

TAYNUILT & LOCH AWE - at

THE pretty village of Taynuilt, near Oban, straddles the A85 amid glorious scenery at the foot of Ben Cruachan and on the shores of Loch Etive. Taynuilt is steeped in history and has links with Admiral Nelson, the Callander and Oban Railway and Bonawe quarry on the north shore of the loch.

The area is so interesting you could have a wonderful holiday without ever leaving it, but it is also an ideal base from which to tour the West Highlands.

Loch Etive is one of the loveliest lochs in the area. A sea loch, it is about 20 miles long and one of the best ways to appreciate it is to take a cruise along it surrounded on all sides by stunningly beautiful high mountains almost to the entrance to the world-famous Glencoe mountain range.

You can be assured of a warm and friendly welcome from the local staff at the Robin's Nest Tearoom. Using organic and locally sourced produce, freshly made scones, sandwiches and toasties are on offer along with a wide range of teas and excellent Italian coffee or choose from a mouthwatering selection of cakes and biscuits all made in the tearoom kitchen. From midday the homemade bread and soup provides a tasty snack lunch.

The village came to prominence with the nearby Bonawe Iron Furnace, built in 1753 by a Lake District partnership and which for 120 years processed iron ore from the Lake District using local charcoal. Bonawe

is the most complete charcoal-fuelled ironworks in Britain and a display there gives you an informed glimpse of the area's industrial heritage. The homes of the furnace masters and their workers can still be seen. Even the local woodlands still bear evidence, in the coppicing, of the 600 charcoal burners who worked here.

The furnace gave the village a certain strategic importance and it was included in a military road in 1756. In 1880 the Callander and Oban Railway arrived and Taynuilt is still on the rail route today. Visitors might think it odd to see a monument to Admiral Nelson so far north but in fact this was the first monument built to him after the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805 in which he was killed.

It was erected by the school in Main Street by furnace workers. It is believed iron from the furnace was used for naval shot in the battle. In 2005 local people commemorated the 200th anniversary of Trafalgar with a naval ceremony.

Shops in Main Street include a butcher's, a grocery, a toy shop and an antiques shop. There is also an excellent old coaching inn which provides live entertainment during the summer season and a tea shop. Although the furnace helped to form the village you see today Taynuilt is in fact much older. In Muckkairn churchyard you will find gravestones and tombstones dating from the thirteenth century.

The nearby Inverawe Country Park makes for a superb family day out. Set in



Always a warm and friendly welcome at Robin's Nest Tearoom

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The stunning beauty of Loch Awe

some of rural Argyll's most stunning scenery this historic estate has something for everyone including a range of walks lasting from 20 minutes to 2 hours, allowing ample opportunity to explore the beauty of the landscape. Nature trails are laid out so that if you are very quiet you might glimpse a roe and red deer, red squirrels, eagles, buzzards and even seals.

For something a little different the traditional smokehouse gives a stage-by-stage account of the history of fishing and preserving and smoking salmon, trout, eel and much, much more.

The history of the area and the estate and some of the infamous secrets of the wonderful Inverawe House are also highlighted.

Sample Inverawe's delicious products in their tearoom and shop where a warm welcome awaits together with a fine array of produce, home-baking and fresh soup and coffee.

Robert Campbell-Preston, owner of Inverawe Smokehouses, is looking forward to a busy summer. He said: 'It's great when the sun comes out and we can make the

most of the place - there is a real buzz. This is a family business and visitors are warmly invited to explore the smokery and even try their hand at fishing.

'The River Awe and our four stocked lochs provide a great opportunity for trout and salmon fishing and we offer seasonal lessons to the less experienced.'

Three holiday cottages on the estate offer an ideal retreat for soaking up the landscape and taking full advantage of the activities.

Taynuilt has a nine-hole golf course and a sports field where football and shinty is played and the annual Taynuilt Highland Games are held towards the end of July. Beside the sports field is an enclosed astro-turf football surface which doubles as a tennis court. You can book it at the grocer's in Main Street.

A walk round the shores of the loch near the village is a pleasant occupation as the scenery is so beautiful.

A stroll in the Aird's Bay area is popular but if you fancy more of a climb Ben Cruachan, a Munro mountain, at 3,694ft (1,126m), will test your resolve. For the uninitiated a Munro is a Scottish mountain over 3,000ft of which there are 284 in the Highlands.



Muckkairn Churchyard can trace the Taynuilt's history back to the 1300s



The grandeur of Ben Cruachan as she proudly guards Taynuilt.

LOCH ETIVE

LEAVING FROM TAYNUILT VILLAGE!

CRUISES

All aboard!

2 or 3 hour round trips to the seal colony and the head of the loch leave Kelly's Pier daily, except Saturdays.

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or to get Donald onboard: 07721 732703



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