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# ROADS THAT WADE BUILT

In 1724, after the Jacobite uprising of 1715, King George I sent General George Wade to the Highlands to report and recommend measures to minimise further rebellion. The network of military roads that criss-cross the Highlands are his legacy: linking garrisons and barracks and providing easier access between towns and villages.



Portrait of General George Wade (1673-1748).

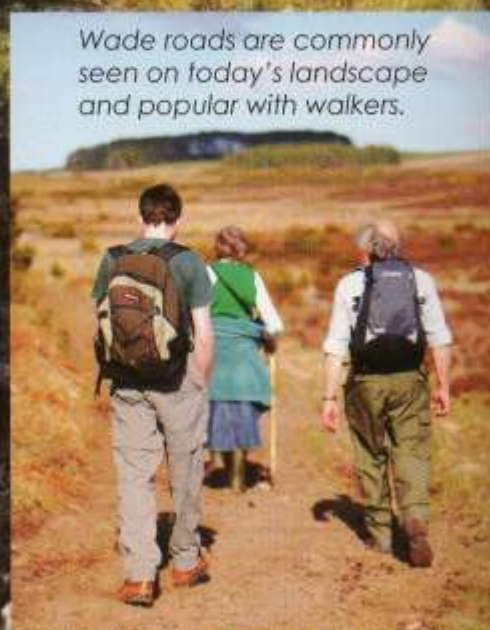
## Wade through 'wilderness'

These military roads transformed travel in what were previously considered inaccessible areas of the Highlands. One of Wade's men, Major William Caulfeild, is reputed to have stated "If you had seen these roads before they were made, you would hold up your hands and bless General Wade". Caulfeild was promoted by Wade and built most of the later military roads.

## Linking garrisons

The Wade road through the Great Glen was the first to be built: starting with the Fort William-Fort Augustus (Kilchuimen) section in 1725, followed by Fort Augustus to Inverness (Fort George) in 1726. Today, many straight sections of the B852 and B862 follow this military road exactly.

Wade roads are commonly seen on today's landscape and popular with walkers.



# ROADS AFTER WADE

For decades after Wade and Caulfeild had left their mark on the area, the mileage of roads in the area increased only very slowly. Most people continued to travel on foot, on horseback, or if they could, by boat on Loch Ness.

## Telford's plan

In 1803, Thomas Telford was busy planning new roads. By 1810, one of the first was what is now the B851 from Daviot to Errogie, dropping down via the Pass of Inverfarigaig to link up with Wade's road and Inverfarigaig pier on Loch Ness. Five years later, the 'corkscrew' road from Inverfarigaig to Loch Ceo Glais was added.



Wade's road at Inverfarigaig.



The Pass of Inverfarigaig.

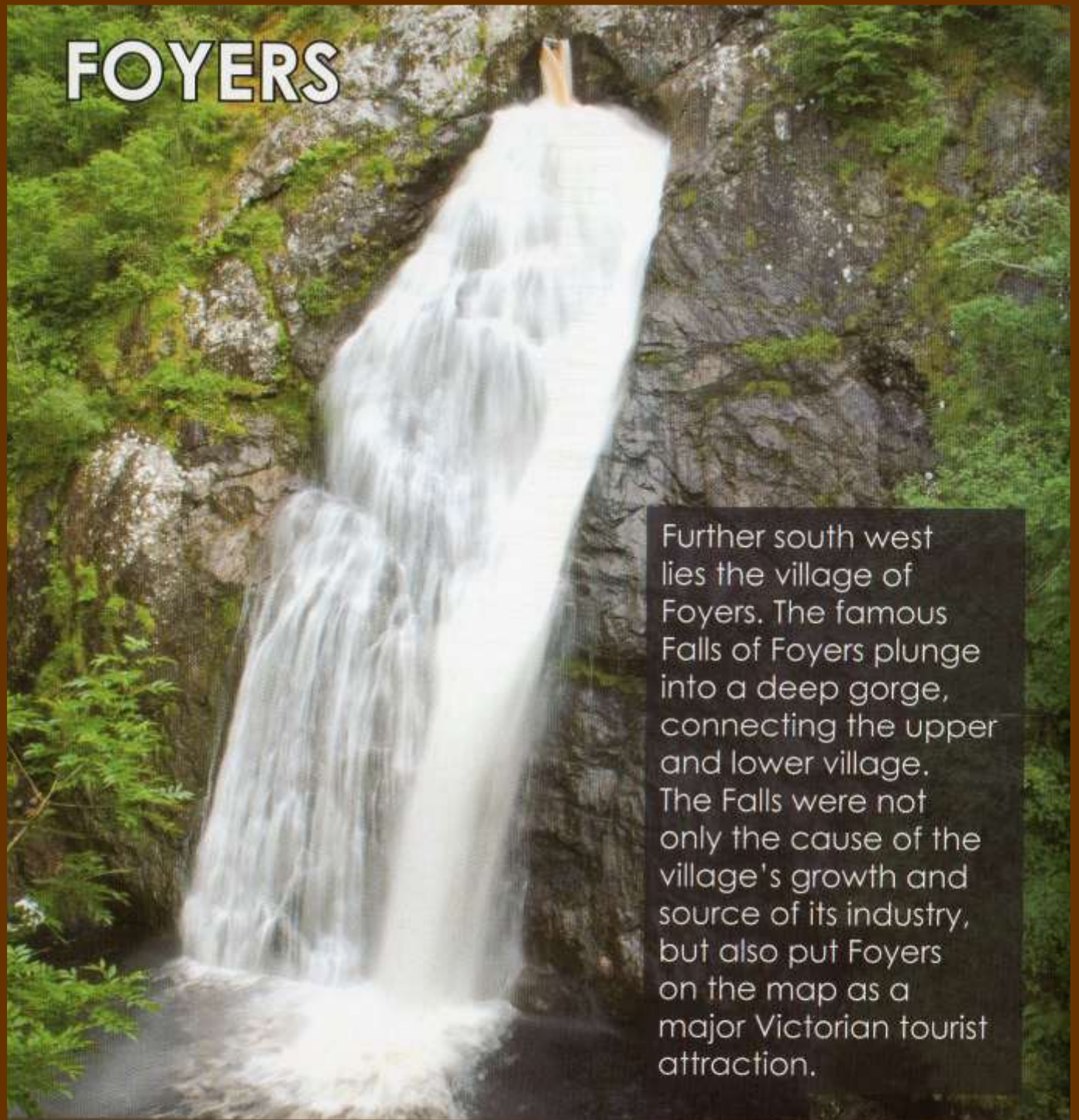
## On the beaten track

By 1835, the area's basic road network had been completed, linking communities on what is now the B862. Today's network is little changed, apart from the addition of tarmac, passing places, some widening and straightening, and a few replacement bridges.



Portrait of Thomas Telford, engraved by W. Raddon, c.1831. Telford was responsible for over 900 miles of new or reconstructed roads, 120 bridges, and the building of the Caledonian Canal, in the first decade of the 19th century. A busy man!

# FOYERS

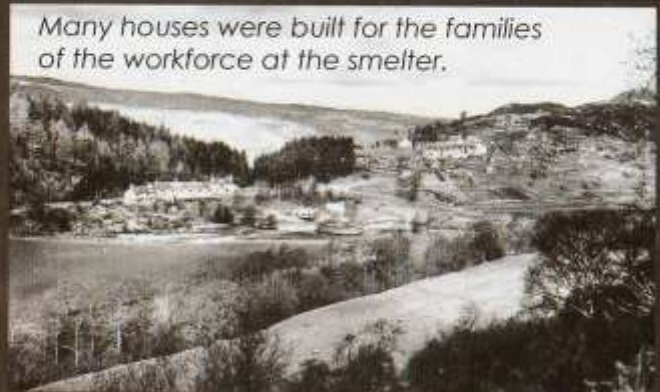


Further south west lies the village of Foyers. The famous Falls of Foyers plunge into a deep gorge, connecting the upper and lower village. The Falls were not only the cause of the village's growth and source of its industry, but also put Foyers on the map as a major Victorian tourist attraction.

## Ideal for industry

Foyers is a perfect example of an industrial settlement. The potential water power for turbines attracted the British Aluminium Company here in 1894. At its peak, the smelter employed about 500 people, who were provided with housing and served by a hotel, shops, a doctor's surgery, a church, a school and a workers' club.

*Many houses were built for the families of the workforce at the smelter.*



## For or against?

The building of the aluminium smelter was one of the first environmental battles. Many petitioned against it, arguing that it would spoil this famous beauty spot. The debate was even discussed in Parliament!

## Pioneering water power

Compared with other metals, aluminium is difficult to extract from its ore because of the huge amount of energy required. A new process utilised the power from the falls to obtain pure aluminium metal. The smelter at Foyers was one of the first in the world to use this process and the first industrial hydro-electric scheme in the UK.



*Constructing the Foyers aluminium factory, c. 1894–5.*

## Did you know?

Aluminium was once considered a precious metal, more valuable than gold!



*The British Aluminium factory at Foyers. By 1900 the factory was producing a mighty 1,000 tons per year.*

*The factory contributed to the social life of its workers, as this sports day, c. 1897, shows.*



*The factory's tug of war team, 1912.*

## The Falls of Foyers

*"As high in air the bursting torrents flow,  
As deep recoiling surges foam below,  
Prone down the rock the whitening sheet descends,  
And viewless Echo's ear, astonish'd, rends."*

Robert Burns wrote this verse after he visited the Falls of Foyers in 1787. Their beauty has always attracted admirers, reaching a peak in the Victorian period when pleasure cruises from Inverness made them easier to reach.



The Falls of Foyers were a source of inspiration for Robbie Burns.



A paddle steamer at Foyers pier, early 20th century.

Courtesy of Highland Libraries and Am Baile website

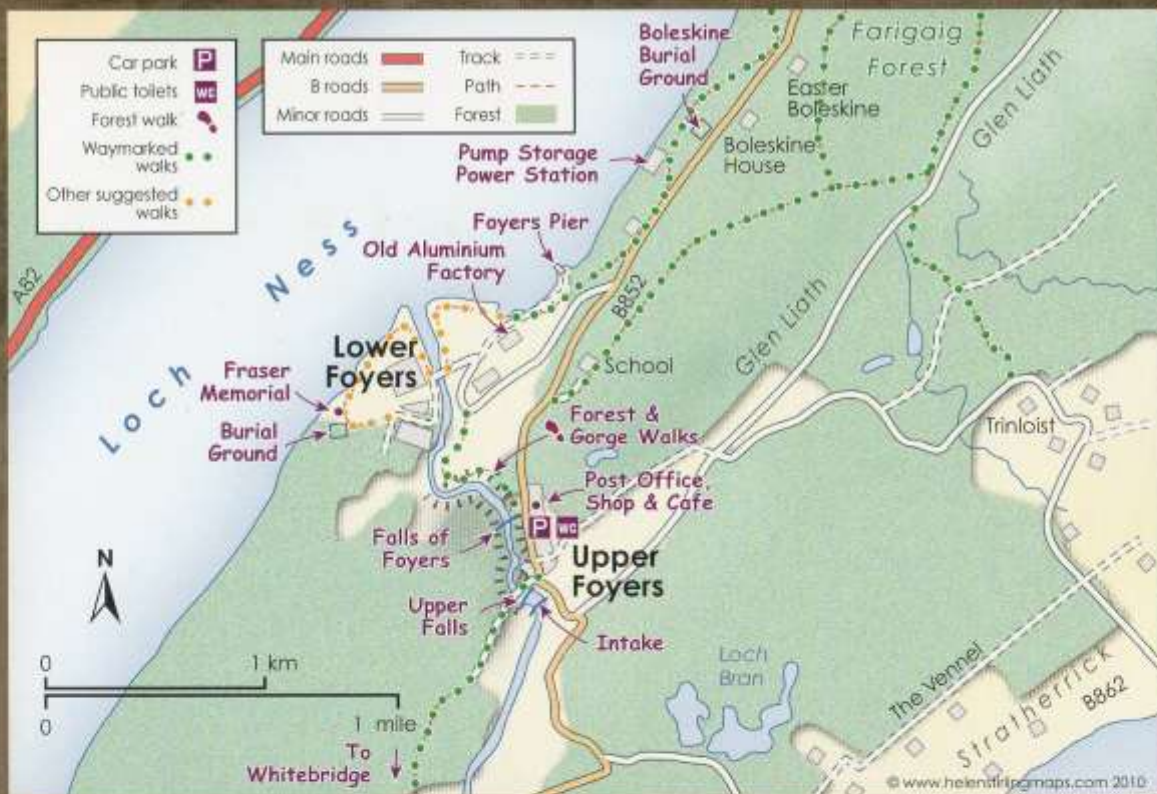
## Boom-time to beauty spot

The British Aluminium Co. shaped Foyers and the surrounding area physically, economically and socially for many years. After the closure of the smelter in 1967, some work was available in the construction of the new pump-storage hydro scheme, but the population of the village sadly declined. Today, tourism contributes to the local economy, as it did when the falls were at their peak.



Large gathering at Glenlia park in the summer of 1955, a few years before the closure of the factory in 1967.





## Wartime target

During WWII, the factory at Foyers, with its large-scale aluminium production, was a target for German bombers. The Foyers School Log Book (1901–48) described the event:

13th February, 1941

*"In today's air-raid in which two workmen lost their lives & considerable damage was done to the factory, the school was not damaged in any way. With one or two exceptions, the children were remarkably cool. They had community singing until the excitement died down."*

## And what of the famous Falls?

Water is still being diverted for hydro-electric power, but the gorge and plunge pool remain impressive and after heavy rain the falls may even echo something of their former strength. The network of paths winding through Scots pines are well worth exploring.

## Tale of a broken heart

A couple of hundred years ago, young Jane Fraser's fiancé fell to his death whilst climbing a tree. Broken-hearted, she would come to this viewpoint to look over the loch and yearn for her lover. At her own request, she was buried here and the Fraser Memorial marks the spot.



The Fraser Memorial, Foyers.

Highland Historic Environment Record