

# Lockerbie

## The Town That Taught the World a Lesson in Humanity

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**Lockerbie, Scotland, is a quaint sheep-farming town that is rich in** Scottish culture, history and tradition, with roots going back as far as the Vikings and Romans. Nestled on the English border in Dumfries and Galloway, this enchanting and friendly locale serves as a welcoming gateway to Scotland from England and as a sheep-farming town for surrounding farms. Although Lockerbie is only roughly 75 miles from the bustling streets of Glasgow, it remains home to just a few thousand people. Sheep freely roam the pastures and stately Victorian architecture featuring locally quarried red sandstone borders the streets.

This tight-knit community could never have imagined the horror that would tear through the night and rip through the very fabric of life in Lockerbie. To that same end, the rest of the world could never have comprehended the outpouring of compassion and the dedication shown by Lockerbie residents as they began the horrific task of digging through the bent and burning remains of Pan Am 103.

The Lockerbie community's extraordinarily generous response in the aftermath of the Pan Am 103 bombing earned the town praise and recognition as "the town that taught the world a lesson in humanity."

In the Foundation's expanded website we plan to highlight the humanity and resilience of Lockerbie through a photo series demonstrating the town's historical richness, beauty, and peacefulness along with the courage and compassion of its residents. We will also share details about visiting Lockerbie, including accommodations, specific points of interest, and attractions such as the Tundergarth Kirks.



Lockerbie Town Hall and War Memorial Statue



## The Horrific Moment

It was shortly after 7:00 p.m. on December 21, 1988, just a few days before Christmas when Pan Am 103 exploded in the skies directly above Lockerbie. Less than 50 seconds later, the remains of the plane and passengers began to rain down upon the town, blazing through buildings, ripping through the landscape, and spreading a maelstrom of ignited jet fuel, jagged metal and destruction that stretched for 845 square miles.

The cockpit and forward section landed in a field near Tundergarth Church, 2.5 miles east of Lockerbie – the downed nosecone becoming one of the most iconic images of the aftermath. The rear fuselage fell amid the family homes of the Rosebank area of town. The wings and fuel tanks tore through the Sherwood Crescent neighborhood, first crashing into one house and then causing an explosion that left a 143-foot-long crater and rocketed more than 1,500 tons of debris into the air. Homes up to 75 yards away lost their roofs; the doors and windows of homes even farther away had their doors and windows shattered.

The impact was so intense that the British Geographical Survey measured an impact of 1.6 on the Richter scale. Fires burned across an area more than one mile long and half a mile wide. A total of 21 houses were completely destroyed, and amid the wreckage were the bodies of 11 Lockerbie residents and 259 passengers and crew members murdered in the violent attack. In the blink of an eye, Lockerbie had become a global disaster zone.

## Lockerbie's Response

For this Foundation—our family of survivors—it's difficult to find the appropriate words to express our gratitude to and fondness for the people of Lockerbie, Scotland.

That night, police, rescue teams, and so many ordinary citizens were instantly on the scene, beginning the dark and daunting task of recovering and tagging the remains. In the days that followed, the people of Lockerbie, young and old, rushed to find their own ways to help.

Lockerbie women, who would become known as the “Women who Washed,” made it their mission to launder, iron and sort through clothing recovered from the wreckage, so that it could be returned to the surviving families in proper order. This unexpected gesture of kindness meant so much to families facing their darkest hours.



Lockerbie in the Spring



Tundergarth Church and 1575 Celtic Kirk Church Ruins.





Countless residents and citizen groups joined in the recovery process as Lockerbie mobilized and transformed itself into an emergency unit under the most impossible circumstances.

As the families of the victims began arriving on the scene, the town's humanity and compassion were unexpected sources of comfort. Mothers and fathers were surprised to meet the very people who had recovered their sons' and daughters' belongings. First responders answered our tough questions with grace and honesty. Even the Boy Scouts, despite their tender ages, did their part as messengers in getting the job done with honor and dignity.

### Humanity Amid Tragedy

We saw the work the townspeople of Lockerbie had done. We knew how difficult it must have been. We connected with perfect strangers who had taken it upon themselves to do whatever they could to make the situation a little easier for us—despite losing 11 of their own on the ground and even as a flood of broadcast media, press, and investigators descended upon their homes.

Lockerbie was then, and remains today, a shining example of the best qualities in the human spirit. When faced with circumstances monumental in their tragedy, these people met it with a personal sense of responsibility and empathy that made the hardest days in our lives feel a little less alone.

Our Foundation serves to chronicle the events of December 21, 1988, giving voice to those lost and allowing those left behind to share their stories. We come from 21 different countries. However, we share a common thread, and that is our deep admiration and appreciation for the townspeople of Lockerbie, Scotland.

**Good endures. This is the legacy of Pan Am 103 Lockerbie.**



Above — Lockerbie Air Disaster Memorial at Dryfesdale Cemetery

Below — Town Hall stained glass windows of flags representing the 21 countries of the 270 victims of Pan Am 103

