

### **Badenoch & Strathspey – Fifty Interesting ‘Facts’**

1. “Badenoch” means the “drowned land”.
2. Field Marshall Montgomery spent time in his private train at **Dalwhinnie** whilst working on plans for the D Day Landings in 1944.
3. In 1942 Sir William Beveridge worked on the famous Beveridge Report which was the foundation of the British Social Security and National Health systems whilst staying at the Craigard Hotel in Boat of Garten.
4. The Cairngorms National Park has an area of 3800 sq kms, a population of some 16 000 and 25% of Britain’s threatened species.
5. May 2006 sees Grantown’s sixth Strathspey in May festival, which exists to foster interest and participation in traditional music, song and dance. It follows hot on the heels of the 8<sup>th</sup> Spirit of Speyside Whisky Festival.
6. The Spey is a Special Area of Conservation because of its North Atlantic Salmon, Otters, Sea Lampreys and Freshwater Mussels.
7. The Cairngorm Funicular Railway has a track gauge of 2m and is 1950m long. Its maximum gradient is 22%.
8. Loch Pityoulish, near Aviemore, has traditionally had a Water Horse or Kelpie. Above the loch there are the remains of a Pictish Fort on Craig Chastell.
9. Boat of Garten refers to the Ferry at the Big Enclosure.
10. Jane, Duchess of Gordon, helped recruit for the newly created Gordon Highlanders. She did this in person on horseback at markets, wearing a regimental jacket and bonnet, and offering for recruits the irresistible bounty of a kiss and a guinea. A monument near moor of Alvie commemorates her.
11. The road to Cairngorm was opened in time for the 1961 skiing season – having being washed away just before it was due to be opened.
12. The Cairngorms have 52 summits over 900m.
13. Fans of the TV series Monarch of the Glen, which is filmed in and around the Badenoch area, are called Boglies.
14. Queen Victoria came within an ace of buying Ardverikie. The reason she chose Balmoral was because she visited Ardverikie in July and couldn’t stand the midges. Ardverikie is the ‘big hoose’ in Monarch of the Glen.
15. Tourism represents 80% of the economy of the Cairngorms National Park.
16. Waltzing Waters in Newtonmore pumps 8000 litres per minute for its water show.
17. Tradition holds that a battle was fought on the shores of Loch Insh, the defeated leader was one King Harold whose grave is on the side of Creag Righ Tharailt in the hills beside Dunachton. Dunachton means the Dun of Nechtan, the Pictish King.

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18. The first reference to Skiing on Coire Cas on Cairngorm is in the Scottish Ski Club yearbook of 1906.
19. Aviemore had a Post Office by 1745 and the Railway Station was opened in 1863.
20. The Funicular Railway on Cairngorm can operate in winds of up to 75 m.p.h.
21. The famous "Grant" Vibration fishing rod was invented by Alexander Grant of Battangorm, Carrbridge.
22. The Railway Line serving Inverness from Perth needed at places in Drumochter up to 25ft of gravel to stabilise it. The total line cost £8806 per mile in 1868.
23. The Ptarmigan Restaurant on Cairngorm is the highest Restaurant in the UK at 1097m or 3600 ft.
24. Kincardine Church, between Pityoulish and Boat of Garten is one of the very few existing churches to still have a leper's squint [window for watching the service from outside the church].
25. Reindeer were introduced into the Cairngorms in 1951 by Mikel Utsi. They had to endure a 1000 mile journey and several months of quarantine before this could happen.
26. The Bridge of Carr, Carrbridge was built in 1717 with unused Ministers stipend money as there was no local Minister at the time.
27. Robert Burns visited Aviemore - Aghaidh Mhor = the Big Pass – in September 1787 and described it as "a wild and romantic place"
28. The Loch Garten Osprey Hide was opened in 1959 and within 6 weeks had had 14000 visitors.
29. Getting from Aviemore to Cairngorm has always been a vexed subject. During the war there was a narrow gauge railway for timber. In the 60s and 70s a number of solutions were proposed – not least of which being a monorail.
30. During the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War Badenoch and Strathspey was home to a fascinating range of military and civilian units. In addition to several active Home Guard units there were the Mountain Artillery and Sikh Horse and Mule handlers, the Canadian Forest Corps and many Newfoundlanders of the Newfoundland Overseas Forestry Unit. Perhaps best remembered are the Norwegian Kompagnie Linge – the Norwegian Resistance Army - famous for their attack on the heavy water plant at Vermork. This was planned at Drumintoul Lodge, Rothiemurchus.
31. Helen Shaw from Danavert emigrated to Canada where her son became the first Prime Minister : Sir John Macdonald.
32. Shinty has been played at the Eilean, Newtonmore since 1877.
33. Castle Roy, Nethy Bridge is supposed to have a buried treasure – but it is not advised to find it since legend says it is infected with the plague.

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34. John Roy Stewart, born 1700 at Kincardine near Boat of Garten, commanded the Edinburgh Regiment at the Battle of Culloden. His battalion flew the Green Flag of Kincardine.
35. The well-known Cairngorm Mountain Rescue Team was first officially created in 1962.
36. Robert Grant, born in Grantown on Spey in 1814, wrote the first history of astronomy and catalogued 8500 stars.
37. The name Kingussie has nothing to do with royalty. The name is derived from the Gaelic and means the head of the pine wood.
38. Grantown on Spey was laid out as a planned village by Sir James Grant in 1765 –66.
39. Sandy Grant from Grantown emigrated to America where his son Ulysses S. Grant became President of the United States.
40. The River Spey is the fastest flowing river in the UK.
41. Strathspey has the largest remnants of the original Old Caledonian Forest.
42. Dalwhinnie is the highest distillery in Scotland at 326m 1073 ft.
43. The name Rothiemurchus is derived from Rathad Murchais meaning the stronghold of Murchais which was probably sited where The Doune stands today.
44. The Wolf of Badenoch was one of the area's best known characters. Alastair Mor mac an Righ , Earl of Buchan, was the son of Robert II of Scotland. He used Loch an Eilein Castle but is most famous for burning Elgin Cathedral in 1390.
45. Parts of the so-called Via Regia or King's Road of Alexander II are still visible in and around Tulloch where it is known as the Rathad an Righ.
46. The Cairngorms are the heavily eroded remnants of mountains created some 400 million years ago, at the same time as the Appalachians in the USA and mountains of Norway.
47. Insh Church is associated with Adamnan's bell. Adamnan was the biographer of St Columba.
48. Ruthven Barracks was the last muster point of the Jacobite forces after the battle of Culloden. Bonnie Prince Charlie sent them a message that each man should save himself the best he could.
49. Creag Dubh near Laggan is famous Cluny's Cage , one of the caves in which the Macpherson of Cluny spent 9 years after the '45 in hiding. It is immortalised in Robert Louis Stevenson's "Kidnapped".
50. James "Ossian" Macpherson of Balavil published a series of ostensible translations of Celtic epic ballads by the 3<sup>rd</sup> century bard Ossian. One of these – Fingal – was published in 1762/3. Its Italian translation was Napoleon's favourite reading. The name of another "Ossianic" heroine - Malvina – is the Spanish name for the Falkland Islands.