



## **Driving Tour from Auchindrain to Old Castle Lachlan, Loch Fyne**

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!*

### **Auchindrain to Inveraray**

*On leaving the museum at **Auchindrain** turn right onto the A83. The small town of Inveraray is only 5.5 miles away. Once you reach the town look out for signs for parking. There is plenty of pay and display parking within easy walking distance of the cafes, shops and **Inveraray Jail**. Parking for **Inveraray Castle** is in the castle grounds and is well signposted.*

#### **Inveraray Town**

Inveraray, a formally-planned town, was established in its present location by the Duke of Argyll and was built between 1772 and 1800. The town was originally half a mile away close to Inveraray Castle, but was moved when the Castle was rebuilt. 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](http://www.inveraray-argyll.com)

#### **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, 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](http://www.inveraray-castle.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](http://www.inverarayjail.co.uk).

### **Inveraray to the head of Loch Fyne**

*Drive north out of Inveraray on the A83 signposted for Glasgow. Just outside the town you will cross a dramatic humpback bridge, which gives an impressive view of Inveraray Castle to the left. After about 5.5 miles you will pass the privately owned **Dunderave Castle**.*

### **Dunderave Castle**

This castle was the seat of the MacNaughton clan. Originally built in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, after years of abandonment it was rebuilt by Sir Robert Lorimer (who also built Ardkinglas – a grand house which you will come to soon on our tour) in the early twentieth century. It is currently a family home with private grounds.

*Continue driving north for 3.5 miles on the A83 towards the loch head, you will see on your left 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](http://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](http://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](http://www.lochfyne.com)

*As you leave the car park to continue your tour, turn left and follow the A83 round the head of Loch Fyne. You will pass a sign for **Fyne Ales Brewery** on your left. The Brewery is open for visitors, please check the website for opening times [www.fyneales.com](http://www.fyneales.com)*

*Approximately half a mile after the brewery, there is a war memorial on the side of the loch. Here the road splits with the main road of the A83 heading up the hill and a smaller road keeping to the lochside. Take the road on the lochside to visit the village of Cairndow and **Ardkinglas Woodland Garden**.*

*In Cairndow you will pass the **Stage Coach Inn** [www.cairndowinn.com](http://www.cairndowinn.com) and 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. Just after the church you will see signs for **Ardkinglas Woodland Garden** on the right.*

### **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 Gruffalo Trail. Follow the map and the well known children's story to find the Gruffalo 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](http://www.ardkinglas.com)

### **Ardkinglas to Strachur**

*From Ardkinglas, return to the A83 via Cairndow. At the war memorial, turn right onto the A83. Please be aware of fast moving traffic approaching at this junction and keep on the left side of the road. After approx half a mile you will see a sign to turn right for the Dunoon A815. Take this turn and drive south. After around 4 miles you will reach the the*

*junction between the A815 and the B839, and the **Tinkers' Heart**. To see the Heart, park your car on the verge near the junction, cross the road carefully 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.

*Return to your car, and continue south for another four miles to **St Catherines**.*

### **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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup> century and was built to house pilgrims and travellers who were visiting the holy well and chapel situated behind where the inn now stands.

*Continue south, keeping the loch on your right. After 3.5 miles you will arrive in Strachur, your next stopping point. If you wish to stop in Strachur you will find parking at the Memorial Hall – take the first left after you leave the lochside for the car park. Proceed on foot in the village. In Strachur, there are beautiful woodland walks at **Strachur House**, **Strachur Smiddy Museum**, and **Strachur Church**. [www.strachur.org.uk](http://www.strachur.org.uk)*

### **Strachur House**

*(On foot, turn right at the bottom of the car park then walk a short distance until you see a gate on the left. Follow the paths to explore the woods)*

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](http://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 shop. 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.

[www.strachursmiddy.org.uk](http://www.strachursmiddy.org.uk)

## **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 Newton**

*From the Memorial Hall car park turn right onto the A815 and then take the first left signposted Tighnabruaich (A886). You will pass the post office on your right which has a coffee shop and parking. Continue through Strachur keeping the loch on your right. Follow the A886 for three miles until you see a brown sign for Old Castle Lachlan – B8000. Turn right at this sign and round the bend you will meet a t-junction. Take the right turn with a sign for the Hidden Gallery. Follow this bendy road for 0.7 miles down to the lochside and the village of **Newton**.*

## **Newton**

Newton was built by the 19th chief of Clan Maclachlan 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.

## **Newton to Strathlachlan and Old Castle Lachlan**

*Return back up the bendy road from Newton (0.7 miles) until you meet the junction once more with the B8000. Don't turn right to go back to the junction with the main A886 road, but go straight ahead and continue along the B8000.*

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

*Travel just under 5 miles through **Strathlachlan** and follow the signs to **Inver Restaurant** where there is parking for both the restaurant and walks to **Kilmorie Chapel** and **Old Castle Lachlan**.*

## **Strathlachlan**

On the way through Strathlachlan it is interesting to note the changes in the area

over the years. You will pass a red telephone box: the building here, Sunfield, was the old post office but is now a private residence. Just after this on the left is the community centre 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.

You will pass the whitewashed building of 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.

A little way down the road and you will see Strathlachlan caravan park followed closely by **Kilmorie Chapel**. There is a large layby here to park here if you wish. This peaceful site is thought to be the only medieval church remains left in the west of Scotland. As well as being the local burial ground it is the traditional resting place of the Maclachlan Clan Chiefs. There are interpretation panels at the chapel for further information and paths linking to the castle and restaurant.

*Park your car at **Inver Restaurant**. After you have taken in the magnificent views over Loch Fyne to **Old Castle Lachlan**, please take a look at the information panels and pick up a walking trail. The return walk to the castle and chapel takes approx 1 hour and is suitable for most walking abilities.*

### **Inver Restaurant**

Inver Restaurant, set in the building of a former crofting cottage, is modern Scottish in its style and prides itself on the use of locally sourced ingredients to create world class dishes. They are open for a special night out with a set menu, or simply a tea and scone of an afternoon or a refreshing beer in the sunshine after a walk. Please see their website for more information.

[www.inverrestaurant.co.uk](http://www.inverrestaurant.co.uk)

### **Old Castle Lachlan**

The ancient seat of the Maclachlan Clan makes a fine looking ruin and easy walking paths encourage you to explore and enjoy your surroundings. It is a hidden gem on Loch Fyne, standing out on the loch since the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, once a centre of local

life. However, the castle has lain empty since the 17<sup>th</sup> Clan Chief took sides with Bonnie Price Charlie and died on the battlefield of Culloden in 1746. The current clan chief and his family live in the white 'new' castle you can see on your walk. There are information panels and a walking trail guide to give you plenty of interest on your visit. The castle is undergoing vital conservation work at present so please observe the safety signs at the castle.

[www.oldcastlelachlan.com](http://www.oldcastlelachlan.com)

### **The end of the tour**

Your visit to Old Castle Lachlan around the northern end of Loch Fyne concludes our tour.

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. At Auchindrain there 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](http://www.oldcastlelachlan.com) or find us on Facebook or Twitter @loveourcastle.

### **Thank you!**

The Lachlan Trust  
Scottish Charity SC032246