



Fascinating facts in and around Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park

1. Loch Lomond, broad and shallow at the southern end, deep and narrow at the northern end is the largest inland stretch of water in Britain. The Loch is 24 miles long and five miles wide and at its deepest point is some 600 feet deep.
2. On the Loch there are approximately 38 Islands, some of them inhabited and there is even a Hotel on one, Inchmurrin. Inchmurrin takes its name from the missionary St Mirrin who spent some time there. There is some debate about the number of islands on Loch Lomond, as there are varying arguments as to what constitutes an island. Some of the islands are "crannogs" – man made islands dating from the Bronze and Iron Ages.
3. Three of the most interesting crannogs are located close to Arden and Cameron House. The Cameron Point crannog has been carbon-dated to 2,000 years ago.
4. Loch Lomond must be one of the world's most famous Loch and has been much written about, both in song and verse.
5. The Loch is crossed by the Highland Boundary Fault. The line of the Highland Boundary Fault can be seen clearly from Conic Hill on the south-east shore, looking west across the islands of Inchcailloch, Torrinch, Creinch and Inchmurrin.
6. Some 200 species of birds and over 25% of Britain's wild plants have been recorded in the area.
7. The first commercial pleasure steamer was brought into service in 1827. The first regatta to take place was in 1827. Since then there has been a steady increase in the numbers and type of craft using the Loch for pleasure sport and recreation.
8. The Loch Lomond Rescue Boat (LLRB) was founded in 1977 from monies donated by an unknown sailor. The Boat is sited at the village of Luss and is manned from a pool of around 20 local volunteers.
9. Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park is the first National Park in Scotland, founded 24th July 2002. Stretching from Breadalbane to the Argyll Forest, the Park encompasses 720 sq miles of mountain, loch and glen.
10. John Muir (1838-1914), a Scot from Dunbar, was the first to see the need to care for wilderness and "invented" the idea of National Parks – starting with Yosemite in the US. He is credited with being the "father" of the science of "ecology". Little known in his native Scotland, two hundred sites in the US are named after John Muir including: Muir Woods, Muir Beach, Muir Glacier and the John Muir Trail through the High Sierra.
11. John Muir's vision was for "pristine lands without domesticated animals and free of people". Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park is a managed Park which balances the natural environment with the increasing demands of tourism and the economics of modern life.
12. The sculpture at Stonymollan roundabout is intended to mark the entrance to the National Park. Designed by Brian McArthur, an Ileck, it is made from locally sourced and sawn timber from a Balloch sawmill. The timbers chosen are Douglas Fir and Larch.

13. The winning design represents a timber crown surrounded by flying geese. Whilst the total cost of the project has been controversial, the bulk of the money was spent on improving the junction layout and providing tourist signage.
14. Scotland now has two National Parks – the other being The Cairngorms National Park established in September 2003.
15. Ben Lomond, at 3,194ft, is Scotland's most southerly Munro.
16. A Munro is a hill over 3,000 feet. Sir Hugh Munro compiled the list in 1891. He recorded 236. Thanks to advances in surveying methods there are currently 284 Munros and a further 511 'Tops' (peaks above 3000 feet which are part of a range or ridge but which are judged not to be a separate mountain). The first recorded Munro-bagger to climb all the 3000-foot peaks was the Rev. A. E. Robertson in 1901 and since then, the Scottish Mountaineering Club has recorded over 2800 intrepid souls who have 'completed'.
17. Other categories of hills include: Corbetts – over 2,500 feet but under 3,000, Grahams, known as "Elsies" – over 2,000ft but under 2,500 and Donalds which are lowland Grahams.
18. You'll take the high road There are many interpretations of this song, the most common is that two of Bonnie Prince Charlie's men were captured and left behind in Carlisle after the failed rising of 1745. One of the young soldiers was to be executed, the other released. The Spirit of the dead soldier travelling by the 'low road' would reach Scotland before his comrade, who would be struggling along the actual road over high, rugged country. It captures some of the romantic spirit of the lost cause of Bonnie Prince Charlie.
19. The song "Loch Lomond" performed by The Borderers is a popular tune with many Australian Gaelic and Folk music fans. During one of their performances, when they requested people to dance on stage, they actually broke the stage. At their next concert, a barrier was erected!
20. Luss, a beautiful village on the west shore of Loch Lomond, takes its name, some say, from "fleur de lys". Alternatively, it may simply mean "place of herbs or plants". Formerly known as "clachan dubh", or black village, because of the lack of light and the black slate roofs.
21. The village of Luss ("Glendarroch") on the shores of the loch was the location for the TV soap Take the High Road, and the loch itself was given the fictional name Loch Darroch for the purpose of the series.
22. The delightful village kirk at Luss is probably the third on the site. The present one was built as a memorial by James Colquhoun to his father, who along with five ghillies, drowned in the loch during a storm.
23. Today, Loch Lomond is well known for the exclusive Loch Lomond Golf Club which has hosted international events. The Barclays Scottish Open in 2007 takes place from Wednesday 11 July to Sunday 15 July.
24. Rosdhu House, "Black point" with its imposing coat of arms over the gateway, was once the seat of the Colquhoun family. The house, rebuilt in 1775, is now the clubhouse for the exclusive Loch Lomond Golf Club.
25. Rowena Ferguson, at the Coach House Coffee Shop designed a new tartan to commemorate the National Park. Called "Loch Lomond District" it takes its colours from the clans surrounding the loch and references to the colours of the vegetation in the park.
26. In The Adventures of Tintin cartoon book series, Captain Haddock's and Snowy's favourite drink is Scotch whisky of the brand Loch Lomond.

27. The area of Loch Lomond is close to the kingdoms of the Picts, Scots and Britons and was even invaded by the Vikings. In 1263 Magnus dragged his longboats across land from Loch Long and set forth destroying the communities around Loch Lomond.
28. The Clans in the area continued the spirit of rivalry, cheating and stealing. The main clans in the region were the MacGregors (of Rob Roy fame), the Buchanans, the Colquhouns and the MacFarlanes. Raids, cattle stealing, broken alliances and skirmishes led to the battle at Glen Fruin in 1603.
29. The Loch Lomond Youth Soccer Festival is now in its seventh year providing exciting international soccer for young teams from all around the world. The tournament began in the small picturesque town of Balloch, Loch Lomond. Due to its steady growth it has now moved to Stirling University. This is a FIFA affiliated festival.
30. Last year the Loch Lomond Food & Drink Festival ran from Friday 15th September through until Sunday 17th September 2006. The festival was a great success, with a busy programme throughout the 3 days. Dates for next year's festival will be announced soon. Loch Lomond Food & Drink Festival 2006 - Contact Tel: 01436 679882
31. Loch Lomond Shores opened its doors in 2002 and has since succeeded in providing a focal point for visitors to the southern end of Loch Lomond. Drumkinnon Tower is home to the Loch Lomond Aquarium, the first new Sea Life Centre to be built in the UK for 10 years. Attractions at the aquarium include touch pools, ray tanks and a tropical ocean tunnel. Its 26 displays contain mainly native Scottish species. Drumkinnon Tower also has a 350-seat cinema and a café.
32. The Loch Lomond Craft Association was formed in 1996 to foster creativity in craft work, offering training and business support to members and assistance in the promotion and marketing of craft work.
33. The Lomond Folk Festival is held annually during the month of July at Balloch on the shores of Loch Lomond. 2007 Festival Dates - Friday July 27th to Sunday July 29th.
34. Figures released by SE Dunbartonshire in February 2007 show that almost 1.1 million people visited Loch Lomond Shores during 2006, its most successful year to date since its launch in 2002. The figures also represent an increase of four per cent on the previous year, and 14 per cent since the Loch Lomond Aquarium opened in July 2006.
35. The Trossachs (Scottish Gaelic, Na Trosaichean) is a small woodland glen between Ben An to the north and Ben Venue to the south, with Loch Katrine to the west and Loch Achray to the east. However, the name is used generally to refer to the wider area of wooded glens and braes with quiet lochs, lying to the east of Ben Lomond.
36. The scenic charms of this area became popular when Walter Scott wrote of Scotland's romantic past with his 1810 poem *Lady of the Lake*, the lady herself being found on Loch Katrine. This was followed up by his historical novel *Rob Roy* romanticising the outlaw cattle thief Raibert Ruadh born by Loch Katrine and buried at nearby Balquhidder.
37. The effect of this romantic literature was to draw tourists to the area and make the Trossachs Hotel well known. There is a cluster of film locations associated with the 1959 version of *The 39 Steps*, notably around Balquhidder as well as Loch Lubnaig and also near the very top of the Duke's Pass. Further north, the spectacular Falls of Dochart at Killin are also in the film. They turn up again in *Casino Royale* (1967) with its galaxy of stars including Peter Sellers, Ursula Andress, David Niven, Orson Welles and even Ronnie Corbett.

38. One of TV's best loved medical series, Dr Finlay's Casebook (1962-1971) featured the experiences of Dr Alan Finlay (Bill Simpson), working in a country medical practice under the tutelage of the veteran Dr Cameron (Andrew Cruickshank) in the fictional Scottish village of Tannochbrae in the late 1920s. In reality, Tannochbrae was the village of Callander.
39. Loch Katrine changed in 1859 when a dam was built at the eastern end and connecting aqueducts built to bring a new main water supply to Glasgow. Queen Victoria had a holiday house built overlooking the loch.
40. The steamer SS Sir Walter Scott, from 1900, is still operating on Loch Katrine, giving visitors a delightful way to enjoy the scenery while adding to the picturesque view.
41. Scotland's only lake, the Lake of Menteith, lies about 6 miles to the south east of the glen, on the edge of the Trossachs area.
42. In Aberfoyle the Poker Tree is an oak tree close to the main crossroads at the west end of the village, from which is hung a poker. This dates back to an incident in Sir Walter Scott's novel Rob Roy in which Bailie Nichol Jarvie makes use of a poker in a fight with Highlanders in an Aberfoyle inn.
43. The Rev Robert Kirk (1641-1692) was a brilliant scholar though a man of strange habits! While minister of the church at Aberfoyle, he took to wandering about the nearby Doon Hill late at night, sometimes lying down with his ear to the ground and murmuring as if in conversation. He then wrote a book called 'The Secret Commonwealth of Elves, Fauns and Fairies' at a time when the church (unsurprisingly) frowned on such dabblings. Then, in 1692, he was found dead in his nightshirt on the hill. Some say he was trapped in Fairyland. There's a signposted trail on the Doon Hill today. But watch out for the tall pine on top. Rumour is that it's the minister, changed by the little folk.
44. Situated only a mile north of Aberfoyle, the David Marshall Lodge is the visitor centre for the Queen Elizabeth Forest Park. The Park has Orienteering routes and walks and visitors can watch birds of prey in the forest on the webcam monitors in the lodge.
45. Sir Walter Scott published "The Lady of the Lake" in 1810 and tourism in the Trossachs increased by 500% overnight. As a southern gateway to the area, Aberfoyle was transformed during the 1800s into a desirable Victorian resort. In 1882 it became the terminus of a branch railway specifically intended to service the tourist trade. In 1886 its attraction was increased further when "The Duke's Road" was built to connect Aberfoyle with Loch Achray to the north and form a link with the road into the Trossachs from Callander.
46. Despite the new-found wealth from tourism slate mining remained important. By the end of the 1800s the four quarries to the north west of Aberfoyle together comprised Scotland's third largest source of slates, with 1.4 million being produced each year.
47. The high point of the industry came in the 1930s when slate from Aberfoyle was used for the billiard tables on the luxury liner Queen Mary. But demand for slate declined and the railway to the quarries was closed in 1947, to be followed by closure of the quarries themselves in 1958.
48. The name Brig o'Turk comes from Scottish Gaelic and means "Bridge of the pig"; "tuirc" meaning pig or boar.
49. Balloch became an important gateway to Loch Lomond during the 1800s, when many steamers operated on the loch. In 1850 the railway reached Balloch, and continued right to a station built alongside the newly completed Balloch Pier on the loch.
50. The country park at Balloch, at the southern end of Loch Lomond, has a visitor centre in Balloch Castle. The original castle which had been built in 1238 by the Earls of Lennox (before they built a more secure stronghold on Inchmurrin Island on the loch). The country park itself is 200 acres of

woodland, parkland and ornamental gardens with pathways which go down to the shores of Loch Lomond. There are lots of corners for quiet picnics and the visitor centre has a small exhibition on the plants and animals which can be seen in the area. The park is particularly attractive in the spring when the large numbers of rhododendrons and azaleas are in bloom.

51. The estate of Buchanan Castle stretched for 100,000 acres and was the seat of the Duke of Montrose until the end of the 17c. Used as a military hospital during WW2 it was also the scene of Rudolph Hess' interrogation after landing in Scotland. The roof of the castle was removed in 1970.
52. The name "Lomond" has a number of possible sources. Possibly Brythonic (Welsh) meaning "beacon" or perhaps from Scottish Gaelic "leamhan" meaning "elm trees". This would account for the River Leven, which flows from Loch Lomond to the Clyde. A text from 1535 refers to the loch as "Levin".
53. The Maid of the Loch is the last paddle steamer to be built in Britain and is currently undergoing a major re-fit thanks to enthusiastic volunteers.
54. Opened in 1980 and stretching 95 miles from Milngavie to Fort William, the West Highland Way follows the eastern shores of Loch Lomond passing Ben Lomond on the way.
55. Timber from the area around Loch Lomond was felled for the building of both Paisley Abbey and Glasgow Cathedral.
56. Drymen – In the 1700s Drymen found itself on the route of the military road from Stirling to Dumbarton. The Clachan Inn, on a corner of The Square, dates back to this period and carries signs proclaiming that it was first licensed in 1734.
57. Inchmurrin is the largest of the islands in Loch Lomond. The name means "the island of the spears" as it was used for hunting. The castle dates from the late 14c.
58. Fraoch Eilean, "heather island", is said to have been a prison colony for wives who talked too much and failed to do as they were told.
59. Loch Lomond Seaplanes have begun to use Balloch Pier for some of their operations, allowing visitors to see much of Scotland from a very different perspective and use the seaplane's unique ability to drop in on the remotest of island, coastal or lochside locations.