

## Locked gates and path networks in the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park

### Description



A week ago, two thirds along the forest track between the Ardochallarie and Anie hydro intake ([see here](#)), above the eastern shore of Loch Lubnaig, I came across this locked gate. (It was hard to note the exact position after been sandwiched between thick conifer plantations for a time but it was at GR 594115 approx).





The design of the gate is such that it would be very hard to climb over.....unless you were wearing

While, once you had brushed the conifer branches aside, the wooden fence on the Lubnaig side of the gate was quite secure and not difficult to climb over for an able bodied person, anyone unable to climb or with a bicycle would have been stopped here and unable to go on. The gate therefore legally constitutes an obstruction in terms of the Land Reform Act.





Access was once welcomed and facilitated here. Almost completely hidden from the track and only accessible after pushing through dense vegetation was the remains of an old stile. Never good for bikes but still a lot better than the locked gate.

The hydro planning applications noted that these tracks never formed part of the core path network. It looks like the estate managers are now actively wanting to stop access.

Well past the locked gate the track ends on the high ground above the Pass of Leny in an area being cleared of conifers:





Looking back up towards where the formal track, as recorded on OS Maps, ends

There is then a short band of almost impenetrable destruction.....





before you reach the native woodland in the Pass of Leny.....





Following my nose, 50m below this I found a faint track which led down.....to the camping permit area which FCS and the LLTNPA created this year at the Pass of Leny.





I had been here in

March and in my view its not a good place to camp. Like other camping permit areas the area where it might actually be possible to pitch a tent is much smaller than that depicted on the LLTNPA sign while there is constant noise from traffic passing just below.





The area was chosen I think because its not a good place to visit and helps therefore segregate campers from other visitors. Recreational opportunities from the permit area are very limited. To get to the river you need to cross the main road, there is then no footpath and further access is barred by fencing. On the uphill side, the section of path I found is short and around it fairly dense vegetation. A difficult place to wander from.....





The path above the campsite

Extend the path however, so it connects with the forest tracks running by the hydro schemes, remove the locked gate and you could create a circular route all the way round Loch Lubnaig – which would be particularly good for cycling. This is the sort of path improvement that the LLTNPA should have been considering as part of its core path plan consultation ([see here](#)).

The LLTNPA Access Team has a good record when it comes to locked gates and uncrossable fences, most notably with the Drumlean Judgement ([see here](#)) – the Sheriff in a recent bitterly contested access case on Cairnbank Road at Penicuik quoted the Drumlean decision in support of her arguments – and in response to the locked gates at Derrydarroch has got Falloch Estates to install stiles there ([see here](#)). I am pretty confident therefore that they will deal with the locked gate (which I have reported to them and which they have told me they will investigate).

Whether the Access Team, however, will be allowed by LLTNPA senior management to propose



further extensions to the core path network, such as that I have proposed here or the new Derrydarroch hydro track, in the face of opposition from landowners who would prefer to lock the public out remains to be seen.

## What needs to be done?

I am far from the only person who has had to climb past locked gates and almost everyone must have ideas for path improvements:

- if you come across locked gates or deer fences without crossing points, report them!
- if you have an idea of how to improve the path network in the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park suggest it!

## Category

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## Tags

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## Date Created

September 29, 2018

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