

A Trip to Remember

2011 - SCOTLAND

16 May 2011

Inverness





Great spot on the River Glass where salmon jump up river between June and October



Tower in Dingwall



BAGGING A MUNRO

We've met many "hill walkers." Clad in walking boots, raincoats and backpacks many are "bagging Munros". In the 19th Century, Sir Hugh Munro compiled a book on Scottish mountains higher than 3,000 feet. The book has spawned a cult following as hill walkers locate and climb each of the 283 distinct mountains Munro identified. According to many walkers we spoke to, ticking names off a list is not what the Munro mission is about. Plodding around in mist, cloud and driving rain to the point of exhaustion, is time well spent as it takes you to some of the wildest, most beautiful parts of Scotland. Once you have bagged all the Munros you can always move on to the Corbetts (2500ft), the Donalds (2000ft) or even the McPhies (300ft on the Isle of Colonsay).

BIKING

We have also come across more and more people touring on bicycles. Surprisingly a fair percentage are older (like us). Whilst we are warm and snug in our van, we shiver when we see cyclists, on the road, in the rain. We stop at a caravan park and watch as

thoroughly wet bikers roll up with their panniers, unpack in the rain and erect their small, fragile tents. We complain when the water in the shower is not warm. Imagine those poor blighters. Brrrrrr. Warm sunny weather yes, but numbing cold blustery weather must make traveling by bike a very very miserable experience.

LAIRG TO INVERNESS

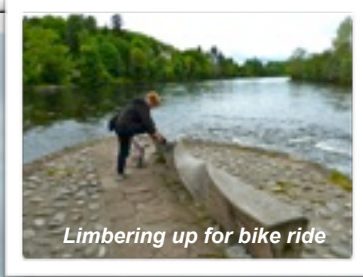
The change from isolated, open, treeless, almost barren moor country to more recognisable farming areas with green paddocks and pine plantations, was very rapid. However some of the A roads still had single lanes with passing places.

After driving south in the morning we finally found Loch Ness and drove along its edge until we reached Inverness. We camped there for the night. We did not visit any of the "Loch Ness Monster" attractions because we visited them 30 years ago. At Inverness the weather was clear so we jumped on our bikes and explored the centre of the city. The ride in was on a bike track via some islands in the Ness River. The islands are joined by some great little bridges.

Loch Ness is part of the Great Glen - a geological fault running in a arrow-straight line from Fort William to Inverness. Glaciers have eroded a deep trough along the fault line which is now filled by a series of lochs, including Loch Ness.



Inverness



Limbering up for bike ride



Inverness Castle