

# Eilean Donan Castle — Matheson links

Our website has had a refresh, and the home page now sports a wonderful view of Eilean Donan Castle. Why this castle in particular? There are historical links between this castle and Mathesons.

Stories about the origins of the castle include a founding legend that the son of the chief of the Mathesons acquired the power to communicate with birds. As a result of this power, and after many adventures overseas, he gained wealth, power and the respect of King Alexander II, who asked him in the 13th century to build the castle to defend his realm against Norwegian invaders.

The later history of clan feuding to control this important castle includes that during a surprise attack in 1539 the recently-appointed constable, Iain Dubh Matheson, was killed defending the castle with one other, the warden of Clan Macrae.

Eilean Donan Castle was bombarded and destroyed in 1719 by the English fleet at the time of the Battle of Glenshiel.

When Sir Alexander Matheson bought the land in 1851 the ruin must have been included. It was later sold by his eldest son Sir Kenneth, 2nd Baronet, to Major John Macrae-Gilstrap, who restored the castle to its present state. In 1983 the Macrae family established a trust to own, maintain and restore the castle.

This is a famous Scottish landmark and is now a beautiful place to visit, looking out as it does over Loch Duich.

## Snippets about Eilean Donan Castle

In Gaelic, Eilean Donan means 'The island of Donan'. The name refers to the legend that the 6th century Irish Saint Donnán lived on the island for a time, before being martyred on the island of Eigg.

It is quite possibly the most photographed castle in Scotland.

It's set on a small rocky island where three lochs meet: Loch Alsh, Loch Duich and Loch Long.

A Pictish fortress may have existed on the site during the 6th or 7th centuries.

It has featured in many movies, including the Bond film 'The world is not enough'.

