

Calum's Road on the hillside above the sea, in mist

Before you go

About 1¾ miles (2.8 km) each way by the plaque on Calum's cairn, about 3½ miles (5.6 km) there and back; no walking time is published. A narrow single-track road with no pavement, some potholes and steep climbs and drops: about 100 metres up and 110 down each way.

Brochel is about seven miles north of the ferry and there is no bus on the island: bring a car or a bike on CalMac's 25-minute crossing from Sconser. In winter, to 25 March 2027, the last boat back leaves at 6pm, Monday to Saturday, and 4.30pm on Sundays.

No toilets at Brochel or on the road: the nearest are at the ferry terminal, about seven miles back. Never park in a passing place. Keep dogs on a lead, for the cars and the cattle grids' stock. On 21 December it is light only from about 9.03am to 3.40pm.

After the walk

Bring a picnic: Raasay House is closed from 26 October 2026 to 24 March 2027, its own site says, and the shop in Inverarish opens Monday to Saturday, 9am to 5pm. Sea eagles are often seen at Brochel Loch, and porpoise in Loch Arnish, the island's own site says.

The walk online, with its photographs and map:
hiddenscotland.com/walks/brochel-castle-and-calums-road-walk-raasay

It starts at the small parking place at the foot of Calum's Road, below Brochel Castle, NG 583 462.

In an emergency, call 999 or 112 and ask for the police.

A WALK ALONG

Calum's Road



A HIDDEN SCOTLAND WALK

From Brochel Castle over the Moor to Arnish

Calum's Road runs from Brochel Castle to Arnish, at the north end of Raasay. Refused a road by the council, Calum MacLeod made the old footpath into one himself, with a pick, a shovel and a wheelbarrow. The walk goes out along it and back the same way.

words // Hidden Scotland *photography* // Simon Hird

Start at the small parking place at the foot of Calum's Road. Brochel Castle stands on its 15-metre crag about 200 metres east, fenced off, with signs against going in, because its walls are unsafe: look at it from the road, and never approach the ruin. The Highland Council's record dates it to the late 1400s or early 1500s; the MacLeods of Raasay held it, and probably left it in the 1670s.

A sign reading Rathad Chaluim, Calum's Road, with a rusted wheelbarrow at its foot, marks the start. In 1931 the people of northern Raasay asked for a road and were refused, and by the late 1960s only Calum and his wife, Lexie, remained at Arnish. About 400 metres up the road stands his cairn: its plaque says he did the work single-handed over ten years. The council tarred the road in 1982. Children can turn back here.

The road climbs on over boggy moor to its highest point, about a kilometre from the start, then drops steeply, skirting the cliffs above the rocky inlets of the Inner Sound, and rounds the rocky head of Loch Arnish, the lowest point of the walk. It ends at a turning place 100 yards above the couple's croft house. Turn here and walk back the same way, with the long climb back over the moor.



Calum's Road from Brochel Castle to Arnish and back: 1¾ miles each way by the cairn's plaque, about 3½ miles in all. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors