

# APPIN and LISMORE

The romantic and beautiful district of Appin lies between Loch Creran and Ballachulish on the A828 Connel Bridge to Ballachulish road. Bordered by mountains inland and seawards by Loch Linnhe it is steeped in history and is the ancestral land of Clan Stewart of Appin. The Stewarts fought for Prince Charles Edward Stuart at the Battle of Culloden in 1746 where 92 clansmen were killed or wounded out of 300. The clan gravestone can be seen in the old parish churchyard.

With its sheltered bays and idyllic scenery you'll want to return again and again to Appin with its pretty historic villages.

Further along the main road towards Ballachulish you will meet one of the loveliest views in Scotland.

Some say that the view of Castle Stalker (from the Gaelic 'stalcaire', meaning stalker or hunter), sitting firmly on its rocky base in a sheltered bay, is the finest in Scotland.

Built in the 13th century by the MacDougalls it has a turbulent and bloody history. Still in private hands, much restored and habitable once more, the castle is open on certain days depending on tides and the weather.

An infamous occurrence in Appin's history was the hanging in 1752 of James Stewart of Glen Duror for the murder of landowner and government official Colin Campbell, known as The Red Fox, of Glenure.

The chief suspect was in fact Alan Breck Stewart who afterwards could not be found. The allegedly innocent James was tried at Inveraray by a Campbell judge and jury and hanged at Ballachulish, where a plaque marks the location.

The former railway line from Oban to Ballachulish passes through Appin and must have been one of the most spectacular lines in the UK. You can still see the pretty station buildings along the line and they are still in use. One is a house, another a top hotel and restaurant but the station building at Creagan has been lovingly restored.

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Long and narrow, Lismore is around 11 miles long by little over a mile wide, and its closeness to the mainland makes it a perfect day out with a choice of two ferries which both land within easy reach of some of the best places to visit on the island.

It has the finest broch in Argyll and the largest Bronze Age cairn, and has produced an archaeological find of a massive bronze armllet so important that it has to be displayed at the National Museum of Scotland rather than in the Lismore Museum (although a replica can be seen there).

Lismore became a highly important centre for Iron Age peoples around 2000 years ago, and much later was chosen by the Celtic monk St Moluag, as the base for his mission to the Picts in the 6th century.

It reached another peak in the 13th century under the Chiefs of the Clan MacDougall who built two spectacularly sited castles on the west side. Later still, islanders turned its very rocks into a thriving industry producing lime; limekilns still dot the landscape.

The story of Lismore has been encapsulated in a new award-winning museum at Ionad Naomh Moluag, which was opened last year by the Comann Eachdraidh Lios Mòr (Lismore Historical Society). It lies close to many of the monuments and is the focal point for discovering the island.

The museum began with a project to reconstruct a thatched cottar's house, and this now stands alongside a truly 21st century building, which is an attraction and talking point in itself. It has a 'living' turf roof, geothermal heating and walls lined with sheep's wool.

Its displays, café and shop make a welcome stopping point, and on summer days the Lismore Café is busy with walkers and cyclists resting over excellent coffee and a slice of homemade cake or a delicious lunch made from local produce – often basking in sunshine on the veranda while rain clouds glower 20 miles



The ruins of Castle Coeffin on Lismore the medieval castle of the Chiefs of the Clan MacDougall

away over Ben Nevis.

There are many ways of discovering the island, and these can be found in a new booklet of Lismore Heritage Trails produced by the museum.

Including maps, circular walks, heritage and nature notes. The Trails guide is an indispensable item in the rucksack.

The island website www.isleoflismore.com has a full list of accommodation, which ranges from bed and breakfast to some delightful holiday cottages.

## GETTING THERE

**Oban to Achnacroish (Caldeonian MacBrayne car ferry) 50 minutes.**

On a fine summer's day a trip on the 'Eigg' is a delightful journey with superb views to the islands of Kerrera and Mull, and good bird watching from the deck. If you are lucky you will see porpoise.

**Port Appin to Point (passenger ferry) - under 10 minutes.**

This ferry runs hourly through the day and into the evening during the season. Small and full of character, the ferry takes just 20 passengers and a staggering number of bikes, and will repeat the crossing if full.

## GETTING ABOUT

The museum and café are 2½ miles from Achnacroish and 3½ miles from Point, and the island is perfect for walking and cycling, with bike hire on the island (delivered to the ferry) and at Port Appin.

A post-bus meets the Oban boat in the morning and afternoon with the pick-up point at the Lismore shop.

There is also an island taxi service and a community minibus can be hired for special group trips.

This summer a pony and trap will occasionally meet the ferry from Port Appin and transport you at an old-fashioned pace along to the museum 3½ miles down the road.

## MUST SEE and MUST DO'S...

It all starts or finishes with **Ionad Naomh Moluag**, the Gaelic Heritage museum and reconstructed croft house, café, shop, library, family history resource ... wet weather refuge (not that it ever rains in Argyll)...

Make sure you have a copy of the **Heritage Trails** (available at the Oban Tourist Office, local shops, the museum, and at 'honesty boxes' at the Lismore piers).

**Tirfur Broch** – a well-preserved Iron Age monument from 2000 years ago.

**Castle Coeffin** – medieval castle of the Chiefs of Clan MacDougall.

**Cathedral Church of St Moluag** – sited halfway between the two ferries.

**Achanduin Castle** – the main MacDougall castle (more of a trek, but worth it).

**Port Ramsay** – a picturesque row of old cottages.

Lismore is a farming island. Give livestock a wide berth and keep your dogs on a lead – remember that cows with calves can be dangerous. Please close gates and take your litter home.



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## Isle of Lismore GAELIC HERITAGE MUSEUM

at Ionad Naomh Moluag – 'The gathering place of St Moluag'

- MUSEUM EXHIBITION discover the history of Lismore
- TIGH ISEABAIL DHAIDH thatched cottage 1850 – 1890
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Open 7 days, 11am - 4 pm 15th March to 31st October

Seasonal opening at Christmas and New Year

Adults £3.00: Children (under 16) free

and

Walk or cycle Lismore with our new

**Heritage Trails**  natural scotland  
handbook

Containing maps, circular routes, heritage and nature notes  
Available from Tourist Offices, Lismore museum and shop, and  
'honesty boxes' at the ferry piers.

*Don't pack your rucksack without it!*



Eat at the edge of Loch Creran  
amidst stunning views

Lunches

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Open 11am – 11pm Mon – Thurs

(12am Sat)

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