

12 RAASAY to SKYE

On Raasay, it does not require an overnight stay to visit all the places with which Charles is associated. However, for those who do wish to stay overnight, there are various types of public accommodation, including a youth hostel, at and near the village of Inverarish in the south of the island.

On the mainland, the walk between Portree and Sligachan has a hotel and a well organised campsite. For the walk between Sligachan and Loch Slapin, there is accommodation in the settlement of Luib at the entrance to Strath Mor. Thereafter, there is little to be found until Elgol.

Raasay

Landranger Map: 24

OS Maps Central Grid Reference:

NG 570 390

The only public transport to Raasay starts on the southern shore of Loch Sligachan, where a ferry transports pedestrians and cars from Sconsor to East Suisnish. Charles stayed at Glams or Glame (NG 560 427), some six miles north of Inverarish. It can be reached either by car or on foot. Nowadays, Glams is just a collection of ramshackle farm buildings, but the remains of cottages can still be found in the heather near the shore.

Portree to Sligachan

Landranger Maps: 23, 32

OS Maps Central Grid References:

NG 480 400, NG 480 330, NG 480 370

The route, along which Malcolm MacLeod led Charles, is not precisely known. However, it is certain that they did not follow the main road. In order to avoid the troops, Malcolm wanted to go along 'by-ways', and

used 'the ridges of high hills'.

It seems likely that they walked along the moorland on the west side of Glen Varragill.

The starting place is the B883, which runs eastwards from the A850 at the southern end of Portree bay. About a mile from the river, there is an S-bend. Two hundred yards further on, the route starts by a stream that the road crosses. The climb up to the moorland follows this stream. At the crest, the way simply follows the crest to its end, where it descends to the campsite by the Sligachan Hotel.

Distance: 8 miles (13 km)

Height of ascent: 1110 feet (340 m)

Naismith time: 3 hours 10 mins

Sligachan to Loch Slapin

Landranger Map: 32

OS Maps Central Grid References:

NG 530 260

The route begins at the humpback stone bridge immediately outside the hotel on the other side of the A863. After following a good path for two miles down Glen Sligachan, it is necessary to fork left, and climb up to Mam a' Phobuill along the side of Allt na Measarroch. On the other side of the bealach, the route descends into Coire nam Bruadaran. It then follows the stream down to the A850, where it skirts round the end of Loch Ainort.

There is then no alternative to walking along the road by the loch. After a mile or so, two parallel lines of pylons begin to snake up the hillside to the right. These pylons mark a good path, which is followed in a horseshoe turn round the shoulder of Glas Bheinn Mhòr, and down to the valley of Strath Mor. A further four miles along the boggy bottom of this valley lead to the head of Loch Slapin.

Distance: 10 miles (16 km)
Height of ascent: 1160 feet (350 m)
Naismith time: 3 hours 47 mins

Loch Slapin to Elgol

Landranger Map: 32
OS Maps Central Grid References: NG 560 180

According to local tradition, Charles approached Elgol from the north after walking along Glen Scaladal. Thus, it seems most likely that, from the head of Loch Slapin, his route goes west up the Allt na Dunaiche, half a mile south along the A881. At the head of this stream, the route turns left, follows the ridge of An Carnach for a mile and half, and then descends Abhainn Cille Mhaire to a lochan with the remains of a stone circle on its shore. The final stage then climbs south-west, descends Glen Scaladal, and follows the coastal path to Elgol.

Distance: 8 miles (12 km)
Height of ascent: 1160 feet (350 m)
Naismith time: 2 hours 59 mins

The Embarkation Point

Landranger Map: 32
OS Maps Central Grid References: NG 560 150

Charles sailed for the mainland from the bay, Pòrt a Luig Mhòir, just a mile south of Elgol village. It is reached from the harbour by the path that climbs up to the moorland from the jetty. Eventually, the path disappears in grass and heather, but there is no difficulty in finding the way to the bay.

The cave* in which Old MacKinnon and his wife ate a meal with Charles before his departure can be reached by turning westwards through a narrow gap in the rock at NG 517 124, and following the shoreline below the cliffs for 150 yards. The cave can then be seen about 50 feet up on the right. At low tides, it is possible to scramble up to it.

Distance: 1 mile (1.6 km)
Height of ascent: 300 feet (80 m)
Naismith time: 27 mins

* *The directions to the cave were kindly provided by Bob McMillan*

Gaelic Place Name Details

| <i>Name</i> | <i>Pronunciation</i> | <i>Translation</i> |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Allt na Measarroch | alt na mezarokh | stream of the place of berries |
| Coire nam Bruadaran | kora nam brootaran | corrie of the dreams |
| Eilean na Glaschoille | elen na glas khol-yeh | island of the grey wood |
| Glas Bheinn Mhòr | glas vehn vohr | large grey mountain |
| Inbhir | inver | mouth of a river |
| Mam a' Phobuill | mam a fobil | hill of the congregation |
| Port a Luig Mhòir <i>should be</i> | | |
| Port a Luig Mhòir | porst a lung vohr | port of large ship |