

## A Touring Guide to Buchanan Places in Scotland



## INTRODUCTION

Clan Buchanan, its cadet lines, and its many septs have their roots in the lands between Loch Lomond and Callander, in Stirling, Scotland. For the longest time, it was believed that the originator of Clan Buchanan was one Anselan O'Kyan, an Irish prince brought to Scotland to fight the Vikings. However, genetic genealogical research currently being conducted by members of Clan Buchanan is now showing this to be an origin myth and that our origins are much more local and ancient in Scotland itself.

The descriptions in this guide will help the visitor to explore the heritage of these lands from which our clan has sprung.

## A BASE IN BALMAHA OR DRYMEN

Both **Balmaha** and **Drymen** make excellent bases from which to explore Buchanan Country. Indeed, in Balmaha you are within the Parish of Buchanan itself. From Balmaha, it is possible to see and visit the Island of Clairinch, its neighbouring crannog, The Kitchen, and the larger adjacent island Inchcailloch. Balmaha is also home to **Tom Weir's Rest** (a lifelike memorial to climber, author, TV presenter and Buchanan clan member, the late Tom Weir), the **Oak Tree Inn**, and a **National Park Visitor Centre**. Drymen boasts a range of accommodation and dining options and is within easy walking distance of the **Buchanan Castle Golf Club**.

### Island of Clairinch and The Kitchen crannog

Set within the south-eastern end of Loch Lomond, the island of **Clairinch** and its neighbouring artificial island, or crannog, **The Kitchen**, together comprise the spiritual heart of our clan. Famously granted to the Seventh Laird of Buchanan, Anselan, by Maldonus, Earl of Lennox, in 1225, Clairinch served as the clan seat and its name became the clan's war cry, 'Clàr Innis!'. Archaeological remains on the island consist of at least seven building foundations and stone jetties. Of the buildings, we think at least one was a corn drying kiln, and the number of jetties surrounding the island testify to the importance of being able to reach this little haven in the Loch. Little remains of the crannog (a Scheduled Ancient Monument) today but a stony, bushy summit that sits just above the water level. In its heyday, however, this stone-built artificial island would have had a larger platform and would have been topped by a building that served as a meeting place for the clan. With no causeway from Clairinch to The Kitchen, access to the crannog would only have been possible by boat from one of the jetties on the island.

Access to Clairinch today is possible via kayak, which can be booked from Balmaha (Calamity Kayaking, phone: +44 7493042667) or Luss (Loch Lomond Leisure, <https://lochlomond-scotland.com/watersports/kayak/>). When you go, remember to wear long trousers and use plenty of tick-repellent! Enjoy a meal or an overnight stay at the Oak Tree Inn in Balmaha on your return (<https://www.theoaktreeinn.co.uk>).

## Buchanan Castle Golf Club

**Buchanan Castle Golf Club** is located near Drymen, just to the east of Loch Lomond, on lands that once comprised the core of the Buchanan estate. Whilst today's golf course was established by owners who came after the Buchanans, visitors can still see the remains of **Buchanan Auld House** and the approximate site of the medieval tower house, **Peel of Buchanan**, both of which were originally part of the Chief of Buchanan's estate. Peel of Buchanan was demolished in 1724, leaving no currently extant foundations, but it is likely to have stood somewhere at the northern end of today's golf course. The golf club estate is also home to the now lost Buchanan Parish Church and a burial ground of medieval Buchanan Chiefs.

For visitors, Buchanan Castle Golf Club is accessible via either the **B837** or the **A811**, and offers dining, golfing and accommodation - see their website for more details (<https://buchanancastlegolfclub.co.uk>) or call the Clubhouse on +44 1360 660369.

## Shieling Huts

Walkers who wish to depart from roads and venture into the uplands surrounding Ben Lomond may encounter traces of our Buchanan farming ancestors' seasonal dwellings, known in Lowland Scots as *shielings* and in Scots Gaelic as *áirigh*. During the medieval period and through into the 18th/19th Centuries, farmers would bring their cattle herds onto upland pastures for the grazing season, sheltering in shielings.

Scotland's record of archaeological sites - Canmore - lists 27 such huts or clusters of huts in the hills overlooking the eastern shore of Loch Lomond. Identified on early maps such as 1st Edition Ordnance Survey maps, the remnants of at least half of these have been located during field walking by archaeologists in recent decades.

If walking the slopes overlooking the Loch, look out for the remains of small rectangular buildings with one, two or occasionally three rooms and imagine our Clan forebears bringing their cattle into the hills, conducting repairs, and making butter, cheese and gruthim (salted curds). Specific shieling locations can be found by conducting a search with Scotland's **Canmore** website (<https://canmore.org.uk>) and comparing those with your most up to date **Ordnance Survey Explorer** map (<https://shop.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/maps/>).

## THE ANCIENT KINGDOM OF STRATHCLYDE

### From Dumbarton to Clach na Briton

Scotland's cultural roots draw on Pictish, Brittonic, Gaelic, Anglo-Saxon, Viking and Norman influences. Many of the ancestors of those who would become the Clan Buchanan lived within this melting pot at the meeting point of the lands of the Britons, Picts and Gaels, in the northern tip of the early medieval Kingdom of Strathclyde (5th to 11th Century AD).

Two sites in the vicinity of Loch Lomond define the northern extent of the territory of Strathclyde: the ancient centre of the kingdom at **Dumbarton Castle**, Dumbarton, and a megalith (big stone!) marking the kingdom's northern boundary, **Clach na Briton** - which means 'Stone of the Britons'.

Parking for Dumbarton Castle is available in the carpark in **Castle Road** near the castle. As the castle has been closed for maintenance works in 2022, do check for opening information at Visit Scotland's website (<https://www.visitscotland.com/info/see-do/dumbarton-castle-p248621>) before visiting.

Driving north along the **A82** from Dumbarton via the western shore of Loch Lomond, Clach na Briton (NGR NN 3371 2161) is most accessible for experienced and well-equipped hikers. For a steep, tussocky cross-country climb (approximately 1000 yards as the crow flies) to the megalith, park at the **Falls of Falloch** and cross the A82. An access gate is located on the north side of the A82 some 60 yards to the west of the carpark. The stone is located some 1000 yards NNE of the gate, with a climb of approximately 500 feet. For a less strenuous walk, the Falls of Falloch are themselves a beautiful destination in their own right.

## BUCHANAN MONUMENTS AND MEMORIALS

**George Buchanan Memorials: *The Buchanan Monument, Killearn and Memorials, Greyfriars Kirkyard, Edinburgh***

The Killearn monument, which commemorates the historian, poet and reformer, George Buchanan (1506-1582), is a 31 metre / 103 foot tall obelisk constructed of white Millstone Grit. George Buchanan, famously tutor to both Mary Queen of Scots and James VI of Scotland, was an uncompromising critic of church and state corruption. Buchanan was born near Killearn at the Moss and is buried in Greyfriars Kirkyard in Edinburgh. The Killearn Buchanan Monument is located in **Balfron Road**, just off the **A875** in Killearn, whilst Greyfriars boasts two memorials in George Buchanan's name - a larger one to the west of the church and a smaller gravestone to the east of the church.

**Dugald Buchanan Memorials: *Little Leny Burial Ground, Callander; Obelisk, Kinloch Rannoch, Perth & Kinross; and Gothic Monument, Strathyre, Stirling***

Little Leny, located at the confluence of the Garbh Uisge and the Eas Gobhain near **Callander**, is one of the resting places of the Buchanans of Leny. The burials are predominantly from the 18th and 19th Century, but it appears that a chapel stood here from the 13th Century until being relocated due to the river changing course.

Amongst the Buchanans laid to rest here is Dugald Buchanan, the 18th Century 'Gaelic poet, teacher, evangelist', to whom monuments also stand adjacent to the **B846** in **Kinloch Rannoch** (Perth & Kinross) and beside the **A84** in **Strathyre** (Stirling), where the Buchanan chiefs have held land since the 14th Century. Dugald Buchanan, together with minister, James Stuart of Killin, completed the first translation of the New Testament into Scottish Gaelic in 1767, contributing greatly to the preservation of the language.

Little Leny Burial Ground can be reached on foot by taking the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs **Callander Meadows** walk, which starts at **North Ancaster Square** (for details of this and other walks near Callander, see [https://forestry.gov.scot/images/pdf/rec\\_pdfs/Callander\\_paths.pdf](https://forestry.gov.scot/images/pdf/rec_pdfs/Callander_paths.pdf)). A pair of wellies is recommended in wet weather as part of the walk crosses a low-lying field!

## SEATS OF THE BUCHANAN LAIRDS AND CADET LINES

### **Cambusmore (privately owned)**

**Cambusmore** is located to the south-east of Callander, in Perthshire. It is the current Seat of the Chief of Clan Buchanan, and has been in his family since approximately AD 1300. The residence of The Buchanan, the house is Georgian and exhibits a porte-cochère tower. The estate property combines commercial hardwood and conservation woodland with livestock agistment. The estate is also home to much archaeology, including the Neolithic **Auchenlaich Chambered Cairn**, the longest of its type in the British Isles, and **Auchenlaich hill fort**, possibly of Pictish construction. Cambusmore is located on the **A84** and is the venue for the Inauguration of The Buchanan in October 2022. Associated with Cambusmore, and also in the Buchanan's family since at least 1300, are the lands of **Auchleshie** to the north.

### **Leny House (privately owned, accommodation available)**

**Leny House** is a Scottish baronial residence located to the north of Callander. A former property of the Buchanans of Leny, to whom the charter was given in 1237 by Alexander II, it was built in 1513 as an L-plan tower house. 19th Century rebuilding works gave the house its Jacobean appearance that it has today. Leny House is also home to a small walled graveyard, in which many Buchanans have been laid to rest, and a Scottish Sundial - a style that is unique to this part of the world. Leny Estate offers a range of accommodation by appointment (<https://www.lenyestate.com/about-us/>) and is accessed from **Old Military Road** near Kilmahog.

### **Site of Arnprior Castle (privately-owned)**

Although the remains of this castle could still be seen in 1796, nothing is now visible above the ground surface. Set within what are now arable farm fields, **Arnprior Castle** was the home of John Buchanan, the 'King of Kippen'. The probable site of Arnprior Castle is in privately-owned farmland to the south of Arnprior Farm, via the **A811**.

### **Balloch Castle Country Park (local authority managed park)**

The current **Balloch Castle** was built in 1808 for John Buchanan of Ardoch. Buchanan's building replaced the older castle, which had been built by the Earls of Lennox around 1238 - close to the time when the first grant of Clarinch was made to Anselan of Buchanan by the Lennoxes. Earthworks associated with the original castle are still visible and the grounds are accessible for visitors. Balloch Castle is accessed via **Stirling Road**, Balloch (<https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/leisure-parks-events/parks-and-green-spaces/parks/balloch-castle-country-park/>).

### **Boturich Castle (privately owned, dining and events)**

Also constructed for John Buchanan of Ardoch, **Boturich Castle** was built in the 1830s, again on the site of an earlier Lennox castle, which appears to have been built to an L-plan. Boturich Castle is today a wedding venue, offering dining and event planning in an idyllic setting (<https://boturich.co.uk>). Boturich Castle is accessed via **Stirling Road**, Balloch.

## PUBLIC ACCESS TO LAND IN SCOTLAND

### **Scottish Rights of Way & Access Society (ScotWays)**

Public access to land is enshrined in law in Scotland, providing walkers with access to many cross-country routes throughout Scotland. The **ScotWays** website (<https://scotways.com/maps-and-leaflets/>) is essential reading when planning a visit to the countryside in Scotland.





**George Buchanan Monument, Killearn**  
© Malcolm Buchanan



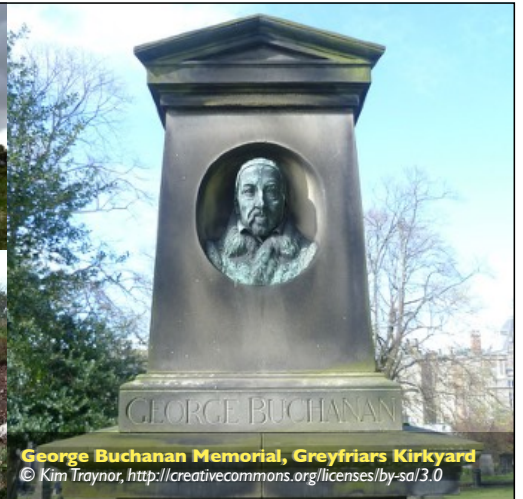
**Clach na Briton, Glen Falloch**  
© Kim Tuovinen



**Reconstructed Shieling**  
Hill Bothy at Cashel cc-by-sa/2.0 - © George Lanyon - [geograph.org.uk/pl/100080](http://geograph.org.uk/pl/100080)



**Buchanan Auld House, Buchanan Castle Golf Club**  
© Malcolm Buchanan



**George Buchanan Memorial, Greyfriars Kirkyard**  
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**Site of Peel of Buchanan, Buchanan Castle Golf Club**  
© Kim Tuovinen



**Cambusmore Estate, Callander**  
<https://www.theclanbuchanan.com/landmarks>



**Dugald Buchanan memorial, Kinloch Rannoch**  
Kinloch Rannoch cc-by-sa/2.0 - © Richard Dorrell - [geograph.org.uk/pl/1504649](http://geograph.org.uk/pl/1504649)



**Leny House, Callander**  
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**Tom Weir's Rest, Balmaha**  
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**Site of Arnprior Castle**  
Arable land above Arnprior cc-by-sa/2.0 - © Richard Webb - [geograph.org.uk/pl/1350184](http://geograph.org.uk/pl/1350184)



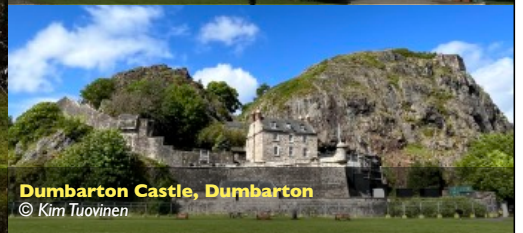
**Balloch Castle, Balloch**  
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**Island of Clairinch, Loch Lomond**  
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**Boturich Castle, Balloch**  
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**Dumbarton Castle, Dumbarton**  
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