



What's the rush?

To appreciate the immense beauty of this area one needs to allow plenty of time. So instead of driving on, stop awhile, put a tape of Gaelic music on the car stereo and watch the light sweep the view before you.

Below is a wee suggestion on how long to linger at the locations listed over:

Key:

Soak Up The Scene
Get Out And Walk



2



5



3



6



4



7



8

1. Beinn na Caillich
2. Beinn Sgritheall from Tormore
3. Knock Castle - Teangue
4. Autumn leaves
5. In the shadow of Blà Bheinn
6. Textures and patterns of boats
7. The Isle of Eigg from Aird of Sleat
8. Ardvassar Bay



Gaelic

Gaelic is the traditional language of the Highlands and Islands and is currently undergoing a rich revival thanks to the efforts of many dedicated institutions and individuals throughout the length and breadth of Scotland.

Pronounced 'GALIC', not 'gaylic' or 'garlic', the language is particularly lyrical and illustrative.

Below is a glossary of words you are sure to come across whilst with us, but beware, their pronunciation is very different to their spelling! If in doubt why not ask a local for help.

1. 1 hour (GOAW)
2. 1 hour (GOAW)
3. 1 hour (GOAW)
4. 1 hour (GOAW)
5. 30 mins (SUTS)
6. 2 hours (GOAW)
7. 30 mins (SUTS)
8. 30 mins (SUTS)
9. 1 hour (GOAW)
10. 30 mins (GOAW)
11. 30 mins (GOAW)
12. 15 mins (SUTS)
13. 15 mins (SUTS)
14. 4 hours (GOAW)
15. 15 mins (SUTS)
16. 45 mins (GOAW)
17. 15 mins (SUTS)
18. 45 mins (GOAW)
19. 30 mins (GOAW)
20. 2 hours (GOAW)
21. 45 mins (GOAW)
22. 20 mins (GOAW)
23. 4 hours (GOAW)
24. 15 mins (SUTS)
25. 10 mins (SUTS)
26. 1 hour (GOAW)
27. 20 mins (SUTS)
28. 15 mins (SUTS)
29. 4 hours (GOAW)
30. 30 mins (GOAW)
31. 3 hours (GOAW)

- Abhainn** - river
Acarsaid - anchorage
Ailean - green field
Aird - promontory
Airdh - shieling
Allt - burn
Ath - ford
- Bac** - bank
Bàgh - bay
Baile - town
Bàn - white
Beag - little
Bealach - pass or coll
Beinne - ben or hill
Beithe - birch tree
Bodach - old man
Brae - top or summit
Breac - speckled
Bruach - steep hillside
Buidhe - yellow
- Cailleach** - old woman
Caisteal - castle
Camas - bay
Caol - kyle or narrow strait
Cioch - woman's breast
Clach - stone
Clachan - village
Cladh - churchyard
Cnoc - small hill
Coille - wood or forest
Coire - corrie
Cruach - stack or heap
- Darach** - oak
Dearg - red
Dubh - black or dark
Dùn - mound or fort
- Each** - horse
Eas - waterfall
Eilean - island
Fada - long
- Fang** - sheep pen
Faoghail - ford or sea channel
Fraoch - heather
Fuar - cold
- Garbh** - rough or harsh
Geal - bright / white
Glas - stream
Glas - grey or green
Gleann - glen or valley
Gobhar - goat
- Inbhir** - rivermouth
Iolaire - eagle
- Lagan** - hollow
Leac - flat stone
Learg - hillside
Leitir - slope
Loch - lake
Lòn - stream or marsh
- Machair** - low grassy land
Maol - headland / rounded hill
Meall - rounded hill / lump
Mòine - mossy place
Mhòr - large or tall
- Ob** - bay
Ord - conical hill
- Ruadh** - red or reddish
Rubha - headland
- Sean** - old
Sgùrr - peak
Sith - fairy
Srath - river valley
Sruthan - stream
Suidhe - resting place
- Traigh** - beach
- Uisge** - water



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

BOOKS:

- Brown, Hamish. **Skye and Kintail** (Mercat Press 2000)
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 Cooper, Derek. **Skye** (Birlinn Ltd, 1995)
 Humble, B.H. **The Cuillin of Skye** (London, 1952)
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 Swire, Otta. F. **Skye - The Island and its Legends** (MacLean Press 1999)

INTERNET:



www.skye.co.uk

The official web site for the communities of Skye, Lochalsh and Raasay.

- www.scotland-info.co.uk
- www.highland.freedom.com
- www.scotinfo.co.uk
- www.smo.uhi.ac.uk
- www.ealaghol.co.uk
- www.kyleakin.com
- www.lochalsh.com
- www.gardenofskye.co.uk
- www.skye.ws
- www.plockton.com

Discover a wealth of information about the area and way of life, even make contact with local people.

MAPS:

- Ordnance Survey maps for Traveller's Companion guides:
 ORDNANCE SURVEY LANDRANGER SERIES 1:50,000
 SHEET 32 SOUTH SKYE & CUILLIN HILLS
 SHEET 33 LOCHALSH, GLEN SHIEL & LOCH HOURN
 SHEET 25 GLEN CARRON & GLEN AFFRIC
 SHEET 24 RAASAY & APPLECROSS, LOCH TORRIDON & PLOCKTON
 SHEET 23 NORTH SKYE, DUNVEGAN & PORTREE



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South Skye



the sights and sounds, present and past
of Skye & Lochalsh



Not a day goes by in this part of Skye that you don't see a rainbow: God's colourful tears for a fallen universe; his covenant-sign with earth; or - if you believe the scientists and the dictionaries - **"an optical phenomenon caused by the refraction of sunlight through falling water drops"**. Bah, scientists! And linguists! Like calling the Atlantic a collection of water or the Cuillin a heap of stones.

South Skye is but one prism - the purple one - in the rainbow that is Skye and Lochalsh, but in that single area all the historic and cultural colours of what is called the Gaeltachd are still to be seen. According to meteorologists, the larger the water drops in the sky, the stronger are the colours of the rainbow - which is why the Highlands are particularly beautiful in the rainy months: January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, December.

There are always beginnings, and where you begin your relationship with South Skye utterly depends on you. Physically, you will likely arrive either over the bridge into Kyleakin, or on the ferry from Mallaig to Armadale, or the small car-ferry from Glenelg to Kylerhea, at the southern end of the parish. You may, of course, be travelling from the north end, from one of the Outer Isles via Uig and down through Portree: if so, South Skye begins somewhere around Dunan, five miles north of Broadford. There are no lines on the road, or on the water, or on the moors to mark these boundaries: after all, what's a mile or two between Gaelic friends ("It won't take me long to wait half-an-hour" as the old Highlander said, standing at the bus-stop.) And aren't all boundaries (like time itself), ultimately psychological and cultural and linguistic and social, if not political, anyhow: the prejudicial maps in our minds are the first things to discard on coming to Skye.

On a
November
morning,
coming over
Upper Teangue
I saw a
trawler out in
the Minch.

The
ring-netters
of my mind,
the glittering
herring of my
memory, and
the ocean so

Sleat is the most difficult area of Skye for me to write about, because I know it best, I live in it (with my wife and five daughters: good Lord, is that what the old proverb - 'Slèite riabhach nam ban bòidheach', 'Brindled Sleat of the beautiful women' - was about?) and - oh, all right then - I love it. And them. There, it's out. Reminding me of the Lewisman who loved his wife so much that he almost told her.

Taciturn men, us Highlanders. My brother, once freezing in sub-zero temperatures in Barra, went as far as to say: **"Aye, it's a bit fresh!"** Like describing the Pacific as a bit wet, or Everest as a bit tall.

I would, of course, argue that South Skye is the loveliest and gentlest part of the whole island (it's not called "The Garden of Skye" in vain), and not just because I live here: I have no personal interest whatsoever in attracting more visitors to the area. I don't run a guest house, or hotel, or sell flowers or fish, or postcards or pies or fish and chips, and I rather like the empty roads in mid-winter, but I also acknowledge this truth: that God did not create Skye just for my singular, personal benefit. Come and enjoy it, remembering that we only hold it in trust for future generations. So leave it as you find it. Linguistically speaking, of course.

I'm not going to go on about the attractions of the area: all the information is on the inside. Some of the things are very obvious: if you want to learn Gaelic, stop at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig for a year or three; if you need milk at four in the morning, the only 24-hour-a-day garage shop is in bustling Broadford. In the summer, Kyleakin is like a Mediterranean village: all blue sea and white houses, and as many languages as you want heard down by the rolling sea. Good bacon rolls too in this beautiful village.

As ever, however, the magic of the place will be found, for you, in the places that I have not mentioned: on the low-tide coral beaches of Ord; in conversation with an old man on his tractor; at a Gaelic service made glorious by the unaccompanied Psalms. At Ashaig with Maolrubha, or Leitir Fura with the dispossessed, or Tarskavaig with the living.

And as you drive across the brand new, double-track road that now connects Sleat to Broadford, remember that roads erase as much history as they open up. As you drive by at speed, remember that not so long ago this was wild moorland, the land of the summer shielings, where the Gaels of south Skye took their cattle for summer pasture. It was where young men from Heaste met young women from Aird, and young women from Teangue met young men from Drumfearn. Before dance-halls, before Ibiza, before the internet.

I know we need guided, in Gaelic and English and French and Latin, if need be, but the last thing we all want, surely, is to be merely led from one heritage-centre to the next, from one quick holiday experience to the next. In Skye, be guided as much by your heart as by your head, by the landscape as much as by the time-table. The best signs are always internal, the ones that make our hearts beat with an extra rhythm: when we smell the wild garlic by the roadside at Armadale, or catch that first glimpse of Eigg and Rum and Canna from the high Heaste road, or the majesty of the Cuillin from Torrin, or see the Atlantic breakers rolling on to pebbly Achnaclòich beach. These are signposts that remind us that - after all - it is really good to be alive. And what better place to be alive than here, and now?

ANGUS PETER CAMPBELL



Always with a point of view and never without passion, Angus Peter Campbell, Poet, Broadcaster, Writer, Preacher, and defender of all things Gaelic is your travelling companion through the six distinct areas which make up this beautiful region of Skye and Lochalsh. In his company expect the unexpected, find enlightenment, enjoy instruction, be argued with, even sung to!! For this guide is designed to reveal the heart and soul of each area and to help you appreciate why, for many, it takes a lifetime of visitation to understand this unique place and people.

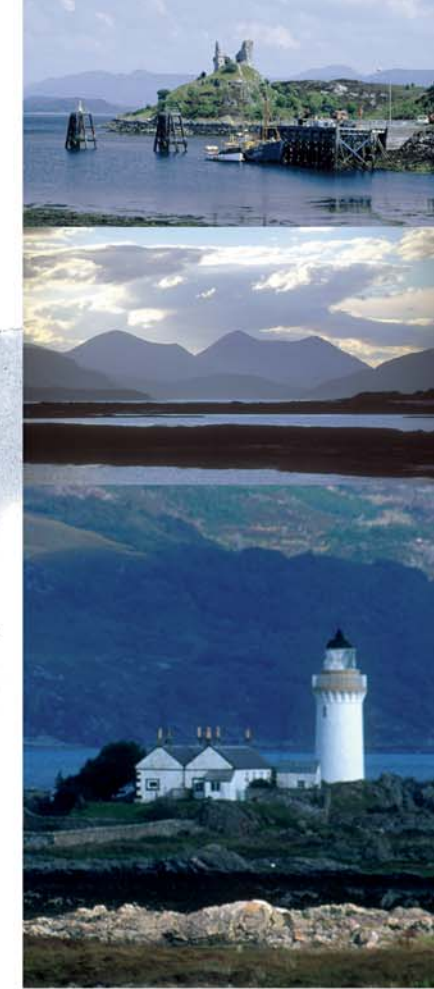
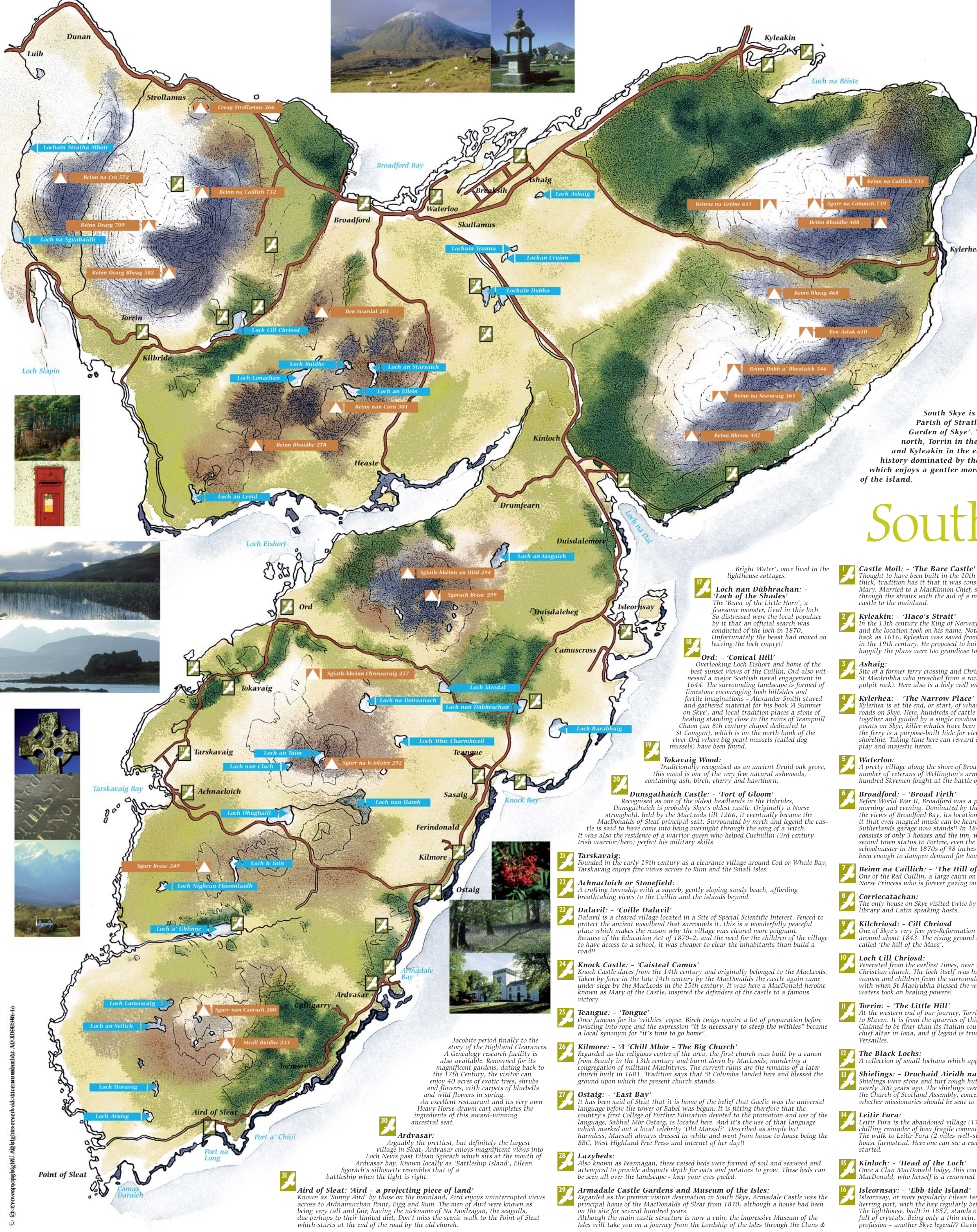
big, and so
beautiful, and
so wide.

"To discover the real Skye, get out of your car, or bus, or whatever moves you. Instead of spending five minutes gazing at a loch, extend it to seven-and-a-half."



South Skye

An t-Eilean Sgitheanach
The Island of Skye



South Skye is a region formed by part of the Parish of Strath and the whole of Sleat - 'The Garden of Skye'. The area is defined by Luib in the north, Torrinn in the west, Aird of Sleat in the south and Kyleakin in the east. South Skye is an area rich in history dominated by the MacDonalids, it is also an area which enjoys a gentler more verdant landscape than the rest of the island.

South Skye

- 1 **Castle Moll - 'The Bare Castle'**
Thought to have been built in the 10th century and with traces of walls ten feet thick, tradition has it that it was constructed by a Norwegian Princess, Saucy Mary. Married to a MacKinnon Chief, she exacted tolls from vessels passing through the straits with the aid of a massive chain which was stretched from the castle to the mainland.
- 2 **Kyleakin - 'Haco's Strait'**
In the 13th century the King of Norway, King Haco, anchored here with his fleet and the location took on his name. Notable for being the crossing to Skye as far back as 1616, Kyleakin was saved from an earlier development by Lord MacDonald in the 19th century. He proposed to build a model town calling it New Liverpool, happily the plans were too grandiose to be realised!!
- 3 **Ashaig:**
Site of a former ferry crossing and Christian sanctuary, Ashaig was home to St Maolrubha who preached from a rock on the north bank of the river (known as pulpit rock). Here also is a holy well which is supposed to have healing powers.
- 4 **Kylerhea - 'The Narrow Place'**
Kylerhea is at the end, or start, of what was once one of the most important drove roads on Skye. Here, hundreds of cattle would cross at slack water, tethered together and guided by a single rowboat to the mainland. One of the oldest ferry points on Skye, killer whales have been sighted through the narrows!! Overlooking the ferry is a purpose-built hide for viewing the wildlife which inhabits the shoreline. Taking time here can reward one with a memorable glimpse of otters at play and majestic heron.
- 5 **Waterloo:**
A pretty village along the shore of Broadford Bay, was so named because of the number of veterans of Wellington's army that once lived there. One thousand six hundred Skymen fought at the battle of Waterloo.
- 6 **Broadford - 'Broad Firth'**
Before World War II, Broadford was a port with the Portree steamer calling morning and evening. Dominated by the slopes of Beinn na Caillich and bordered by the views of Broadford Bay, its location is almost too perfect. In fact tradition has it that even magical music can be heard on a fairy knoll, which is located where Sutherland's garage now stands!! In 1843 Andersons Guide noted: "Broadford consists of only 3 houses and the inn, which is a comfortable one!" Now enjoying second town status to Portree, even the measurements of rainfall by a Broadford schoolmaster in the 1870s of 98 inches and 200 days of uninterrupted rain has not been enough to dampen demand for housing!!
- 7 **Beinn na Caillich - 'The Hill of the Old Woman'**
One of the Red Cuillin, a large cairn on the summit is said to mark the grave of a Norse Princess who is forever gazing out to Norway. Could even be Saucy Mary?!
- 8 **Corriecatagan:**
The only house on Skye visited twice by Boswell and Johnson, it boasted a fine library and Latin speaking hosts.
- 9 **Kilchriod - Cill Chriod**
One of Skye's very few pre-Reformation churches, Kilchriod held its last service around about 1843. The rising ground between the church and the loch is still called 'the hill of the Mass'.
- 10 **Loch Cill Chriod:**
Venerated from the earliest times, near the loch is a stone circle and an early Christian church. The loch itself was haunted by a monster which consumed women and children from the surrounding area. The creature was finally dealt with when St Maolrubha blessed the waters - the monster vanished, and the waters took on healing powers!
- 11 **Torrinn - 'The Little Hill'**
At the western end of our journey, Torrinn enjoys wonderful views across Loch Slapin to Blaven. It is from the quarries of this region that Skye marble is extracted. Claimed to be finer than its Italian counterpart, Skye marble has been used in the chief altar in Inna, and if legend is true, used in the building of the Vatican and Versailles.
- 12 **The Black Lochs:**
A collection of small lochans which appear black due to their peaty water.
- 13 **Shielings - Drochaid Airidh na Suiridhe**
Shielings were stone and turf rough huts used by cattle-herders during the summer nearly 200 years ago. The shielings were places for love-making, so much so that the Church of Scotland Assembly, concerned at this fornication, seriously debated whether missionaries should be sent to curtail these excesses!!
- 14 **Leitir Fura:**
Leitir Fura is the abandoned village (1782) of a large family of MacInnes', and is a chilling reminder of how fragile communities were in those days. The walk to Leitir Fura (2 miles well-signposted) starts at the site of an old black house farmstead. Here one can see a reconstruction of how these buildings were started.
- 15 **Kinloch - 'Head of the Loch'**
Once a Clan MacDonald lodge, this country house hotel is home to Lord and Lady MacDonald, who herself is a renowned writer of Scottish cookery books.
- 16 **Isleornsay - 'Ebb-tide Island'**
Isleornsay, or more popularly Eilean Iarmain, used to be the West coast's main herring port, with the bay regularly being packed with sailing boats. The lighthouse, built in 1857, stands on rock formed of Hornblende Schist which is full of crystals. Being only a thin vein, garnets are supposed to lie around in profusion - another Skye legend? Gavin Maxwell, writer and author of 'Ring of

- 17 **Loch nan Dùbhrachan - 'Loch of the Shades'**
The 'Beast of the Little Horn', a fearsome monster, lived in this loch. So distressed were the local populace by it that an official search was conducted of the loch in 1870. Unfortunately the beast had moved on leaving the loch empty!!
- 18 **Ord - 'Conical Hill'**
Overlooking Loch Eishort and home of the best sunset views of the Cuillin, Ord also witnessed a major Scottish naval engagement in 1644. The surrounding landscape is formed of limestone encouraging lush hillsides and fertile imaginations - Alexander Smith stayed and gathered material for his book 'A Summer on Skye', and local tradition places a stone of healing standing close to the ruins of Teampuill Chaon (an 8th century chapel dedicated to St Comgan), which is on the north bank of the river Ord where big pearl mussels (called dog mussels) have been found.
- 19 **Tokavaig Wood:**
Traditionally recognised as an ancient Druid oak grove, this wood is one of the very few natural ashwoods, containing ash, birch, cherry and hawthorn.
- 20 **Dungathaich Castle - 'Fort of Gloom'**
Recognised as one of the oldest headlands in the Hebrides, Dungathaich is probably Skye's oldest castle. Originally a Norse stronghold, held by the MacLeods till 1266, it eventually became the MacDonalids of Sleat principal seat. Surrounded by myth and legend the castle is said to have come into being overnight through the song of a witch. It was also the residence of a warrior queen who helped Cuchullin (3rd century Irish warrior/hero) perfect his military skills.
- 21 **Tarskavaig:**
Founded in the early 19th century as a clearance village around Cod or Whale Bay, Tarskavaig enjoys fine views across to Rum and the Small Isles.
- 22 **Achnaclaich or Stonefield:**
A crofting township with a superb, gently sloping sandy beach, affording breathtaking views to the Cuillin and the islands beyond.
- 23 **Dalavil - 'Coille Dalavil'**
Dalavil is a cleared village located in a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Fenced to protect the ancient woodland that surrounds it, this is a wonderfully peaceful place which makes the reason why the village was cleared more poignant. Because of the Education Act of 1870-2, and the need for the children of the village to have access to a school, it was cheaper to clear the inhabitants than build a road!!
- 24 **Knock Castle - 'Caisteal Camus'**
Knock Castle dates from the 14th century and originally belonged to the MacLeods. Taken by force in the late 14th century by the MacDonalids the castle again came under siege by the MacLeods in the 15th century. It was here a MacDonald heroine known as Mary of the Castle, inspired the defenders of the castle to a famous victory.
- 25 **Teangue - 'Tongue'**
Once famous for its 'withies' copse. Birch twigs require a lot of preparation before twisting into rope and the expression "it is necessary to steep the withies" became a local synonym for "it's time to go home".
- 26 **Kilmore - 'A 'Chill Mhòr - The Big Church'**
Regarded as the religious centre of the area, the first church was built by a canon from Beaulieu in the 13th century and burnt down by MacLeods, murdering a congregation of militant MacIntyres. The current ruins are the remains of a later church built in 1681. Tradition says that St Columba landed here and blessed the ground upon which the present church stands.
- 27 **Ostaig - 'East Bay'**
It has been said of Sleat that it is home of the belief that Gaelic was the universal language before the tower of Babel was begun. It is fitting therefore that the country's first College of Further Education devoted to the promotion and use of the language, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, is located here. And it's the use of that language which marked out a local celebrity 'Old Marsali'. Described as simple but harmless, Marsali always dressed in white and went from house to house being the BBC, West Highland Free Press and internet of her day!!
- 28 **Lazybeds:**
Also known as Feannagan, these raised beds were formed of soil and seaweed and attempted to provide adequate depth for oats and potatoes to grow. These beds can be seen all over the landscape - keep your eyes peeled.
- 29 **Armada Castle Gardens and Museum of the Isles:**
Regarded as the premier visitor destination in South Skye, Armada Castle was the principal home of the MacDonalids of Sleat from 1870, although a house had been on the site for several hundred years. Although the main castle structure is now a ruin, the impressive Museum of the Isles will take you on a journey from the Lordship of the Isles through the Clans &

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Jacobite period finally to the story of the Highland Clearances. A Genealogy research facility is also available. Renowned for its magnificent gardens, dating back to the 17th Century, the visitor can enjoy 40 acres of exotic trees, shrubs and flowers, with carpets of bluebells and wild flowers in spring. An excellent restaurant and its very own Heavy Horse-drawn cart completes the ingredients of this award-winning ancestral seat.

Ardvasar:
Arguably the prettiest, but definitely the largest village in Sleat, Ardvasar enjoys magnificent views into Loch Nevis past Eilean Sgorach which sits at the mouth of Ardvasar bay. Known locally as 'Battleship Island', Eilean Sgorach's silhouette resembles that of a battleship when the light is right.

Aird of Sleat: 'Aird - a projecting piece of land'
Known as 'Sunny Aird' by those on the mainland, Aird enjoys uninterrupted views across to Ardnamurchan Point, Egg and Rum. The men of Aird were known as being very tall and fair, having the nickname of Na Faoileagan, the seagulls, due perhaps to their limited diet. Don't miss the scenic walk to the Point of Sleat which starts at the end of the road by the old church.