

Walking the Corrieyairack Pass A' coiseachd Màm Choire Ghearraig

The Corrieyairack Pass crosses the Monadhliath Mountains, connecting the two communities of Fort Augustus, in the Great Glen to the north; and Laggan, in Badenoch to the south. The 25 mile Pass takes you through scenic glens and past ancient woodland to open moor and high hill, following a historic route used by travellers for centuries.

The Corrieyairack is ideal for exploring in summer, with short walks available at each end of the Pass. The full route provides a more challenging experience for the hill walking enthusiast.

Be Prepared Before You Go **Bi ullachte**

Even in summer, weather conditions can be changeable and severe along the route. Please check the weather forecast and carry or wear the following items:

- * Warm waterproof clothing, walking boots
- * Map and compass and know how to use them
- * First aid kit, survival bag
- * Food and water
- * Watch, whistle and torch

Assess your own health and fitness against the route distance and conditions.

In the event of an accident, only alert the Emergency Services if self help is impossible or unrealistic. Please note that mobile phones may not work along the route. It is not advisable to walk this route during winter (October to April).

For further safety advice contact the Mountaineering Council of Scotland at:
www.mountaineering-scotland.org.uk

Local Facilities

Bothies can be found at Melgarve and Blackburn, 9 miles apart. www.mountainbothies.org.uk

Both communities at Laggan and Fort Augustus offer a range of facilities and services including local walks and information on the local heritage. To find out more, contact:
www.laggan.com Community Office 01528 544383,
Tourist Office 01479 810363
www.fortaugustus.org Tourist Office 01320 366367



An Asset to Conserve 'S fhiach a gheidheadh

Although the military road has been badly eroded and damaged in places, it remains the longest surviving stretch of Wade road in Britain, and is designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument of national importance.

You can help to conserve the Corrieyairack:

Please leave your vehicles before reaching the military road. The Corrieyairack is not maintained as a public road and is not suitable for use as one. Highland Council will not accept responsibility for any accident or injury caused by ignoring this warning.

Please take precautions to minimize damage when walking on the road, such as avoiding the shortcuts that are eroding the traverses.

Please observe the Country code.

Please take all rubbish home with you.

Please report any damage or other problems to:

Senior Archaeologist, Highland Council Tel: 01463 702502,
Email: archaeology@highland.gov.uk

Photos courtesy of: Stewart Geddes, Laurie Campbell,
The Highland Council Highland Folk Museum.
Text: Elspeth Grant.

Corrieyairack Pass

May to September

An Cèitean chun an t-Sultainn



Walk the Pass

Discover the Past

Coisich am Bealach,
Ionnsaich mun Àm
a dh'fhalbh



Drove Route **Slighe dròbhaidh**

From the early 17th century, drovers from the islands and northern Scotland crossed the Pass on their way south to the cattle trysts at Crieff and Falkirk. Despite increasing competition from the railways, droves of horses, cattle and sheep continued to cross the Pass until the late 19th century.



Patrolled by Redcoats **Air a gheard le Saighdearan Dearga**

In 1731 General George Wade, Commander in Chief of King George I's forces in North Britain, supervised the construction of a road over the

Corrieyairack to link the forts in the Great Glen with Ruthven Barracks and the road south through Drumochter Pass. This would strengthen the military presence in the Highlands, and "open a short and speedy communication with the troops quartered in the low country, contribute to civilise the Highlanders, and... continue them in due obedience to (his) Majesty's Government".

Field Marshal George Wade attributed to Johan van Diest. Courtesy of Scottish National Portrait Gallery.



Travellers have used the Corrieyairack Pass as a summer route for centuries. This high mountain pass provides the shortest connection between the Great Glen in the north to the upper reaches of the Spey in Badenoch to the south.

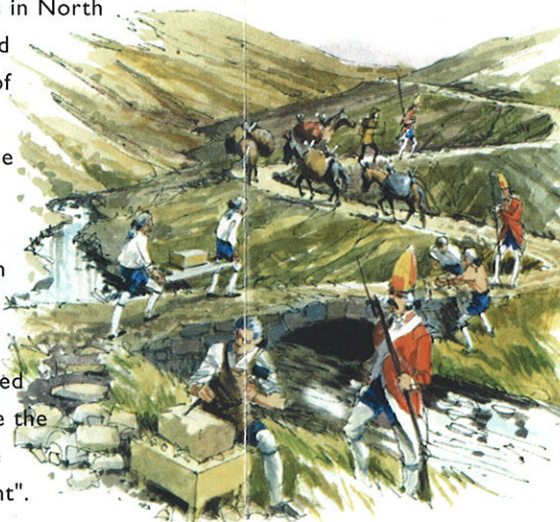
Exploited by Jacobites **Na Seumasaich a' gabhail brath**

Ironically, the military road was used to great effect by the army of Prince Charles Edward Stuart in 1745 at the start of their campaign. On marching south, the Jacobites stopped at the summit of the Pass, ready to ambush General Sir John Cope's army as they scrambled up the zig zags. But instead of confronting the Jacobites, Cope decided to retreat near Dalchully at the foot of the Pass, thus leaving the way open for the Prince's army to continue south and take Edinburgh.



Building Bridges **A' togail dhrochaidean**

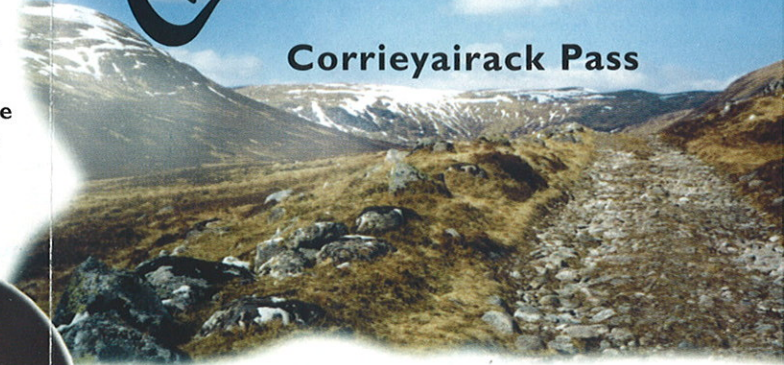
General Wade employed 510 soldiers to build the military road during the summer of 1731. Civilian craftsmen completed the many bridges in 1732. Covering 28 miles between Dalwhinnie and Fort Augustus, and climbing to 2,500 feet, the road became the highest public road in Britain and one of the greatest feats of road engineering in the Highlands.



James Charles Edward Stuart by Antonia David. Courtesy of Scottish National Portrait Gallery.

Màin Chaire Ghearraig

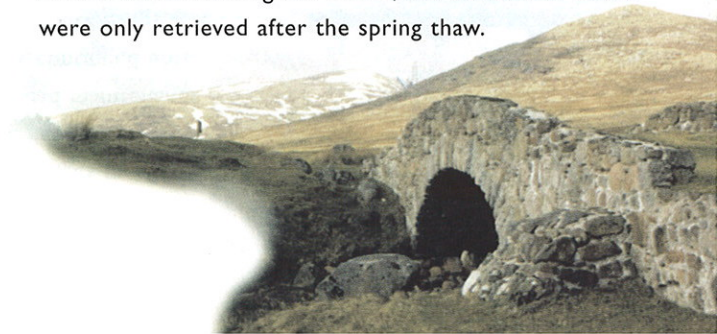
Corrieyairack Pass



As you tread the Pass today, notice the straight 'Roman-style' lines of the road and the zig-zags where the incline was too steep to ascend in a straight line. Wade cut eighteen traverses into the hillside, now reduced to 13, supported by stone and mortar walls. You will pass some fine examples of Wade's bridges, which have recently been restored.

Tragic Tales **Sgeulachdan Muladach**

Although Wade stated that his road was 'as easy and practicable for wheeled carriages as any road in the country', there are many dramatic accounts of travellers crossing the Pass. Carriages were blown over, civilians perished in blizzards and soldiers succumbed to the cold, having over-refreshed themselves with whisky in the Kingshouse at Garvamore. The road was blocked for several months during the winter, and sometimes bodies were only retrieved after the spring thaw.



Corrieyairack Pass

The Corrieyairack was maintained as a military road throughout the 18th century until it was handed over to the Commission for Highland Roads and Bridges in 1814. However by 1818 it was superseded by a new lower level road between Laggan and Spean Bridge. Road maintenance ceased from 1830, although bridge repairs continued until 1850 to provide for drovers still using the route.



More recently in the 20th century, the eastern approach was tarred to Melgarve by the local authority, and repairs carried out on some bridges by the Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland. You will notice that some bridges have been bypassed by road and river realignments.

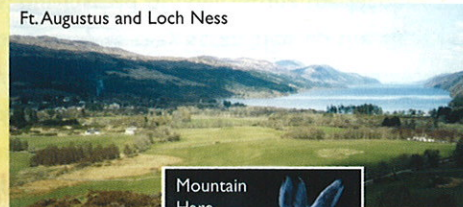
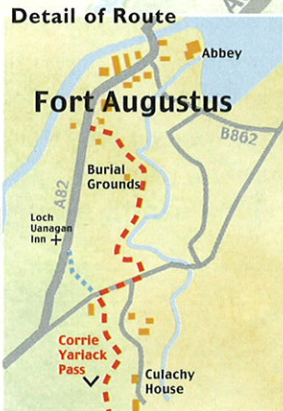
Today, the Corrieyairack pass is popular with hillwalkers and provides access for farmers, deer stalkers and also the electricity workers who maintain the adjacent power line running between Fort Augustus and Rannoch Moor. However, the route has not been maintained as a public road for over 150 years.

Mrs Grant of Laggan, in her *Letters from the Mountains* (1781), wrote that the Corrieyairack was impassable in winter due to snow and 'an evil spirit which the country people devoutly believed to have dwelt there time out of mind'.



Listen for the distant lament of the lonely piper, said to haunt the Pass. Many travellers including a group of soldiers in 1958, have heard the ghostly piper.

Map not suitable for navigation



Ft. Augustus and Loch Ness

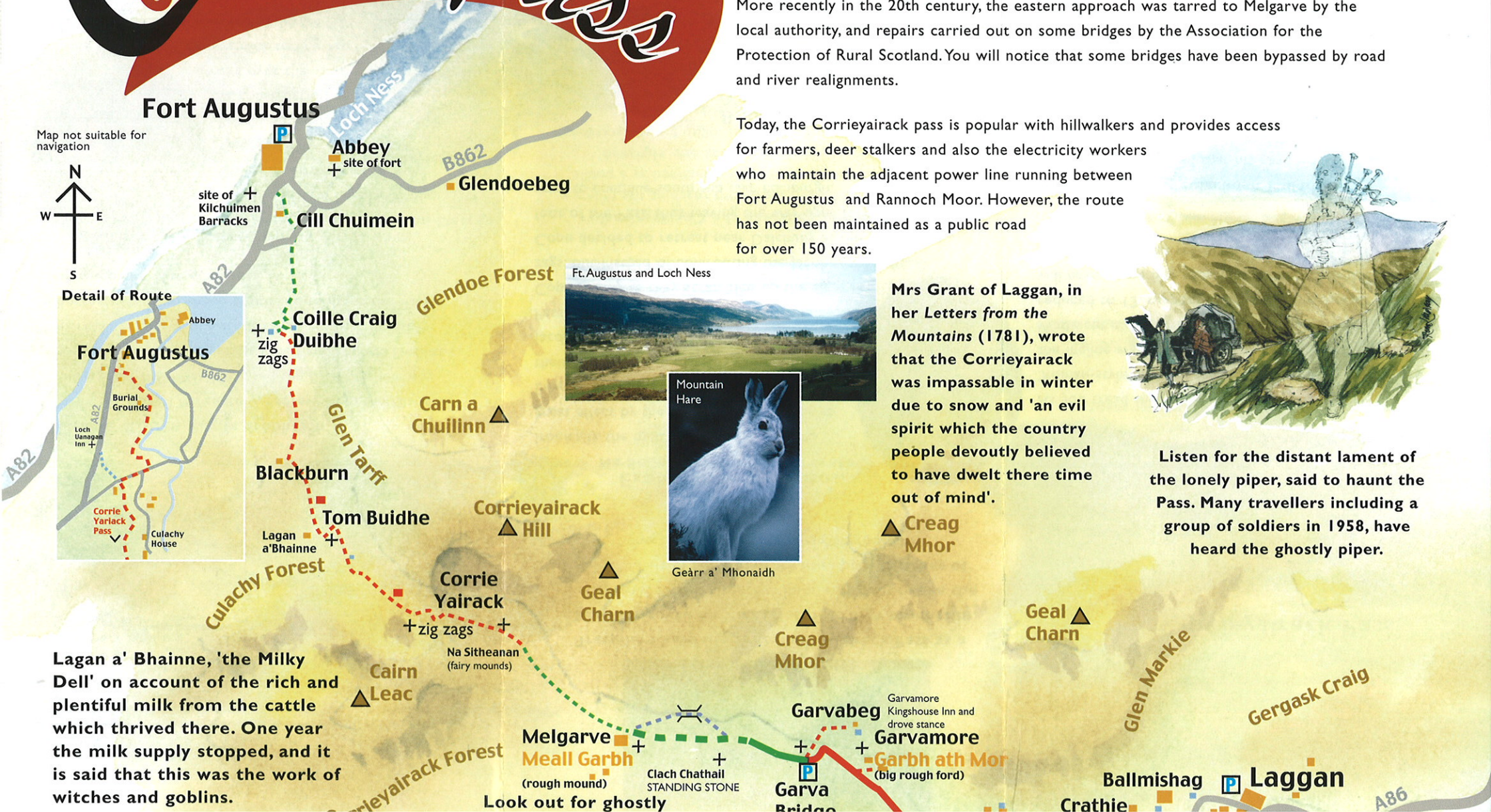


Mountain Hare

Geàrr a' Mhonaidh

Lagan a' Bhainne, 'the Milky Dell' on account of the rich and plentiful milk from the cattle which thrived there. One year the milk supply stopped, and it is said that this was the work of witches and goblins.

Look out for ghostly





Plants like the Sundew and Butterwort supplement their diet by catching and digesting insects, which are attracted to the sugary sap on their leaves.

Sundew
Ros mór an t-solais

PATH INFORMATION

OS map Landranger 34, 35 or Explorer 401

Full Route Distance and Time ----- -----

Fort Augustus (GR 378093) to Laggan (GR 615944)
25 miles (40 km) 11 hrs

Fort Augustus to Melgarve (GR 463961)
13.5 miles (22 km) 7hrs

Shorter Walks -----

Garva Bridge to Melgarve return 8.5 miles (13km) 2.5hrs

Melgarve to bottom of south zig zags return 6miles (10km) 3hrs

Fort Augustus to top of north zig zags return 7 miles (11km) 3hrs

Terrain

Varied quality from rough, stony and steep on higher sections, to tarred road from Melgarve to Laggan and from cemetery to Fort Augustus.

Important

Please keep your dog under control and on a lead near stock.

Please keep to the road. Be aware that deer stalking takes place July to February.

2500ft - 762metres

Path profile

Ft Augustus 30mt 100ft

Laggan
1000ft
300mt

figures accompanied by giant deerhounds.

"If you'd seen these roads before they were made, You'd lift up your hands and bless General Wade" (JB Salmond, 1934)



Curlew
Gullbneach

*Nature shaped by people and ice...
...look around as you walk through the Pass.*



Rounded heather clad hills, deep corries and long glens have been shaped by the last ice sheet, 20,000 years ago. The great expanse of Loch Ness to the north, follows the line of the Great Glen Fault.

Over the centuries, human impact has changed the variety, colour and texture in the landscape. Notice the striped patches on the heather hillsides around you. This practice of 'muirburn' creates the best conditions for rearing grouse.

Wetland bogs are ideal for midges. On still summer days these tiny flies can be a real nuisance to walkers. Please be prepared and take insect repellent and a midge hood. If caught out, try smearing yourself in juice from crushed bog myrtle leaves and run!

Midge
Meanbh-chuilleag



Golden ringed dragonfly on bog myrtle



Damhan nathrach an Òir Roid

Coire Ghearraig

The Gaelic scholar Alexander MacBain from Badenoch thought that the name Corrieyairack was an anglicisation of the Gaelic Coire Ghearraig meaning 'the corrie of the short one' (burn). However, some local people from Badenoch and Fort Augustus explain the name as being the 'red corrie', An Coire Dearg.

Glen Shierra
Strathmashie
A86
A889
A9
Newtonmore

Glen Shierra
Strathmashie
A86
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Newtonmore

Kinloch Laggan
"Our folk are on the old road.....the hunters and the tribes.....daoin'uasail (leaders) and broken men and I hate the New (military) Road It means the end of many things ..." (Neil Munro, The New Road)

Cowberry flower
Lus nan Bo-dhearc



KEY

- Wade road single track tarred
- - - - - Wade road rough track
-
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-
-
-
-

Dalwhinnie



Cowberry
Lus na Feannaig

Spy for golden eagles and peregrines soaring over rocky crags and open hill. The soft wet ground and peaty pools of the moor provide good feeding ground for waders such as dunlin and curlew. Listen out for the skylark. Birds too have reduced in variety and number over the last few hundred years.

Woodland cover has reduced over the centuries since the introduction of sheep and increase in deer numbers. Passing through Glen Tarff, you will see a remnant of ancient woodland which would once have extended up the hillsides, sheltering red deer.

This leaflet is funded by

