

Milngavie to Drymen

John drove us across to Milngavie on the Saturday afternoon, and after a brief comfort stop at the local Tesco, Euan and Wendy set off on the first leg of the West Highland Way. John drove round to Drymen to set up camp and cook dinner for us arriving. As we were only carrying day packs on this section, we made good progress. The initial section was through Mugdock Country Park which was fairly uninspiring. At Carbeth there were some odd chalets with a slightly creepy feel. Although there was Drumgoyne distillery en route we continued onwards to Gartness and the campsite at Drumquhassle campsite. Day one done

Drymen to Rowardennan

We packed our rucksacks, said goodbye to John and set off for a lengthy day of walking. It was relatively easy going. We popped into the shop at Drymen to stock up with lunch and some snacks for the journey. Instead of heading up over Conic Hill, we opted for the alternative route through Milton of Buchanan. It wasn't the most scenic of routes alongside the road until we reached the tourist hotspot of Balmaha, where we used the facilities, ate lunch and moved on as there were midgies trying to make a meal of us. However, it was dry and warm...and getting warmer...We continued to plod on alongside Loch Lomond as it got even warmer... At least that gave us an excuse to stop for an ice cream at one of the caravan parks. By the time we reached the Ben Lomond car park we were flagging. We made the decision to cook dinner at one of the picnic benches to give us energy to continue onwards. We did get a few funny looks but the Sausage and Pasta Ragu did the trick! We hoisted the packs onto our backs once again and set off for Rowchoish Bothy. After a few kilometres, we made the decision to pitch camp as we were exhausted. A suitable camping spot was located and we were sound asleep shortly afterwards.

Rowardennan to Crianlarich

Up early for another long day. We called into Rowchoish bothy on the way past just to say we'd been there and agreed that we'd never had made it the previous day. The terrain was more challenging on this section and we were both grateful for our walking poles. It was dry and warm again...and becoming warmer...and hotter... In fact it was the hottest day of the year!! So grateful for the Platypus hydration system which meant we could drink whilst walking. Stopped at Inversnaid hotel for a water resupply, sausages in a roll and some chips, before tackling the rockiest section alongside the loch. Both Wendy and Euan had a moment where they nearly fell but escaped any injury. Hot and sweaty, we had many stops and were making slow progress. Finally we reached Bein Glas Farm Campsite where we were refuelled with a cold drink, another plate of chips and another water resupply. By the time we reached the youth hostel at Crianlarich we were dead on our feet. The expected catering option at the youth hostel was unavailable, but the warden took pity on us and unearthed a frozen pizza which we heated up (once Euan had figured out how to put the oven on!) A shower, comfy bed and decent breakfast fortified us for the next leg.

Crianlarich to Bridge of Orchy

Another warm day for the climb out of Crianlarich, but a little shower of rain just after we'd started was a pleasant relief and scarcely dampened our clothing. It was pleasant

walking through the woodland then down into Strath Fillan, where we stopped for an ice cream, and water resupply. Continuing onto Tyndrum was very pleasant. The last few kilometres from Dalrigh and past the 'Lochan of the Lost Sword' was particularly pretty. We reached Tyndrum starving to death again! Into the Green Welly Stop for lunch. Stocked up on calories and had a good rest. The local shop didn't have a huge selection of ingredients for a camping stove meal so we improvised by purchasing a pack of ready cooked chicken and a jar of curry sauce for later. We also met the 'Dutchman' for the first time at Tyndrum....Never did discover what his name was but we met him a few times as the week went on. It was a long haul out of Tyndrum onto Bridge of Orchy. The path ran along side the railway for a good while and it made us smile when we got a toot and a wave from the train driver! Unfortunately we were caught in a squally shower halfway along the route, but quickly covered the rucksacks and ourselves with waterproofs and continued on our way. The entertainment for this section was Wendy picking a number and Euan telling me about the song on his playlist this related to. He has obscure taste in music! On reaching Bridge of Orchy, we popped into the hotel for some refreshment and another water resupply. Following advice from the warden at the Youth Hostel, we pushed on up the hill from Bridge of Orchy, found a nice camping spot, a convenient rock to use as a table to cook our 'chicken curry' and a vista for a lovely sunset

Bridge of Orchy to Kingshouse

After a good nights sleep, we packed up the tent and continued upwards until we reached the top of the hill and were rewarded with some wonderful views of Loch Tulla and the mountains beyond. We could see the hotel at Inveronan at the bottom of the hill and had hoped that we'd get a snack here. Sadly it was not open and we had to make do with a cereal bar to fortify us for the trek across Rannoch Moor. Thankful for the good weather, the walk across the moor did not seem too desolate but the surface of the old military road we were following was quite hard going on the feet. Wendy had also been bitten just behind the knee by a cleg. This has swollen quite alarmingly and slowed our walking pace a bit!! It was mid afternoon by the time we reached the Glen Coe ski resort and we were exhausted as well as starving. After a much needed rest and a rather tasty lunch (burger and chips) we headed off downhill for the short walk to Kingshouse. A lovely, peaceful camping spot next to the river was chosen....seconds before two fighter jets came screaming down the glen at what felt like just above head height!! Whilst Wendy sorted out the tent, Euan went off to refill the water containers at the bunkhouse. He returned saying there was a deer in the hotel car park. When it was suggested that he might have been hallucinating, he insisted I went with him to see...no deer but a flock of ducks instead...Our campsite was conveniently situated next to the Kingshouse hotel, so we felt obliged to call in for a refreshment after dinner (boil in the bag meals) and steal some electricity to charge the phones. An excellent night's sleep!

Kingshouse to Kinlochleven

We ordered a breakfast roll from the hotel in the morning, but they forgot about our order and we waited patiently for far too long before hassling the staff...The up side of this was a freebie breakfast of leftover breakfast items from the main hotel. We made the most of this good fortune! We met our Dutch friend here again – he was fuelling up on caffeine! So, after a slightly delayed start, we headed off through Glen Coe to Altnafeadh, where we started heading up hill towards the 'Devil's Staircase' Despite the hype, the climb wasn't too bad and we stopped for lunch at the top to appreciate the stunning scenery. The walk towards Kinlochleven was enjoyable, the weather was dry and not as hot as some of the days, and we made good time on this section. Our delight at seeing Kinlochleven was

deflated somewhat by the long, long descent into the town. However, we finally reached Blackwater Campsite, our home for the night. Once the tent was pitched, we took a wander into the town to seek out some dinner. The Tailrace Inn didn't disappoint, with good food and a convenient socket to charge the phones!

Kinlochleven to Glen Nevis

After packing up the tent and a little wander back into town, we found a lovely takeaway which supplied breakfast rolls and sandwiches. That was us fuelled for the day ahead. The path out of Kinlochleven was pretty steep, but through a wooded area, so it was quite spectacular to see how much we had climbed when we emerged from the trees. The route followed the Lairig Mor, a lovely glen through the mountains and again this was a pleasant walk. We stopped and ate out sandwiches on a convenient rocky outcrop and watched other walkers wander past. The final stretch treated us to a great view of Ben Nevis. It is quite an impressive mountain and unusually we could see the summit as it wasn't shrouded in cloud. By this point, we felt that we'd never reach the Glen Nevis campsite as the descent seemed to go on forever...Eventually we arrived and pitched the tent. It was a shock to the system to be around so many noisy people again! However, we were delighted to meet our Dutch friend again. Wendy pitched the tent whilst Euan went off to use the facilities! We made for the on site restaurant for our dinner and thoroughly enjoyed steak pie, burger and more chips!! Euan had pudding too. He felt he'd earned it!

Glen Nevis to Fort William

We were up fairly early to walk into Fort William to catch the train. It was a bit of a dreary walk, but we spotted the sign signifying the end of the West Highland Way. We'd done it!! Into Morrisons for breakfast...it took forever...then onto the train home. Delayed for an hour at Crianlarich which meant no time for lunch at Glasgow so we were starving by the time we reached Perth. John kindly collected us from the station. Weighed the packs when we got home. Euan's was 15kg and Wendy's was 13kg. If we do it again, we'll be using baggage transfer!