

An Stuc and Lawers Ridge Circular from Lawers Village

The Lawers group of 6 Munroes offers one of the best high level walks of the southern highlands but is an extremely arduous adventure even for the fittest. The walk described here is perhaps more acceptable for a day's outing without stretching the walker to the limit.

This walk includes Meall Garbh (G='rough hill' 3667ft), An Stuc (G= 'the pointed hill' 3643ft), Creag an Fhithich (raven crag) and Ben Lawers (3982ft). Meall Greigh(G='hill of grazing' 3300ft) may be added at the beginning and adds about 1 hour and 1 mile to the overall walk.

Distance 10.5 miles
Height 3982 ft/ total ascent 4650
Start / Parking Lawers Village GR NN680395
Approx. time 7 - 9 hours

Severity This is a serious mountain walk - An Stuc east side is a serious scramble - difficult if greasy and with no by-pass in winter conditions. Easier to climb than descend. If in doubt do not tackle, especially in winter



The walk

Park in or near Lawers village. If you use the carpark opposite the Horn Carver's shop you must pay at the shop. The Lawers Hotel are usually helpful in allowing use of their carpark - but have a pint there when you come back.

Walk up the farm road beside the Horn Carver shop and follow the sign for the hill where the farm road turns right. Follow the track up the hill beside the burn and notice the old shielings after the second stile. *200 years ago the farming families moved up here with the animals in the spring.* The track drops down into the exceptionally deep gorge of the Lawers burn where you cross a footbridge then follow an ill defined track up the opposite bank to follow the west bank of the gorge. Eventually you join a wide track leading to the small catchment dam (GR-NN662427). Cross the burn here and follow the smaller burn up the hill.

Unless you intend to add Meall Greigh to the east, stay on the left bank and head for the lowest point on the horizon (GR NN657438). Turn left here and follow the rising ridge to the summit of Meall Garbh - don't be fooled by the spur leading off to the left near the summit. There are 2 'summits' - take your pick - you climb both in any case.

From Meall Garbh second summit, pick your way down a crumbly rocky path to the bealach to find yourself facing the ascent of An-Stuc (the peak or pinnacle). If in doubt about this ascent, it may be by passed to the right, but this is often blocked by a huge cornice until early summer. Another option is to scramble down to Lochan nan Chat then up to the bealach east of Creag na Fhithich - a long climb!

The direct path winds up through the lower rocks to the left before the climb becomes 'tricky' for the last hundred feet or so. This last part can be difficult - even dangerous when greasy or icy. Continue now to the cairn on An Stuc summit.

Descend the steep crumbly track to the bealach then continue to Creag na Fhithich, keeping to the right of the sheer face which is not recommended. A small scramble near the top and you have a clear view to Ben Lawers north ridge leading away from Creag na Fhithich.

Pick your way over the mossy/rocky top of Creag na Fhithich and make a point of going over to the left for the view down into the corrie with the oddly cat shaped Lochan Nan Chat. The north ridge of Lawers now faces you, looking like a long drag, but in fact only a little over 500ft to the top. Ascend the obvious track up the ridge to the craggy summit of Ben Lawers with its two trig points.

Looking west from here you see the magnificent view to Beinn Glass with the Tarmachan ridge stretching away toward Creag na Caillach and Killin with Ben More and Stobinian beyond.

From the summit trig point look south toward Loch Tay to find the track leading to the east ridge. Head south on the barely visible track to the broken rocks (about 140 metres) where you may see among the rocks the remains of the base of a Victorian mapping expedition. Veering eastward now the very sharp east ridge leads down, with views to Lochan Nan Chat on the left, to a broad shoulder with no vestige of a track visible. Just keep heading east until you find a convenient way down to the left to join the Lawers burn somewhere below Lochan nan Chat.

A track now follows the south bank of the burn to the dam you passed on the way up. Head back down the wide track being careful not to miss the turn off to the left leading back down the burn to the welcome relief of the car at Lawers.

This route may be extended if you have two cars - leave one at the Lawers centre carpark and one at Lawers village. When you reach the summit of Ben Lawers, continue to Beinn Ghlass then down the shoulder to the car you left at the Lawers centre carpark.

A reminder - this route is very difficult, possibly dangerous in winter conditions. Even in summer the east side of An Stuc requires a head for heights and some scrambling skills.