

22 LOCH ARKAIG

The Hiding Places by Loch Arkaig

Landranger Map: 34

OS Maps Central Grid Reference:

NN 170 880

Charles used three different hiding places. Tradition and contemporary accounts identify the locations of two. However, the present surroundings of these sites are very different from what they were in Charles' time. Where there used to be forests of indigenous trees, there are now modern plantations of imported conifers.

The hide-out, where Patrick Grant shot the deer, is believed to have been in the wood, Torr a' Chronain. Nowadays, there is a circular guided forest walk to the cave from the car park by the Cia-aig waterfall (NN 176 888) .

The path climbs steeply up into the trees on the right hand side of the stream. After about half a mile, the route turns right turn down a forestry road. After a few yards, a signpost indicates a path into the trees on the left. A short distance along this path, a sign marked 'Prince Charles' Cave' points to a rock face with the cave, about three feet high and six feet deep, at its base. In Charles' time, the accommodation may have been enlarged with a wooden hut built at the entrance.

A second hiding place was in Torvault wood at the extreme east end of Loch Arkaig. This is the place where Charles met the French men. It was also where Lochiel hid immediately after his return from Culloden. Some years ago, when the original trees were being felled,

the foresters discovered a very old hut-like structure, which could have been Charles' hide-out. Unfortunately, this hut was accidentally destroyed.

The hollow tree, in which Charles is supposed to have hidden, used to lie on its side in 'Mile Dorcha' (Dark Mile). However, it has long been removed.

Achnacarry

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Nowadays, Achnacarry is a little village. Its Clan Cameron Museum has many interesting pieces of Bonnie Prince Charlie memorabilia. The present Achnacarry Castle, in which the descendents of Gentle Lochiel still live, is probably built on a site different from the one that existed up to 1746. According to local tradition, the original house was situated where it was possible to catch a salmon out of one window, and shoot a stag out of another on the other side of the house.

A fascinating relic in the grounds is a line of beech trees, which Gentle Lochiel was in the process of planting when he first heard news of Charles' landing in July, 1745. In his haste to meet Charles, Lochiel just 'heeled' clusters of the saplings into the soil as a temporary measure. He was never able to complete the planting properly. The saplings subsequently grew from where he left them, and produced mature trees, which to-day are in bizarre formations.

Gaelic Place Name Details

<i>Name</i>	<i>Pronunciation</i>	<i>Translation</i>
Torr a' Chronain	torr a khronin	mound of the murmuring
Mile Dorcha	meel-eh dorckh-ah	dark mile