

G R E A T G L E N W A Y S



S L I G H E A N A ' G H L I N N M H Ó I R

# The greatest canal of its day

## An canàl bu mhotha na latha

Pronounced: An canal boo vo-a na la-a

Construction of the Caledonian Canal **Canàl Cailleannach** took 21 years - from the first survey to the official opening. Thirty-four kilometres (22 miles) of artificial cuttings connected lochs along the Great Glen to make an inland shipping route between the east **an ear** and west **an iar** coasts of Scotland.

The aim was to help ships cut their journey times; avoid the stormy waters of the Pentland Firth; and keep out of range of enemy attack at sea. It was also hoped that the canal would provide employment and help reverse the tide of emigration **eilthreachd** from the Highlands, which had begun in the late 1700s.

Thomas Telford was the mastermind behind the canal. Commissioned by the government, he oversaw the building of the biggest British waterway of its time.

Today the canal still provides a safe route for working boats (including tugs, lifeboats, Navy training vessels and fishing boats) and leisure craft (especially yachts and motor cruisers). It has also become increasingly popular with visitors enjoying the spectacular scenery of the Great Glen.



Insignia of the Caledonian Canal.

**“The doubters, the grumblers, the prophets and the sneerers, were all put to silence, or to shame: for the 24th of October was at length to witness the Western joined to the Eastern sea.”**

Inverness Courier, reporting on the formal opening of the Caledonian Canal, October 1822.

