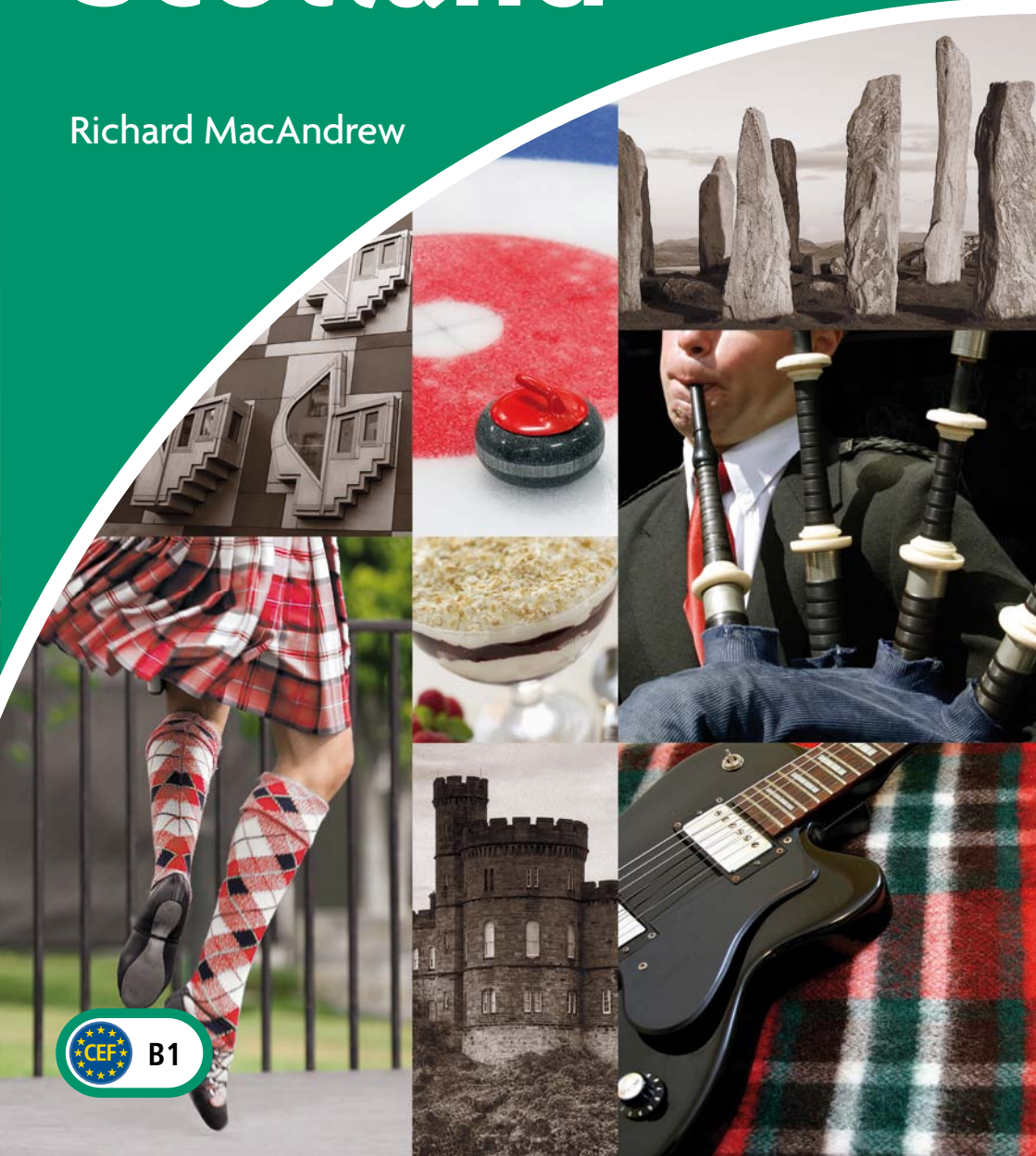


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Scotland

Richard MacAndrew



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Introduction

Scotland has many different faces. It has busy cities, quiet islands, mountains, lochs (the Scottish word for 'lake') and large areas of beautiful and empty countryside. It has Highland Games, Highland dancing, bagpipes and traditional¹ music. It has strange and dark stories from history and beyond. And there is present-day Scotland, a small but dynamic country, with its own special character and identity. Traditions and history come together with new ideas from the young Scots of today to make Scotland an exciting and modern country.



Facts about Scotland

- The population of Scotland is just over five million.
- The capital city is Edinburgh with a population of over 450,000.
- The largest city is Glasgow with a population of about 600,000.
- The other main towns include Aberdeen, Dundee, Inverness and Stirling.
- Scotland has an area of 78,772 square kilometres.
- There are just under eight hundred islands in Scotland. People live on about ninety-five of these islands.
- Three languages are spoken in Scotland: English, Scots and Gaelic. Everyone speaks English. However, about 30% of the population also speak Scots; and about 1.5% speak Gaelic – that is just under sixty thousand people.
- The word ‘Gaelic’ refers only to the language, not to the people.
- The highest mountain in Scotland is Ben Nevis.

A language note

The country is Scotland. The people are ‘Scots’, or ‘Scotsmen’ and ‘Scotswomen’, or ‘Scottish men’ and ‘Scottish women’. The adjective is ‘Scottish’. There is an adjective ‘Scotch’, but it is only used for whisky, pancakes and a few other dishes!

Chapter 1

Wild Scotland



There are mountains in the north of Scotland and on the islands off the west coast. This area, almost two-thirds of the country, is often called ‘the Highlands and Islands’. It is one of the loneliest places in Europe: fewer people live here per square kilometre than almost anywhere else in Europe. Yet it is from this area that much of ‘traditional’ Scotland comes: traditional music and dance, the Highland Games, clans and tartans, and the Gaelic language.

The Highlands

Scotland has mountains. They are not mountains like the Himalayas – or even the Alps. But they are mountains – and the ten highest mountains in Scotland are also the ten highest mountains in Great Britain. Some of them are rocky; some are

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green. You can walk and climb in the summer; you can ski in the winter. They can look beautiful and inviting, but in bad weather they can be dangerous places.



Ben Nevis is Scotland's highest mountain at 1,344 metres. Although there is a path all the way to the top, it is not always an easy climb. For most of the year the wind at the top is very strong; there is cloud at the top six days out of seven; and even in the middle of summer there can be snow. Sixty to seventy times a year the mountain rescue team is called out to help walkers and climbers who have got into difficulty. Over the last ten years, twenty-two people have died on the mountain.

Munros _____

At the end of the 19th century Sir Hugh Munro, who belonged to the Scottish Mountaineering Club, made a list of all the Scottish mountains over 3,000 feet (914 metres) in height. There are 284 of them. These mountains became

known as the ‘Munros’ and very quickly it became a hobby to climb them all. Over four thousand people, both young and old, have climbed them all and the number rises every year.



Four-year-old wants to be top

Four-year-old Darwin Bradley from Guisborough in the north of England wants to become the youngest person to climb all Scotland’s 284 Munros. He climbed his first at the age of twenty-two months and has so far completed fifteen.

Sarah Bradley, aged thirty-two and Darwin’s mum, said, ‘He absolutely loves it. We’ve always been interested in walking.

When he was twenty-two months old we were on holiday and we just thought we’d see if he could make it up a mountain. We did the walk in eight hours and Darwin had a sleep at the top.’

Darwin already has plans for when he has completed all the Munros.

‘I want to throw snowballs from Mount Everest,’ he says.

Walks in the mountains

There are a number of long walks through the mountains in Scotland. Possibly the most famous of these is the West Highland Way. It is 152 kilometres long and goes from Milngavie (near Glasgow) to Fort William in the Highlands. About fifty thousand people do this walk every year. It takes about six or seven days.

If you're still feeling strong, you can continue from Fort William, along the side of Loch Ness, to Inverness. This walk is called the Great Glen Way. It is a further 117 kilometres and will take another five or six days.



The islands

There are over 750 islands off the coast of Scotland, but people live on only about 95 of them. Lewis and Harris is the largest island. The north part of the island is called Lewis and the south part Harris. Often people talk as if they are two islands, but they are not. Lewis and Harris has a population of almost twenty thousand, but there are around twenty-five islands where ten or even fewer people live.

Life can be difficult in the Highlands and islands: villages are small and far apart and the winters can be hard and very cold. Because of this, the people who live there are generally friendly, welcoming and caring. In the villages it will be the tourists, not the locals, who lock their cars when they leave them.

Lonely schoolgirl wants classmates



Caroline Mackinnon, the loneliest schoolgirl in Britain, is hoping that she will soon have some classmates. Caroline is one of the fifteen people who live on the island of Canna off the west coast of Scotland, and she is the only student in the island's school.

'There are people to play with when I'm on holiday,' says Caroline, 'but at school there are no people to play with. It would be good if there were kids here.'

Canna is seven kilometres long by 1.5 kilometres wide. The

nearest shop is four hours away by boat; the nearest doctor is a little closer on the island of Eigg.

There are two empty houses on the island and islanders are hoping that new families will come to live there. There has been interest from all around the world including Dubai, Japan and Australia.

However, Caroline's aunt, Winnie Mackinnon, warns that life is not easy on Canna. 'Winters are long, dark and can be hard for those not used to it,' she says.

Obviously not all schools are as small as Caroline Mackinnon's. In Scotland the average size of a secondary school is just over eight hundred students. Schools in the Highlands, though, are often smaller because there are fewer people in the area. Gairloch High School on the west coast has about two hundred pupils. And some students have to travel as far as sixty kilometres to get there. The school has four coaches and three minibuses to bring them to school in the morning and to take them home in the evening.

Most jobs for teens in the Highlands and on the islands are in tourism – in hotels and restaurants, for example. Towns and villages are very quiet during the winter months, but busier during the summer when visitors come to experience the wild countryside and the beautiful coast.

Crofting



A croft is a kind of small farm found only in the Highlands and islands of Scotland. There are about eighteen thousand crofts in the area. A crofter – the person who farms on the croft – keeps a few cows and

sheep, and grows some vegetables. However, because the land is so poor, crofters cannot always make enough money from farming. They often have to do other work as well as looking after their croft.

The Standing Stones of Calanais _____

England has Stonehenge, France has Carnac. Scotland has Calanais – stones that you will never forget. These stones are called ‘standing stones’ and they were put in place a long time before history began.

The village of Calanais is on wild and faraway Lewis. There are three main groups of stones in and near the village. The largest and most famous is a group of fifty stones, thirteen of them in a circle, with the others in rows going north, south, east and west.

The stones are between three and five thousand years old and they seem to point in some way to the sun and the stars. Some people think that they were an early way for farmers to work out the right time for the different jobs they had to do.

Because the island is so far away, there are few visitors to Calanais. But if you make the journey, you will be happy you did. You can stand among the stones, look out over the sea and the hills and hear nothing but the wind. If you are there at sunrise or sunset, it will be an experience you will remember all your life.

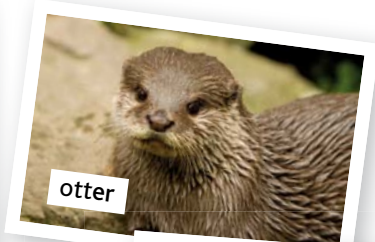


The 'airport' at Barra _____

Barra is one of the many islands off the west coast of Scotland. It is 6.5 kilometres wide, and 13 kilometres long and just over a thousand people live there. Barra has one of only two beach airports in the world. The other one is in Australia. Planes land and take off on a sandy beach on the north of the island. The flight times are always changing because of the sea. When the sea comes in and covers the beach, no planes can land.



Scottish wildlife



The Scottish mountains and islands are home to some wonderful wildlife including deer, otters and squirrels. The red deer is the largest of these. It can stand 1.3 metres high and weigh 126 kilos. Otters live on land and sea. They can live in both fresh water and sea water. They generally eat fish; but they also look for food on land, eating mice and even rabbits. Squirrels live in the forests and Scotland is one of the few places in Britain where you can still find red squirrels.

There are also some interesting birds. The puffin is the most unusual-looking bird in Scotland. It looks a bit like a small penguin, but it flies well. The largest bird in Scotland is the golden eagle. It can be one metre tall and has very wide wings. For a time there were almost no golden eagles left in Scotland, but their numbers are growing and people are not allowed to shoot them any more.

Eilidh MacFadyen's story _____

Eilidh MacFadyen comes from the island of Tiree. Her first language is Gaelic and she learnt English at school. Read what she has to say about growing up in the Highlands and islands.

Growing up on Tiree



Tiree is a great place to grow up. It's safe, quiet and beautiful. It might not have things that the big towns and cities have, but it has the countryside instead. Tiree hasn't got a swimming pool or a shopping centre – but you can swim in the sea and you enjoy shopping centres more when you leave the island.

Tiree has got a lot of crofts. One of my favourite times of year is spring because there are lots of lambs² around. I like going out and helping my dad during lambing time, and enjoy giving food to the lambs.

On Tiree we go to school when we are three years old. That's when I started at the Gaelic

playgroup. It was really fun, and I met the kids I later went to school with. The following year I went to primary school. There were two groups in the primary school: Gaelic and English. I was the youngest in the school when I started. There were only five people in my Gaelic group, and I was the only girl. The English and the Gaelic groups did music, PE and art together – just seven of us in the class. Then, in the third year, I started to learn English.

Moving to secondary school was really easy, because the primary and secondary schools share the same building. Tìree is such a small island that we knew many of the teachers before going to secondary school.

Living on an island means we go on quite a lot of school trips. One of my favourite trips was the Youth Games trip. This was a sporting trip. There were lots of different competitions, and Tìree was in the hockey and football competitions.

I was in the hockey team. We came second out of seven teams. Because I was in a class with four boys during primary school, I played a lot of sport – and I love it.



Tìree is a very musical island. And we're lucky because we have some really good teachers. I started playing the accordion when I was ten. You can also learn the piano, the violin, the flute, the pipes, the drums and other instruments. I love going to school on Tìree because everyone knows each other and we are all friends.

ACTIVITIES

1 Complete the sentences with information from Chapter 1.

- One of the least populated areas of Europe is *the Highlands and Islands*
- The highest mountain in Scotland is
- All the mountains in Scotland more than 914 metres high are called the
- The biggest Scottish island is
- There are some very old stones, which were possibly used to tell the time, in
- There is an unusual airport at

2 Complete the sentences with the names in the box.

Darwin Bradley	Eilidh MacFadyen
Caroline Mackinnon	Sir Hugh Munro

- Sir Hugh Munro* has a group of mountains named after him.
- slept at the top of a mountain.
- doesn't have any classmates.
- likes her school and where she lives.

3 Answer the questions.

- What can make life difficult in the Highlands and Islands?
villages are far apart and winters can be hard and cold.
- What jobs do most teens in the Highlands and Islands do?

- Where do otters live?
