

## The Special Qualities of the Loch Tummel National Scenic Area

- A breathtakingly beautiful landscape, both lowland and highland
- Loch Tummel, the heart of the NSA
- Rich and varied woodlands
- Peacefulness and tranquillity
- The celebrated Queen's view
- Spectacular and famous mountain gorge – the Pass of Killiecrankie
- The picturesque Linn of Tummel

Special Quality	Further information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>A breathtakingly beautiful landscape, both lowland and highland</i></b></li> </ul>	
<p>The Tummel valley dramatically differs from the stern straths of the north and the wild glens of the west.</p> <p>It is a breathtakingly beautiful wooded landscape containing a sparkling river and a stunning loch. It is a fertile, lowland strath with a long history of settlement and prosperous-looking houses and farms; and on the higher slopes there is a wilder landscape of rocky crags and bare, heather-clad summits.</p>	<p><i>The area is 'breathtakingly beautiful with a mix of mountains, moorland, lochs, rivers and forests.'</i> Forestry Commission (2008)</p> <p><i>The steep sides and deep trough of the valley result from glacial action; it is one of 15 major glacial troughs in the southwest Grampians. Nevertheless, it differs from the others in that its surrounding hills are lower (500-600m as opposed to 600-1000m); the slopes are shallower; there is a loch at the lower end; and there is a high proportion of broadleaf woodland.</i></p> <p><i>The area has been inhabited, exploited and appreciated by people over many centuries, with many historic land-use and cultural associations. Peaceful, pastoral settlement is set on the shores of the loch which visually contributes to its prosperous character. Vernacular farms and cottages are associated with 18<sup>th</sup> century field patterns; they form a fringe along the loch shores with some larger 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century estates and policies (e.g. around Bonskeid, Fincastle, Faskally and Altean houses). Remains of settlement from the prehistoric period onwards are found on the loch edges and glen sides, with crannogs in the loch itself.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Loch Tummel, the heart of the NSA</i></b></li> </ul>	
<p>The long and narrow Loch Tummel, beneath its rocky hills and wooded slopes, fills most of the floor of the strath. Presenting a tranquil aspect, the peaceful waters of the loch are the heart of the NSA.</p> <p>The loch was extended by hydro-electric schemes in the 1950s and <i>'enlargement of Loch Tummel itself has created one of the most beautiful sheets of water in the country.'</i> Sylvia Crowe (1958)</p>	<p>Modern hydro-electric schemes have doubled the loch's original length to six miles. However, water levels are maintained at a high level, without large fluctuations or an ugly draw-down zone, thus maintaining the area's scenic value.</p>

<p>• <b>Rich and varied woodlands</b></p>	
<p>Extensive woodlands of unusual richness and variety frame the low-lying loch and lochside farms and ensure constant but changing colour throughout the seasons.</p> <p>The woods provide a restful transition between the loch waters and the heathery upper hills and bare rocky summits. Ancient oakwoods frame the western flanks of the Pass of Killiecrankie.</p>	<p>Not only are the woodlands extensive but they also vary in origin and type, comprising native woodland, commercial forestry, farm woodland, field boundary trees, policy and estate woodland. A major factor in the extent of woodland cover is Forestry Commission planting from 1919 onwards.</p> <p>The variety of species means that colour is an important component of the scene, varying between native and exotic species, and also with the seasons.</p>
<p>• <b>Peacefulness and tranquillity</b></p>	
<p>With its scenery of water, woods and hills, together with its many sheltered paths and tracks, the area remains a major draw for visitors seeking peacefulness and tranquillity.</p> <p>Away from the main roads, natural sounds predominate, whether the lapping of waves on the loch shore, the roar of a waterfall, the songbirds in the woods or the sound the wind in the trees.</p>	<p>Incorporating good access and recreation opportunities into the landscape planning of the hydro-electric scheme has maintained widespread public appreciation of the Tummel's scenic qualities.</p> <p>The importance of the area to recreation and enjoyment has been recognised through much of the NSA being designated as part of the Tay Forest Park. Additionally, the National Trust for Scotland provides woodland and riverside walks through the Pass of Killiecrankie to the Linn of Tummel.</p>
<p><i>Location-specific qualities</i></p>	
<p>• <b>The celebrated Queen's view</b></p>	
<p>From the high vantage point of the Queen's View the eye is drawn westwards through the strath of wood, pasture and rocky moor, over the shimmering waters of Loch Tummel to the distant hills: to the simple lines of the high peak of Schiehallion, and, on a clear day, as far as the great mountains of Glencoe low on the horizon.</p> <p>The Queen's View has long been celebrated, perhaps as far back as Queen Isabella, the wife of Robert the Bruce, 700 years ago. The loch is also celebrated in song for its location on the Road to the Isles.</p>	<p>The earliest history relating to the lands of Bonskeid, on the north shore of Loch Tummel, tells how Robert the Bruce came that way when a fugitive after his defeat at the battle of Methven, 1306. He hid and was given refuge at Coille Bhrochain, between the Tummel and Garry, and Athol Brose for refreshment.</p> <p>Hence the Queen's View is said to be named after Queen Isabella, King Robert the Bruce's wife. These associations document the 700 year time-depth in assigning a royal recognition to Loch Tummel and the valley's scenic qualities. Queen Victoria also visited and her love of Highland Perthshire fed into popularising the area's spectacular scenic qualities to a wider audience.</p> <p>The loch is mentioned in this famous World War I song <i>The Road to the Isles</i>:</p> <p><i>'By Loch Tummel and Loch Rannoch and Lochaber I will go, by heather tracks wi' heaven in their wiles'.</i></p>

• **Spectacular and famous mountain gorge – the Pass of Killiecrankie**

The deep, wooded gorge of the River Garry in the Pass of Killiecrankie, famous for its historical associations, is spectacular. Its deep pools and narrow rapids are dramatic when viewed from the surrounding woodland walks or briefly glimpsed from a window of a train.

Above the gorge, the view from Craigower Hill provides a stunning panorama westwards over the whole NSA; and the main A9 road, as it exits the narrow pass, presents a grand vista northwards into the Vale of Atholl, a 'Gateway to the Highlands'.

The Pass of Killiecrankie (or Coille Creitheannich, the Aspen Wood) is strategically located at a pinch-point on one of the main routes between the Highlands and the Lowlands. Within the pass, the River Garry flows through a spectacular, steeply-sided wooded gorge with deep pools and the narrow Soldier's Leap.

It is renowned in Scotland and beyond both for its history and its spectacular scenery. In the past it was a dangerous trap for travellers and its natural defile required troops to march in single file.

It was the scene of the Battle of Killiecrankie (1689), the first Jacobite uprising when Bonnie Dundee (Claverhouse) defeated William of Orange's government army, headed by General Mackay. A traditional spot of homage is the Soldier's Leap commemorating the leap and escape of Donald MacBean, contrasting with the reality of the death toll and loss of Viscount Dundee on the battlefield. The event is also commemorated in the traditional tune and song Killiecrankie.

John Ruskin (1819-1900) painted *In the Pass of Killiecrankie* in 1857 which captures the lichen, moss and rocky surfaces with the tumbling waters of the Garry.

• **The picturesque Linn of Tummel**

The picturesque rapids of the Linn of Tummel provide an exciting spectacle of sound and vision, contrasting with the peacefulness of Loch Tummel above and Loch Faskally below.

Despite the transformation of the Fall of Tummel from waterfall to rapids due to construction of the 1930s hydro-electric scheme, the rapids still provide an exciting spectacle. A granite obelisk near the site of the old falls marks Queen Victoria's visit in 1841 to the Fall of Tummel.

Originally the river narrowed and leapt five metres into a swirling pool to form the Fall.

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