

## MMGR08 – a route through Wild Assynt and to the North



### Wild Assynt and the North

Assynt is a remote and wild landscape north of Ullapool in the North West Highlands with many spectacular views across wild moorland to remarkable mountains like Quinag, Canisp and Suilven (above). Viewed from different vantage points, groups of these mountains can seem mysterious and weirdly-shaped as they peer above the skyline. Always vast, this landscape can change - sometimes intimidating but then with a weather change, it can take on a mantle of breathtaking beauty. The area has some of the oldest rocks in Europe like Gneiss, around 3,000 million years old, but there is also limestone, unusual for the Highlands.

**After 10 miles (16km) heading north on the long climb out of Ullapool** on the A835, you have the option of a left turn to the west for Achiltibuie on a good single track road. It runs below Cul Beg and Stac Polliadh and has views of the





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Summer Isles just off the north side of the approach to Loch Broom. In earlier times the islands were used by local crofters as summer grazing for their sheep.

**Stac Pollaidh** is often anglicised to Stack Polly. As it is only just over 2,000 feet with ease of access from a road, it has become a very popular peak to climb and the views out to the Summer Isles are wonderful.

From **Ledmore junction** the route follows the A837 through one of the few areas in the Highlands where there are large areas of exposed Limestone. This has resulted in the presence of numerous cave systems including some of the largest underground networks in Scotland.



The famous **Bone Caves**, 5 miles (8km) south of Inchnadamph, are well worth visiting (see below). The limestone is typically covered in a green, grassy sward with a rich flora that includes mountain avens, yellow saxifrage, and lady's mantle. This is good grazing land and the remains of many shielings — huts that

were used by people tending their animals during the summer — can be seen along the valley up to the caves.



At **Inchnadamph** there is a hotel popular with fishing enthusiasts and a geology study centre and hostel at the foot of a beautiful glen leading to the quartzite white capped tops of Conival and Ben More Assynt. Just beyond Inchnadamph there is a

junction — to the right the A894 road to Kylesku and the north and straight on to the fishing port of Lochinver, on the A895.



**Kylesku** is a small, remote fishing hamlet where Loch Glencoul and Loch Gleann Dubh join to form a narrow sea passage. Until 1984 a ferry provided an





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the ferry crossing. Now by-passed by the main road carried over the bridge, the **Kylesku Hotel** overlooks the slipway. Nearby are Eas a' Chual Aluinn, Britain's essential crossing of the narrows for access to the north. The village stretches back along the road from the slipway that used to be the southern end of highest waterfall and the Kerrachar Gardens. Just south of Kylesku is Unapool with the Memories of Childhood Museum which has exhibitions, a tearoom and a craft shop.

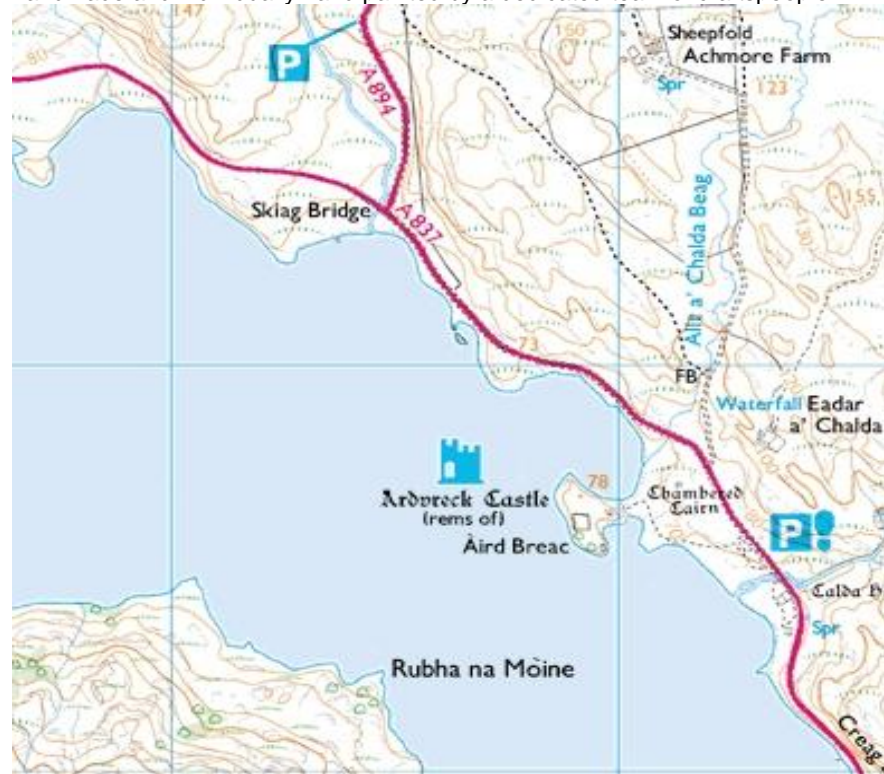
The **Kylesku Bridge** is a distinctively curved award-winning concrete box girder bridge that crosses the narrows at high level. The bridge is your route for further touring to the north via the A838 to Durness and Tongue at the top of mainland Scotland. Returning to the junction on the A837, head north to Lochinver.



**Ardvreck Castle**, a ruined castle dating from the 16th century, stands on a rocky promontory jutting out into Loch Assynt. The ruins are just north of Inchnadamph and can be reached by driving along the A837 which follows the north shore of Loch Assynt from the village of Inchnadamph. Care should be taken when walking around the site as falling masonry is a possible danger.

**Lochinver** is the second largest fishing port in Scotland, frequented by European fishermen mainly from Spain and France. The quiet village is welcoming nonetheless with the **Lochinver Larder** a good place for refreshment. There is a circular route on narrow roads via Stoer and Drumbeg along the coast round to Kylesku which has views over Eddrachillis Bay and north to the distant village of Scourie.

The **Highland Stoneware pottery** at Lochinver is well worth a visit. Since 1974 it has built an international reputation for quality and innovation. Each piece is handmade and individually hand painted by a dedicated team of craftspeople in



Lochinver, so no two pieces are the same. They have another pottery and shop in Ullapool.



Above: Lochinver village



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Retrace the route to the busy fishing town of Ullapool with its shops, an excellent museum, hotels, B&Bs and a petrol station. The small “Tea by the Sea” café on the seafront is an enjoyable visit.



Above: CalMac ferry to the outer islands from Ullapool.

The OS Landranger map for the MMGR08 route is:  
**15 Loch Assynt** (Lochinver & Kylesku) 1:50,000 (1.25 inches to 1 mile)



Above: the enjoyable Tea by the Sea café.

The return route to Inverness and the A9 from Ullapool is up the long hill to Braemore Junction. From there the next sight on the A835 is the remote Aultguish Inn below the Glasgarnoch dam, and then it is on to Garve and Inverness for the A9 south.





**Take care with deer crossing roads**, particularly at dawn, dusk and at night – they are difficult to see and are very large objects for a collision.



**On single track roads** do pull over into a passing place to give way to vehicles behind you – it's a well-established courtesy in the Highlands