



## What's in a name?

Today, the isthmus connects the villages of Arrochar and Tarbet. An early map drawn by Timothy Pont around 1560 depicts a castle at *Terbart* and an area called *Errawharr*. In a later map from 1777, Charles Ross refers to Arrochar as 'New Tarbat'.

Over the years, the spellings have changed: Tarbet comes from the Gaelic *tairbeart* meaning 'portage'; a place where boats were carried between two bodies of water. Arrochar is derived from the Gaelic *arachar* meaning 'ploughgate'; the amount of land a team of eight oxen could plough in a season.

A study of the names of places around Arrochar and Tarbet has revealed glimpses into their past: Creag an't Searraich, meaning 'rock of the colt', Stuckiedhu meaning 'black jutting hill' or Ben Reoch meaning 'brindled or grizzled ben'.

Photography: Cate Gillon Photography, Sandra Kay, Rhona McFarlane, Iain Dick, Richard Mackie, Hidden Heritage Project

Map by Charles Ross, 1777; © National Library of Scotland



The Hidden Heritage Project is hosted by Arrochar and Tarbet Community Development Trust (ATCDT). It aimed to involve the community in investigating and interpreting the area's heritage, and to raise the awareness of locals and visitors alike to heritage features in the landscape.

This leaflet was part-financed by the Heritage Lottery Fund and also by the Scottish Government and the European Community Argyll and the Islands LEADER 2007-2013 Programme.



### Disclaimer

In developing and promoting the Hidden Heritage Trail, ATCDT wishes to point out that the physical activity and remote locations which may be experienced while traversing the route can involve an element of risk, in respect of which, ATCDT accepts no responsibility or liability whatsoever.

Furthermore, while ATCDT has produced this leaflet in good faith and worked hard to make sure that the information it contains is up to date and accurate, it accepts no responsibility or liability arising from any error or omission contained therein.

# The Hidden Heritage Trail



## A circular walk between Arrochar and Tarbet



Explore the landscape and discover the past . . .

*Tarbet, thy shore I climbed at last,  
And through thy shady region passed,  
Upon another shore I stood  
And looked upon another flood:  
Old Ocean's self!*

The isthmus of land between Arrochar and Tarbet forms a corridor linking the sea and communities on the west coast with Loch Lomond and Central Scotland. For centuries, the landscape has been used as a through-route, but also as a place to live, farm and bury the dead. Discover its secrets as you walk.

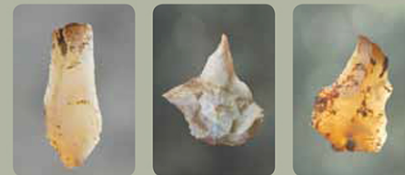
The Hidden Heritage Trail begins and ends at the Three Villages Hall in Arrochar (grid reference NN 2964 0411), but can be accessed at several other points. It is about 3.5 miles long, and follows the long-distance footpath, the Three Lochs Way ([www.threelochsway.co.uk](http://www.threelochsway.co.uk)). Please follow the Three Lochs Way signs and the Hidden Heritage waymarkers.

For more information about the local heritage, visit [www.arrocharheritage.com](http://www.arrocharheritage.com) and [www.hiddenheritage.org.uk](http://www.hiddenheritage.org.uk)

Poem: Samuel Rogers, *Written in the Highlands of Scotland*, 1812

People have lived on the isthmus for thousands of years. Evidence of their presence comes in the form of shaped flint tools found in the school field in Tarbet.

The lochs and hills would have been rich hunting grounds for these early inhabitants.



Evidence of prehistoric flint tools from Tarbet

Just before the famous Battle of Largs in 1263, King Hakon of Norway sent sixty ships up Loch Long commanded by Magnus, King of Man. The Vikings pulled their ships out of the water and dragged them across the land to Loch Lomond, from where they sailed south to raid the inland settlements. This event is evocatively recounted in *The Saga of Haakon Haakonarson* by Sturla Þórðarson c. 1265.



Olaus Magnus, 1555

From the 13th century the lands around Arrochar belonged to the Clan McFarlane, until they were sold in 1784. They are now the property of Luss Estates. The McFarlanes had a notorious reputation as cattle rustlers, and the moon became known as 'McFarlane's lantern', thanks to its role in aiding night-time raids.

The McFarlane chiefs had traditionally lived on the islands of Loch Lomond but in the 1500s they supposedly moved to Cladach Mor – now Tarbet playing field. In the late 1600s, the McFarlanes moved again and built Inverloch House at Arrochar, or 'New Tarbat', which they surrounded with avenues and plantations of trees. Despite being close to Loch Long, Inverloch House faced east across the isthmus towards Ben Lomond, rather than west to the Cobbler.







### 1 The Cobbler

Look towards the iconic Ben Arthur, or 'the Cobbler', part of the Arrochar Alps. Arrochar was significant in the development of Scottish climbing, thanks to the 'Cobbler Club' in the late 1800s, probably the earliest mountaineering club in the region.



### 2 Inverloch House

Inverloch House was built in 1697 by John MacFarlane as the main seat of the Clan MacFarlane; the original dated stone can be seen above the front door. Inverloch House later became Arrochar House, then the Cobbler Hotel and now the Claymore Hotel.



### 3 Arrochar Parish Church

The first church in Arrochar was built in 1733 – its ruins are in the churchyard. Until that time, parishioners had to walk to Luss church. The existing church dates to 1847.



### 15 The Vikings

Notice the views down Loch Long and imagine a fleet of Viking longboats heading for the isthmus! On the opposite

promontory are the ruins of a torpedo testing range (1912-1986). Now in 2013 this is the proposed site of a multi-million pound hotel complex.

**4 Creag an't Searraich**  
Creag an't Searraich, Gaelic for 'Rock of the Foal', was a small settlement lived in until 1820, but was in ruins by 1864. Low stone footings still survive, and excavations in 2013 unearthed the remains of much domestic pottery.



### 16 Railway

This part of the West Highland Line was started in 1887 and opened in 1894. Arrochar and Tarbet station is situated midway between the two villages. Thirty-seven 'navvies' died whilst completing this stretch of the line, and are buried just outside Ballyhennan graveyard.



**12 Church and Graveyard**  
Ballyhennan Church was built as a Free Church in 1844. Most of the gravestones in the graveyard date from the 1700s, though one slab appears to be much older; experts suggest it may date to the 1500s.



### 11 The Glebe

Glebe House reputedly stands on the site of an old dwelling of the MacFarlane clan chiefs in the 1500s. Excavations in 2013 unearthed evidence of prehistoric stone-tool making in the school playing field, showing that people have used this land for thousands of years.



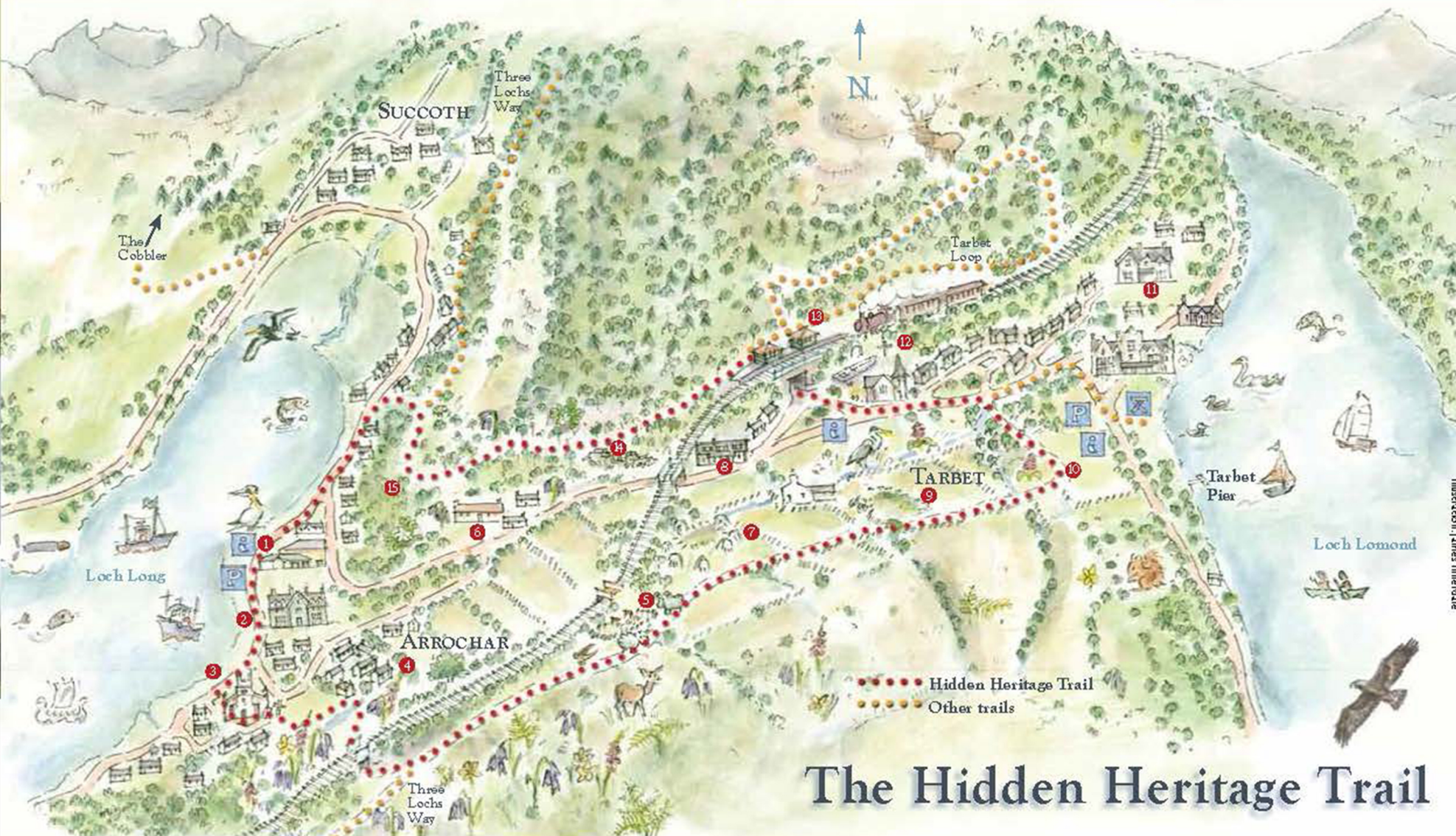
### 10 Loch Lomond

Look across the top of the baronial-style Tarbet Hotel to Loch Lomond and the dramatic peak of Ben Lomond. Victorian guests once enjoyed boat trips on Loch Lomond, as can visitors today. Here, in 1263, the Vikings relaunched their boats after dragging them across the isthmus.



### 9 Enclosure or Exclosure?

Known locally as the 'Witches' Ring' or the 'Viking burial mound', this boundary was excavated by the Hidden Heritage Project in 2013. Archaeologists have suggested that the banks and walls were created to keep livestock out, rather than in, but have no idea of its purpose.



### 4 Beech Trees

Below the railway line, look for some ancient beech trees. These are the remnants of a designed landscape planted by the owners of Inverloch House in the 1700s, and depicted on General Roy's Military Survey in 1750.

Roy Military Survey of Scotland  
© The British Library Board



### 5 Sheep pen

This complex of walls is the remains of an old sheep pen, in use in the 1800s. Notice other signs of farming across the isthmus in the form of old ditches, walls and drainage channels.

Arrochar, Tarbet & Arrochar Heritage Group

### 6 Tighvechtican

Edgar's survey of 1745 marks Tighvechtican, meaning House of the Watch, a reference to its use by the MacFarlanes to watch for approaching enemies or cattle to steal! It stands at the junction of the old military road built in the mid-1700s.

Arrochar, Tarbet & Arrochar Heritage Group



### 7 Curling Pond

Notice the rectangular footprint of the Victorian curling pond. Together with a golf course, these reflect the booming tourist trade fuelled by the arrival of the steam era. Visitors sailed from Glasgow to Arrochar and were transported to Tarbet to explore Loch Lomond by paddle steamer.



### 8 Toll House

Ballyhennan Toll House was built to collect tolls from road users after the road was turpined in the mid-1800s. The current A83 follows the line of a well-used cattle-droving route and Major Caulfield's military road, built in the mid-1700s.

