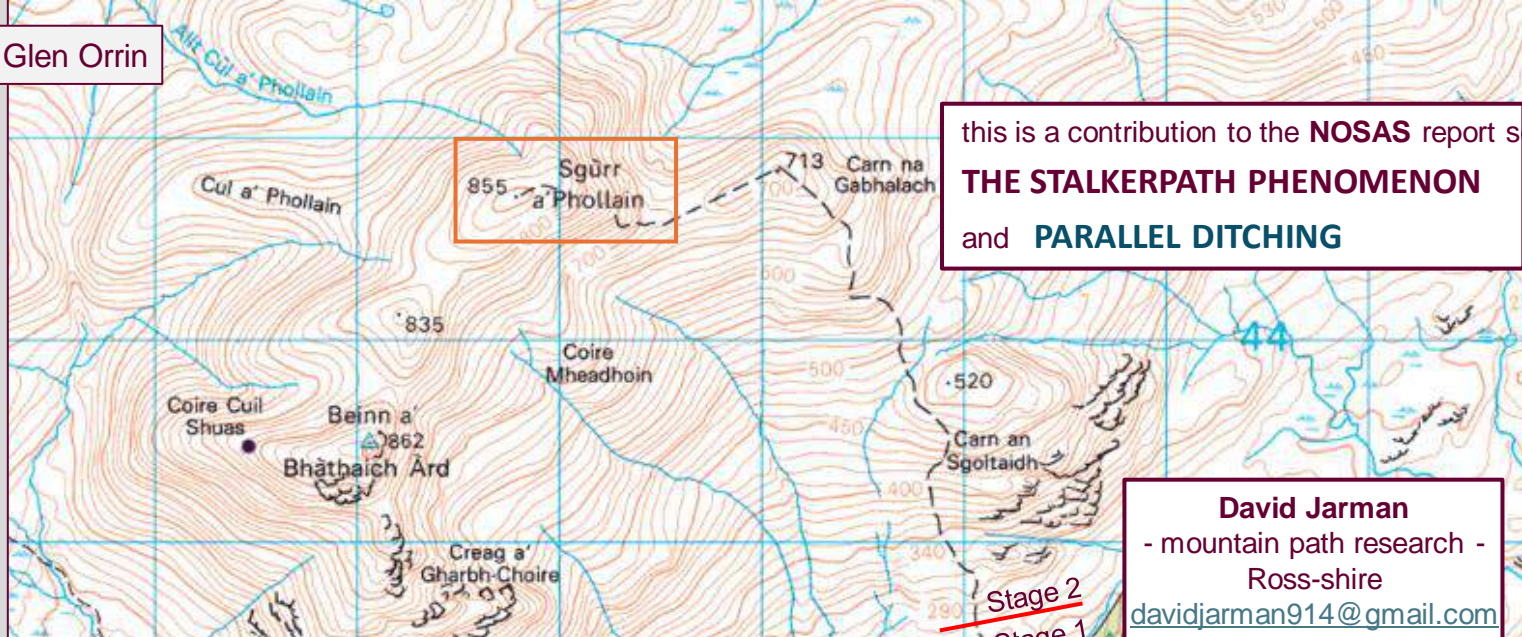
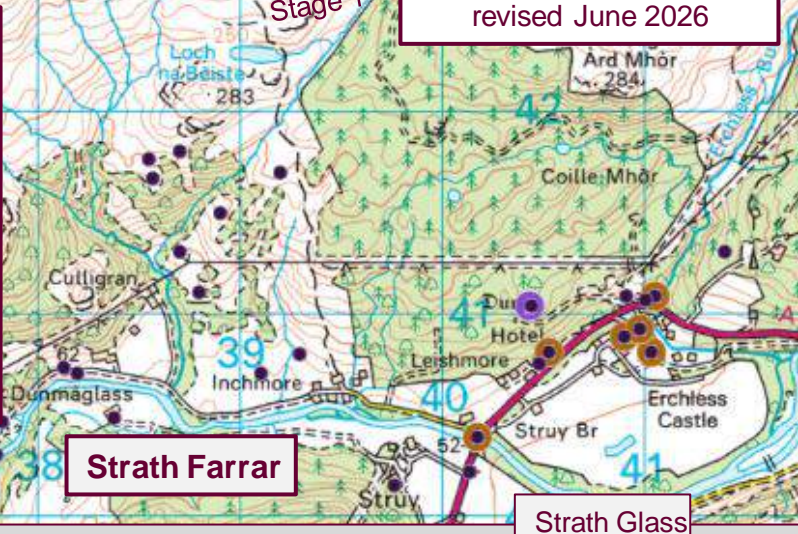


Glen Orrin



this is a contribution to the **NOSAS** report
THE STALKERPATH PHENOMENON
 and **PARALLEL DITCHING**

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 - mountain path research -
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 revised June 2026



Strath Farrar

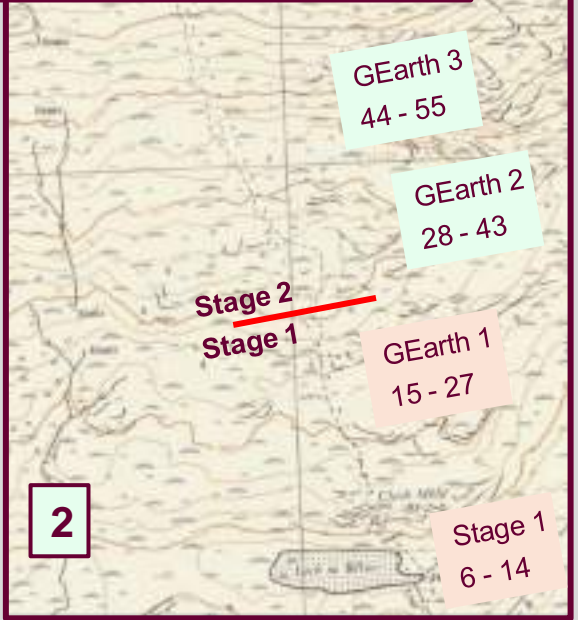
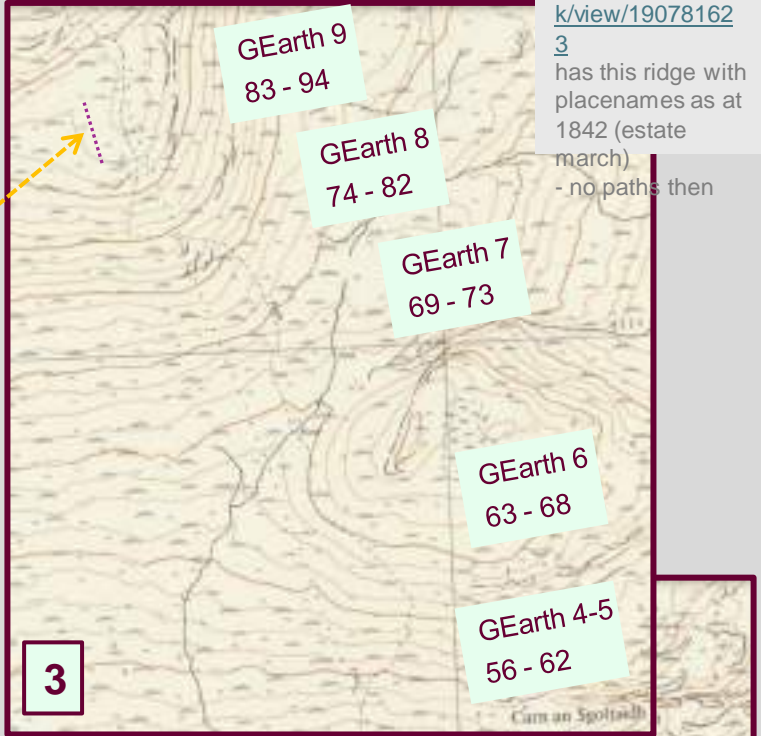
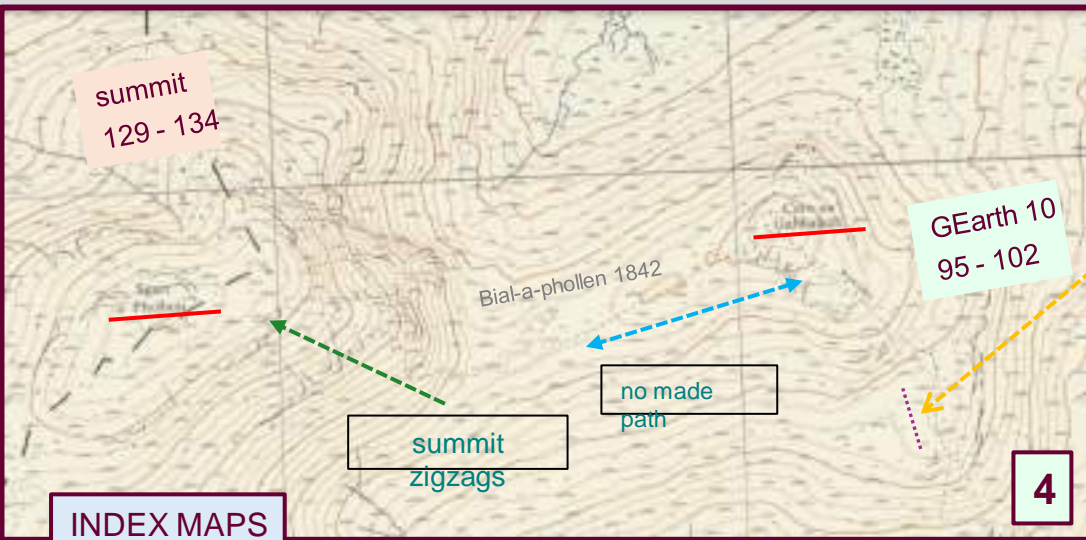
Strath Glass

SP9.45 Sgurr a' Phollain

PD 3

deciphering the only mapped hybrid **Stalkerpath** with lengthy **Parallel Ditching**
 - a late creation, and rare in extending to a summit (the eastmost in the Western Glens - with vista)

<https://maps.nls.uk/view/190781623>
 has this ridge with placenames as at 1842 (estate march) - no paths then



INDEX MAPS

this 'Stalkerpath' is one of the last to be made, going by the mapping history :

- Stage 1 - Inchmore (Farrar gate) to above Loch na Beiste 1" 3rd (1-3) 1907
- Stage 2 - above Loch na Beiste to near summit 6" 3rd (6-3) 1966

1-3 implies **Stage 1 made between ~1894 and 1907**

the route is described in the 11 sections marked (with slide numbers) - shown in more detail next 3 slides
 (as improbable during 1800s-00s) dates discussed

satellite imagery - each section is introduced with a GoogleEarth image from the various Historical Imagery options, none of very helpful quality. BingMaps is sombre, but some fine detail can be seen.

Parallel Ditching (PD) - the several stretches are marked with blue bars on slide 5

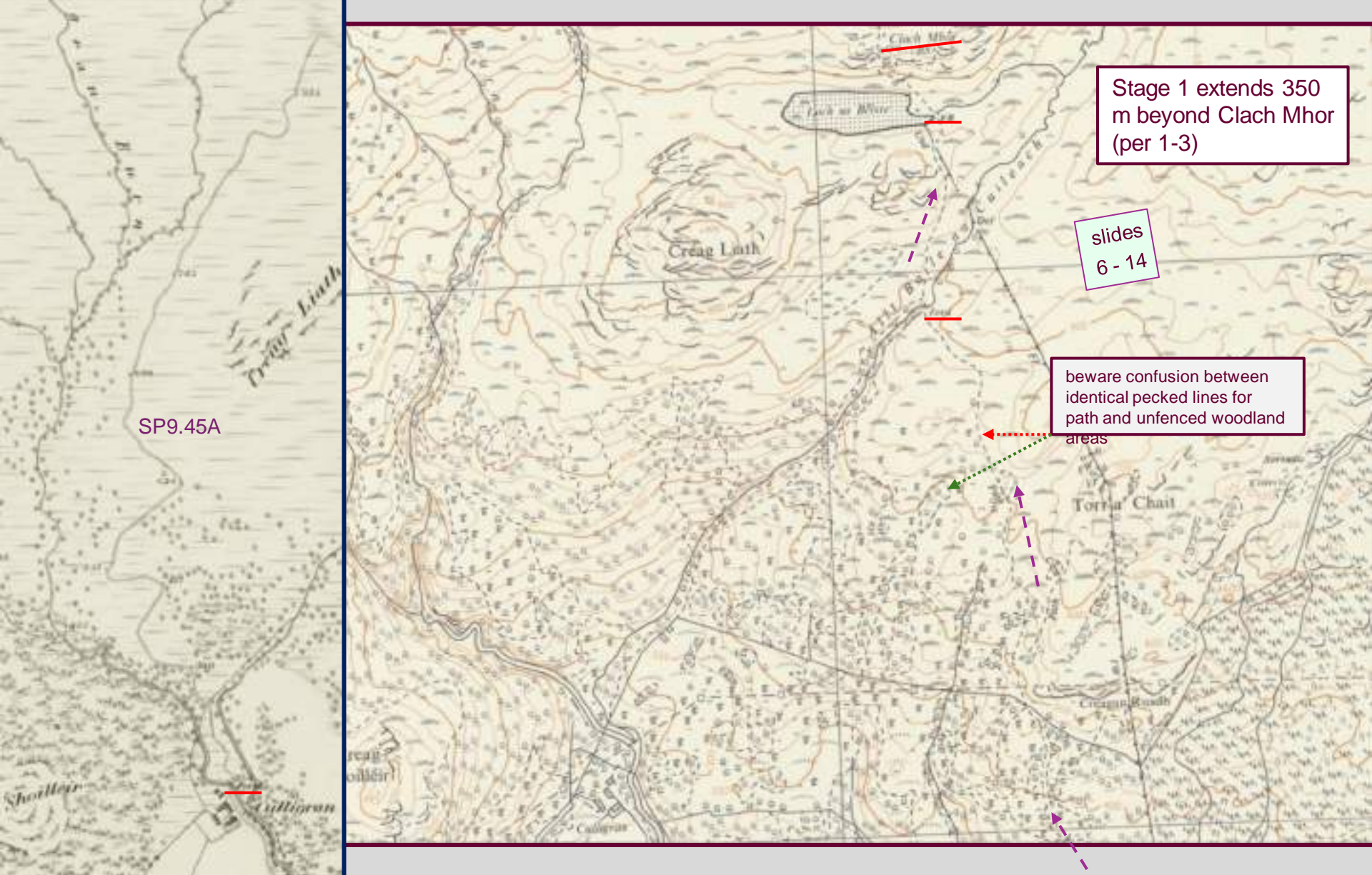
Stage 2 to Carn na Gabhalach 2.65 km
 of which **Parallel Ditching** ~2.25 km 85%
 none of the other 6-8 paths with PD attain 1 km or 50% - **PD 3 is unique**

1
Stage 1

2

4

3



SP9.45A

Stage 1 extends 350 m beyond Clach Mhor (per 1-3)

slides 6 - 14

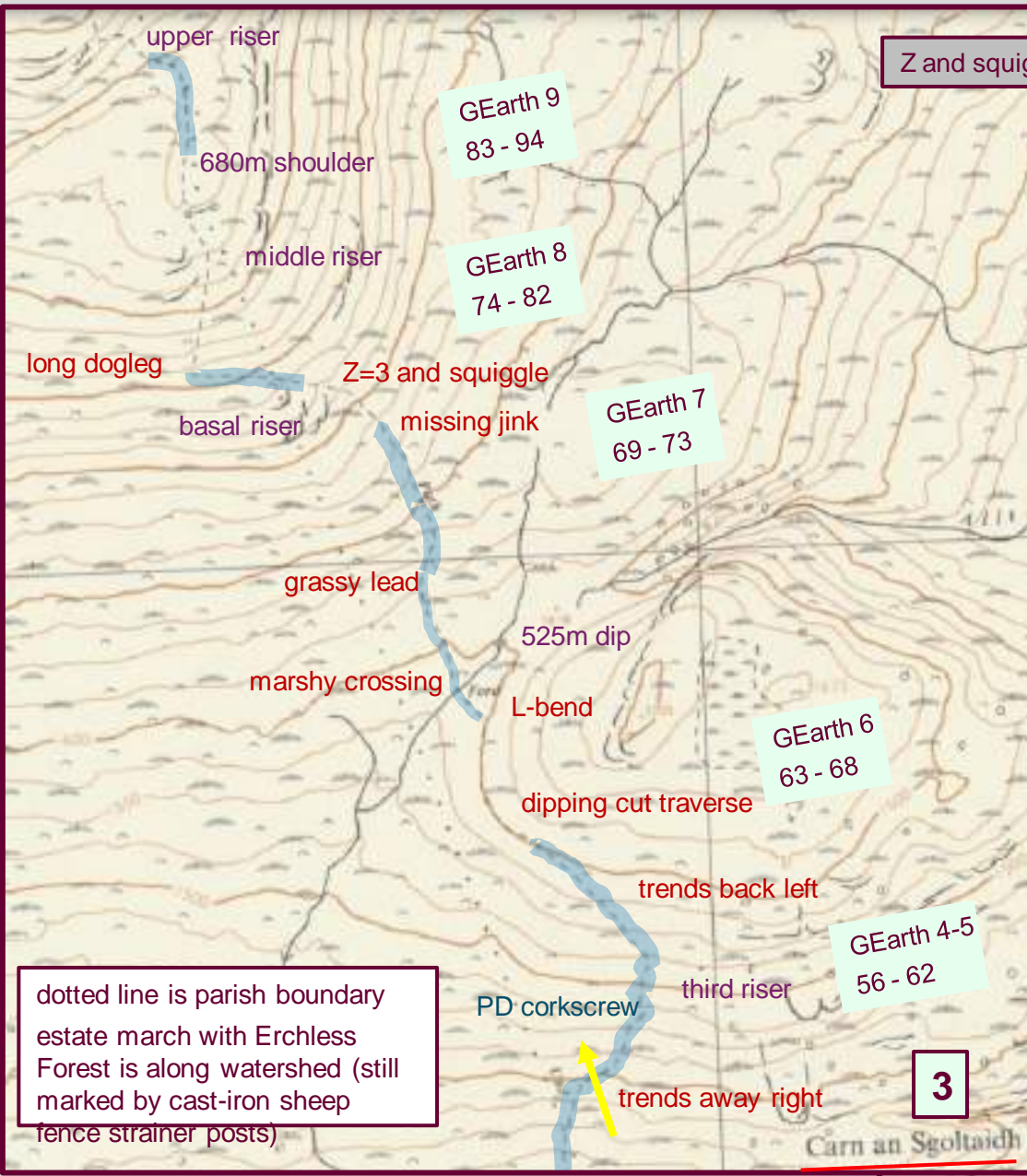
beware confusion between identical pecked lines for path and unfenced woodland areas

First Edn (6-1) has a path from a Ford behind Culligran House winding up near the spectacular ravine to end NW of Loch na Beiste (SP9.45A)
 - deleted from 6-3 - scant traces survive, Ford washed away

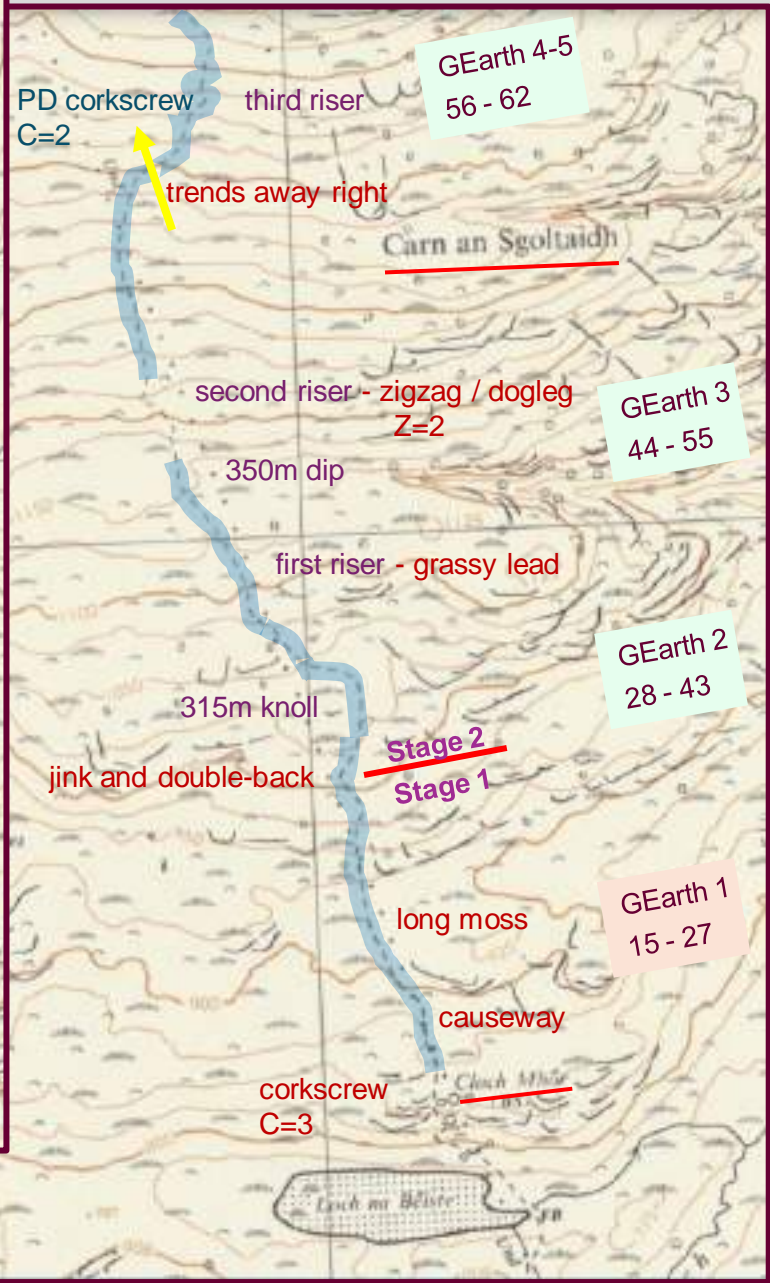
suite of extracts from 6-3 of 1960s - 1

Stage 1 (post-1894 pre-1907)

path starts from Inchmore, now a farm track up through woods



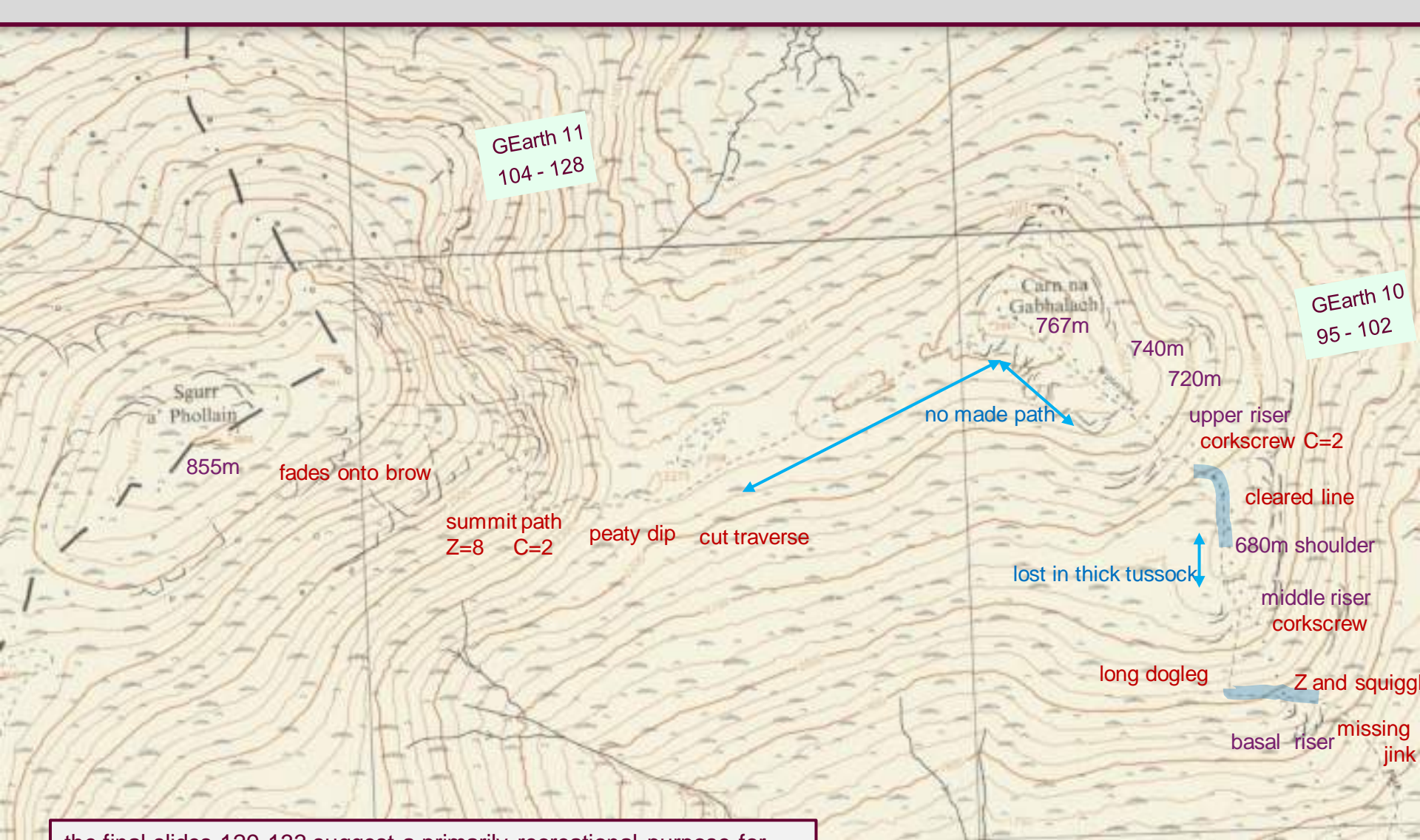
Z and squiggle - no hint on 6-3 ... 6-1 would have captured



suite of extracts from 6-3 of 1960s - 2-3

2

3



the final slides 129-133 suggest a primarily recreational purpose for this late-completed high-level path, for the benefit and entertainment of guests staying for extended periods in the Highland Season

- it will have assisted in stalking and shooting, but had not been essential for that purpose for the first half-century or more of the sporting estate
- the summit is a worthy goal and superb viewpoint, but it may well have been just the start for a high-level ridge circuit of great delight

suite of extracts from 6-3 of 1960s - 4

Z - zigzags	13		
C - corkscrews	9 (incl 2 PD)	see slide 12	
for definitions			



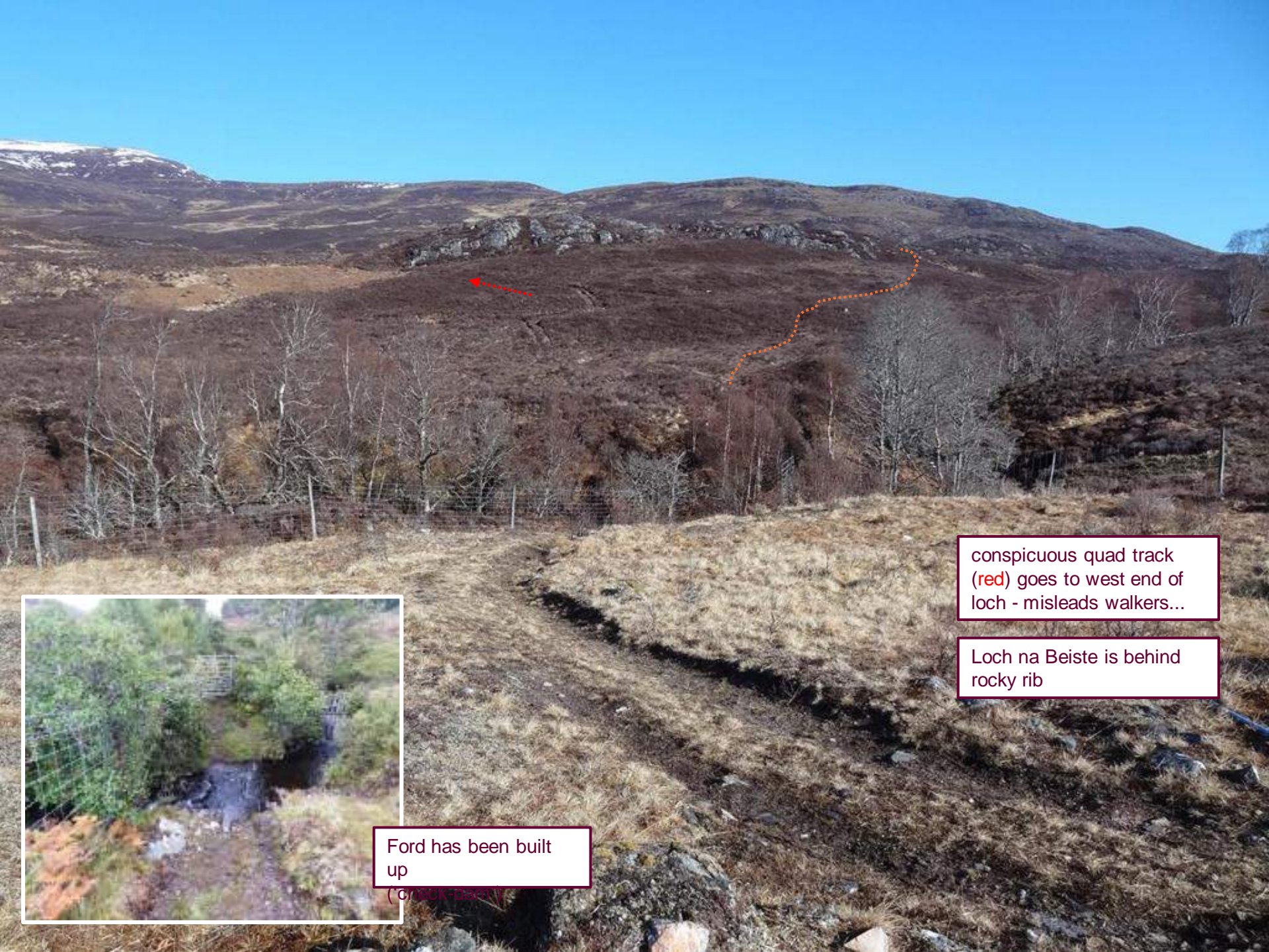
path starts from Inchmore,
now a farm track up through
woods



- brow before Ford
- quadbikes go over
 - original 'path' curves round
 - wide, well cut, ditched
 - to suit small wheeled vehicle



cut line visible ahead, probably
lost in bracken on left



conspicuous quad track
(red) goes to west end of
loch - misleads walkers...

Loch na Beiste is behind
rocky rib



Ford has been built
up

(check-dam)



... misleads walkers...

- very hard to locate original path in rank heather
- telltale level skyline notches—
- worn line is probably by returning walkers !
- hints of ditching and banking across hollow



855

Clach Mhor
erratic

end of Stage 1

march boundary fence



Sgurr a' Phollain
855

Carn na Gabhalach
713 (hidden)

Clach Mhor
end of Stage 1

corkscrew

Loch na Beiste

zigzags (Z) and corkscrews (C)

- classic stalkerpath **zigzags** have sharp angles, for walkers
- **corkscrews** are more generously curved, where terrain permits, and easier for hill ponies (ridden or led) (with every gradation between)

the tally for the entire SP9.45 is

Z = 13

C = 9 - remarkably, two of which are PD,

this 'corkscrew' looks from here to be tight zigzags (Z) - see next slide - but the corners sweep round generously, perhaps to allow easy

progress for ponies

'risers'

the ascent to Carn na Gabhalach is a staircase of treads and risers

- Stage 1 culminates ascending the one seen here, by the corkscrew
- Stage 2 lower half to 525m dip has three (**first-second-third risers**)
- Stage 2 upper half has three (**basal-middle-upper risers**)
- most risers are ascended by corkscrews, even quite tight ones, rarely sharper Zs - usually as cut paths, although corkscrews can be made with PD

ascending the third riser



Clach Mhor

Loch na Beiste

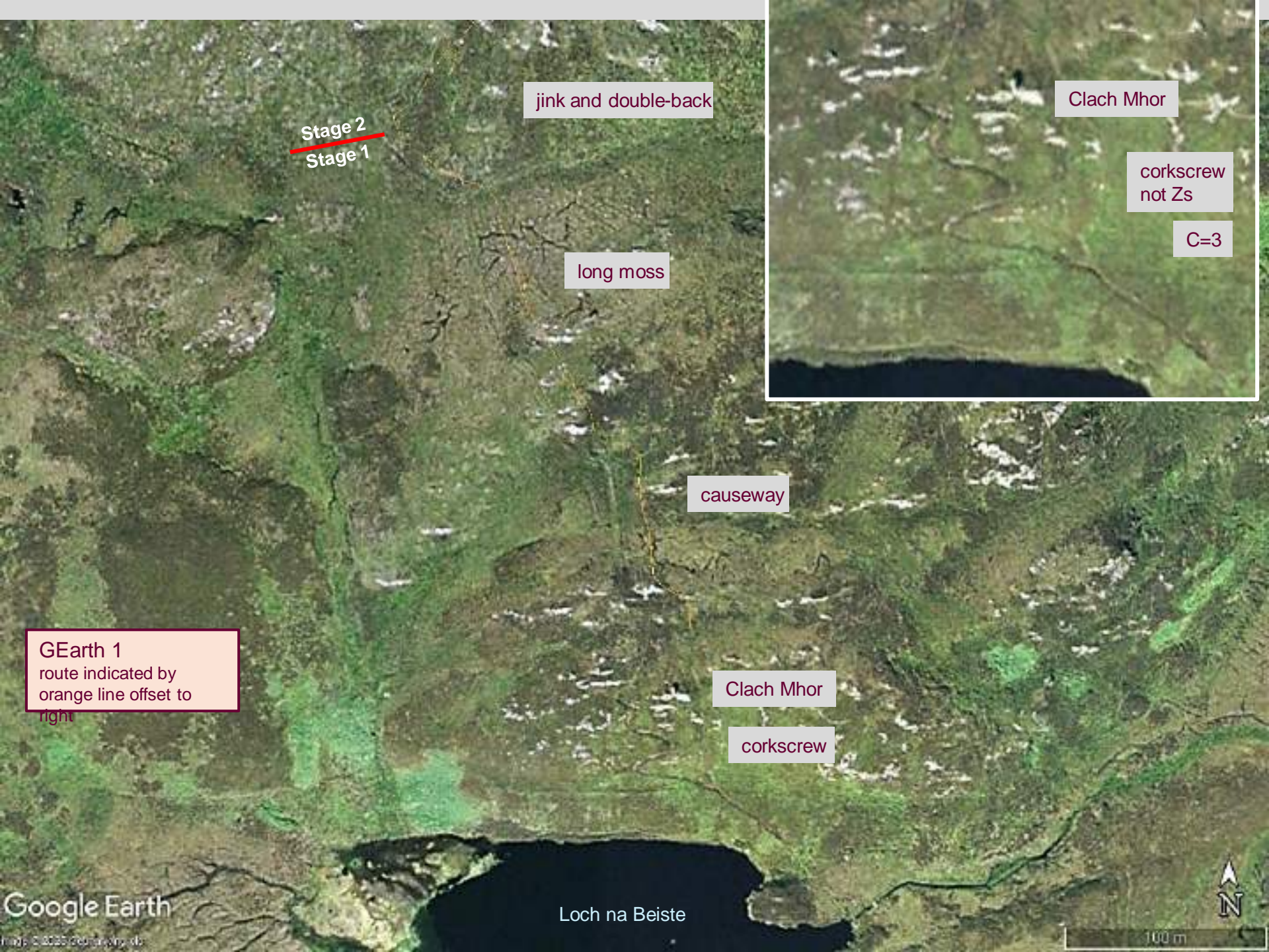
an unmapped cut path (orange arrow) appears to go to the west end of the loch, possibly once linking to SP9.45A from Culligran House (slide 3)

corkscrew from directly opposite, previous visit
- route chosen for drama ? - not slanting up easier open slope to right



footbridge abutments
causeway approaches





Stage 2
Stage 1

jink and double-back

long moss

causeway

Clach Mhor

corkscrew

Clach Mhor

corkscrew
not Zs

C=3

GEarth 1
route indicated by
orange line offset to
right



hybrid PD in final leg of Stage 1 ?
(only 2.5m apart, narrower than usual 3 - 3.5m)

Clach Mhor
erratic

(Loch na Beiste)

top of corkscrew



slight bend round rise between Clach and causeway



BP - Borrow Pit

Carnan Sgoltaidh

knoll

BP

causeway



still in Stage 1, apparent PD, ditches at usual 3 - 3.5m apart)



knoll

true extent of Stage 1
- a late discovery

thanks to Roland Spencer-Jones (NOSAS)
for remarking on this being the only known constructed bridge, thus prompting a recheck of the only editions that show Stage 1 (1-3 / 1-4 / 1-7)

- it had been misread as ending at Clach Mhor above Loch na Beiste
- in fact it extends 350 m to the 'jink'
- Stage 1 thus got users across the initial bogs to launch them up better slopes
- this now explains the more 'made' character - including the rare borrow pit and raised causeway

in mitigation, on 1-3, the path is obscured by text, the dotted parish boundary, and the hillslope hachuring - 1-4 is a bit clearer ... and 1-7 (1950s) retreats it to the Loch ...

[original notes]

possible hybrid construction

- rare (possibly sole) 'stone cundie' (slab bridge) between poles
- requires made path on approaches
- yet seems to revert to wide-spaced PD beyond, no made path
- occasional borrow pits for such requirements



1-3

1-7



and to Roland generally for his valuable commentary on the final version, informed by rather more visits than those of the author

end of Stage 1
as mapped 1-3 / 1-4

why end here, at the 1000' contour ?

- the idea of a launch-pad beyond the bogs still leaves much rough, awkward terrain to ascend;
- could the 1907 (1-3) date allow for a continuous path-making project, extended annually in the off-season as make-work (as per McPherson's Diary at Glen Feshie)?
- **1-3 1907 could just be a snapshot of progress to that date**
- the progressive adoption of PD may reflect experience on other Farrar paths (see PD ppt) - or cost-saving eg. after WW1

but Stage 2 is not on 1-4 1926

- only 4 SPs are added in that edn.
- two are trivial - but one is SP9.23 to a high plateau rim above Glenuaig Lodge

best guess for Stage 2 and PD
1926-1939

(finally mapped 6-3 1967)

knoll

S-bend

jink and double-back

long moss





long moss

jink

unclear if 'long moss' is PD or conventional drainage ditching, with or without raised surfacing - but the extent of wetness suggests another made causeway, in keeping with Stage 1 design, long since degraded



double-back

double-back invisible - next pair of slides at corner, then shown together
PD slots usually found with probing (or stepping into...)





jink

long moss





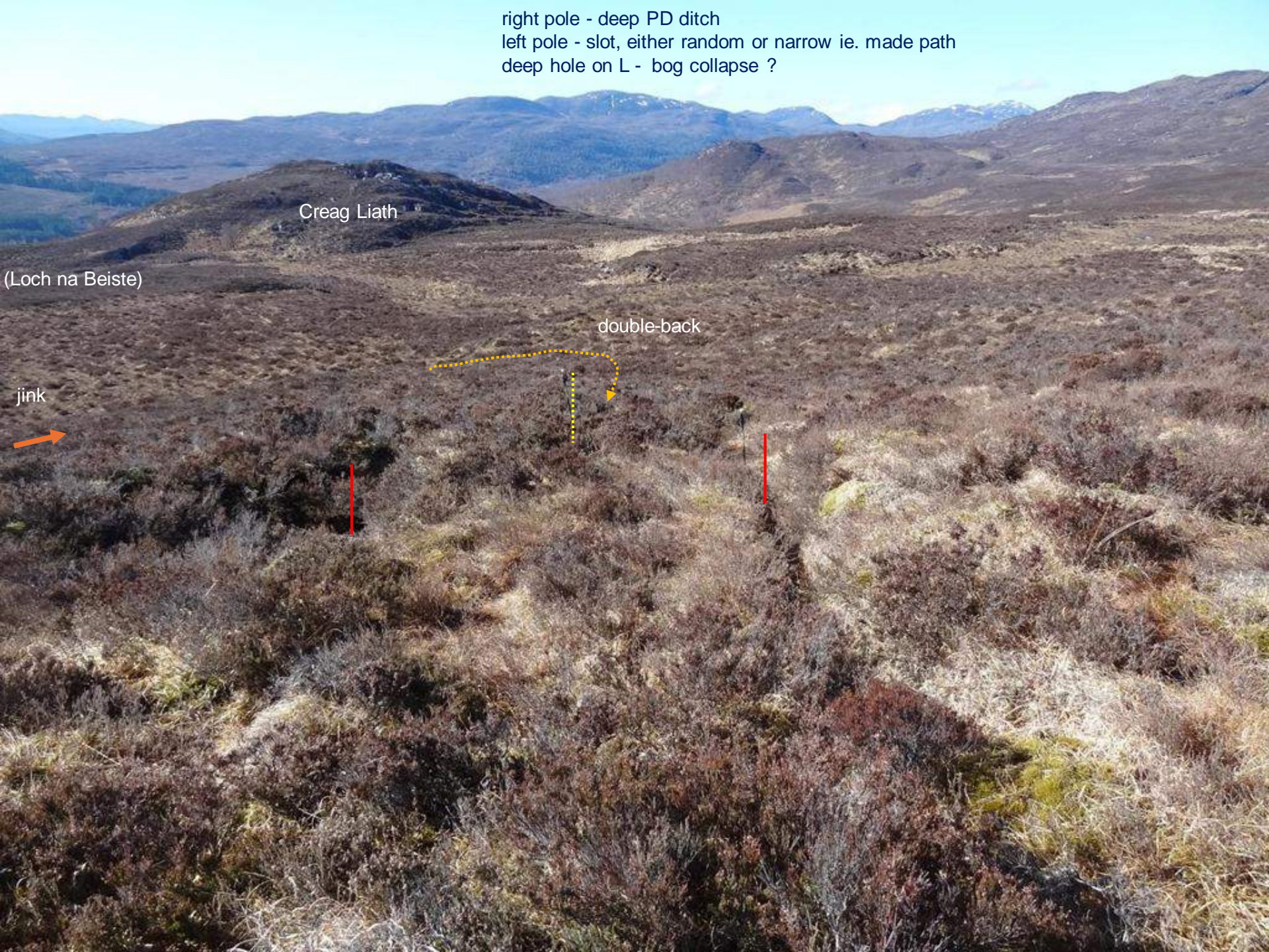
right pole - deep PD ditch
left pole - slot, either random or narrow ie. made path
deep hole on L - bog collapse ?

Creag Liath

(Loch na Beiste)

double-back

jink



grassy gully 1

first riser

315m knoll

GEarth 2
route indicated by
orange line offset to
right

S-bend

double-back



diamond crossing of short-cut walkers path



wide PD : 3 - 3.5m apart



S bend - lower curve
(looking west)



S bend - upper curve
(looking east)



curve round knoll - retrospect next



curve round knoll - retrospect

PD marked
- trod in middle

discontinuous over outcrops



first riser



PD line across this short level could not be spotted in field

- imagery detects gentle bends slanting across first riser
- unwise to sketch on this photo !



knoll

where now



knoll

healthier heather swathe may simply be drainage provided by PD, not embanked or surfaced





knoll



PD approaching first
riser



line curves into small grassy gully and follows its heathery flank straight up (whereas at similar next above, it doesn't - confusable)

reverts to cut path, or hybrid PD, up this gully



first riser

knoll

grassy gully #1 - foot

route ascends quite
steeply at first - hard to
locate precisely



grassy gully #1 - middle



grassy gully #1 - head



grassy gully #2 - note short slant dark line



second riser



350m dip
(hidden)

grassy gully #1 - out onto level

reverts to PD between
gullies

the bold diagonal line is a deer highway, leading into the 350m dip* and the notch

'zigzag' is the slant line arrowed previous/next

Z=2

dogleg

hollybush, second riser

grassy gully #2

← zigzag

causeway

350m dip

GEarth 3 route indicated by orange line offset to right

crossing the 350m dip* is the most baffling short stretch to locate on the ground or on imagery - let alone to fathom the thinking

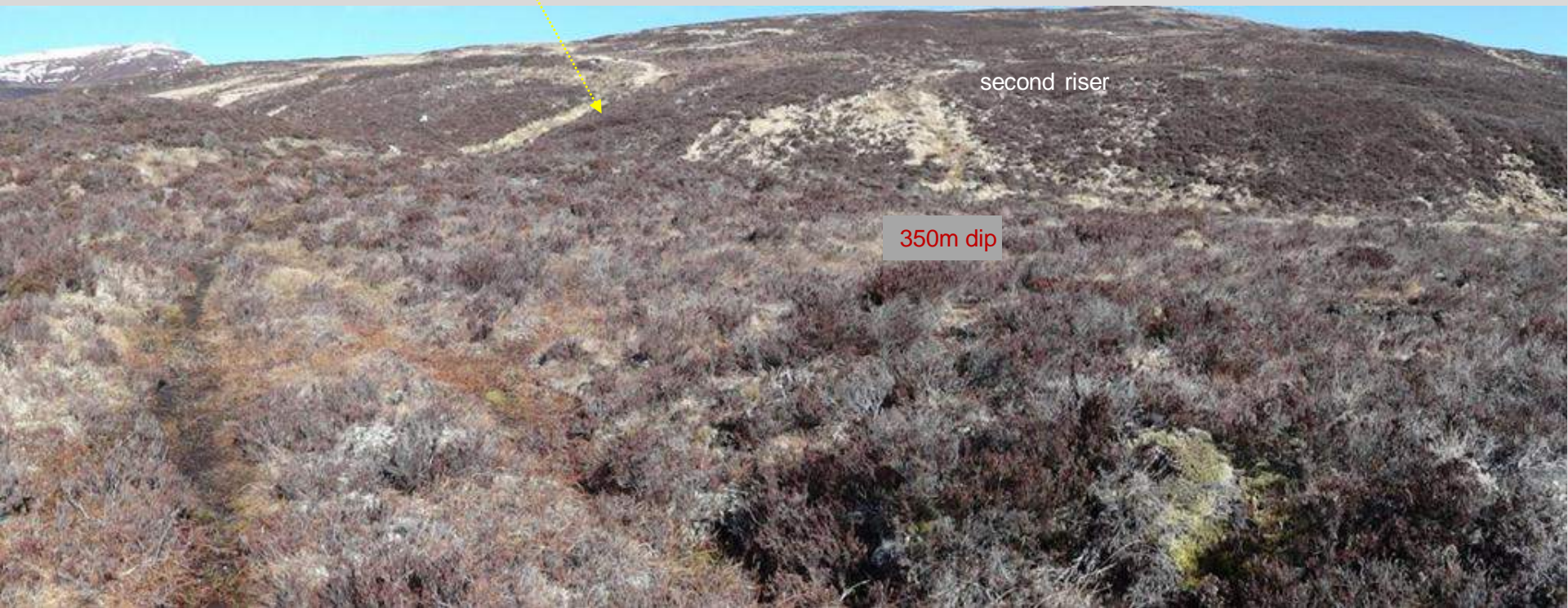
grassy gully #1

first riser

*the 350m dip is the onset to one of several ice-marginal glacial meltwater channels deeply grooving the shoulder of Carn an Sgoltaidh - the notched hill



grassy gully #2 - note slant line



second riser

350m dip

sweep shot taken, as no
idea on approach where
the route might go up this
next riser

even once slant line spotted
as a likely 'cut', not obvious
how it was reached - imagine
next two slides without
markups...

a remarkable, wilful or even playful passage across the 350 m dip

- now hard to follow, as it does not take the obvious sweep left across the wee 'col' (where the dip is least and bend simple)
- nor does it take the inviting line up the grassy gully, instead coming into it higher up
- it zigzags across the steep heathery bank, with unusual effort (unless the terrain and vegetation was different then)
- a rare stretch of traditional cut stalkerpath between long PD stretches

this cannot be about maintaining easy gradients, as some of the PD sections are steeper than comfortable

similarities with SP9.44 Neaty Burn sector C along the ravine rim, jinking out up such banks



grassy gully #2

hollybush
second riser

350m / 1150' col

Z=2

350m dip

ochre line - dogleg round
hollybush only spotted in final
imagery checks



causeway

350m dip

...the most baffling short stretch - it has taken much toggling between this visit, previous, and imagery, and finally planting 'poles' in the PD slots - to 'see' the **causeway** in a subtle vegetation contrast - not visible in previous, with slight change of viewpoint, or on imagery (until known)



at first zag -
causeway, initial zig
invisible



at top zig - causeway visible ...
line appears to come straight up
here

only on reviewing merge
components did error strike home
...

*see next three slides for real
story*



causeway



hollybush



short slant
dark line



second riser marked by lone
browsed conical holly bush



cut-and-fill dogleg





400m

350m dip

causeway

knoll

looking down from here conveys the substantial 50 m of the second riser requiring zigzags and dogleg



cut-and-fill dogleg



hollybush
second riser
400m

after the bend left, the route takes a slight course correction right, and straightens up to ascend the open moor
- the prominent deer trod intersects it just above the bend

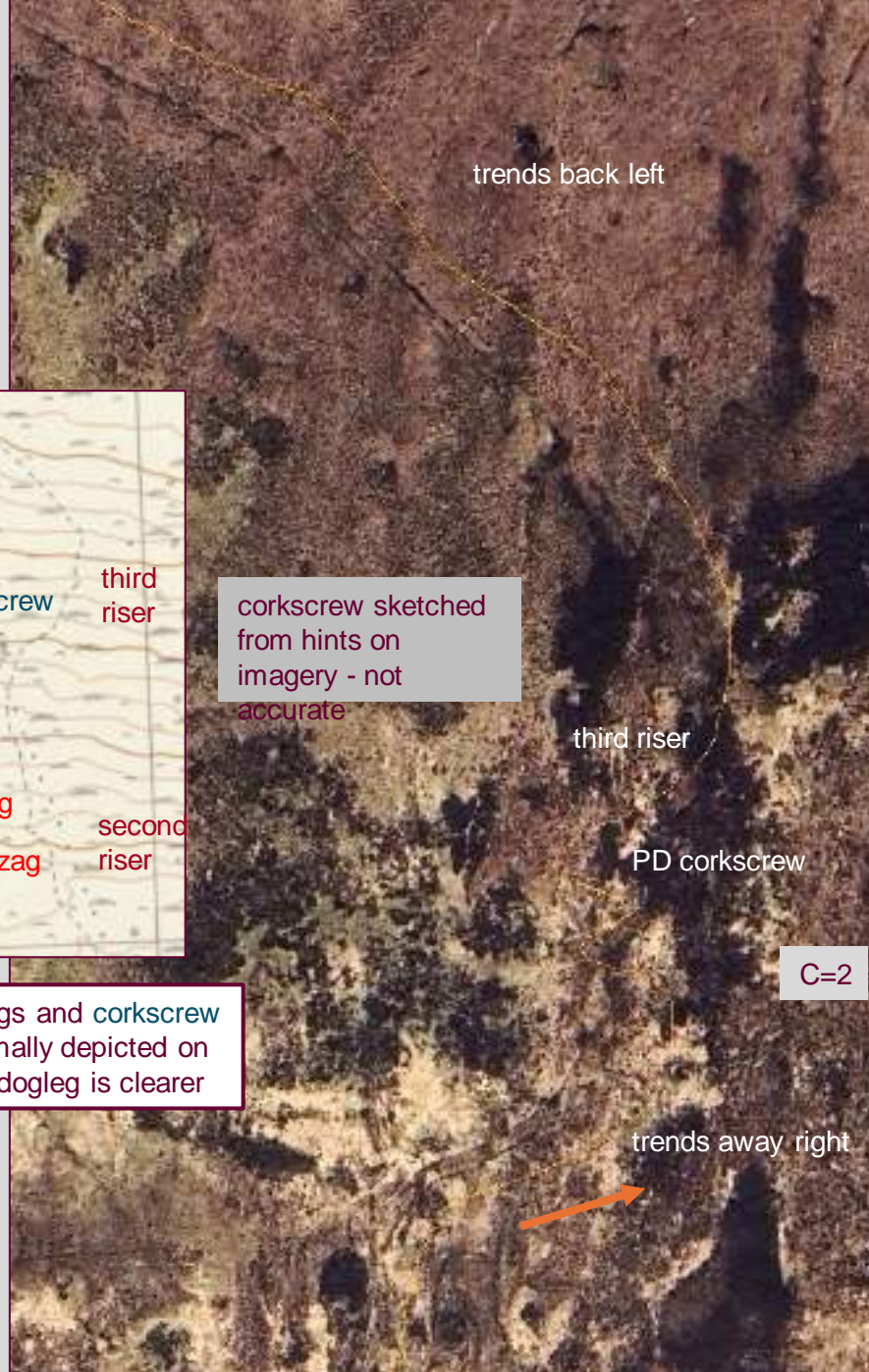


deer highway

trends away right

above the dogleg, the route
straightens up to ascend the open
moor, reverting to PD

4 minutes uneventful hike to next photo at
bend...



corkscrew sketched from hints on imagery - not accurate

the zigzags and corkscrew are minimally depicted on 6-3; the dogleg is clearer

C=2

GEarth 4-5 route indicated by orange line offset to right



... after 4 minutes uneventful hike up the open moor, the PD bends right ...

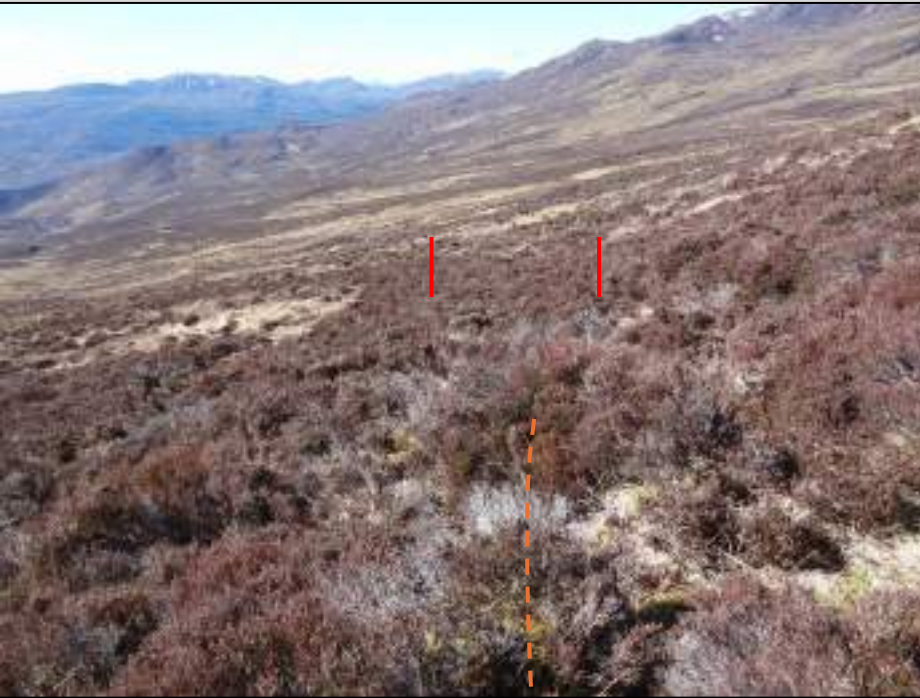




the PD bend right
... if only it could be seen or
marked



midway up the trend right
- PD line is mostly possible to identify,
underfoot



the trend right makes a tight PD
corkscrew, well-radiused curves

looking west
third riser



next bend in PD corkscrew
- 'poles' are indicative
- the crossfall is remarkable, and must have been intended to guide a walker or pony up or down a centre-line (as seen on other PD routes eg. Glencarron Lodge)

looking east
third riser



the seepage and verdant patch must postdate marking of the PD route, with the slots possibly channelling drainage

top of PD corkscrew
- cairn is not a regular waymarker, but a whim with a rare rash of loose stones handy
- the hillwalkers' shortcut is now well to the west

looking west
riser

third

these photo-pairs are 2 minutes apart each



L-bend

Carn an Sgoltaidh

cut across slope
route chosen to go above peat hag gullies ?

gently-dipping PD traverse

trends back left

top of PD
corkscrew



100m

this Historical Imagery date is best for middle reaches - but runs into cloud here ☹

GEarth 6 route indicated by orange line offset to right



no photos going round long corner, nothing new to see

... as reverts to cut-and-fill path

4



levels off, dips slightly down

minimal if any levelling

3



2

trends back left, hints of levelling



1

top of PD corkscrew



L-bend

clear evidence of levelling
by **cut-and-fill**, as cross-
slope becomes steeper



grassy lead

marshy crossing

525m dip

L-bend



cut line
coming in



L-bend - rare borrow pit
- staging post ??

L-bend



this is a peculiar piece of path design or evolution

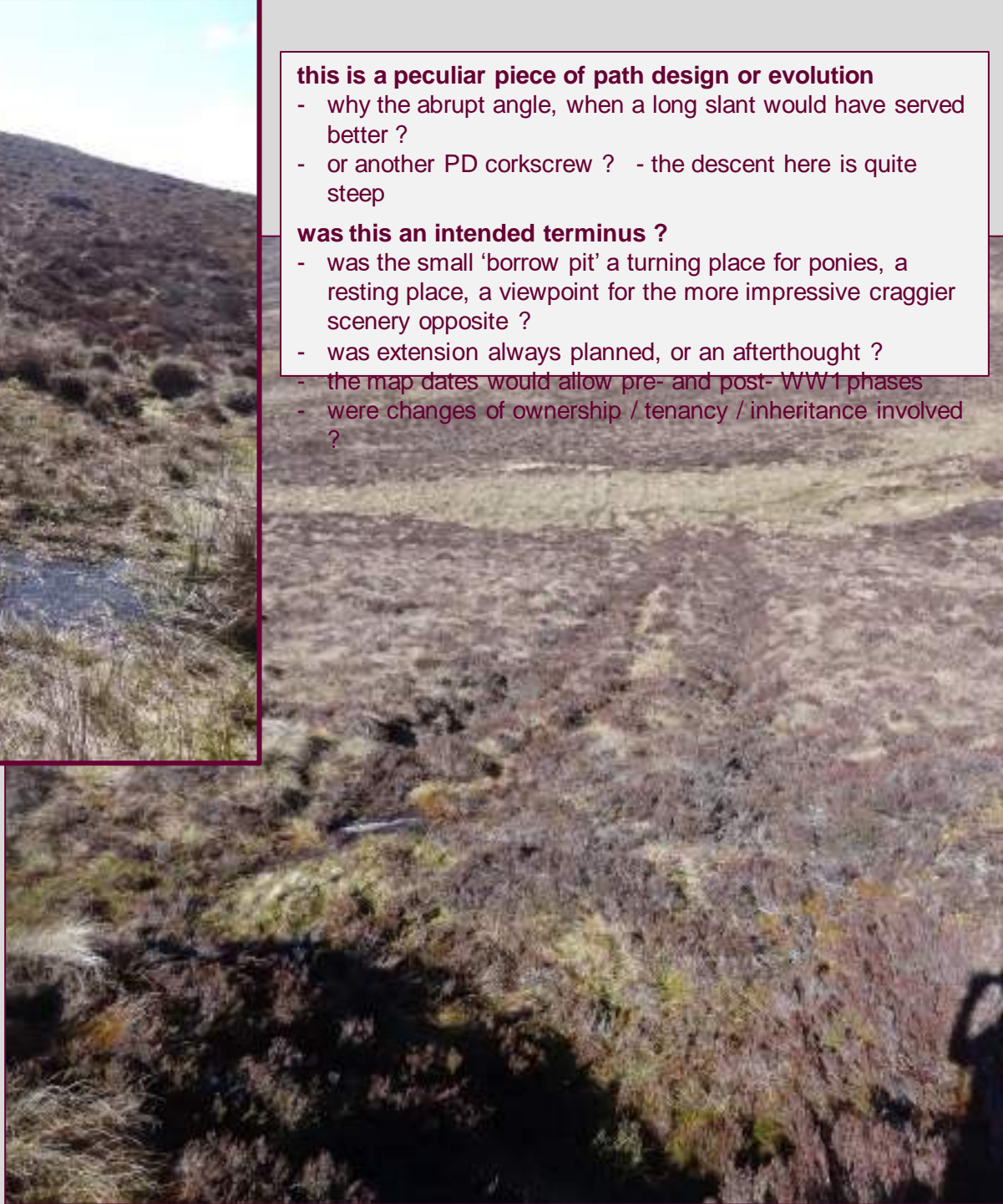
- why the abrupt angle, when a long slant would have served better ?
- or another PD corkscrew ? - the descent here is quite steep

was this an intended terminus ?

- was the small 'borrow pit' a turning place for ponies, a resting place, a viewpoint for the more impressive craggier scenery opposite ?
- was extension always planned, or an afterthought ?
- the map dates would allow pre- and post- WW1 phases
- were changes of ownership / tenancy / inheritance involved ?

is the descent a narrower-spaced Parallel Ditching, or a stretch of conventional ditched path-making ?

- there is little sign of a built-up and surfaced centre between the bold drainage ditches
- nor is there an effective causeway across the marsh - let alone a stone cundie



missing jink

bend uphill

wandering
up round

grassy lead

525m dip

marshy crossing

L-bend

GEarth 7
route indicated by
orange line offset to

basal riser

the upper half beyond 525m
dip is another succession of
steeper
'treads and risers'
labelled basal-middle-upper

525m dip

as with the L-bend, the path design beyond the 525m dip is intriguing:

- following the grassy lead would be sensible - if properly drained, or benched into the flank as earlier, here it is (now) a wet plodge
- but then it chooses to weave tricksily up the craggy treads and risers of the nose, when easier open slopes are evident on the left flank - and could have led more directly to the main summit

if an intention was deer-stalking, this route could get above deer in the broad open carries to the left (west), usually downwind

- the line also follows the estate march - perhaps a territorial marker

line wandering up the grassy lead

- again, unclear if narrow PD or a made and ditched path, or PD with a central trod
- no obvious borrow pits in vicinity





above the grassy lead, it definitely reverts to wide-spaced PD





but as the terrain gets steeper and more awkward, the PD may have elements of cut-and-fill benching



GEarth 8
route indicated by
orange line offset to
right

the imagery becomes 'sub-optimal' again, at the intricate bits

missing jink and side-jump are disconnects between

- PD on the 'treads' and
- cut SP zigzags up the riser



PD bend uphill

basal riser
Z and squiggle

PD - cut path zigzags - PD at top
with disconnects

not obvious why this line was
chosen
- hard to spot in distance
- tricky to pick up at foot and exit

now impossible - days after revisit
- to locate confidently the zigzag
line, neither shown relates well to
imagery



Carn an Sgoltaidh

525m dip

grassy tongue

missing jink





zigzag (somewhere)



the zag back up left
- even this hints at hybrid
PD

- no photos of remarkable 'squiggle' at top - see next
- impossible to capture, on a convexity





long
dogleg

*

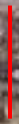
basal riser
Z and squiggle

squiggle ends in a
recess, - red line too
awkward
- orange line hint on
image, not obvious
on ground
- star is dangerous
hole

the zag back up left



long dogleg



hole

PD along shoulder fairly clear on imagery - but initially cannot be picked up

680m shoulder

this 'middle riser' is most baffling of all - none of the GEarth series, nor Bing, manage to capture the evident neat corkscrew, not even its general location. even after three goes, there is no resolution:

- orange line - misled at top of squiggle (and that 'hole') by bold tramlines heading north (X) - and aligning with classic tramlines where they should be on 680m shoulder (no attempt to depict corkscrew) BUT: this completely failed to reconcile with photos of a long dogleg and slant up
- yellow line - hints on GEarth encouraged this sketch BUT: realised it is at odds with OS 6-3, which for once is helpful in capturing the long dogleg (if not the corkscrew)
- green line - fits the OS, following faintest traces on this GEarth - but not of PD scale, more like a thin made

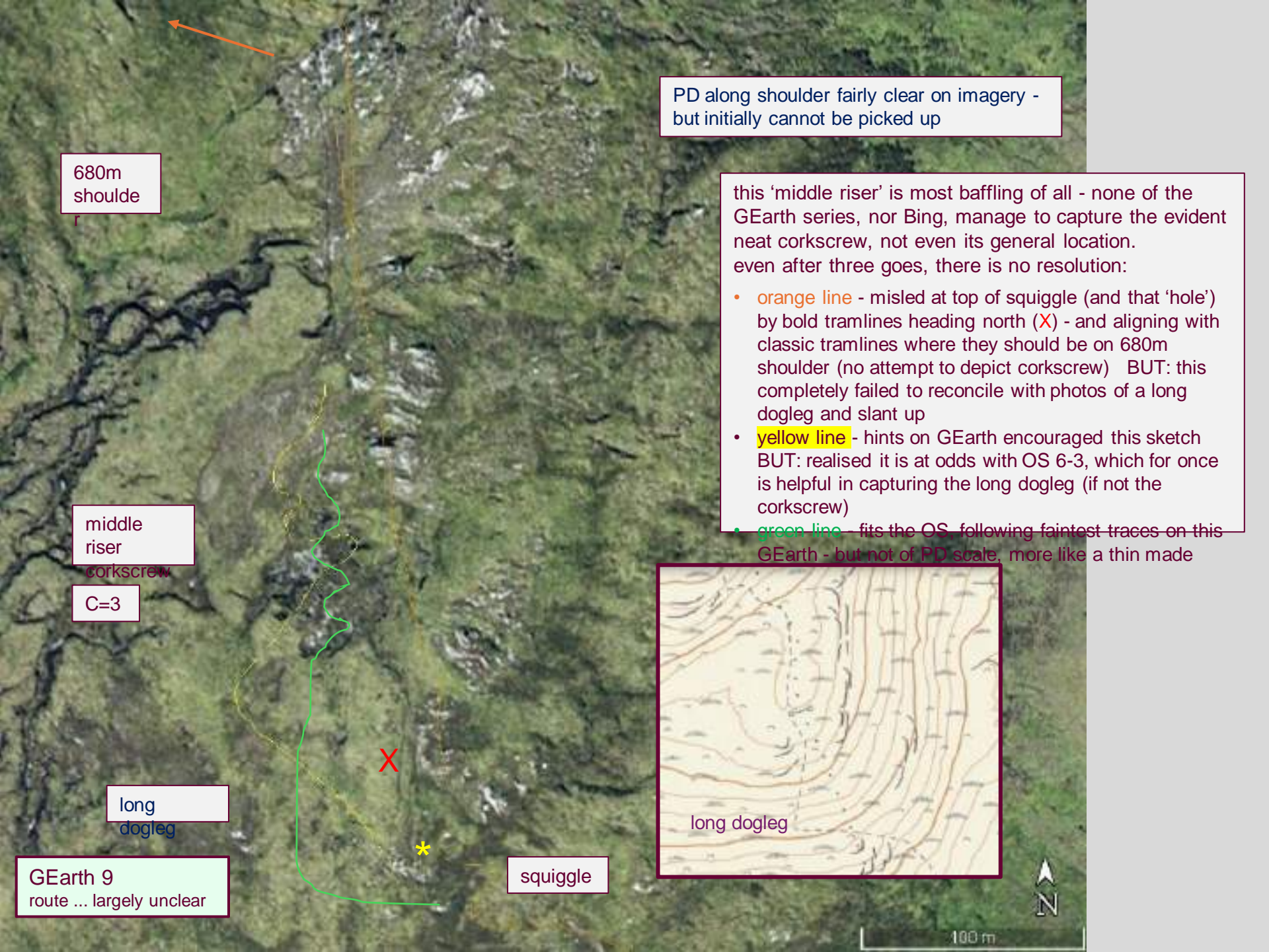
middle riser corkscrew

C=3

long dogleg

GEarth 9 route ... largely unclear

squiggle





long dogleg

rather a gentle gradient, why not just carry on this line and cut the corner ?

a well-handled sweeping
PD curve to the long
dogleg

middle riser

long dogleg

path somewhere above arrow





the well-handled
sweeping curve to the
long dogleg

PD up open slope
transitions round corner
into cut-and-fill
stalkerpath traverse
across middle riser

looking east



top of cut-and-fill
stalkerpath
traverse across
middle riser

rare local stone heap
- possibly sortings
from the wee borrow
pit

looking west



long dogleg

first zig up middle riser



cut zigzags up middle
riser





looking down the middle riser
zigzags,
becoming tighter corkscrew



faint zag follows line of slabs



looking down corkscrew from brow



previous visit - clear PD up onto 680m shoulder from middle riser brow, not obvious in revisit (below left)



route lost in thick tussock on shoulder, apparent dug way is blind alley

680m shoulder



minimal traces on outer shoulder - imagery hints at a PD line beside fence post (well to right of orange arrow)

inner shoulder - red arrow is viewpoint for pair of insets from different visits - wide-spaced PD, possible cleared swathe ?

below : approach ramp A (see later) wide PD splay



no made path
from here

Carn na
Gabhalach
767m

the ascent of the final steep
riser is different again - and
miraculously revealed in just
this light



initial sketch
missed this
'squiggle' seen on
BingMaps (green)

740
m

upper riser
corkscrew

C=2

720m and
740m are
deceptive
brows or
"false
summits"

720
m

no made path

680m
shoulde

Google Earth 10
route ... intermittent



100 m



lower image captures
- confusion of three straight lineaments converging on slope foot
 (actual is A-B - next slides)
- long zigzag left (hidden under lens raindrop / in snow)



upper riser
corkscrew


680m
shoulder

upper riser

approach slant from 680m
shoulder to slope foot
- wide PD
- yet appears partially cross-
graded and cut into bank

A





remarkable ramp attacking riser
head-on

- conventional constructed
stalkerpath
- regular gradient, surface
- elevated with drainage ditches
- excessively steep !

B

neat, continuous PD-SP transition ..



PD-SP transition .. although ramp is flanked by PD-spaced ditches, much wider apart than a conventional path

- hybrid form ?

B

rare 'hoggin' surfacing remnant, from some borrow

CH



at top of ramp, conventional
stalkerpath zigzags begin,
becoming corkscrew at top
- make light of ascent (or would
when not holding snow)

looking west



rare built-up corner - showing how tight corkscrew is, on steep riser

possible original surfacing

top of corkscrew, brow of upper slopes to
Carn na Gabhalach

- no obvious made path beyond, on the
ground (no photos as nothing to show ...)
- no path-head marker cairn

upper part of corkscrew

note line across 680 shoulder, slant, and
ramp



Carn na
Gabhalach

767m



possible excavated way through peaty dip

- but why go through it when open grass on SW ?
- possible minor easing though peaty stretch of ridge SW of Gabhalach (next two slides) but that looks irregular, worn by beasts along fenceline, then walkers
- neither of these is as clearly 'dug' as SP9.43B Deanie Ridge (see Parallel Ditching ppt)

740

m

upper slopes to Carn na Gabhalach

- no photos, but this imagery shows an S-curve resumption after the long gap over the bare brow
- possibly not found if off-axis from top of corkscrew

120 m pathless gap
from 720m brow at
top of upper riser

corkscrew

BING

maps

the reduced scale emphasises how small a proportion of the whole is concentrated in this most memorable final 'addendum'

Carn na Gabhalach 767m

740 m

720 m

upper riser

Sgurr a' Phollain 855m

no made path (if not orange)

final C=2 Z=8

peaty

740 m

the 600 m of ridge over Carn na Gabhalach and descending gently to peaty dip has a walkers' path, probably following an original deer trod, but no signs of making, PD, or even way-clearance - this is naturally good terrain affording rapid progress

middle riser

ascending in mist, following the height of land leads to the base of the final nose and a made path leading in to the peaty dip - BUT on return, it would be easy to go astray on Carn na Gabhalach - even if the right-angle turn is made correctly, picking up the top corkscrew would be hit-and-miss tricky, scope to veer off - why no PD funnel guiding the approaches to CnG (as Glencarron Lodge) ?

GEarth 11 route ... still intermittent note smaller scale

➤ because presumably the sheep fence was then extant, even if derelict



3.0 m

final ascent - the zigzags Z=8
for intelligent route selection, not
tackling prow head-on, see slide 113

Sgurr a'
Phollain 855m



hardly any trace even today, across wind-cropped
heath

- clearer line across moor grass and thin peat



near the end of the ridge walk,
the worn line veers slightly
off left and becomes more
'made' looking - still not
definite, minimal works



Carn na
Gabhalach 767m

made or worn





now definitely made

- cut into the slight slope
- and with a purpose, to turn the corner into peaty dip, rather than go over a knoll



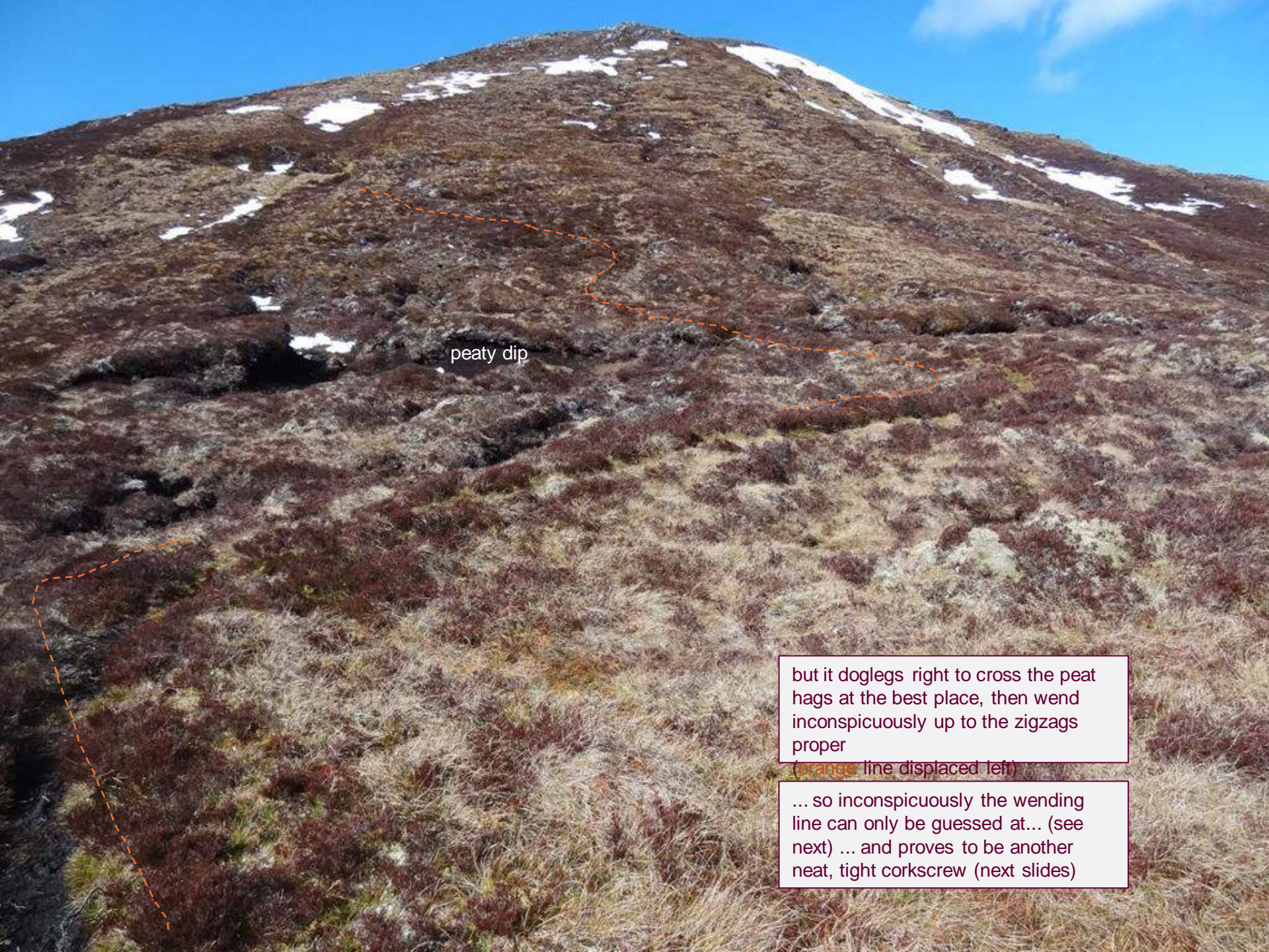


peaty dip

here there is another, final playful surprise

- the side cut becomes a causeway across the wet depression
- it appears to point to the base of the zigzags (snowpatches)

(green line displaced left)




peaty dip

but it doglegs right to cross the peat hags at the best place, then wend inconspicuously up to the zigzags proper

(orange line displaced left)

... so inconspicuously the wending line can only be guessed at... (see next) ... and proves to be another neat, tight corkscrew (next slides)



zigzags start here - seepage traverse

corkscrew

astonishingly, the 'bridge' of intact peat has survived a century, more or less

- it could have been wider of course, but has not been reinforced

Carn na Gabhalach
767m

* large borrow
pit for causeways
?

peaty dip

tight initial corkscrew

C=2

initial
seepage
traverse

BING maps



1. slant off axis and curve into peaty dip
2. corkscrew
3. initial wet seepage travers
4. start of main zigzags
5. general line

- intelligent route selection : from peat bridge
- avoids heading straight on up steeper, messy footslope
 - works round onto more open slopes, better terrain, well off natural axis



zoom from Carn na Gabhalach brow



final C=2 Z=8 not well caught by
GoogleEarth imagery offerings - but
authentically atmospheric



the 'seepage traverse'

- this first long zig has not worked out well
- saturated moss, here from snowmelt, but in any wet spell
- follows base of a slab wall, shedding water onto it
- may have cut in to a minor springline or seepage



'seepage
traverse'

short initial zigzag,
then a long one rising
left (next)







wee shelter

zag does not angle at snowpatch, but goes on to the brow - above wee 'shelter' (inset)

- possible remnants of original surfacing
- no obvious borrowpits
 - simple cut-and-fill
 - no drainage ditches or cross-drains
 - yet has largely survived erosion (as on a convexity, relatively permeable terrain)



wee shelter





...only to revert to a shallow
skimming



here though, where the slope steepens briefly, the cut-and-fill is more substantial

- embanked as a crude retaining wall
- path wider in consequence



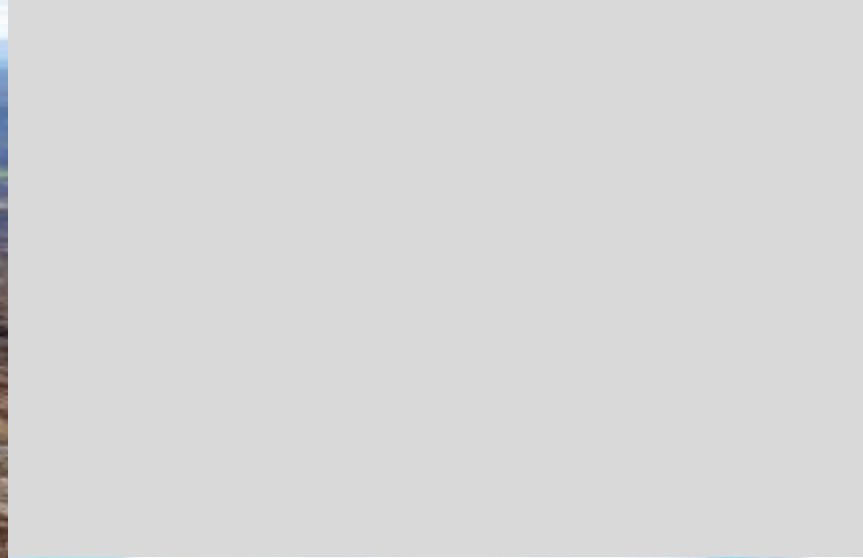
compare this minimal treatment
(lower pair)
with the next zig up (orange
and above)
- boulder clearance, crude
retaining wall, levelling to it





*apologies for clumsy photomerge
and wonky skylines - despite the
bright morning, the early calm has
blown up into a chill Force 6*





near the top, there is an unusually long rising traverse, with a slight jink (next)

- more of a boulder clearance than a path-making





the final zigzag to the summit dome brow is more whimper than flourish, but still useful (in ascent at least) as so well graded almost throughout





the made path fizzles out

- no marker cairn
- no landmark that was aimed for
- a random transition from wind-clipped heath to moor grass

possibly once extended further, since overgrown

- but last map (6-3 1960s) shows it ending on this alignment 50 feet below the broad ridge axis
- strange that it aims for the humble dip (2761') the outer top (2777') is a rocky eminence, and would have been a far worthier culmination

why the path was made ...



into the teeth of the near-gale,
camera tilt uncorrected ... actual
summit of **Sgurr a' Phollain 2802'**
just to the right

- the winds have striated the thin
heath into 'beach-sand ripples'
- bell-shaped Beinn a' Bhathaich
Ard

ahead is the Corbett

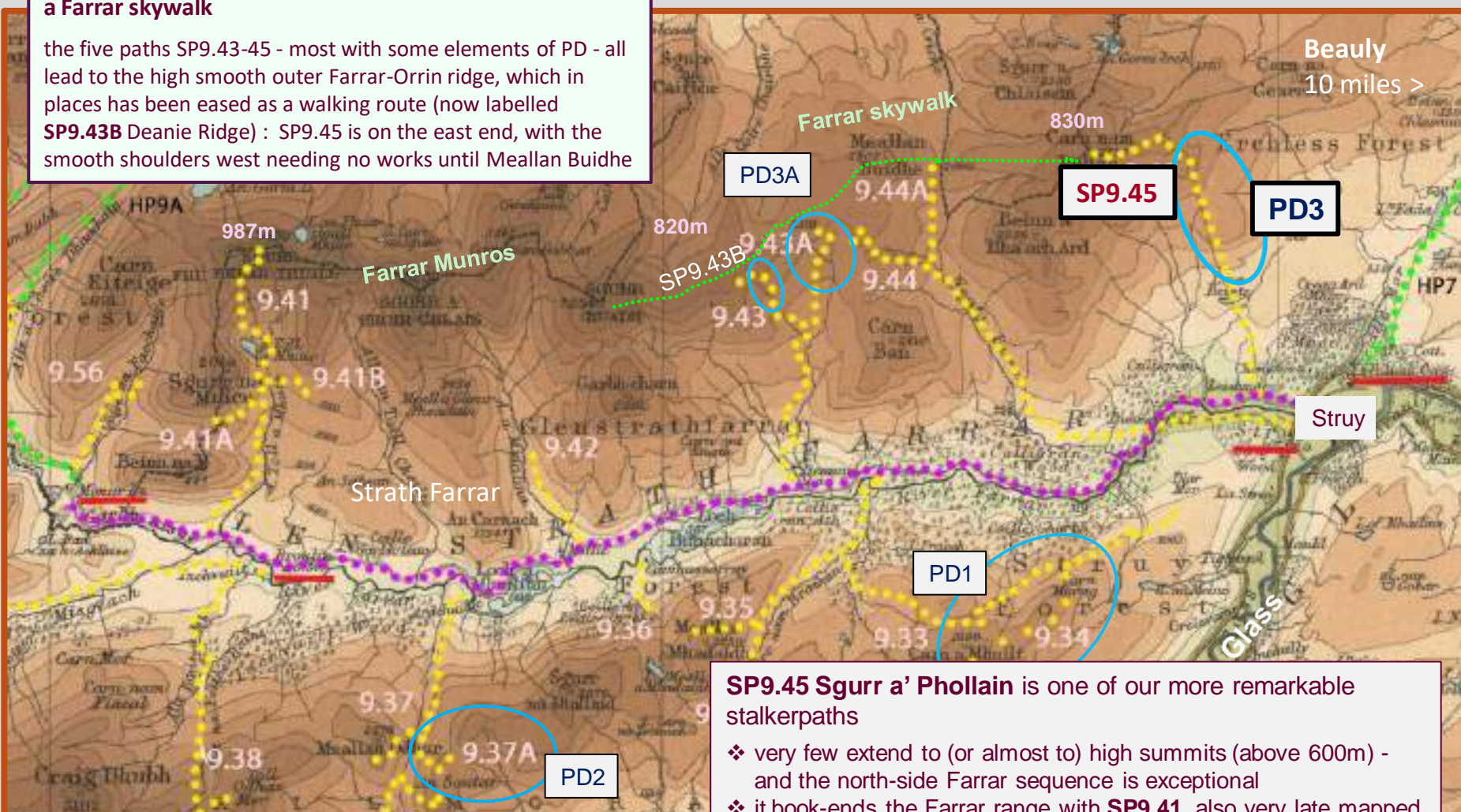
why the path was made ...

Glen
Orin

the high Strathfarrar Munros, Monar, Torridon, Slioch, Fisherfield (all in this frame) .. Fannich, Beinn Dearg, Wyvis...
...and to the east, the Beauly Firth and Cairngorms
a very fine vantage point, for owner, family, friends, guests

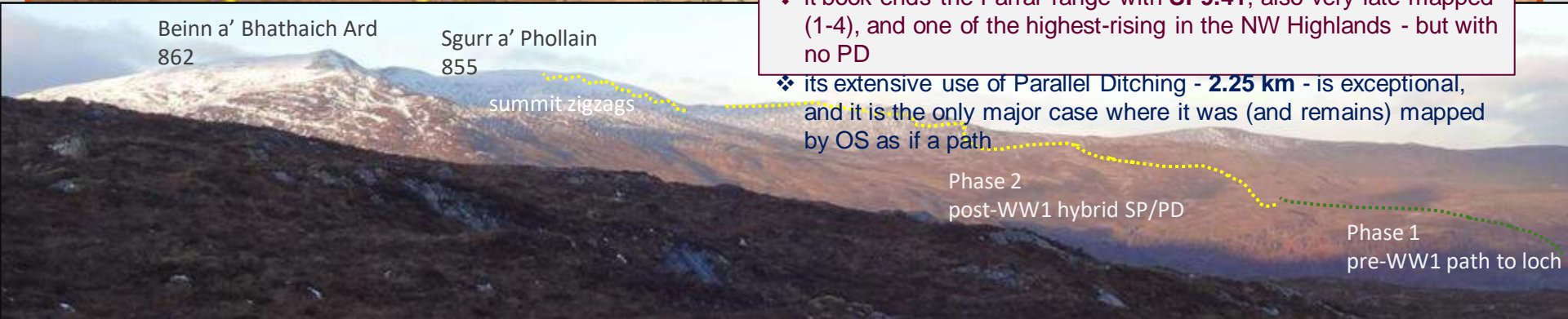
a Farrar skywalk

the five paths SP9.43-45 - most with some elements of PD - all lead to the high smooth outer Farrar-Orrin ridge, which in places has been eased as a walking route (now labelled **SP9.43B** Deanie Ridge) : SP9.45 is on the east end, with the smooth shoulders west needing no works until Meallan Buidhe



SP9.45 Sgurr a' Phollain is one of our more remarkable stalkerpaths

- ❖ very few extend to (or almost to) high summits (above 600m) - and the north-side Farrar sequence is exceptional
- ❖ it book-ends the Farrar range with **SP9.41**, also very late mapped (1-4), and one of the highest-rising in the NW Highlands - but with no PD
- ❖ its extensive use of Parallel Ditching - **2.25 km** - is exceptional, and it is the only major case where it was (and remains) mapped by OS as if a path.



Beinn a' Bhathaich Ard
862

Sgurr a' Phollain
855

summit zigzags

Phase 2
post-WW1 hybrid SP/PD

Phase 1
pre-WW1 path to loch

a Farrar skywalk

- no link path along the ridge ever mapped*
- but several 'easings' suggest the intention:

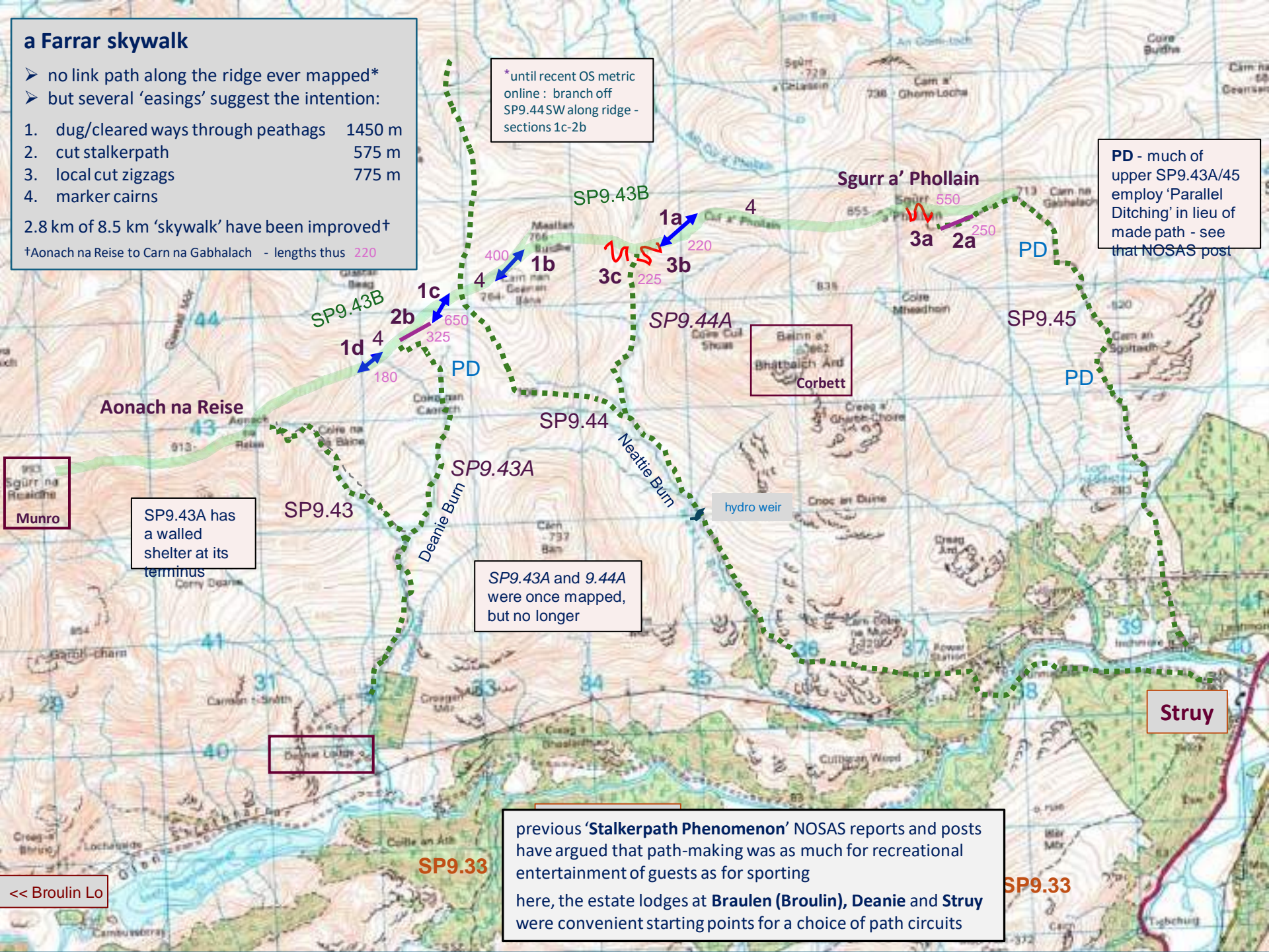
1. dug/cleared ways through peathags 1450 m
2. cut stalkerpath 575 m
3. local cut zigzags 775 m
4. marker cairns

2.8 km of 8.5 km 'skywalk' have been improved†

†Aonach na Reise to Carn na Gabhalach - lengths thus 220

*until recent OS metric online : branch off SP9.44 SW along ridge - sections 1c-2b

PD - much of upper SP9.43A/45 employ 'Parallel Ditching' in lieu of made path - see that NOSAS post



Munro

SP9.43A has a walled shelter at its terminus

SP9.43A and 9.44A were once mapped, but no longer

Struy

<< Broulin Lo

previous 'Stalkerpath Phenomenon' NOSAS reports and posts have argued that path-making was as much for recreational entertainment of guests as for sporting here, the estate lodges at **Braulen (Broulin)**, **Deanie** and **Struy** were convenient starting points for a choice of path circuits

why the path was made ...



Aonach na Reise 913

764

Meallan Buidhe 766

Deanie Burn

Neaty Burn

zigzag

a Farrar skywalk - this view west is from Beinn a' Bhathaich Ard, with the shoulder of Sgurr a' Phollain far right

the four paths up to the Deanie Ridge **SP9.43/43A/44/44A** are marked - if ours is included, a 10-12-mile ridge circuit between Struy and Deanie (assuming transport along the glen ..)

curious that there is no made path to this main peak from any side (modern ATV tracks extend up SW and SE flanks)





SP9.45 Sgurr a' Phollain

this extraordinary and captivating image, from BINGmaps but no longer available, was one of the earliest inspirations behind the 'Stalkerpath Phenomenon' research - and now [for this case study](#)

the first attempt to photorecord the whole path was overtaken by cloud, and memory of this final zigzag flight was of unpleasantly wet, broken-up going, a sadly degraded path

yet revisiting in bright spring weather has miraculously restored it, to a joy to behold and to follow, making light of the 500 feet of ascent

Z=8 plus initial corkscrew

C=2