



Inveraray, Loch Fyne

Scotland Through Writers' Eyes hiking adventure

With Johnson and Boswell, the Wordsworths and Stevenson

No twenty-first century person's conception of 'Scotland Today' could aspire to be the 'correct' one, even if the way things are now could somehow be all that mattered. It can't be and it isn't. Fortunately, the past has always had observers inclined to record what they have seen. Scotland has raised great writers of its own and has also attracted the attention of many literary outsiders; taken together, their contemporary accounts can give us remarkable insights, not only into days gone by, but also into the evolution of modern society. Their 'snapshots' can bring the past to life and help us to see things a little more clearly and 'in the round'. For us, whether they meant to be or not, these writers are the very best of companions along the way.

Highlights

- *Edinburgh - Athens of the north*
- *Visit to Inveraray and Inveraray Castle where Johnson and Boswell had dinner with the Duke of Argyll.*
- *Walk across the sands to Erraid where Davie Balfour was shipwrecked*
- *Two nights stay on the tiny island of Iona - Icolmkill in the 18th century*
- *Hiking between the impressive mountains of Glen Coe*
- *Stirling and Stirling Castle*

Our literary guides

Our literary guides – always intelligent, sometimes sympathetic, sometimes opinionated – are principally, but not solely, these:

- **Dr. Samuel Johnson**, and his friend and biographer **James**

Boswell, who completed their autumnal Hebridean tour via Mull, Iona and Inveraray in 1773.

- **Dorothy Wordsworth**, who travelled in the southern and western highlands via Glasgow and Edinburgh with her brother, William, and, for part of the way, Coleridge, in August and September 1803 and, illustrates the successful shaping of landscape and history into page-turning fiction.
- **Robert Louis Stevenson**, whose *Kidnapped* takes the reader – and us – from 18th century Edinburgh to the Hebrides and back via Glen Coe and Stirling, always with a vividly descriptive feel for the country that his heroes are passing through.



- 1 + 2. Edinburgh
3. Loch Lomond, Inveraray
4. Isles of Mull and Erraid
5. Isle of Iona

6. Isle of Staffa, Morvern, Glencoe
7. Appin and Ballachulish
8. Glen Coe, Calander and Stirling
9. Edinburgh



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Edinburgh from Calton Hill

Introduction

Stevenson, as a Scot who was born in early Victorian Edinburgh and who lived there until early adulthood, also offers us a chance to explore the city and to reflect upon its influence on someone who was to become one of Scotland's greatest writers.

The Wordsworths are representative of a Romantic attitude to wild highland scenery that is commonplace today, but was then in the process of replacing the long- and deeply-held view of all 'civilised' people that such landscapes were simply rude and abhorrent.

Johnson and Boswell's separate and complementary accounts (read both!) are particularly important, coming not so very long after the political and social earthquake that shook the highlands following on from the Jacobite rebellion - or revolution - of 1745. They were in a position to observe and to record the effects on highland society of the disintegration of traditional clan relationships, particularly since they had access to all social levels.

Our major ports of call are

Edinburgh - the hill-strewn, sea-surveying capital where Johnson arrived in Scotland, from whence the Wordsworths left it and the place where Stevenson was born and grew up.

Argyll and the Isles - visited by each of our literary 'guides' and the setting for some of the central events in Stevenson's *Kidnapped*.

- Inveraray
- Isle of Mull
- Isle of Iona
- Isle of Erraid
- Isle of Staffa

Appin and Glen Coe – scene of the Appin murder and the flight of the heroes of *Kidnapped*

Stirling – a frontier town on the edge of the highlands – scene of crucial battles in Scotland's independence struggles.



Isle of Mull from the Isle of Iona



Isle of Staffa



Glen Coe



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