

THE WATERFALL WALK

1 STONE BRIDGE —

This is what remains of the original bridge which gave access to Gairloch from the south when the old single track road used to run by the Old Inn. The new road and bridge were built in 1986 after the old bridge was damaged during a spate in the river.

2 ABHAINN GHLAS (GREY RIVER) —

Rises on An Gròban and Sidhean Mór, the two hills at the head of the glen. It is a typical Highland river – fast flowing – and its level rises and falls very quickly with rainfall.

4 THE ICE HOUSE —

Tucked into the bank on the left of the drive is the store which held ice for use through the summers before days of refrigerators. The ice was produced during frosty weather by flooding a series of “ice ponds” further up the glen, allowing water to freeze, cutting the ice into blocks and transporting them by horse and cart to the ice house.

6 FLOWERDALE HOUSE —

Built in 1738 by Alexander and Janet Mackenzie, it was extended westwards (from the projecting bowed bay) in 1904. The house in Gaelic is known as AN TAIGH DÌGE, signifying “the moat house” and takes its name from the earlier house of the Mackenzies of Gairloch which stood in the field below the road opposite the present house. As the name suggests, it was surrounded by a moat or ditch but no trace of the old house or ditch now remains, having been obliterated by agricultural operations a century ago.

7 THE ISLAND OF JUSTICE —

This small ‘island’ surrounded by its (deep!) boggy ditch was, according to tradition, where justice was administered by the Gairloch lairds until the end of the 18th century.

8 ALLT LOCH A’MHUILIN —

The Burn of the Mill Loch – so called because it used to provide the water to drive the sawmill at its foot. It may, in earlier times, have powered a small corn mill for use at Flowerdale.

9 FORESTRY SCHEME —

This marks the start of one of our forestry plantations. A large part of the area within this fence was clear felled as part of a continuing forestry strategy. The majority of the area has been stocked with native species of trees such as birch, Scots pine, rowan, alder, ash and wild cherry. All the

young trees have been grown from seed collected on the Estate and this wide variety of species will provide habitats for a diversity of wildlife in the woodland. It is essential to have a high perimeter fence to keep farm stock and deer out. When leaving the fenced area PLEASE DO NOT CLIMB OVER THE FENCE as this causes serious damage to it. Gates and stiles are provided at all main exit points together with steps on many of the heavy turning posts and strainers. Please ensure that gates are kept closed at all times. THANK YOU.

10 FLOWERDALE MAINS FARMHOUSE AND BARN —

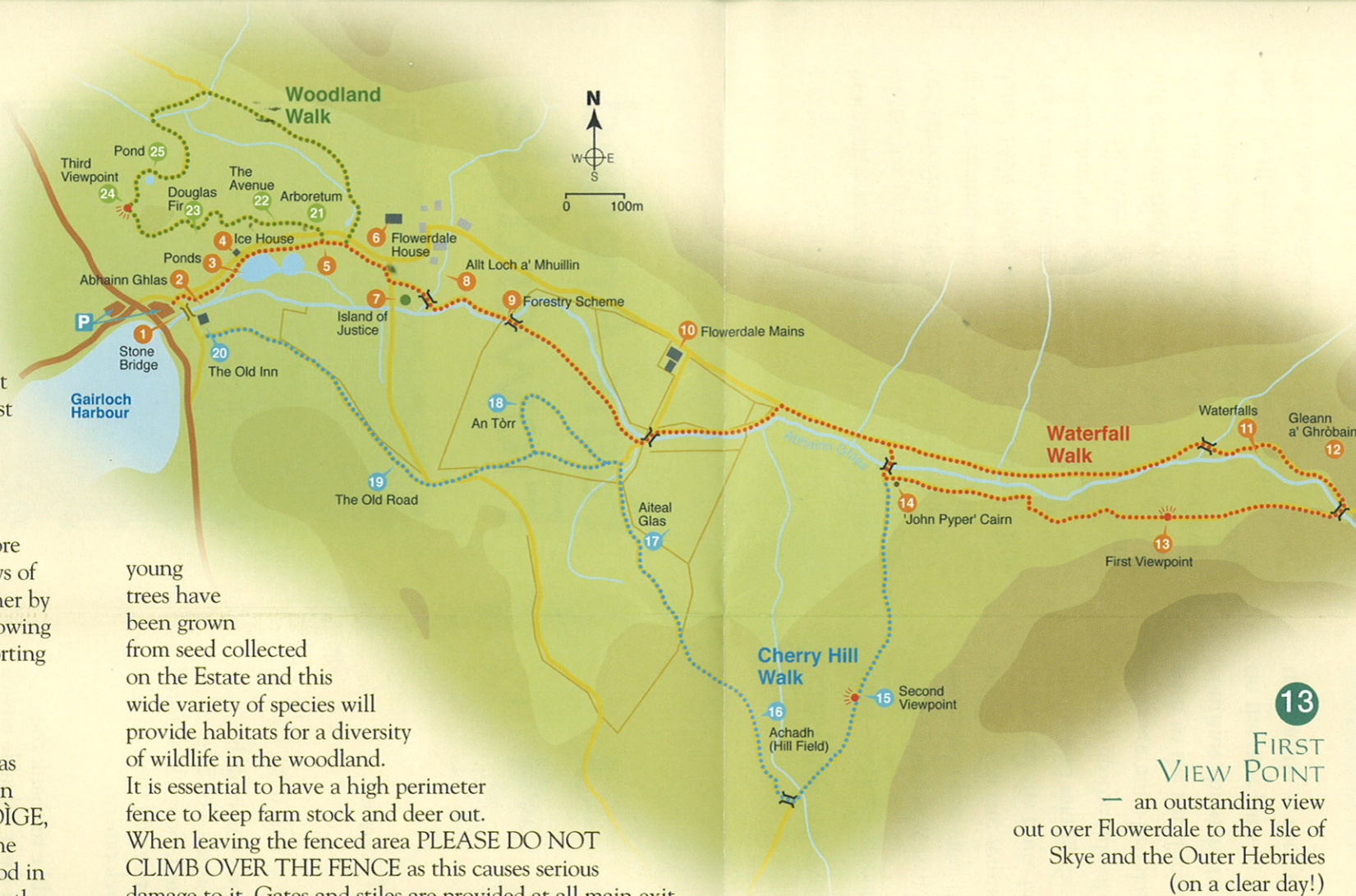
Built around the turn of the 19th century on a site known as ENGIDALE GLAS (“Grey” Engidale), this was home to Ian Dall Mackay (1656-1754), the blind piper of Gairloch. Called “John Pyper” in Estate records, Ian Dall is a most important figure in the history of piping and he and his descendants were second in their influence only to the Macrimmon family in Skye. The Mains is now used as a PONY TREKKING CENTRE which offers guided treks around the Flowerdale area.

11 THE WATERFALLS —

are at the end of Flowerdale Glen about a kilometre beyond the Mains and are known locally as EAS A’ GHILINNE (The Glen Falls). The name refers to the big glen above the falls that lies between the hills of AN GRÒBAN (The Grooved Hill) to the north and SÌDHEAN MÓR (The Big Fairy Hill) to the south. The bridge over the stream at this point was built in 1993 by the Army for the benefit of the community.

12 GLEANN A’ GHRÒBAIN “GROBAN GLEN” —

was used until the mid 19th century as a sheiling for the summer grazing of stock on the hill. Cattle were tended here mainly by the young women who slept at night in the small sheiling or huts. Here they made butter or cheese for use in the winter months.



17 AITEAL GLAS — surrounded by a dry-stone dyke, this is one of the “parks” or cultivated fields of Flowerdale Mains Farm and would have grown crops of hay, oats, potatoes and turnips.

18 AN TÒRR — This knoll is often called “Cherry Hill” because of the wild cherries growing there. From the top of it, the hills which surround and shelter Flowerdale can be seen well. Turning clockwise from the north, these are: Creag a’ Chait with Flowerdale House and the White Barn at its foot, the Sròin Ghaoithe above Flowerdale Mains, An Gròban and the Sidhean, and to the south west, Druim Obair Latha or “Day’s Work Ridge”, named after a small folly on its top called the “Day’s Work”.

19 THE OLD ROAD — was the way into Gairloch prior to 1846, when a new road was made on the line of the present road. Called in Gaelic the “Dùbh-ghlac” or “Dark Hollow”, it was used by those walking to Gairloch until quite recently and was the route taken by people from the villages on the south side of Loch Gairloch.

20 THE OLD INN — so called in English because it is the oldest hotel in Gairloch. Its Gaelic name is TAIGH ÒSDA CHEAN AN T-SÀIL (or Kintail Hotel, meaning head of the salt water) and it was built by the Estate around 1792. The account for “the expenses of the new inn at Kintail” has survived and shows that it cost the grand total of £302-14s to build.

THE WOODLAND WALK

21 THE ARBORETUM — much of the Woodland Walk runs through a collection of semi-exotic trees which were planted in 1885 by Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.

22 THE AVENUE — mostly comprised of Abies delavayi, one of the family of Silver Firs. These trees are prized for their beautiful foliage and large cones which turn blue/purple on reaching maturity when, sadly, they disintegrate in order to release their seeds.

23 DOUGLAS FIR (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) — these huge conifers were first introduced to Britain by David Douglas, one of the eminent 19th century plant hunters. They originate in Western North America where they attain heights up to 100m but in Britain they only grow to 60m. Douglas was a prodigious collector and was responsible for the original introduction of some 249 species to Britain, the most significant of which, in commercial terms, is the Sitka Spruce.

24 THIRD VIEWPOINT — fine views over Gairloch Golf Course and the bay, and to Skye on a clear day.

25 ORNAMENTAL POND — now sadly filled in with silt and vegetation, this pond was probably built at the same time as the arboretum was planted. Note the clump of GUNNERA (giant rhubarb) and the exotic Rhododendrons which are at their best in May/June.

13 FIRST VIEW POINT — an outstanding view out over Flowerdale to the Isle of Skye and the Outer Hebrides (on a clear day!)

14 “JOHN PYPER” CAIRN —

erected on the site of BREANRIE. Ian Dall was the tenant of Breanrie from 1706 till 1711 when he took the tenancy of Engidale Glas. There is now very little trace of a habitation as the houses were mainly built of turf with only the footings being of stone.

THE CHERRY HILL WALK

15 SECOND VIEW POINT —

Looking westwards from the highest point of the forestry track, the fields and buildings of Flowerdale Mains Farm can be seen below. Beyond these is the wooded TÒRR or CHERRY HILL and Flowerdale House can just be glimpsed through the trees. In the distance is Loch Gairloch, the coast beyond Strath of Gairloch and the Minch.

16 ACHADH OR HILL-FIELD —

the path from the footbridge passes through an old hill-field, whose surrounding dyke can be clearly seen. Osgood Mackenzie in his book “A Hundred Years in the Highlands” gives a graphic description of how these fields were cultivated, at a time when every patch of arable ground was utilised. The ground was turned using a CAS-CHROM or foot-plough and the crops grown would have been barley, oats or field peas. Their use gradually declined during the latter part of the 19th century.

The attractive little burn to the east of the path is ALLT MEALL NA H’INGHINN, “The Burn of the Daughter’ Knoll”.

