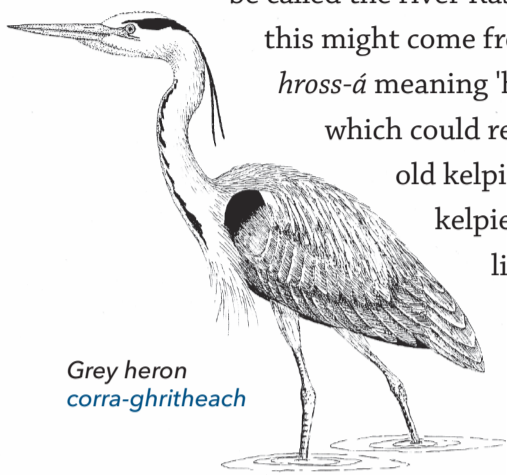


Welcome to Contin Island

- perhaps part of the original 'Cunndainn' or 'confluence of the waters' where Contin got its name. The area to the south of the island - on maps as 'Coille Uisge', the 'Water Wood' - is now farmland. This area was once criss-crossed with waterways and rivulets, and just beyond is where the river Conon and the river Black Water meet. The origin of the name 'Conon' is obscure - it may be from the Gaelic *chonnain* referring to 'dog'. The river Black Water used to be called the river Rasay. It's thought

this might come from the Norse *hross-á* meaning 'horse-river' - which could refer to an old kelpie legend (a kelpie being a horse-like water spirit).



Grey heron *corra-ghrithreach*



Contin Church is dedicated to St Maelrubha - the saint of Applecross - and was founded in 690 AD, though the present church dates from 1490. Maelrubha was a popular saint, having 22 churches named after him in Scotland, and was also honoured until recent times with

Fèill Mourie - a festival of great feasting with the sacrifice of a bull to the deity Mourie for those suffering from 'delirium'.

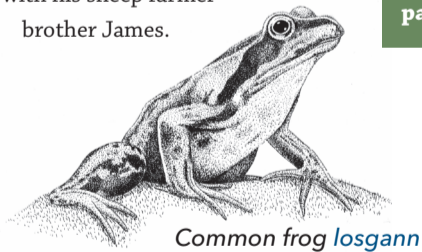
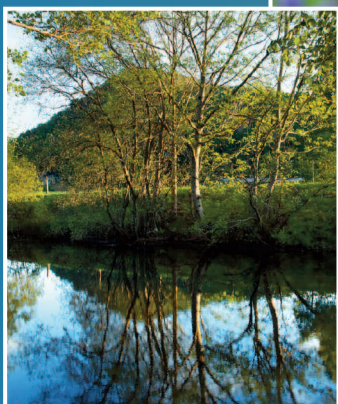


The graveyard contains several interesting gravestones and monuments - including the resting place of William Laidlaw who was the secretary to the renowned Scottish writer, Sir Walter Scott. William's final days were at nearby Rogie, with his sheep farmer brother James.



Look out for the views across to Tor Achilty - the 'hill of Achilty'; 'Achilty' itself might mean 'high place'. It's certainly prominent and a significant local landmark, and tradition makes it the seat of the McClelland clan.

There may have been a fort on top of the hill - one of the slopes is called 'Bruthach an Ràtha', meaning 'the slope of the ancient fort' - though there is nothing there now, nor known about it.



Common frog *logann*



Bluebell *bròg na Cuthaig*



Bullfinch *corcan-coille*

The woodland on the southern part of the island is criss-crossed with rivulets and old water channels - many of which are quite deep and fast flowing at some times of the year.

It's an alder (Gaelic *Feàrna*) and ash (*Uinnseann*) woodland having international and UK recognition for its special wildlife and dynamic pools and shingle - as are many other riverside and island woodlands in the Conon catchment.

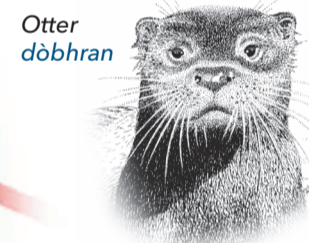


Marsh marigold *Ius buidhe Bealltainn*

It's possible to get to the topmost tip of the island - where you can get close to the river Blackwater, and also see good views of the mountains to the north.



Please be aware that not all the footpaths shown on this map are all abilities paths - they are often uneven with tree roots present. The paths may also be wet or flooded.



Otter *dòbhran*



Wood anemone *flùr na gaoithe*

Around Contin

'**Preas Mairi**' means the 'bush of St Maelrubha', which might refer to the bush or thicket where the Saint was supposedly murdered by robbers. However, this dubious honour is also claimed by the site of the old parish church in Urquhart, on the Black isle between Conon Bridge and Culbokie. Preas Mairi is erroneously spelt that way on some maps – it should be *Preas Ma-ruibhe*.



This is the site of the Mackenzie of Coul family burial ground and also contains a Neolithic chambered cairn – having spectacular 'cup marks', larger than most others in Scotland. **Map ref:** NH 46090 55842



Contin church has been rebuilt several times – such as when the Macdonalds burned the church down, plus the people who were sheltering within, following a skirmish with the Mackenzies at the gruesomely named 'Field of Heads' (*Blàr nan Ceann*) near Jamestown. **Map ref:** NH 47293 56869

Coul House Hotel – dating from 1821, this was once the mansion of the Mackenzies of Coul, one of several Clan Mackenzie families who owned most of the land from Contin



as far west as Torridon in Wester Ross. 'Coul' derives from the Gaelic *A' Chùil* meaning 'the nook, corner or recess'. **Map ref:** NH 46261 56402

Deer antlers (the *Cabar Fèidh*) are the old Mackenzie Coat of Arms.



The Smiddy – is reputed to be Contin's oldest building and was a working blacksmith's until the turn of the 21st century. There are unconfirmed reports that Bonnie Prince Charlie had his horse shod here in

1746, and rallied support standing on a foundation stone at the south-west corner of the building – now known as the King's Stone. **Map Ref:** NH 45841 55991

Five Acre Wood – is a community woodland containing some wonderful oak (Gaelic *darach*) and beech (*faidhbhile*) trees, with interesting carved creatures alongside its many paths. Five Acre Woods leads to the Tor View housing estate and through to many woodland walks and trails beyond – see <https://forestryandland.gov.scot/visit/contin> **Map ref:** NH 45761 56202



Useful info

- Contin Village Stores – open 7 days
- Smith's Garage - 01997 421472
- Coul House Hotel
www.coulhousehotel.com
- Coffee Bothy at the Smiddy
www.facebook.com/bothanchofaidh/
- Riverside camping and caravan park
www.lochness-chalets.co.uk
- Conon islands woodland
<https://sitelink.nature.scot/site/8230>
- Preas Mairi chambered cairn -
<https://canmore.org.uk/site/12447/preas-mairi>



The church car park is at map ref NH 45673 55778



[contincc](https://www.facebook.com/contincc)

This leaflet is part of the Contin Community Council project 'What Contin means to me'.

For more information visit:
www.community-council.org.uk/contin

Gaelic place-names
<http://www.rossandcromartyheritage.org/Community/Garve/Places/Place-Names.aspx>
See many of the local area's Gaelic Online place-names here -
<https://tinyurl.com/y6f2kk4z>

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CONTIN ISLAND

'Confluence of the waters'

