

Walk description:

This walk starts from opposite the Glen Nevis Hostel and describes the most straightforward and safest ascent and descent of Ben Nevis (4,418ft), Britain's highest mountain, via what is now widely known as the Mountain Track, previously and probably unwisely named the 'Tourist Route'. This is a serious mountain challenge and should be treated as such, but that said, in ideal conditions it is an immensely rewarding undertaking offering superb views throughout, especially from the summit, where on the rare days it is clear a vast area of lochs, glens and mountain peaks offer breathtaking vistas.

Access information:

From Fort William take the A82 (signposted for Inverness). At the small roundabout go straight across (signposted 'Glen Nevis'). The Glen Nevis Hostel is 2.5 miles down this road on the right; there is limited parking opposite the hostel and just beyond on the left. Alternatively there is ample parking at the visitor centre, which is just under a mile further back along the road from the hostel.

Additional info:

The walk is described starting from the Glen Nevis Hostel, but could be just as easily started from the visitor centre by crossing the footbridge and turning right along the riverside before walking up to join the Mountain Track and on to join the walk as described from Waymark 2.

The weather on Ben Nevis can change rapidly and has claimed lives in the past, therefore it is essential that proper boots and clothing are worn and plenty of refreshments taken along. Also a map and compass and the ability to use them are strongly advisable, as navigating across the summit plateau in poor visibility is notoriously difficult.

Start grid ref: NN127718**OS map:** Explorer 392**Walk length:** 9 miles**Duration:** 480 minutes**Height gain:** 1325 metres**Contributor:** M Parkin**Weathercall:** Get a local forecast for this walk.

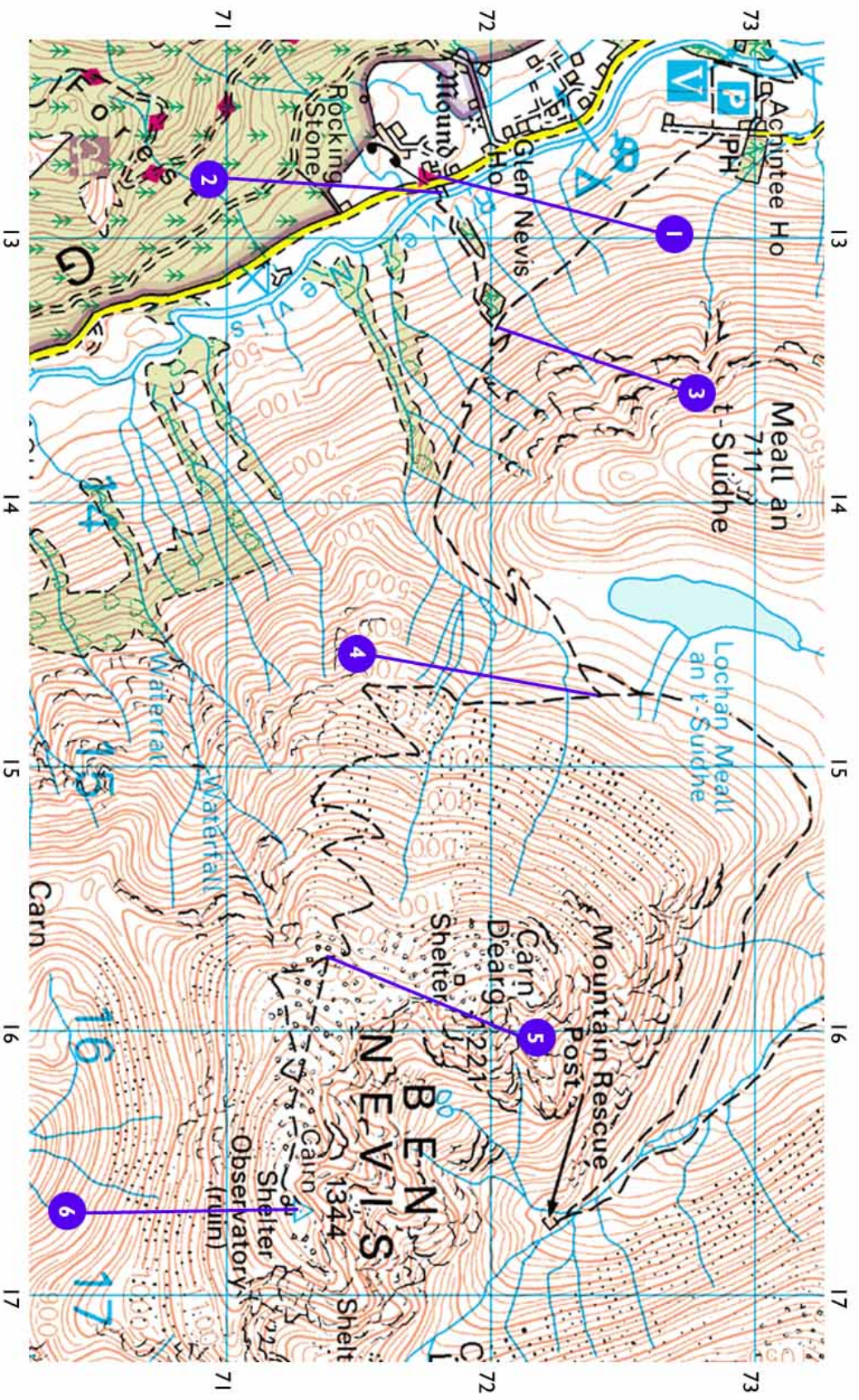
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Features:

- Mountains
- River
- Lake/Loch
- Birds
- Great Views

1:50 000 (x2)

Ben Nevis via the Mountain Track



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- 1**  The walk starts by crossing the footbridge over the River Nevis opposite the Glen Nevis Hostel and turning right to reach a stepped stile over a fence. (Grid ref: 127718)
- 2**  Cross the stile over the fence and check the information board on the right to see if there is any relative information to the walk, before climbing steeply up the path to reach the junction with the Mountain Track. (Grid ref: 128718)
- 3**  Turn right up the Mountain Track. After the path puts in a couple of zigzags and further up crosses two rather neat metal footbridges, it starts to veer northwards, following the western flanks of the Red Burn Gully. As the back wall of the gully is neared the track elbows its way up to the saddle, where the gradient eases for a while as the track pass Lochan Meall an t-Suidhe off to your left and carries on up to a walled windbreak at a junction of paths. (Grid ref: 133720)
- 4**  On reaching the junction of paths at the walled windbreak, turn sharp right up the track to pass under the waterfall of Red Burn, which marks the halfway point of the ascent. This is the point at which if either weather or fitness are in doubt you should turn back, as the second half of the ascent is tougher than the first. After fording the Red Burn the track continues up in a series of four giant zigzags, eventually to reach a split in the track just beyond a circular, stone-walled windbreak on your right. (Grid ref: 147724)
- 5**  Both tracks just beyond the circular windbreak flatten somewhat and both will lead you to the summit, but it is better to take the one to the left in a westward direction. There is thankfully only one last short, steep ascent to reach the summit plateau. Great care should be taken while crossing the plateau and to remember the route taken to the actual summit, as the track is bordered by some dangerous gullies on its north-eastern side. (Grid ref: 157713)
- 6**  There is no mistaking the actual summit of Ben Nevis, as it is topped with a triangulation pillar on top of a cairn and the remains of the old observatory building with an emergency shelter on top. The descent is the reverse of the ascent, starting by carefully navigating your way back across the summit plateau, which can be notoriously deceiving in poor visibility. Once on the edge of the summit plateau, return down the Mountain Track on what many believe to be a hard and tiring descent back to the start. (Grid ref: 166712)