



*Travelexonline*

## **Welcome to The Scottish Highlands**

**Our Highland tour will give you a taste of Scottish history and some of the most breathtaking views to be found anywhere in the world.**

### **Perth**

#### **Scone Palace**

From at least 700 BC, the native people of Scotland were a Celtic race, named by the Romans as Picts. From about the mid 4th century AD, Scots from Ireland began to settle in Scotland. Following the departure of the Romans from Britain in the 5th century, Germanic Angles, an Anglo-Saxon people, invaded Scotland from the south. The native Picts absorbed many external cultures, especially the Gaelic culture of the Scots. In the 6th century, St Columba brought Christianity from Ireland, first to the island of Iona, then later to mainland Scotland. The Pictish Kingdom of Scone, with Scone as its capital, grew in importance. A Culdee cell of holy men was established at Scone from the 6th century, and it was on the Hill of Credulity at Scone that the Pictish King Nectan formally embraced the customs of the Church of Rome in 710. It can thus be seen that the Moot Hill was already an important sacred site long before it was used for the crowning of the Kings of Scots. The early history of Scone as a centre of religion continued for many centuries. In 906, King Constantine proclaimed on the Hill of Credulity that the religious laws and customs of the Celtic or Culdee Church be established. Scone remained a College of the Culdee Church until 1114, when a monastery founded by Alexander I superseded it.

#### **The Stone of Scone**

The Stone of Scone - also known as the Stone of Destiny - was kept at Scone for nearly 500 years. It was placed upon the Moot Hill and used in the coronations of the Kings of Scots until the end of the 13th century, when it was removed to Westminster Abbey. It has now been in use for the crowning of Scots monarchs for more than 1000 years. The Stone has an obscure history. Traditionally it is said to have been Jacob's pillow when he saw the angels of Bethel. Another legend suggests it was brought to Scotland by Scotia, daughter of an Egyptian pharaoh. The most likely explanation is that it was a royal stone brought from Antrim to Argyll and then to Scone by Kenneth MacAlpin, the 36th King of Dalriada. The Stone was seized by King Edward I in 1296 and taken from Scone Abbey to Westminster Abbey. Some say that the stone placed beneath the Coronation Chair was a fake, the true Stone of Scone having been hastily hidden by the monks in an underground chamber. The truth may never be known. Scottish Nationalists removed the Stone from Westminster in 1950 and returned it to Scotland. It was recovered in the grounds of Arbroath Abbey four months later. In 1996, the Stone was finally restored to the people of Scotland when the British Government moved it to Edinburgh Castle. The Stone of Scone was last used at the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II - and so it still performs its ancient duty, and to far greater effect, making not only the monarch of the Scots but of Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

## **Dunkeld Cathedral**

This area, with its rich natural resources, has been a settlement since ancient times. Dunkeld's position guarding one of the main passes from Lowland into Highland Scotland made it an attractive location from a strategic point of view and there is evidence of both the Romans and the Picts. Dunkeld emerged as a centre of Christianity during the 7th Century, when Columba came over from Iona, and much work was carried out by his successors. In the 9th Century, Kenneth MacAlpin, the first King of Scots, made Dunkeld head of the Celtic Church and capital of the newly formed nation created by the union of the Scots and the Picts. The Church grew in power and wealth and the Cathedral, started in 1325, was extremely important in ecclesiastical terms until the Reformation in the 16th Century, when it was destroyed. The Choir of the Cathedral was re-roofed in 1600 to serve as the parish church, and there was relative peace until 1689, when there was a short, but extremely violent Battle between the Jacobites and the Cameronians (a newly-raised regiment supporting William of Orange) and most of Dunkeld was burned to the ground.

The re-building was slow, but once again Dunkeld became an important centre, this time as a market town and a place of much commercial bustle, since it was here that cattle-droving roads met. There were many businesses - brewing, tanning, glove-making, candle-making and weaving. Communication and transport however, two vital elements of successful trade, were poor. It was not until the building of the bridge in 1809 that these improved. Tolls were imposed to pay for the bridge and this led to great resentment. By the time the tolls were removed, the railway had come to the area, but on the south side of the river, and so Dunkeld had begun its next decline.

The main route through Dunkeld became north south rather than east west and so the Cross and Cathedral Street became a backwater and fell into decay. Much of this area was ruinous by the middle of the 20th Century and it was due to the National Trust for Scotland and the Perth County Council that Dunkeld has retained much of the impression of a different age.

## **Pitlochry**

Pitlochry's growth from tiny settlement to bustling and attractive town can be traced back to a three notable visitors. The first was General Wade in the early 1700s, who ran one of his main military routes north through what is now the town.

The second was Queen Victoria, who in 1842 stayed at nearby Blair Castle. Her favourable comments marked the start of Pitlochry's real growth as a popular tourist destination. The arrival of the third visitor, the railway, in 1863 confirmed it as one of the premier mountain resorts in the country. Given its history, it is no surprise to find in Pitlochry a solid town with a stone-built Victorian air. But unlike so many places matching that description, Pitlochry seems to have maintained its vitality. The range and quality of the shopping is superb; so while you can find tartan dolls waving Saltires, you can also find a really good selection of "normal" high street shops as well as a range of mid to upmarket outlets specialising in a wide variety of goods.

One of the most attractive features of Pitlochry is that it is surrounded by mountains. They may not be amongst Scotland's highest, but include Pitlochry's own Ben Vrackie, at 841m or 2759ft, which is obvious in many views to the northeast from the town. It is usually climbed from Moulin, a northeastern, uphill outlier of Pitlochry. Less obvious is that beyond Ben Vrackie lies the Cairngorm massif, one of the largest and remotest, though not quite the highest, of Scotland's mountain ranges.

Even if you're not into shopping or climbing, there's a great deal to see and do in Pitlochry. The cultural highlight is the Pitlochry Festival Theatre, just across the River Tummel and accessible for pedestrians by means of an interesting suspension bridge. The theatre is famed for allowing visitors

to see as up to eight different plays in a week. Other tastes are also catered for. The Blair Atholl Distillery towards the southern end of the town was founded in 1798 - making it one of Scotland's oldest distilleries - and offers a visitor centre. Up on the hillside to the east of the town lies a second distillery, the Edradour, whose claim to fame is being Scotland's smallest distillery. Here, too, you will find a visitor centre. Lovers of beer rather than malt whisky will find a working brewery in the town, at the Moulin Inn in Moulin. And there are other good pubs to choose from too: including the Portnacraig Inn and Restaurant, on the banks of the River Tummel and under the shadow of both the Festival Theatre and the Hydroelectric Dam. The only drawback here is that after a drink or two the swaying of the suspension bridge on your way back to the main part of Pitlochry might be a little disconcerting. Another, very unusual, attraction in Pitlochry is its very own dam, which was built across the River Tummel to create Loch Faskally. Associated with the dam is a "fish ladder" built to allow salmon to make their way upstream of the dam to spawn. Visitors can actually see the fish making this supreme effort at the right time of the year through glass walls in the ladder. Pitlochry offers a very wide range of facilities, a wide choice of accommodation, and a great deal to do whatever the weather.

## **Dalwhinnie**

Dalwhinnie sits at the head of Loch Ericht where it meets Glen Truim, at a height of 358m or 1160ft. This makes it a few metres higher than the Highlands' officially highest village at Tomintoul, 40 mountainous miles to the northeast. It remains, however, some distance short of Scotland's highest village, Wanlockhead, at 467m or 1531ft.

While Dalwhinnie's altitude may not always gain the recognition it deserves, Dalwhinnie Distillery is without challenge Scotland highest. This beautifully kept white-painted complex of buildings stand out for miles as you approach Dalwhinnie on the A9, which bypassed the village in the late 1970s.

Although Dalwhinnie's malting has been done elsewhere since 1968, the distillery has thankfully kept its two distinctive pagodas. Its origins date back to 1897, though in its early years it traded under the very misleading name of the Strathspey Distillery. The distillery was largely rebuilt following a fire in 1934 and today Dalwhinnie is one of UDV's "Classic Malts". In common with other distilleries in the group it has invested in a high quality visitor centre and offers distillery tours.

Dalwhinnie Distillery is open all year as follows: Easter to September, Monday to Saturday 9.00am to 5.00pm and Sunday 12.00pm to 5.00pm; October, Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm; November to Easter, Monday to Friday 10.00am to 4.00pm. Tours take place every 20 minutes and cost £3.50, redeemable in the shop. Dalwhinnie came into being around an inn that from the early 1700s served the needs of Highland cattle drovers en route to the market at Crieff. On a single day in August 1723 over 1200 head of cattle passed through Dalwhinnie, in eight different droves.

In 1729 Dalwhinnie was the point at which military road construction teams working south from Inverness via Ruthven Barracks and north from Dunkeld met, completing the predecessor to today's A9. Another road was built to the northwest crossing the high level Corrieyairack pass from Laggan to Fort Augustus, a route abandoned as a road in the 1820s.

The Inverness and Perth Junction Railway arrived in Dalwhinnie in 1863, and the village still has its railway station today. This provides one of several points of focus for this rather sparse and dispersed settlement. The others are the distillery at the north end of the village, the Inn at Loch Ericht at the south end of the village, and the houses around the junction between the old A9 and the side road to the railway station. Here you will find the once grand Dalwhinnie Hotel, looking slightly forlorn.

In recent years Dalwhinnie has become the focus of a widespread network of tunnels and dams providing hydroelectric power for the Scottish grid, and forestry has also become an important activity in the area.

## **Aviemore**

Aviemore existed in the 1600s, but it didn't really begin to grow until the latter part of the 1800s with the arrival of the railway. The first line was built in 1862, and by 1892 it was an important junction with lines to Perth, Inverness and Forres. Hotels like the Cairngorm followed, and though the phrase was to take a while to catch on, Aviemore started its evolution into a mountain resort.

The second major period of growth followed the development of the Cairn Gorm ski areas from 1961. This led in 1964 to the Aviemore Centre, providing a wide range of services for visitors and residents alike. Unfortunately, Scottish architecture in the 1960s tended to view concrete as the ultimate answer to life, the universe, and everything. As a result, what emerged in Aviemore seemed more than a little reminiscent of the sorts of structures going up in peripheral estates around Scotland's larger cities at the time?

Aviemore has spent much of the intervening 35 years trying to live down the reputation given it by the Aviemore Centre. And at the start of the third millennium it's time to acknowledge that things are changing for the better. Today's Aviemore really does look and feel much better designed and cared for than yesterdays ever could.

## **Inverness**

With its suspension bridges across the River Ness and old stone buildings, it is a pretty place which is well-known for its floral displays. In fact it won the 1996 award for Best Large Town in the Bloom of Britain competition.

In December 2000, it was one of only 3 towns to be awarded city status by the Queen. The official ceremony took place on 19 March 2001 and celebrations were held in July around the time of the Inverness Highland Games.

The local population is about 41,000 in the city plus another 20,000 in the district.

Walk down along the riverbanks (in the direction of the Caledonian Canal) and you'll find the Ness Islands where you can escape from the hustle and bustle of the shops. Cross the river on the little bridges and you can visit Bught Park. Close by between the ice rink and the sports centre is the Floral Hall - a sub-tropical horticultural extravaganza with small waterfall, fish and allsorts of plants/trees (open all year round). Entrance fee approx £1.20. I particularly like the cactus hall - quite a surprise! Walking up the river in the other direction (towards the harbour) you will see Ben Wyvis on the skyline. Inverness has an excellent Museum and Art gallery between the castle and the tourist office. Open 9am-5pm, Monday-Saturday all year. Local history talks take place here on the first Wednesday evening of each month.

Inverness Castle was built on the site of an earlier fortress in 1835 and sits on a low cliff overlooking the river. Today it houses the Sheriffs Court. Take Castle Street which winds its way up around the rear of the castle and past some pretty floral displays to get to the statue of Flora MacDonald. At the Castle Garrison Encounter you can journey back in time to 1745, enlist in the Regiment and meet some of its other characters live. Visits take about 40 minutes: open daily during the tourist season from 10.30am to 5.30pm.

It is thought that 11th-century castle which featured in Shakespeare's play *Macbeth* (even though there is no historical evidence to suggest that it was where Duncan I was murdered) was in fact located to the east of the present castle (in what is now Auld castle Road).

Originally built of wood, it was replaced by a fortress of stone on Castle Hill. Apparently there have been sightings of the ghost of King Duncan walking along the banks of the River Ness in full regalia. On the opposite bank of the river is Saint Andrew's Cathedral (minus its spires as the funds ran out before they could be completed).

The font is a copy of Thorwalden's font in Copenhagen Cathedral. Look out for the Russian gold icons. Concerts and organ recitals are held. The teashop in the old schoolhouse is open from March to September Monday to Saturday 10.30am to 3.30pm. From here you can walk down the riverbanks and explore the Ness Islands.

There are many old houses in the city centre dating from the 16th and 17th centuries. Built in 1791, the Steeple on the corner of Bridge Street and Church Street used to be the steeple of the old jail. Opposite, on the corner of Bridge Street and Castle Street is the Town House, an interesting 19th century Gothic-style building (of the Town House at Christmas). Although it is used as local government offices, you can have a little look around - go inside and admire the fancy staircase

### **Loch Ness (Nessie the monster)**

Loch Ness is the largest of three lochs located in the Great Glen, which divides the North of Scotland along a line from Fort William to Inverness. The loch is large by British standards, being 23 miles long and a mile in width, and averaging 600ft in depth. Its catchment is hilly and wet, and is drained by 6 major rivers that flow into the loch. It contains over 2 cubic miles of fresh water, and the River Ness outlet, although only 5 miles long, is one of the greatest in Britain for average flow. The trench-like feature which contains Loch Ness is ruler-straight and runs SW - NE for over 60 miles across the Highlands. It follows the line of the Great Glen Fault. This fault splits the Highlands from Fort William to Inverness and then goes on Northeast to form the coastline of Ross-shire and Sutherland. Beyond this, it may extend from Caithness to Shetland.

For many years it has been supposed that there is a large dinosaur-like "monster" resident in Loch Ness. The evidence for its existence are a series of sightings of a plesiosaur-like dinosaur throughout the last 100 years. The case has occasionally been supported by indistinct photographic evidence. However, several scientific studies have been conducted; including thorough sonar surveys of the loch, and these have not revealed any presence of such a "monster". Many people believe that the size (21 square miles) and great depth of the loch (almost 800 feet), together with potential underwater caves, gives the monster many places to hide.

Regardless of the truth, (which we happen to believe in) the suggestion of the Monster's existence makes Loch Ness one of Scotland's top tourist attractions.

### **Spean Bridge**

Wherever you go in the Highlands, you keep coming across bridges and other structures constructed by Thomas Telford in the early 1800s. And you could be forgiven for thinking that Spean Bridge was named after his crossing of the River Spean here, built in 1819. But you'd be wrong: it is actually named after General Wade's earlier High Bridge, which crosses the Spean a mile and a half to the west. Or did, until part of it collapsed into the river a hundred feet below in 1913.

Spean Bridge is an attractive village, though one, which carries a heavy stream of traffic in the summer. It is also one of those examples you find in the Highlands of road junctions that are unremarkable or insignificant to look at, yet which mark major decisions in your journey through Scotland. In the centre of the village and on a sharp bend in the A82 is the junction with the main A86 north east past Roybridge to Kingussie, Aviemore, and the Cairngorms (a road that, unlike the

bridge, was originally built by Thomas [Telford](#)). It's an exaggeration to say that this is the spot at which the Western Highlands and the Cairngorms meet: but it is the spot at which you have to choose between them. The village itself is well equipped, with a good car park, a Tourist Information Centre, and the attractive Spean Bridge Mill.

Spean Bridge is also home to a railway station, on the line to Fort William. Its buildings have been converted into the Old Station Restaurant. Though the land immediately to the south is heavily forested, it is still possible to gain excellent views up to the imposing northern faces of Ben Nevis and Aonach Mor, plus the entire range of the Grey Corries sweeping away to your left.

The views are still more spectacular from the northern side of the river, where the lovely Kilmonivaig Church and churchyard form a pretty and peaceful oasis. And a little further north again, where the main A82 crests the hill, is the dramatically imposing Commando Memorial, a bronze monument crafted by Scott Sutherland and placed here in 1952 to commemorate the many members of the elite commando units who trained in the area during the Second World War. Associated with the memorial is a Commando Exhibition open during the summer in a room at the Spean Bridge Hotel; and a Commando Trail, which takes in many of the locations used during training. Their headquarters was a little further west, towards Loch Arkaig. Spean Bridge's one earlier claim to military fame came in 1745, when during the first skirmish in the conflict that culminated in failure for the Jacobites the following year at Culloden, a handful of noisy highlanders persuaded a very much larger force of government troops to run away.

## **Fort William**

The town can be very busy in the summer. Fort William has always been popular with tourists and since the filming nearby of the movies Rob Roy, Braveheart and Harry Potter even more people are flocking to the area.

There are banks, & a wide range of shops to please every one including a, MacDonald's fast food restaurant.

Generally you'll see lots of walkers with backpacks and heavy boots. There are some expellant eateries and shops if you need any kind of outdoor equipment and there are lots of places to buy those postcards and souvenirs.

## **Ben Nevis (overlooking Fort William)**

At 4406 feet or 1344 metres, this is the highest mountain in Britain. Now owned by the John Muir Trust. 'Nevis' comes from the Gaelic word for heaven or clouds, so Ben Nevis could be taken to mean 'mountain with its head in the clouds' or 'cloudy mountain'. The top is covered in snow for most of the winter and spring. Clouds shroud the summit for about 300 days a year. There is a reasonably simple way to walk to the top on a well-established path, but remember that it will probably be quite cold once you reach the summit. Make sure you have some warm clothes and extra food with you. Read the safety information before you set off and tell someone where you are going - just in case. Ask at the Tourist Office for information about the weather and conditions of the paths. The annual race up the mountain takes place in early September when mad people run up and down in less than an hour and a half. It could take you the best part of a day to walk up there and back safely. Typical times for walkers on the 5-mile track are 5 to 7 hours. It starts at the Visitor Centre by Achintee House.

## **Ben Nevis Distillery (just outside Fort William)**

Guided tours, video presentation, gift shop and snack bar. Open 9am - 5pm Monday to Friday all year. Extended opening hours in July and August (weekdays until 7.30pm, plus 10am - 4pm on Saturdays, and 12 noon - 4pm on Sundays). Telephone: 01397 700 200. Large groups should book in advance.

## **Oban**

Oban stands unchallenged as the capital of the western seaboard of Scotland. It was a late starter, existing only as a small fishing and trading village until the steamers of the early Victorian era started arriving in ever-greater numbers. It became the main point of departure for the Western Isles and a regular stopping-off point for the steamers linking Inverness with Glasgow via the Caledonian and Crinan canals. And the arrival of the railway in 1880 only confirmed its growing status.

But there's much more to Oban than simply somewhere you transfer between train and boat. The town itself lies in a crescent that occupies the hills surrounding Oban Bay. The Bay is protected from all but the most severe of weather by the northern tail of the island of Kerrera, which blocks wider seaward views at Esplanade level. For these you need to climb the surrounding hills, from where magnificent westward views extend over the islands of Kerrera and Lismore to Mull and Morvern.

Within Oban the most outstanding feature is McCaig's Tower, more usually and descriptively called McCaig's Folly. This is the Colosseum look alike that stands above the town and features in many of the postcards you will find for sale in the shops on George Street. A local banker, unsurprisingly called McCaig, in 1897, built the Tower. The aim was to provide work for local stonemasons and provide a lasting monument to his family. The original intention was to complete it with a large tower placed in the middle, but this, like the intended statues of McCaig's family, never materialised.

First time visitors to the tower are in for a surprise. The interior comprises a grassy hilltop, with the wall of the tower encircling it like a crown on an uneven head. These days McCaig's Tower serves three main functions. It is an ideal destination for a hard ten minute uphill walk from the centre of the town; it provides a nice walled garden as a respite from the hustle and bustle of the summer shoppers; and it is a great place from which to take the sea/island/sunset photographs that feature on all the postcards you'll see for sale in Oban that don't actually feature the Tower itself.

Well worth a visit while you are in Oban, especially if the weather is unkind, is the Oban Distillery, unusual in being located in the heart of such a busy town. There has been a distillery here since 1794. It can readily be identified by its tall chimney and by its location, almost on the waterfront and immediately underneath McCaig's Folly.

It's a shame that they allowed someone to build a brightly painted shop directly in front of the distillery, thereby breaking the visual appeal of the buildings in that part of the town. But that's progress, and was probably agreed at about the time they decided to knock down the town's Victorian railway station in 1988.

Guided tours of Oban Distillery can be had for £3.50 per person, a sum that is refunded if you buy a bottle of whisky in the shop at the end of the tour. If you've never seen a distillery in operation it's a fascinating process: all the more so if you have developed a taste for the product.

Wherever you turn, though, there's no escaping the fact that Oban exists because of the sea. It is the main ferry terminus for Mull, Colonsay, Coll, Tiree and Lismore; and there are also sailings from here to Barra and South Uist in the Western Isles. Oddly enough, however, to get to Oban's own island, Kerrera, you need first to travel two miles south to Gallanach.

Oban is also arguably the centre for the west coast sailing scene, and it also retains a large fishing fleet. On a nice day there's relaxation and enjoyment to be had by simply strolling the waterfront and admiring the boats. Or the really energetic can start The Coast to Coast Walk to St Andrews from here.

Overall, Oban is a busy place, and can at times be a crowded place: something that is particularly obvious if approaching the town from the north or east by road in summer. But the bustle can add to the atmosphere and certainly adds to the number of eating, drinking and shopping opportunities available in the town. And Oban can also be a very attractive place. As a result it has a great deal to offer visitors, whether simply passing through or wanting to stop awhile.

## **Glencoe**

Glen Coe is a steep-sided valley climbing steadily southeast from the village of Glencoe on the sea-loch, Loch Leven. It eventually emerges from its enveloping mountains onto the wet plateau of Rannoch Moor ten miles away and at an altitude of over 1000 feet.

Glen Coe is famous for two main reasons: its topography and its history. The name probably means *narrow glen* and for the sheer majesty of mountain scenery there is little to beat it anywhere. The north side of the glen is closely hemmed in by the jagged edge of the Aonach Eagach ridge, usually thought to be the most challenging ridge scramble in mainland Scotland. Habitation in modern Glen Coe is largely confined to the village of Glencoe at the bottom of the glen. On the main road nearby is the new Glencoe Visitor Centre, opened in 2002. At the top of the glen it opens out onto the boggy expanse of Rannoch Moor at the Kingshouse Hotel. The name comes from its origin as a staging post on the military road now followed by the West Highland Way from here to Kinlochleven. Opposite the hotel is the junction formed by the single-track road leading down Glen Etive.

Glen Coe is best known for an event that took place here at 5am on the morning of 13 February 1692, but whose origins go back much further. For the previous two hundred years the Glen Coe MacDonald's had been regarded as cattle-thieves, especially by the Campbell's, whose more fertile lands lay towards Loch Awe to the south and Glen Lyon to the south east.

As early as 1501 MacDonald's captured a Campbell castle on an island in Loch Awe. Many minor raids followed over the following 150 years; including one in which 30 MacDonald's were caught and hanged in Glen Lyon. In 1646 a MacDonald raid into Glen Lyon led to the deaths of 36 Campbell's and Menzies after a wedding. 1685 saw the *Atholl Raid*, in which Glen Coe MacDonald's laid waste to large parts of Glen Lyon. And in 1689 they burned down Achallader Castle, near Bridge of Orchy, in another skirmish with the Campbell's.

But it was a wider conflict that eventually led to the MacDonald's' downfall. In August 1691 King William III offered to pardon all the Highland clans who had taken up arms against him in the 1689 Jacobite uprising. These included the Glen Coe MacDonald's. The pardon was conditional on their taking an oath of allegiance to him by 1 January 1692. Clan Chief Alastair MacDonald arrived at Inverlochy (now Fort William) on 31 December 1691, only to find he should have gone instead to Inveraray to take his oath. He eventually got there five days late. As a result, the Glen Coe MacDonald's did not appear on the list of clans who had taken the oath by the deadline.

Still worse for the MacDonald's, the Secretary of State for Scotland, Sir John Dalrymple, wanted to set an example by punishing one of the clans who failed to take the oath. Although some had made no effort at all to take it, the Glen Coe MacDonald's were selected to set this example because they were unpopular, they had no stronghold, and they lived in a valley whose exits could easily be blocked.

Over the following month, troop numbers at Inverlochy were increased. On 1 February, two companies, perhaps 130 men, were moved south from Inverlochy and billeted with the MacDonald's in Glen Coe. The troops were commanded by Captain Robert Campbell of Glen Lyon, a 60 year-old bankrupt alcoholic. He was probably put in charge because he was unlikely to question his orders. These duly arrived, in writing, on 12 February, from Major Robert Duncanson based at Inverlochy.

Captain Campbell and his men were to "fall upon the Rebels... and putt all to the sword under seventy." This was to happen at 5am the following morning, 13 February.

There were up to 500 MacDonald's, scattered over the lower reaches of Glen Coe. A fire lit on what is now called Signal Rock at 5am signalled the start of the massacre. It was dark, it was snowing, and reinforcements intended to block escape routes from the glen failed to turn up, leaving Captain Campbell to make his mark on history largely unaided.

The massacre was ineptly carried out. Some 38 MacDonald's were killed by the troops, but the sound of the initial gunfire provides ample warning to most, who escaped into the Winter Mountains. An unknown number subsequently died from exposure. The public outcry that followed led to the resignation of Sir John Dalrymple. The military officers involved were left to continue their careers, though Captain Campbell eventually ended his days in a gutter in Bruges.

It's wrong to minimise the deaths of 38 people, plus others in the snow. But Glen Coe's infamy is not really because of the deaths involved. The number of victims was not much greater than killed by the MacDonald's in the less well-known 1646 raid on Glen Lyon. What offended Highlanders most about Glen Coe was the abuse of the hospitality offered by the MacDonald's to the government troops.

The massacre of Glen Coe has been transformed by history into something done to the MacDonald's by the Campbell's. Certainly the Campbell's had every reason to dislike the Glen Coe MacDonald's, and some Campbell's were well placed in government and in the military establishment. It is also true that 12 of the 130 soldiers involved in the massacre were Campbell's, including their Captain. But it is wrong to see this as just another episode in two hundred years of inter-clan cattle raiding and castle burning. For us the straightforward Campbell vs. MacDonald interpretation lets the Government of the day off the hook: which is perhaps what it intended by putting Captain Campbell in charge and leaving him to get on with it unaided. No, Glen Coe had less to do with clan rivalries than it had to do with the government's continuing efforts to suppress the Highlands and its troublesome residents. The orders for the massacre were signed by a Major in Inverlochy, but the action was authorised all the way up to the Secretary of State for Scotland and beyond, probably to the King himself.

## **Loch Lomond**

Britain's largest inland waterway, measuring 22 miles long and at certain points up to five miles wide, is Scotland's most famous (uninhabited!) loch, thanks to the Jacobite ballad about its "bonnie banks". These same banks are now one of the busiest parts of the Highlands, due to their proximity to Glasgow (only 20 miles south along the congested A82). During the summer the loch becomes a playground for day-trippers who tear up and down the loch in speedboats and on jet skis, obliterating any notion visitors may have of a little peace and quiet. In spring 2002 this area became Scotland's first National Park. The west bank of the loch, from Balloch north to Tarbet, is one long, almost uninterrupted development of marinas, holiday homes, caravan parks and exclusive golf clubs. The most picturesque village on the west bank, Luss, is the setting for the Scottish TV soap *Take the High Road*, and is full of visitors buying souvenir tea towels and hoping to catch a glimpse of one of the 'stars'. The Loch Lomond Authority Visitor Centre, Tel. 01301-702785, next to the large car park in the village, has information on the loch's natural history, flora and fauna. Easter-Oct daily 1000-1800. **Also a must is a visit to the drovers inn, the food is excellent and it will epitomise ancient times in Scotland (it's a must even for a wee dram)**

The tranquil east bank of Loch Lomond is a great place for walking. The West Highland Way follows the east bank all the way from Drymen, through Balmaha, Rowardennan and Inversnaid. Beyond Rowardennan this is the only access to the loch's east bank, except for the road to Inversnaid

from the Trossachs. From Rowardennan you can climb Ben Lomond (3,192 ft), the most southerly of the Munros. It's not too difficult and the views from the top (in good weather) are astounding.

***Our Scottish Highland Tour is a full two-day tour consisting of approximately eight hours per day. The total cost for this tour excluding Guests/drivers over night accommodation, entrance fees and meals would be £680.00***