



1



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- 1. Overlooking Portree
- 2. The Eastern cliffs of Trotternish
- 3. Mealt falls and the Kilt rock
- 4. Sunset on Loch Snizort
- 5. Traditional roof anchoring
- 6. Loch Portree
- 7. Ewans Castle, Balnacnoc - Uig
- 8. The sweep of Staffin Bay



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 **U**p **T**he **S**cene
Get **O**ut **A**nd **W**alk

- 1. 2 hours (GOAW)
- 2. 15 mins (SUTS)
- 3. 30 mins (GOAW)
- 4. 30 mins (SUTS)
- 5. 45 mins (GOAW)
- 6. 30 mins (SUTS)
- 7. 15 mins (SUTS)
- 8. 2 hours (GOAW)
- 9. 2 hours (GOAW)
- 10. 45 mins (GOAW)
- 11. 30 mins (GOAW)
- 12. 30 mins (GOAW)
- 13. 30 mins (GOAW)
- 14. 20 mins (GOAW)
- 15. 45 mins (GOAW)
- 16. 15 mins (SUTS)
- 17. 3 hours (GOAW)
- 18. 20 mins (SUTS)
- 19. 20 mins (SUTS)
- 20. 15 mins (SUTS)
- 21. 2 hours (GOAW)
- 22. 15 mins (SUTS)
- 23. 1 hour (GOAW)
- 24. 20 mins (SUTS)
- 25. 20 mins (SUTS)
- 26. 20 mins (SUTS)
- 27. 20 mins (SUTS)
- 28. 45 mins (GOAW)
- 29. 1 hour (GOAW)
- 30. 1 hour (GOAW)
- 31. 30 mins (GOAW)
- 32. 30 mins (SUTS)
- 33. 20 mins (GOAW)
- 34. 2 hours (GOAW)
- 35. 30 mins (GOAW)
- 36. 30 mins (GOAW)
- 37. 45 mins (GOAW)
- 38. 45 mins (GOAW)
- 39. 30 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 col
- 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.highland.freedom.com
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- www.smo.uhi.ac.uk
- 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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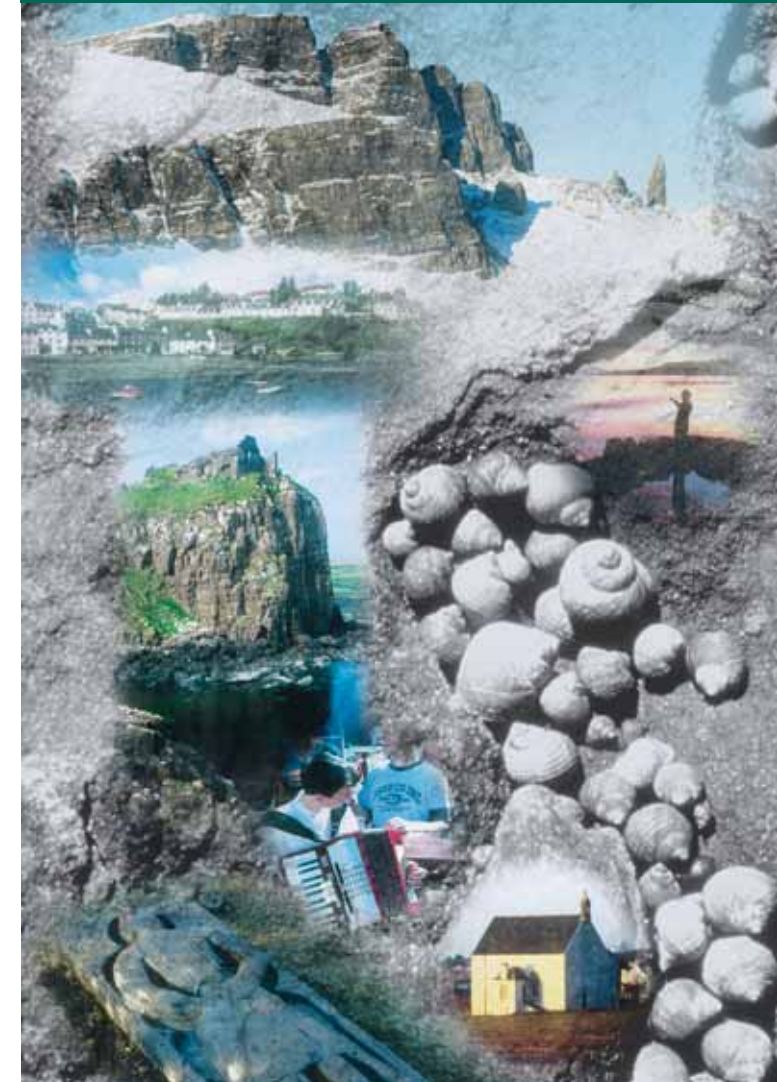
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Trotternish



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



The district of Trotternish. I have always felt, is not for the faint-hearted, but for those who are mature, or prepared to become mature, in their relationship with landscape. It is not Majorca or the Costa del Sol, though it does get gloriously blue summer days; it is not London or New York, though Portree on a Saturday evening after a shinty match can sometimes match Chelsea or the Bronx for sheer exuberance; nor is it even like other places on Skye: it is just itself, bare, elemental, independent.

That's it: as you drive round the Staffin peninsula, beneath the Old Man of Storr, through the Quirang, by Duntulm and Kilmuir and Kensaleyre, you realise that this is a landscape that is superior to civilisation, beyond intellectual and cultural conquest, that exists by and in and for itself. It was here before you came, and it will be here after I have gone, receiving the warm west wind, bowing before the terrible winter storms, coping, thrawn, surviving.

The great American poet Richard Hugo, who spent a year or so in the district, came to know it like a reluctant friend:

"The harsh names on this map are Nordic, the soft words Gaelic. We can love there well grateful what is cruel ran out. The only irritants, a soft longing for mist to clear and a nagging feeling more should happen."

It's happened already. It's all here in the names...

A big woman,
rounded
in a
Gaelic way:
strong,
secure,
well-becoming.
The men
at sea.
The world of
coloured flags
and the world
of the women,
creels on wide
backs.

For the purposes of this brochure, the capital of Skye - Portree - has been included with the vast district of Trotternish, if for no other reason than that your journey to this great peninsula will likely begin and/or end in Portree.

Despite the meaning given inside (that Portree means, in Gaelic Port an Rìgh, the King's harbour) it also has an alternative meaning, which I prefer - Port a' Ruidhe, meaning the-harbour-beneath-the-ridge-of-land (aye, I know, longer and more prosaic than all that stuff about King James, but less royalist and much more politically suitable to my tastes!)

Anyway, whether you begin or end in Portree, you'll enjoy it: it is the hub-town of the island where, almost inevitably, everyone - whether local or visitor - meets at some time. Everything from a haircut to a haddock can be purchased here. Portree has a lively night-scene (so they tell me), but is also especially lively on Thursday afternoons, when all the locals come in from the parishes to purchase the local paper, The West Highland Free Press. Check it out.

Then take the bus round Trotternish, on a nice round trip (remember to get off the bus and stay, and get the bus back the next day, or the next, or the next). Absorb the green crofting swards around Staffin: on a late spring morning, crisp and clear, you wouldn't exchange it for the world. Watch the wild Atlantic smack itself off Kilt Rock. Sense the folds of history around Duntulm: remember Flora MacDonald, and Gilleasbuig

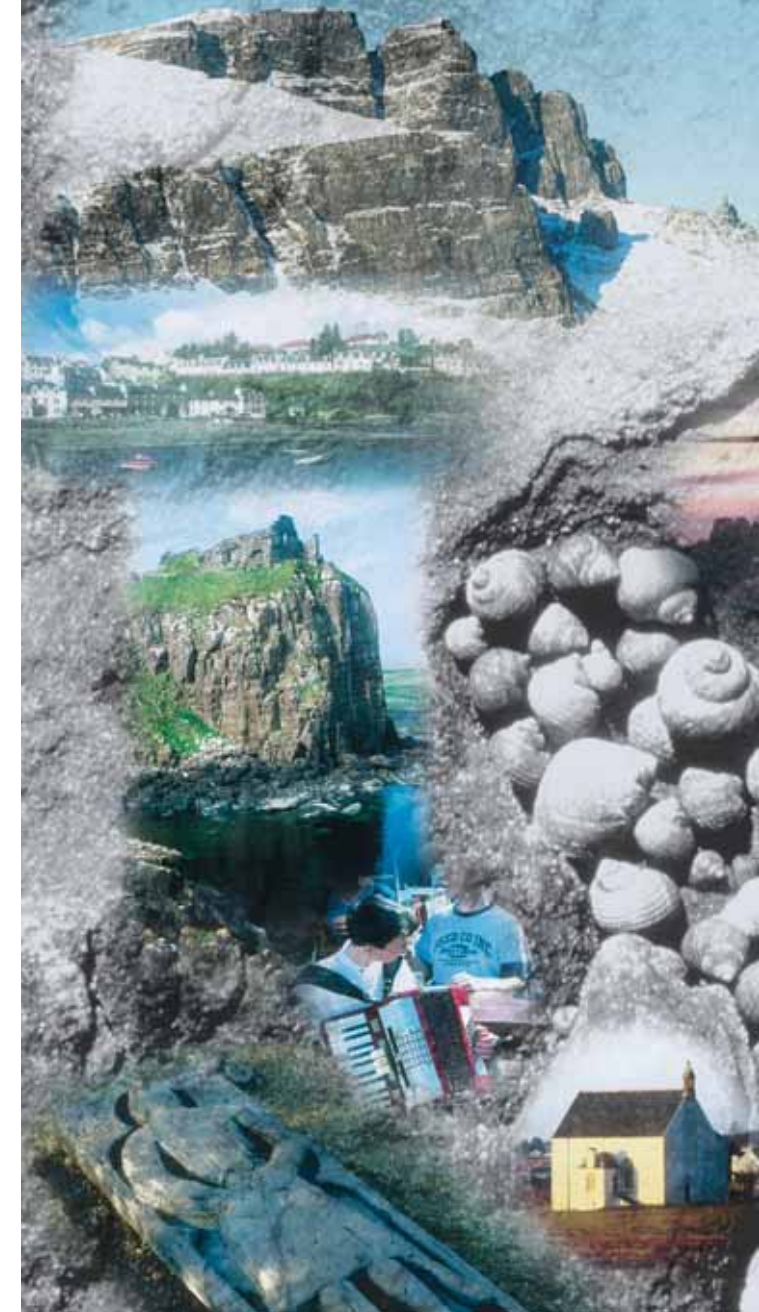
Aotram, and St Columba who all travelled here, without a bus pass. On foot, by galley, on horse. The natives who watched them, saw them come and go, living and dying.

The newest thing in Trotternish is Columba 1400: a terrific initiative incorporating a place to stay, a place to play, a place to worship and a hundred-and-one other uses. Coffee, croissants, conversation, communion, community: you carry it on to z. Eòin Dòmhnallach's (Jonathon MacDonald's) small thatched village at Kilmuir (The Museum of Island Life) is well worth a visit to hear Eòin's exquisite use of Gaelic, which is probably among the loveliest in Skye.

The west side of Trotternish - taking in such as Uig and Kensaleyre and Skeabost Island - is probably worth a brochure on its own, but that's how these things go, when money is spent on nuclear arms rather than attracting civilised visitors. But civilised as you are, stop at Uig, even if it's just to see the red and black funnel of our beloved Cal Mac ferry steam in from the Outer Isles.

You can, of course, take a cruise from there, over to Harris, or Uist, and be back that evening, or the following day: by which time, having already been to Portree and Staffin and Duntulm, you might very well feel that you are, as Runrig once sang, **"coming home"**. There's nothing like it.

ANGUS PETER CAMPBELL



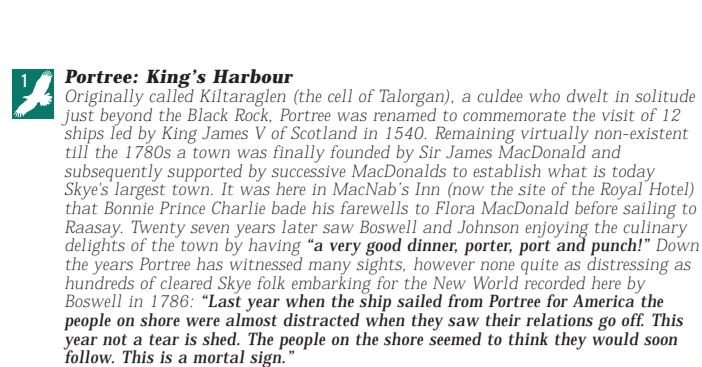
Always with a point of view and never without passion, Angus Peter Campbell, Poet, Broadcaster, Writer, Preacher, and defender of all things Gaelic is your travelling companion through the six distinct areas which make up this beautiful region of Skye and Lochalsh. In his company expect the unexpected, 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.

"Absorb the green crofting swards around Staffin: on a late spring morning, crisp and clear, you wouldn't exchange it for the world."



Trotternish

An t-Eilean Sgitheanach
The Island of Skye



1 Portree: King's Harbour

Originally called Kiltaraglen (the cell of Talorgan), a culdee who dwelt in solitude just beyond the Black Rock. Portree was renamed to commemorate the visit of 12 ships led by King James V of Scotland in 1540. Remaining virtually non-existent till the 1780s a town was finally founded by Sir James MacDonald and subsequently supported by successive MacDonalds to establish what is today Skye's largest town. It was here in MacNab's Inn (now the site of the Royal Hotel) that Bonnie Prince Charlie bade his farewells to Flora MacDonald before sailing to Raasay. Twenty seven years later saw Boswell and Johnson enjoying the culinary delights of the town by having "a very good dinner, porter, port and punch!" Down the years Portree has witnessed many sights, however none quite as distressing as hundreds of cleared Skye folk embarking for the New World recorded here by Boswell in 1786: "Last year when the ship sailed from Portree for America the people on shore were almost distracted when they saw their relations go off. This year not a tear is shed. The people on the shore seemed to think they would soon follow. This is a mortal sign."

In Loch Portree, opposite the shores of Penifiler, is an island which contains the remains of a church named after St Columba. Above the harbour is a hillock called the Meall or lump. It was here that Dr Ban planted shrubs and trees hoping to make Portree a second Oban. It was here also that the last public hanging took place in 1742. The unlucky victim was one Angus Buchanan who was dispatched "with great decency and without the least disturbance."

2 MacCoitir's Cave:

This is supposed to have been the base for an infamous brigand who used to regularly raid ships lying at anchor.

3 Dun Gerashader: 'The Fort of the Little Dwelling'

Once a very powerful fort with walls 14 feet thick, unfortunately much of its stone has been robbed for other purposes, however, its walls are still recognisable amidst the rubble.

4 Old Man of Storr:

The Storr, an impressive mass of rock rising to a height of 2,358 feet, has directly in front of it an extraordinary basalt pinnacle known as The Old Man of Storr; which measures 165 feet in height. Noted as a seamark, the Old Man can be seen for many miles and was successfully scaled in 1955 by Don Whillan and James Barber.

5 Bearreraig Bay:

Here on the shores of the bay, underneath the watchful eye of the Old Man, a hoard of silver coins, brooches, bracelets, rings and nearly 100 10th century Anglo Saxon silver pennies plus 18 coins minted in Samarkand were found.

6 Loch Fada:

Once occupied by a particularly murderous water horse, who was successfully dispatched with a knife of pure iron. The loch also provided the boat which rowed Bonnie Prince Charlie to Raasay. Story has it that when the boat was reported missing by government troops and that it might be used to aid the Prince, the charge was dismissed as impossible, due to the immense exertion required to haul it over land to Portree!

7 Holm Island:

Thought to be one of the locations of the mythical island of Tir-nan-Og - the Isle of Perpetual Youth, the Gaelic paradise. Opposite the island, when the coast road was being constructed, workmen found a large underground passageway or dwelling containing prehistoric animal bones and flint weapon-heads.

8 Lealt:

Three miles inland from Lealt gorge is Loch Cuihir. It was here in 1886 that Diatomite was extracted and transported via an iron tramway to a processing factory at Invertoe. Diatomite is a lake sediment formed from microscopic algae rich in silica, and was used commercially in many ways including face powders, fillers and fire-proofing.

9 Coastal Duns:

Along this stretch of coastline are a number of duns, Iron Age forts peculiar to Scotland. Dun Beag, Dun Raisaburgh, Dun Grinan and Dun Connavern. Dun Beag enjoys the fame of being one of the five hills whose beacon called the clans to arms.

10 Lonfearn:

In this area are Beehive dwellings, thought to have been used by monks. It is believed they date back further than this as locally they are referred to in Gaelic as Tighean nan Druidneach - Druids' houses.

11 Lealt Falls:

Here the Lealt river drops over a rock lip to form an impressive waterfall. Although one is unable to view it from the road, the waterfall is worth the short walk.

12 Mealt Falls:

As at Lealt Falls, one can survey the spectacular stretch of coastline which makes up Skye's eastern seaboard. Here, the wind can be very powerful. Often one can witness the reversal of the fall's water as it is blown back up the cliff face, with the spray even flying back across the road to the loch!

13 Kilt Rock:

Best viewed looking north from the view point at Mealt Falls. The Kilt Rock is formed of black basalt columns which create the folds which give the cliff face its name. As well as these pleats, the rock contains horizontal strata which creates the sett for the tartan pattern.

14 Marishader:

Long time home of the Martins of Marishader, it was this family who gave the world Martin Martin who wrote the definitive book on Skye in 1716.

15 Staffin: 'The Place of Upright Pillars'

Reputed to have one of the most beautiful bays in Skye, it was here that a Martin of Marishader built the first inn with a slate roof!

16 Digg:

How nicknames develop is often a mystery. Here the people of Digg have had the nickname Na Boguis (the Bugs)! Close by on the shore, a fossil of an Ichthyosaurus was discovered in 1966. It is now displayed at the Royal Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh.

17 The Quirang: 'The Round Fold or Pen'

Possibly one of the most unexpected and exciting natural rock formations anywhere in the British Isles. The Quirang is a wild testimony to the incredible pressures which were exerted on the landscape over 150 million years ago. Contained within its craggy jurisdiction are the Prison, the Needle and the Table, a large turf covered area where annual midsummer shinty matches used to be played.

18 Loch Siant Well:

Here near Loch Siant, is supposed to be the most celebrated well on Skye. Believed to be a wishing-well, small offerings of pins, rags and coloured thread were left to ensure good fortune.

19 Flodigarry House:

Once home to the famous Flora MacDonald after her marriage to 'young Kingsburgh', it is now a comfortable hotel.

20 Shulista:

Home of the MacLeans of Shulista, hereditary doctors to the MacDonalds. It was also the site of Skye's first school in 1610. Here four languages were taught: English, Gaelic, Latin and Greek plus subjects such as arithmetic and navigation.

21 Duntulm:

Originally an ancient Pictish fort known as Dun Dhaibhidh. Duntulm, the fort of the island of Tulim, changed hands between MacLeods and MacDonalds, finally becoming the MacDonald's chief dwelling place around 1539, being visited by King James V in 1540. An impressive and almost impregnable castle with 50 foot cliffs on three sides. The castle had a sea gate as its second entrance, and one can see marked on the rocks nearby, deep scars which it is believed were carved by the keels of MacDonald galleys when hauled up the shore. Vacated around 1730 it was systematically quarried for stone to build the new MacDonald home at Monkstadt. After centuries of neglect a local community Trust is currently planning an extensive renovation programme for this unique monument.

22 Fladda Chuan:

Also thought to be the location of Tir-nan-Og, the Isle of Perpetual Youth, it is believed that St Columba had a chapel built on the island with its altar made of an impressive single black stone. Thought to have been a Druid altar stone, it became known as the weeping stone as it was continually wet. Fishermen, until recently, would land on the island and pour three handfuls of sea water onto the stone to procure favourable winds and prevent floods.

23 Kilmuir:

Called in Gaelic Am Fearann Stepagach (the land of cream), it is believed, like Kilmore in Sleat, that the name has derived from the presence of a church dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Here in the graveyard is a famous memorial to Flora MacDonald inscribed with a tribute written by Johnson. Resting here too are members of the MacArthur Clan, hereditary pipers to the MacDonalds. Also in the graveyard one can discover an impressive carved grave slab bearing a mail clad figure, marking the burial place of the Martin family. This grave slab is reputed to have been brought from the Isle of Iona by a Martin family member known as Angus of the Wind.



Trotternish is Skye's most northerly peninsula and today, within its narrow confines, it contains a barren haunting environment studded with fantastic basaltic lava formations and ancient settlements. Embracing the area known as "the granary of Skye, laughing with corn", as well as being densely wooded at some time in its history, the peninsula has been fought over for generations and was the location for Skye's greatest battle fought between the MacLeods and the MacDonalds. Its boundaries are defined by Rubha Hunish in the north, Skeabost Bridge in the west and Portree in the south and east.

Trotternish

24 Kilvaxter:

A Stone Age souterrain (underground passage) has recently been discovered on a croft in Kilvaxter and is being excavated by the local community.

25 Cairn Liath:

Although robbed and disturbed, parts of this burial cairn still survive to a height of 14 feet.

26 Loch Chalum Chille:

Now just flat land between the road and the sea, once there was a large loch here with its own island, still marked on the maps as Eilean Chalum Chille. Here it is believed St Columba founded a chapel and tower, a centre from which to spread Christianity throughout Skye. Today a cluster of beehive cells can be traced showing that a large community existed here at one time. Obviously a key centre for the gospel, a monastery was also founded here at a later date as well as a chapel and foundation under the rule of the Nuns of Iona being established just up the road in Kilvaxter. The loch was finally drained in 1825, releasing the land to become the "richest arable land on Skye."

27 Monkstadt:

It was here at Monkstadt House that Flora MacDonald along with Lady Margaret made plans for Bonnie Prince Charlie's safety. From Monkstadt to Kingsburgh the country is known as Prince Charles country, echoing with memories of Flora and the Prince.

28 Prince Charles Point:

Here in June 1746, dressed as Flora MacDonald's Irish maid 'Betty Burke', Bonnie Prince Charlie landed and waited for Flora to join him and take him to Kingsburgh House, from there to Portree, then on to the Island of Raasay.

29 Dun Skudiburgh:

Now really only a pile of stones, close by on the coast is Skudiburgh Stack, a natural basaltic pillar.

30 Uig:

Another bay regarded as being one of Skye's best. Uig, when approached from the sea, looks very Norwegian with its whitewashed houses and prominent church. A place known for its witch population, 1880 saw an Elder of the Free Church bring possibly the last charge of witchcraft against a mother and her five daughters - happily she survived unscathed! The town has a folly built by Captain Fraser who owned parts of Snizort and all of Kilmuir in the 19th century.

31 Uig High Stone: - 'Clach Ard Uige'

This stone is believed to have come from an ancient stone circle and is dated from around the Bronze Age.

32 Uig - Kingsburgh Road:

This stretch of highway is known to be the oldest road on Skye. In 1799 a government survey was undertaken to turn bridlepaths into roads and reported that here could be found "a good horse road from Uig to Kingsburgh."

33 Hinnisdale & Romesdale Rivers:

Both affording pleasant trout fishing, it is believed they were named by early Norse settlers as they reminded them of their beloved Hinnisdale and Romesdale rivers in Norway.

34 Hugh's Castle: - Caisteal Uisdein

Thought to be the last medieval castle built on Skye, and although regarded as plain, it enjoys a dramatic coastal location. Built by Hugh MacDonald of Sleat at the time of King James VI, Hugh was known far and wide as a rogue of the first order. Unable to change his ways, upon completion of the castle, Hugh prepared a house-warming gathering and plotted treachery against one of his key guests. Unfortunately, the invitation to the murder victim and note containing instructions to the hired murderer got mixed up, leading to Hugh being imprisoned in Duntulm Castle, dying an agonising death after being fed salt meat and fish without a drop of water!

35 Eyre Standing Stones:

Thought to date from the Bronze Age, legend has it that these stones supported the cooking pot of the Feine, in which wonderful venison stew was made. The mottling on the stones is supposed to have come from a pot of shellfish stew (a poor second to venison when not available), which was thrown over them by the Feine when a cry was heard at the discovery of deer! Since then the stones have been known locally as Creagan a' Bhalgaim (Rocks of the Mouthful).

36 Cairn Liath: - Kensalyre

A large chambered burial cairn where a cist was found containing human bones.

37 Dun Suladale:

Another Bronze Age fort with walls surviving to a height of nine feet and a defensive earthwork.

38 Skeabost Island:

At the mouth of the river is an island on which there are the remains of two chapels. It is believed that St Columba founded Skye's mother church here and that a church known as the Cathedral of the Isles served here until around 1433.

39 Tote Stone:

One of three Pictish symbol stones found on Skye bearing a crescent and V rod symbol. The other two can be viewed at Dunvegan Castle and the Royal Museum of Edinburgh.

