

# Kenmore can't be beaten for beauty, fun and games



**QUALITY TIME:** Taymouth Country Estate, left, offers luxurious self-catering cottages, above, which include hot tubs and saunas

**T**HE conservation village of Kenmore lies on the banks of Loch Tay, less than a two-hour drive from Glasgow or Edinburgh. Arriving at the Mains of Taymouth Country Estate to prepare for our midweek break, I realise once again how lucky we are to have such beautiful scenery on our doorstep.

The estate, bordered by the Tay Forest Park on one side and the River Tay on the other, was built in the 19th century and was formerly the home farm for Taymouth Castle.

The beautiful courtyard buildings themselves have been tastefully converted into luxury self-catering holiday cottages.

After a warm welcome at reception, we head over to our accommodation for the next four days – the luxurious Granary Court.

Featuring a hot tub, sauna cabin with private south-facing gardens, four bedrooms, two masters with en-suite, huge kitchen diner with split level lounge area and log burning stove, it really is stunning.

On site, we have access to a nine-hole golf course, riding stables, the Courtyard Bar and Restaurant, delicatessen and gift shop, while there is also boat hire, fishing, biking, water-sports and sensational walking of all grades.

We start our break with a visit to the award-winning Scottish Crannog Centre located on the shores of Loch Tay.

In case you don't know, a crannog is a type of ancient timber-built roundhouse supported on piles or stilts driven into the loch bed.

Found throughout Scotland and Ireland dating from 5,000 years ago, most today appear as tree-covered islands or remain hidden as submerged stony mounds.

Several hundred have been discovered so far in Scotland, although only a few have been properly investigated.

The Scottish Crannog Centre features a unique reconstruction built by the Scottish Trust for Underwater Archaeology, based on one of the 18 crannogs preserved in Loch Tay.

Here we can step back in time and discover how and why these ancient people built their homes on the water and experience first-hand how they lived.

Back on dry land, we get the chance to try out some of the ancient crafts, such as wood turning, grinding out flour by hand, stone cutting and fire starting – my favourite.

Then it's back to Granary Court for a quick sauna and dip in the hot tub before heading for dinner at the Courtyard.

The chefs here use local produce, including bread from the Kenmore Bakery, Remony Estate venison and Kinnihallen lamb sc

## DEREK ROSS takes his family on a four-day break to Loch Tay for some relaxation and more than a little education



**HAND-FED:** Guests can feed red deer

naturally reared at 'Ewetopia' near Fortingall.

Our second day sees us heading for Highland Safaris and, after a quick introduction to our guide, Andy, we are off in our Land Rover heading up into the hills.

We stop at various times to check out animal tracks and native tree species – bringing back some Boy Scout lessons from my childhood – before enjoying the stunning view stretching from Aberfeldy to Loch Tay.

After lunch, it is time to meet Ossian, the Highland Safaris visitor centre's very own barn owl.

From the sound of the screeching, Ossian is ready for a feed and, after a quick introduction from handler Donald, we are treated to the sight of the owl flying back and forth across the room.

Then we learn about Scotland's native deer population, before heading outside to the red deer enclosure armed with cups of feed to serve them from the palm of our hands.

Established in 1992 by Donald and Julie Riddell, Highland Safaris have been awarded many accolades, including Most Enjoyable Visitor Attraction, and have twice been finalists in the VisitScotland Thistle Awards.

Back at the Courtyard later that evening, I must confess to feeling slightly guilty as I order a venison burger – but it is delicious!

Day three brings time for yet more fresh air with a gentle bike ride around Kenmore and the grounds of Taymouth Castle.

We time it perfectly to stop for lunch at the Kenmore Parish Church, which just happens to be having a fundraiser BBQ and cake event.

The final day brings a horse-riding adventure – although, never having ridden a horse before, I must admit to being a bit apprehensive.

I need not have worried as all the horses at the Taymouth Stables seem to sense who's on board and are very forgiving – even for me.

Once equipped with our helmets, it's time to meet our horses. We are introduced to Fergus, Brody and Teddy and lead them down to the enclosure.

Both the horses and instructors are very patient and, once we learn how to control the horses and our confidence is up, we try a short trot for the length of the enclosure. I now have a new respect for seasoned riders.

With so much to see and do in such a beautiful location, you really should put Kenmore on your list of places to visit.

Now I just have to work out how to fit a hot tub in my back garden...

### ● FACT FILE

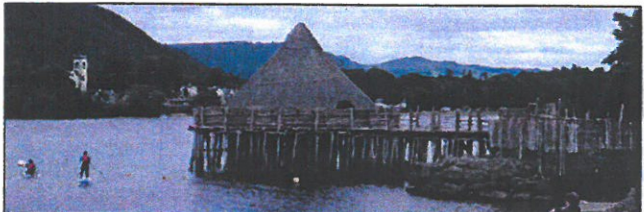
Mains of Taymouth Country Estate – [www.taymouth.co.uk](http://www.taymouth.co.uk)

Scottish Crannog Centre – [www.crannog.co.uk](http://www.crannog.co.uk)

Highland Safaris – [www.hIGHLANDSAFARIS.net](http://www.hIGHLANDSAFARIS.net)

Loch Tay Boating and Mountain Bike Hire – [www.loch-tay.co.uk](http://www.loch-tay.co.uk)

Taymouth Stables – 07712 321903



**RIGHT AT HOME:** The Scottish Crannog Centre allows visitors to step back in time