

Paths Around Abriachan

1 Clansman to Balchraggan (The old coffin track)

Come and walk in the footsteps of our ancestors and follow the last route many of them took to their final resting place – on this ancient Right of Way. The funeral cortege would have stopped at the spectacular viewpoints along the way to rest. They may have offered up a toast of locally still whisky to the clans folk they carried. Abriachan had a great tradition of distilling its own local brew. The path runs diagonally down the hillside but parking is easier at the Clansman end. Here you can reflect on these people who are witnesses to the changing traffic on the loch, from the early Viking settlers in their wooden longboats to the hi-tech sonar cruisers of modern day Nessie-hunters. Paths managed by the Woodland Trust Scotland.

Allow 1hr. Distance - 2km up hill.
Moderate - waterproof footwear
Park at Clansman or Abriachan village hall.

2 Abriachan Nursery to Clansman (Woodman trail)

The old road up-hill to Abriachan has been re-opened here and links with a new path to the Clansman Hotel. This was a well-trodden route to the settlement on the upper slopes, where today, ancestors of the early crofters are still working the land.

Follow the footsteps of the woodsmen through hazel woods and see this rich ancient woodland, which would have provided wood-fuel and shelter. The hazels here were cut over annually for rods to make creels and barrels. Fishermen would call in to buy the products of the woodsmen's labour before sailing on through the great glen from coast to coast, following the seasonal bounty of herring and cod. Paths managed by The Woodland Trust.



Loch Ness towards Dores

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Allow 1hr. Distance - 2km. Moderate - waterproof footwear
Park at Clansman or Abriachan Gardens.

3 Easy Access Paths - (suitable for wheelchairs and buggies)

Over 1500m of smooth surfaced paths and boardwalk weave through the flattest area in Abriachan forest. All these trails are the result of partnerships between the Abriachan Forest Trust (AFT), Cantray Bridge Rural Skills College students and local people. Take a picnic so that all ages and abilities can enjoy the surprises hidden among the trees.

Great fun for children even when it's raining.

Bug hunt beside the boardwalk



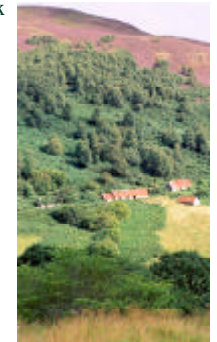
4 Carn Na Leitire Hill path

Running from the AFT car park to the Balchraggan road end this is the walk to show you what Abriachan Forest Trust is all about. Stroll along the easy access paths, passing the Ark tree house and immediately after the round house take the left path through the recently thinned pine wood. After climbing for 25 minutes up the steep track the hill levels out and from the top, on a clear day, you will be able to see the Munros in Strathfarrar and Affric, the oil rigs in the Moray Firth and beyond the bulk of Ben Wyvis to the hills in the north. We are helping to reforest the Great Glen with mixed woodland of scots pine, rowan, birch, aspen and juniper. Look out for crossbills on your way up and you may see black grouse once out on the open hill. Follow the old peat tracks across the bogs and past the shieling before dropping down to the crofting township of Balchraggan. To make this a loop walk you can park at the village hall, walk along the road either west past Loch Laidie to the AFT car park or in the opposite direction along to Balchraggan and up the shieling path as described in Walk 5.

Allow 3.5hrs. Distance - 7km / 4.4 miles loop. Moderate - waterproof footwear.
Park at village hall or AFT car park.
or allow 3 hours to walk 5.5km from AFT car park, over the hill path and down the old coffin track (Walk 1) to the Clansman Hotel.

5 Shielings Loop

Chase the cows up this path to enjoy the best views across Loch Ness and out to the sea. You will be following the route taken by the cattle and their summer herders to the hilltop grazings well away from the ripening corn fields below in Balchraggan. After 30 minutes steady climb through birch and pine wood, continue along the right fork and you will spy the turf-roofed shieling ahead - a welcome picnic stop and viewpoint. Sit and allow your thoughts to wander back 100 years before continuing along the hill path and past large circles of turf mounds - all that remain of possibly the old shielings? To come back down the hill take the path on the left which runs back along the edge of the woodland. Chose to gasp at the magnificent Great Glen viewpoint by coming down the steep ride to the Corryfoyness road or carry straight on to meet the path you came up.



Old croft township viewed from Shieling

Allow 2hrs. Distance - 6km / 3.8 miles.
Moderate - sensible footwear. Park at village hall and follow road to Balchraggan.

Paths under Development

6 The Peat Paths to fitness

This will link the hill path to the Great Glen Way. When it is finished (estimated 2005) you will be able to cut some peats and along the way build up your stamina with a series of peat based challenges.

7 Whisky Still Link

Abriachan's aptitude for illicit stilling and even more lawless treatment of the excisemen are recorded in verse and legal records. The path between the Great Glen Way and the Shieling Loop is a useful link now but the whisky still will not be found easily - we use juniper smokeless fuel to keep locations a secret.

8 Rivoul ich Cycle Loop

This is open to mountain bikers now but will be developed over the next few years. We hope cyclists and walkers can co-exist safely and separately!