



Ryan Findlay, P5. Still standing after all these years



Ngairé Beveridge, P5. Dragon Fly Spring



Molly Burnett, P7. Dunlin wading



Mathew Gunn, P6. I wonder if Santa will let us pull his sleigh



Gerlinde Coghill, P6. Red Grouse at sunrise



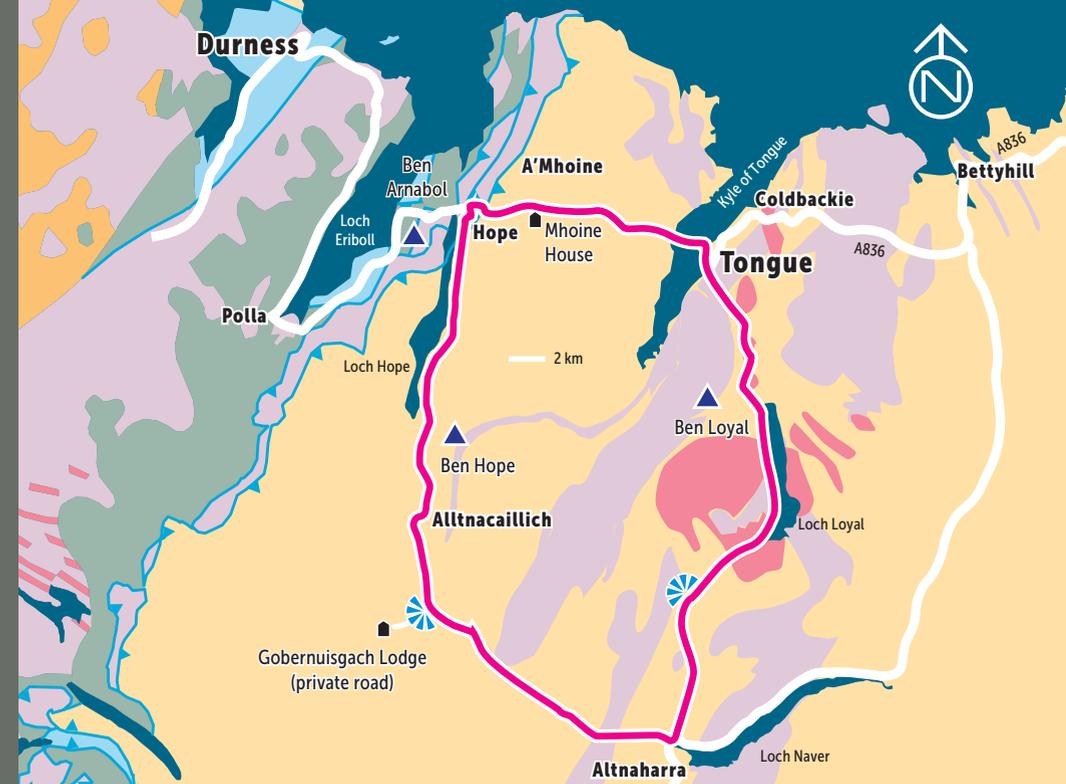
Lawrence Martin, P5. Moine house stands alone



Owen Beveridge, P7. Sticky sundew waiting for dinner



Maisie Gunn, P6. Just as Well I have a warm coat



Rocks from the dawn of time

- Granite, syenite, porphyry:** Coarse igneous rocks, rich in feldspar and quartz; various ages.
- Durness Limestone:** Pale and dark grey limestone, commonly with caves, clints and grykes; c. 480 million years old.
- Basal Quartzite and Pipe Rock:** White to pink quartzite with worm burrows ('pipes') in the Pipe Rock; c. 500 million years old.
- Torridonian Sandstone:** Red-brown, coarse sandstone; c. 1000 million years old.
- Moine Rocks:** Metamorphosed sandstones and mudstones; c. 980 million years old.
- Lewisian Gneiss:** A stripy, pink to grey-green rock, with distinct Scourie Dykes. At c. 3000 million years old the oldest rocks of Britain.
- Thrust faults**



Pebble Route 6



Photograph by Kevin Arrowsmith

The Moine Thrust route

The longest of our Pebble Routes, the Moine Thrust route will take you on a journey through the mountains just north of Altnaharra (a hamlet which holds the record for Britain's coldest temperature at -27°C). The circuit begins at 'Hope' and navigates what was once some of the wildest terrain in the north of Scotland.

The large spit of land between Loch Eriboll and the Kyle of Tongue is marked on the map as "A'Mhoine", a Gaelic word meaning 'Moss' or peat bog. The route crosses the Moine thrust, an incredibly important geological feature which helped 19th century geologists explain how mountains form right across the world. The rock type, Moine Schist, takes its name from the blanket bog which develops upon it.

The Norse influence on the coastal landscape is strong here, Ben Hope for example is named for the inlet at the mouth of the River Hope, which

in Old Norse is 'Höb' or 'bay', but as you drive deeper into the strath you'll pass Altnacaillich (the stream of the old lady) and Governuisgach (the point at the water place).

If you are feeling adventurous, why not try the 'Moine path'? An ancient trackway between Strath More and Tongue.

Both the Moine Path and Pebble Route 6 lead to Tongue village, a busy settlement of 200 people under the watchful eye of Castle Bharraich. The origins of the Castle are shrouded in mystery, even the date it was built has only been cautiously ascribed to the sixteenth century. Enjoy a walk to the top and take in the views and interpretation.

At the side of the main road from Tongue to Durness is the 'Moine House'. Built in the 1830s as a traveller's rest when the road was so rough and remote that journeys would take much longer and often entail an overnight stay. The house was no doubt a welcome site, sitting atop the hill like a beacon.

Evoke a Sense of Place

Explore Deep Time



Heritage of the Strath

Begin your journey down through **Strath More**, where the ancient remains of Bronze Age occupation line the eastern shore of **Loch Hope**. Across the loch is **Ben Arnabol**, the site where 3 billion year old Lewisian gneiss was forced up and over 500 million year old Pipe rocks. This is where it was first realised that great stresses and traumas could move rocks vast distances. You can see the **Old Coffin Road** from **Eriboll**

running down the hill, where residents were carried on their final journey before being laid to rest in the graveyard at the foot of Ben Arnabol.

The hillsides then seem to close in on the road, with craggy **Moine rocks** clearly exposed and gigantic boulders strewn by glaciers to either side. Once the road has squeezed through the gap, the Strath opens up.

Stories from a Working Landscape

Ancient glacial and river deposits have created flat, fertile land. Look out for the Iron Age broch tower, '**Dun Dornaigil**', an enigmatic structure which would have stood several stories high in its day. Until recent times this landscape was heavily populated. **Rob Donn MacAoidh**, our famous Gaelic poet was born and brought up here. His work records a snapshot of Highland life during the years of the **Jacobite rebellions**.

Park in the layby and from here you can see **Beinn Hee** (the Fairy Mountain) to the south west. There is an excellent mountain biking route to the north of this mountain. **Strath More** is a working deer stalking estate. The main lodge, **Gobenuisgach** was built during the Victorian era. Passing through the Strath you are likely to spot red deer and perhaps a golden eagle if you have enough patience!

Mountains and People

The mountains here are steeped in history. **Ben Klibrek** or **Beinn Clibric** (Gaelic) seen to the south as your approach the junction seems to derive from the Old Norse, **Hlið-brekk** 'hillside slope'. Turn left at the junction and head back north. Most of the mountains are made of the Moine Schist, thrust upwards into peaks once as high as the Himalayas. One exception is **Ben Loyal**, which now dominates the horizon to the north west.

This hill is unusual here because it is composed of granite. Ben Loyal has been Anglicised from the Gaelic **Beinn Laghail** which itself comes from the Old Norse, '**Laga-fjell**' meaning 'law mountain'. Justice may once have been given out here many centuries ago. Park in the layby (not a passing place) and look down to **Loch Coulside**, this was once densely populated with fields, shielings and homes.

Traveller's Rest

Towards the end of your journey you will come to **Tongue** itself (Old Norse '**Tunga**' or spit of land, probably the spit of land in the Kyle of Tongue, where there are the remains of the early Norse settlement). Here the landscape is dominated by **Castle Bharraich**, whose origins are steeped in mystery. Cross the causeway and head west back towards the North West Highlands Geopark to

finish your journey passing the '**Moine house**' (see front cover). This was built in the 1830s as a traveller's rest when the road was so rough and remote that most would need to seek refuge. It sits on top of the hill like a beacon. From here you are rewarded with a spectacular view over all the Northern most mountains.

Encourage Stewardship



View point 1. Looking South East East. NC460424



Photography: Name here

View of xxxxx NX000000