

11 SKYE to RAASAY

The town of Portree, with its many hotels and guest houses, would make an ideal base for this leg. The starting points for all the routes described here can be reached from Portree in less than one hour by car. For the stages between Kilbride and Portree, there is plenty of accommodation at Uig, but rather less along the road from Uig to Portree.

Vaternish Point

Landranger Map: 23

OS Maps Central Grid Reference:

NG 270 650

The starting point is the hamlet of Sgoir Beag (NG 230 617), at the end of the road along the Vaternish peninsula. From there, a path runs due north for four miles to Unish. The next mile or so over open ground leads to Vaternish Point itself.

As an alternative to reversing this route, the return to Sgoir Beag may be done round the east coast of the peninsula as far as Abhainn a' Ghlinne. It is then easy to follow this stream up the northern shoulder of Ben Geary, and descend to Sgoir Beag.

Distance: 11 miles (15 km)

Height of ascent: 725 feet (250 m)

Naismith time: 3 hours 25 mins

The Landing Place on Trotternish

Landranger Map: 23

OS Maps Central Grid Reference:

NG 400 640

This landing place is known with considerable certainty to be by Allt 'a Chuain, a stream that flows into the sea at Kilbride, on the west coast of the Trotternish peninsula. It is convenient to go there at the same time as a visit to Monkstadt.

The lane to Monkstadt leaves the A856 about three miles north of Uig. It is possible to drive all the way to the house. Nowadays, the house is a ruin, but the front garden, in which Lady Margaret plotted with Kingsburgh and Donald Roy, is not overgrown. The continuation to Allt a' Chuain and Prince Charles's Point is then south-west for half a mile over farmland to the shore.

Kilbride to Uig

Landranger Map: 23

OS Maps Central Grid Reference:

NG 400 640

From the landing place, MacEachain took Charles to 'Bulodhabor'. This name is no longer used, but it probably refers to the hill, Creag Leith, some two miles south of the landing place. As the first step on the way to Uig, it can be reached by walking south along the shore. The present route of the A856 almost certainly closely follows the track that was used in Charles' time. As Charles and MacEachain rested less than fifty yards from the road, their resting place must have been on the east face of the hill.

The rest of the route to Uig must follow the line of present main road, because it is not possible to walk on either side of it. This stretch of the way is probably where they encountered the people who were affronted by 'Betty Burke'.

Distance: 3 miles (4 km)

Height of ascent: 360 feet (110 m)

Naismith time: 59 mins

Uig to Kingsburgh

Landranger Map: 23

OS Maps Central Grid References:

NG 400 600, NG 400 550

It is not known exactly where Kingsburgh and Charles took to the hills in

order to avoid meeting other people. From the nature of the terrain, it seems likely that it would have been soon after passing through Uig.

The present route starts just after the second of two churches, where it climbs diagonally left up Ben Brogaskil (NG 415 615) by the side of a small forestry plantation. It then continues along the ridge to Loch Mor, and down by the stream, Lòch Loch Mhòir, to Peinlich (NG 415 585) in Glen Hinnisdal. According to Flora MacDonald, Charles approached Kingsburgh's house in a south-south-easterly direction. The route must therefore follow the River Hinnisdal across the main road, and then over open country to Kingsburgh.

The actual house in which Charles stayed was on the meadow by the shore of Loch Snizort Beag. However, that house has long since disappeared. The house, that now stands at the edge of the meadow, is a more recent construction. The adjacent wood is probably where Charles changed his 'Betty Burke' costume for Kingsburgh's plaid.

Distance: 6 miles (10 km)

Height of ascent: 1090 feet (330 m)

Naismith time: 2 hours 33 mins

Kingsburgh to Portree

Landranger Map: 23

*OS Maps Central Grid References:
NG 400 550, NG 400 520, NG 460 500,
NG 460 460*

The best continuation to Portree begins along a track heading south-east from the sharp left-hand bend in the lane from Kingsburgh to the A856.

After about a mile this track joins the A856.

The route, that Flora rode along, would have followed the present line of the A856. Charles and MacEachain would have taken to the open ground on the east side of the main road, making their way roughly parallel to Flora's.

Access to the open land can be gained near to where the path from Kingsburgh meets the main road. Although it is always easy to walk over the open land, some of the streams may be difficult to cross because they are lined by thick vegetation. There is a ready-made track over the four-mile stretch from Annishader, and another over the final three miles from Achtalean. The inn where Charles met Donald Roy in Portree is on the site of the Royal Hotel in the centre of the town.

Distance: 10 miles (16 km)

Height of ascent: 330 feet (100 m)

Naismith time: 3 hours 22 mins

The Embarkation Point at Portree

Landranger Map: 23

*OS Maps Central Grid Reference:
NG 460 460*

According to tradition, the place from which Charles sailed to Raasay is Sgèir Mhòr or Nicholson's Rocks. These are the rocks that stretch out in a line into the sea from the far end of the northern shore of Portree harbour. From the centre of the town, a public road is followed for a mile to within a few hundred yards of these skerries. The remaining stretch has to be done on foot down steep rough ground.

Gaelic Place Name Details

<i>Name</i>	<i>Pronunciation</i>	<i>Translation</i>
Abhainn a' Ghlinne	ahvin a glinn-yeh	river of the valley
Allt a' Chuain	alt a khu-in	stream of the ocean
Creag Leith	krehk leh	grey rock
Lòn Loch Mhòir	lon lokh voor	stream of the large lake
Sgèir Mhòr	skehr vohr	large skerry
Sgoir Beag	sgor bek	small peak