

Fáilte! Welcome To Oban!

Take a walking tour around the town by following the directions to different points on this map. Learn about places from stories told by children who might have lived here throughout the ages and see the town through their eyes.

Can you find the answers to the questions in the rhymes after each story?

This walking tour is on wheelchair and pushchair accessible pavements through the centre of Oban. Please take care whilst on the piers and when crossing roads. Use recognised crossing points.



1 **Let's go!**
The walk starts outside Rockfield's gate next to the Big Tree
 Hallo!
 Is mise lain agus tha mi a'fuireach air Sràid a'Chòmbaidh-ach-Combie Street, I forget that I need to speak English. Rockfield is the main school for Oban and the Gaelic name is Achadh Na Creige which translates as field of the cliff or rock. This land was a park with many trees but only this tree remains. The building was built in 1876. I started school here soon after because the government made school education compulsory for children between 5 and 13. Even though I speak Gaelic with my family and most of my friends I have to speak and learn in English at school.

Look at the building with the big arched window over on the corner of Stevenson Street and Rockfield Road. It was the church hall belonging to the Free Church up the hill. Sometimes it was used for extra classrooms if there were too many children in Rockfield. It was also used for Prayer Meetings and Sunday School.

**High above in the wall
 Of the former church hall,
 Is a shape called a trefoil,
 A plant with 3 leaves found in soil.
 It symbolizes the holy Trinity.
 How many do you see?**



2
From the big tree, cross the street to the pavement on the right and walk towards George Street. Your next stop is part way along before the corner at the blue awning.
 I'm Máiri and I started school at Rockfield in 1962. There are now so many children in the school that two huts have been built for more classrooms. I live over a mile from the school but my brother and I usually run there in the morning and back again for dinner. We take our time on the way home when school finishes for the day because we save our bus fare to spend in the shop nearby. Hannah Pearson who is in the shop, is a kind and generous lady. Her shop is full of sweet treasures such as MacCowan's Highland Toffee, which has a picture of a Highland cow on the front. The toffee sticks in your teeth so you can't speak properly. Wagon Wheels, Tobermory Tatties, Sherbet Dips, Lucky Bags, 5 Boys Chocolate, Liquorice Laces, Torpedoes, Lovehearts, Puff Candy and many more we love to spend our pennies on. The double gates at the bottom of the playground are always locked. Sometimes during playtime we stand at those gates and beg innocent passers-by to get sweets for us!

**Forwards or backwards, left or right
 This is the place where you might
 No matter how you look at the name
 This type of word reads the same.
 Can you see what is known
 As a palindrome?
 Hint: Check the words on the awning!**

3
Turn left at the corner of Stevenson & George Street. Walk along the pavements until you reach the corner at the Royal Hotel. Cross safely to the other side then cross towards the red post box that stands in front of the reddish stone building on the opposite corner.
 I'm Annie MacLean and I lived in Oban 200 years ago in 1820. The town was just a village then and a few people lived along the shore and around this Square. My family didn't have much money so we wore second hand clothes and only wore shoes or boots in the winter. I remember walking across Argyll Square one very cold day in November to my home in High Street. Right in the middle of the Square, in front of the Court house, there was a pillory where people who had broken the law were made to stand with their neck and wrists held in a wooden framework. Everyone could see. On this cold day, poor Mary MacDonald was in the pillory. She was just a young girl like myself but she had stolen cutlery and towels from the inn where she worked. As a punishment she was fined 1 shilling which was a lot of money and put into the pillory. She had no shoes on and had to stay there for 2 hours in the cold rain until dark. People shouted unkind words, threw rotten vegetables, fish heads and even stones at her. I felt really sorry for Mary and wished I could help her. She left the town after that and I never saw her again.

**This building was a bank but now a cafe.
 On the wall remains a stone crest from back in the day.
 It shows a tree and a fish that swallowed a ring.
 Can you find those things?**

Children's Walking Heritage Map



IONAD ACHADH NA CREIGE | **THE ROCKFIELD CENTRE**

Scottish Registered Charity No. SC045503



Researched & developed by volunteers at The Rockfield Centre.

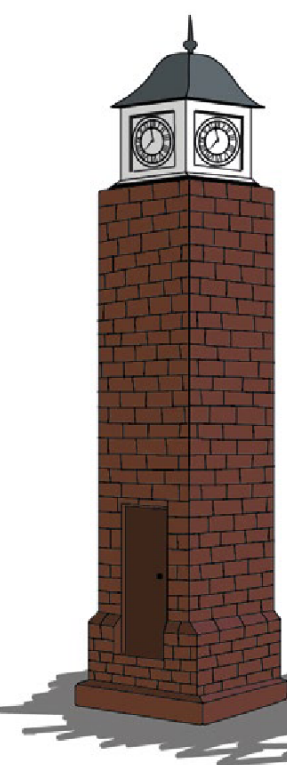
Illustrations and leaflet design by www.artandsea.co.uk

4

Walk towards the Station Square and the clock tower.

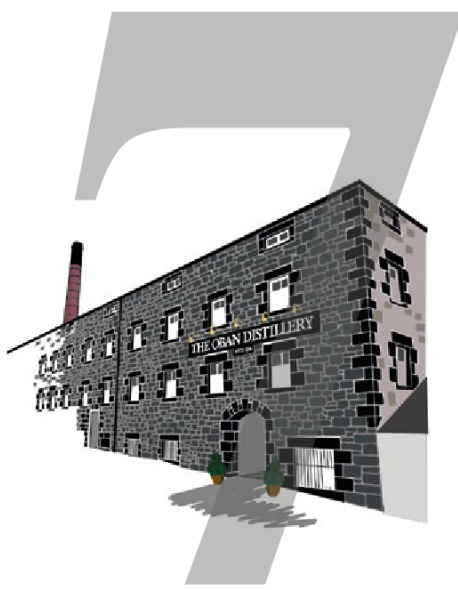
My name is Iain and when I was 10 in 1985 I watched as the original station building was torn down. It was a beautiful building from when the railway to Oban was completed in 1880. I was sad because it was lovely with a big glass roof, shops and a place where people met. The present

station building is nothing like the old one. Station square has always been a busy place. Long before all these taxis were here, men called badge porters used carts and would have helped people transport their luggage. They would wear a badge indicating they were officially allowed to be paid for taking luggage places (sometimes they had special deals to take luggage only to certain hotels!) Also, at one time in Victorian days, there was a small park across the street where the bank and a big hotel are now. A man named Thomas Stevenson kept some llamas there and sold their wool. I would love to have seen that.



Walk around the clock towers 4 sides And brass plaques you will spy. English words aplenty but search for Scotland's name then find the Gaelic word which means the same.

Use the crossing at the traffic lights to go safely towards the sitting area in front of the Oban Inn. Continue along the pavement to the set of traffic lights at the corner of George and Stafford Street. Cross at the lights to Stafford Street where the doors of the distillery can be seen.



My name is Thomas Stevenson. My father Hugh and my uncle John were the founders of this distillery in 1794. I am very proud to be a Stevenson. Our family are involved in all sorts of things from a tannery, smoking and curing fish, building houses, farming, a slate quarry, running an inn and ship building. All the family seem involved in developing businesses as the town grows. Some Stevensons have even gone to sea as ship captains or off to South America. Maybe I will help with the distillery someday but I do like adventure and maybe I might go exploring places like South America before I settle back in Oban.

Some window bars can be found to the right of the main door. On the middle bar is a brass plate this clue is for:
Place your paper on top to make an emboss
By using your fingers to rub over and across.
If you want to do it differently go ahead and use a pencil to rub for the image to appear instead.



Follow the seafront wall and stop when you spot the large building with the gold words Argyll Mansions on its black balcony railings.

I came to work at the Station Hotel, now called the Perle, in 1948. I had been in Belgium as the war was finishing, helping to feed the troops. I got a job as a chambermaid to begin with and also helped to serve people in the dining room. I met a lot of young girls from the islands and we all got on very well together. They are even teaching me Gaelic words. Working in a hotel in the summer is hard work but good fun. There are ceilidhs all the time and clubs to join.

A friend of mine grew up here in Oban. She has a really nice job as an assistant in Boots the Chemist on the corner of George and Stafford streets. She works upstairs in the Boots Booklovers Library. People pay a subscription and then can borrow books. It is a very classy place.

Many people came to Oban by ship and later by rail. Even Queen Victoria visited Oban in August 1847. Oban was a very busy place during WWII with RAF aircrew staying in the hotels.



As you gaze along the shop fronts, spot changes between how the town looked in this 1905 picture and now

5

6

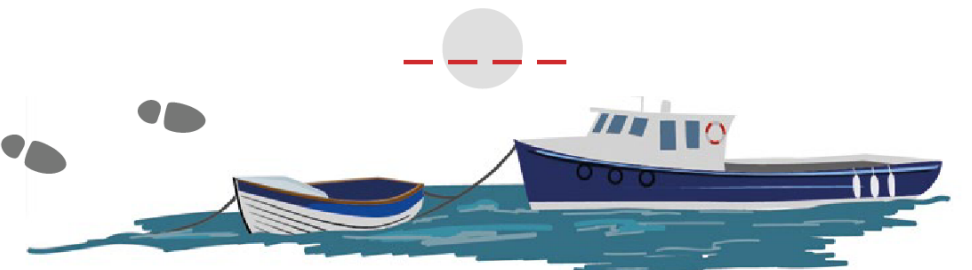
Walk to the North Pier

My name is John and the year is 1965. It is a bright winters day, with snow lying all around. On our way home from Rockfield school to Dunollie we have fun in all kinds of ways.

On the North Pier is MacBrayne's ticket office and a waiting room for ferry travellers. We go into the waiting room from time to time to warm up. The room is bare except for a wooden bench all the way round the walls, with a bay window looking out onto the pier. But what attracts us in is an old fireplace which is always lit in winter for the comfort of those waiting and we enjoy warming up before continuing our way home from school.

However, I know something really intriguing. Under the pier lie the remains of an American ship the B.C. Bailey. It sank off Lismore in 1848. In 1855, instead of leaving it to rot, the waterlogged hulk was towed here and positioned to be used as a landing stage. Later it was covered over as the pier was built. It's so interesting to think of the history under our feet.

At the North Pier, the boats come and go
Ferries to islands sail to and fro
The old ticket office had a clock on its top
When was it built and has time stopped?



Browse the shop fronts of George Street then turn left onto Argyll street. Walk to the top of the street to the Congregational Church

8



Hello. My name is Donald and I am 10 years old. I would like to welcome you to worship in our new Church. The year is 1820 and we finally have a building in Tweeddale Street after many years of trying. Now there are 300 seats for people to come to worship. I am particularly pleased as we can now worship in the warm and dry. Before, we were forced to worship wherever possible. One of the places being along the esplanade on the shore above the high water mark at Creag-a-Bhoidaig-Ruaig (rock of the old red man). It is so good to have a building but even better is that during worship we no longer have things like old vegetables or fish heads chucked at us from people who go to other chuches!

See the year number above the church door?
It is when the people could stop worshipping on the shore.
The challenge is to use maths skills to add in your head
And change the year from four digits to two instead

Head back to George Street and have a look in the rest of the shop windows before turning left onto Stevenson Street and walking back to the red doors of the Rockfield Centre.



When I started P1 in 1956 these red doors seemed enormous! I am a big P6 girl now and my classroom is in the newly built huts. There are 46 of us in my class. Every day milk arrives for us to drink. It comes in crates with 30 glass bottles and it sits outside until the milk monitors take them round the classrooms. Sometimes, on hot days the milk sits out too long and curdles and goes sour but we still had to drink it. Girls and boys have different entrances and areas on the playground. My favourite game is bouncing our ball against the wall in the shelter. In the winter we make slides down the slope when it is icy until the janitor shoos us away and puts ashes on it to stop it being slippery.

A big smile is the name of the game as you strike a pose in the picture frame.
So take a selfie and let everyone see the fun to be had and how happy They will be
When they come to Oban by the sea.
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