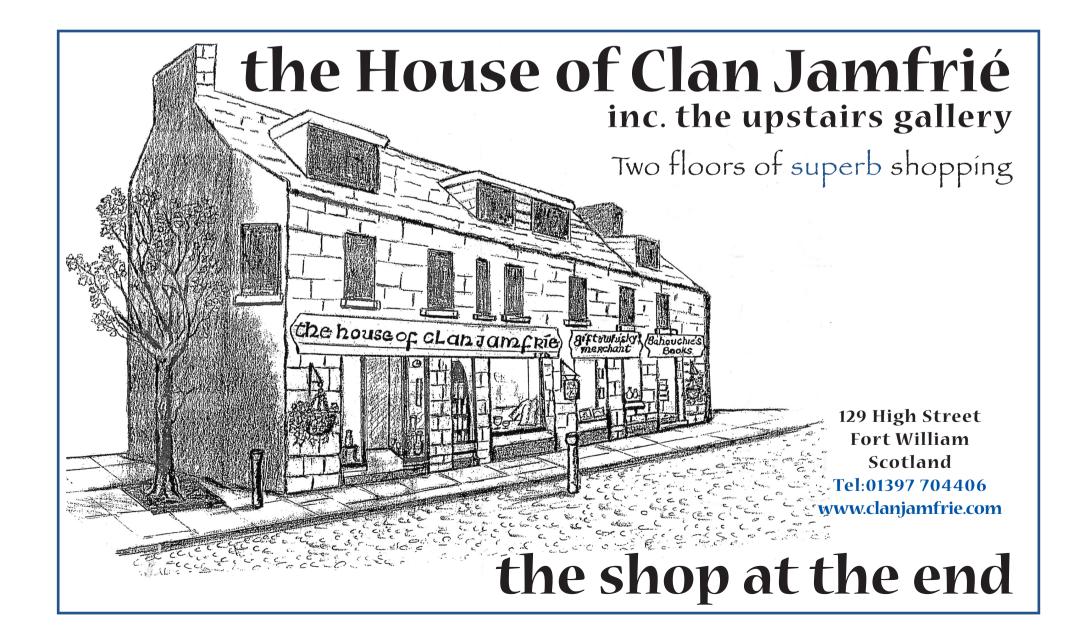
# www.westhighlandwayfarer.co.ukl

Satisfaction for young Harris Williamson as he contemplates his achievement. He covered the 96 miles of the West Highland Way on his unicycle in just three days.

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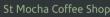
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THE WALKER on the West Highland Way has, on the whole, a pretty gentle introduction to the dangers that lie ahead, but this sign seen in recent years just outside the village of Drymen at the southern end of Loch Lomond, promises an unusual hazard.

Over the years the route taken by the Way has been made increasingly hazard free, partly in response to the sheer pressure of numbers on this the most popular of the long distance walks.

From time to time diversions need to be introduced, be it to avoid danger or simply to allow restorative work to take place.

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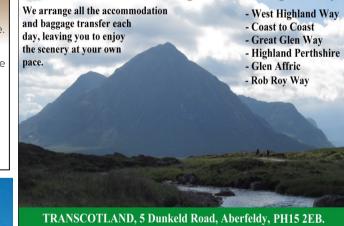
Watch out for warning signs and do take heed of them. Further into the hills real danger can lurk.





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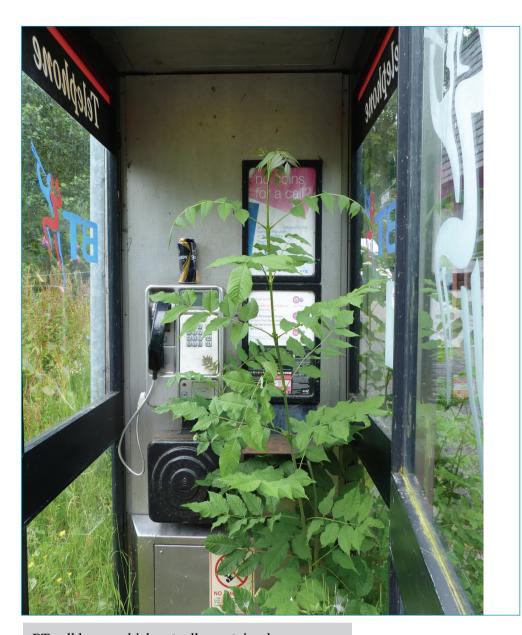




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BT call boxes which actually contain phones are, sadly. becoming an ever rarer fixture in the countryside. Where there is plentiful cellular coverage this is not, maybe, such a loss, but in many parts of the Highlands there is no signal – so even a box shared with greenery, such as this one in Glen Nevis, is a welcome, if unusual sight.



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### Race against time

NOT FOR NOTHING is the Fort William area known as the outdoor capital of the UK. Besides being the ultimate destination of its most popular long distance walk, it boasts an enormous variety of outdoor attractions during the

For those who have first hand experience of walking even part of the Way, probably the most daunting event is the West Highland Way Race. This year this is due to take place on June 18th.

A rigorously selected group of runners depart in the wee small hours from the Way's starting point in Milngavie and end up - most of them - anything up to 35 hours later in Fort William. The record, broken successively for the past three years by the same runner, Paul Giblin, now stands at an incredible 14 hours and 14 minutes.

Holder of the women's record is Kate Jenkins who recorded a time of just over 19 hours back in 2011. If running the whole route sounds too much to contemplate there are plenty of other challenges to consider.

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Earlier in the season, and earlier on on the route of the Way, is the Ben Lomond Hill Race. This is scheduled

for May 7. At the end of the Way (and now officially another metre higher!) the race up Ben Nevis is due to take place this year on September 3.

along part of the Way is the Caledonian Challenge. This charity event actually comprises two team races known as The 54 and The 24. Both start at the northern end of the Way on June 11.

The 54 (54 miles) starts at Gairlochy on the Great Glen Way and is scheduled to finish the following day at Strathfillan. The 24 (24 miles) gets away from Fort William itself and finishes the same day in Glencoe.

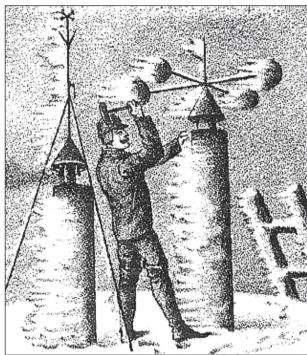
The week before this one of the most dramatic mountain bike events, the UCI Mountain Bike World Cup, is fought for in the hills above Fort William on June 4 and 5.

Still on two wheels, but with the benefit of an engine to power them, competitors in the renowned Scottish Six Days Trial battle it out in a whole variety of events on the roads and tracks around Fort William from May 2 - 7. Start and finish for all these events is the West End Car Park in Fort William.

For a less strenuous day out - unless you feel like competing - there are a number of Highland Games

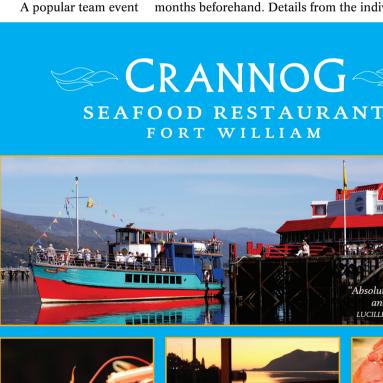
held throughout the area. They include the Lochaber Games (usually held on the last Saturday in July), the Arisaig Highland Games (July 27), the Mallaig & Morar Highland Games (August 7) and the Glenfinnan Gathering (August 20).

NB: Entries for the main events listed close many months beforehand. Details from the individual websites.



A century back a weather station was maintained on the summit of Ben Nevis. (Illustration from: "Ben Nevis and its Observatory

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## Fort William Ahoy!

FULL SPEED ahead for Harris Williamson, who last year completed the 96 miles route of the West Highland Way on his unicycle.

Harris, from Huntly, undertook the challenge to raise funds for the charity Networks of Wellbeing. He completed the course over three days, spending a total of 23 hours in the saddle.

Of the ordeal he said: "The toughest part peoples' attention."

must have been the top of Loch Lomond, it was very hard going on both myself and the unicycle, and I had to carry it for some very tough sections.

"On a whole it was really very enjoyable. It is a trail I have walked before and done sections many times, and it seemed aptly absurd as a way to raise awareness and catch peoples' attention."

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### Follow my leader...



AT TIMES walking the Way can be a lonely business, but on other occasions it can be anything but, as the scene above

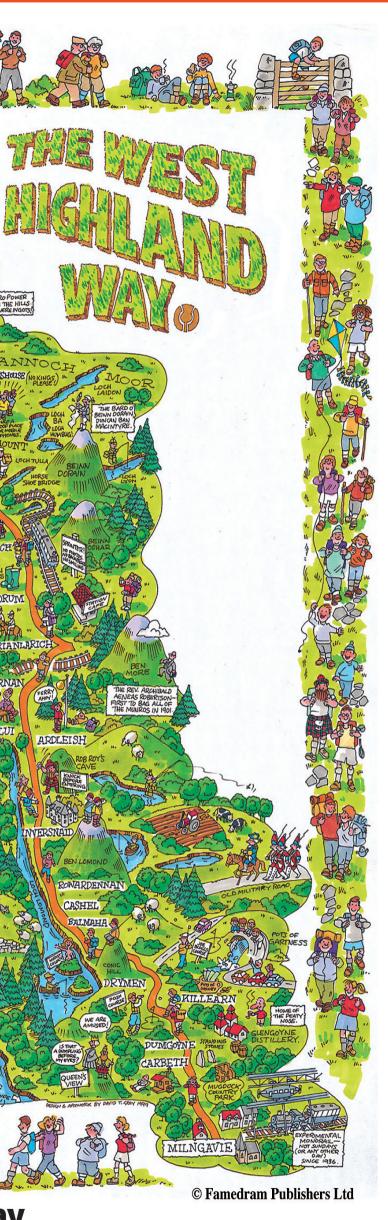
A procession of walkers make their way down the path of the old road towards the ever-welcoming Kings House Hotel right at the gateway to the wilds of Rannoch Moor. After this it's over the hills again and, eventually, into another welcoming oasis - Kinlochleven.

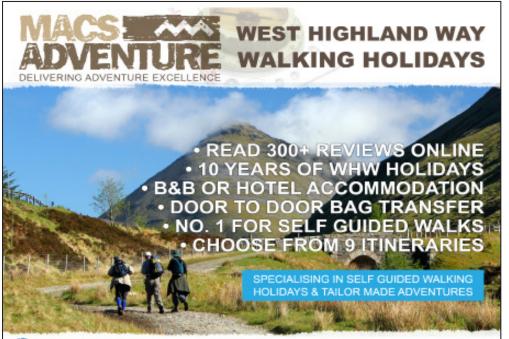




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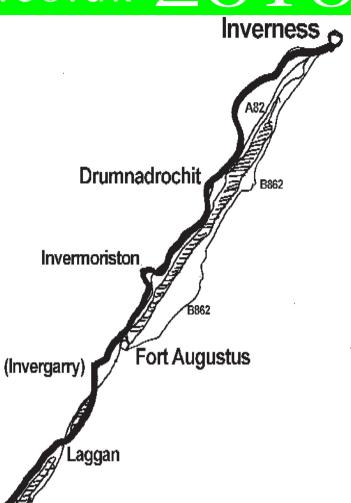
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