



paths around DUFFTOWN





Go wild in Dufftown

These paths could seriously:

- *Improve your health and well being*
 - *Bring you close to nature*
- *Let you see some beautiful countryside*
 - *Bring local history to life*
 - *Unravel the delights of whisky*
 - *Be fun*

About the Area

Dufftown, acknowledged as the malt whisky capital of the world, is situated on the edge of the newly created Cairngorms National Park. Home to seven operating whisky distilleries, including the famous Glenfiddich brand, the town nestles between heather clad hills where the River Fiddich and Dullan Water meet.

Established in 1817 by James Duff, 4th Earl of Fife, the town is a fine example of a planned settlement. Nature abounds in this beautiful corner of old Banffshire where numerous species of animal and plant life thrive in a variety of river, woodland and moorland habitats. The area has a rich history displayed by the presence of Balvenie and Auchindoun Castles. Mortlach Kirk lies near the site of Mortlach battlefield where the Danes were defeated in 1010.

Annual events include two whisky festivals, (Spring and Autumn), with the 'Spirit of Speyside' walking festival in August. Dufftown Highland Games are held on the last Saturday in July, a feature of which is the massed pipe bands.

There is a whisky museum in Fife Street recalling illicit distilling and smuggling in auld lang syne (days gone by). Glenfiddich Distillery has a visitor centre. The Keith and Dufftown railway is run by volunteers. The Golf Club welcomes visitors and is claimed to have the highest green in the country from where the views are magnificent.

Recommended Walks

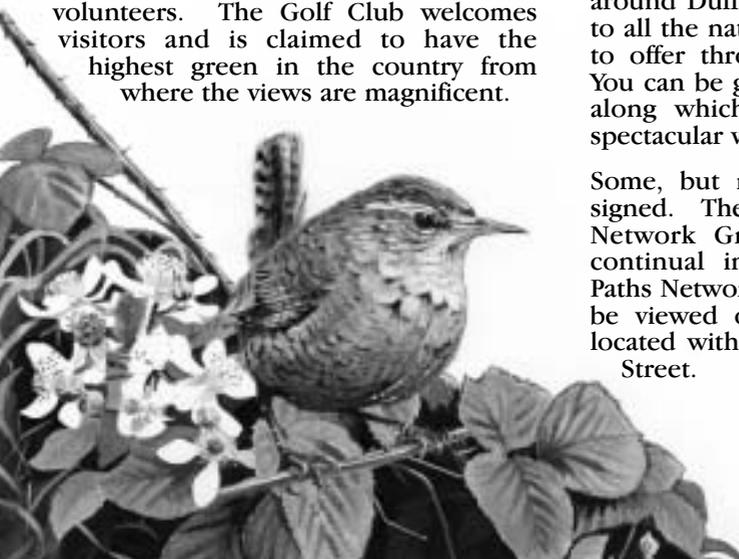
All the featured walks in this booklet, (except to Auchindoun Castle), start at The Clocktower in the Square. This was originally a jail, which now houses the seasonal Tourist Information Centre. The clock originally housed in Banff claims to be the one used to hang James McPherson, a notorious freebooter famously recalled in the folk song, 'McPherson's Rant'. Note the plaque commemorating George Stephen who emigrated from Dufftown to Canada and was co-founder of the Canadian - Pacific Railway. Outside the Clocktower there is a map board showing the walks. Dufftown is well connected to Elgin and Aberlour by a regular bus service with a heritage rail connection to Keith run by volunteers.

An occasional bus service runs to Huntly and Aberdeen Contact Traveline (Tel: 08706082608) for further information.

Many of the walks are short in distance and generally have good surfaces in the town with rougher sections in the country. For the more ambitious several routes can be combined to create a longer walk. Most routes are hilly in places and stout footwear and waterproof clothing are recommended.

All the walks explore the countryside around Dufftown and give good access to all the natural attributes the area has to offer throughout the four seasons. You can be guaranteed that somewhere along whichever walk you choose a spectacular viewpoint will unfold.

Some, but not all, of the routes are signed. The Local Speyside Footpaths Network Group is working towards continual improvement of the Local Paths Network. Details of the walks can be viewed on the computer terminal located within the Whisky Shop in Fife Street.



Walk: 1 The Giant's Chair

Distance: 2 Miles

Time: 1 hour 30 minutes

Terrain: Mixture of tarmac, gravel and grass paths. Relatively level with some minor gradients. Sections of the path near the Giant's Chair are uneven and rough.

Users: Suitable for walkers. There is a kissing gate at the far end of this walk and some flights of steps.

The route starts along Church Street, following the road down past the Kirk and up the steep brae with Dufftown Distillery at the bottom, Pittyvaich at the top. The derelict farmhouse is a listed building.

Continue on this minor road until a lovely green road (as featured on this booklet's front cover) is seen on the left, signposted Giant's Chair. Once across the River Dullan footbridge the Giant's Cradle is on the left, just off the path – great care is needed here, also at the Giant's Chair by the shelter. Both of these are natural rock features carved by the power of Dullan Water. Further downstream the path passes the beautiful Linen Apron Waterfall, which only earns its name when the burn is in spate. After a

tranquil stretch of water a weir, known locally as "the intak" is reached; beyond lies Dufftown Distillery, on the far bank. Further on you can cross the river by a pedestrian brig opposite Hardhaugh, or the brig between the old and the new graveyards. The old graveyard and Kirk are well worth a visit.

Mortlach Kirk, is the site of one of the oldest places of Christian worship in the country. St Moluag, from the Monastery of Lismore established a cell at Mortlach in AD566. It is said to have been the seat of a bishop until the 12th Century. In the vestibule is a fine Pictish symbol "elephant" stone. The chancel has three lancet windows dating from the 13th Century, although the glass is much later.

In the Kirkyard, there is a weathered Battle Stone with a cross on one side, on the other a serpent, bullshead and a man on horseback. Here is evidence of the coming of Christianity and the absorption of the old Pictish symbolism.

Mortlach was the site of a battle between the Scots and the Danes in 1010. The story goes that the Danes had encamped in the haugh, either side of Dullan Water. The Scots led by Malcolm II dammed the Dullan by the Giant's Chair. Then, while the Danes slept, the Scots breached the dam, followed the water down and routed the enemy. To commemorate the victory Malcolm extended the Kirk by three spears' length.

Leave the Kirkyard by the front entrance and return to the Clock Tower via Church Street.



Walk 2 Meg's Widd (Princess Royal Park)

Distance: 1 1/4 Miles

Time: 1 hour

Terrain: A route combining roadway paths and grass/gravel paths through woods and fields. Steady inclines in places with a few rough, wet sections.

Users: Limited to able-bodied pedestrians along rougher paths in the vicinity of Meg's Widd where a short set of steps requires to be negotiated, also a kissing gate.

Best started along Conval Street, this walk travels through Meg's Widd from where fine panoramic views of the area – even Ben Rinnes can be glimpsed between the Convals at one point.

Follow the signs through attractive pasturelands to descend to Church Street, Mortlach Kirk is in the foreground with its near neighbour, Dufftown Distillery. In the background is the hill of Macalea, which can be reached from the Huntly road. The border with Aberdeenshire lies just beyond.

Walk 3 Maister's Widd

Distance: 1 Mile

Time: 30 minutes

Terrain: Good surfaces throughout with short inclines within the wood.

Users: A short amble suitable for a wide range of users. Narrow paths and some steps within the wood.

This very short walk is a good introduction to the town's attractions including Maister's Widd, a fine stand of deciduous trees linking, Church Street with Fife Street via Cowie Avenue.

Note the Maister's Well incorporating an inscribed stone originally situated in the town square.

Walk 4 Tomnamuidh Widd

(Gaelic: Tom – thicket; knoll, Na – of, Muidh – front beam in a weaving loom.)

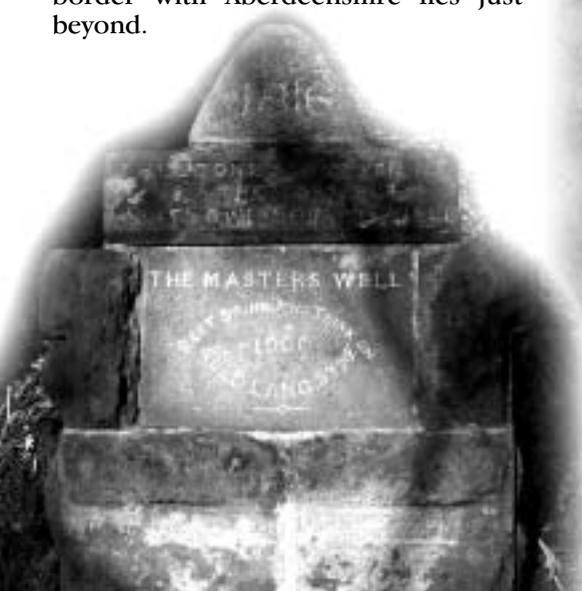
Distance: 1 3/4 Miles

Time: 1 hour 15 minutes

Terrain: Smooth, level roadside path in the town. Some steep and uneven sections of paths to be negotiated within the woodland.

Users: Suitable for able-bodied pedestrians. No barrier features to be negotiated but there are steps on the steeper sections.

Tomnamuidh Widd, locally referred to as the 'Toon's Widd', is best accessed from Balvenie Street by means of the Memorial Garden, a pleasant spot to reflect on the sacrifice made by this small community in two world wars. As



you climb through the wood look to your left to see the extent of Wm. Grant and Sons enterprise, Glenfiddich Distillery in the foreground. Just beyond lies the ruined Balvenie Castle, which is open to the public seasonally. This can be reached from the wood by following the field path down to the cottage.

Balvenie Castle is thought to date from the 13th Century, when Black Comyn, the Earl of Buchan, ruled over this Celtic province until their overthrow a century later by Robert the Bruce. The “Black” Douglases were then in possession until they too were wiped out in 1455 by James II who gave Balvenie to a kinsman. The title, Earl of Atholl, was later bestowed upon one of this family who entertained Mary Queen of Scots at Balvenie in 1562. By 1720 the castle was abandoned. The name Balvenie originally encompassed the town until in 1817 James Duff, 4th Earl of Fife, founded Dufftown, but Balvenie survives as a distillery and in the name of its famous product.

Once back in the Widd, continue down and round to the right to reach Tiniver Brae. Cross the play park and head straight on to return to Balvenie Street and the Clocktower.

Walk 5 Gordons' Cross

Distance: 2 Miles

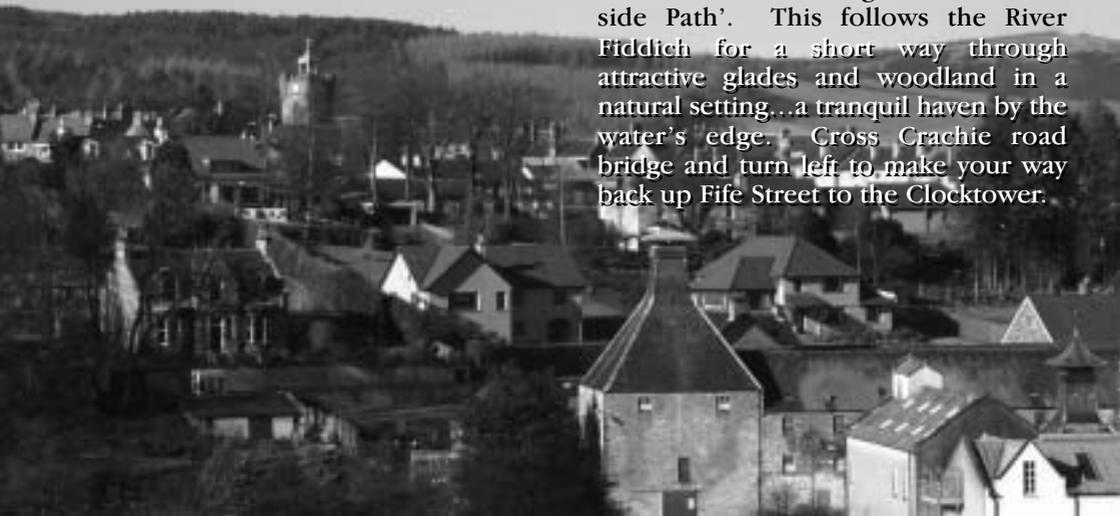
Time: 1 hour 30 minutes

Terrain: Fully surfaced roadside paths in the built up areas. Rough grassy and gravel paths in country sections. Some short steep inclines to be negotiated by flights of steps.

Users: Suitable for able-bodied pedestrians. Several gates require to be negotiated near Gordons' Cross and beside the river Fiddich where there are some steps.

Travel along Church St. and down past the Kirk. Cross the river to Hardhaugh, turn left onto the track between the old kirkyard and new graveyard. Branch off to the right and follow the track through two gates, and straight on to where a bench is situated on the path between the fields. Alongside is a large stone, the base of the “Gordons' Cross”, or gibbet, where the Gordons held the power of “Pit and Gallows”. Note the fine view northwards over the town with Mortlach Distillery in the foreground

Continue on the track, cross the Huntly road and follow the signs for the ‘River side Path’. This follows the River Fiddich for a short way through attractive glades and woodland in a natural setting...a tranquil haven by the water's edge. Cross Crachie road bridge and turn left to make your way back up Fife Street to the Clocktower.



walk 7 Gownie Circular Walk



LEGEND

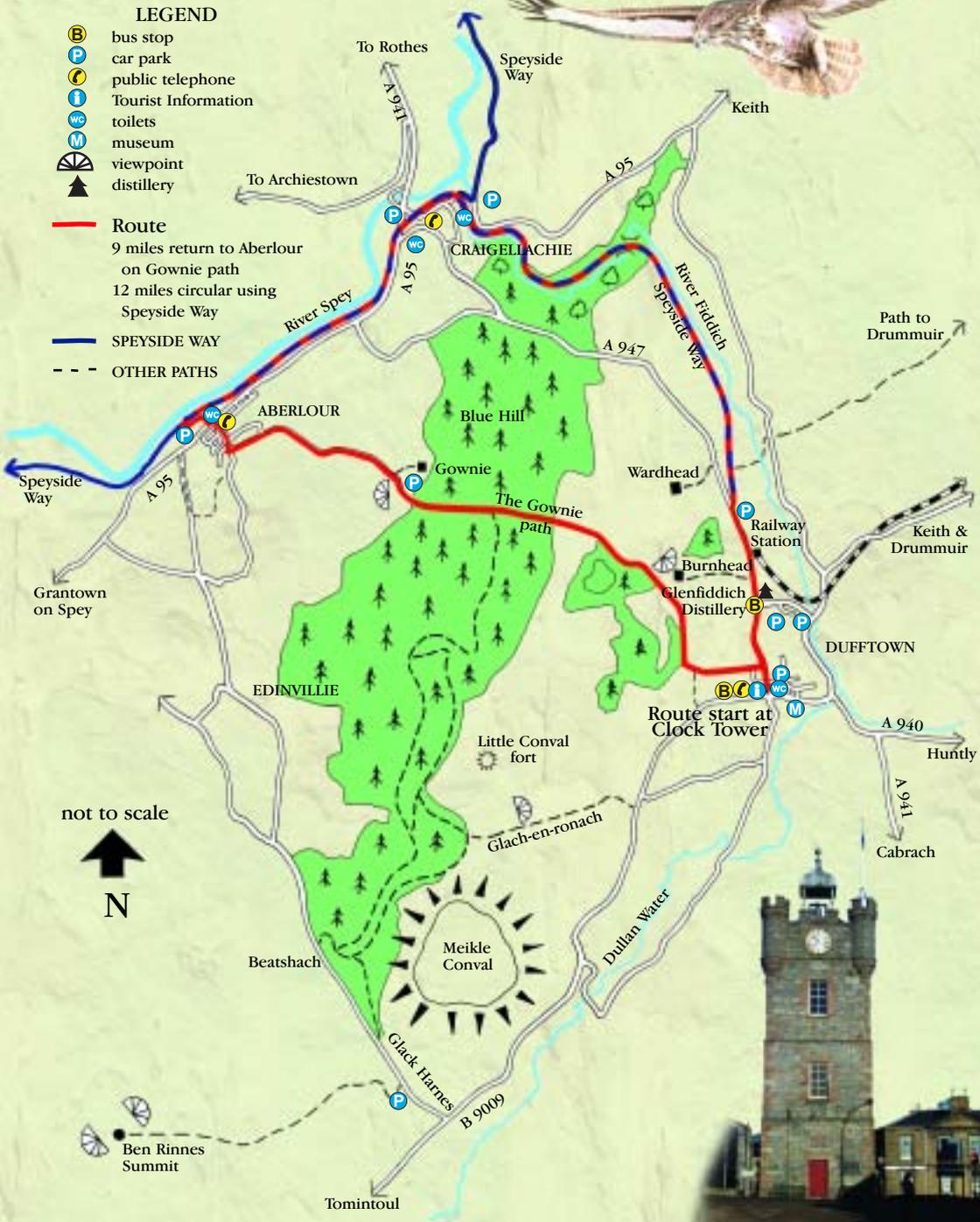
-  bus stop
-  car park
-  public telephone
-  Tourist Information
-  toilets
-  museum
-  viewpoint
-  distillery

Route

9 miles return to Aberlour
on Gownie path
12 miles circular using
Speyside Way

 SPEYSIDE WAY

 OTHER PATHS



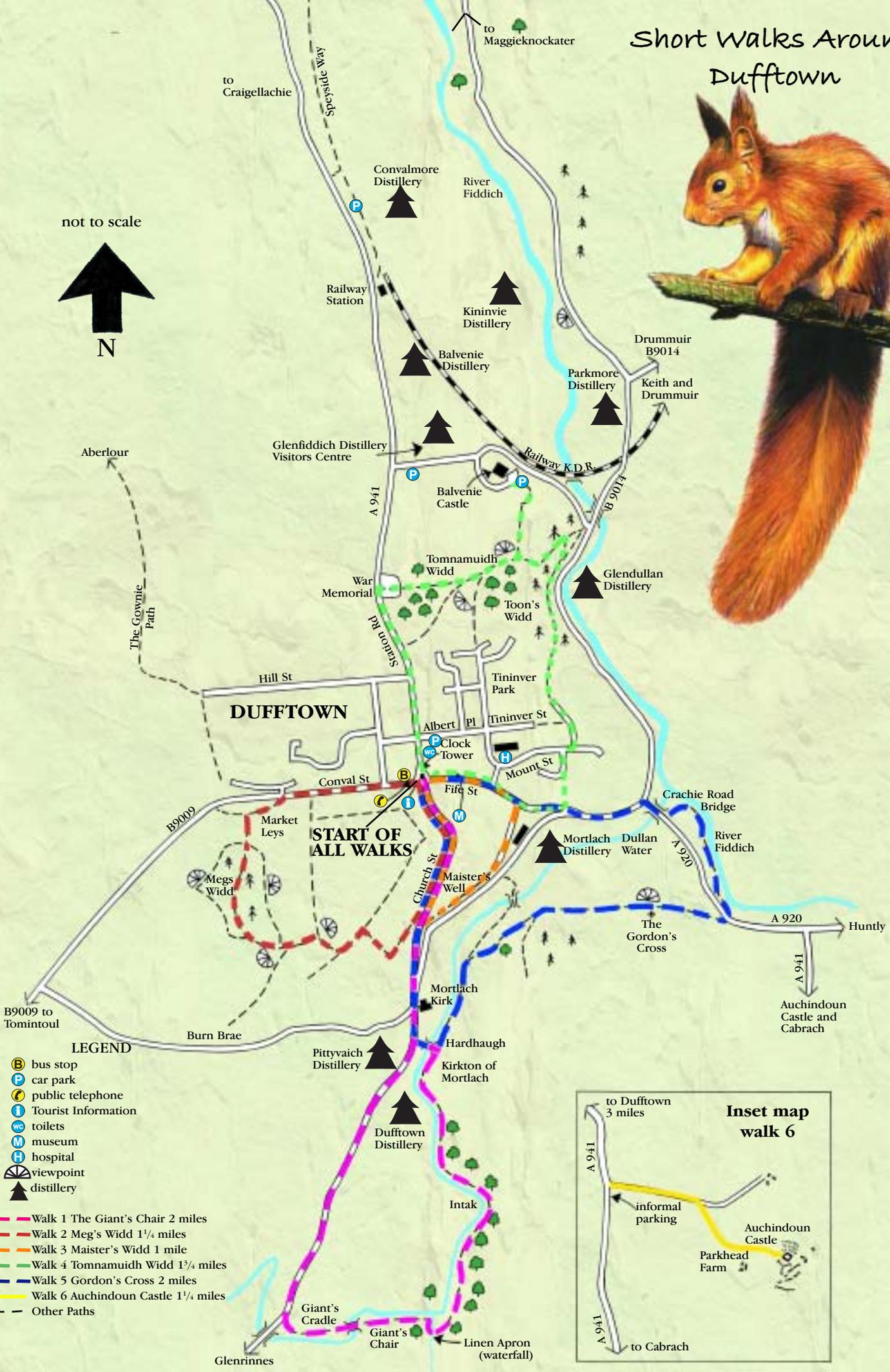
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Short walks Around Dufftown



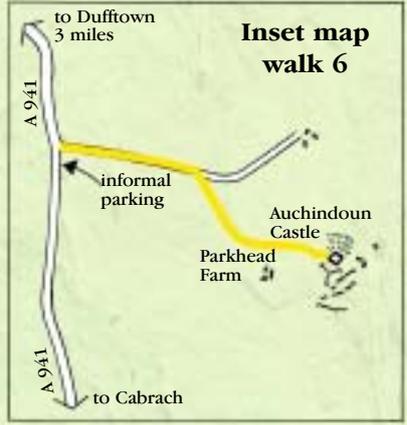
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START OF ALL WALKS

- LEGEND**
- bus stop
 - car park
 - public telephone
 - Tourist Information
 - toilets
 - museum
 - hospital
 - viewpoint
 - distillery

- Walk 1 The Giant's Chair 2 miles
- Walk 2 Meg's Widd 1 1/4 miles
- Walk 3 Maister's Widd 1 mile
- Walk 4 Tomnamuidh Widd 1 1/4 miles
- Walk 5 Gordon's Cross 2 miles
- Walk 6 Auchindoun Castle 1 1/4 miles
- Other Paths



Walk 6 Auchindoun Castle

Distance: 1 1/4 Miles return from A941

Time: 1 hour

Terrain: A wide rough surfaced access track with a steady incline.

Users: Suitable for able-bodied pedestrians. Gates require to be negotiated near the castle. Access is from the Cabrach road, 3 miles south of Dufftown, where there is informal parking at the side of the road. Do not drive up the uneven track, which is private.

A fairly steep, rough track takes you to within sight of the Castle. At the junction take the track on the right and cut across the field to the entrance gate. The view up Glen Fiddich from the top is particularly pleasing. The Keep, standing three storeys high is encircled by Pictish earthworks. It was built by Robert Cochran, a favourite of James III, later hanged by the Scottish Barons at Lauder Bridge in 1482. The Ogilvies owned it at one stage, then the Gordons. A popular ballad recalls the burning of it by Willie MacIntosh in 1592. Return by the same route to the A941 Cabrach Road.

Walk 7 The Gownie Circular

Distance: Dufftown to Aberlour return is 9 miles with the full circular route via Craigellachie being 12 miles long

Time: Dufftown to Aberlour return - around 4 1/2 hours

Full circular route - 6 to 8 hours

Terrain: Mostly surfaced access tracks particularly in lowland section with some grassy paths through fields. Rough in places with considerable gradients to the summit of the Gownie Path at a height of around 1000ft.

Users: A route for the more energetic walker and cyclist. There are some stiles and gates to be negotiated.

A circular walk via Craigellachie and Aberlour for the more enthusiastic looking for some adventure. Initially follow Balvenie Street, past Glenfiddich Distillery and the Railway Station and travel along the Speyside Way Spur.

Going along the old railway line (Speyside Way Spur), the going is easy although take care at one section as considerable slippage has occurred, the result of heavy rainstorms. The track follows the River Fiddich on its way to join the Spey at Craigellachie, home to the hotel of that name which has become world renowned for hosting sensitive international summit talks. But the name had been whispered (well shouted anyway) in the United States Senate long before this. When General Ulysses Grant, U.S. President 1868 – 1876 held office it was wagered that no-one could trick his poker face to show emotion but, during a debate in the senate a fellow clansman called out “Stand Fast Craigellachie” and the President’s face was completely transformed by smiles. “Stand Fast Craigellachie” is the slogan (battle cry), of the Clan Grant.... an easily won wager for someone who knew his kinship!

From Craigellachie, the Speyside Way continues to Aberlour. Leave it by The



Square, just before the playpark, cross the road into Queen's Road and turn left into Allachie Drive.

The route over the Gownie Path is quite a stiff climb; (you could cheat and get a lift as far as the metalled road end). The views across Strathspey from the summit are spectacular.

The path is waymarked as a right of way passing through different terrain from conifer wood to moorland and pasture on the Dufftown side. As you descend from the path summit the views over Dufftown are extensive and the town's 'seven hills and stills' can be clearly seen. Wildlife abounds, but you need to proceed quietly to glimpse it. The path joins Hill Street connecting with Balvenie Street, or climb Steepie Brae reaching Conval Street to get back to the Clocktower.

Walk 8 Dufftown Drumble

Distance: 4 1/2 Miles

Time: 3 hours

Terrain: A mixture of tarmac, gravel and grass paths, some sections traverse public roads so care should be taken due to the proximity of traffic. There are short gradients and sections of uneven paths.

Users: Suitable for able-bodied walkers, sections of the route can also be cycled. There are a number of gates and steps to be negotiated.

The route starts from the Clock Tower linking all Dufftown distilleries in one walk. The tower is known to have had an illicit still working away in the basement during the early part of the 20th century.

Excisemen on their way to work would pass through The Square and get the odd whiff of a fresh mash or a fiery

point in the Distillation cycle and put it down to legal production at one of the seven operational stills in the village. Talk about cocking a snook at officialdom! The story of illicit distilling is recalled in the Whisky Museum in Fife Street.

Follow Church Street, to Mortlach Kirk at the bottom of the hill. In the graveyard there are many former distillers and workers alike. William Grant for instance has a large family grave there, not a stone's throw from Hardhaugh on the other side of the Burn where he used to reside during his "Mortlach Days". In the grave next to William Grant and perhaps only a coincidence is a certain "McGregor" who was a brewer at Mortlach around the time that William Grant was manager; indeed there is a photograph at Mortlach with both gentlemen in the picture.

Cross the River by the Footbridge and turn right for a view of **Dufftown Distillery**, which was built in 1896 in a tight hollow alongside the Dullan Water. It was owned at that time by Peter McKenzie and was eventually sold on to 'Bells', the UK best seller during the 60's, 70's and 80's. Uphill from the Kirk, **Pittyvaich Distillery** was built to produce additional volume for the successful Distiller (1974). Alas the distillery has long since closed (2000) and was recently demolished.

Bells merged with Scottish Malt Distillers back in the 1980's and with so many other distilleries the need to keep Pittyvaich in production reduced. Back in the mid-1990's it was being used for experiments, one in particular was the production of Gordon's Gin. At that time all the neutral spirit for Gordon's Gin was produced at Cameronbridge Distillery and tankered down to London where United Distillers had their Gin Pot Still by the name of Old Tom. Financially this was madness, tankering the neutral spirit to London and

tankering the feints (low alcohols) back up to Cameronbridge. It was considered to be much cheaper to move the whole operation north to Cameronbridge in Fife and produce the final Gin product there. This proved to be difficult for some of the United Distillers hierarchy to accept that they could still produce a quality Gin in Scotland so they set up a trial at Pittyvaich. A water jacket was installed round the outside of the final distillation still, the neutral spirit was tankered north from Fife, the botanicals were added to the still to provide the Gin flavours and hey presto – pure Gordon’s Gin was produced. This was enough to convince the board that Gin could be made north of the border and Gordon’s Gin is now wholly produced in Cameronbridge.



Follow the Dullan downstream to **Mortlach Distillery**. Dufftown is in the parish of Mortlach, a name found on the Canadian Pacific Railway, as founded by Dufftown “loon” (boy) George Stephen, later Lord Mount Stephen. Mortlach was the first distillery to be built in Dufftown back in 1823, the same year as the first distilling licences were issued. Mortlach was a thriving distillery and like many old distilleries it had its own railway siding which was then routed off the main Keith – Dufftown track at Parkmore, running along the back of Glendullan. Mortlach was purchased by Johnnie Walker in 1923 and was swallowed up within the Scottish Malt Distillers empire around 1935.



Return to the River Dullan, cross the bridge and follow the sign towards the Gordons Cross. Beyond, cross the A920 and follow the Riverside Path by the River Fiddich. This water once served a thriving Mill at Auchindoun producing large quantities of grist for Distilleries legal and illicit. Cross the Crachie Bridge and follow the B9014 Keith Road

where **Glendullan Distillery** can be seen on the right. A new Glendullan Distillery was built alongside the old distillery in 1972-1973 and for some years both produced whisky. Eventually the old distillery closed due to the high running costs. Glendullan used to have an association with McDonald and Greenlees Distillers and the “Old Parr” whisky. Most of the production nowadays is fed into many of the very

successful blends in the Diageo portfolio.

Alternatively, from Mortlach Distillery continue to Fife Street, cross to the far side and walk uphill to the steps signed to Tomnamuidh Widd. Once in the Widd take the bottom path from where a view of Glendullan Distillery can be enjoyed. Follow the path to the bottom corner of the wood to join the Keith Road.

Just the other side of the Railway Viaduct lies **Parkmore Distillery**, built just before the turn of the last Century. Parkmore was produced on and off until 1931 when Scottish Malt Distillers, who had purchased it the previous year, closed it. According to a Scottish Malt Distillers journal at the time it was temporarily closed due to a high rise in duty that year. It never re-opened but the floor maltings continued to work through until the late 1950's when it closed with many other floor maltings due to the introduction of large purpose built Drum Maltings which could produce vast quantities of quality malt at a much reduced cost.

Taking the minor Maggieknockater road you eventually reach a lay-by on the right, which overlooks William Grant's four operating Distilleries, all on the one site, (see interpretation board on Glenfiddich, Balvenie, Kininvie and Convalmore Distilleries). The most famous of these is **Glenfiddich Distillery**, built by William Grant and his family during 1886-1887. The first spirit flowed from the Spirit Safe on Christmas day 1887. William had left Mortlach Distillery, where he had learnt his trade, after twenty years. He used his hard-earned cash to purchase three stills from Cardhu and transported them back to Dufftown with horse and cart. William Grant's Glenfiddich was a commercial success and five years later he went on to establish **Balvenie Distillery** in 1892. The water source was off the same hill

but the Robbie Dhu spring, which supports all Glenfiddich needs, proved to be much larger than the springs not a mile distant just round the hill. Indeed in the present day there are around thirty different springs needed to keep Balvenie and Kininvie in operation. Balvenie has the only working floor maltings on the Scottish mainland. **Kininvie Distillery** was built beside Balvenie in 1990 and the distillery was opened by Mrs Jane Roberts who is the granddaughter of William Grant. Mrs Roberts' husband, Eric, was a former Chairman of the Company. At the time of writing Mrs Roberts is in reasonably good health for a lady who was 103 on 13th August 2004. Kininvie was named after the Estate on the other side of the River Fiddich and next to the house where Mrs Roberts resides. The distillery was built primarily to produce a different malt for the fast growing Grant's blend. Glenfiddich is quite a light malt and Balvenie quite heavy, so Grant's were looking to produce something in between to add to their blend recipe.

The last of these distilleries is **Convalmore** which can be found tucked into the back of Glenfiddich and Balvenie and best seen from the path between Dufftown and Craigellachie on the old railway track, known better as the Speyside Way. Convalmore was also built in 1896 but burned down in 1903, it was rebuilt in 1907 with a column still for distillation, (column stills are used almost exclusively in Scotland in the production of grain whisky). This did not last long as the whisky was not of a good quality and so they returned to Pot Stills made from copper. Convalmore was a fairly middle of the road malt and the water supply was not the best, two of the reasons for its eventual closure in 1986. The distillery was purchased by William Grant's in 1994 and only the warehouses are now in use for maturing Glenfiddich, Balvenie and Kininvie.

From the lay-by follow the Maggieknockater road northwards until just beyond the sign for Tullich House on the right and turn left down a track to cross the Fiddich by a footbridge. Join the Speyside Way by the Jubilee Path and return to Dufftown past Glenfiddich Distillery where you can have a restorative dram at the Visitors' Centre.

Thanks to Ian Millar of Glenfiddich Distillery who supplied the text for this walk and also to Wm Grant and Sons and Diageo for their continued support.

DIAGEO



OTHER WALKS

Dufftown is located at the end of the Speyside Way Spur linking the town to Aviemore and the Moray Coast, a separate publication details this route. Many other walks exist in the area other than those featured including the path to the summit of Ben Rinnes and a variety of woodland and moorland walks. These can all be used subject to you responsibly exercising your 'right of access' established by the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003.



NATURE

Just some of the species to look out for:

FLORA

Alder	Blackberry	Blaeberry
Bird Cherry	Ferns	Fungi
Gean	Hackberry	Heather
Honeysuckle	Mimulus	Primrose
Rowan	Scots Pine	Silver Birch
Sweet Cicely	Stag Horn Moss	Violet
Wood Sorrel	Woodrush	Wych Elm

FAUNA

Badger	Big Cats	Brown Trout
Buzzard	Capercaillie	Dipper
Deer	Fox	Heron
Otter	Owls	Pied Wagtail
Red Squirrel	Ring Ouzel	Rook
Salmon	Sea Trout	Stoat
Water Vole	Wild Cat	Wren



USEFUL NUMBERS

Stephen Cottage Hospital 01340 820215
Dufftown Medical Group 01340 820888
Speyside Footpaths Network Group 01340 821245
Traveline Public Transport Info 0870 608 2608



COUNTRY CODE

To help conserve this special place and to ensure that these paths will continue to be enjoyed by everyone, please take CARE:

Courtesy for others

Awareness of the environment

Respect for people who live and work in the countryside

Enjoy!

ACCESS

Since February 2005 you now have a 'right of access' to all the paths featured. You are required to act RESPONSIBLY in accordance with the new Scottish Outdoor Access Code (SOAC). Know the code before you go!

To acknowledge landowners & farmers co-operation in making these walks possible leave the area as you find it, respect property and take care to stay away from farming and timber operations. Please keep dogs under control at all times and on a lead near livestock.

Note:

Please do not pick wild flowers, this is a criminal offence



DIAGEO

