



## Plock of Kyle

Enjoy stunning views of a landscape formed by rock, fire and ice (*Creag, Teine agus Deigh*), admire the Kyle Bridge from above and learn how early motorists travelled over the sea to Skye.

### Did you know? (*An robh fios agad?*)

For many years, ferries (*aiseagan*) between Kyle (*An Caol*) and Kyleakin (*Caol Acaìn*) provided the main crossing between the mainland and Skye. Early ferries were very basic and motorists may have been rather apprehensive when they saw how their vehicles were about to be transported. The Kyle to Kyleakin ferry service ended in 1995 when the Kyle Bridge (*Drochaid an Eilein Sgitheanaich*) was opened.



Main picture: Stockscotland;  
Loading Ferry: The Duncan Macpherson Collection  
© Dualchas Heritage Service, Portree. With permission of Mrs Mary Hudson.



## Scorrybreac

Ancestral home (*dachaigh shinnsearail*) of the Nicolsons of Skye: volcanoes and glaciers worked together here to make a soil so fertile that the area around was known as the "breadbasket of Skye".

### Did you know? (*An robh fios agad?*)

According to an old Gaelic saying, all Highlanders had a "right to a deer from the hill, a tree from the wood and a fish from the river (*fiadh à fireach, fiodh on choille agus iasg à abhainn*)."

However, by the late 1700s/early 1800s, many Highland landlords no longer wanted ordinary people (*daoine cumanta*) helping themselves to the bounty of the land (*math na talmhainn*).

Norman Nicolson, last Chief of the clan on Skye, himself branded a poacher, emigrated in the 19th century, eventually settling in Tasmania.



Bluebell – just one of the woodland plants which thrive at Scorrybreac

Main picture: Stockscotland  
Bluebell: © Lorne Gill/SNH.



## Old Man of Storr

Glaciers (*Eigh-shruthan*), Norse place names, rare Ice Age plants – and Viking treasure. This enigmatic landscape has lots of stories to tell.

### Did you know? (*An robh fios agad?*)

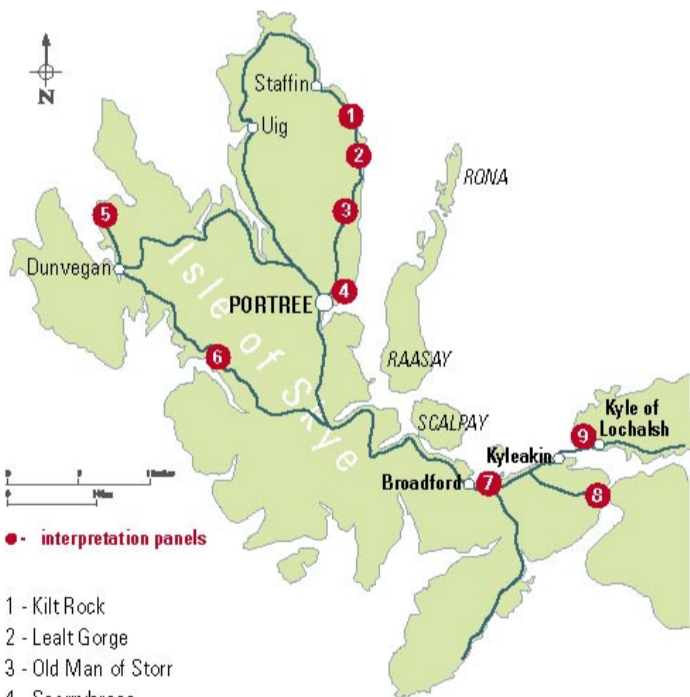
The old Man of Storr pinnacle is 48 metres high (160 feet) – that's the same as eleven double-decker buses stacked on top of each other! The first recorded ascent of the Old Man of Storr was made by the late Don Whillans in 1955.



Storr Hoard

Main picture: © Iain Sargeant, Dingwall  
Storr Hoard: © National Museums of Scotland via www.scran.ac.uk

## Discover nine geologically special places in Skye and Lochalsh...



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**There is more to the geology of Skye and Lochalsh than meets the eye: from the macro to the micro, the mineral world has had a powerful effect on human activity here.**

The Highland Council has responsibility for a number of important countryside sites around Skye and Lochalsh. In 2006, interpretive panels illustrating the importance of the geology here for people and for wildlife were installed at nine of these sites. This leaflet gives a brief introduction to each of the sites and the interpretation to be found there. We hope you will visit these sites for yourself and that the interpretation you will find there will add to your appreciation of these parts of Skye and Lochalsh.

**To request this booklet in large print,  
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## Secrets in the landscape



## Dìomhaireachd na Cumadh-tìre

Discover nine geologically special places in Skye and Lochalsh

"Please remember  
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Enjoy, Respect and Protect."

For more details: Tel: SNH (01738 458545)  
or [www.outdooraccess-scotland.com](http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com)

This series of nine interpretive panels for Skye and Lochalsh was produced by the Highland Council Planning and Development Service in 2006 with funding from INTERREG III B (a European Community fund, one of whose aims is promoting the environment and good management of cultural heritage and natural resources, particularly water) with additional funding from Scottish Natural Heritage, HIE Skye and Wester Ross Enterprise and The Highland Council.



[www.highland.gov.uk](http://www.highland.gov.uk)

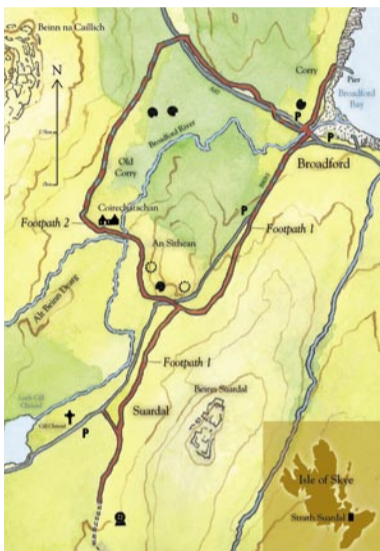


## Broadford – Skye Marble

Molten volcanic rock (*creag leaghte bholcànach*) meeting Durness limestone 63 million years ago resulted in the formation of Skye marble. Find out about Durness limestone (*clach-aoil Dhiùrnais*), the local marble (*marmor*) industry of the early 1900s and the Strath Special Area of Conservation.

### Did you know? (*An robh fios agad?*)

You can walk along the route of the quarry railway on paths (*ceuman*) completed by Broadford Environmental Group (*Buidheann Àrainneachd an Àth Leathainn*) in 2003.



Main picture: Cailean MacLean, Skye Media.

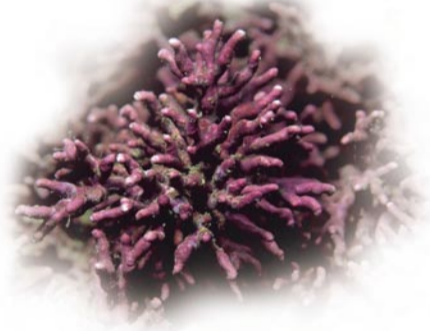


## Coral Beach

Walk out to a beach formed from bleached coral (*maèrl*) – and look out for the *rich range of marine life (beatha na mara)* which thrives in this protected habitat.

### Did you know? (*An robh fios agad?*)

Because *maèrl* beds (*iomair maèrl*) have lots of nooks and crannies, they make excellent homes for a wide range of sea creatures such as starfish (*crosgagan*), sea urchins (*cnagain- feannaig*) and shellfish (*maorach*). These creatures in turn attract fish such as young cod (*trosq*), saithe (*saoithean*) and pollock (*liùbh*) which are favourite meals for seals (*ròin*).



Main picture: Andy Sutton  
Maèrl: Sue Scott.

Underwater Maèrl



## Dun Beag

Explore an Iron Age (*'Linn an Iarainn' an Ìnnse Gall*) fort and discover a legacy of stone-built duns and brochs (*Dùn agus Broch*) - and what they tell us about the people who lived here in the past.

### Did you know? (*An robh fios agad?*)

No-one really knows why brochs and duns were built.

Martin Martin, who wrote an account of his travels (*cuairtean*) to Skye around 1695, had his own theory (*beachd*) about brochs and duns on the island.

*"All these forts stand upon eminences, and are so disposed that there is not one of them which is not in view of some other; and by this means, when a fire is made upon a beacon in any one fort, it is in a few moments after communicated to all the rest; and this hath been always observed upon sight of any number of foreign vessels or boats approaching the coast."*

Main picture: Derek Croucher.



## Kilt Rock

Admire the views and spot the clues... find out what this striking landmark tells us about Skye's past – from volcanoes and dinosaurs to Norse settlers (*luchd-tuineachaidh Lochlannach*).

### Did you know? (*An robh fios agad?*)

Recent discoveries of the first dinosaur fossils (*fosailean dìneosaur*) in Scotland were from Jurassic rocks (*creagan Iurasag*) in the Staffin (*Stafain*) area.

If you want to see some of these fossils for yourself, visit the Staffin Museum (*Taigh-tasgaidh Stafain*).



Fossilised dinosaur footprint found in Staffin area.

Main picture: Ronald Weir, Stockscotland  
Dinosaur footprint: Photo © Hunterian Museum and Art Gallery, University of Glasgow



## Kylerhea Narrows

A place where ancient continents collided. Find out about the early Skye ferry which operated here, and about the Highland cattle (*crodh Gàidhealach*) who used to swim the channel on their way from Skye to Lowland markets.

### Did you know? (*An robh fios agad?*)

Highland cattle were important to the Skye economy for hundreds of years. There were originally two main breeds of Highland cattle in Scotland (*Alba*) - the black island breed (*gnè dubh an eilein*) which was smaller and hardier than their red Scottish mainland cousins. However, the black variety also grew less quickly, meaning that the red variety gradually became more popular.

The cattle trade on Skye declined during the 1800s as local landowners (*uachdarain na sgìre*) cleared people off their land to make way for large-scale sheep-farming. By the early 1900s, cattle exports had dropped to about 50% of their previous levels, and cattle were being sent to Lowland markets by train (*air tràin*) via Kyle instead of being taken by drovers via Kylerhea.

Main picture: Scottish Viewpoint



## Lealt – The story of Skye diatomite

Find out how tiny plants from a local loch gave rise to an industry which exported as far afield as South Africa to provide the raw materials for products as diverse as paints (*peant*), polishes (*stuth-lìomhaidh*) and dynamite!

### Did you know? (*An robh fios agad?*)

Diatomite was taken from Loch Cuithir (three miles from here over rough moorland) and partly dried (*air a thioramachadh*) in sheds close to the loch. It was then moved (*air a ghluasad*) to the coast in wagons which were pulled (*air a tharraing*) by people along a railway track (*slighe rèile*) laid across the moor. Next it was dried, calcined (*air a theasachadh*) (heated to destroy any remains of plant material) and ground (*air a bhleith*) in the buildings you can see below. After that, it was ready to be transported by boat to customers as far away as South Africa.



Main picture: Cailean MacLean, Skye Media;  
Diatomite: courtesy of Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.

Loch Cuithir Diatomite.