This is a challenging circular walk around Arran’s northern headland. Discover the island’s industrial history and see the footsteps left, 300 million years ago, by the largest invertebrate ever to have lived on land! Return via 'Hutton's Unconformity' – rocks that shaped our understanding of the immense age of the Earth.

**Distance:** 12 km / 7.5 miles  
**Approximate time:** 5 hours  
**Start:** Lochranza  
**Terrain:** Surfaced tracks, grassy paths, wet in places; some rock scrambling over boulders, which may be slippery.  
**Safety information:** Leave route details and an estimated return time with someone. In an emergency call 999 and then ask for the Coastguard.  
**Route description:** Follow signposts for Laggan Cottage, along track and then following path up to the Narachan Pass. Descend to Laggan, then follow coastal way markers west to return to the start.
North Arran Walk

This circular walk revisits Arran's industrial history, and explores past environments. Find the footprints of a giant millipede and see the place where James Hutton changed geological thinking for ever.

1. Lochranza slate quarry
   Look up the hill to the right of the path to see the remains of the old slate quarry. These slates are the oldest rocks on Arran at around 540 million years old. They were quarried for a short time for use as roofing slates. Some samples contain crystals of pyrite, also known as 'fool's gold'.

2. Coal mines and Arthropleura trackway
   This is the site where Arran's only coal seam was exposed at the surface. You can still see the pits where it was mined. The ruined buildings are the old salt works, where the coal was burned to evaporate seawater.

3. Arthropleura, at up to 2m long, was the largest invertebrate that ever lived on land!

4. Ossian's Cave can be found in the sandstone cliffs on the left of the path. Ossian was the great poet of Celtic mythology. The walls of the cave contain carvings, including one of a three-masted ship, that may date to the eighteenth century.

5. An Ordovician rockfall
   The path winds between boulders of sandstone and conglomerate that fell from the cliffs above as a huge rockfall in the eighteenth century. The noise was reportedly heard on the Isle of Bute and even on the mainland!

6. Hutton's Unconformity
   James Hutton is considered the father of modern geology. He came across this outcrop in 1787, and noticed that gently sloping sandstones lay on top of steeply dipping schists. This junction of rocks is known as an 'unconformity'.

7. Deser: sandstones
   The rocks along this section of the coast belong to a geological unit called the New Red Sandstone. They were deposited in a desert during the Permian around 270 million years ago. Some layers contain fragments of other rocks. These were laid down by flash floods during storms.

8. Hutton reasoned that the time taken for geological processes to create this feature must have been immense. In the eighteenth century the Earth was thought to be 6,000 years old, but Hutton knew that an unconformity could not possibly form in that time.

   He proposed that the Earth was immeasurably ancient, and introduced the scientific community to the concept of 'deep time'.

Individual sand dunes can still be made out in the Permian sandstones of north Arran.