



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

1. 4 hours (GOAW)

2. 45 mins (GOAW)

3. 45 mins (GOAW)

4. 45mins (SUTS)

5. 45 mins (GOAW)

6. 45mins (GOAW)

7. 1 hour (GOAW)

8. 2 hours (GOAW)

9. 3 hours (GOAW)

10. 3 hours (GOAW)

11. 4 hours (GOAW)

12. 45 mins (SUTS)

13. 2 hours (GOAW)

14. 2 hours (GOAW)

15. 1 hour (GOAW)

16. 45 mins (SUTS)

17. 2 hours (GOAW)

18. 2 hours (SUTS)



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.

Abhainn - river
Acarsaid - anchorage
Ailean - green field
Aird - promontory
Airidh - 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
Sìth - fairy
Srath - river valley
Sruthan - stream
Suidhe - resting place

Traigh - beach

Uisge - water



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

BOOKS:

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Cooper, Derek. **Skye** (Birlinn Ltd, 1995)
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INTERNET:



www.skye.co.uk

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

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

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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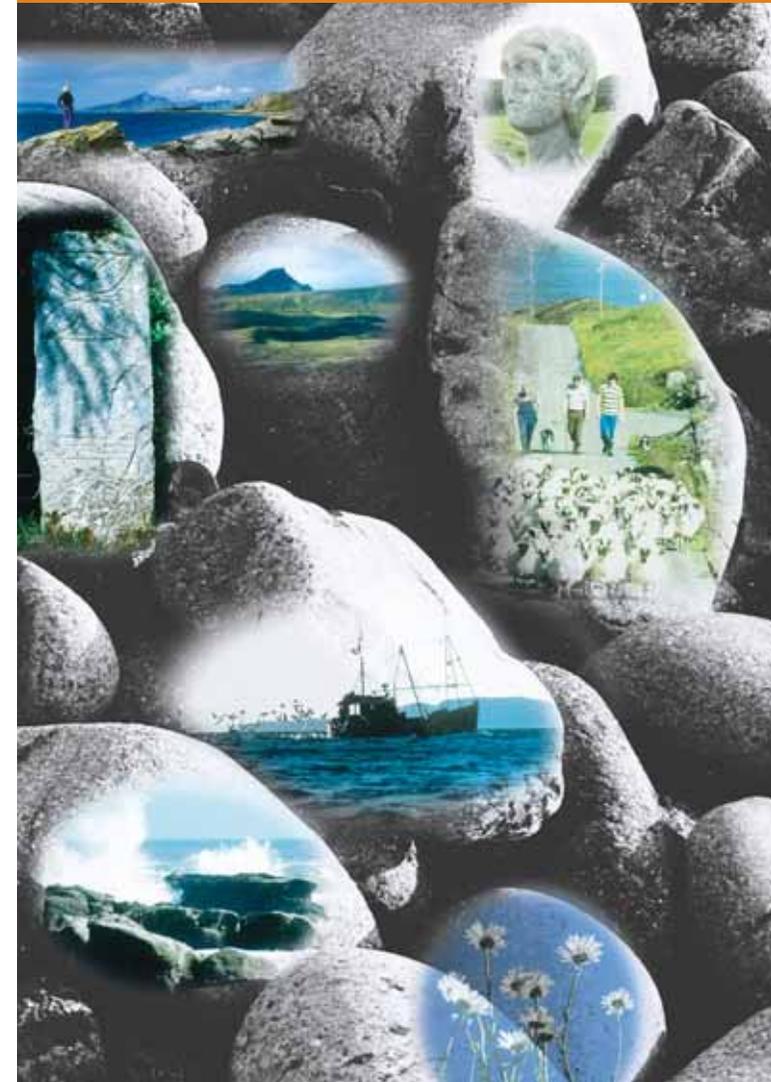


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Raasay



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

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I can never think of Raasay without remembering two great men I knew: the poet Sorley MacLean and the road builder Calum MacLeod. Hospitable, learned, industrious, witty: if I permitted myself, which I won't, the adjectives to describe these two Raasay men would be without end.

Sorley MacLean, who died in 1996, was a poet of international stature - the Nobel Laureate, Seumas Heaney, having compared him favourably with Dante and Yeats, describing Sorley as **“a man whose poetry has become priceless, and indispensable.”** His great works connected with Raasay are 'Coilltean Ratharsair' and his masterpiece, 'Hallaig':

“Tha bùird is tàirnean air an uinneig troimh'm faca mi an Aird an Iar 's tha mo ghaol aig Allt Hallaig 'na craoibh bheithe, 's bha i riamh...”

with a terrific quatrain in the middle which telescopes all time into the now:

“They are still in Hallaig, MacLeans and MacLeods, all who were there in the time of Mac Gille Chaluum the dead have been seen alive...”

“A custodian of emotional geographies”

Seagulls

Heaney called MacLean: visit Raasay if only to try and get to grips with that terrific phrase.

are my

And while you're there, go up to the north end and walk Calum's road, one man's shovelled testament against the follies of bureaucracy: the state with all its glorious resources couldn't build a road, so Calum, with barrow and shovel, did. It stands solid and beautiful, while all the state officials and politicians who refused him are all forgotten and gone.

constant

companions,

wheeling,

You get to Raasay by boat, which makes your options nice and simple: no plane, no train, no bridge, just a nice, simple car ferry going from Sconser, seven times a day in the winter, ten times a day in the summer, on a lovely 15 minute journey (each way). Travel over on the last ferry on Saturday and you're guaranteed to be there until Monday morning: there are no Sunday sailings, ensuring that you (and the inhabitants) get a quiet, peaceful Sabbath.

then standing

on seaweedy

outcrops

One of the advantages of being on Raasay is that you can see the Cuillin from a different angle: for those locals who become over-familiar with Glamaig and Sgurr nan Gillean from the side of the A87, take a trip over to Raasay and renew the wonder of the most beautiful mountain range this, or the

pecking at

something

other, side of the Alps.

Take the family, if you have one, and a bicycle, if you can acquire one, for the lovely rhododendron-filled wooded walks around Inverarish: these are the times I imagine I am my grandfather in the un-cleared Gaelic film that was never made.

On my last visit to Raasay, just the other day, I covered my boots in mud walking to Screapadail, thanking God that some parts of this beautiful universe still remained un-signposted, beyond the tourist package. At the end of the track are the ruined houses that remind all of us of our temporality: they spoke to me not of the dead, but of us, the living, and our need to articulate against the ever-encroaching silence.

And maybe the most articulate speech I found on Raasay that day was the children's red tricycle sitting in the doorway of Raasay House: the once powerful clan chief's mansion, which then became the run-down ruin of the execrable Doctor Green, now and wonderfully in the possession of small children, in the name of Raasay Outdoor Centre. Great activities, and a great cafe (seasonal).

ANGUS PETER CAMPBELL



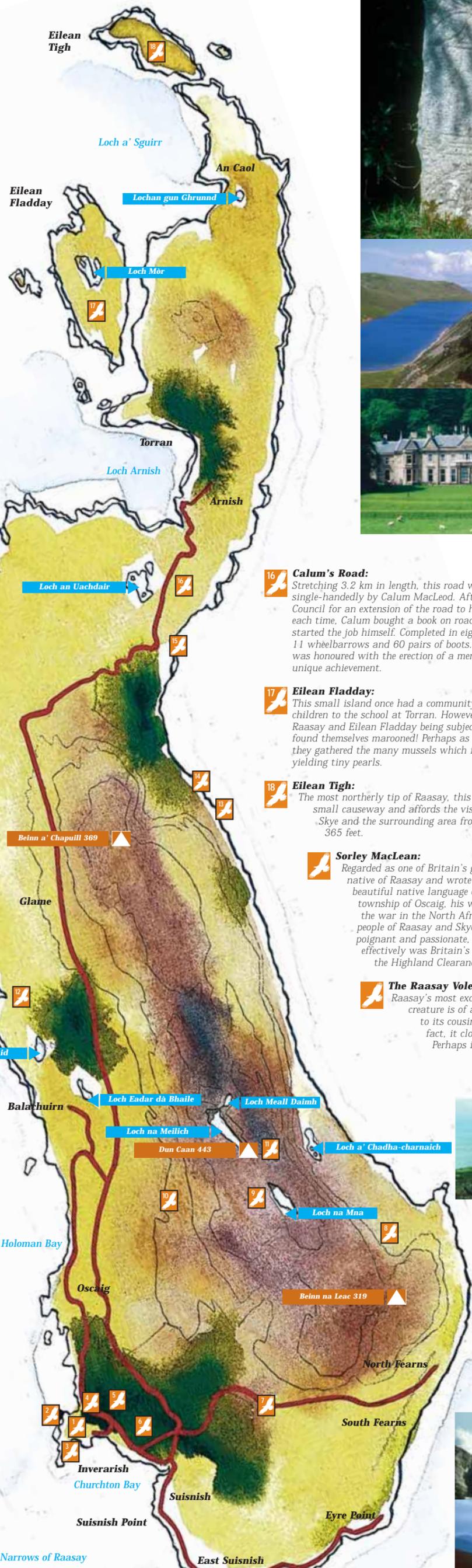
Always with a point of view and never without passion, Angus Peter Campbell, Poet, Broadcaster, Writer, Preacher, and defender of all things Gaelic is your travelling companion through the six distinct areas which make up this beautiful region of Skye and Lochalsh. In his company expect the unexpected, 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.

quite

invisible.

“Take the family, if you have one, and a bicycle, if you can acquire one, for the lovely rhododendron-filled wooded walks around Inverarish”





Raasay meaning 'Roe-Isle' is just over 14 miles long with a third of the island over 500 feet above sea level. Owned for a long time by the MacLeods of Raasay, the island has seen its fair share of joy and sorrow, paying dearly for a visit from Bonnie Prince Charlie in 1746. Raasay today gives a rare glimpse of how the Highlands used to be 50 years ago and is a rewarding experience for all who visit.

Raasay

1 Raasay House: Built by the MacLeods in 1746, this is where Boswell and Dr Johnson were entertained in lavish style by MacLeod, his wife and ten daughters. Writing in his book 'A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland' Johnson illuminates the scene: "Our reception exceeded our expectations. We found nothing but civility, elegance and plenty. After the usual refreshments, and the usual conversation, the evening came upon us. The carpet was then rolled off the floor; the musician was called, and the whole company invited to dance, nor did ever fairies trip with greater alacrity. The general air of festivity, which predominated in this place, so far remote from all those regions which the mind has been used to contemplate as the mansions of pleasure, struck the imagination with a delightful surprise, analogous to that which is felt at an unexpected emersion from darkness into light."

The house stands on the site of a tower built in 1549, this was burnt down by Government troops in 1746 because the island gave shelter to Bonnie Prince Charlie. Three hundred houses were burnt, 280 cows and 700 sheep slaughtered and several horses shot and most of the island's boats holed and sunk. A devastating occurrence for a poor Highland community.

During the 18th century the house was remodelled with an elegant Georgian frontage being added. The last MacLeod of Raasay emigrated to Australia in 1846, followed by a string of owners. During this time 129 people were shipped out to make way for sheep!

At the outbreak of the World War I, 36 Raasay men were assembled under the clock tower by the stables. When it was time to depart the clock stopped, and although many attempts have been made to repair it, the clock refuses to work. Of the 36 men who left that day only 14 returned to their beloved isle.

2 The Symbol Stones: Pictish in origin, these ancient symbol stones can be seen in two locations. At the Battery, cut into the natural rock, and on a free-standing monolith located just inside the iron gate leading into the forestry plantation near the North gate of Raasay House. Dating between the late 7th and early 11th century, the symbols contain the Christian cross along with three pre-Christian symbols. It is thought the stones may have been used to mark out the territory belonging to a tribe or family.

3 The Battery: Located on the shoreline below Raasay House is a circular fortification adorned with two rather dubious mermaids and a small cannon. Originally armed with six pieces, the structure was built in response to the threat of invasion by the French in 1810.

4 Uamh nan Ramh: Only recently discovered, this subterranean dwelling and passageway is believed to be over 2,000 years old. Known locally as Uamh na Ramh - (cave of the oars), perhaps oars were hidden here to avoid evidence of smuggling?

5 St Moluag's Chapel It is believed that in the 6th century an Irish missionary named St Moluag may have visited the island. Whether he did or not, this 13th century church is dedicated to him and is believed to be on the site of an earlier 11th century structure.

6 Dun Borodale Broch: Dating from the Iron Age, Dun Borodale is a good example of this kind of fortification. Inside the structure traces of galleries or chambers can be seen in the walls. Believed to have been occupied intermittently over long periods, it would seem to have served as a place of sanctuary during times of trouble.

7 Iron Ore Mine: In 1893 iron ore was discovered on the island by a Fellow of the Geographical Society. Twenty years later in 1913 William Baird & Son opened the Raasay Iron Ore mine. Worked originally by miners from Lanarkshire, Belgium and Italy, during the World War I German prisoners of war were also put to work here. Sadly, many Germans died during this period due to the flu epidemic of 1918 and are buried on the island. By 1920 all work had ceased at the mine, with most of the machinery being removed for scrap. Over 250,000 tons of iron ore were extracted during this period, with an estimated further ten million tons remaining.

8 Hallaig: Made famous by Raasay-born poet Sorley MacLean. Hallaig suffered under the Highland Clearances when its inhabitants were forced to leave. A cairn stands in recognition of those who once lived, loved and died in this part of the island. Down on the shore one can find fossils as well as admiring the spectacular waterfall.

9 Loch na Mna: Translated from Gaelic as the 'the women's loch', it would seem this loch obtained its name due to having a mythical water horse in residence who was partial to local women!

10 Loch Storab: Thought to have been named after the nearby grave of a Norwegian Princess.

11 Dun Caan: The highest mountain on the island, Dun Caan with its distinctive flat top rises to a height of 1,456 feet above sea level. It is here that Boswell recorded: "We mounted up to the top of Duncaan, where we sat down, ate cold mutton and bread and cheese and drank brandy punch. Then we had a Highland song...then we danced a reel."

12 Inver: A haven for wildfowl, eider ducks are regular visitors to the seashore here. This is also a fine place for a spot of fishing off the rocks.

13 Eaglais Breige:- 'False Church' Here on the east coast is this large rock formation which derives its name from its distinct vaulted shape.

14 Screapadail: Another village which suffered at the hand of the Highland Clearances, evidence of some very early settlements can be found in this area.

15 Brochel Castle: Built in the 15th century by the MacLeods of Lewis, Brochel Castle was once an impressive structure comprising three storeys and four towers. Impregnable from the sea, and being built on a two level cliff-top plateau, the castle could only be entered through a heavily guarded entrance to the rear. The last resident MacLeod Chief was Iain Garbh 'Mighty John' who was a man of great strength. It is believed the castle was vacated around the mid 1600s whereupon the family moved to Kilmoluag. When Boswell and Johnson visited the ruin, Boswell was amused to notice that the castle had a 'necessary house' (toilet), something Raasay House had not yet invested in. Dr Johnson was heard to remark of their hosts that they were taking "very good care of one end of a man, but not the other!".

16 Calum's Road: Stretching 3.2 km in length, this road was planned and built single-handedly by Calum MacLeod. After making numerous requests to the Council for an extension of the road to his home, and being turned down each time, Calum bought a book on road-making costing 3s (15p) and started the job himself. Completed in eight years, it is believed he wore out 11 wheelbarrows and 60 pairs of boots. Calum MacLeod died in 1988 and was honoured with the erection of a memorial cairn commemorating his unique achievement.

17 Eilean Fladday: This small island once had a community of four families, sufficient to send children to the school at Torran. However, due to the causeway between Raasay and Eilean Fladday being subject to tidal flooding, the children often found themselves marooned! Perhaps as they waited for the tide to change, they gathered the many mussels which inhabit the shoreline here, some even yielding tiny pearls.

18 Eilean Tigh: The most northerly tip of Raasay, this small island can be reached by a small causeway and affords the visitor wonderful views of the Isle of Skye and the surrounding area from its solitary hill rising to 365 feet.

Sorley MacLean: Regarded as one of Britain's greatest poets, Sorley MacLean was a native of Raasay and wrote the bulk of his poetry in his beautiful native language of Gaelic. Born in 1911 in the township of Oscaig, his work spanned such diverse subjects as the war in the North African desert to the landscapes and people of Raasay and Skye. His poem 'Hallaig' is particularly poignant and passionate, dealing as it does with what effectively was Britain's first instance of ethnic cleansing - the Highland Clearances. Sorley MacLean died in 1996.

The Raasay Vole: Raasay's most exclusive inhabitant, this tiny creature is of a totally separate species compared to its cousins on the mainland and Skye. In fact, it closely resembles the Alpine vole! Perhaps it came over as a tourist and stayed!!

