



Driving Tour from Old Castle Lachlan to Auchindrain via Inveraray

Failte. Welcome. This driving tour of 35 miles round the north end of Loch Fyne provides interesting information about the heritage of the area and places to stop and explore. Allow a long full day if you want to see everything, or go back another day to visit some of the attractions on the route.

Please be careful on single track roads to watch your speed and use the passing places to allow oncoming traffic to pass. Keep on the left!

Lachlan Bay to Newton

*Having visited the Old Castle, leave the car park at Inver Cottage and turn left onto the B8000 through **Strathlachlan**. Keep straight ahead on this road for just under 5 miles towards the village of **Newton**. The road is straight but be aware that there are two road turnings to the right which you will need to pass. At the point where you meet the second turn to the right, again keep straight - you will see a sign for the Hidden Gallery which is in Newton. The road then winds down to the shore where Newton is situated. Keep following the signs to Hidden Gallery until you reach the lochside.*

Strathlachlan

On the way to Newton you will pass the 'new' **Strathlachlan Church** which was built in 1792. It is still in use and can be visited by arrangement with a key holder (details on the church notice-board). The church is typical of simple Highland churches of its day and contains a Laird's Gallery with the coat of arms of the Maclachlan chief. Beside the church are the ruins of a blacksmith's workshop.

Across from the church is another ruin, **Garbhalt**, which was once a coaching inn and where the blacksmith also once lived. It was inhabited until the death of the last resident, retired estate gamekeeper, Neil Graham. It was known as 'old inn croft' locally. Garbhalt is Gaelic for 'rough burn or stream'. All the old buildings in the Highlands were built close to sources of fresh water in the days before mains water supplies – springs, wells, rivers and burns were plentiful and put to good use.

It is interesting to note the changes as you pass through Strathlachlan: you will see the community centre on the right which was the local **school** until its closure in 1974. Behind the school is an old bridge leading to the remains of a settlement containing several buildings including a mill. These ruins can be seen clearly in winter. The mill was worked until the end of the 19thC then the 1911 census shows

it was turned into a private residence. The first recorded resident was a retired gardener from the Maclachlan estate called John Wesley.

After the school you will pass a red telephone box: the building here, Sunfield, was the old post office but is now a private residence.

Newton

Newton was built by the 19th chief in the 1790s. Its Gaelic name is 'Ballure' which means 'the new township'. It was specifically built as a new 'model village' for the tenants on the Maclachlan estate as an alternative source of living and income when the land where they previously had their crofts was designated for agricultural improvements. At that time herring was plentiful in Loch Fyne and the fishing industry booming. Tenants rented houses and boats provided by the chief to encourage them in their new life. Today the village is a quiet and picturesque place to stop and admire the beautiful views of the loch.

Return back up the bendy road from Newton (0.7 miles) until you meet once more the road from Strathlachlan (B8000). At this point take the sharp left turn up to the main road. This will take you to the T-junction with the A886. Turn left (signposted to Glasgow) and drive 3 miles to Strachur.

Newton to Strachur

*Driving along Loch Fyne through Strachur, you pass the post office and tearoom. Parking is available. Just past the post office you will approach a T-junction with the A815. To explore Strachur village, turn right and first left to The Memorial Hall which provides ample parking. Proceed on foot in the village. In Strachur, there are beautiful gardens and woodland walks at **Strachur House**, **Strachur Smiddy Museum**, and **Strachur Church**. www.strachur.org.uk*

Strachur House

(Turn off the A815 at Strachur House Farm entrance and park in the farm square)
Strachur House, was built by General John Campbell in the 1780s and has been added to over the years since. There are four hundred acres of pasture in the grounds broken up by stately avenues of mature trees. There are two designated woodland walks plus nature trails offering an abundance of wild flowers and wildlife. There is also a small river running through it and a secluded lochan. The house has a private formal garden which is open to the public three weekends a year. Please see www.scotlandsgardens.org for further information.

Strachur Smiddy

(Walk from the car park at The Memorial Hall by following the signs into the village)
Smiddy is a Scots word for a blacksmith's. Strachur Smiddy dates from 1791 and was worked by four generations of the Montgomery family. It closed in 1950 and remained untouched until its restoration in the 1990s by Strachur Smiddy Trust. It is a unique record of the blacksmith's trade and is still worked in today by skilled blacksmiths. The Smiddy is open Easter - September, 1-4pm with a small admission price.

Strachur Church

(A short walk from the car park at The Memorial Hall. Follow the village road to your right. The church is on your left.)

The churchyard holds some interesting and ancient gravestones including eleven sculpted grave slabs which have been built into the outer wall of the church. Most date back to the 1300s and 1400s and have carvings typical of West Highland grave slabs of the era such as a knight, carved swords, and lots of lovely Celtic knotwork.

Strachur to the head of Loch Fyne

*From Strachur keep heading north up Loch Fyne on the A815, signposted for Glasgow. Keep the loch to on your left when you head north. You will pass through the quiet hamlet of **St Catherines** after 3.5 miles.*

St Catherines

This wee hamlet on the lochside used to be the ferry crossing point to Inveraray. The old pier can be seen as you pass. The pier still standing today was built in the 19th century and was well used as a link on the route to the lowlands. Across from the pier is the sorry looking building of the Old Ferry Inn. The original building was thought to have existed since the mid 15th century and was built to house pilgrims and travellers who were visiting the holy well and chapel situated behind where the inn now stands.

*After around 4 miles from St Catherines you will reach the the junction between the A815 and the B839, and the **Tinkers' Heart**. To see the heart you will need to park on the verge near the junction, and walk south for a short distance until you come to a path on your right: go up this to the Heart.*

The Tinkers' Heart

The Tinkers' Heart is a heart-shaped pattern of quartz stones set into the middle of what used to be the junction between the B839 and the A815 until the roads here were realigned in the 1960s. The stones mark the location of what has for centuries been a symbolically-important location for Scotland's Gypsy-Travellers, used for weddings, baptisms, and important meetings.

*About 5 miles north of the Tinker's Heart you come to a T-junction at the A83. Turn left – signposted Campbelltown and Oban. For your next stopping point, **Ardkinglas Woodland Gardens**, take the first left as signposted. Follow this narrow winding road for half a mile until you see a sign for the Ardinglas Woodland Garden, turn left and park.*

Ardkinglas Woodland Garden

The woodland garden was planted and designed over centuries so that what we

visit today is a stunning array of mature trees and rhododendrons with interweaving paths to wander and discover. Until recently the garden boasted it was home to the tallest tree in Britain and although it has now been overtaken, it is still a sight to see. At the centre of Ardkinglas estate is a magnificent Victorian house designed by Sir Robert Lorimer which replaced the former castle. It sits on the banks of Loch Fyne in its beautifully designed landscape. A new walk at the woodlands for 2015 is the Gruffallo Trail. Follow the map and the well known children's story to find the Gruffallo and his friends.

The woodland is open all year and house tours are available every Friday from April-October. Admission prices apply.

www.ardkinglas.com

*Leave the car park at Ardkinglas, driving straight ahead (towards the 30 mph speed sign). Follow the road straight ahead into the village of Cairndow. You will pass the unusual **Kilmorich Church** which is octagonal with a pyramid roof and an ornate square tower. It was commissioned by Sir Andrew Campbell and built by Andrew McKindley in 1816. It is open daily for visitors. Also in Cairndow is the **Stage Coach Inn** www.cairndowinn.com*

*As you leave Cairndow, you will pass a war memorial on the lochside and at this point, join the A83 once more, keeping the loch on your left. Near the head of the loch is **Fyne Ales Brewery** and shop which you will see signposted on the right.*

www.fyneales.com

*Continue driving on the A83 round the loch head, you will see on your right a complex of buildings with a car park. This is **Loch Fyne Oysters Restaurant, The Tree Shop** and also home to the Cairndow **Here We Are** project. Park and take a wander round.*

Here We Are

Run by the community and for the community, Here We Are holds fascinating exhibitions on local history and is the base for local ecological projects.

www.hereweare-uk.com

The Tree Shop

Stop here for a coffee or light lunch while you catch up online with free wi-fi. You can also pick up locally made crafts or a plant to take home from the garden centre.

www.thetreeshop.net

Loch Fyne Oysters

Loch Fyne first made its name for seafood with the herring fishing boom of the 1800s. There was so much herring that by the 1870s chartered steamers would bid and buy the catch on the loch through the night. These steamers would be back round to Glasgow for the early fish markets to sell the herring caught only hours before. Nowadays Loch Fyne Oysters continues the tradition of fresh local seafood and is famous worldwide.

www.lochfyne.com

The head of the loch to Inveraray

*Turn right to get back onto the A83 towards Inveraray. After about 3.5 miles you will pass the privately owned **Dunderave Castle**.*

Dunderave Castle

This castle was the seat of the MacNaughton clan. Originally built in the 16th century, after years of abandonment it was rebuilt by Sir Robert Lorimer (who also built Ardkinglas) in the early twentieth century. It is currently a family home with private grounds.

*Keep driving south for about 5 miles to Inveraray. Just outside the town you will cross a dramatic humpback bridge, which gives an impressive view of Inveraray Castle to the right. Once in the town take the first road on your right into **Inveraray Castle**. You can visit the castle or just walk the grounds if you prefer.*

Inveraray Castle

Inveraray Castle is the ancestral home of the Duke of Argyll and chief of Clan Campbell. There has been a Campbell castle here since the 1400s but the castle we see today was begun in 1746 and completed 43 years later. The conical towers plus the addition of the third floor were the result of additions in 1877 after a fire.

Clan Campbell and Clan Maclachlan were two dominant clans in this part of Argyll and were often rivals even though the Campbell lands stretched from Perthshire in the east to the Atlantic in the west and the Maclachlans were much smaller. They were sometimes united by marriage.

In the 1745 Jacobite rising they took opposite sides, the Maclachlans supporting the Stuart cause and the Campbells the Hanoverian. Following the Jacobite defeat and the death of the Maclachlan chief in the battle of Culloden, Old Castle Lachlan was abandoned and in Edinburgh the Maclachlan colours were burned on the orders of the Duke of Cumberland. However, the Maclachlan lands were not forfeited because it was ruled that the Maclachlan chief had been killed before the correct legal processes could be followed and his son, Donald, now the chief, was a young boy. The chief of the Campbells, Archibald, 3rd Duke of Argyll, helped ensure that on 12 February 1747 Donald received a charter for his lands though it was a considerably unpopular decision at the time.

The castle is open April - October and admission prices apply

www.inveraray-castle.com

Inveraray Town

Inveraray, a formally planned town, was founded by the Duke of Argyll in 1745 and was built between 1772 and 1800. It is the traditional county town of Argyll. It is well known as the gateway to the Highlands and Islands and from here many places around Argyll can be reached for exploring. There is a wide variety of shops, walks and places to eat in Inveraray, with plenty of parking and superb views of the area.

www.inveraray-argyll.com

Inveraray Jail

Inveraray Jail was built between 1816 and 1820 as the county courthouse and prison for Argyll, and is Scotland's finest surviving example of this type of site. The prison closed in 1889 and as Inveraray declined in importance as a town the courts moved to Oban and Dunoon in 1953-54. The buildings were restored in 1991, and are now run as a visitor attraction open year-round:

www.inverarayjail.co.uk.

Inveraray to Auchindrain

*Continue out of Inveraray on the A83 signposted Campbeltown. **Auchindrain Township Outdoor Museum** is only 5.5 miles out of Inveraray and well sign posted. There is plenty parking and the museum also hosts a cafe and gift shop.*

Auchindrain Township Outdoor Museum

Auchindrain is very important in Scotland's heritage. It was the last surviving 'township', a type of settlement that was once common in Scotland, involving farming communities where groups of families worked together. Three hundred years ago this system of land use began to change and was replaced by crofting, modern farms and large estates. In some places the process was forced on the population and was known as the Highland Clearances. Auchindrain remained intact until 1963. It has been preserved to show life as it had been for rural Scots until the final demise of the clan system in the aftermath of the battle of Culloden. Open April – October: 10am-5pm, admission prices apply.

www.auchendrain.org

The end of the tour

Your visit to Auchindrain concludes this driving tour from Old Castle Lachlan around the northern end of Loch Fyne.

In a short distance you have been taken on a journey through a key period in Scotland's tumultuous history.

At Lachlan Bay, on the private Maclachlan estate, there is evidence still visible that shows how Scotland's land, culture, social relations and economy were 'modernised' after Culloden. Here at Auchindrain is evidence of what existed before under the old clan system – communities working together with feudal ties of loyalty and obligation between chiefs and their clan members, a way of life still hinted at also in the ghostly ruins of Old Castle Lachlan.

We hope you have enjoyed your day exploring this special corner of the Highlands.

If you would like to give us feedback or make a donation to our ongoing work please visit www.oldcastlelachlan.com or find us on Facebook or Twitter @loveourcastle.

Thank you!

The Lachlan Trust
Registered charity SC032246