

Memorable MG Routes

Places to visit – check opening times

Drumochter Pass

It's the main mountain pass between the northern and southern central Scottish Highlands on the A9 to Inverness.

Glen Roy – an Ice Age Monument

Horizontal lines across the sides of the hills are a natural feature which had puzzled people for centuries but are now explained at a viewpoint at the head of the glen.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glen_Roy
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1A3Pg2TXKEU>

Commando Museum

A small room in the Spean Bridge Hotel records the daring wartime exploits of the elite force known as the 'Commandos' set up in 1940 who trained at Achnacarry nearby.

Tel: 0800 6199462

<http://commando.speanbridgehotel.co.uk/index.html>

Postcode: PH34 4ES

Commando Memorial

On the A82 a mile north of Spean Bridge is the Commando Memorial depicting the three soldiers looking out over Leanachan Forest to Aonach Mor and Ben Nevis.

www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk/speanbridge/commando/index.html

Eilean Donan Castle

A 13th century castle restored in the 19th century on a promontory of Loch Duich linked to the shore by an arched causeway. It's one of the most photographed castles in Scotland.

Tel: 01599 555202

<http://www.eileandonancastle.com/>

Postcode: IV40 8DX

Glenelg ferry

Travel to Skye the traditional way on the Glenachulish, the last manually operated turntable car ferry in Scotland.

<http://www.skyeferry.co.uk/index.html>

Glenelg brochs

Two of the best-preserved brochs (Dun Telve and Dun Troddan) on mainland Scotland.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glenelg,_Highland

Grid reference: NG 829 172

Loch Brittle Bay

A remote and beautiful location for a picnic with views out to sea and a view inland of the Cuillin ridge.

Grid reference: NG 410 204



A route through the Northwest Highlands to Skye

As you drive up through the impressive Drumochter Pass (1,516ft/462m) on the A9, the sign for Dalwhinnie is a welcome sight. There you turn off on to the A889 and pass through the village with its white distillery building and then on over the hills and on winding roads through the glens via Spean Bridge, Invergarry and Glen Shiel to Skye.

As this route begins on the A9 north of Perth it's likely you will have travelled some distance beforehand so **two places to take a break and enjoy some refreshment** are worth noting. The first is the House of Bruar, an extraordinary independent retail success story alongside the A9 near Blair Atholl where you can relax in their café for snacks or lunch and then explore their comprehensive range of good quality Scottish knitwear and stylish country clothing. The second place for a break is on a much smaller scale – the **Pottery Coffee Shop** at Laggan Bridge just over the hill from Dalwhinnie.

Shortly after turning left at the T-junction at Laggan Bridge you pass the location for the popular TV series **Monarch of the Glen** by Loch Laggan. The road then sweeps alongside the loch with the massive sight of Creag Meagaidh up on the right and then down to **Roy Bridge** with the West Highland railway in a gorge on the left. Here is a very worthwhile diversion.

Turning right near the centre of Roy Bridge you **head out of the village up into Glen Roy** where you see a natural feature which had puzzled people for centuries – three horizontal lines across the sides of the hills. Gaelic legend had claimed they were roads created by the Celtic warrior Fingal for hunting, but now we know that as the Ice Age ended, over 10,000 years ago, this glen was filled by a huge loch. The "Parallel Roads of Glen Roy" are the former shorelines of the loch at various water levels over centuries until an ice blockage at the bottom of the glen near Roy Bridge finally gave way and the loch drained down.

From Roy Bridge the route runs down to **Spean Bridge** on the A82 from Fort

William to Inverness, the main link across the northwest Highlands. There is a woollen mill shop and nearby a small **Commando Museum** in a room in the Spean Bridge Hotel which records the daring exploits of the elite force known as the 'Commandos' set up in 1940, who trained nearby. Just above the village on the A82 is the Commando Memorial.

The **route heads northeast up the Great Glen** on the A82 which soon runs alongside Loch Lochy with the high mountains which tumble down from well over 3,000ft to the opposite side of the loch. You get a sense of how large this major geological fault is as it stretches across the Highlands. It's a very busy route carrying high traffic volumes with a mixture of vehicles and with many tourists. There are very few safe passing places and sadly it's a particularly dangerous road so take great care.

Soon you reach the **Laggan swing bridge** which crosses a very short stretch of canal which links Loch Lochy to Loch Oich and after a brief run alongside the loch you soon descend a sweeping hill to a T-junction in Invergarry where there is a sharp left turn to Kyle of Lochalsh on the A87. A service station with fuel is just 300 yards beyond the junction if you stay on the A82 – do ensure your tank is topped up before the next long and remote leg to Skye, well over an hour away.

Once you leave the village boundary, the road begins a **long 5 mile (8km) climb to a truly spectacular viewpoint**. With a halt here you are rewarded with a very long view over Glen Garry, with its lochs part of a major hydropower scheme completed in the mid-1950s. In the distance are the eastern limits of the Rough Bounds of Knoydart – a very remote area indeed. An excursion up this wild glen to Kinloch Hourn is a very enjoyable,



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Safety First!

1

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Tea shops, pubs & hotels

House of Bruar

It's an extraordinary independent retail success story, nine miles north of Pitlochry alongside the A9 near Blair Atholl. It's an excellent place with a café for snacks or lunch together with an extensive range of country clothing.

Tel: 01796 483390

<http://www.houseofbruar.com/>

Postcode: PH18 5TW

The Pottery Coffee Shop

Cakes, tea and coffee together with a selection of local knitwear and other tempting items are on offer.

Tel: 01528 544231

<http://www.potterybunkhouse.co.uk/coffee-shop.asp>

Postcode: PH20 1BT

Glengarry Castle Hotel

A comfortable country house hotel with a jewel of a setting on the shores of Loch Oich and an acknowledged reputation for friendly Highland hospitality.

Tel: 01809 501254

<http://www.glengarry.net/index.php>

Postcode: PH35 4HW

Cluanie Inn

A 13 bedroom hotel with a choice of accommodation with morning coffee, lunch and afternoon tea.

Tel: 01320 340238

<http://www.cluanieinn.com/>

Postcode: IV63 7YW

Carron Restaurant, Pottery & Gallery

A family run restaurant situated on the south shore of Loch Carron near Dornie.

Tel: 01520 722321

www.carronrestaurant.com

Postcode: IV54 8YX

Sligachan Hotel

Stunning views of the Cuillin, good bar lunches and dinners plus accommodation.

Tel: 01478 650 204

<http://www.sligachan.co.uk/sligachan-hotel.php>

Postcode: IV47 8SW

Route data

Route via Dalwhinnie, Laggan Bridge, Spean Bridge, Invergarry, Glen Shiel, Kyle and on to Skye ending at the Sligachan Hotel is 146 miles excluding the off route visits and stops. The approximate driving time is 3.5 hrs. Full route details and additional information are available at www.v8register.net/mmgr/mmgr.htm



gentle drive along a narrow single track road with wonderful views of many mountains, but do allow at least two hours for the adventure.

From the viewpoint you set off for the **Cluanie dam**, part of another very large hydro project completed in the mid-1950s, which you reach shortly after descending a hill to a T-junction where you join the A887 road from Invermoriston. From there the road is good with long sweeping bends and you may be tempted to drive at speed in your MG but take care, particularly at dawn or near dusk, as deer from the hills can nonchalantly stroll out over the road or often dash across. Their colouring is just about a perfect match for the heather and bracken alongside the road, so take real care as hitting a deer, even a small creature, will do very serious damage to your car and could very easily injure occupants too.

The route through to Glen Shiel provides wide views of the mountains on either side of Loch Cluanie and midway there is a welcome inn for refreshment – the **Cluanie Inn**. From this point the road begins a long **descent down Glen Shiel** to Loch Duich. If you should do this route in reverse then the view as you leave Loch Duich and begin the long climb leaves you perplexed as to where a major road could find a way through the mountains ahead. But the road threads its way and gradually all is revealed! At the start of the descent the views are dominated by the long South Glen Shiel Ridge and on the northern side a range of mountains known as the Five Sisters.

Nearing the lower end of the descent **there is a choice of roads to Skye** – either continuing on the A87 to Kyle of Lochalsh and over the new Skye Bridge to Skye or you can take the old route to Skye via the Glenelg ferry with the bonus you can visit two fascinating ancient structures known as **brochs**. After passing Shiel Bridge Shop and a Gleaner Fuel Service Station, road signs indicate a left turn for Glenelg and the ferry.

The route to Glenelg is an alpine-style mountain pass, constructed in 1815, which will take 30 minutes. From sea level at Shiel Bridge, it twists and turns towards the

summit of Mam Ratagan before making a more gradual descent. As you pass the village of Glenelg you will soon see the **Kylerhea narrows**, a very narrow stretch of water (1,790ft or 550m wide) between the mainland and Skye, with very strong tidal streams. It has been a crossing point for hundreds of years particularly for the drovers from the Western Isles.

A ferry still operates today – **the Skye Ferry** - which is the last working example of a turntable ferry of this kind left in Scotland. It's run by the local community and is maintained as a "Scottish national treasure"! Seeing the ferry snake across the narrows dealing with the racing tidal flows is quite a sight only topped by sailing across with your car!

A more rapid route to Skye is to drive straight on at Shiel Bridge heading for Dornie and Kyle of Lochalsh but few will be able to pass one of the most iconic images of Scotland, **Eilean Donan castle**. Situated on an island at the point where three sea lochs meet, it is little wonder that the castle is now one of the most visited and important attractions in the Highlands.

Your first view of Skye and the Cuillin mountain range that dominates the skyline is stunning. Pulling onto a layby and looking down Loch Duich towards the new Skye Bridge is an impressive sight you will remember for many years. As soon as you leave Kyle the sight of the road over the **elegant Skye Bridge** rises before you with views over to the Applecross peninsula to the north on the righthand side. Beyond the bridge you head off along a weaving coastal route by Broadford to the Sligachan Hotel. Just before Broadford, the single track road from the Glenelg ferry joins at a minor junction.

The Sligachan Hotel is a welcome sight located on a sweeping righthand bend. Its bar has refreshments throughout the day and the hotel offers overnight accommodation. Behind the hotel are magnificent views of the Cuillin. Exploring Skye is beyond the scope of this route but visiting the other side of the Cuillin range takes you to Glen Brittle and to what is a magical place for a picnic on a pleasant day – **Loch Brittle Bay** – with views out to the islands of Rum and Canna.

This is surely one of the most memorable MG routes and a joy to drive in an MG.