

# Stonemollan

Over the moor to the Cross Stone

START & FINISH: Red car park, Lomond Shores, Balloch

DISTANCE: 7km; 4.25 miles

TIME: 2hrs 15mins

MAP: OS 56; Harvey LLTOA

TERRAIN: Roads, tracks and paths; muddy in places

GRADE: Easy / Moderate



Approaching Stonemollan Muir

West of Balloch, on the very edge of the National Park, a ridge of high ground separates Loch Lomond from the River Clyde. The northern end is marked by the high point of **Ben Bowie** [3], but further south the ridge is characterised by open moorland.

This walk follows the first section of an old Right of Way from Loch Lomond to Cardross on the River Clyde, which starts as a beautiful beech-lined track with extensive views across Loch Lomond, then ascends to pass over the ridge at its lowest point; the Cross Stone on Stonemollan Muir.

From the south-westerly corner of the Lomond Shores car park follow the tarmac path out to the old A82 (now a no through road) and turn left towards Balloch. Follow the road past a ruined mansion in parkland on the right, to a Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society

signpost at Lower Stonemollan Road, indicating a Public Footpath to Cardross.

Go up this tarmac road up past Drumkinnon Farm and Glendale Kennels and cross a footbridge over the new A82 bypass, to gain an access road. Ascend through woodland, still signposted Cardross, with fine views across to Balloch Castle and Loch Lomond. At the highest house the road ends at an access gate where a track and firm, rocky footpath lead out onto the moor.

The views continue to improve as the path, now more of a grassy track, ascends steadily to reach the high crest of the ridge and a conifer plantation on the National Park boundary. The Cross Stone lies by the fence to the right of the gate and is thought to have formed the plinth for a cross, although doubt was cast on this as early as the 1890s and it is unlikely we shall ever know.



Go through the gate and descend through the conifers, muddy in places, and over a forest road to where the woodland ends with southerly views over the River Clyde to Port Glasgow. A return can be made from here, or the Right of Way can be continued, again muddy in places, to a right turn at a T-junction above Blackthird farm. This track re-enters the forest and becomes

the road crossed earlier, to complete a circular route (add 1km, 0.75 mile).

On the return route, turn right onto the access road half way down (sign-posted Farmhouse B&B), then immediately left onto a well worn path into the woodland, and follow it down past a waterfall, to exit onto the road at the bottom. Turn left and ascend slightly to regain the footbridge over the A82.



Balloch from the Stonemollan track