

A GUIDE TO MACFARLANE COUNTRY, SCOTLAND

Revised edition (2026) published by The Clan MacFarlane Society, Australia Inc.

It is recommended that the user of this guide purchases the Ordnance Survey Map of Loch Lomond & the Trossachs, which is available from most bookshops in Scotland. At a scale of one inch to one mile, all the following points of interest are clearly marked; also provided below are GPS Coordinates and references to descriptions of National Monuments for points of interest detailed below; simply copy these coordinates into Google Maps.

For those without transport, and those who like walking, the Dunbarton District Ranger Service at Alexandria (near Balloch at the foot of Loch Lomond) conducts a guided walking tour of six miles, titled "*Loch Sloy and Clan MacFarlane*".

LUSS PARISH CHURCHYARD (Also known as St. Kessog's Churchyard) (56°06'01.4"N 4°38'11.6"W) - Driving north up the west bank of Loch Lomond on the A82, we arrive at the village of Luss, where Luss church stands, once the only church in the Parish of Arrochar (Arroquhar), and where the churchyard contains many MacFarlane graves.

Ref: <https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/2442221/luss-parish-churchyard>

In the north wall of - the church is a stone inscribed, "*Here is the place of burial appointed for the Lairds of Arroquhar, buildit by Johne Mackfarlan Laird thair of 1612.*" EFTER DEATHE REMAIMIS VERTEW MEMENTO MORI J.M. 1612." In the original charter of lands granted to Gilchrist, the founder of Clan MacFarlane, by his brother Malduin, Earl of Lenox in about 1230, was the Barony of Arrochar commencing at Luss and extending north. Ref: <https://www.trove.scot/designation/SM2461>



The Steadings
MacFarlane Drive, Arrochar



FIRKIN POINT (56°10'15.2"N 4°40'39.5"W) - About 6 miles (9.6 km) north of Luss on the A82, past Inverbeg, there is a headland, on the other side of which is the hamlet of Firkin. Here is a very large old yew tree under which King Robert the Bruce is supposed to have waited whilst his men followed him in twos and threes in a "*litill sonkyn bate*" from the cave at Craigostran on the other side of the loch where he had been sheltering. Another version is that King Robert planted this tree. There is no doubt that he would have been greeted by MacFarlanes, as he was in their territory. (Note: yew tree wood was once prized for making bows and arrows.)

TARBET CASTLE (56°12'21.5"N 4°42'33.4"W) - The original house of the chief of the MacFarlanes of Arrochar on the mainland stood at Tarbet, within a few hundred yards of the banks of Loch Lomond. The site is called Clattochmore (where the manse now stands). No part of the building now remains, except portions of the foundations, which, although level with the ground, can still be traced. After the slaughter of Sir Humphrey Colquhoun in the castle of Bannachra (see Glen Fruin), the chief of the MacFarlanes fled to this house at Tarbet (in 1592.) Ref: <https://www.trove.scot/place/23817>

At the junction of the A82, and the road to Arrochar (A83), there was a clachan (small settlement) of the MacFarlanes where the sons of the chiefs lived. There they had their gallows knoll. Across a little burn which crosses the road, the MacFarlane's once faced a party of Colquhouns who had come to retrieve the gates of Ross-Dhu which the MacFarlanes had carried away after the Bannachra affair. Outnumbered, the Colquhouns withdrew, and the gates remained in MacFarlane hands until the clan land was sold in 1784 by William, 21st Chief. At the Tarbet Hotel at this intersection (built in the style of a castle), turn west and drive two miles (3.2 km) to Arrochar (anciently known as Inverioch) on Loch Long.



THE STEADINGS (56°11'46.4"N 4°44'40.8"W) - The former steadings (farm service buildings) served Inverioch / Arrochar House on Church Road, now the Claymore Hotel, were once the spacious stables built by William, 21st Chief, from 1774-76. Situated on MacFarlane Drive, Arrochar, these steadings have latterly been restored and converted into residential accommodation. In the time of the Viking invasions, they landed at Arrochar & dragged their galleys across the narrow stretch of land between Arrochar & Tarbet to raid the rich settlements of Loch Lomond. There was a battle with the MacFarlanes. The mound to the right of the Steadings driveway entrance is said to be the burial mound of the Vikings killed in the battle. The MacFarlane dead are said to be buried at Ballyhennan, midway between Arrochar & Tarbet. Ref: <https://www.trove.scot/place/126739>



The Steadings
MacFarlane Drive, Arrochar



Inverioch House,
now the Claymore Hotel,
prior to additions in 1965

INVERIOCH HOUSE - (56°11'50.6"N 4°44'49.3"W), now the Claymore Hotel was the last house of the chiefs of Clan MacFarlane, built in 1697. The Barony of Arrochar, together with Inverioch House was sold by Dr. William, 21st Chief, to Ferguson of Raith in 1784, and by him to Sir James Colquhoun in 1821. Colquhoun extended the original building, incorporating the original stone lintel over the new front door where it remains to this day. Engraved on it, in Gaelic, are the words freely translated as, *"This stone was taken from the main entrance to the house built by John, Chief of the MacFarlanes and Laird of Arrochar, in the year inscribed upon it"*, which is 1697. It has since been extended to form a hotel, now called the Claymore Hotel. It looks across Loch Long and toward Ben Arthur (The Cobbler) along the base of which runs the famous road built by General Wade, to Loch Fyne after the 1715 uprising (now the A83). Ref: <https://www.trove.scot/place/126740>

STRONAFYNE FARM (anciently known as Sron afinneadh) – (56°12'35.4"N 4°44'30.3"W) - Situated a short distance up Glen Loin at the head of Loch Long, once guarded the clan's western approaches. Glen Loin was the old route to Loch Sloy from Inverioch (Arrochar). One of only two farms which remained in the hands of a MacFarlane family after the sale of the Arrochar Estate in 1784, it was finally sold as part of the Tarbet Estate in 1954.



ARROCHAR, OLD PARISH CHURCH - (56°11'41.3"N 4°44'52.2"W) situated at Kirkfield Place. The Parish of Arrochar came into being in 1659, but the first church was not built until 1733. Parts of this church remain, including the door lintel with the date 1733. A house close to the site of the original church may have been the manse. Funds to build the church were pledged by John, 17th Chief, but the debt was not finally settled until 1802, eighteen years after the estates had been sold. In 1742, the Hon. Helen Arbuthnott, widow of John, 19th Chief, made a gift of two silver communion cups which are still in use. The treasures of the church also include pewter jugs and plates, and two wooden collecting ladles used during the 18th century. The present Parish Church was built alongside the old ruins in 1847 and has no association with MacFarlane history.

Ref: <https://www.arrocharparishchurch.org/history>

<https://www.trove.scot/place/125903>

<https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/2602754/arrochar-churchyard>

One may drive 15 miles (24 km) south down Loch Long to visit Glen Fruin or do this on the way home after visiting clan sites further up Loch Lomond. Glen Fruin is described later in this guide.



ARROCHAR - TARBET ROAD [A83] - The Norsemen who invaded Central Scotland in 1263 are reputed to have landed at Arrochar and dragged their boats across to Loch Lomond via this route, from whence they plundered the interior. The MacFarlanes who were killed in this encounter are thought to be buried at Ballyhennan where unmarked burial mounds are to be seen. Returning to Tarbet via this road, as 1891 account says, *"The ancient oaks on either side of the road are purported to mark the broad avenue which once ran through MacFarlane Park. On the right side leaving Arrochar these trees form a crescent, and the remains of a mound are seen, said to have been a MacFarlane watchtower"*.

BALLYHENNAN BURIAL GROUND – (56°12'12.1"N 4°43'14.1"W) midway between Arrochar and Tarbet, behind the former Scottish Free Church is reputed to have been the burial ground for clansmen killed during the Viking raid on Loch Long and Loch Lomond in 1263 (see above). Many later MacFarlanes are buried here, including John MacFarlane "piper in Inverloch 1730".

Ref: <https://www.trove.scot/place/23818>

<https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/2596178/ballyhennan-burial-ground>

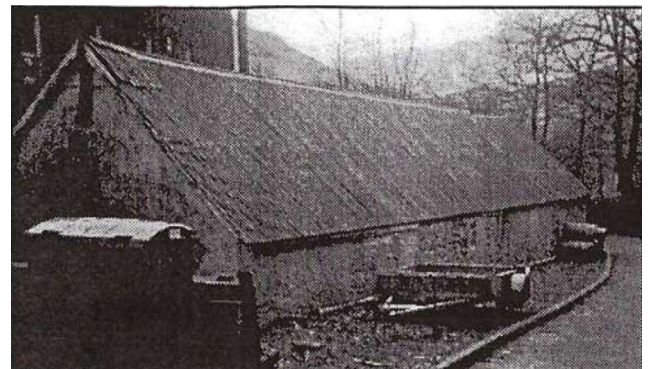


BALLYHENNAN CHURCH - The church situated near the burial ground was built in 1856 and was in use as a Free Church until re-unification in 1947, The church is now the Clan MacFarlane Heritage Centre and Kirk O' The Lochs Restaurant.

Ref: <https://www.trove.scot/place/23821>

TIGHVECHTAN (Tyvechtan) - a corruption of the Gaelic words signifying *"the house of the watch"*, is situated half-way between Arrochar and Tarbet. This was the site of a watchtower belonging to the MacFarlanes where they kept a lookout for enemies and raiders. Later, a collection of stone cottages with thatched roofs existed here. In a corner of the field opposite the present village hall, there was a large wooden building used as a shop.

Tyvechtan was also the watchman's house near Stronafyne (Sron afinneadh), where the clan usually mustered when the fiery cross was sent round.



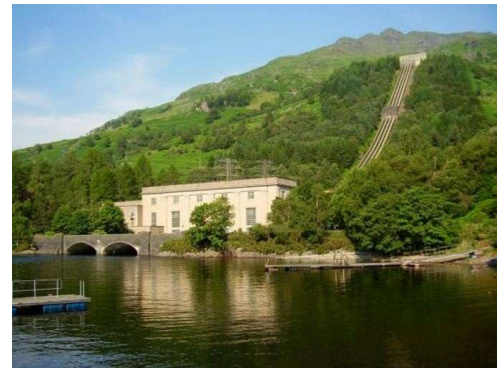
INVERUGLAS BARN (56°14'51.4"N 4°42'49.6"W) - Heading north from Tarbet on the A82, just beyond the bridge over Inveruglas Water, on the LHS where a tree grows from a split boulder, is an old stone barn with arrow slits in the walls. The stones are supposed to have come from the ruined Inveruglas Castle. Opposite the barn is Inveruglas Farm.

Ref: <https://www.trove.scot/designation/LB43186>



LOCH SLOY (Sloy Dam) (56°15'46.2"N 4°45'46.8"W) The original Loch Sloy was, in the 1940's, turned into a storage reservoir for the power station by constructing a huge concrete wall across its southern end. The water is piped under the right-hand flank of Ben Vorlich to the power station below. Access to the dam is by private road which starts near the power station (see below). About a mile (1.6 km) west up the gravel road is Coiregrogain where Black Duncan (son of John 15th Chief) gathered a band of young men from Portincaple to ambush and destroy a party of Athol-men who were returning from south via Glen Loin. The road diverges NW up Glen Uglas for a mile (1.6 km) or so to the dam wall. Having climbed the wall, you will see before you a much larger Loch Sloy than the original, and the clan's shielings (stone huts used by shepherds) are now under many feet of water. The surrounding countryside is very wild and beautiful, but very lonely with no signs of habitation. Loch Sloy was the clan's gathering place in times of danger or emergency, and "*Loch Sloy*" is also the clan's slogan or war-cry. The dam is also a main source of water for much of the Lower Clyde and Dunbartonshire.

INVERUGLAS POWER STATION (56°15'04.8"N 4°42'41.3"W) - About three miles (4.8 km) further up the A82, is the site of the Power Station which feeds Glasgow at peak periods. It derives its driving force from water piped underground from Loch Sloy through the mountain behind it, which is Ben Vorlich. It is from this power station that you must obtain permission to drive up to Loch Sloy through a nearby closed gate. It is sometimes difficult to find anyone in attendance, so be patient, No permit is required to walk up to the dam, but it is about 2 miles (3.2 km) each way.



INVERUGLAS VISITOR CENTE & INVERSNAIL FERRY JETTY. (56°15'06.4"N 4°42'30.6"W) - Robert, son of John 11th Chief, established his house at Inversnaid in the early 1500's and the family was resident there for over 200 years, in the later generations as tenants of 'Rob Roy' McGregor. At the jetty landing is the Inveruglas Visitor Centre which has a display board detailing the Clan MacFarlanes involvement in the area. Those who have arranged (with the MacFarlane Boatyard at Balmaha) a visit to Inveruglas Island and its MacFarlane castle, can be picked up at Inveruglas jetty for the short trip out to the island just offshore. Ref: <https://www.lochlomondwakeboard.com/speedboat-trips/> / <https://www.balmahaboatyard.co.uk>

INVERUGLAS ISLAND, (56°14'56.1"N 4°42'31.3"W) - On Loch Lomond opposite the power station, is the site of a MacFarlane castle, and the main stronghold of the chiefs until destroyed by Cromwell's troops in about 1650. The last chief to occupy it was Walter, 16th. Only ruins remain. The Elanvow Preservation Fund (EVPF) is dedicated to archaeological study, preservation and maintenance of the sixteenth century castle, buildings and site on Elanvow and other Macfarlane-relevant sites including on Inveruglas Island in collaboration with Historic Environment Scotland (HES). Their goal is to preserve the ruins while protecting the natural ambience of the island and screening the castle from unnecessary visitors' traffic. Both Inveruglas Island and Elanvow can be visited by hired motorboat from Ardlui or Balmaha.

Ref: <https://www.trove.scot/place/23814>
<https://elanvow.org/the-inveruglas-isle-project.html>





ELANVOW (also known as Island I Vow, Eilean a Vow, Ellan Vhow) (56°16'39.6"N 4°41'48.8"W) - Is another island about 2 miles (3.2 km) north of Inveruglas. On it are the ruins of another castle, built by Andrew 14th Chief, in 1577, and it was here that he entertained King James VI of Scotland. In later times it was used by a certain Andrew MacFarlane as a store for goods which he sold on both sides of the loch. Early this century a broadsword, probably mid-18th century, was found when a tree was blown over.

Ref: <https://ellanvhow.org/index.html/>
<https://www.trove.scot/place/23837>

MACGREGORS. On the opposite side of Loch Lomond lived the Clan Dougal Ceir MacGregors who were [often] the allies of the MacFarlanes for many centuries. The island of Eilean-a-Vow was supposedly the meeting place for the two clans.

PULPIT ROCK (also known as Clach Nan Tarbh or The Bull Stone), (56°17'09.0"N 4°42'27.9"W) - Is not strictly a MacFarlane site, it was constructed in 1825 after the MacFarlanes had sold the Arrochar estates. It lies 2 miles (3km) south of Ardlui on the A82, and a few yards off the road. It is a deep recess cut into a huge outcrop of rock, high enough for a man to stand in. Originally there was a wooden lectern, and it was said that the minister could be heard from the other side of the loch. It is also said that there were a greater number of the congregations behind the rock "*taking refreshment*" than in front. Tradition has it that two huge bulls fought a fierce battle above the loch, and in doing so dislodged the rock. Note: the term 'bull' also relates to religious declaration or edict.

Ref: <https://www.trove.scot/place/127862>



ARDLUI at the head of Loch Lomond was approximately the northern limit of the MacFarlane clan lands. It is from here, and from Balmaha at the southern end of the loch, that boats can be hired to visit the islands of Inveruglas and Eilean-a-Vow.

GLEN FRUIN - From Arrochar, drive south on the A814 along Loch Long until, some 15 miles (24 km) further near Faslane, the old Glen Fruin Road runs away to the east into the mountains. After some 2 miles (3.2 km), there is a memorial stone (56°04'21.4"N 4°47'23.9"W), which marks the supposed site of the Battle of Glen Fruin on 7 February 1603, when the MacGregors and the MacFarlanes joined forces to ambush and defeat the Colquhouns and their allies, the townsmen from Dumbarton. Two miles (3.2 km) further along the glen, is the ruined farmhouse of Auchenvenal, (56°03'41.5"N 4°44'57.2"W). A half a mile (0.8 km) further on the left is another farm - Blairnairn. (56°03'19.4"N 4°43'55.0"W). Continuing along the right fork for 12 miles (19.2 km) you will find Drumfad. These three farms were formerly occupied by cadet families of chiefs of the MacFarlanes. There is now a bypass Haul Road (A817) off the A814 near Garelochhead to Loch Lomond, built by the Ministry of Defence during the 1980s and which runs largely parallel to and above the old Glen Fruin road. Ref: <https://www.trove.scot/place/41400>



Battle of Glen Fruin memorial

About 1 mile (1.6 km) after the old Glen Fruin road joins the A818, you will find a driveway on the right leading to Bannachra Castle, (56°01'22.3"N 4°39'38.9"W). Built by the Colquhouns sometime after they acquired the associated lands in 1512. In 1592 it was attacked and taken by the MacGregors who killed Sir Humphrey Colquhoun with an arrow fired through a stair window. The MacFarlanes burnt down Bannachra after the Battle of Glen Fruin in 1603. Sadly, the castle ruins are not visible from the road, and the current owners discourage visitors. Ref: <https://www.trove.scot/designation/SM7770>



OUTPOSTS OF THE CLAN



ARDESS, on the east bank of Loch Lomond, almost opposite Inverbeg Hotel, was the home of Andrew McFarlane before he succeeded his brother as 18th Chief in 1679, taking with him his own "differenced" Arms which depicted a sword in lieu of a sheaf or arrows on the Crest. Rob Roy MacGregor was known to have owned the property in 1710, and the National Trust for Scotland conducted an archeological excavation there in 2007. Ref: <https://www.trove.scot/place/127893>

GARTARTAN CASTLE (56°09'00.7"N 4°22'03.7"W) - Situated near Gartmore off the A81 from Glasgow to the Trossachs. Entrance through the large gates of Gartmore House in whose grounds it sits. This structure was probably built by Malcolm Macfarlane of Gartartan, circa 1597. This was the home of the family of Walter of Ardleish, who was a son of John, 11th Chief. The father of James MacFarlane, author of the Clan History 1922, was born at Gartmore, and his grandfather John and great-grandfather Malcolm are buried here. Ref: <https://www.trove.scot/place/44641>
<https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/2289155/gartmore-parish-churchyard>



INCHCAILLOCH ISLAND, Church of St Kentigerna and Burial Ground (56°04'54.7"N 4°33'17.8"W) - At the southern end of Loch Lomond, there is an interesting cemetery, which was the burial place for many MacFarlanes including Duncan, whose stone dated 1783 bears the MacFarlane Arms. Seven generations of his descendants have kept the boatyard at Balmaha and continue to do so. There is a ferry to the island from the boatyard. Ref: <https://www.trove.scot/place/43477>
<https://www.balmahaboatyard.co.uk/ferrytoinchcailloch.htm>
www.findagrave.com/cemetery/2593410/inchcailloch-cemetery/

BALLENCLEROCH HOUSE (55°59'14.8"N 4°13'48.5"W) and **CLACHAN OF CAMPSIE**, on the A891, 2 miles (3 km) east of Lennoxtown. Part of the original house, which was built by James MacFarlane, great-great-grandson of Andrew 12th Chief, remains. It lies at the entrance to the scenic Campsie Glen. Note, particularly, above the old doorway the arms of James with the initials JM and MK above. The house was gutted by fire in 1983 and is now a sad ruin. In the overgrown garden is a broken granite whipping post. Close to the house lies the Clachan of Campsie with the old, ruined church and graves. This was the burial place of John MacFarlane, the "Advocate" of Ballencleroch, 1788-1852. The history of this family is described in The Parish of Campsie by James Cameron. Copies can be obtained at Kirkintilloch Library. Ref: <https://www.trove.scot/place/45191>



BALLENCLEROCH HOUSE

Other cadet branches of the clan were at Auchenvenal in Glen Fruin, Tullich in Glen Douglas, and Finnart on Loch Long, all of which show how the clan spread south well into Colquhoun country. Houses were also at Erines, Muckroy and Glenralloch in Argyll; Kilmaronock in Dunbartonshire; and Ledard by Loch Ard in Perthshire. There are also branches in Northern Ireland which are thought to stem from the MacFarlane retainers of the Earl of Lennox who acquired 4000 acres during the plantation (resettlement) of Ireland in the early 1600's.

PORTINCAPLE, Loch Longside. According to local folklore, an old meal mill once stood near the burn at Portincaple. The site became a sanctuary of charity following fierce clan battles where sons of men killed in battle were fed. It is said that from every bag of grain, each man was allowed to take as much as he could lift between the open palms of his two hands and carry to the door without spilling any; if this happened, he had to put the meal back into the bag. Some sources claim that this is how the sept name Miller arose, (the miller's sons).



OTHER PLACES WITH CLAN CONNECTIONS YOU MAY CARE TO VISIT



HIGH MORLAGGAN, LOCH LONG, (56°10'33.9"N 4°46'36.2"W) During November of 2009 a team of eager volunteers carried out a research dig at High Morlaggan an old MacFarlane settlement site located above the eastern shores of Loch Long, Argyll and Bute District (originally Dunbartonshire). The old settlement was probably a MacFarlane property, and being near to the western opening of Glen Douglas, they may have been descendants of Dougald MacFarlane, (brother of Andrew 10th Chief of Arrochar, circa 1488), who founded the MacFarlane branches of Tullachintaul, Glen Douglas, and of Finart and Gorton, all on Loch Long-side.
Ref: <https://www.trove.scot/place/301028>

GLENFINNAN HOUSE HOTEL, (56°52'12.3"N 5°26'40.7"W) Glenfinnan (about 12 miles (19 km) west of Fort William on the road to Mallaig; (A830). This Scottish country house is a fine stone mansion dating from 1755. Although not in MacFarlane territory, the hotel is currently owned by a MacFarlane family who came to Glenfinnan in 1971. Although the house was in an advanced state of disrepair, the family converted the house into a hotel, retaining as much of its old character as possible. The proprietor, Tearlach (Charlie) MacFarlane, a descendant of Black John (4th son of John, 15th Chief), was a kilted Gaelic-speaking Highlander who piped his guests into dinner and had a wide knowledge of Scotland and its history.

Ref: <https://glenfinnanhouse.com/>



CILLE CHOIRILL CHURCHYARD, LOCHABER, (56°53'29.2"N 4°46'51.1"W) - Overlooking the A86 just east of Roy-bridge in Brae Lochaber, not far from where it leaves the A82 at Spean Bridge. Amongst the 14 different clans who have members buried in the graveyard of this ancient church are MacFarlanes.

Ref: <https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/2506967/cille-choirill-churchyard>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



**Julian Dawson Miller
(1917-2005)**

The original 'A Guide to MacFarlane Country' was compiled in 1987 by Julian Millar, Southport, Queensland, Editor of 'MacFarlane's Lantern', the newsletter of The Clan MacFarlane Society (in Australia). Contributions to the guide were received from Ronald Macfarlane, Hemel Hempstead, England; Norman Douglas, Tarbet, Scotland and other members of the Society who wrote about their experiences. First published in 1987 and made available to members, further additions to the guide were published in July 1987 (Lantern No. 24).

In 2007 Malcolm Lobban, Pooraka, South Australia revised the guide for The Clan MacFarlane Society, Australia Inc., with assistance from Graham Hopner, Information Services Librarian, West Dunbartonshire Council. Copies were available to members.

In 2016 Andrew Macfarlane, Palmerston North, New Zealand added photographs to make an illustrated version of the guide and respectfully dedicated it to the memory of the original author. The illustrated version was made available on our website as a free download.

The guide was reviewed in June 2026 by Peter McFarlane, Somerton Park, South Australia, who updated it with GPS reference points and historical references. It was made available on our website as a free download in July 2026.

<https://clanmacfarlane.org.au>