



Cwm Idwal Route Guide

Disclaimer: This guide is provided for general reference only. Conditions can change at any time and information may be inaccurate or out of date. You are responsible for your own navigation, decisions, safety, and equipment.

Note: When writing this step-by-step guide, I've tried to be as concise as possible whilst still providing enough information so that anybody can use it to walk the route with ease. However, I would highly recommend using our pre-planned route on a navigation app as you can then be certain you are always following the correct path.

1. Starting at the Ogwen Centre pay and display car park, head towards the Cwm Idwal visitors centre (see figure 1); if you need the toilet, want some more info about the area, or you're just a bit peckish, head into the centre before you start the hike (see the Facilities & Hospitality section for more information). Just to the left of the centre, there are some steps leading onto a cobbled path which you should follow. The path splits pretty soon after the steps, with one path heading straight ahead and the other heading right, follow the path that goes straight until you reach a set of 5 upright stones on your left (see figure 2). If you look through the hole on each of the stones you'll be able to see the mountain whose name is engraved on the front; Tryfan and Pen yr Ole Wen among others can be seen. Continue past the stones, until you reach an ornate wrought iron gate, head through it and cross the footbridge which spans the Afon (river) Idwal.

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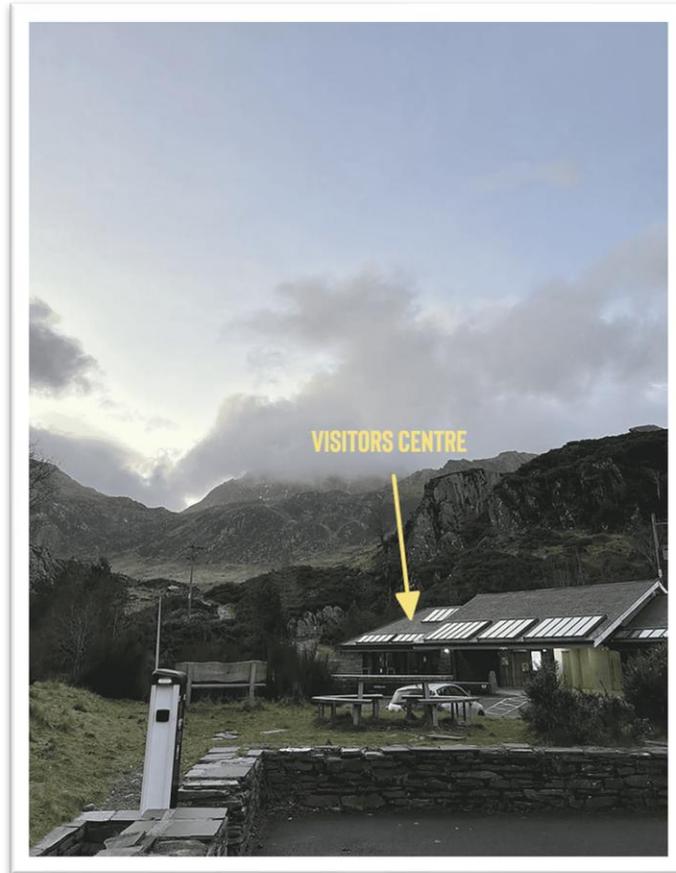


Figure 1 – Cwm Idwal Visitors Centre

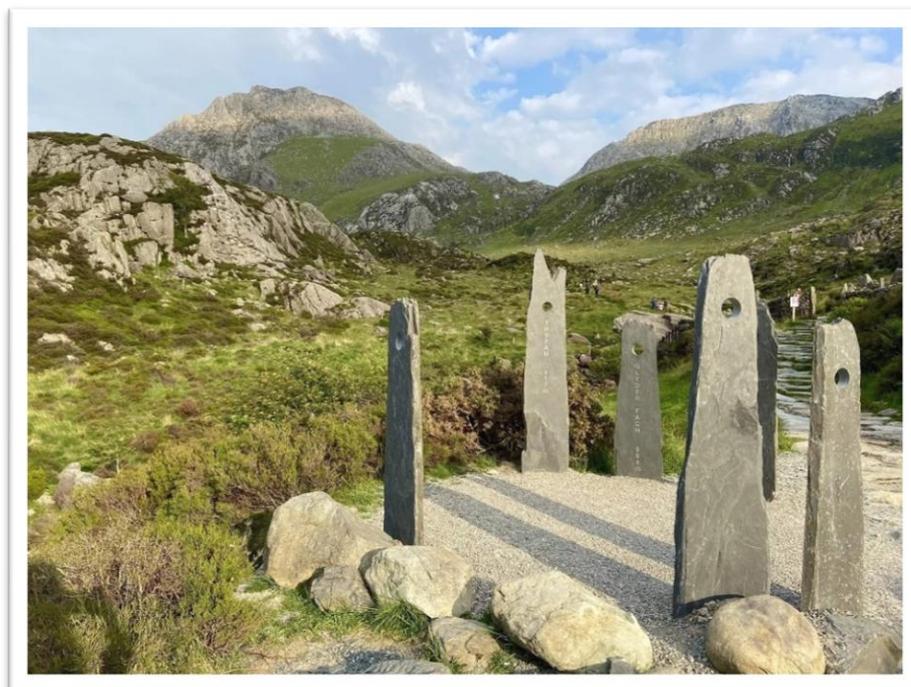


Figure 2 – Five Window Stones



2. From here follow the main cobbled path until you reach the edge of Llyn (lake) Idwal; don't take any dirt path diversions like the one not long after the bridge (see figure 3 for an overview of this section). The route from the gate to the lake's edge is around 800 meters and will take around 10 minutes to walk. When you reach the lake the path splits in 2 (see figure 4), take the left path (we'll be coming back via the right path, so you'll get to cross the little bridge later) and walk along the lake's edge until you reach a stone wall with an iron gate, which you need to pass through. Continue walking along the cobbled path and eventually the lake edge will veer off to the right whilst the path continues straight ahead. Shortly after the path and lake edge diverge, there will be 2 sets of steps, the first with relatively few steps, the second set with many more steps and a more gradual incline. When you get to the top of the steps (see figure 5 to see the view from the top so you know you're on the right path), there will be a low stone wall on your left, just beyond this the route splits in 2, with one heading to the left taking you uphill, and the other continuing straight ahead at the same level you're currently on, take the path that goes straight ahead (see figure 6).

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Figure 3 – Overview of Route From Visitors Centre to Llyn Idwal



Figure 4 – Left Turn After Reaching Llyn Idwal

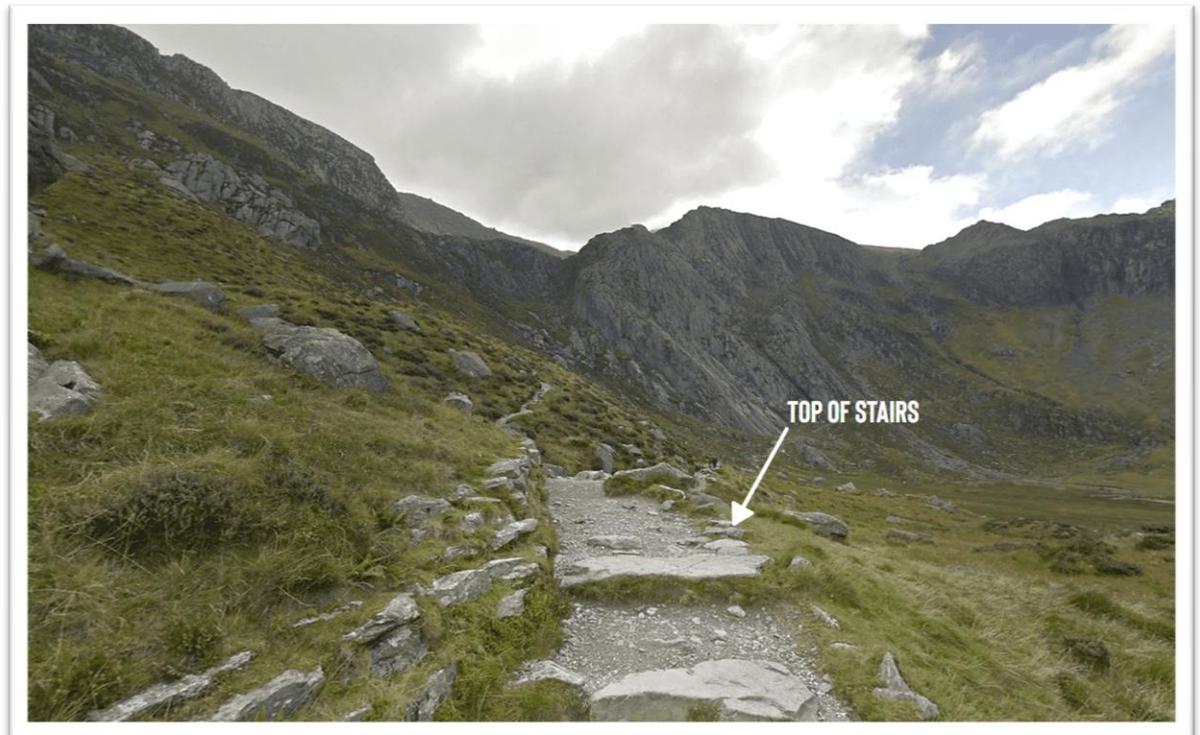


Figure 5 – View From Top of Second Set of Stairs

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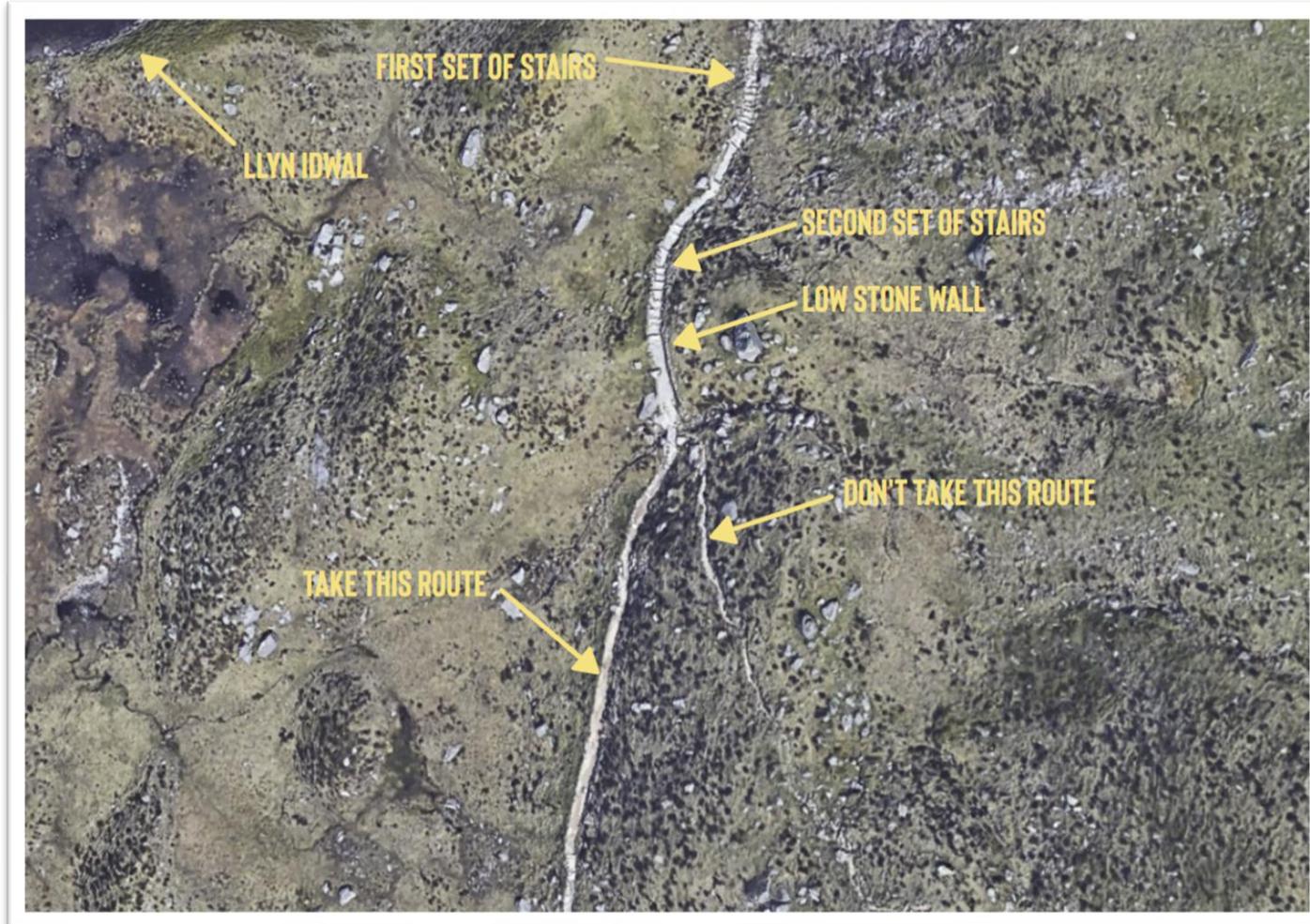


Figure 6 – Route to Follow After Ascending Both Sets of Stairs



3. Continue for around 310 meters after the path splits (around 4 minutes walk) until you reach another split in the path, with one heading to your right towards the lake, and the other heading straight on; take the path going straight on if you want to do the full, slightly more challenging route (see figure 7), or if you want to avoid this section to make the hike less strenuous or just shorter, take the path to the right and head to step 6 where it will rejoin the longer route I'll describe going forward (and see figure 8 for an overview of the shortcut route). So, after heading straight on at the split, the path will start to ascend; it's still mainly the cobbled path you've been following throughout the walk, interspersed by some loose rocky sections, but it's always easy to follow (unless it's covered by snow!).

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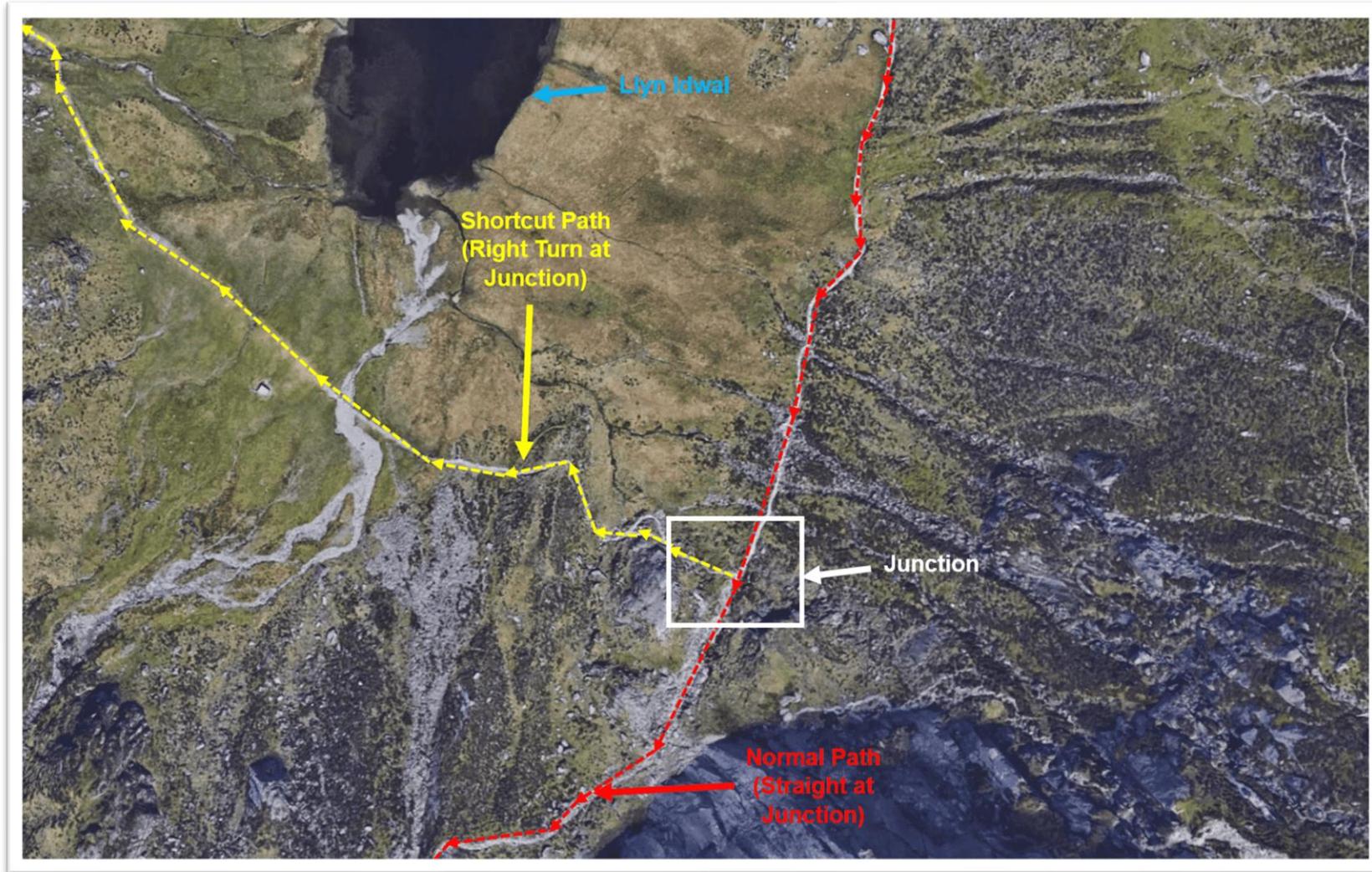


Figure 7 – Overview of Junction for Normal Route & Shortcut

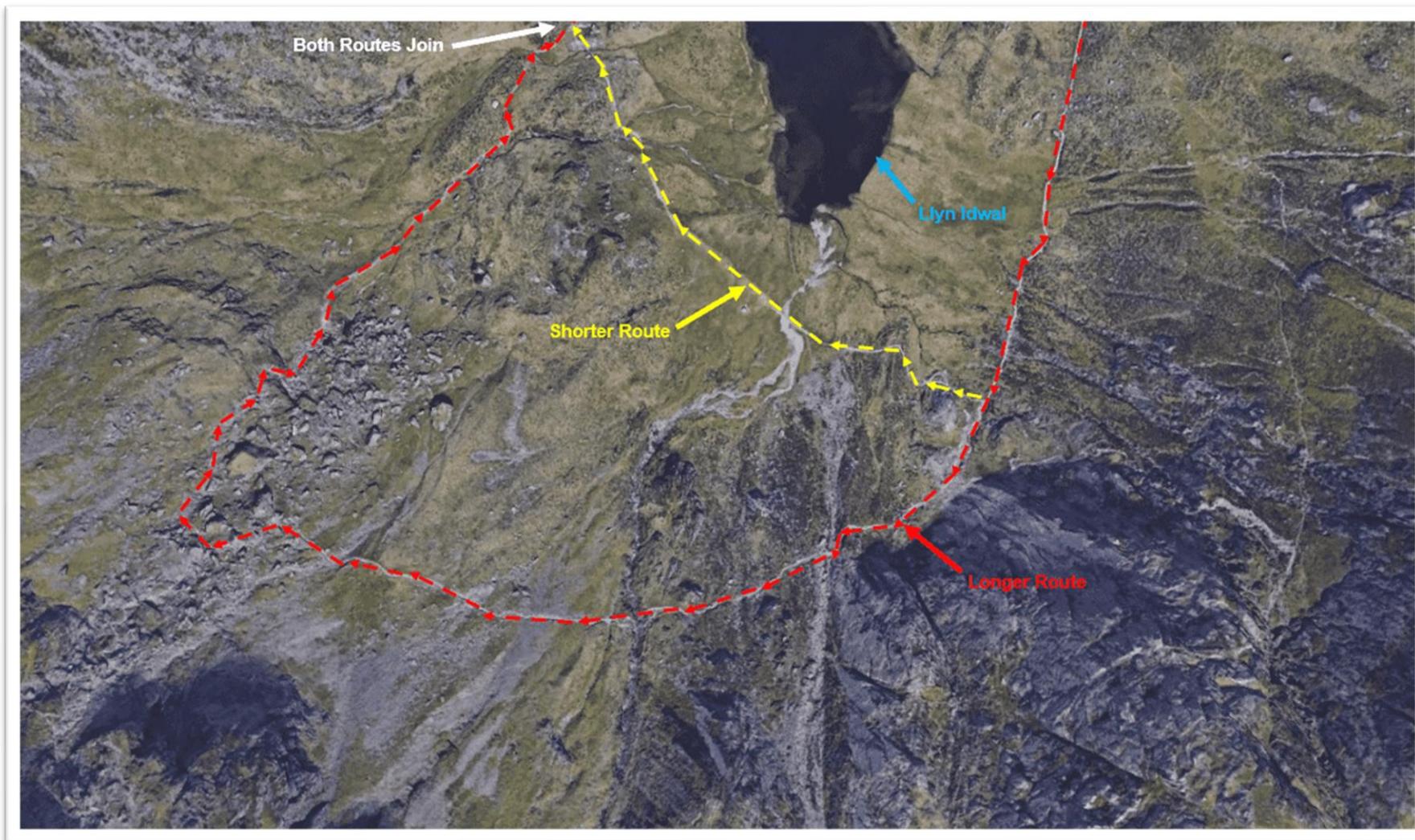


Figure 8 – Overview of Full Shortcut & Where it Re-Joins the Normal Path



4. Continue to follow the clearly defined path, on your left you'll see the Idwal Slabs which will likely have climbers on (see figure 9). Continue past this, following the path as it ascends towards Devil's Kitchen (see figure 10), or Twll Du ("Black Hole") as it's known in Welsh, a dramatic gash in the mountainside that often has plumes of steam emanating from within it; according to local legend, the steam comes from the Devil cooking in his kitchen 🍲. Head to this [Google Maps link](#), which will give you a 360-degree view from where you should be at this point in the hike; notice the lake behind to your right, the path you're on will soon start to turn taking you back towards it. Follow the path until you reach a bridge (see figure 11), cross it and continue onwards, with Devil's Kitchen still ahead of you. You'll come to a section of the path with a big boulder in front of you. The path turns sharply to the left here (after making this left you should be able to see the gash that is the Devil's Kitchen directly ahead of you (see figure 12), up to now you will have just seen it from the side on). Shortly after it will turn sharply to the right, and then finally it will gradually turn right again until it heads back towards the lake (see figure 13 for an overview of this section).

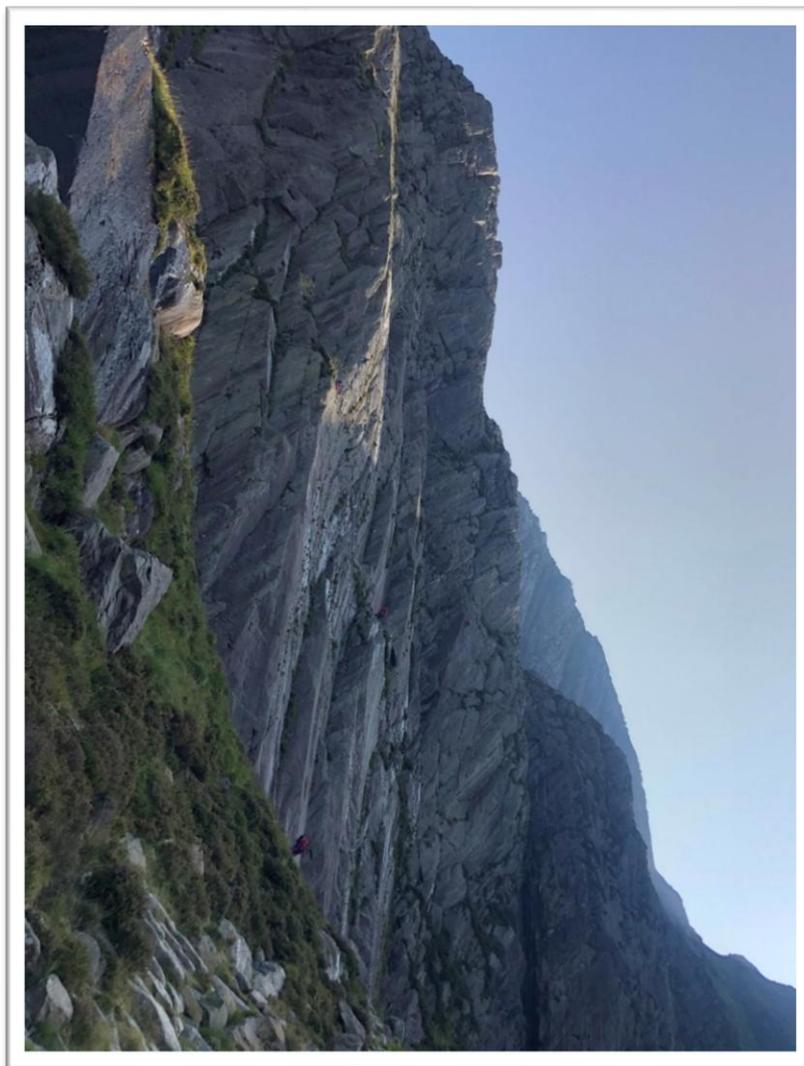


Figure 9 – Idwal Slabs

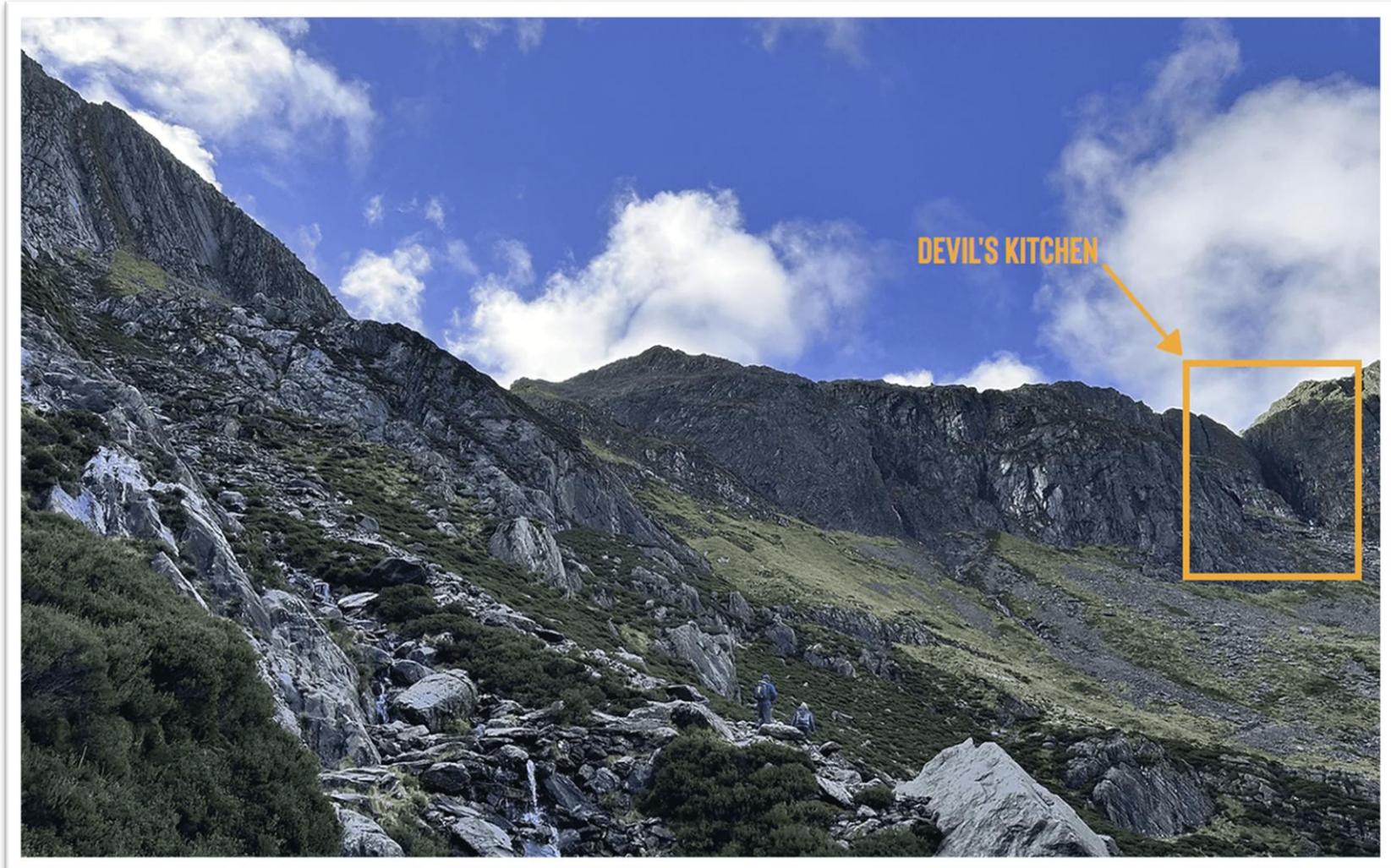


Figure 10 – Devil's Kitchen



Figure 11 – Bridge

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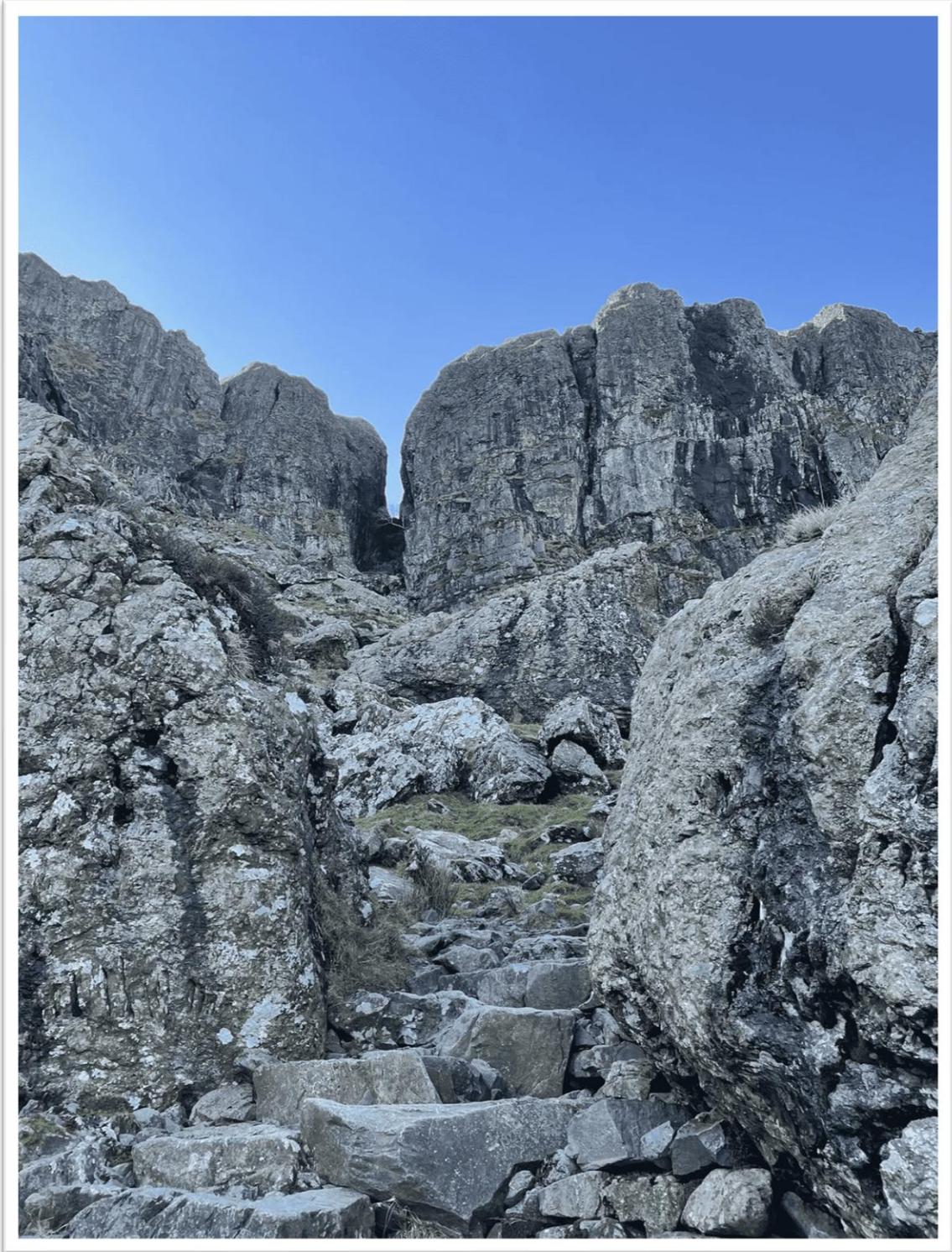


Figure 12 – View of Devil's Kitchen After Left Turn Near Big Boulder

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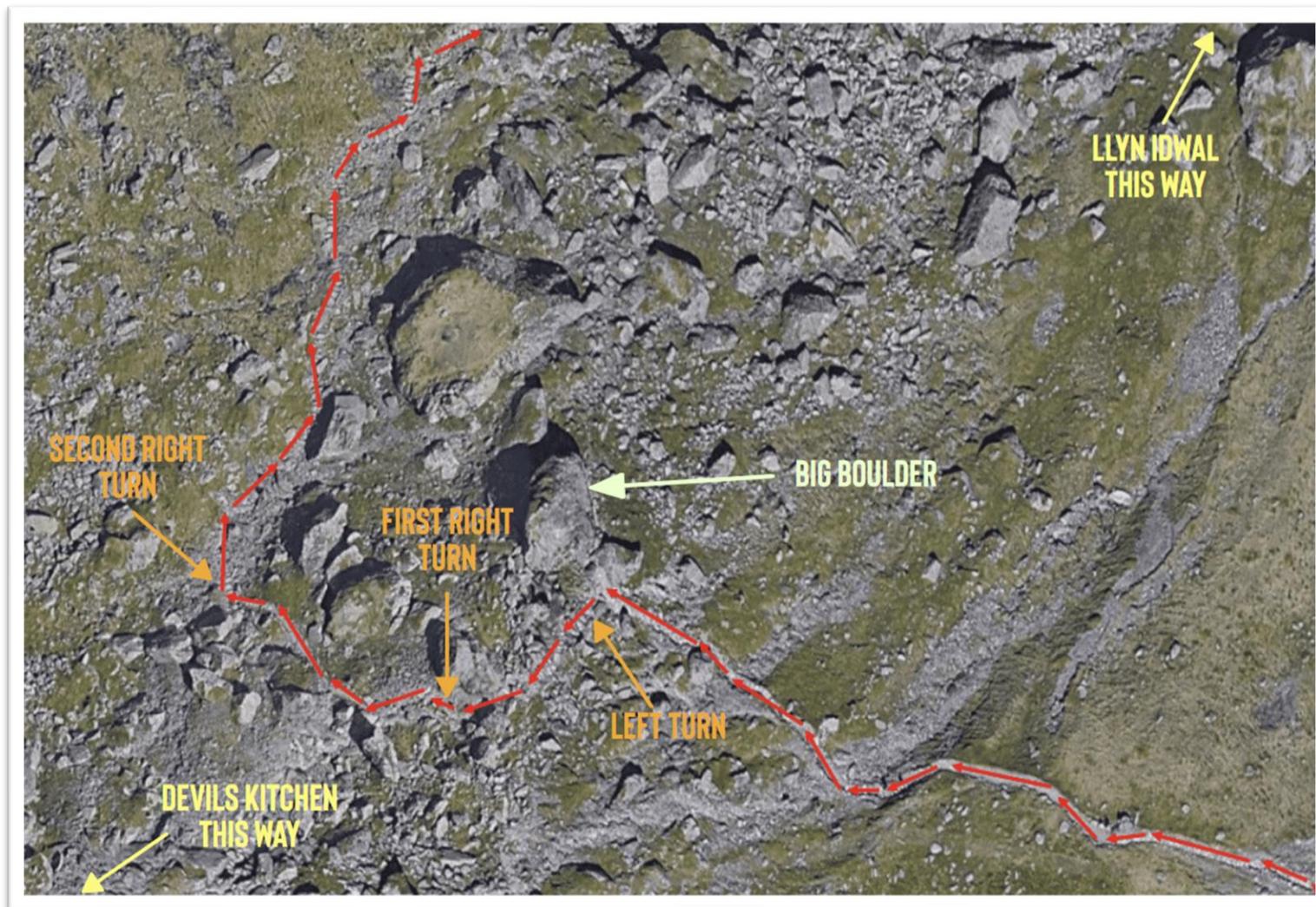


Figure 13 – View of Devil's Kitchen After Left Turn Near Big Boulder



5. The next part of the route has you heading back towards Llyn Idwal, and from here, the path you've been following will gradually start to descend towards it. Continue on this path for around 450m (5 to 6 minutes' walk) until you're almost level with the lake and you can see the path in figure 14, heading off to the right (this is where the shortcut described in step 3 rejoins the main path).

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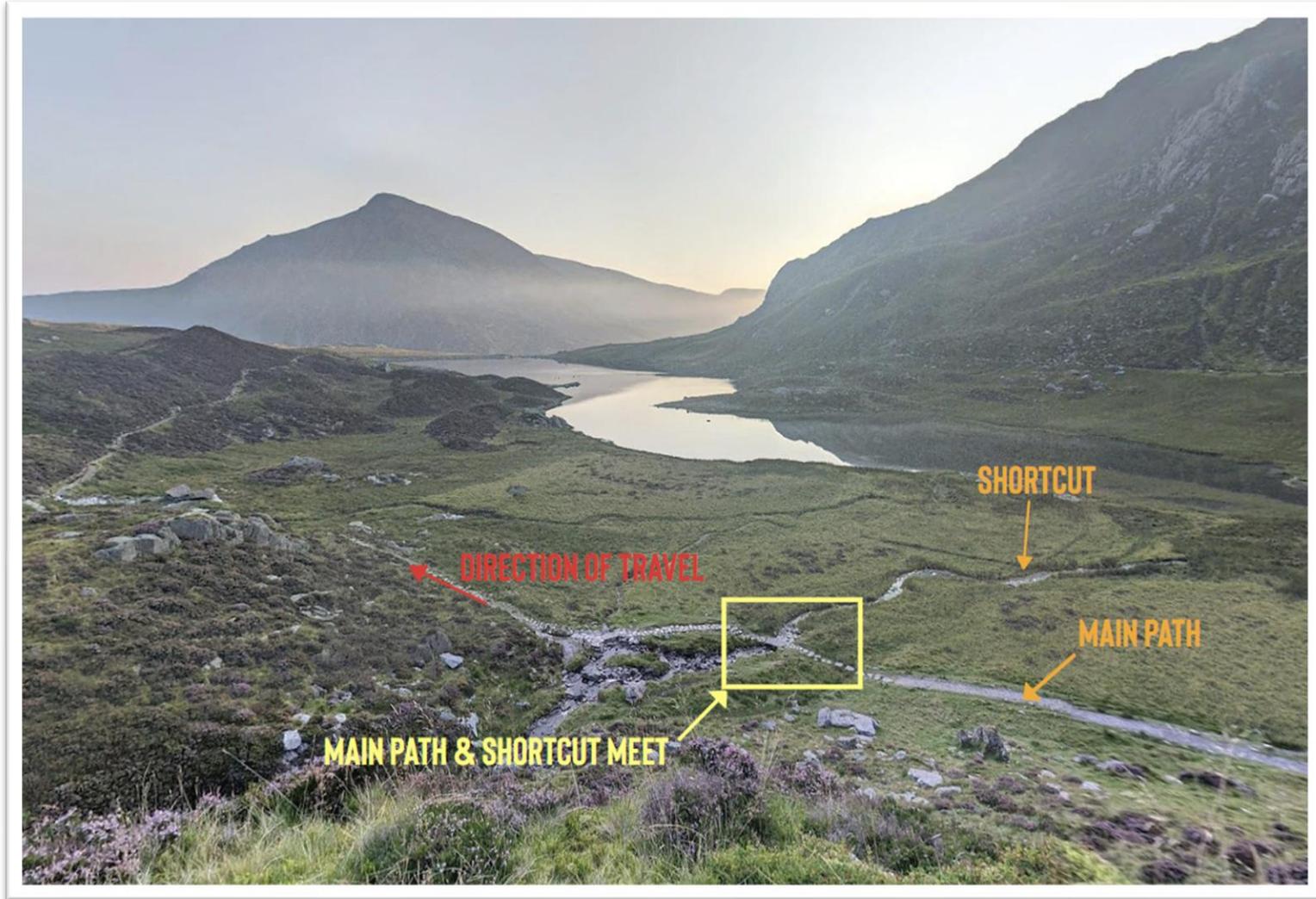


Figure 14 – View of Devil's Kitchen After Left Turn Near Big Boulder



6. If you took the shortcut, turn right when the path you're on meets the main path (see figure 7). If you took the longer route you're already on the main path, so continue straight ahead, going past the right turn and keeping the lake on your right-hand side. From here follow the clearly defined path running alongside the lake, until you reach the stone wall and gate as shown in figure 15. Pass through the gate, and admire the stunning pebble beach, which sits directly across from Devil's Kitchen and is an amazing spot for some lunch. When ready, walk to the other end of the beach and onto the path which runs alongside the edge of the lake. The path will lead you to a stone wall with a gate which you'll need to pass through, immediately after this you need to cross the little bridge which you might remember from earlier in the hike. About 10 meters from the end of the bridge turn left (you should recognise this area from earlier in the hike [step 2]) and then retrace your steps to get back to the start of the hike.

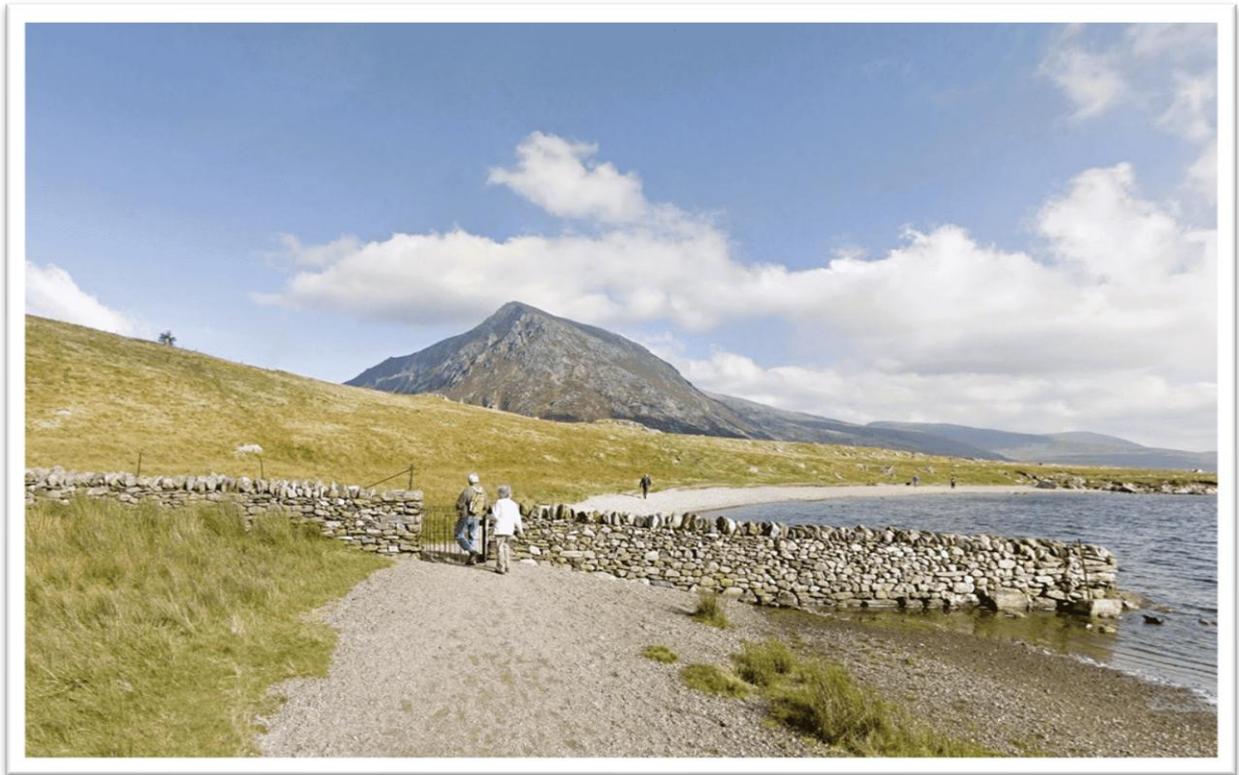


Figure 15 – Iron Gate in Stone Wall Near Pebble Beach

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