

Cairndow, Inverary and Oban

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Inveraray, Scotland, United Kingdom
Friday, May 20, 2016

I sit beside the fire and think of people long ago and people that will see a world that I shall never know - J.R.R. Tolkien

Wednesday 18th of May 2016

After spending some more time in Stirling this morning inspecting the William Wallace monument - dedicated to the Scottish hero - we headed towards the Highlands.

The countryside remained fairly "English looking" until we got to Loch Lomond and had lunch just south of Firken Head. The view was Firken fantastic. The landscape was now decidedly Scottish here onwards - bald hills with sharp slopes and escarpments leading down to waters of a loch - culminating with a spectacular view at Rest and be Thankful which is not too far from Cairndow, the birthplace of this arm of the McArthur family. We explored Cairndow and the cemetery at Kilmorich church where we found a number of graves of family ancestors dating from the late 1700s. Further south on Loch Fyne we found another McArthur family history location at Strachur, which now consists of only a church and a derelict building next door. It was quite moving being at the place where my ancestors lived and worked, probably for hundreds of years.

We turned around to travel down the other side of Loch Fyne to Inverary. The weather was now very Scottish - periods of rain interspersed with patches of sunlight. Our accommodation was a bit further on at Furnace in a quirky little B&B right on Loch Fyne hosted by Hillary - who was also quirky but very friendly.

We travelled back to Inverary to have tea at The George Hotel, established in 1776.

Rain, a little sunshine, very cool day. 125 miles.

Thursday 19th of May 2016

We started the day with another cooked breakfast - of course - and the best one so far. The weather was terrible. Raining, misty and cold. Luckily we got some good photographs yesterday in some sunny breaks.

First of all, we toured Inverary Castle, which was different from all other castles toured so far in that it was never a defensive castle. It is home to the Duke of Argyll, the Chieftan of Clan Campbell. McArthurs are listed as a member clan of the Campbells, but I seem to recall reading that the McArthurs split from the Campbells in the 1800s - I'll have to check with my mum on that point. Anyway, the castle is an ostentatious display of wealth by the Campbells and was very interesting. Anna really enjoyed this as castle as it was the location of a Downton Abbey episode

We headed off to Oban, which is north of Inverary on the coast past Loch Awe, another McArthur family ancestral area. We found Cladich, a tiny village where a number of my ancestors lived in a pretty, secluded valley.

The rain kept up the entire time we were at Oban, a picturesque fishing town on the west coast. This is the main ferry port to various islands off the coast and it was pretty busy when we visited. We took refuge from the weather in a pub to have some tea and scones and warm up a bit. We headed back to Cairndow to look for another cemetery with McArthur graves mentioned in my mother's history document on the McArthurs. By now it was pouring rain, but as they say, there is no bad weather in Scotland - just inappropriate clothing.

Back to Inverary for tea at an Indian restaurant before retiring to Furnace where we chatted with our host Hilliary before retiring to our comfortable bed.

Cold and raining. 131 miles.

Comments

Is that a photo with dad using an umbrella??!

— From Steph, on May 20, 2016 at 11:52PM

The Highlands look like the west of Ireland, home of Clan Brennan. Starkly beautiful, and often wet. I'm so jealous of your adventures in Europe. But, if you can't beat 'em, join 'em. I've decided to join Fab in Paris in late October for a week in the City of Light, then 8-10 days driving round selected bits of France. Did anyone ever see "The Odd Couple"? I'll be Oscar. Keep up the great blog- I'm lovin' it

— From John Brennan, on May 21, 2016 at 08:30AM

Yes Steph. Me using a damn umbrella.

John, you'll make a great Oscar. Phil will make a pretty good Felix 🐱🐱. Sounds great and wish we could come too.

— From Brad McArthur, on May 21, 2016 at 04:01PM

Oban looks beautiful - my Dad's relatives live in Oban - I remember ringing them from Edinburgh and did not understand one word of the conversation - such fun and lovely people. Enjoying the blog - great work. Tough job but somebody has to do it 🐱🐱

— From badminton65, on May 22, 2016 at 05:17AM

Great photos and informative commentary, Brad it looks like you will be able to get a job with Lonely Planet when you are ready to change jobs!! Good to see that there are some photos with both of you in the shot - tripod or other tourists helping out? Looking forward to Brad and Anna's Guide Book to the Best Pubs in the UK. Enjoy the rest of your holiday.

— From Brad Dummett, on May 23, 2016 at 08:08AM

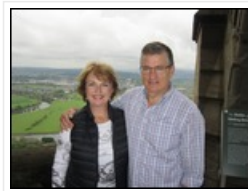
I felt the same way when visiting the ancestral homeland. To be in the environment that partly shaped my genes. It was a very moving experience. Looking around at the locals to see if their faces looked familiar and wondering if they were distant relatives.

— From Des, on May 23, 2016 at 10:33AM

Pictures & Video



Wallace Monument



Us at the top of William
Wallace Monument
Comments!



Lunch next to Loch Lomond



Loch Lomond



Road towards Cairndow



Rest and Be Thankful



Rest and be Thankful
Comments!



Us at Rest and Be Thankful



Kilmorich Church, Cairndow



Kilmorich Church,
Cairndow



Kilmorich Church, Cairndow
Story and comments!



Stage Coach Hotel,
Cairndow



Cairndow



St. Catherines on Loch
Fyne



Looking Across Loch Fyne
from St. Catherines



Strachur



Claddich



Inverary near sunset across
Loch Fyne
Story and comments!



Breakfast at Furnace



Inverary Castle
Story!



Inverary Castle



Dining room Inverary Castle



The Armoury Hall, Inverary
Castle



The McArthur Bedroom,
Inverary Castle



View from McArthur
Bedroom



Loch Fyne Cemetary



Loch Fyne Cemetary



The old cemetary near Loch
Fyne Oyster Bar
Story!



Loch Long



Oban



Wallace Monument

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Us at the top of William Wallace Monument

Comments:

Well done Brad!. I have a fear of heights and I could not get past the second (first) level. It is way way scary. Tiny narrow medieval stone stairs, no modern supports, no hand-rail, no lighting, scary views - I bailed! Glad that you got to enjoy the view. My anxiety just took over.

— From Craig McArthur, on May 20, 2016 at 09:42PM

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Lunch next to Loch Lomond

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Loch Lomond

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Road towards Cairndow

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Rest and Be Thankful

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Rest and be Thankful

Comments:

Your Grandparents ashes are spread here. Bev and Graham did that on their first visit to the UK. An absolutely wonderful location, close to Cladic(h) from where they married prior to their emigration to Australia.

— From Craig McArthur, on May 20, 2016 at 08:46PM

The ashes were spread slightly to the right of the photo. In, what, is now, a bunch of conifers. I am happy in a return to the earth that is in such a beautiful place.

— From Craig McArthur, on May 20, 2016 at 08:52PM

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Us at Rest and Be Thankful

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Killmorich Church, Cairndow

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Kilmorich Church, Cairndow

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Killmorich Church, Cairndow

Many graves of McArthurs in the grounds.

Comments:

I found it odd, McArthur is not a common surname in Australia (nor London, where I have been for a while) but to see a cemetery with many (what 15 - 20%) of the graves have the name McArthur on them was surreal. How much does my name mean and what does the history of it mean to a 21st Century person mean?.

From my reaction, obviously something.

— From Craig McArthur, on May 20, 2016 at 09:27PM

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Stage Coach Hotel, Cairndow

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Cairndow

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St. Catherines on Loch Fyne

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Looking Across Loch Fyne from St. Catherines

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Strachur

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Claddich

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Inverary near sunset across Loch Fyne

About the only sun we saw today.

Comments:

Peaceful!

— From Craig McArthur, on May 20, 2016 at 09:45PM

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Breakfast at Furnace

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Inverary Castle

Home of the Chietan of the Campbell Clan

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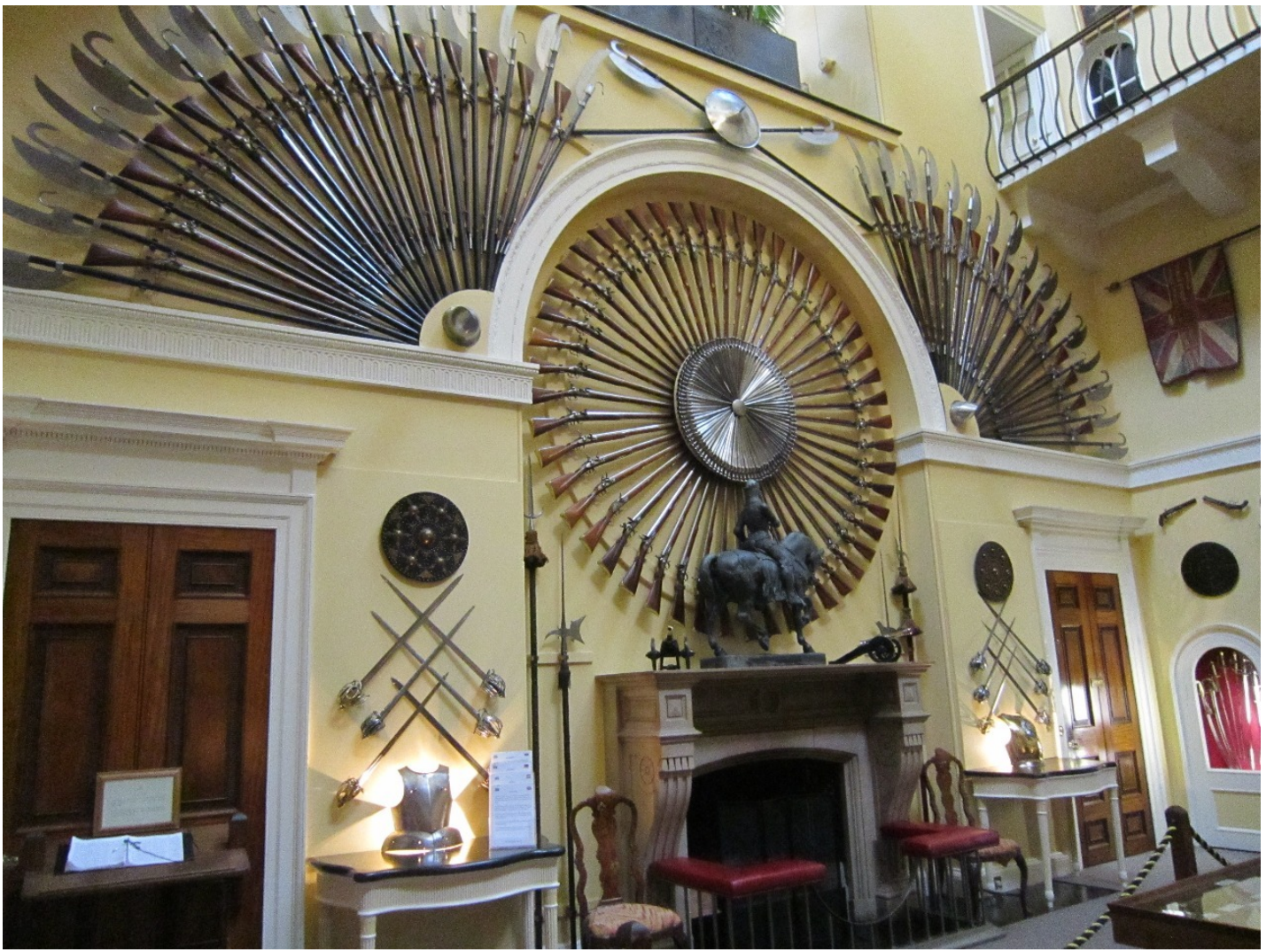
Inverary Castle

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Dining room Inverary Castle

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The Armoury Hall, Inverary Castle

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The McArthur Bedroom, Inverary Castle

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View from McArthur Bedroom

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Loch Fyne Cemetary

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Loch Fyne Cemetary

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The old cemetery near Loch Fyne Oyster Bar

More McArthur graves here.

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Loch Long

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Oban

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