

## Schiehallion



*Schiehallion* is from the Gaelic *Sidh Chailleann*, which translates as 'Fairy Hill of the Caledonians'.

Its regular shape led it to be selected by Charles Mason for a ground-breaking experiment to 'weigh the world' in 1774. The deflection of a pendulum by the mass of the mountain provided an estimate of the mean density of the Earth, from which its mass and a value for Newton's Gravitational constant  $G$  could be deduced. Mason was assisted in the task by mathematician Charles Hutton, who devised a graphical system to represent large volumes of surveyed heights, later to be known as contour lines - which are now a main feature on all maps.

Schiehallion is the perfect introduction to hill-walking. It is one of the easier Munros, the walk to the summit (1083m) is about 6.25 miles and takes about 5 - 6 hours return.

To get there From Pitlochry (20 miles), drive north on the A924, don't join the A9 but head for Killiecrankie. Just past Faskally Caravan Park turn left onto the B8019 and follow this road to the far end of Loch Tummel. Turn left onto the B846 and follow this road until you see the sign for Schiehallion Road on the right. Turn up here and park in the Braes of Foss car park. *Grid ref* : NN753556. There is a plaque here commemorating the work of Mason.

From Aberfeldy (12 miles), leave on the B846 signposted for Kinloch Rannoch and follow until you see the sign for Schiehallion Road on the left.

From the Braes of Foss car-park, head to its southern end and through a gate to a couple of information boards put up by the John Muir Trust. They have laid a well constructed path to almost the summit. Follow this path and not the old one which is really boggy. As the path starts to climb, you will pass a few stone 'chairs' that make for a good picnic spots looking onto Meall Tairneachan and over to Beinn a'Ghlo. Watch out for birds of prey, grouse, ptarmigan, whinchats and even some red deer.

This path then leads right up onto the top of the ridge and a boulderfield, take time and care crossing here. You will pass numerous cairns but the true summit of Schiehallion is further along the ridge than might be first thought! You will know when you get there.

The views are fantastic, particularly to the west across Rannoch Moor to the peaks of Glencoe.

The return to Braes of Foss is by the same route, to prevent further erosion - please do not short-cut down the old path.

Remember, mountains are dangerous. Do not venture out without being properly equipped for all weathers and eventualities. If you do go on a hot day, take plenty of water as there is none on the mountain.