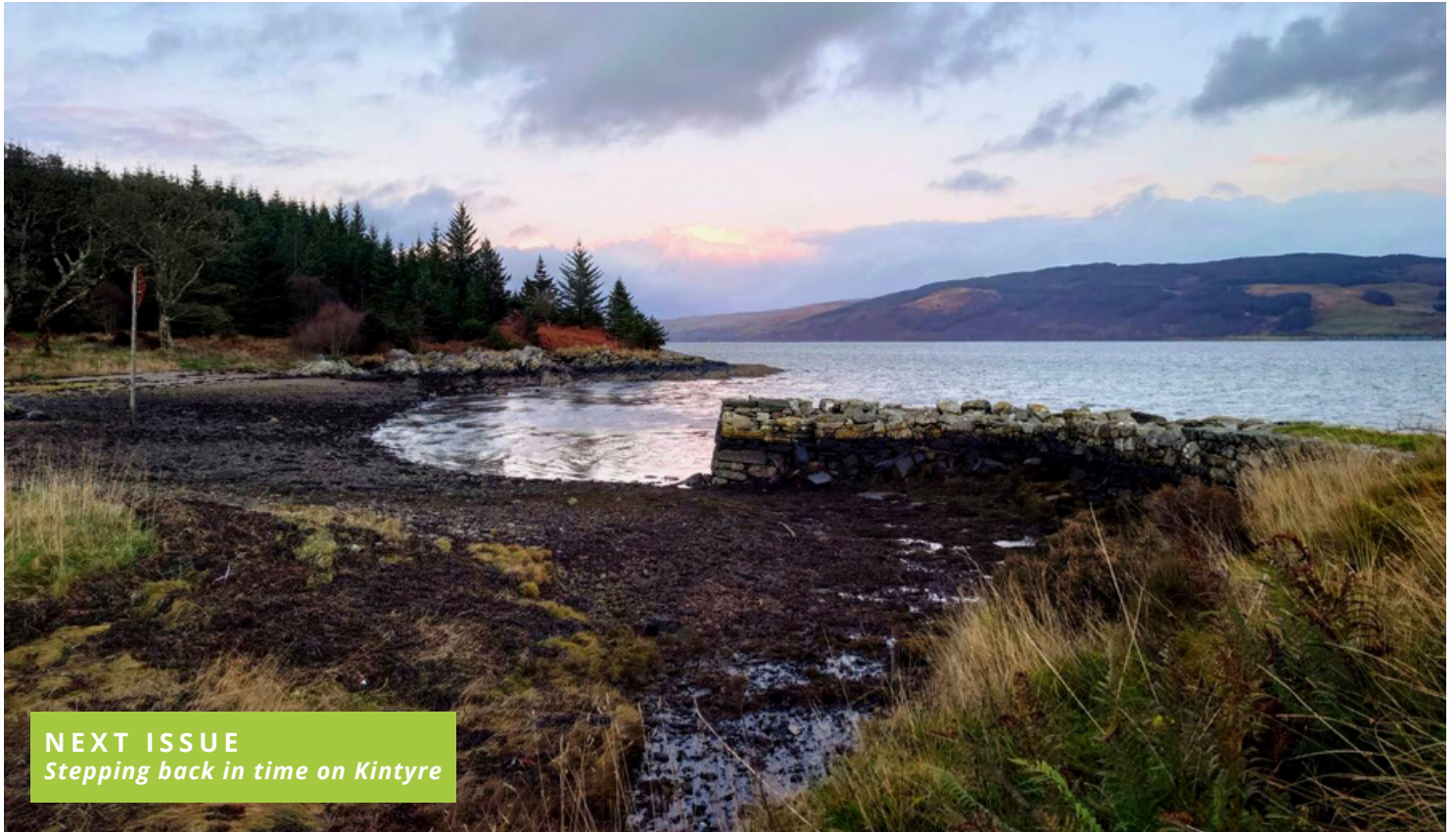




MARCH 2022

HEATHERY HEIGHTS MONTHLY

Articles, walks and news



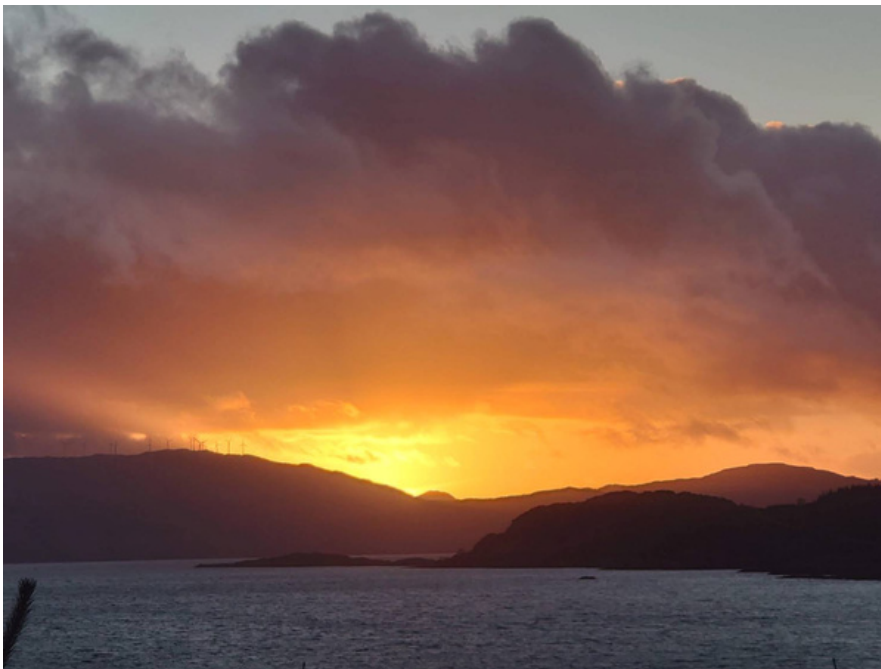
NEXT ISSUE
Stepping back in time on Kintyre

WEST OTTER FERRY AND PORT ANN

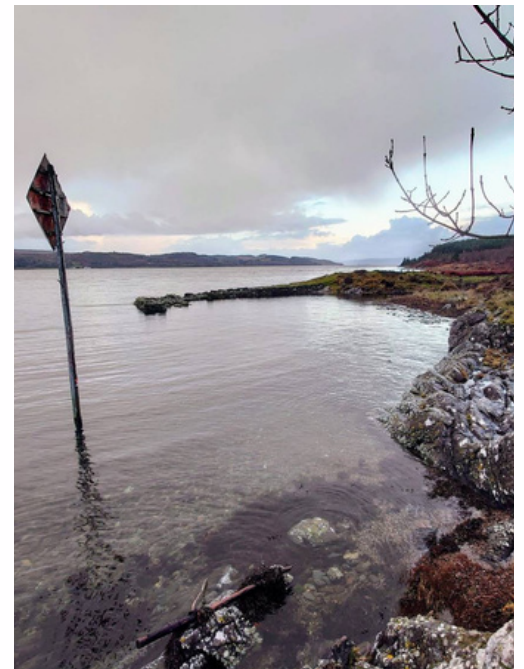
Knapdale sunsets on the Otter Ferry Trail ...

The old ferry route across Loch Fyne harks back to another age when the long circuitous route around the head of Loch Fyne by horse and carriage could be shortened by crossing the 1½ mile stretch of Loch Fyne between Otter Ferry on the east shore, and West Otter Ferry on the west shore.

The word 'Otter' is believed to derive from the Gaelic word 'Oitir', meaning spit of land, rather than relating to the animal. This is certainly logical as the long spit of land on the eastern shore is named 'Oitir' on OS Maps to this day. Used for some 200 years the route was finally abandoned in 1948. Roads and transportation methods would have steadily improved and the addition of the Crinan Canal and Ardrishaig Pier in the 1830s would have opened up new possibilities for maritime traffic. The stone quay and slipway were built in the early 1700s and are in fine condition to this day. Nearby the old ferryman's cottage lies amongst the nearby ruins.



Sunset over Knapdale



West Otter Ferry



The old quay and slipway

The start of the walk from the forestry car park has a useful signboard with further information and shows a map of the 'Otter Ferry Trail', as it is locally known. The route has blue marked posts to help you stay on track. However, the route does not include the addition given here, which leads down one of the old forestry tracks to a viewpoint which gives an excellent vantage point for sunsets over Knapdale.

It may seem counterintuitive to choose a walk on these shores, as one is generally facing east, but the little point lying on the east side of Port Ann gives a clear view across to Stob Odhar – Knapdale and Kintyre's highest 'Marilyn' (a hill with a 150m drop on all sides) - and the gap just north of Cruach a' Phubuill (the sun sets in this gap in mid-winter). I recommend undertaking this path clockwise if you wish to catch the sunset, just give yourself plenty of time so you can enjoy West Otter Ferry too.

The walk

1. Leaving the car park take the path that heads southeast by the burn. You will follow this as it skirts round the head of Port Ann until after 600m it starts to rise. Keep heading up the path for the next 300m until you reach a path turning left (also note the path on your right as this is where you will be heading later).
2. Turn left, the path soon opens out onto a main forestry track, and you will be following this route northwards for 1km*. Keep an eye out for the marker post that indicates the path on your right.
3. Turn right following the path up through the trees and then southwards to the shores of Loch Fyne. As you approach the shore you will find the ruins, now somewhat hidden in the undergrowth.
4. Ahead look for the path that drops left down to the old quay and slipway of West Otter Ferry – it is a lovely spot, and the stonework has stood well against the test of time.
5. Return to the main path and continue up a gentle incline heading southwest for 400m. Look for a turning left (the route you took earlier goes right).

6. Turn left down the grassy track in the trees, following it for nearly 300m where it will end abruptly. This is where you can get some wonderful sunsets looking across Loch Fyne past the small island of Glas Eilean and over to Knapdale; they are particularly good in mid-winter before the sun tracks northwards on the horizon once again.
7. Return to the main path and turn left. You can follow this all the way back to the car park just under 1km away. Don't forget your headtorch to ensure you can see your way back!

*En route you will pass another path on the left (after 500m). Should you decide that 'Tump' bagging is your thing then Carrick Hill is a Tump (hill with a drop of at least 30m all round). Give yourself plenty of extra time as the path - that veers right at an unmarked junction higher up - WILL lead you to within 150m of your goal but thereafter it is thick forestry where a compass and good navigation are required to pinpoint its summit and safely return.

Safety in the Outdoors

Please continue to adhere to current guidelines as set out by the government, exercise responsibly and use appropriate clothing and equipment for your chosen outdoor activity. Consider informing a contact about your route/whereabouts and don't forget your phone, snacks, drink, any medication/first aid supplies you may need and to check weather conditions. Please keep your dog under close control, especially around livestock and wildlife, and be aware some open areas of moorland may have snares in use. Please follow the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, bylaws and laws that protect areas including National Nature Reserves (NNRs) and Sites of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSIs).

www.heatheryheights.co.uk



The ruins at West Otter Ferry



Gold light over Stob Odhar

The described route and accompanying information are there to be used as a guide and do not replace the use of map and compass and the skills required to use them. Whilst every effort is made to ensure the route is accurate at the time of going to print please be aware that track and path closures can happen at any time. All walks are undertaken at your own risk.

Walk Information

Route: West Otter Ferry and Port Ann

Distance: 5km (3 miles)

Ascent: 136m

Time: 2 – 2.5 hours

Terrain: Mixture of paths and forestry tracks. If head to Tump 150m of dense forestry to contend with.

Map/s: OS Landranger 55 (1:50 000)

OS Explorer 358 (1:25 000)

Start/Finish/Parking: Car park at Port Ann

Grid reference: NR 906865

Public Transport: Bus 428

Toilets: No

[OS Map link](#)



HEATHERY HEIGHTS