two bridges because the River Orchy has split in two forming a kind of island on which the early 19th century church stands. The old Gaelic name for the island is Clachan Desearth ('hermit's or saint's community'), so we may presume that Dalmally was a sacred place from earliest times.

Inside, the church has an interesting Laird's loft on a timber colonnade and the churchyard has grave-stones relating to both Breadalbanes and MacNabs. On the pretty river bank, below the fine second bridge, is a post showing how the floodwaters from the higher reaches of the Orchy can push up the water level at times.

From here you retrace your steps, unless you wish to extend your walk to **Stronmilchan** (1½ hours; turn LEFT over bridge) or **Craig Lodge** (30 minutes turn RIGHT). Formerly a hunting lodge, Craig Lodge is now a Catholic House of Prayer, Youth Community and Retreat Centre, welcoming all denominations; you are welcome to visit the house and lovely garden.

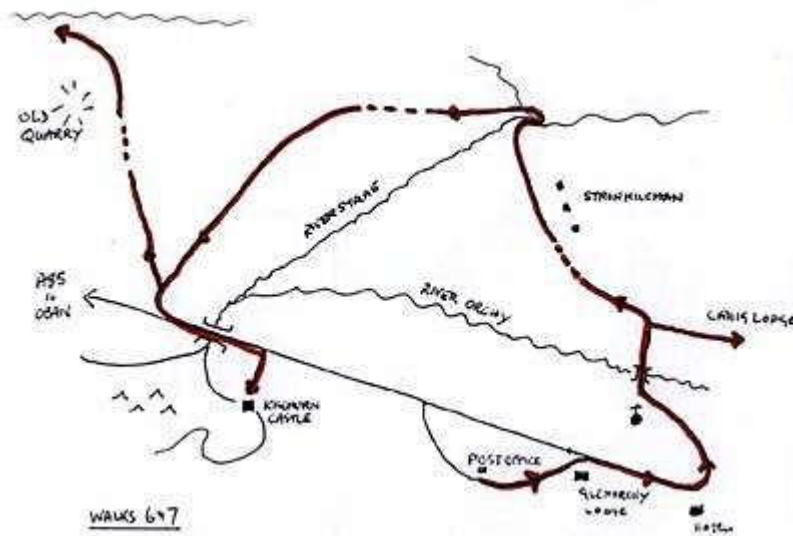
A short distance along the main road to Crianlarich is **Glen View**, where there is a pottery, a well-stocked General Stores and a modern Primary School. The original village school is a few steps further along the main road and, before it, down below the road level, lies **St Conan's Well**. Look for a fenced-off, landscaped descent opposite the police-station).

WALK 6

Kilchurn Castle via Stronmilchan Village (2-3 hours)

Proceed as for Walk 5 and continue left after Dalmally Bridge. This is the old high road to Bridge of Awe, via the Brander Pass. The land-use pattern of a crofting township is clearly visible both to the left and right as the road leads you out towards Ben Cruachan and Ben Einidh. On the right, as the township ceases and the electricity pylons climb the hill, is the site of the Great House of Clan McGregor, who disputed unsuccessfully with the Campbells for supremacy in these glens.

The road does a dog-leg bend at the river Strae, where there are 2 more bridges. There is a beautiful pool at this point. The road turns SW and you soon reach the main Oban road. You turn LEFT here and make a run for it! over the bridge to the access point to Kilchurn. Watch out for traffic on the road and ensure you cross UNDER the railway bridge. The 15th century castle, built for Black Colin Campbell, is largely a ruin but you can get access to the interior during office-hours in the season.



WALK 7

Ben Cruachan's Lower Slopes (up to 3 hours)

Leave the Ben Cruachan Inn, heading east towards Dalmally. Veer onto the Stronmilchan road. There is a gate leading on to a track which skirts the mountain's lower slopes. This is a lovely walk in open countryside and need not be too strenuous.

After 30 minutes and two gates you see the course of a river going diagonally LEFT up towards Cruachan. Follow the river for a while (beautiful falls and pools) and you will see a footbridge onto the open slopes.

TURN BACK THEN unless you are used to climbing mountains!

WALK 8

Lochawe, The Village and its splendour.

Take a stroll out of the Ben Cruachan Inn Carpark, cross the road into the grounds of Loch Awe Hotel, a short 10 minute walk around the paths will lead you to the Lochawe Railway Station. Follow the rails west and into the village. Follow the main road, but keep an eye left for access to a secluded viewpoint of Kilchurn – don't forget to take care crossing the railway line and keep gates closed.

Continue on to St Conans Kirk. Take a tour around this magnificent building then head back out, cross the road to St Conans Road. This will lead you as far as you like up Ben Cruachan. It's all paved right up to Cruachan Reservoir – you may have spotted this site in Starwars Andor! The walk to the Reservoir takes around an hour and 15 minutes. The views are spectacular.