



RAASAY DAY – Wednesday 5 August 2026

Fàilte gu Eilean Rathairsir / Welcome to the Isle of Raasay!

The Isle of Raasay is a long narrow island between Skye and mainland peninsula of Applecross. It is an intriguing place and for a relatively small island offers visitors a variety of interest with hills, forests, castles, ancient stones and other curiosities reflecting thousands of years of human occupation from the Mesolithic era. You will find much to interest you outwith the published programme of events.

Today some 150 people live and work on Raasay. Employment includes crofting, forestry, tourism and of course the great new addition – a distillery! Most inhabitants live at the south end of the island in and around the village of Inverarish but you can see ruins of the townships where people lived until the infamous Clearances of the 19th Century.

Raasay and Clan MacLeod

The history of Raasay from the 15th to the 19th centuries was with Clan MacLeod.

Historic stories include the capture of Brochel Castle and its use as a pirate stronghold; the Battle of Clachan Bay where the MacLeods fought a sea battle with marauding MacKenzies; the harbouring of the fugitive Bonnie Prince Charlie which led ultimately to the Chiefly family giving up the island and seeking a new life in Australia along with many other Raasay folk; the visit by the famous travellers Johnson and Boswell; and the infamous landowner George Rainey who cleared the island of most of its people.

In the twentieth century Calum MacLeod single-handedly built his own road to his village of Arnish at the north of the island. Today, people walk, cycle and drive his road and often film the experience.

After Brochel Castle was abandoned, the Chiefs moved to Raasay House. Raasay House is now a hotel and activity centre and the base for some of our activities today.

Schedule for today: The ferry departure port for Raasay from Skye is Sconser. Buses will leave Dunvegan for Sconser at 0800 and 0900. These are timed for the ferry departures at 0925 and 1025.

0950 First ferry arrives in Raasay. Chief John piped ashore

*There are earlier and later ferries. Independent travellers should consult the Calmac timetable. <https://www.calmac.co.uk/en-gb/route-information/sconser-raasay/#timetables>

1000 Chief John's welcome to Raasay

1000 First fast boat departure from pier

1000 Teas and coffees open at Community Hall

1030 First History talk by Rebecca Mackay at Community Hall

1050 Second ferry arrives in Raasay

1100 Second fast boat departure from pier

1100 Mini-bus departure from Community Hall for Brochel and Calum's Road

1200 Tea / coffee at Community Centre closes. Lunch opens.

1200 Third fast boat departure from pier

1300 Fourth fast boat departure from pier

1400 Lunch closes / tea opens at Community Hall

1400 Tug o' War in front of Raasay House

1415 Second history Talk by Rebecca Mackay at Community Hall

1500 Fifth and last fast boat departure from pier

1530 Official Opening of Heritage Centre by Chief John Macleod of Raasay

1600 Tea / coffee at Community Hall Closes

1700 Ferry for buses to Dunvegan departs.

1725 Ferry arrives at Sconser

1735 Buses depart Sconser for Dunvegan

Notes:

** Raasay House is open morning and afternoon for other activities, teas, coffees and lunches.

*** Raasay distillery is open morning and afternoon for tours (book first) and sales.

****Tours of the Walled Garden are bookable on request.

ACTIVITIES

RIBs – Fast Boat rides: At 10:00, 11:00, 12:00, 13:00 and 15:00 there will be boat rides lasting about 45 minutes. These will be name checked. Please come at the correct time. Equipment will be provided but wear sensible clothes for a boat ride with lots of splashes!

Tug o' War: The traditional contest between the Raasay Macleods and all-comers. Assemble in front of Raasay House about 13:30 if you want to take part.

Mini-bus Tour: By request, there has been a late addition of a ride in the mini-bus up to the north of the island to see Brochel Castle and Calum's Road. Scheduled departure from the Community Hall at 11:00. Return there approximately 13:00.

History Talks: At 10:30 and 14:15 local historian and author Rebecca Mackay will give a talk on the history of Raasay in the Community Hall. Rebecca is a member of Raasay Heritage Trust and has been instrumental in the creation of the new Heritage Centre in Mulainn Àrais.

Heritage Centre Opening: At 15:30 Chief John Macleod of Raasay will officially open the new Heritage Centre – Muileann Àrais.

Dun Caan: Dun Caan is the highest hill on Raasay and is a notable landmark due to its flat top which makes it look like a volcano. It is easily climbed from the road starting a few miles north of Raasay House. If you attempt this, you need your own transport and remember your ferry time for getting back!

Walled Garden: The walled Garden behind Raasay House is lovely. Tours can be booked by enquiry to Hannah at raasaywalledgarden@gmail.com.

Raasay House tours: Enquire with Raasay House info@raasay-house.co.uk.

Raasay Gallery: Gordon and Krista Cheape will welcome you to their home and gallery just by the village of Inverarish where you can see Gordon's and other artists' work. <http://raasaygallery.co.uk/>

Raasay Distillery: By the side of the road between Raasay House and the Community Hall is one of Scotland's newer whisky distilleries. Tours and tastings by arrangement. Or whisky to buy as you please! <https://raasaydistillery.com/>

TOILETS There are public toilets at the pier. Other toilets are at Raasay House, the Distillery and the Community Hall. Accessible toilets in all locations 

SHOPS There is a community shop in Inverarish. Please remember that islanders need those supplies so do not over-purchase!

PETROL (GASOLINE) / DIESEL There is none to buy on Raasay. If bringing your car to the island, check you have enough fuel!