

WALK 13: RUTTLE WOODS AND EILEAN AIGAS

Distance: 5.8km

Time: 1 hour 20 minutes

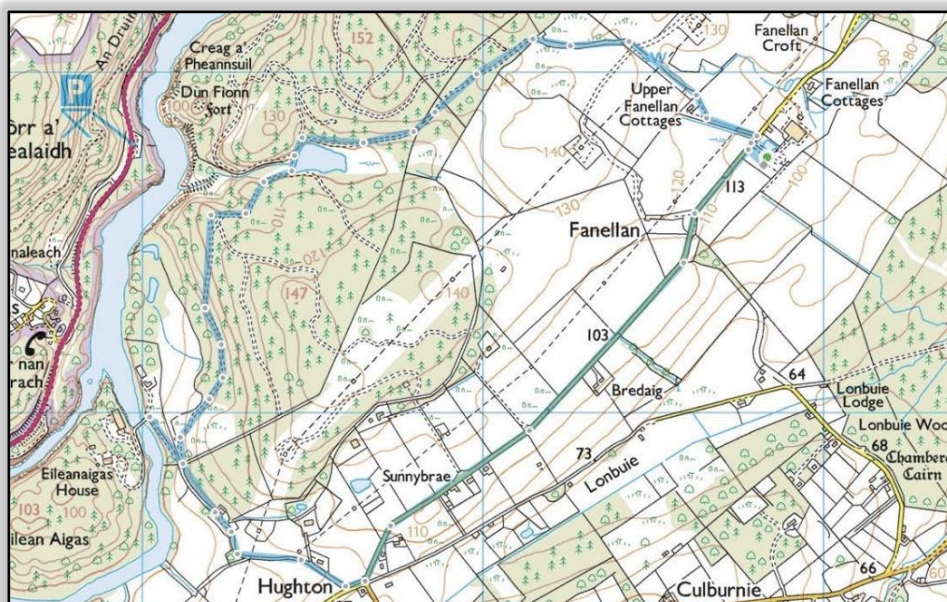
Ascent: 107m

Map: OS Explorer 431

Terrain: The majority of this walk is on well-maintained woodland tracks, with the return leg on a minor tarred road

Start Point: Parking space next to the former Lovat Water Bottling Plant, close to Fanellan - 429489

A great, mostly wooded, walk through the pleasant Eilean Aigas estate, including a chance to glimpse the grand Eileanaigas House, makes this an enjoyable circular walk



STEP 1

To access the start of this walk from the A831 Beauly to Cannich road, turn left (signposted for Kiltarlity) to cross the Black Bridge over the River Beauly. Shortly after crossing the bridge, turn right onto a minor B road signposted for Fanellan and Eskadale. After 1km, there is a car park on the left-hand side of the road, situated next to the former Lovat Water Bottling Plant. To begin the walk, cross back over the road and take the track 10 metres to the right, signposted for 'Upper Wester Fanellan'. This track can be very wet and muddy, but thankfully doesn't last very long. Bear right before you reach the farmhouse, soon crossing a cattle grid. At the end of the track, go through a wooden gate on the left and onto another track to enter Ruttle Wood.



STEP 2

Continue along the track past the gate into the dense woodland. The track soon passes by a lovely little lochan, making for idyllic views. Shortly after, the track crosses another cattle grille before reaching more open ground, where you can catch the first glimpses of the grand estate house. The track then reaches a junction with a small minor tarred road. Turn right to head downhill for the best look of the house.



STEP 3

The best views of the house can be seen at the bridge. The current Eileanaigas House dates from 2006 and was built to replicate an old-style hunting lodge by Canadian businessman Brendan Clouston. The old estate house, to the north of the island, was once home to the Sobieski Stuarts, who claimed to be descendants of Bonnie Prince Charlie and therefore claimants to the throne of the UK. The brothers held court on the island and surrounded themselves with royal paraphernalia. They managed to convince some they were real descendants, including Lord Lovat himself who owned the island, but many and more did not take their claim seriously. To continue the walk, retrace your steps back up the hill and follow the road past the junction.



STEP 4

The road soon passes the pleasant and impressive estate manager's house on the left, before reaching another small minor road a few hundred metres later. Turn left and follow the road into the tiny hamlet of Hughton. Then, turn left at the junction, following signs for Fanellan. Follow the quiet road for approximately 1.7km back to the start, enjoying pleasant views towards the south.