



A PILGRIMAGE TO IONA

WITH OTHER HIGHLIGHTS OF SCOTLAND

AUGUST 26 – SEPTEMBER 8, 2026

ORGANIZED BY

THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GREENWICH

Participants

Marth Alff

Tom Alff

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Mona Deming

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Christine Massaro

Seth Weeldreyer

Caroline Worra

Margaret Worra



God of the journey, as we travel on
alert us to the things that matter
and open our eyes to every sign of your presence.
Give us a sense of direction, or at least a sense of purpose,
a sense of wonder, a sense that, in everything,
you are walking with us step by step,
gently leading us to the heart of things.

“Pilgrim” from *A Day without Rain* by Enya

Pilgrim, how you journey
On the road you chose
To find out why the winds die
And where the stories go.

All days come from one day
That much you must know,
You cannot change what's over
But only where you go.

One way leads to diamonds,
One way leads to gold,
Another leads you only
To everything you're told.

In your heart you wonder
Which of these is true;
The road that leads to nowhere,
The road that leads to you.
Will you find the answer
In all you say and do?
Will you find the answer ... In you?

Each heart is a pilgrim,
Each one wants to know
The reason why the winds die
And where the stories go.

Pilgrim, in your journey
You may travel far,
For pilgrim it's a long way
To find out who you are...

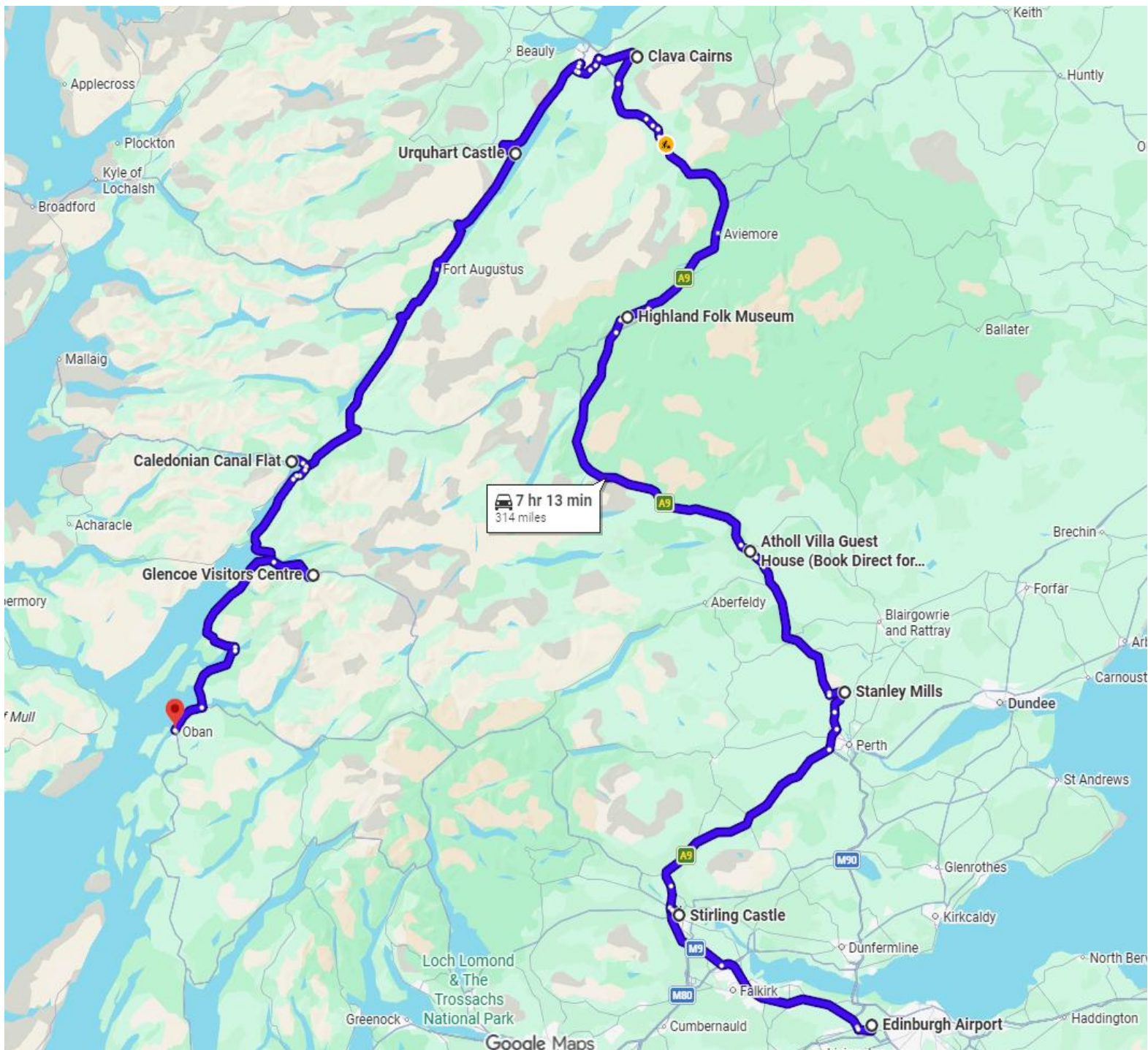
Pilgrim, it's a long way
To find out who you are...
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To find out who you are...

“Pilgrimage” by Brian Woodcock

The weekly pilgrimage around the island is part of the life of the Iona Community, and also of its welcome to all who come to Iona. A crowd of people setting off from the grounds of the Iona Abbey for a challenging, reflective walk across the island. Pausing at particular places to prayerfully consider the history of the island or the course of their own lives. Finishing, appropriately, in the ancient graveyard chapel: place of resurrections and new beginnings. Finding they have come closer to fellow travelers, to the natural environment, to themselves; maybe to God. Pilgrimage is about individual quest and, sometimes painful, growth, within the context of shared humanity.

Coming to Iona is a pilgrimage in itself, of course. Pilgrims have been doing so for hundreds of years. And to other places of spiritual significance: Rome, Lourdes, Santiago de Compostela ... Pilgrimage is certainly no invention of the Iona Community!

Nor of Christianity! Most faiths have pilgrimage traditions. I have seen countless groups of Hindu pilgrims trudging along South Indian roads: strange to Western eyes perhaps, yet humbling in their unashamed spirituality. I have heard a young Muslim tell a Lent group in Bristol how he accompanied his mother to Mecca even though he had no faith himself; and how, as he waited for her to complete the Hajj, something deep moved within him and turned his life around. You could have heard a pin drop as he spoke. We were hearing the parable of the prodigal.



Itinerary route Thursday, August 27 – Friday, August 28

Thursday, August 27

Arrive in Edinburgh 8:30 am. Meet other participants who traveled a day earlier. Pick up rental van and car for our group at the Edinburgh airport. Depart by 10:00 am.

~ 45 minutes ~

Stirling Castle

Situated on a volcanic outcrop guarding the lowest crossing point of the River Forth, Stirling Castle is a great symbol of Scottish Independence and a source of enduring national pride. The castle's long, turbulent history is associated with great figures from Scotland's past, such as William Wallace, Robert the Bruce and Mary Queen of Scots. It has seen many royal dramas and witnessed the lives and deaths of almost every Scottish monarch up to the Union of the Crowns in 1603.

The legacy of Stirling's long history is a complex monument of diverse buildings and spaces. At its heart lies the Inner Close, around which are ranged the most important buildings – the King's Old Building (built for James IV in 1496), the Great Hall (James IV around 1503), the Palace (James V around 1540) and the Chapel Royal (James VI in 1594). Around the Outer Close are the Great Kitchens (early 16th century) and later Army buildings. The Nether Bailey occupies the lowest part of the castle rock. It houses 19th-century powder magazines. The Outer Defences (Queen Anne around 1710) and Forework (James IV around 1500) guard the main entrance from the town.

Stirling Castle is first mentioned around 1110, in Alexander I's reign; he died here in 1124. Throughout the Wars of Independence with England (1296–1356), Stirling was hotly fought over, changing hands frequently. Bloody battles were fought in its shadow – Wallace's great victory over Edward I at Stirling Bridge (1297), and Bruce's decisive encounter with Edward II at Bannockburn (1314). Bruce then destroyed the castle to prevent it falling into enemy hands again.

Stirling was the favoured residence of most of Scotland's later medieval monarchs. Most contributed to its impressive architecture. In James IV's reign (1488–1513), Scotland was increasingly receptive to Classical ideas spreading across Europe from Renaissance Italy. James spent much time and money making the castle fit for a European monarch, chiefly to impress his queen, Margaret Tudor, daughter of Henry VII of England. His legacy was continued by his son, James V, equally determined to impress his second bride, Queen Mary of Guise. Their daughter, Mary Queen of Scots, was crowned here in 1543, and Mary Queen of Scots' own son, the future James VI, was baptised here in 1566. The celebrations culminated in a fireworks display on the Esplanade, the first recorded use in Scotland.

Lunch stop at a Tesco / grocery store near Stirling

~ 45 minutes ~

Stanley Mills

Stanley Mills is one of the best-preserved relics of the Industrial Revolution of the late 1700s. The cotton mill harnessed water power to produce textiles for 200 years. Local merchants set up the mill with support from the English cotton baron Richard Arkwright. Arkwright is world-famous as a pioneer of technical innovation in machinery and for the 'factory system'. This, above all else, brought social and economic change to Scotland and much of the world. Stanley Mills was built in

1786 at a hairpin bend in the River Tay – a spot where immense water power was available. By the late 1700s, Perthshire had a well-established textile industry. Linen was made from locally grown flax. Around this time, British merchants began to import cotton, which could be spun into warm and strong textiles. In northern England, water-driven machines were being installed in large factories to process the ‘new’ fibre. By 1785, a group of Perth merchants eager to establish a cotton industry on the Tay persuaded Arkwright to invest his money and expertise.

Initially, Stanley Mills thrived until the East Mill was gutted by fire in 1799. Because of this, and a slump caused by war in France, Stanley Mills closed down. James Craig bought the mills in 1801, with financial help from David Dale, founder of the mills at New Lanark. But the business failed again and the mills closed in 1813. In 1823, the mills were bought and reopened by Buchanan & Co. The Glasgow company enlarged the East Mill and built the Mid Mill, the gasworks and, in Stanley village, a church and new housing. It flourished for 30 years. Owner George Buchanan helped to create a rail link to Stanley in 1848, making the transfer of raw cotton from Glasgow much easier. Buchanan sold the mills in 1852. The next owner, Samuel Howard, closed the mills during the Cotton Famine of the 1860s, causing mass unemployment.

F.S. Sandeman, an astute businessman and skilled technician, took over in 1876. He replaced the waterwheels with turbines and introduced a new product – cotton belting, sold around the world to drive machinery. During the First and Second World Wars, the mills saw good years producing webbing for the armed forces. Another advance was made in 1916, when Stanley Mills began producing an ‘endless’ thin cotton belt, used in the manufacture of cigarettes. This product helped Stanley Mills to survive the Depression of the 1920s and 1930s. India became independent in 1947 and imposed import tariffs on cotton goods, damaging a major export market. The growing availability of electricity also shrank the demand for belting. By the late 1960s, the mills were mainly producing artificial fibres. In 1979, a management buyout led to the formation of Stanley Mills (Scotland). But the market proved too competitive and the mills closed for good in 1989.

~ 30 minutes ~

Dinner at Fern Cottage Restaurant in Pitlochry

Overnight at the Atholl Villa Guest House in Pitlochry

** ATM available in Pitlochry, if needed*

Friday, August 28

Depart the Atholl Villa Guest House at 8:30 am

~ 60 minutes ~

Highland Folk Museum in Newtonmore

The Highland Folk Museum gives visitors a flavour of how Highland people lived and worked by displaying over 30 historical buildings and furnishing them appropriate to their time period. Some have been built from scratch on site and some have been moved here from other locations.

In a national context, it is fair to claim The Highland Folk Museum is unique in terms of its origin, its longevity and its cultural reach. Inspired by European folk museums Isabel F Grant (1887-1983) founded the Highland Folk Museum in 1935 on the Island of Iona, so that “*the old setting of our daily life....be saved*”. She named the Museum ‘*Am Fasgadh*’ (Gaelic: ‘The Shelter’) and began collecting artefacts from the fast-disappearing way of Highland life. By 1939 the collection had outgrown its Iona home and was moved for a period of five years to a disused church in Laggan, Inverness-shire.

In the early 1980s the Highland Folk Museum, now owned by the Highland Council, acquired an eighty acre site in Newtonmore where an open air, living history site was established. This site is divided into four main areas – a 1930s working farm, the ‘open air museum’ with a developing community of re-located buildings, the Pinewoods and ‘Baile Gean’ the Museum’s unique reconstruction of an early 1700s Highland Township. On this mile-long site visitors can discover how Highland people lived, worked and dressed, how they produced food, cooked and what they ate from the 1700s up to 1950s.

~ 60 minutes ~

Clava Cairns

On a gravel terrace above the River Nairn is one of Scotland’s most evocative sacred prehistoric sites. The Clava Cairns are dominated by a line of three exceptionally well-preserved burial cairns, each enclosed by stone circles. We know little about who the cairn builders were, for they left no written record. The actual remains of those buried within the cairns no longer survive because of overzealous archaeological digging in the early 20th century. However, recent excavations have shed new light on the cairns.

The burial cairns at Clava are around 4,000 years old. They are not quite like those elsewhere in northern Britain. Other burial monuments generally incorporate massive standing stones – either in the facade as at Cairnholy in Galloway, or supporting the chamber as at Maeshowe in Orkney. In contrast, at Clava the circles of standing stones are separate elements from the tombs. The three well-preserved cairns each have a central chamber. But while the two outer cairns have entrance passages, the chamber of the central one is completely enclosed. The outer kerb of each cairn is well defined by large boulders, and each is surrounded by a ring of standing stones.

~ 40 minutes ~

Urquhart Castle

Urquhart Castle dominates a rocky promontory jutting into Loch Ness with a long and famous history. Magnificently situated, it remains an impressive stronghold despite its ruinous state. Urquhart was once one of Scotland's largest castles. Its remains include a tower house – the most recent building on the site – that commands splendid views of the famous loch and Great Glen. Around AD 580 St Columba was making the long journey from his monastery on the island of Iona to the court of Bridei, king of the Picts, at Inverness. As he was passing up Loch Ness, he was called to the residence of an elderly Pictish nobleman at Airdchartdan (Urquhart). Emchath was close to death, and Columba baptised him and his entire household. We cannot be sure that Emchath's residence was on the site of the castle. However, the discovery of a fragment of Pictish brooch (dating from the late 700s or early 800s) strongly hints it may well have been the location.

Urquhart witnessed considerable conflict throughout its 500 years as a medieval fortress and its history from the 1200s to the 1600s was particularly bloody. Following the invasion of King Edward I of England in 1296, it fell into English hands and was then reclaimed and lost again. In the 1300s it figured prominently in the Scots' struggle for independence and came under the control of Robert the Bruce after he became King of Scots in 1306. In the 1400s and 1500s, the castle and glen were frequently raided from the west by the ambitious MacDonald Lords of the Isles. In the twilight of its days as a seat of the chief of Clan Grant, Urquhart continued to prove its worth. It was last garrisoned in 1692, and the towering gatehouse was deliberately blown up so that the castle could never again be a military stronghold.

Over 1,000 years of stirring history remain to be discovered. The castle's history is told in the exhibition and audio-visual display in the visitor centre, featuring an outstanding array of medieval artefacts found at the castle. It also tells the stories of the noble families who held the castle at different times: the Durwards, MacDonalds and Grants. The visitor centre contains a café, a shop, an exhibition and interpretation area, an audio-visual presentation and toilets, all on one level.

Lunch at Urquhart Castle or in the van/car

~ 75 minutes ~

Caledonian Canal

Traversing the Great Glen of the Scottish Highlands for 60 miles the Caledonian Canal connects the North Sea by Beaully and Moray Firth on the east coast with the Irish Sea by Lochs Linnhe and Eil on the west. Thirty eight miles of the canal pass through freshwater lochs Douchfour, Ness, Oich and Lochy with the remaining 22 miles formed by earth cutting. Initially 28 locks, and later 29, were required to reach the summit elevation of 106 feet at Loch Oich.

The canal was first proposed by James Watt in 1773 and 20 years later by John Rennie. However, no immediate action resulted. It would be 1803, two years following the issue of Thomas Telford's Highland Report recommending construction of a broad network of roads, canals and harbor

improvements throughout the Scottish Highlands, that an Act of Parliament would form the Caledonian Canal Commission, initiating serious work. The main purposes of the canal were to provide an alternate to the hazardous and lengthy sail around the north of Scotland via the Pentland Firth, to provide badly needed employment and to encourage development of the Highlands. The Caledonian Canal was a massive project for its time. Telford's plan called for a canal 20 feet deep, 50 feet wide at the bottom and 110 feet wide at the top. The locks were 180 feet long by 40 feet wide by 20 feet deep, the largest ever constructed until the Panama Canal in 1916. Telford assembled an expert team of earth movers, stone masons, and iron workers, with an inexperienced labor force, who battled difficult access, harsh weather and bad ground conditions for 18 years.

Although it did not live up to the commercial success expected, the Caledonian Canal did serve as an important military supply route during World War I. Today, after considerable restoration by British Waterways, it is an important tourist and leisure attraction in the Scottish Highlands. The sheer magnitude of the project and the severe conditions under which it was performed contributed greatly to the advancement of civil engineering knowledge in Britain and beyond.

~ 30 minutes ~

Glencoe Visitors Center

The most famous Scottish glen is also one of its most dramatic, with forbidding mountains, thundering waterfalls and sparkling lochs. Famous for its amazing landscape, its natural and cultural heritage; the scenery of Glencoe has been fashioned by millions of years of geological and geomorphologic processes is now regarded as some of the finest 'wild' landscape in Scotland. The drama is also reflected in Glencoe's history, both real and imagined – myths and legends abound, all part of the fabric of this magical, mysterious place. It's easy to imagine that Fingal, the giant Viking-killer of Celtic mythology, made his home among the towering mountains, and that his poet son, Ossian, found inspiration in the beauty and serenity of the landscape. You'll see many references to the two of them in place names throughout the area, including Ossian's Cave.

It's also very easy to picture events of 13 February 1692 – the Massacre of Glencoe. On that cold, bloody night, 38 unsuspecting MacDonalds were killed as they slept by soldiers who had billeted with them for 12 days. There's a monument to the MacDonalds in Glencoe village, where the massacre began, just a short walk from the Glencoe Visitor Centre. And that's not the only blood on the ground – the notorious Appin Murder, which inspired Robert Louis Stevenson's fictionalised account in *Kidnapped*, also took place nearby. James Stewart, the brother of chief suspect Alan, was hanged for the murder close to where Ballachulish Bridge stands today.

Fiction and fantasy are part of the fabric of the glen. Its stunning scenery has been an ideal film location for, among others, *Rob Roy*, *Braveheart*, *Highlander*, *The 39 Steps*, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, and most recently *James Bond*.

~ 60 minutes ~

Overnight at the Corran Guest House in Oban, dinner in the pub below.

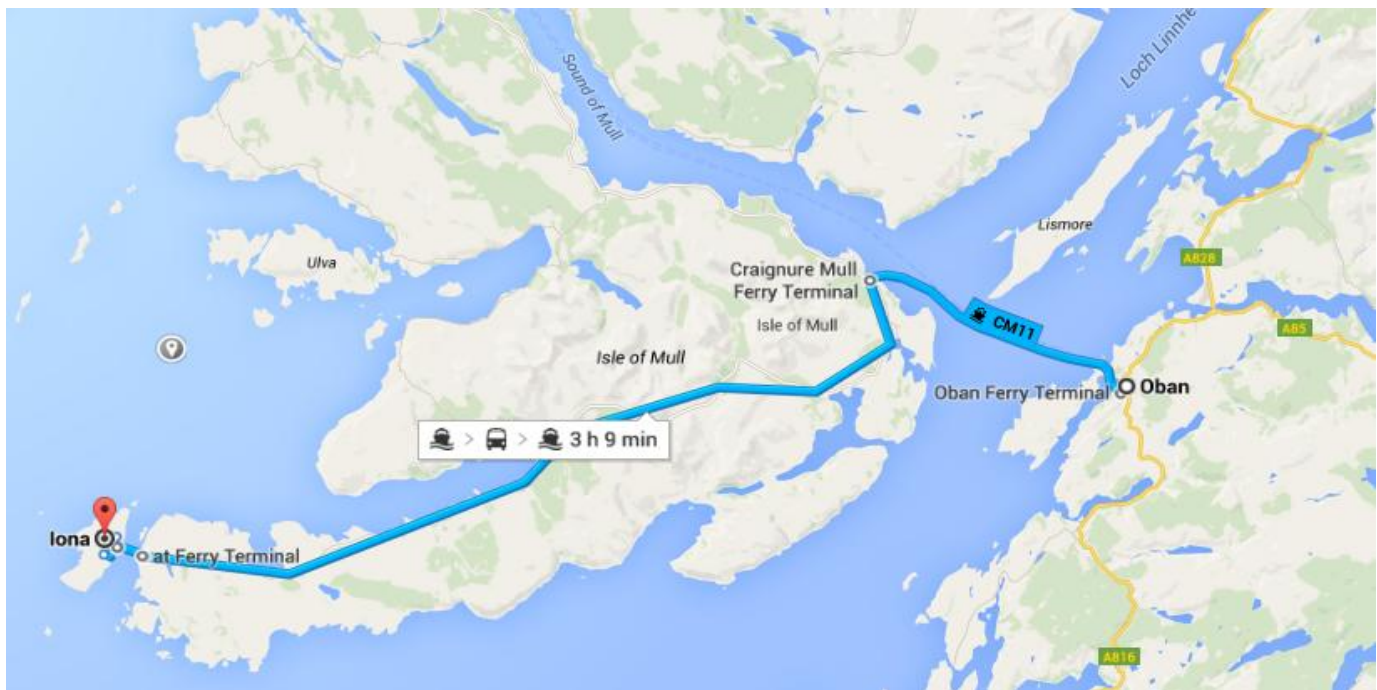
Saturday, August 29

Morning to explore Oban then transport to Iona

To do in Oban: Sleep in / chill after a busy couple of days?

- Walk the esplanade / bay area, soak in the harbor atmosphere
- Visit local shops
- Do a whiskey tasting / tour at the Oban Distillery
- Acquire lunch, or run to Tesco again, if something is needed

Leave on the 12:15 ferry (in line by 11:40) from Oban to Craignure, Isle of Mull (45 min). Then drive across Mull to Fionnphort (60 min). Then ferry from Fionnphort to Iona (15 min), where we'll put luggage in a van and walk to the Abbey.



Journey from Oban to Iona – Saturday, August 29

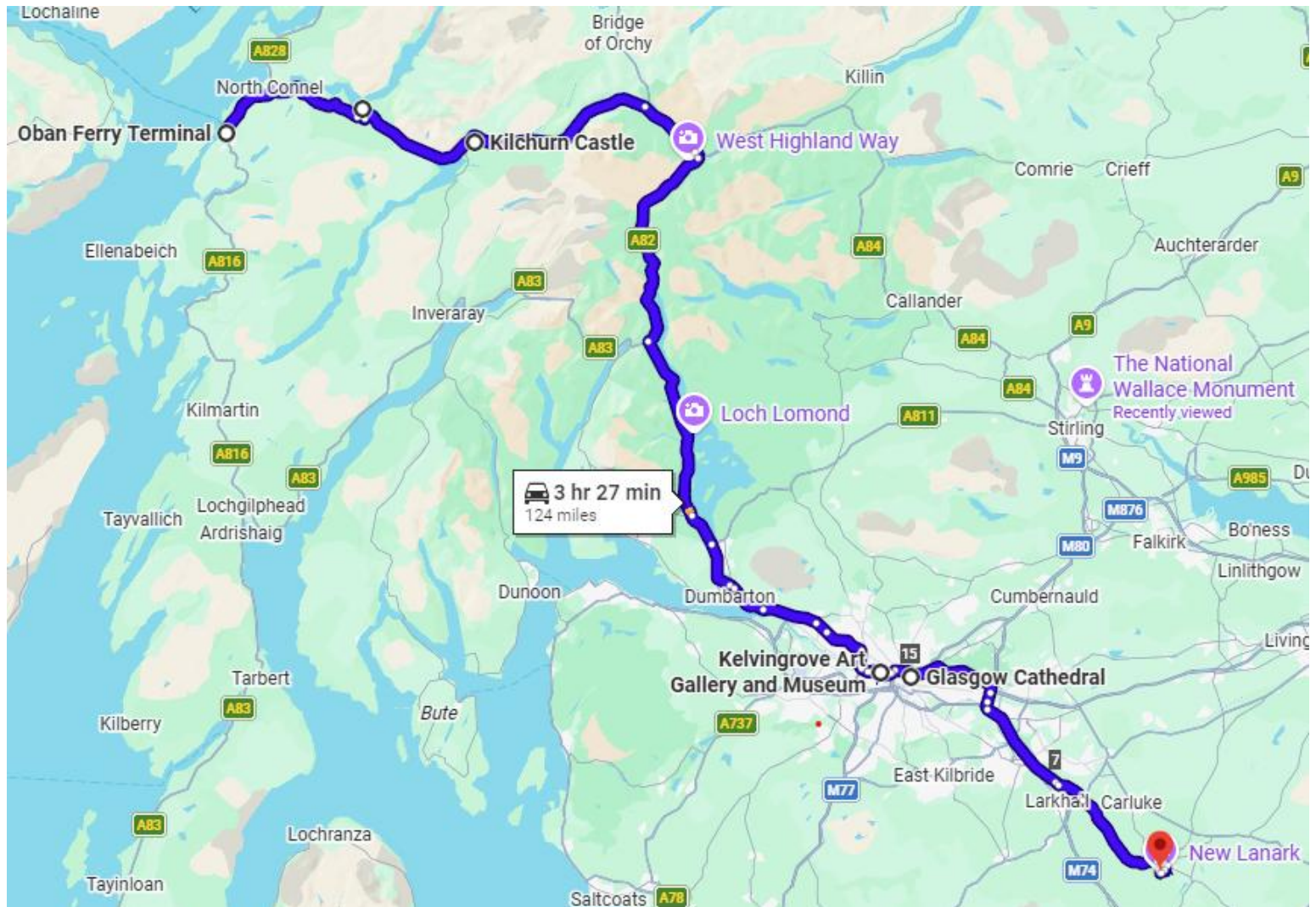
Saturday, August 29 – Friday, Sept 4

... on Iona with Iona Community programming in the Abbey (see other schedules and descriptions). Possible special activities include a ceilidh, a day-long pilgrimage hike around the island, an afternoon boat trip to the island of Staffa, Historic Scotland exhibits, Iona Community Shop, and other island shops.



Friday, September 4

AM travel from Iona back to Oban (reverse of schedule above) ... lunch on ferry or in the van/car



Itinerary route Friday, September 4

~ 25 minutes ~

Maybe a peek at the Bonawe Historic Iron Furnace (if we have time / interest)

In 1753 a Cumbrian ironmaster opened a new works in Scotland, at Bonawe. The extensive woodland of Argyll, guaranteed an almost endless supply of charcoal. Plenty of water for powering the huge bellows was an added advantage. The iron ore was imported from Cumbria.

In its heyday, the furnace produced 700 tons of pig iron annually, and employed up to 600 people, most of them 'charcoalers' working in the woods. The works outlasted all the other Scottish ironworks using charcoal as fuel, and when it finally closed in 1876, after 123 years of operation, only Backbarrow, in south Cumbria, remained operational. Bonawe is the most complete charcoal-fired ironworks in Britain. The entire manufacturing process can be traced:

- ❖ The lade – bringing water from the River Awe onto the waterwheel to power the bellows;
- ❖ The two vast charcoal sheds – storing enormous quantities of fuel in dry conditions;
- ❖ The small charcoal shed – where imported high-quality haematite ore was stored, along with the limestone (for removing impurities during smelting);
- ❖ The charging house – where raw materials were weighed and loaded into the furnace;
- ❖ The furnace, blowing-house and casting-house – where the iron ore was smelted;
- ❖ Bonawe House – built for the manager (a private house *not* open to visitors);
- ❖ The two blocks of housing – where the workers and their families lived;

~ 20 minutes ~

Kilchurn Castle

Look out over Loch Awe from the powerbase of the Campbells of Glenorchy and one of the most photographed castles in Scotland. Kilchurn Castle was a fortress, a comfortable residence and later a garrison stronghold, and contains the oldest surviving barracks on the British mainland. Its five-storey tower house dominates the complex, with a lower hall, courtyard and barracks below. Kilchurn Castle was built in the mid-1400s, and it remained the base of the mighty Campbells of Glenorchy for 150 years. After the first Jacobite Rising of 1689, Kilchurn was converted into a garrison stronghold, but was abandoned by the end of the 1700s.

Driving through Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park

~ 60 minutes ~

Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum

Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum features 22 themed, state-of-the-art galleries displaying an astonishing 8000 objects. The collections at Kelvingrove are extensive, wide-ranging and internationally significant. They include natural history, arms and armour, art from many art movements and periods of history and much more. The most famous painting on display at Kelvingrove is the Salvador Dali masterpiece 'Christ of St John of the Cross'. Sir Roger the Asian elephant is another big museum attraction. There is even a Spitfire plane hanging from the ceiling of the west court. The refurbished building is an attraction in its own right and Kelvingrove welcomes families, its displays having been designed with children in mind. Besides all the exhibits, Kelvingrove has a restaurant, a café and a gift shop.

~ 10 minutes ~

Glasgow Cathedral (if time)

Glasgow Cathedral is one of the finest buildings from the 1200s in mainland Scotland. It's the only medieval cathedral in Scotland to have survived the Protestant Reformation of 1560 virtually intact. Building fabric from Bishop Jocelin's time (1174–99) remains. When fire

halted Jocelin's work, it fell to his successors to finish the cathedral. The end result was a Gothic creation consisting of rows of pointed arches, windows with slender tracery (stone divisions), an unusual array of three vaulted aisles around the presbytery and choir. The intention was to house a shrine to St Kentigern (as known as St. Mungo) at the main level, behind the high altar, to complement the saint's tomb in the crypt beneath. Kentigern was the first bishop of the area that is modern Strathclyde, with a diocese stretching from Loch Lomond to Cumbria. It's thought that Kentigern was buried on the cathedral site around 612.

Around it there used to be a chanonry – where the bishops, archbishops and clergy lived. A thriving burgh sprang up to its south and west under the bishops' patronage. Since then, the burgh has grown into the metropolis it is today. The Reformation ended bishops answerable to the Pope. Glasgow Cathedral was 'cleansed' of its Catholic trappings and used as a parish kirk – in fact, three parish kirks. The choir housed the Inner High Kirk; the west end of the nave, the Outer High Kirk; and the crypt, the Barony Kirk. But growing appreciation of medieval architecture led to another change. By 1835, both the Outer High Kirk and the Barony Kirk had left the premises. In 1836, the cathedral became State property. By 1857, the entire building was looked after by the State. A campaign of restoration began and continues to this day.

~ 45 minutes ~

Dinner and overnight at the New Lanark Mill Hotel

New Lanark World Heritage Site

New Lanark is an eighteenth century restored cotton mill village on the banks of the River Clyde, close to the Falls of Clyde in Southern Scotland. New Lanark was created as a cotton-spinning village in the late eighteenth to early nineteenth century and was transformed under the management of Robert Owen. Owen greatly improved the conditions, facilities and services for the workers and their families and this led to many social improvements including progressive education, factory reform, more humane working practices and garden cities.

By 1799 New Lanark was the biggest cotton mill in Scotland and formed one of the largest industrial groups in the world. Over 2,000 people lived or worked in the village. The mill continued manufacturing cotton for nearly 200 years, until 1968. This helps explain why the buildings in the village are so little changed. New Lanark was inscribed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2001.

The outstanding universal value of New Lanark is based on its remarkable degree of survival as a late eighteenth, early nineteenth century planned mill village. The benevolent paternalism of mill owner Robert Owen is physically expressed at New Lanark through its planned layout. His concern for the well-being of workers is demonstrated by the provision of the education institute, school and spacious workers' housing. Owen's social philosophy had a profound influence on social development throughout the nineteenth century and beyond.

Saturday, September 5



Itinerary route Saturday, September 5

Depart New Lanark at 9:00 AM for Peebles Highland Games at Hay Lodge Park

~ 60 minutes ~

Peebles Highland Games is the biggest gathering of its kind in the Scottish Borders. Events include traditional heavy events, pipe band competition, drum major competition, highland dancing competition, haggis hurling, loads of stalls, fairground rides, plus great food and drink and much more. A great day out held in the idyllic setting of Hay Lodge Park.

- 10:30 Chieftain's Parade Arrival at Hay Lodge Park
- 10:35 Opening of Games - by 2025 Chieftain Main Field
- 10:00-1700 Highland Dancing Competitions Dance Boards
- Pipe Band Competitions
- Drum Majors Dress Pipe Band Ring TBC
- Drum Majors Discipline Marching and Flourish Main Field TBC
- 12:30 - 16:00 Heavy Events Competition Main Field
- 15:30 - 16:00 Haggis Hurling Main Field
- 16:30 - 17:00 March On and Presentation of Trophies Main Field
- 17:15 Pipe Band Street Parade Depart from Haylodge Park to Old Town
- Trade Stalls - Throughout the day
- Art and Craft Stalls - Throughout the day
- Community Organisation Stalls - Throughout the day

~ 45 minutes ~

Melrose Abbey (depending on how long we stay at the Highland Games)

Melrose Abbey was founded in 1136 by King David I. It was the first monastery of the Cistercian order in Scotland. The Cistercians were drawn to this fertile spot beside the River Tweed because of its intimate associations with the holy men St Aidan and St Cuthbert, whose monastery lay downriver at Old Melrose. The monks came from the Cistercians' great northern English missionary base of Rievaulx, Yorkshire. Monastic life continued at Melrose for the next 450 years. The last monk, Dan Jo Watson, died around 1590. The crumbling abbey church continued in use as a parish church, until a new kirk was built nearby in 1810.

The great abbey church of St Mary the Virgin at Melrose loomed large in the lives of many on both sides of the border with England. Powerful people endowed it richly, and a hallowed few were privileged to be buried there. They included King Alexander II (d. 1249) and the heart of King Robert the Bruce (d. 1329), whose body was interred at Dunfermline Abbey. The fame and importance of Melrose attracted attention from English kings in the later Middle Ages. Attacks in 1300, 1307, and 1322 necessitated major repairs. Richard II's attack in 1385 led to a complete rebuilding of the church. The Wars of Rough Wooing in the 1540s brought further depredations.

Only a very small fragment survives of the first abbey church. The present building of beautiful rose-coloured stone dates almost entirely to the post-1385 rebuilding. Nevertheless, this is regarded as one of the most magnificent examples of medieval church architecture anywhere in the British Isles. The presbytery at the east end, where the high altar once stood, the monks' choir and transepts, and part of the nave are still remarkably intact. Highlights of the interior include the ornate stone vaulting over the presbytery, the elegant piers and the window tracery: the carved stone separating the glass. The exterior is decorated with some of the most beguiling sculpture to be found on any medieval church building. It includes demons and hobgoblins, lute-playing angels, cooks with ladles, and of course the famous bagpipe-playing pig.

~ 5 minutes ~

Tour of Abbotsford House

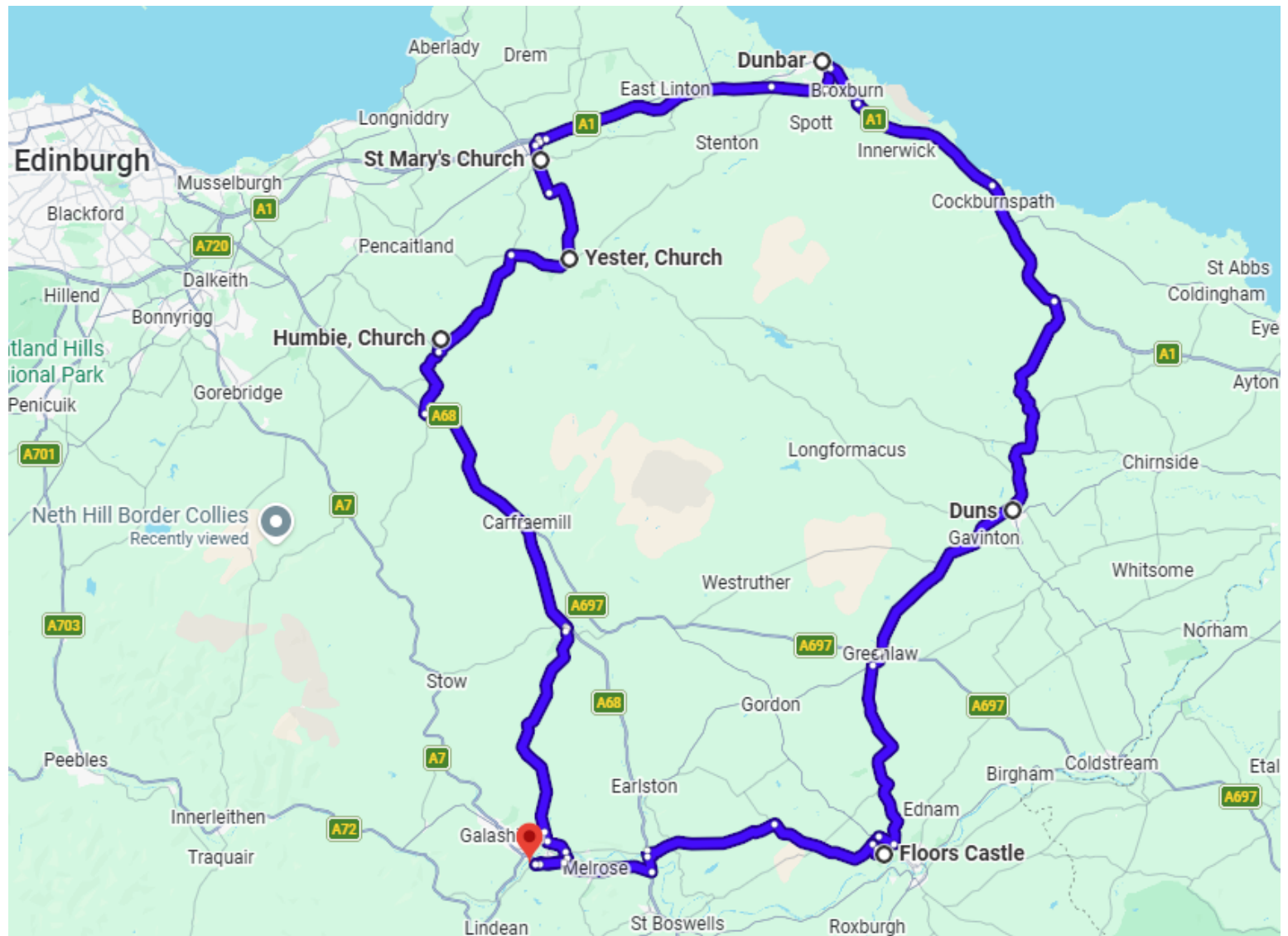
Standing on the banks of the River Tweed, Abbotsford was Sir Walter Scott's creation and, after his death in 1832, somewhere visited by millions. It was built on the proceeds of a phenomenally successful literary career, and Scott became determined to keep it in his family as he worked to pay off huge debts after near-bankruptcy in 1825. Abbotsford is an enduring monument to the tastes, talents and personal tragedies of its creator.

Scott was an obsessive collector of books, artefacts, weaponry and more, much of which can still be seen in the Abbotsford Collections. But his home was his most cherished possession, 'the Delilah of his imagination', his 'Conundrum Castle' and 'flibbertigibbet of a house' that would 'suit none but an antiquary.' Its architecture and interior design made it an iconic building of the 19th century Scottish Baronial style, and it remains a key site in the history of European Romanticism.

Scott was a generous host and during his lifetime Abbotsford was visited by writers, politicians, noblemen and many of his readers. After Scott's death, it was opened to the public in 1833 and has never lost its place as a place of literary pilgrimage and monument to one of Scotland's greatest sons.

Dinner / overnight at Abbotsford (with run to local Tesco for breakfast / lunch groceries)

Sunday, September 6



Itinerary route Sunday, September 6

Depart at 8:30 AM

~ 40 minutes ~

Brief stops at Humbie and Yester Parish Kirks

We glimpse the variety of Presbyterian Churches in Scotland. Humbie Kirk is a beautiful, small, stone church set in a verdant, picturesque location outside a tiny town maybe next to a stream. Yester Kirk stands a bit more stately at crossroads in the county seat overlooking the market square / High Street. John Witherspoon (Presbyterian minister, founder of the College of New Jersey / Princeton University, and signer of our U.S. Declaration of Independence) was born in the manse for this parish and preached his first sermon / presided at his first communion in this church.

~ 10 minutes ~

Worship in St. Mary's Church, Haddington

In this cathedral, built pre-Reformation (roughly the size of our church?), we can see the evolution of worship and use within a well-maintained and refurbished architectural masterpiece. In earliest days the site included monastic enclosures. Begun as a Collegiate Church in 1380, and taking over one hundred years to build, this church was largely ruined during the Siege of Haddington by Henry VIII in 1548-49. At the instigation of John Knox, born in Giffordgate just across the river, the Town Council repaired the Church in 1561 "frae steeple to the west end". A barrier wall was built and the enclosed nave served as the parish church for over 400 years. Final refurbishment to its present shape was done in the early 1970s. The worship center (raised dais / pulpit / lectern) stands at the central cross of the nave. With more formal and less formal seating areas on either side. The beautiful organ was built by a member of the church where Seth served in Belhaven / Spott completed in 1993. Centuries-old gravestones surround the cathedral, situated beside a river.

~ 15 minutes ~

Stop in Dunbar – lunch on the High Street or in the van/car?

With a little time to explore the harbor area or High Street? Among shops in the High Street is a small informative museum (free admission) about John Muir in the modest house where he was born. This is the town where Seth Weeldreyer lived 29 years ago (and daughter Ailih was born).

~ 60 minutes (through the village of Duns—home of John Duns Scotus and the 'dunce cap') ~

Floors Castle

Floors Castle is the largest inhabited house in Scotland, first and foremost, home to the Duke and Duchess of Roxburghe. As it stands today it is the product of two main phases of construction. The Georgian house was created from a pre-existing house, on a natural terrace overlooking the Tweed, which was one of the seats of the family. Floors became the primary residence after 1730. The grandeur and setting of the house prompted Sir Walter Scott to declare Floors, 'a kingdom fit for Oberon and Titania to dwell in'. During the time of the 6th Duke, between 1836 and 1847, the architect William Playfair brought the original building into harmony with its landscape park by grafting on a fairytale silhouette, as well as a number of extensions and the coach port. The result is one of the most iconic pieces of Scottish architecture, and as a dwelling, has few rivals in the UK.

Gardens

Combining one of the finest Victorian kitchen gardens in the spectacular Walled Garden with the formal Millennium Garden, the gardens at Floors are a showpiece of seasonal interest and inspired new creations. Enjoy the frenzy of colour in the breath-taking herbaceous borders, explore the glasshouses bursting with soft fruit with the kids or take a stroll with the dog through the Millennium Garden featuring a French-style parterre and also a charming summerhouse known as Queen's House after Queen Victoria's visit in 1867.

A Modern Estate / Farming at Floors

The Estate is a modern business, with a variety of revenue streams and interests. It comprises some 52,000 acres (21,000 hectares), and encompasses a variety of Borders landscapes, from the Cheviots to the Lammermuirs, and the fertile land of the Tweed valley. With such a variety of topography, the type of farming carried out over the Estate's land is equally diverse resulting in a variety of produce. The in-hand farming operation comprises sheep and cattle—Cheviot lamb is unique to the Borders and much sought after. The major arable crops are wheat and oil seed rape. Malting barley, potatoes and vegetables are also grown. Other activities on the Estate relate to Forestry, Sporting pursuits, Green Energy, Conservation and property management.

Dinner and overnight at Abbotsford House

Monday, September 7

Depart at 9:15 AM

~ 10 minutes ~

Lochcarron Weavers Visitor Centre and Shop

One of the premier woolen weavers Scotland ... here's an opportunity for higher quality scarves, sweaters, blankets, numerous other accessories and even a kilt, if desired.

~ 45 minutes ~



Neth Hill Border Collies

As you journey into Carcant Farm, home of Nethhill Border Collies, you'll be surrounded by breathtaking scenery. The track leading to Carcant winds through rolling hills, immersing you in nature and setting the stage for an unforgettable experience.

Upon arrival, Julie will warmly welcome you before guiding you on a short walk to the demonstration area. Nestled among the hills, Carcant's charming house provides a picturesque backdrop, with sheep grazing peacefully across the landscape. Julie will introduce you to Carcant, sharing a brief history of the family's connection to the land and her role as a tenant farmer. She will explain the demands of shepherding on such steep terrain and the vital role her remarkable dogs play in managing the flock.

Throughout the demonstration, Julie will bring to life the incredible bond between shepherd and dog. She will showcase how she communicates with her dogs, harnessing their natural instincts and intelligence to work seamlessly as a team. You'll witness the step-by-step process of training, from young pups learning their first commands to fully trained working dogs performing essential tasks. Using her Natural Way training method, Julie will highlight how she tailors her approach to suit each dog's unique temperament, ensuring they reach their full potential. As you watch these extraordinary dogs in action, you'll gain a deep appreciation for their skill, dedication, and unwavering partnership with their shepherd. Prepare to be captivated by the intelligence, agility, and instinct of these incredible border collies—a truly unforgettable experience at Carcant Farm.

~ 40 minutes ~ (to Newcraighall junction where we'll get the train into Waverley Station, Edinburgh)

Edinburgh Castle

Edinburgh Castle has been at the heart of Scotland's life for well over 1,000 years. Well defended on its tall volcanic crag, it has been occupied since prehistoric times. By the medieval era it was an important royal residence, and the city growing up around it became the nation's capital. It is the most besieged castle in the UK and over many centuries has witnessed royal ceremonies, savage battles, medieval parliaments, lavish feasts, grand parades, ruthless politics, raids by stealth, the birth of a king and the deaths of queens, jousting tournaments, troubled marriages, devout prayers and intensive military activity.

Scottish monarchs commissioned grand buildings here, as secure lodgings and as demonstrations of their wealth, power and sophistication. The castle's royal role continues up to the present day. The castle has sheltered many Scottish monarchs. They include Queen Margaret (later St Margaret), who died here in 1093, and Mary Queen of Scots, who gave birth to James VI in the Royal Palace in 1566. Her great-great-great grandson Charles Edward Stuart – Bonnie Prince Charlie – captured Edinburgh but was unable to take the castle during the 1745-6 Jacobite Rising.

The Scots and English struggled for control of the castle during the Wars of Independence. In 1314 it was recaptured from the English in a daring night raid. From the late 1500s the castle became increasingly important as a military base. In the 1600s the distinctive Half-Moon Battery was

constructed, buildings were rebuilt and new ones were raised to garrison soldiers and jail prisoners of war. The military presence remains unbroken, but over the last 200 years it has become Scotland's leading tourist attraction, a key element of the Edinburgh World Heritage Site.

The castle is also home to important national symbols, such as the crown jewels of Scotland, the Stone of Destiny and the medieval siege cannon Mons Meg. Its long military use continues, and is recognised in the National War Museum, regimental museums, and the sombrely handsome Scottish National War Memorial. In more recent times, Edinburgh Castle has gained recognition as an international icon and a fascinating place to visit.

Other possible attractions include:

The Royal Mile

St Giles Cathedral

historic City Hall Chambers / Church of Scotland General Assembly chambers

John Knox House

Scottish Parliament

Palace of Holyrood House

Princes Street Gardens

The Scottish National Gallery of Art

Royal Botanic Gardens

Calton Hill

and lots of shopping.

Dinner and overnight at Abbotsford House

Tuesday, September 8

Depart 7:30 AM for Edinburgh Airport for flight home

SONGS / PILGRIMAGE PLAY LIST

Dougie MacLean

“Caledonia”

I don't know if you can see the changes that have come over me
In these last few days I've been afraid that I might drift away
So I've been telling old stories, singing songs that make me think about where I came from
And that's the reason why I seem so far away today

But let me tell you that I love you, that I think about you all the time
Caledonia you're calling me and now I'm going home
But if I should become a stranger you know that it would make me more than sad
Caledonia's been everything I've ever had

Now I'm sitting here before the fire, the empty room, the forest choir
The flames that couldn't get any higher, well they've withered, now they've gone
But I'm steady thinking, my way is clear and I know what I will do tomorrow
When the hands have shaken and the kisses flow, well I will disappear

But let me tell you that I love you, that I think about you all the time
Caledonia you're calling me and now I'm going home
For if I should become a stranger you know that it would make me more than sad
Caledonia's been everything I've ever had

“Rescue Me”

Old layers of time have buried the ways that the others have grown
And though sturdy and strong his eyes open wide with each new unknown
And oh it is for the earth that he screams in the night
He's a servant of the seasons and the morning's early light
But the troubled one he says

CHORUS

Rescue me, he says, rescue me, on this mountain's the only place I can see clearly
And see these guilty hands that envenom the soil and take the like from his fields
But now these book-reddened eyes have discovered the truth and what it conceals
And oh it's for the earth that he screams in the night
He's a servant of the seasons and the morning's early light
But the troubled one he says

CHORUS

And so the plough it will turn and our hearts they will burn for sair works nae easy
But oh this circle stone and this buzzard dyke and this great unknown
It goes on and on into the distance of time
And oh it's for the earth that we scream in the night
We're servants of the seasons and the mornings early light
But the troubled ones they say

CHORUS

“Stepping Stones”

And so much time has gone since we worked out in these open fields
With the hopes of generations pulled around us and a strength revealed
And so much has been done since we ran around the Snaigow wood
And never knowing where our gentle lights might lead us or if indeed they could

CHORUS

And we do not stand alone
I know we stand with all the others
Out in the deep unknown
I know we stand upon their stepping stones

Sure and simple souls guarded round us as we worldly grew
With nothing greater than what working days might show them they gave us all they knew
And though their dreams were small their true and rural hearts were strong
And with an honest smile that burns from somewhere distant they helped us all along

CHORUS

And in these silent hours when reflection lays our journey down
And we think on all departed conversations it's such an earthly sound
And so much time has gone since we worked out in these open fields
With the hopes of generations pulled around us and a strength revealed

CHORUS

“For a' That” (words by Robert Burns)

Is there for honest poverty
That hangs his head and a' that
The coward slave we pass him by
We dare be poor for a' that
For a' that and a' that
Our toils obscure and a' that
The rank is but the guinea's stamp
The man's the gowd for a' that

What though on hamely fare we dine
Wear hodden grey and a' that?
Gie fools their silks and knaves their wine
A man's a man for a' that
For a' that and a' that
Their tinsel show and a' that
The honest man though e'er sae poor
Is king o' men for a' that

Ye see yon birkie ca'd a lord
Wha struts and stares and a' that
Though hundreds worship at his word
He's but a cuif for a' that

For a' that and a' that
His riband star and a' that
The man o' independent mind
He looks and laughs at a' that

A prince can mak a belted knight
A marquis duke and a' that
But an honest man's aboon his might
Gude faith he mauna fa' that
For a' that and a' that
Their dignities and a' that
The pith o' sense and pride o' worth
Are higher ranks than a' that

Then let us pray that come it may
As come it will for a' that
That sense and worth o'er a' the earth
May bear the gree and a' that
For a' that and a' that
It's coming yet for a' that
That man to man the world o'er
Shall brothers be for a' that

“Scots Wha Hae” (words by Robert Burns)

Scots wha' hae wi' wallace bled
Scots wham bruce has aften led
Welcome to your gory bed
Or to victorie
Now's the day and now's the hour
See the front o' battle lour
See approach proud edward's power
Chains and slaverie

Wha will be a traitor knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave?
Wha sae base as be a slave?
Let him turn and flee
Wha for scotland's king and law
Freedom's sword will strongly draw
Free man stand or free man fa'
Let him follow me

By oppression's woes and pains
By your sons in servile chains
We will drain our dearest veins
But they shall be free
Lay the proud usurpers low
Tyrants fall in every foe
Liberty's in every blow
Let us do or die

The Tannahill Weavers

“Capernaum”

If a' the blood shed at thy Tron
Edinbro', Edinbro'
If a' the blood shed at thy Tron
Were shed intae a river
'Twould ca' the mills of Bonnington
Edinbro', Edinbro'
'Twould ca' the mills of Bonnington
For ever and for ever

If a' the tears that thou hast grat
Edinbro', Edinbro'
If a' the tears that thou hast grat
Were shed intae the sea
Where would ye find an Ararat?
Edinbro', Edinbro'
Where would ye find an Ararat
Frae that fell flood tae flee?

“Ye Banks and Braes” (words by Robert Burns)

Ye banks and braes o' bonnie doon
How can ye bloom sae fresh and fair?
How can ye chant ye little birds
And i sae weary full o' care?

Ye'll break my heart ye warbling birds
That wanton through the flowery thorn
Ye 'mind me o' departed joys
Departed never to return

Oft hae i roved by bonnie doon
To see the rose and woodbine twine
And ilka bird sang o' its love
And fondly sae did i o' mine

Wi' lightsome heart i pulled a rose
Full sweet upon its thorny tree
And my false lover stole my rose
But ah she left the thorn wi' me

If all the psalms sung in thy kirks
Edinbro', Edinbro'
If all the psalms sung in thy kirks
Were gaithered in the wynd
'Twould shaw the tops o' Roslin's birks
Edinbro', Edinbro'
'Twould shaw the tops o' Roslin's birks
'Til time was oot o' mind

If a' the broken hearts o' thee
Edinbro', Edinbro'
If a' the broken hearts o' thee
Were heaped in a howe
There would be neither land nor sea
Edinbro', Edinbro'
There would be neither land nor sea
But yon rede brae and thou

“The Braes o’ Balquhiddier”

CHORUS

Let us go, lassie, go
Tae the braes o' Balquhiddier
Whar the blueberries grow
'Mang the bonnie Hielan' heather
Whar the deer and the rae
Lichtly bounding thegither
Sport the lang summer day
On the braes o' Balquhiddier

I will twin thee a bow'r
By the clear silver fountain
And I'll cover it o'er
Wi' the flooers o' the mountain
I will range through the wilds
And the deep glens sae dreary
And return wi' their spoils
Tae the bow'r o' my dearie

CHORUS

When the rude wintry win'
Idly raves 'roun' oor dwellin'
And the roar o' the linn
On the nicht breeze is swellin'
So merrily we'll sing
As the storm rattles o'er us
'Til the dear shielin' ring
Wi' the licht liltin' chorus

CHORUS

Noo the summers in prime
Wi' the flooers richly bloomin'
Wi' the wild mountain thyme
A' the moorlan's perfumin'
Tae oor dear native scenes
Let us journey thegither
Whar glad innocence reigns
'Mang the braes o' Balquhiddier

CHORUS

“The Plooboy Laddies”

Doon in yonder den there's a plooboy lad
An' summers day he'll be a' my ane

CHORUS

And sing laddie aye and sing laddie oh
The plooboy laddies are a' the go

I will hae nae miller wi' his dusty coat
The merchant's gear isnae worth a groat

CHORUS

I love him weel, I love nane but him
I love the very cairt he hurls in

And when I think on my plooboy's smile
It's in his arms I would bide a while

I see him coming in frae yonder toon
Wi' a' his ribbons hingin' 'roon an' 'roon

“The Gallant Shearers”

Adam's wine and heather bells
Come rattlin' ower yon high, high hills
There's corn rigs in yonder fields
And autumn brings the shearin'

CHORUS

Bonnie lassie, will ye gang
And shear wi' me the hale day lang?
And love will cheer us as we gang
Tae jine yon band o' shearers

And if the thistle, it be strang
And pierce your bonnie milk-white hand
It's wi' my hook I'll lay it lang
When we gang tae the shearin'

And if the weather be ower hot
I'll cast my gravat and my coat
And shear wi' ye among the lot
When we gang tae the shearin'

And if the weather, it be dry
They'll say there's love 'tween you and I
We'll shyly pass each ither by
When we gang tae the shearin'

And when the shearin', it is done
And slowly sets the wintry sun
Ye'll be my ain 'til life is run
Nae mair tae jine the shearers

Capercaillie

“Fear a Bhata”

CHORUS

Fhir a'bhàta, na ho ro eile
Fhir a'bhàta, na ho ro eile
Fhir a'bhàta, na ho ro eile
Mo shoraigh slàn leat 's gach àit'an téid thu

Is tric mi 'sealltainn o'n chnoc a's àirde
Dh'fheuch am faic mi fear a'bhàta
An tig thu an-diùigh no'n tig thu a-màireach?
'S mur tig thu idir gur truagh a tà mi

CHORUS

Tha mo chridhe-sa briste, brùite
'S tric na deòir a'ruith o m'shùilean
An tig thu a-nochd no'm bi mo dhùil riut
No'n dùin mi'n dorus le osna thùrsaich?

CHORUS

“Ailein Duinn”

Gura mise tha fo eislean
Moch sa mhaduinn is mi g'eirigh

CHORUS

O hi shiubhlainn leat
Hi ri bho, ho ru bhi
Hi ri bho, ho rionn o ho
Ailein Duinn, o hi shiubhlainn leat

Ma 's'en clusag dhuit a ghaineamh
Ma 'se leabaidh dhut an gheamainn

CHORUS

Ma 's en t-iasg do choinlean geala
Ma 's na Rìgh do luchd-faire

CHORUS

Dh'o lainn deoch ge boil le cach e
De dh'fhuil do choim 's tu 'n de idh do bhathadh

CHORUS

CHORUS

O, boatman, don't go too far
O, boatman, don't go too far
O, boatman, don't go too far
Fare well, good health be everywhere you go.

Often I look from the highest hill
To find whether I can see the boatman.
Will you come today or will you come tomorrow?
And if you don't come at all I will be miserable.

CHORUS

My heart is bruised and broken
And often the tears run from my eyes
Will you come tonight or will I be expecting you
or will I close the door with a mournful sigh.

CHORUS

How sorrowful I am
When I rise early in the morning

CHORUS

Ò hì, I would go with you
Hì ri bhò hò ru bhi
Hì ri bhò hò rinn o ho
Brown-haired Alan, ò hì, I would go with you

If the sand be your pillow
If the seaweed be your bed

CHORUS

If the fish are your candles bright
If the seals are your watchmen

CHORUS

I would drink, though all would abhor
Of your heart's blood after you were drowned

CHORUS

"At the Heart of It All"

Let's go up the hillside
To the highest ridge of Storr
Where the lapwing sings a eulogy
At the wonder of it all
As the evening shadows plunder
The cloak around the world
We remember all the mornings
At the heart of it all

CHORUS

At the heart of it all
Is a calling to this land
In the words of our salvation
Is a song for the common man
At the heart of it all
Is a story to be told
For the sake of our salvation
And the troubles we behold

You can see the river rising
Its banks will creak and slide
There's a silence in the evergreens
And a surging of the tide
Well, it's nature's way of saying
Our backs are up against the wall
By the hush of the world
In the lull before the storm

CHORUS

The poems and the musings
Of Sorley MacLean
They tumble and cascade across
The page of every man
They will rise and spring to life again
In a song for the good of all
Where the people and their land are at
The heart of it all

CHORUS

"God's Alibi"

Spring in Macedonia
The last clean pocket on a blood-soaked coat
In a state of claustrophobia
Waiting for the rain to wash it all out

CHORUS

Fear in their eyes
Did the crucifix lie
Did the words of the church run dry
Fear in their eyes
Did the crucifix lie
Did the words of the church run dry

Meeting on a road to Basra
You half blind in a blood-soaked coat
Me I'm a fallen angel
Fallen from the burning tree of doubt

CHORUS

I'm a witness to the moon and the stars above
I'm aware of the crimson sky
I'm a witness to the crumbling walls as well
But I'm not your alibi

War is the last sensation
The final song with the longest note
Like a silence never broken
War is the book that nobody wrote

CHORUS

I'm a witness to the moon and the stars above
I'm aware of the crimson sky
I'm a witness to the crumbling walls as well
But I'm not your alibi

“Waiting for the Wheel to Turn”

Living in a place with time
Living in a place where reality is
Standing on a big broad line
Watching it all go by, ah,
But you're taking it all away
The music, the tongue and the old refrains
You're coming here to play
But you're pulling the roots from a dying age

Remember the Buachaille Mor
Reaching for the skies from the barren shores
Watching o'er the village of Burns
And counting the days since the gael kept home
Well, the stranger claims it now
Sitting like a king with his gold from the south
Don't you see the waves of wealth
Washing away the soul from the land?

Here come the Clearances, my friend
Silently our history is coming to life again
We feel the breeze from the storm to come
And up and down this coast
We're waiting for the wheel to turn

Free were the fields of fern
Free was the fishing in the coves of care
Empty are the homes of old
Empty for the sake of summer's cause
Yes, you're taking it all away
The music, the tongue and the old refrains
You're coming here to play
But you're pulling the roots from a dying age

Here come the Clearances, my friend
Silently our history is coming to life again
We feel the breeze from the storm to come
And up and down this coast
We're waiting for the wheel to turn

“The Hebrides”, “Iona Theme”, “Colum Cille”
(Short instrumentals)

Felix Mendelssohn

“The Hebrides Overture”, op 26 composed in
1830

“Heart of the Highland”

Let the dance begin
Lock away the fine china
And kick out the old stone floor
Where the train divides
Up on Lomondside
Hear the echo from forest to shore
Sailing over deep water
And dancing on air
If you close your eyes
You will be there

CHORUS

Do you dream of a journey
Taking you back to your home
Where the cry from
The heart of the Highland lives on

When the morning breaks
Over ground, undercover
They're waiting to sound the alarm
Where the jets fly
Look up and wonder now
Could we be easy without the armed guard
But the heartbeat's a river
Flowing all around the world
The call is unspoken
But never unheard

CHORUS

CHORUS