

Hello Mike

Re Identification of locale for picture <https://gilbertmunger.org/Pages/ID81.html>.



The painting is, of course, a romantic exaggeration of the scene as one would expect and therefore has elements of 'artistic licence' in its depiction.

As such it is always hard to fit a painting exactly to a modern day scene unless there are elements which clearly link the scene, or there are mountains which are so distinctive – *i.e.* the Matterhorn - that the picture really can't be anything else. That can be awkward in the Highlands. Our distinctive mountains are just that, but there are a lot of impressive other peaks that could be 'anywhere in the Highlands'. However the suggestion that it depicts the 'Four Sisters' is a good one and the terrain and peaks do seem to fit. *(Note from Mike Schroeder -- Here is a view from Google Earth, which strongly makes the case. Munger was a little further away, but the Google Earth views from there are occluded by trees.)*

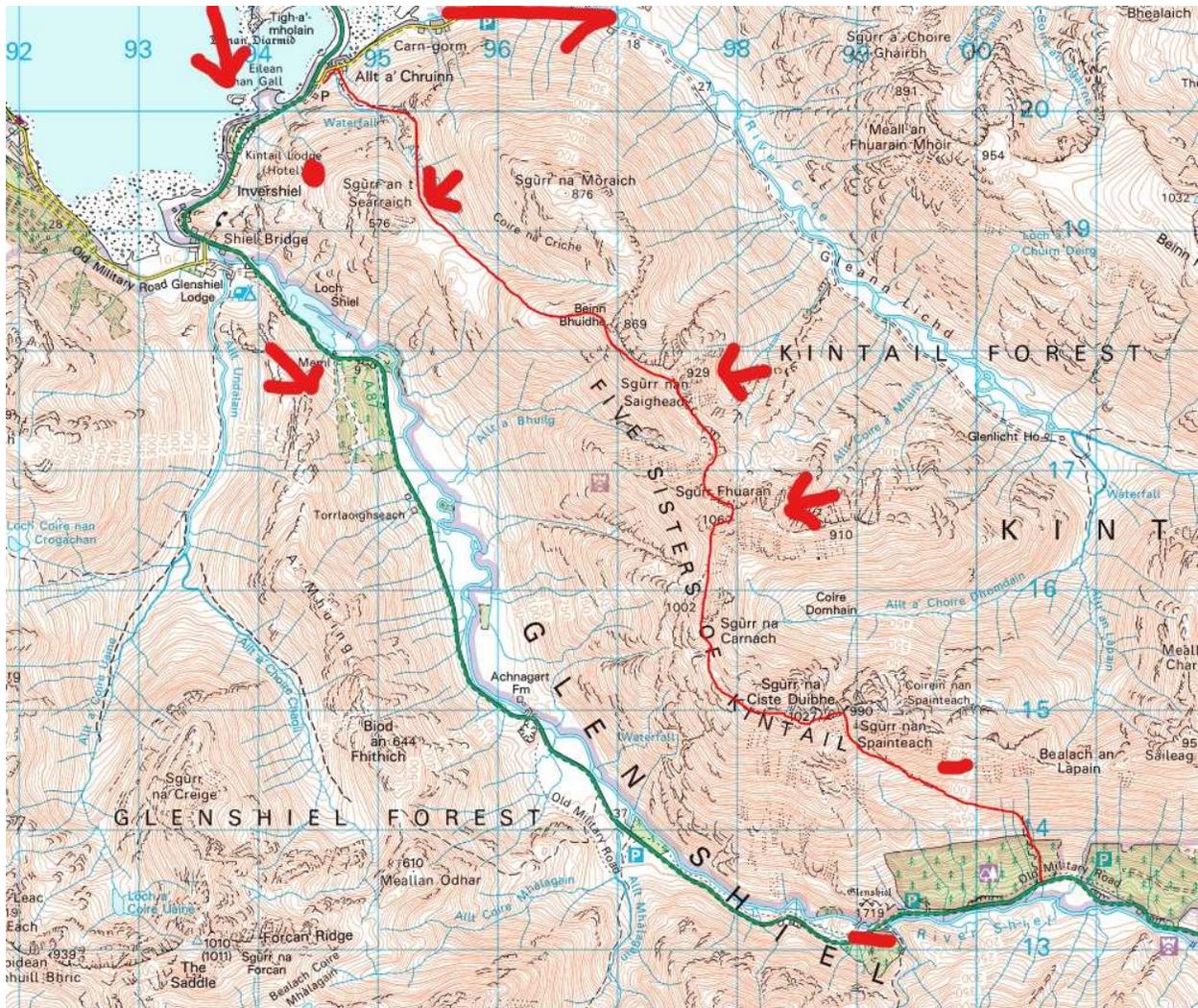


The 'Five Sisters' are the Five Sisters of Kintail (note not Four Sisters) that lie at the west end of Glen Shiel on the road to the Isle of Skye. The view is 'well known' and is popular with photographers and

artists now and I am sure would have been in the past. It is easily accessible by road (there since the early 18thC), and in the past would also have been easily accessible by boat or 'tourist' steamer from Glasgow or Fort William.

The Loch in the foreground would be Loch Duich which is a sea-loch, that is open to the sea, rather than enclosed freshwater loch, looking east towards the settlement of Shiel Bridge at the head of the loch.

The Five Sisters ridge consists of seven peaks. Technically only the five highest are the actual Five Sisters, although all seven on the ridge are known as the Five Sisters or Five Sisters ridge.



Looking at the attached map, the first lower peak in the painting is probably Sgurr an t-Searraich. This is one of the seven although not one of the highest 'Five Sisters'. Behind it in the painting are Sgurr nan Saighead and perhaps Sgurr nan Fhuran. These are two of the higher Five Sisters. The other three are hidden behind.

Again, looking at the map, the perspective of the painting seems to be such that the other two low peaks at the west end of the ridge, the less dramatic peaks Sgurr na Mòraich and Beinn Bhuidhe are further left and out of the painting. This would make sense if you were wanting a perspective which emphasised the drama - see attached map).

The most easterly of the actual Five Sisters, not shown in the painting and hidden by the high peaks in the painting - is Sgurr nan Spainteach. This is Peak of the Spaniards named after the battle of Glen Shiel in 1719, when a small party of Spanish arrived by sea and joined a Jacobite force (post the 1714 Old Pretender rebellion, and pre the New Pretender - Bonnie Prince Charlie - 1745 rebellion) at the start of another abortive Jacobite uprising. They were defeated by government forces further up Glen Shiel, as they marched inland. The Spanish soldiers were pursued over the mountains by government forces.

In school we are taught the last invasion of the UK was 1066. This forgets the Spanish troops who invaded in Glen Shiel in 1719. Perhaps 'invasion' is stretching it, but a bit of forgotten history.

Returning to the view. The picture looks up Glen Shiel and, from what I can see from the map and my recollections - I have travelled the glen and climbed its mountains - fits the current terrain pretty well.

Of course, I can't guarantee any of this, because there is an element of artistic licence here - the peaks are not as dramatic as this - and the only way to really check would be to stand there looking at the view with picture in hand.



In the attached photo, the painting view is looking left to right across the photo, from the forestry and water's edge on the left side, towards Shiel Bridge settlement (behind the large conifer) and Glen Shiel, which starts at the far right on the picture. The smaller lower peak of Sgurr an t-Searraich can be seen 'out in front' of the main ridge. Behind are the more impressive first peaks of the Five Sisters, Sgurr nan Saighead and perhaps Sgurr nan Fhuran etc.

You can see, that given the 'correct angle' you could get these impressive peaks immediately behind the lower Sgurr an t-Searraich, as it is in the painting (leaving out less impressive and lower Sgurr na Moraich and Beinn Bhuidhe). NOTE - the photo is slightly exaggerated, the peaks are not quite this pointed.

You will notice also that the painting shows a lower buttress that projects a bit from low on the foreground peak, Sgurr an t-Searraich, and a similar buttress can also be seen in the photograph (marked as red spots).

Hope you find that interesting and helpful and best regards from a sunny Scotland.

Tom Prentice, Secretary Scottish Mountaineering Club, 26 February 2021