

What to do at Mansefield House

What's your thing? Golf? Hill walking? Clay pigeon shooting? Canoeing? Historic sites? Beautiful botanic gardens? You're in the right place....

Loch Long is a spectacular fjord type sea loch that cuts deep into the craggy mountains of the Arrochar Alps. Arrochar, situated at the head of the loch, is derived from the Gaelic meaning 'Loch of ships' bearing reference to the fleet of Viking longships that sailed up the loch over 700 years ago. I thought it was because it is very long. I was wrong.... No more Vikings I'm afraid, but plenty of history and masses to see.

Walking

There are numerous local walks which start from the house, as well as the more adventurous walks further afield. All abilities and levels of fitness can be catered for. – from flat walks with prams to Munros of over 3,000 ft. The Cruach Tarbeit walk is well surfaced but quite steep in parts, but really worth the effort for the joint view of Loch Long and Loch Lomond. Argyll Forest Park, consisting of the forests of Ardgartan, Glenbranter and Benmore, has ideal marked walking paths, which are also suitable for mountain biking. One good circular forest trail – the Cat Craig Loop, with views down Loch Long or back towards Arrochar, starts at the Information Centre at Ardgartan and takes approximately 2.5 hours. The West Highland Way runs along the East side of Loch Lomond and can be picked up at Inverarnan. This 93-mile route is indisputably Britain's most spectacular long-distance path.

Short walks with kids in mind (too numerous to mention them all....)

Clachan Farm Woodland Walks, Cairndow

Signposted from the Tree Shop at The Loch Fyne Oyster Bar, there are three walks taking you to an ancient burial ground, a tree house and a viewpoint. The medieval burial ground at Kilmorich is only a 20 min stroll across the fields. Dating back to the 13th century, there are examples of stone carvings and evidence of an early Christian Chapel within the graveyard walls. The Tree House loop takes approx. 30 mins and follows the old "coffin road". A must for kids (and adults), the tree house gets you inside the canopy of an ancient ash tree. You should allow 60 mins for the Viewpoint walk which takes you on a steep ascent up the slopes above Loch Fyne (walking boots recommended). The path follows the route taken by the workers who built the aqueduct and reservoir that supply the nearby hydro power station. Once at the viewtop, the climb is well worth the fabulous views down the Loch and up Glen Fyne.

Firkin Point, Nr Tarbet, Loch Lomond

Firkin Point picnic area and car park is the start of various lochside walks with fabulous views across Loch Lomond - ideal for wheelchair users / cyclists and families with young children. In both directions from the picnic area, 3 miles of level surfaced path follow the old road along the lochside.

Hours: Open daily April – Oct. Details: 01389 758 216

Puck's Glen and Benmore Gardens, Loch Eck

After a very scenic 40 mins drive towards Dunoon, you will find Puck's Glen - a truly special glen with a series of cascading waterfalls and luscious overgrown banks rising up from the well signed path. Great for kids. You can combine this with a visit to Benmore Gardens, which are fabulous.

Climbing

The Arrochar Alps include four Munros - Ben Vorlich, Beinn Ime, Ben Vane, Beinn Narnain. Not forgetting the spectacular Ben Arthur ('The Cobbler'), a Corbett at just under 3000 ft, which is ideal for the more adventurous hill walker. You can buy maps of the area at Braeside Stores in the village. Don't forget to tell someone if you are climbing in the hills.....



Mansefield House
Arrochar
Loch Long
Argyll & Bute G83 7AG
t: 01301 702 956
m: 07958 771 106

www.mansefieldhouse.com

Pottery: 'Potting with Tom', Mansefield Studios

Fancy having a go at some pottery? Tom offers two hour sessions for 2 - 8 people making a cup (or anything else that takes your fancy). He will then fire your pot and send it on to you. Longer courses also available, depending on your requirements.

Price £25 per person including firing and postage
Address Mansefield Studios, Mansefield House, Arrochar, Loch Long G83 7AG
Tel 01301 702 956
Email enquiries@mansefieldstudios.com
Website www.mansefieldstudios.com

Cruising on Loch Lomond

Loch Lomond's largest cruise boat operator is based in Tarbet, 2 miles away. The boats have open deck space as well as lower centrally heated areas for the cold-blooded. Tea, coffee and full bar facilities are aboard.

Address The Boatyard, Tarbet, Loch Lomond G83 7DG
Tel 01301 702 356
Email enquiries@cruiselochlomond.co.uk
Website www.cruiselochlomond.co.uk

Cruising elsewhere: SS Sir Walter Scott Steamship, Loch Katrine

The SS Sir Walter Scott's passenger service has been cruising around beautiful Loch Katrine for well over 100 years. She is the last screw-driven steamship in service in Scotland's inland waters and is a testimony to the outstanding skills of her builders.

Price High Season: Adult £5.00 Child £3.75 Family £16.00
Low Season: Adult £5.00 Child £3.20 Family £14.50
Hours High Season: 14th June - 31st Aug; Easter weekend;
September weekend: 11.00, 13.45 & 15.45 daily.
Low Season: 29th Mar - 13 June; 1st Sept - 24th Oct: 11.00, 13.45 & 15.45 daily.
Details 01877 376 316.

Watersports: Canoe, Kayak, and Pedal Boat

Fantastic for families searching for the complete day out, with a wide variety of activities for the kids to enjoy from outdoor water and land activities to children's play areas and learning zones at the Loch Lomond Shores Gateway centre, Balloch. Guided canoe trips gliding through the tranquil waters of Loch Lomond can be arranged for individuals and groups. Half-day and full trips available, overnight camps can be arranged on request.

Address 11 Haldane Terrace, Balloch, G83 8ER,
Email info@canyouexperience.com
Website www.canyouexperience.com

Canoe / Kayak Hire

The canoes, kayaks and pedal boats can all be hired for a 1/2 hour or 1 hour hire, at a cost of £12 for 1/2 an hour's activity, or just £17 for a full hour - per boat. Open everyday between Easter and October. Canoe and kayak hire is also available every weekend and all school/bank holidays. Each canoe can seat up to two adults and two small children. A kayak is suitable for 2 adults, or 1 adult and 1 child, and the pedal boats are can seat up to 3 adults and 2 small children. A limited number of 'super pedal boats', which can seat up to 3 adults and 2 large children. A fabulous and economical way to have some fun with the family!
Gently paddle or pedal around the sheltered lagoon on the southern point of Loch Lomond, with



stunning views towards Ben Lomond and north of Loch Lomond. Staff monitor the designated area, patrolling in a safety boat - so you can have complete peace of mind to enjoy the experience. Children under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult.

Cycling & Mountain-biking

The varied terrain in the Loch Lomond area offers great rides for all abilities and requirements from easy flat cycle paths to more adventurous mountain bike trails. There are a number of designated mountain bike tracks in the area as well as a flattish path along Loch Lomond from Tarbet to Balloch. You can hire bikes from Can You Experience in Balloch. Open everyday between Easter and October.

Address 11 Haldane Terrace, Balloch, G83 8ER

Email info@canyouexperience.com

Website www.canyouexperience.com

Bike Hire

Can You Experience have a fleet of bikes in various sizes to suit all the family. For the tots they have a pull along trailer, which can be attached to the adult's bike. For 4 to 7 year olds who are not yet confident riders, there are tag-a longs - they get to peddle, but are still attached to the adult bike.

Maps of the popular routes will be provided with your hire, and staff can help you plan out where you want to go - Balloch is on the popular Sustrans cycle route, which many people choose for their journey.

Between April and September bikes can be hired every day between 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m and in October open 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m - either for up to 4 hours, a half-day or a full day. Bike hire prices are from £12 for 4 hours to £214 for a weeks hire:

Train: West Highland Railway

You can get a train from Arrochar & Tarbet station and enjoy a picturesque rail journey as far as Mallaig or Oban in the north or to Glasgow or Edinburgh to the East. Harry Potter's train route... We see him all the time. National Rail Enquiries Tel 08457 48 49 50.

Strathblane Falconry

A unique experience of free flying and handling trained birds of prey, either in the spectacular Blane Valley, or at a venue of your choice. From the diminutive White Faced Scops Owl to the impressive Turkmanian Eagle Owl; from the humble Kestrel to the awe-inspiring Peregrine, you'll be instructed in the handling of these magnificent birds. Price: £60 per group: treat your family to a one hour demonstration or hold a birthday party treat at the Centre. The number in the party is your choice. All age groups can be catered for and they will be given the opportunity to fly and handle a selection of owls and hawks. Half day experience - £65 per person: a tour of the Centre and the opportunity to hold and fly various birds of prey. It allows the individual to experience the thrill of flying birds of prey to the glove. An exciting experience that will be remembered for a very long time.

Interactive day - £95 per person: an insight into the sport of falconry which includes aspects of keeping, training and flying birds of prey, followed by the opportunity to fly and handle a wide selection of birds including an eagle, owls, hawks and falcons. A light lunch is provided at the hotel.

Address Strathblane Country House Hotel, Milngavie Road, Strathblane G63 2EH

Tel 01360 770222 Fax: 01360 770345

Email info@strathblanefalconry.co.uk

Website www.strathblanefalconry.com



Pony Trekking

Argyll Adventure, just 25 minutes drive from Mansefield House offers fantastic riding for beginners upwards, from the age of 4.

Address Dalchenna Farm, Inveraray, PA32 8XT

Tel 01499 302 611

Website www.argylladventure.co.uk

Action Adventure Activities

Action Adventure Activities is located minutes away from Loch Lomond. They provide the ideal leisure experience for groups or individuals. Choose from 4x4 Driving, Mountain Boarding, Canoeing, Kayaking, Wakeboarding, Waterskiing, Windsurfing, Climbing & Abseiling, Archery, Paintball, Quad Biking, Off Road Buggies, Canyoning, Cycle Trips, Blindfold Driving, Power Kiting, Raft Building, Guided Hillwalks & our Survival Experience. Stag and Hen packages available.

Address Easterhill Farm, Gartmore, Stirlingshire, FK8 3SA

Email action@aaactivities.com

Website www.aaactivities.com

Clay Pigeon Shooting

One of the best ranges for Clay Pigeon Shooting in Scotland. Clay Shooting is an exciting and thrilling sport. If you've never tried it before, why not give it a go in a safe and friendly environment? They have modern electronic traps which give a variety of targets to simulate everything from high pheasants to bolting rabbits, in a scenic woodland setting overlooking Loch Lomond. No previous experience is required as instruction is given by a former Scottish International Clay Pigeon Shot. It's fun and challenging and suitable for men and women of all ages (minimum 12 years). From 1 person to small parties. Times: You can arrange to shoot anytime from 11 am to 4 pm. (nb there is no shooting on a Sunday). Price: £50 per person for 50 clays. This includes use of gun, ear defenders, expert tuition.

Address Tullichewan Farm, Balloch, Loch Lomond G83 8QY

Tel/Fax 01389 711190

Email tullifarm@btinternet.com

Website <http://www.lomondshooting.co.uk>

Lomond Archery

Lomond Archers is a mobile archery tuition service based in Dumbarton meaning we are able to travel to you for the actual sessions. Alternatively they can provide one of several scenic venues to meet your specifications. This is an inexpensive way to enjoy some healthy exercise while picking up an exciting skill you can tell your friends about! Whatever your age and fitness level, they will have the perfect bow for you. With a wide range of specialised equipment they can cater for everyone's needs, both individuals or large groups.

Email info@lomondarchers.com

Website www.lomondarchers.com

Go Ape! High Wire Forest Adventure

Want to feel 120 feet tall? Take to the tress and speed down Britain's two longest zip slides. They're part of an exhilarating course of rope bridges, Tarzan swings and zip slides; all set up to 120 feet above the forest floor. Ideal for friends and families, you'll share around 3 hours of fun, challenge and adventure going ape up in the trees.



Opening times: 9-12 & 16-17 February half term, 14 March – 31 October, weekends throughout Nov
Prices Gorillas (18 years+) £25, Baboons (10-17 years) £20
Address David Marshall Lodge Visitor Centre, Queen Elizabeth Forest Park, Aberfoyle, FK8 3SY
Email info@goape.co.uk

Swimming Pools & Leisure Centres

The Meadow Centre Dumbarton (25 mins drive) is a great swimming pool with a gradual beach-like incline into the water, a water fume and a wave machine that comes on periodically. Brilliant fun for all the family.

Helensburgh swimming pool, 25 mins drive away has a good baby pool. Tel: 01436 672 224

The Loch Fyne Hotel & Leisure Club, Inveraray has a 15 metre swimming pool with whirlpool spa, steam room and sauna. No baby pool and possibly a bit cool for tiny babies. You could make a day of it and have something to eat in the Waterfront Restaurant after your swim. Call the Leisure Club Supervisor for details: 01499 302 148.

Golf

There are many great golf courses in the area, including the Championship Loch Lomond Course. The Carrick offers an alternative for those wanting to play Loch Lomond but who don't have a spare £60k to join... (www.devere-hotels.com/our-hotels/cameron-house/golf) There are courses open to all at Inveraray and Helensburgh. Go to www.loch-lomond.net/golf for further information.

Fishing

Sea water fishing on Loch Long (which is tidal) includes cod, whiting, plaice, mackerel. In August salmon can be seen jumping in the loch. You can hire a boat from Tony Hebdon, next to Teigness Stores, and spend a morning or afternoon out on the loch (don't forget your picnic!).

Tel: 01301 702 720.

20 miles long and 4 miles wide at the wider southern end, Loch Lomond is suited to both boat and shore fishing. Boats can be hired, and fishing permit can be bought from various hotels along the shore.

Fly Fishing at Inverawe Fisheries: A superb fly fishing centre with four lochs catering from the beginner to expert dry-fly angler. The lochs are stocked daily with 2-3lb rainbow trout and intermittently with large jumbos and 2lb brown trout. The fisheries also have a mile and a half of salmon and sea trout fishing on River Awe. There is an Angling School where you can hire tackle and learn to fly fish.

Tel 01866 822 777

Website www.inverawe-fisheries.co.uk

Aquariums

Loch Lomond Sea Life Centre

At the bottom of Loch Lomond, the drumkinnon Tower hosts the Sealife Centre. A must for all fish fanciers. Website www.sealifeeurope.com/local/index.php?loc=lochlomond

Oban Seal and Marine Centre, Balcardine, Nr Oban

On the shore of Loch Ceran, the Oban Seal and Marine Centre is in one of the most picturesque Settings in Britain, and is a haven for some of the most enchanting of British creatures. You can explore over 30 natural marine habitats and the seal sanctuary (with seal pup nursery). The hospital cares for stray, sickly or injured pups and is the most successful 'rear and release' centres in Scotland. Hours: Open daily from 10.00. Details: 01631 720 386



Blair Drummond Safari Park, Nr Stirling

Elephants, rhinos, giraffes, zebras, lions, tigers, monkeys, bears.... Also a Pets' Farm where you can get up close with penguins, donkeys, llamas and otters. Giant astraglide, the 'Flying Fox' across the lake, adventure climbing area and pedal boats. Price: Adult £8.00 Child £4.00

Hours: 20th Mar - 4th Oct: 10.00 - 17.30 (last admission 16.30)

Tel 01786 841 456

Website www.blairdrummond.com

Gardens

Ardkinglas Woodland Garden, Cairndow

One of the finest collections of conifers and rhododendrons in the British Isles. The collection includes one of the tallest trees in Britain, a 202 ft Grand Fir and the 'Mightiest Connifer in Europe' - a Silver Fir with a girth in excess of 32 feet. Various woodland trails of different lengths wind throughout the garden. The blaze of colour make this a must in Autumn and Spring. Many of the plants seen in the garden can be bought from the Tree Shop at Cairndow. Price: Over 16s £3.00 Under 16s Free. Hours: Open all year, dawn to dusk. Details: 01499 600 261.

Benmore Botanic Gardens

magnificent woodland garden set in the stunning Cowal Peninsula. Its 140 acres, entered via a Giant Redwood Avenue forming one of the finest entrances to any botanic garden in the world, contain a wide collection of flowering trees and shrubs including over 300 species of rhododendron and over one third of the world's winter hardy conifer species.

Way marked walks lead to a pond, formal garden and viewpoint at 450 feet (140m). Fine collections from North and South America, the Orient and the Himalaya are interpreted through guided and audio tours and a guidebook. Exhibitions are shown at the Courtyard Gallery. Refreshments, plants, books and gifts are available.

Website www.gardens-of-argyll.co.uk

Local History

The area has many historic buildings, museums and points of interest. Hill House, Helensburgh is the finest of architect and designer Charles Rennie Mackintosh's domestic creations. Ballyhennan Burial Ground, located behind the Black Sheep Craft Shop in Tarbet, has a particularly interesting graveyard which is the last resting place for a number of Vikings. Inveraray Castle, home of the Duke of Argyll and family seat of the Campbell Clan, is open between April and October. Exhibitions at the Castle include the famous armoury collection, French tapestries and a genealogical display in the Clan Room. Also the starting point of three good walks (the best being the steep path that takes you up to the keep overlooking the Castle).

Places of Historic Interest

Inveraray Jail, Church Square, Inveraray

This is Scotland's living 19th century Jail. It features an 1820 courthouse where you can sit in the public benches and hear about some of the trials that took place here. There is also the torture, death and damnation section: branding with a hot iron, ear nailing and public whippings. The Old Prison, also set in 1820 is where you can rub shoulders with the murderers and mad men who were imprisoned here. Hours: April - Oct: 09.30 - 18.00 (last admission 17.00); Nov - March: 10.00 - 17.00 (last admission 16.00). Details: 01499 302 381



Breadalbane Folklore Centre, Falls of Dochart, Killin

Overlooking the beautiful falls of Dochart, the Breadalbane Folklore Centre gives an insight into the life and legends of Breadalbane - the 'High Country' of Scotland. The centre is housed in a lovely old restored watermill and brings to life the facts and fables that form the Gaelic folk traditions of the Highlands. Price: Adult £1.50 Child: £1.00 Family: £3.00

Hours: Mar - May & Oct: 10.00 - 17.00; June & Sept: 10.00 - 18.00; July - Aug: 09.30 - 18.30; Nov - Jan: Closed; Feb: 10.00 - 16.00 weekends only. Details: 01567 820 254.

The Rob Roy Story, Ancaster Square, Callander

Clan leader, cattle trader, cattle thief, balckmialer,. Rob Roy has provoked powerful emotions for over 300 years. The Rob Roy Story is situated at the gateway to his Trossachs home land, and takes you into his world. You can listen to his conversations, meet the man himself, track the story which led to him being outlawed. Price: Adult £2.75 Child: £1.25 Family £6.00

Hours: Mar - May & Oct - Dec: 10.00 - 17.00; June 09.30 - 18.00; July - Aug: 09.00 - 22.00; Sept 10.00 - 18.00; Jan - Feb: 11.00 - 16.30 (weekends only). Details: 01877 330 342.

Stirling Castle, Stirling

The Royal Castle of Stirling sits overlooking some of the most important battlefields in Scotland's history, including William Wallace's victory over the English at Stirling Bridge in 1297 and Robert the Bruce's defeat of the same foe at Bannockburn in 1314. Stirling Castle was besieged, relieved and besieged countless times in the Scottish struggle against domination by the English. Also childhood home to Mary Queen of Scots, who had her coronation here in 1543 and almost died in a fire in 1561.

Price: Adult £5.00 Child £1.50. Hours: April - Sept: 09.30 - 18.00; Oct - March: 09.30 - 17.00. Details: 01786 450 000.

Bannockburn Heritage Centre, Glasgow Road, Stirling

From this battlefield the Scots "sent them home tae think", when Edward II's English Army was soundly defeated by Robert the Bruce. This brought the independence for which William Wallace also fought.

The Centre includes a large model of the Battle of Stirling Bridge with audio visual presentation of the battle, life sized models of Wallace and Bruce, and displays relating to the Declaration of Arbroath (which inspired Thomas Jefferson when he drew up the American Declaration of independence).

Price: £2.30. Hours: 1st - 31st Mar & 1st Nov - 23rd Dec: 11.00 - 15.00; 1st Apr - 31st Oct: 10.00 - 17.30. Details: 01786 812 664.

Charles Rennie Mackintosh's Hill House, Helensburgh

Possibly the best surviving example of Mackintosh's domestic architecture, the house is stamped with his very personal interpretation of Art Nouveau. Open April - Oct: 13.30 - 17.00.

Address 8 Upper Colquhoun Street, Helensburgh, G84

Tel 0844 493 2208 / 01436 673 900

Dumbarton Castle, Dumbarton

Set in the old capital of Strathclyde, this is the site where Mary Queen of Scots sailed to France as a child in 1548. The castle is spectacularly set on a volcanic rock overlooking the Clyde. There are displays in the Grosvenor's House. Price: Adult £1.80 Child: 75p. Hours: Open all year; winter: closed Thurs & Fri afternoons. Details: 01389 732 167.

Shopping: Loch Lomond Shores, Balloch

Stylish shopping mall at the bottom of Loch Lomond with Jenners, and various other shops, restaurants and cafes, a very good and informative Tourist Information Centre, and Drumkinnon Tower - home of the Aquarium and sea life centre. A good day out for all the family. There is also a monthly farmers market showcasing some of the best local produce. Hours: Summer: 09.00 - 19.00; Winter: 10.00 - 17.00. Details: 01389 721 500



Archray Forest Drive, Aberfoyle

Achray Forest Drive consists of 7 miles of forest road that means you can exchange the pace of the main road for a leisurely drive through this very beautiful Highland scenery, spotting the local wildlife. There are lots of parking areas so you can leave your car and wander up a rocky knoll or picnic beside a stream. Details: 0131 334 0303.

Oban Distillery, Stafford Street, Oban

Find the North Pier and you've found the Distillery. This is one of the oldest sources of malt whisky and you can watch the distillers at work producing the very distinctive peaty malt. A complimentary dram ends the visit.

Hours: Mon - Fri 09.30 - 17.00

Details: 01631 572 004

and finally.....

The Haven, Balloch

The Haven provides a full range of health and relaxation treatments: Dermatologica skin care treatments, spa body therapies, mineral scrubs, holistic and stress reduction sessions and reiki. Anything from 15 minutes of electrolysis to a full day 'Hot Stone Therapy Session'. Sheer indulgence.

Tel 01389 607 222

Website www.the-haven.biz

**... I told you there was loads to do!
You'll have to come again....**



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