

Through the Valley of Weeping

—One-day Travel in Glencoe

By Victoria Jing

"No! No! "

Susie and I looked back and saw a silver haired seniors lady with a pet dog after us, shouting and waving hand anxiously. We didn't know what happened, so we stopped and intending to ask about it.

"Where are you going?" She asked.

"Parking area." I replied.

"Party area?" She looked shocked.

"No, I mean the car park. There's a bus waiting for us. Google Maps shows that it will take us about 20 minutes to walk along this road to the lake, and we can see it. " To prove myself, I showed her my smartphone with the route shown on Google Maps.

"I'm sorry, but that's my house. I don't mean you are not welcomed; just afraid you'll waste time on the wrong way." She laughed. "I know the parking area. There may be something wrong with your App."

Now it is our turn to be shocked. I admit that I was focused on my phone, tried to find the way, and didn't notice the sign by the side with "Residents Only". But who can image that there is a mountain and a road in this lady's yard! It seems inconceivable for us. This misunderstanding made us so embarrassed and just wanted to find a tree hole to hide in. We apologized desperately and explained that we had no intention of offending. Instead of blaming us, she smiled and pointed us the right way and wished us a happy journey.

This one-day travel in Glencoe ended in such a blushing way. Sitting on the return bus, I look back on today's experience, hoping to hold this shining memory.



(Photo by Victoria Jing)

The sightseeing is arranged by the University of Stirling, to increase our knowledge of the history and culture of Scottish Highlands. As a member of the exchanging program, I glad to have the opportunity to be a tour guide today, introducing those backgrounds of Glencoe for everyone. By collecting information, I had a preliminary understanding of Glencoe.

Based on literature, 950 million years ago, the earth entered a period of great ice age, which known as Precambrian ice age. The Scottish Highlands is one of the earliest known places as evidence of the Precambrian ice age, and also the last reservation of the ice age with the deepest and widest influence in the history on the earth today. In Scottish Gaelic, Glen means “valley” and Coe is the name of river. A82 highway passes through the valley, which can be regarded as the most beautiful section. The scenery is so heroic. The famous movies *Skyfall* (one of the 007 films) and *Harry Potter* (Quidditch stadium and Hagrid’s cottage) have been shot here.



(Photo by Victoria Jing)

In 1692, in order to resist the rule of the Protestant king of England, 38 members of Clan MacDonald were killed in Glencoe, so Glencoe is also known as “the valley of weeping”. The Massacre of Glencoe is the endless pain in hearts of Highlands Scots, and it has become the creative theme of countless writers and artists.

On the way to Glencoe, I introduced the war between Clan MacDonald and Campbell, William III and James II, as well as the details about Massacre of Glencoe, and played Moria Kerr's song *Maclain of Glencoe*. The leaden sky with the sorrowful song seems to bring us back to the age of blood and fire.

When driving near the Three Sisters (Beinn Fhada, Gearr Aonach, Aonach Dubh), there was a bunch of white daisies on the rocks at a roadside viewing platform. The flowers are still fresh and there is no sign of withering. They might be using for expressing mourning. Because it is Monday and there are few tourists, we have chance to immerse ourselves in the magnificent landscape.

After arriving at the valley, the lake surrounded by mountains appears in front of us. Plants are painted in different colours by autumn. There are not many local residents, houses are mainly on both sides of the road. Due to the limited visiting time and the misunderstanding mentioned at the beginning, we didn't stay for a long time, but the amazing natural landscape of Glencoe still left a deep impression on us.