CATERANECOMUSEUM.CO.UK



FROM DEEP TIME TO OUR TIME

Walking across the Cateran Ecomuseum



A MUSEUM WITHOUT WALLS





THE CATERAN ECOMUSEUM A Museum Without Walls — All Our Sites Are Outside

www.cateranecomuseum.co.uk

Route Design

Special thanks to the following people who lived and worked in our communities who helped design these itineraries: Nigel Dalziel and Professor John Mackenzie for Alyth Auld Town, Clare Cooper for Hill of Alyth and Den 'O' Alyth, Meg Luckins for A Spin Along The Ericht, Meg Mearns & Kevin Grieg for A History Tour around the Kirkton of Glenisla, Mount Blair Community Archive for In & Around Kirkmichael, the Ramsay family for Bamff Estate & Bamff Wildland Project, Carol Pudsey for Alyth Geotours, and Dr Richard Tipping for the Last Glaciers of Glenshee.



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FROM DEEP TIME TO OUR TIME

Walking across the Cateran Ecomuseum

The Cateran Ecomuseum is a museum without walls – all our sites are outside. Designed to reveal the hidden history of Cateran Country by the community who live here, it tells the story of its people, places and landscapes from pre-history to the present day.

Situated on the 500-million-year-old Highland Boundary Fault – the great geological feature that divides the Scottish Highlands from the Lowlands – the Cateran Ecomuseum's human history stretches back through millennia with sites identified from Neolithic times.

There are Pictish stones to excite your curiosity, unknown stories from the legends of King Arthur and Finn mac Cumhaill, contemporary histories of the Scottish Traveller Community, important events linked to the great Jacobite rebellions and fables of the Caterans themselves, the Highland clan warriors who came to be associated with cattle raiding.

You can discover the history of Scotland's Berry Capital, Blairgowrie, and visit the site of its Victorian textile mills, walk a part of the Highland Boundary Fault in Alyth and enjoy its well-preserved old town centre, see one of the most important collections of Pictish stones in Western Europe in Meigle and imagine the hustle and bustle of the great medieval Cistercian monastery at Coupar Angus.

A hike or cycle along the Cateran Trail, one of Scotland's great long-distance footpaths, will take you across magical Glenshee to the small villages of Kirkmichael and Glenisla, offering you spectacular views through huge landscapes sculpted by glaciers and traversed by old drove roads and ancient rights of way.

This booklet introduces you to the walking routes we have designed, which can be enjoyed by people of all ages and walking experiences.

Guiding you through the natural and cultural heritage of the Ecomuseum, they offer some of the best walking experiences you can have in Scotland.

Walk along old drove roads and through ancient woodlands, past prehistoric stone circles and into historic market towns, beside Victorian textile mills and across modern-day rewilding estates. Each route links you to sites of interest from deep time to our time, all framed by the gentle Vale of Strathmore, the rolling Braes of Angus, the beautiful Glens of eastern Perthshire and western Angus and the breath-taking Cairngorm Plateau.

Visit <u>www.cateranecomuseum.co.uk/explore</u> to find out detailed route information for each route.

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Designed by Pulse North

Individual walkers are responsible for their own welfare and safety and for being properly equipped for conditions. You should always carry a backup means of navigation and not rely on a single phone, app or map. The publisher cannot accept liability for any ill-health or injury, however caused.

All feedback will be welcomed. Please email your comments to the caterane comuse um@gmail.com







https://www.komoot.com/user/1758518065079

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FOREWORD

Janet Hunter, Cateran Ecomuseum Director

Janet, you've lived and worked in the Cateran Ecomuseum area for 25 years, what are some of your favourite places to walk here?

Enochdhu to Glenshee is probably my favourite trail because it takes you into the beautiful Perthshire landscape very quickly after you leave the road. There a sense of remoteness, but it's a well-trodden path and I always wonder who walked just before me as well as thinking about the distant past. Queen Victoria travelled this route to Balmoral and I'm sure she experienced the same thrill whenever she reached to the col to see over to Glenshee and the Cairngorms beyond — it's a wonderful view! I also reimagine the extraordinary outdoor art installations that we were created here in the last few years and look even now across to see if any remnant of Hamish Henderson's huge portrait is still there! The Den 'O' Alyth is quite a contrast, full of beautiful giant beech trees and stunning at any time of year. It's great for a short stroll in the woods or for children to explore and have a longer adventure. The Ericht is one of my favourite rivers in Scotland. It's where I saw my first otter. Many of its tributaries have the character of a fast-flowing highland river in Glenshee and Glenericht, and yet it becomes a much sleepier lowland water below Blairgowrie. You can choose a section to suit your mood whilst looking out for kingfishers and dippers.

Is there a particular time of year that you would recommend visiting or can folk enjoy the itineraries across the seasons?

For spectacular natural colour it's difficult to beat the spring for every shade of green imaginable. And equally, if you prefer orange and yellow, the autumn colours are everywhere. Some of the archaeology is perhaps more easily seen in winter when the vegetation is low and ancient ruins can be found in the grass. Each month offers something new, but not always predictably!

What is it about walking that creates such a positive and powerful feeling?

I'm not sure. But I do know that a walk always helps me to sort out an intractable challenge. Is it because, for most of us, walking is such a natural movement that we don't have to think about it. We have the capacity to appreciate our surroundings, lose ourselves in a day dream or have a different kind of conversation with companions. It's more than just exercise, it is a kind of freedom to explore physically and mentally.

Walking has an important role to play in how we preserve beautiful places like the Cateran Ecomuseum for future generations. How can we encourage more people to travel for leisure in this way?

Exploring on foot should become the norm. But it needs to be easy to find the start of a path, and we need the infrastructure, especially more public transport for walkers (and cyclists) to enable people to get here. Walking is the ultimate slow travel option; you see more, wherever you are.



IT'S EASY TO TRAVEL TO THE CATERAN ECOMUSEUM

The Cateran Ecomuseum is close to both the cities of Perth and Dundee and on the way to the Cairngorms National Park. The SnowRoads Scenic Route runs through it.

This centrality gives us great links to Scotland's other three major cities – Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Getting to the Ecomuseum car-free

You can take Ember's electric bus service between Edinburgh, Dundee, Perth and Kinross. The best way to book tickets is online at ember.to



You can take the train as far as Dundee and Perth, where you can get the no. 57 bus, which serves Alyth and Blairgowrie.

Our website also gives information on traveling in from Braemar, Pitlochry, Dunkeld and Kirriemuir.

Getting around the Ecomuseum car-free

We've got a section on our website that tells you how to get around the Ecomuseum car-free once you get here. Please go to: www.cateranecomusuem.co.uk to find out more details.

BEST TIME OF YEAR AND WEATHER

Our walking itineraries can be enjoyed throughout the seasons, but we would advise that you are always fully prepared for the weather and walking conditions whatever time of year you choose to come. Please be aware that snow might make the higher lying sections of some routes impassable from December – April, or significantly increase your journey time. With climate change bringing increased extreme weather events, please be sure to check weather reports prior to your walk. The Scottish Mountain Weather Forecast can be found at www.mwis.org.uk

We endeavour to advise of any impacts of extreme weather on routes via our website.

Make sure you stay warm, dry, hydrated and safe at all times. For advice, a good source is the Mountaineering Scotland website at: www.mountaineering.scot



HOW LONG WILL EACH ROUTE TAKE?

All but one of the routes in this booklet are designed as half-day trips. Many take as little as one to two hours. If you choose to do all three sections of **In and Around Kirkmichael**, you should plan for a whole day. If you are a visitor to the Ecomuseum area, please consider staying for a few days and taking your time enjoying a few of them, or intersperse them with some of our cycling itineraries. The routes listed in this booklet are not waymarked, and the maps are not sufficient to navigate. You'll find a good overview of the routes, more detailed information, maps and the GPX files to download via the links below and on our website.

The Cateran Trail

One of Scotland's Great Trails, the fully waymarked 64 mile/103km Cateran Trail circumnavigates much of the Cateran Ecomuseum geography. Divided into five stages, it can be walked comfortably in five days by anyone who is reasonably fit. The Trail has no official beginning or end and can be joined at any stage. It is managed and maintained by the Perth & Kinross Countryside Trust, see this link for details: www.pkct.org/cateran-trail

ROUTE CATEGORIES EXPLAINED

GRADE I •

An easy walk on pavements or well-maintained paths without stiles and only moderate hills.

GRADE 2 ••

A moderate walk with some difficult paths and the possibility of one or more substantial hills.

GRADE 3 • • •

A more difficult walk, mainly on poorly maintained path or tracks, through rough fields or woods.



Route	Miles	Km
Bamff Estate & Wildland Project	2.6	4.21
Route Category: Grade		
Walking Time: 1-2 hours Total Ascent: 40 m	:	•
Full details: https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/bamff-estate	•	•
inceps.//eater anecomuseum.co.divitationary/baimin-estate		· ·
Den 'O' Alyth	1.8	2.92
Route Category: Grade		:
Walking Time: I-2 hours	:	•
Total Ascent: 30 m	:	•
Full details: https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/den-o-alyth/		:
Hill of Alyth	2.7	4.4
Route Category: Grade 2 • •		:
Walking Time: 1.5–2 hours		•
Total Ascent: 170 m	:	•
Full details: https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/bamff-estate		•
Alyth Auld Town	2.3	3.8
Route Category: Grade	:	•
Walking Time: 1–2 hours	:	:
Total Ascent: 30 m	:	:
Full details: https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/bamff-estate		•
A History Tour of the Kirkton of Glenisla	3.8	6.25
Route Category: Grade & 3		:
Walking Time: 2–3 hours		•
Total Ascent: 40 m		•
Full details: https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/a-history-	:	:

tour-around-the-kirkton-of-glenisla/

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The Last Glaciers in Glenshee	Miles	Km
Route Category: Grade 2 • •	1.8	3
Walking Time: 1–2 hours		
Total Ascent: 50m	:	:
Full details: https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/the-last-glaciers-	:	:
in-glenshee/	:	:
	•	•

Route		Mile	s Km
A Spin along the Ericht Route Category: Grade • Walking Time: 1.5–2 hours Total Ascent: 50m Full details: https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/a-ericht/	-spin-along-the-	3.4	5.6
In and around Kirkmichael	Miles	K	Km
Walking Time: Kirkmichael Village Walk: 30 minutes Dirnanean Gardens: I hour Lunch Hut: 3 hours	Kirkmichael Village Walk: I Dirnanean Gardens: .9 Lunch Hut: 6.7	V D	irkmichael illage Walk: Þirnanean iardens: .9 unch Hut: 6
Total Ascent: Kirkmichael Village Walk: 0m Dirnanean Gardens: 40m			

Alyth Geotours
Route Category: Grade 3 • • •
Walking Time:
Alyth Hill Geotour 1: 50 minutes
Alyth Hill Geotour 2: 1.5 hours

Full details: https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/

Den 'O' Alyth Geotour: I hour

Total Ascent:

Lunch Hut: 210m

kirkmichael-village/

Alyth Hill Geotour I: 70m Alyth Hill Geotour 2: 180m Den 'O' Alyth Geotour: 40m

Full details: https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/ alyth-geotours/

Miles

Alyth Hill Geotour: 1 1.6 Alyth Hill Geotour: 2 2.8 Den 'O' Alyth Geotour: 1.9

Km

Alyth Hill Geotour: I 2.6 Alyth Hill Geotour: 2 4.6 Den 'O' Alyth

Geotour: 3.1

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'Walking within the landscape of the Cateran Ecomuseum gives the walker time to dwell on the past, realise the present and dream of the future. This land of ours has much to explore and so many guid local folk to meet and talk to'

- Bob Ellis, Cateran Ecomuseum Director

STRAIGHTFORWARD CHECKLIST FOR YOUR WALKING TRIP IN THE CATERAN ECOMUSEUM

The checklist below refers to your likely needs and is divided into essential and desirable and designed for all levels of experience.

Essential

- Comfortable, waterproof walking boots
- Suitable clothing, consider specialist walking socks if going on a longer walk
- Hat (to protect against cold and/or sun), gloves and waterproof
- Water bottle
- Food or snacks if going on a longer walk
- Insect repellent. Although midges are few, they can be present in the summer months
- Rucksack

Desirable

- Gaiters to keep mud and water out of boots and off trouser legs if walking off road
- Binoculars for spotting wildlife
- Camera
- Sun protection, e.g., sunglasses, sun cream

While you can use your mobile phone for navigation, please consider that some areas have no mobile reception. Either download the routes on your phone or GPS device so you can use them offline or take a printed map as backup. When using a mobile phone or GPS, make sure to carry a battery pack to re-charge.



ACCOMMODATION, FACILITIES AND REFRESHMENT

There are plenty of different kinds of accommodation on offer across the Ecomuseum geography, listed on the Cateran Ecomuseum website. There are accommodation providers who have identified themselves as walking and/or cycling friendly, and some offer pick up and drop off services. On our website you will also find the main cafes along the routes, all of which have publicly available toilets.











NATURAL HERITAGE





'It's the energising feeling of traversing a vast open space, while being in a diverse landscape. I love coming across old settlements and wondering what stories the stones could tell.'

- Norma Lyall, Angus Tourism Co-operative



'When I walk as a poet, I subconsciously frame and capture everything. It's as if every view, every sound, every encounter are precious snapshots stored in the mind to be retrieved and crafted on to a blank page. When you walk the lands of the Cateran Ecomuseum, you are perhaps unaware, but you too can become a poet, bound only by the endless limits of your imagination'

- Jim Mackintosh, Cateran Ecomuseum Makar



Grade I: An easy walk

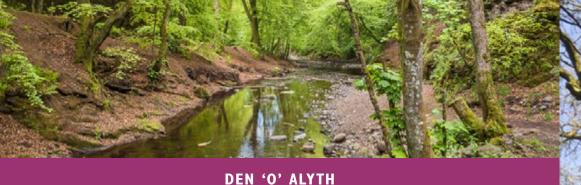
This walk takes you along part of the Cateran Trail through the beautiful woods of Bamff Estate. At the start of the 2020s, the Ramsay family, who own the estate, initiated a rewilding project to create a richly biodiverse area of wild land out of 166 hectares of marginal farmland and plantations. Here you will see evidence of beavers and the extraordinary landscape of wetlands in between the fields and woods which they have created. And you can get a glimpse of Bamff House itself, owned by the Ramsay family since 1232.





Full route details here: https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/bamff-estate/



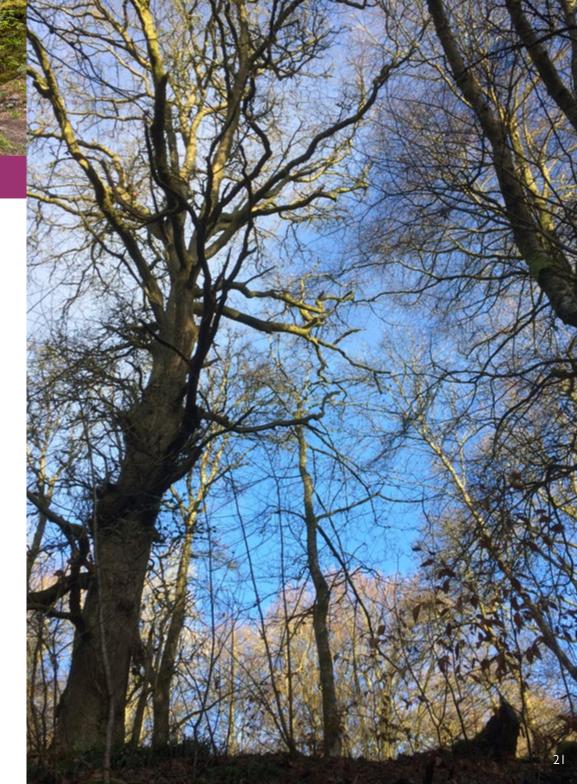


Grade I: An easy walk

The Den ('narrow valley' or 'gorge') 'O' Alyth is a beautiful wooded glen through which the Alyth Burn runs. Part of the geography of the Highland Boundary Fault, it is close to the outskirts of Alyth, and much of the stone used to build Alyth in earlier times was quarried from here. Designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) by NatureScot, the Den's ancient woodland is of semi-natural origin, comprising native species, such as ash, oak, birch and hazel, and non-native species, such as beech and sycamore. A variety of wildlife is regularly spotted here, including red squirrels, deer, tree creepers and great tits, with dippers, herons and grey wagtails often seen by the water. Combine with our geology walk to find out more about the Den's glacial past.



Full route details here: https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/den-o-alyth/





HILL OF ALYTH

Grade 2: A moderate walk

Rising steeply on the northern edge of the town to 300m, this brisk walk takes you up the Hill of Alyth on part of the Cateran Trail. Walk along old drove roads and tracks across open grassland, and past the site of a pre-Christian Holy Well onto the largest and most important commonty (area of common land) still in existence in Scotland. At the top you will be rewarded with panoramic views – from the fertile farmlands of Strathmore and the Sidlaw Hills to the south, to the Cairngorm Mountains in the north. Combine with our geology walks to find out more about the rocks beneath your feet.





Full route details here: https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/hill-of-alyth/



HUMAN HISTORY

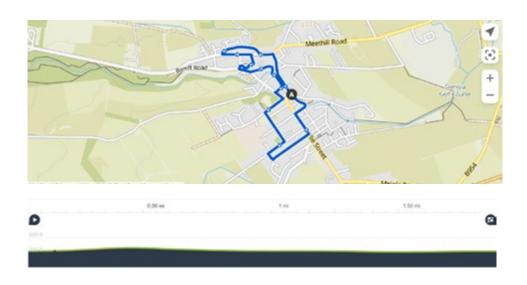




ALYTH AULD TOWN

Grade I: An easy walk

Alyth, most probably derived from the Gaelic 'aileach', meaning 'rocky place', is a small traditional market town on the southern edge of the Cateran Ecomuseum. This walk has been designed to reveal the most intriguing aspects of its 1,000-year history, including the Pack Bridge, one of Scotland's oldest masonry bridges, and many of the notable characters who called the town home, such as James Sandy, inventor of the invisible hinge.



Full route details here: https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/hill-of-alyth/



A HISTORY TOUR OF KIRKTON OF GLENISLA

Grade I: An easy walk & Grade 3: A more difficult walk

Kirkton of Glenisla is a great place to spend the night if you are walking the Cateran Trail. The village, set in one of the most beautiful Glens in the Ecomuseum, has a storied history.

From cattle droving to Benedictine and Cistercian monastic orders, neolithic settlements and ritualistic sites, engineering firsts and glimpses into everyday life in the Glen in the Middle Ages, we have something for all the family. This walk will take you to its pretty Kirk, pre-Christian Holy Well, the innovatively engineered Brackney Bridge and a pre-historic Bell Cairn with fine views of the surrounding countryside.





Full route details here: https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/a-history-tour-around-the-kirkton-of-glenisla/

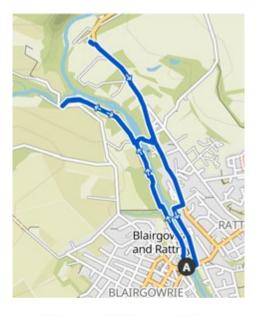




A SPIN ALONG THE ERICHT

Grade I: An easy walk

During the Industrial Revolution, Blairgowrie & Rattray was a bustling centre of the textile industry, first spinning flax, then jute and latterly rayon. This walk tells the story of eleven of the old Mills, how they worked, the innovations made here and the challenges that the mill owners and their workers faced. You can still see evidence of the immense engineering works that were designed to control the flow of the water into the mills through weirs and lades and, at Oakbank Mill, some of the external cast iron machinery that harnessed the power of the water wheels.





Full route details here: https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/a-spin-along-the-ericht/



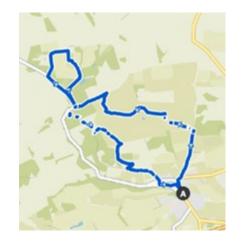


IN & AROUND KIRKMICHAEL

Grade I: An easy walk & Grade 3: A more difficult walk

Kirkmichael village dates back over 1,000 years. It was once an important market in the cattle trade between the Highlands and Lowlands, with various drove roads converging on the village.

This walk can be taken in three parts. A walk around the village will take you to one of the most important sites in the 1715 Jacobite rising – the Bannerfield, where John Erskine, 6th Earl of Mar raised a flag in support of the exiled Stuart King James



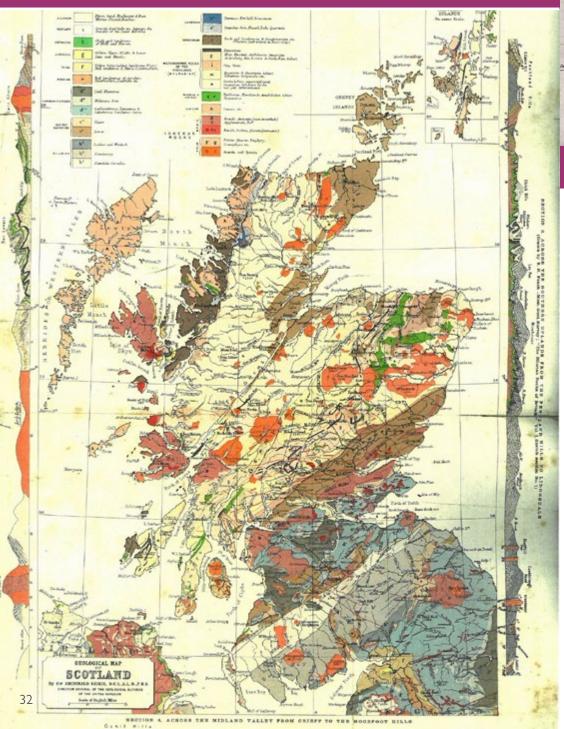
VIII, known as the Old Pretender. You can enjoy beautiful Dirnanean Garden, a short distance from the village, which is managed to encourage wildlife and wild flowers (please note there is an honesty entry fee of £5, so bring cash), and from here you can walk up the Cateran Trail to the Lunch Hut, a walkers' shelter with an intriguing history.

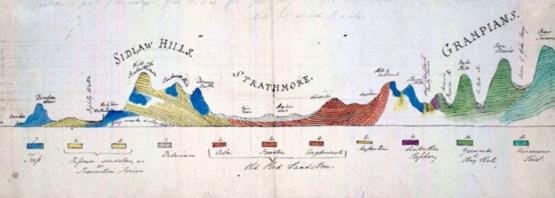


Full route details here: https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/hill-of-alyth-bamff/



GEOLOGY





ALYTH GEOTOURS

GRADE 3: A more difficult walk • • •

These three walks around Alyth – two on the Hill of Alyth and one in the Den 'O' Alyth – offer the chance to explore one of Scotland's most ancient geological features: the Highland Boundary Fault. The Hill of Alyth has outcrops of the Old Red Sandstone and provides stunning views along the Highland Boundary Fault and across the broad valley of Strathmore. In the Den 'O' Alyth, a beautiful, wooded gorge through which the Alyth Burn runs, you can see a variety of geology, all impacted by the last ice age.



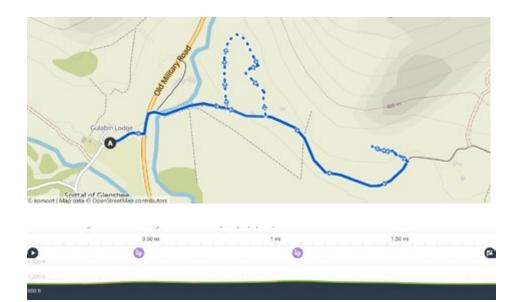
Full route details here: https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/alyth-geotours/



THE LAST GLACIERS IN GLENSHEE

GRADE 2: A moderate walk ••

Scotland was once covered by glaciers in the ice age. But how do we know? What is the evidence the glaciers left behind? This short walk, along Glen Shee from the Spittal of Glenshee, will introduce you to the abundant physical evidence of Kames, Kettle Holes and Eskers, transporting you back 20,000 years to a very different world.



Full route details here: https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/strathmores-secrets



WHAT IS AN ECOMUSEUM?

Originating in France in the 1970's, Ecomuseums focus on the identity of a place with the term "éco" being a shortened form for "écologie". Still a relatively new concept, there are around 300 worldwide, mostly in Europe, but there is only one other in Scotland, on Skye.

Set in specific landscapes, they offer:

- an opportunity for local people to share the unique heritage of where they live in a way that is meaningful to them and which preserves the objects, sites and cultural practices they value.
- a holistic nature and culture frame for the interpretation of cultural heritage, quite different to traditional museums' focus on the specific items and objects of their collections, sited inside a building.
- a focus for community empowerment and regenerative tourism.



CREDITS

This booklet has been created as part of the Cateran Ecomuseum's **Travel For All Our Tomorrows** programme and has been made possible by funding from the Lottery Heritage Fund (thanks to National Lottery players), Paths for All Smarter Choices Smarter People programme, Inspiring Scotland and the Scottish Government's Rural and Island Communities Idea into Action (RICIA) Fund and the Cairngorms National Park Authority.

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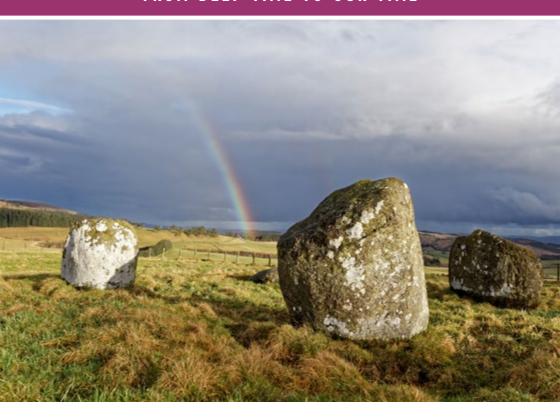








FROM DEEP TIME TO OUR TIME



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Guiding you through the natural and cultural heritage of the area, they offer some of the best walking adventures you can have in Scotland.

Along old drove roads and through ancient woodlands, past prehistoric stone circles and medieval Tower Houses, into historic market towns and across modern-day rewilding estates, each route links you to sites of interest from deep time to our time – all framed by the gentle Vale of Strathmore, the rolling braes of Angus, the beautiful glens of eastern Perthshire and western Angus, and the breath-taking Cairngorm Plateau.

Visit www.cateranecomuseum.co.uk to find out detailed route information.