



1



2



6



3



7



4



8



5



9

- 1. Sunrise over MacLeod's Tables
- 2. Dunvegan Castle
- 3. Across Loch Harport to the Cuillin
- 4. Lambing season
- 5. Waterstein
- 6. Wild heather
- 7. Sunset over the mountains
- 8. The coastline around Orbst
- 9. The ruined walls of Dun Beag



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. 15 mins (SUTS)
- 2. 45 mins (GOAW)
- 3. 30 mins (GOAW)
- 4. 20 mins (GOAW)
- 5. 30 mins (GOAW)
- 6. 20 mins (GOAW)
- 7. 2 hours (GOAW)
- 8. 1 hour (SUTS)
- 9. 45 mins (GOAW)
- 10. 30 mins (SUTS)
- 11. 1 hour (GOAW)
- 12. 30 mins (GOAW)
- 13. 20 mins (GOAW)
- 14. 2 hours (GOAW)
- 15. 20 mins (SUTS)
- 16. 45 mins (GOAW)
- 17. 30 mins (GOAW)
- 18. 30 mins (SUTS)
- 19. 5 hours (GOAW)
- 20. 1 hour (GOAW)
- 21. 1 hour (GOAW)
- 22. 20 mins (SUTS)
- 23. 30 mins (GOAW)
- 24. 30 mins (GOAW)
- 25. 30 mins (GOAW)
- 26. 30 mins (SUTS)
- 27. 45 mins (GOAW)
- 28. 45 mins (GOAW)
- 29. 30 mins (GOAW)
- 30. 30 mins (GOAW)
- 31. 45 mins (SUTS)
- 32. 5 hours (GOAW)
- 33. 1 hour (GOAW)

- 34. 15 mins (SUTS)
- 35. 45 mins (GOAW)
- 36. 30 mins (GOAW)
- 37. 1 hour (GOAW)
- 38. 45 mins (GOAW)



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
- Sith** - fairy
- Srath** - river valley
- Sruthan** - stream
- Suidhe** - resting place
- Traigh** - beach
- Uisge** - water



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- 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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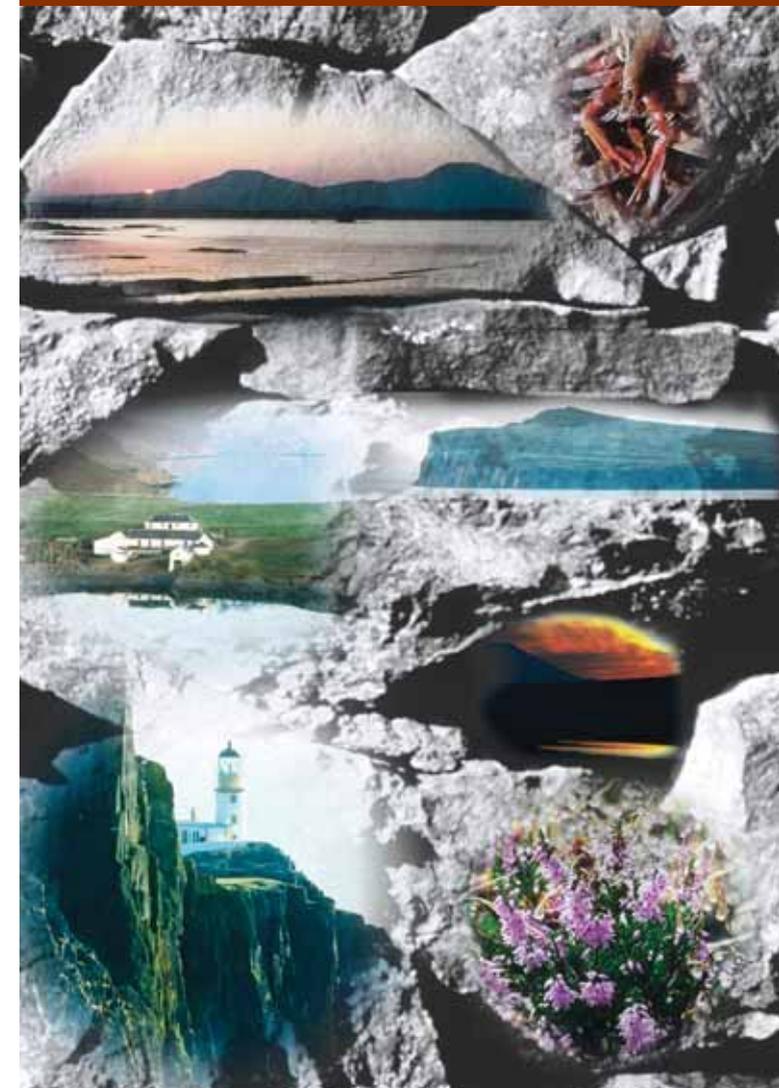
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TRAVELLER'S COMPANION



N.W. Skye



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



For a Gael with any knowledge of Skye, the north-west of the island ought always to be associated with Màiri Mhòr nan Òran (Big Mary of the Songs), the great 19th century bardess: **“Moch 's mi 'g èiridh air bheagan èislein air madainn Chèitein 's mi ann an Os...”** **“I wakened early with little sadness on a morning in May in Ose...”**

Màiri Mhòr was truly a poetess of the people: born in Skeabost in 1821, she moved to Inverness where she married a Skyeman, shoemaker Isaac MacPherson, who died relatively young leaving Màiri a widow with six teenage children. To keep herself and her children, she took a job as housekeeper to a Captain Turner in Inverness. She was unjustly accused of stealing and in a rigged trial, found guilty and imprisoned for 40 days at the age of 50. She had never in her life previously composed any poetry or song: her imprisonment spurred her to song, and she spent the next 30 years or so composing political verses which inspired the great Land League movement of the time. Now there's a great Gaelic feminist for you to admire as you tour her land, around Skeabost and Ose.

It's well worth mentioning that this part of Skye played a glorious part in the uprisings against landlordism in the late 19th century: most notable, perhaps, was John MacPherson, known as one of the Glendale Martyrs, imprisoned in Calton Jail, Edinburgh, following the Glendale Riots in 1883, which drove the police from the entire district of Dunvegan. MacPherson stated, **“It would be as easy to stop the Atlantic Ocean as to stop the present agitation until justice has been done to the people.”**

Judge for yourselves, as you visit this district, whether

It's not that there is glory in the west or that there is happiness in the great oceans but I saw you like sandpipers on the Western Strand as free as the

that justice has been done: view or visit, for example, Dunvegan Castle, one of the most famous visitor venues on Skye - the home of the Chiefs of the Clan MacLeod for the past 700 years. One noble thing that MacLeod did was to feed the hungry at the time of the terrible famine and Clearances in the 19th century.

This is a country that always impresses me with its complexity: one moment a village; the next, the Atlantic. Turning one corner you see the magnificent Healabhal Mhòr and Healabhal Bheag (MacLeod's Tables), turning the next you find yourself on the brim of one of the great sea-lochs that decorate the area. Like Sleat, it is one of those areas that requires more than a minute or two, or hour or two: stop for a pub lunch, or take a flask and pieces (sandwiches), or both, and spend time at the edge of the great lochs, by the beautiful rivers, in the verdant glens, in the villages.

If you don't fancy, or don't really have the time, to go to remote St Kilda (aye, go on) then this area of Skye will do as a grand substitute: the cliff edges that range from the southernmost tip of Loch Bracadale up until you reach the spectacular Waternish Point at the north are as dramatic as any you will see in Scotland. Particularly startling in a Force 12 storm in January, but that eternal conflict between land and sea will give you pause for thought, even on the balmiest of blue summer days.

There's a great story, by the way, about MacLeod's Tables that I need to tell: about how the 7th MacLeod Chief, Alasdair Crotach, was taken to Edinburgh and entertained to a sumptuous candle-lit dinner in Edinburgh Castle. **“Have you ever seen anything as beautiful as this table?”** asked the nobleman hosting the dinner. **“Come to Dunvegan,”** replied Alasdair

Crotach, **“and you will.”** When the nobleman came to Skye, Alasdair Crotach led him to the top of Healabhal Mhòr which was laid out with the very best of food and wine and scores of kilted MacLeods walking round carrying blazing torches, under a stunning starlit sky. **“When you have heaven for starry light,”** said Alasdair Crotach, **“who needs candles.”**

And I can't finish without stressing that this is also the country of the MacCrimmon pipers, at least one of whom - Pàdraig Mòr - with his great piobaireachd “The Lament for the Children” (composed in 1648 when his six children died within days of a plague brought in by a passing sailing ship) ranks for musical genius along with Beethoven, Mozart and Bach. We have never made enough of him, nor praised him enough.

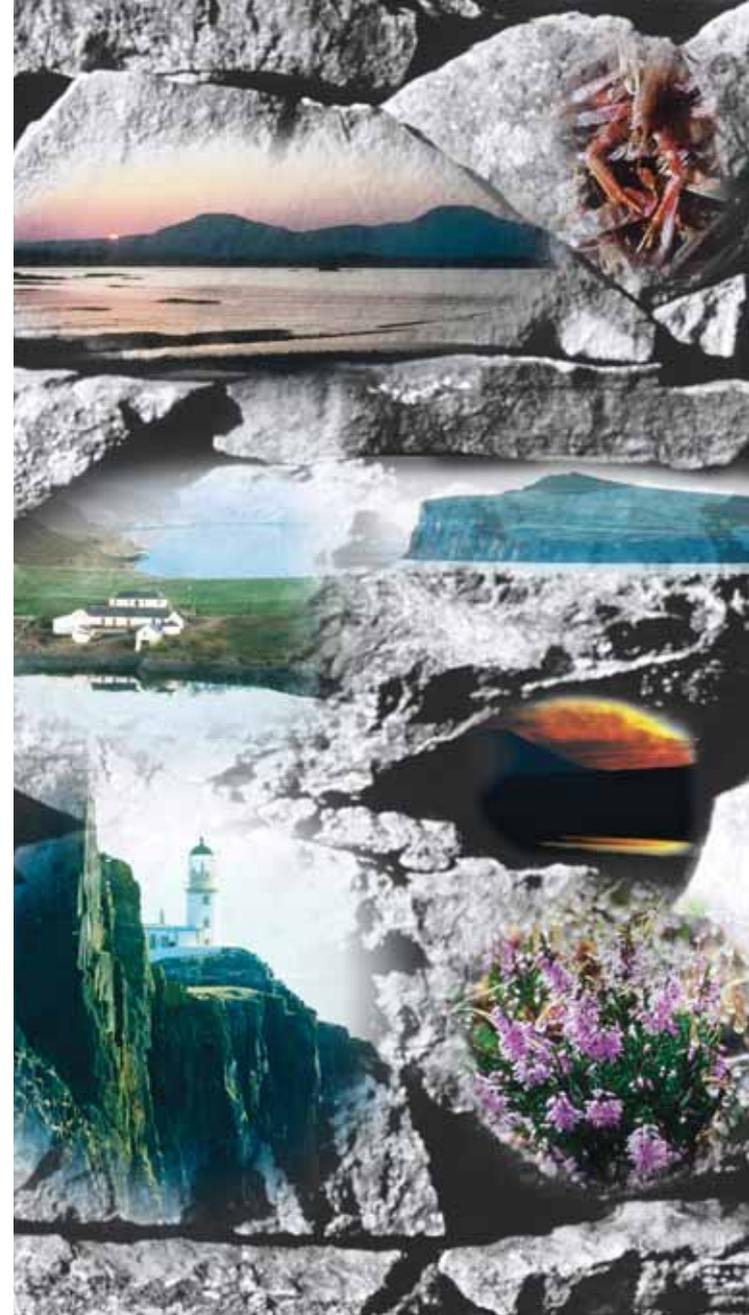
Nor, on a much more prosaic, if human, note, have we made enough of the natural resources of the area - the organically-grown vegetables, the local lamb, the sea-fresh fish that can still be found on the discerning pier, and at the discerning table. This area, like all parts of Skye, is gaining an increasing reputation for lovely fresh local food. Insist upon it, while you're here, so that we'll stop relying on tins hurtling up the M1.

One day we'll have - perhaps on the top of Healabhal Mhòr, on one of those stunning starry Skye nights - a great falaisgear (bonfire) burning all the tin-openers on Skye, to the old cry of **“Sgàdan ùr! Sgàdan ùr! Sgàdan ùr! - Fresh herring! Fresh herring! Fresh herring!”**

See you there.



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.

laughter of the Holy Ghost.

“but that eternal conflict between land and sea will give you pause for thought, even on the balmiest of blue summer days.”



N.W. Skye

An t-Eilean Sgitheanach
The Island of Skye

1 Snizort River:
The official boundary between MacLeod and MacDonald countries. It is here on the moorland beside the banks of the river Snizort that in 1539 the Battle of Trotternish was fought (between the MacLeods and MacDonalds) for control of the Trotternish peninsula. The MacDonalds proved victorious and in the fashion of the day, floated many MacLeod heads down to the mouth of the river where they were caught by fish traps earning the area the dubious name of 'Coirre-nan-Ceann' the 'Cauldron of the Heads'. After this, MacDonald of Sleat moved his seat to Duntulm Castle.

2 St Columba Island Chapel:
At the mouth of the river Snizort is an island on which the ruins of a cathedral-like structure can be seen. It is believed that this was the site of the mother church of Skye founded by St Columba and the site of the very first Christian burial, that of a warrior chief named Arbrannan.

3 Lyndale:
Here one can enjoy great carpets of snowdrops in the early spring. It is believed they were originally brought back by Skyemen serving in the Crimean war.

4 Loch Greshornish:
This sleepy loch has seen much action. There was the 'summer of sharks' which saw the loch full of the beasts dissuading even the most fool-hardy to bathe. Then, in the 1920s, a great storm ravaged this part of Skye removing in one night all the woods at Orbost, half the trees at Greshornish and over 4,000 trees at Dunvegan. During World War II the roaring sound of a seaplane flying low dropping depth charges into the loch woke this sleepy area once again. It was believed a German U-boat was taking refuge in the loch!

5 Edinbane: - meaning 'fair-faced'
This small township was planned by Kenneth MacLeod of Greshornish and boasted having the island's first hospital. Kenneth MacLeod was a remarkable man living from 1809 - 1869. From one of the oldest families in Skye (who could trace their roots right back to Harold the Black, King of Iceland), Kenneth went to India and made his fortune in tea and indigo. On returning to Skye his life continued to be as adventurous, even to the point of employing a mad cook who grew three sets of teeth!!

6 Fairy Bridge:
Known in the Gaelic as Beul-Ath nan Tri Allt (the ford of the three burns), this bridge held a particular fear for travellers. Whether it was because of the dancing fairies which spooked horses, or the fact that perhaps up to three murders had been committed there, many men would not pass that way at nightfall. Things changed when the noted Free Church preacher Rev Roderick MacLeod held large prayer meetings at the bridge. Since then the area lost its sense of evil.

7 The Temple of Annait:
Bearing the obscure Celtic name Ahnett which is traditionally applied to sacred sites, it was Dr Johnson who first suggested that the site was a place of Christian worship and not a temple of the goddess Anaitis. The size of the narrow triangular area along with remains of domed cells suggests a site of much activity. In fact, within current archaeological circles, Annait is regarded as one of the most important Christian sites in the Hebrides.

8 Waternish:
Known as the last haunt of wolves on Skye, Waternish has historically had the reputation of having an air of foreboding, perhaps because many of its tales and legends are filled with horror and fear.

9 Stein: - meaning 'stone' in Icelandic
Stein is another planned village, this time by the British Fisheries Society, who in 1787, provided nets, boats and a pier, in fact, everything needed to make the venture a success. However the village never achieved the expected results. Some believe it was because Skyemen regard fishing as employment fit only for the deformed and weak!! In fact, around the Stein area, pursuing a more noble profession, were to be found Clan MacLeod's armourers and smiths.

10 Dun Hallin:
Iron age in date. Dun Hallin stands on a ridge with its wall rising to a height of about 12 feet.

11 Ardmore Point:
Almost the place where Bonnie Prince Charlie, disguised as 'Betty Burke', landed with Flora MacDonald had it not been for soldiers firing upon their vessel. It's also near here where 'hanging hill' can be seen and where a number of silver coins were found, perhaps from a victim of the gibbet?

12 Trumpan Church:
It was here in May 1578 that a congregation of worshippers were burnt to death by the MacDonalds of Uist, exacting revenge for an earlier atrocity committed by the MacLeods on Eigg where 395 people had been murdered in a cave. Although successful in their revenge, the MacDonalds never made it back to their ships in Ardmore Bay. A force of MacLeods intercepted them, and armed with the Fairy Flag, killed them all, taking their corpses and tumbling a dyke over them for swift burial. The encounter became known as the Battle of the Spilling of the Dyke.

13 Trumpan Graveyard:
The graveyard contains two fine medieval carved grave slabs, the grave of Lady Grange (a tale of great misfortune and suffering) and the Clach Deuchainn (the trial stone). At the top of this rough hevn stone is a small hole. Legend has it that if the accused, blindfolded, could put their finger through the hole at the first attempt then they would be deemed to be truthful!!

14 Dun Borrfaich & Dun Gearymore:
Requiring something of a walk, these two ruined brochs rise to a height of nine and eight feet respectively.

15 Ascrib Islands:
Comprising seven islands in total with the largest being only half-a-mile long. It is said that much of the stone used in the construction of Caisteal Uisdein, on the shore of Loch Snizort, came from here.

16 Coral Beaches at Claigan:
These coral beaches of fine white sand are not real coral. The coral beach is made up of the skeleton parts of a plant algae called Lithothamnium Calcareum. Rich red in colour when living under the water offshore, sections of the plant break off, are washed ashore and bleached by the sun.

17 Claigan Souterrain:
A fine example of one of Skye's subterranean passageways or souterrains. It is thought they may have been dwellings for a race of very small people!!

18 Dun Fiadhairt:
Another Iron Age broch, and in relatively good condition. This broch, when excavated, yielded such finds as pieces of pottery, an amber necklace and a terracotta model of a bale of goods, which is thought to be Roman.

19 Dunvegan Castle: - 'The Fort of the Few'
Home to the MacLeods since the 13th century, the castle and its grounds are one of the highlights of the island. Believed to be the oldest inhabited castle in Britain, and certainly the most important castle on Skye, Dunvegan is home to all manner of outlandish fiction and bloodcurdling fact. Amongst its treasures is the famed Fairy Flag. The flag was a gift to one of the early Chiefs of MacLeod by his fairy wife. The flag contains magical powers and is reputed to bring victory when unfurled, a maximum of three times. So far, the flag has been used at the Battle of Glendale in 1490 and the Battle of the Spilling of the Dyke in 1578. It is also believed that the flag, when draped across a MacLeod Chieftain's marriage bed, brings fruitfulness, and that it can charm the herrings in the loch! The castle also houses many other treasures which are inextricably linked with the island's history.

20 Dun Borreraig:
Rising to a height of nine feet, situated on a rock crag, stands this ruined dun, which affords spectacular views to the Outer Hebrides.

21 Borreraig: - Castle Bay (Norse)
Recognised worldwide as the home of piping, the famous MacCrimmon pipers had their piping college here from 1500 to 1800 and were for ten generations the hereditary pipers of MacLeod. As legend has it, the first MacCrimmon was a rather uninspired piper. Hearing that Chief MacLeod was auditioning local pipers to select an assistant piper, he started practising, unfortunately things went from bad to worse, until one day despairing of his ineptitude and flinging his pipes down, a fairy lady appeared and gave him the gift of a silver chanter. The gift produced the sweetest music ensuring MacCrimmon won the coveted position.

22 Galtrigill:
At the end of the road is the cleared settlement of Galtrigill. Believed to have been home to the MacCrimmons, one can still see the ruins of 12 houses along with evidence of lazybed cultivation.

23 Manners Stone:
A mile beyond Borreraig is the Manners Stone, described as either a great stone or small rock. It is said that whoever walks around the stone three times will find his or her manners!

24 Glendale:
The valley of Glendale is the largest and most fertile valley on Skye and has, until recent years, been an area cut off from the rest of the island. In fact most of its supplies came by boat and were landed at Poultiel Pier for many years. The inhabitants of the valley were thought to be distinctive in a number of ways; women in particular were famous for their looks, quick intelligence and extraordinary gift for flower arranging. In 1882 a group of crofters led by John MacPherson (one of the Glendale martyrs) stood up against the Clearances and oppression of the people. Their actions led to the Crofters' Holding Act of 1886 and assured Glendale was the first area on Skye where the crofters owned their title deeds.

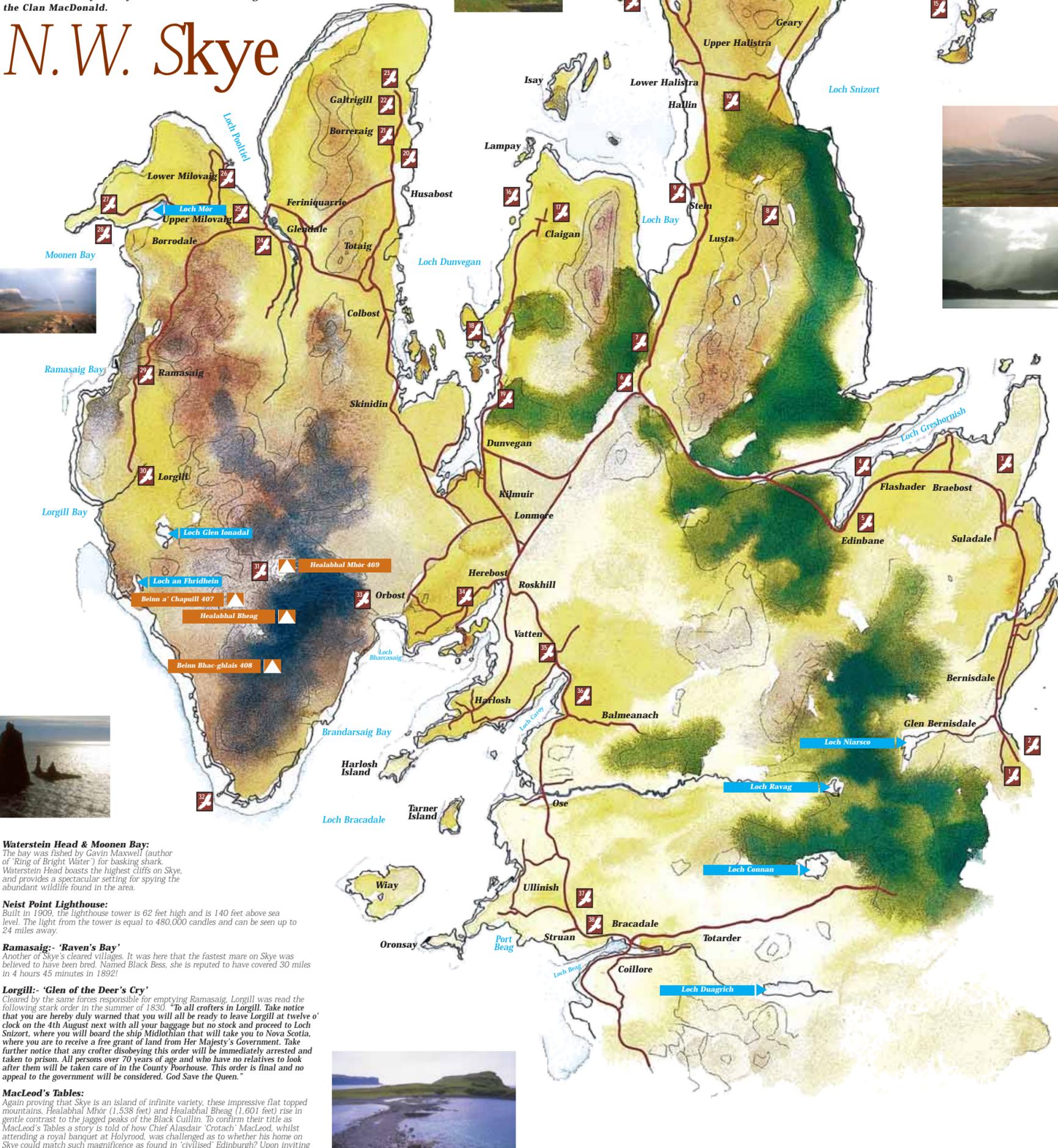
25 Kilchoan Church:
One of the original parish churches of Skye, this church saw its last service nearly 200 years ago. Out of the centre of the ruin grows a twisted elder tree. It is believed that below it is the grave of a Scandinavian prince named Diel or Tiel.

26 Upper/Lower Milovaig:
It is here, at the end of the world, that 'Glendale Martyr' John MacPherson was born.



North West Skye, stretching from Waternish Point in the north to Neist Point in the west, Struan in the south to Skeabost Bridge in the east, is an area which includes Waternish and Duirinish. This is a land of spectacular coastal scenery, mountainous cliffs and ancient settlements, not to mention it being the heartland of the Clan MacLeod and scene of many bloody encounters with their age old foe the Clan MacDonald.

N.W. Skye



27 Waterstein Head & Moonen Bay:
The bay was fished by Gavin Maxwell (author of 'Ring of Bright Water') for basking shark. Waterstein Head boasts the highest cliffs on Skye, and provides a spectacular setting for spying the abundant wildlife found in the area.

28 Neist Point Lighthouse:
Built in 1909, the lighthouse tower is 62 feet high and is 140 feet above sea level. The light from the tower is equal to 480,000 candles and can be seen up to 24 miles away.

29 Ramasaig: - 'Raven's Bay'
Another of Skye's cleared villages. It was here that the fastest mare on Skye was believed to have been bred. Named Black Bess, she is reputed to have covered 30 miles in 4 hours 45 minutes in 1892!

30 Lorgill: - 'Glen of the Deer's Cry'
Cleared by the same forces responsible for emptying Ramasaig, Lorgill was read the following stark order in the summer of 1830. "To all crofters in Lorgill. Take notice that you are hereby duly warned that you will all be ready to leave Lorgill at twelve o'clock on the 4th August next with all your baggage but no stock and proceed to Loch Snizort, where you will board the ship Midlothian that will take you to Nova Scotia, where you are to receive a free grant of land from Her Majesty's Government. Take further notice that any crofter disobeying this order will be immediately arrested and taken to prison. All persons over 70 years of age and who have no relatives to look after them will be taken care of in the County Poorhouse. This order is final and no appeal to the government will be considered. God Save the Queen."

31 MacLeod's Tables:
Again proving that Skye is an island of infinite variety, these impressive flat topped mountains, Healabhal Mhor (1,538 feet) and Healabhal Bheag (1,601 feet) rise in gentle contrast to the jagged peaks of the Black Cullin. To confirm their title as MacLeod's Tables a story is told of how Chief Alasdair 'Crotach' MacLeod, whilst attending a royal banquet at Holyrood, was challenged as to whether his home on Skye could match such magnificence as found in 'civilised' Edinburgh? Upon inviting the jeering lowlander to his island, MacLeod held a banquet for him on the summit of Healabhal Mhor and was heard to say "Truly, sir, this is a roof grander than was ever made by human hands; this table, you must confess, is more commodious than any that can be shown even in the royal court; while those faithful vassals of mine are more precious by far than any metallic contrivance, however costly and ornate it may be."

32 MacLeod's Maidens:
At the entrance to Loch Bracadale, off Idrigill Point, are three impressive sea stacks, known as MacLeod's Maidens to commemorate the death of the fourth Chief of MacLeod's wife and two daughters, who perished here on the rocks in their boat. The largest (200 feet) being the mother, resembles Queen Victoria when viewed from sea. Smugglers used to lure boats onto the rocks here by placing false lights at the feet of the stacks.

33 Orbost:
Many years ago, a notable school existed under the mastership of John MacPherson, with many of its pupils becoming ministers of well-known churches in Edinburgh and Glasgow.



34 Roag:
Two incidents in Roag's history are notable. In 1263 King Haco's defeated fleet arrived in the loch and proceeded to strip the area of provisions, leaving the local community to starve. Later it was the location for the first dish of tea to be served. Not knowing how the leaves should be used they were eventually boiled and served with butter as a vegetable!!

35 Vattan Chambered Cairns:
Two fine examples of chambered burial cairns, although robbed of stones, the site, by and large, has been well preserved.

36 Caroy Church:
Dedicated to St John the Baptist, Caroy church was built by several Episcopalian families led by MacLeod of Gesto. Legend has it that the graveyard is particularly haunted, due to it being built over the site of a prehistoric burial mound.

37 Dun Beag:
Probably one of the best preserved brochs on Skye, Dun Beag (small dun) dates from around 500 BC. Recorded to have had walls 18 feet high in 1770, finds from the broch have included pottery, an amulet of glass, a gold ring, bronze objects, coins and glass beads.

38 Struan:
Here once stood the old parish church of St Assynt, patron saint of Bracadale, and was one of Skye's original churches serving a large population.