

# Discover North Kincardine

North Kincardine, where people have wrestled the sea and battled the landscape. Use the map and online guide to explore the landscapes and stories that have their origins in the old county of Kincardineshire.

To some travellers, this area is a place to pass through, by road or rail, rarely stopping to study it in detail: when you head off the main roads, into its villages, natural reserves and coastal paths, there is so much more on offer. We call it home and welcome you to visit, explore and discover why we love it so much.

Welcome to historic North Kincardine.

## 1 North Kincardine Viewpoints

Local people and visitors remark how different the landscape of North Kincardine is from that of the Mearns in the South. You only have to look at the types of materials the dykes and houses are built with to see this distinction. Houses to the north of the Highland Boundary Fault are generally made from sparkly mica rich granite whereas structures south of the fault are rich brown sandstone.

The Highland Boundary Fault explains the difference in physiographic and geological terrains between the Lowlands and Highlands



Fundamental differences in geology and natural habitats can be seen in the various Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Protected Areas in North Kincardine: geological features and fauna at Garron Point, heath lands at Findon Moor (also known as Findon Moss), raised bog at the Red Moss of Netherley.

There are Special Protected Areas at Crynoch Burn, River Dee, Cove Shore and a Local Nature Reserve at Kincorth Hill, Nigg. Community conservation groups meet at Portlethen Moss, Portlethen Community Woodland Park and Maryculter Woods. These are places where you can get "hands on" experience as well as a chance to volunteer. North Kincardine is at the far eastern edge of the Grampian Range providing a more accessible introduction to this geological feature.

The best viewpoints are at Clochandighter, Tollohill, Maryculter and Meikle Carewe.



Atlantic Herring *Clupea harengus*

This white box and logo must remain over any artwork that is in this area for cover gluing

## 2 Portlethen Moss Walk

Portlethen Moss is a rare area of natural raised acidic bog which supports a wide variety of plant and animal species. The moss formed after the last ice age.

The glacial retreat left an undulating landscape with a hollow that filled with water creating a lake which over time filled with decomposing vegetation. It takes about 100 years to form a mere 5cm of peat, formed from decomposing plant residues that are compacted, which then build up slowly over time. In recent coring studies, certain areas of the living bog have been measured to more than three metres in depth!

At the main entrance off Bruntland Road, there is a large noticeboard which provides information for visitors and it shows the paths that lead through the moss.

Some are very boggy in wet weather, so wellingtons are recommended. A second noticeboard is situated further along the all-ability path, just before the dry moss comes to an end and the wet moss (living bog) starts.

Look out for Roe Deer, frogs, toads, newts and migrant birds. Common Cotton-Grass dot the brown boggy moss. Find beautiful Marsh Orchids, Bog Asphodel, Devil's Bit Scabious and Sun Dew. On a warm sunny summer day look out for dragonflies, damselflies, butterflies, moths and a wide variety of bees.



Siskin *Carduelis spinus* found in Conifers, alders and birch trees, eating seeds and small insects.

## 3 Coastal, Coffin & Creel Walk

North Kincardine has an enduring relationship with the coast going back thousands of years.

There are various paths and trails between Muchalls and Torry, which are suitable for walking, cycling, horse riding and exploring the history, nature and scenery of this beautifully hidden treasure in Aberdeenshire. A lot of the trails were formed from the old farm and fishing cart tracks used for the transportation of fish and goods in and out of the villages. Coffins were sometimes carried along these trails to St. Mary of the Storms near Cowie.

Muchalls (Stranathro), Newtonhill (Skateraw), Downies, Old Portlethen and Findon were all busy fishing ports with creel fishing, salmon fishing and more leisurely sea angling. Competitions to win the Douglas Cup (which resides at the bar in the Neuk in Old Portlethen) took place between 1896 and 1921 where local villages competed to see who could catch the most fish.

North Kincardine's coast attracts a host of wildlife. Basking sharks, Common seals and White Beaked dolphins have been observed from Old Portlethen. Common Pipistrelles, geese and wading birds feed off the shores and mosses.

Plants and flowers only found in the area's mosses and heaths show the diversity of the ecology of the area.

Around the area of Muchalls there are signs of smugglers' caves which lead to the bay known as the 'Gin Shore', and there are records of people living in the caves during the summer months. Historically, Muchalls wasn't the first village in the southern end of North Kincardine. The ruins of Seatoun of Muchalls mark the location of the village which was badly hit by the loss of their fishing fleet in the late 18th century. Subsequently, the village relocated to Stranathro, now named Muchalls.

Later, when the railway reached Muchalls in 1849 and the fishing diminished and the village became a health resort with its hotel, leisure golf, fishing, brisk air and sea views.



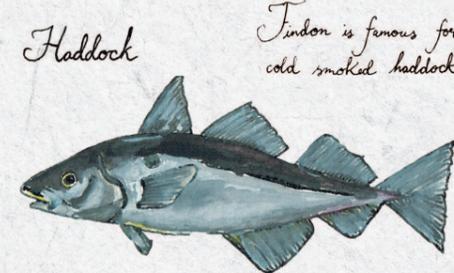
Wood Vetch *Vicia sylvatica*

perennial to 2 metres high  
June to August  
Coastal cliffs and woodland edges



Field Scabious *Knautia arvensis*

Jun to Oct a stout perennial to 1m  
Dry and grassy areas avoiding heavy soils.



Haddock *Melanogrammus aeglefinus*  
Torry is famous for cold smoked haddock



Fishing cottages in Skateraw

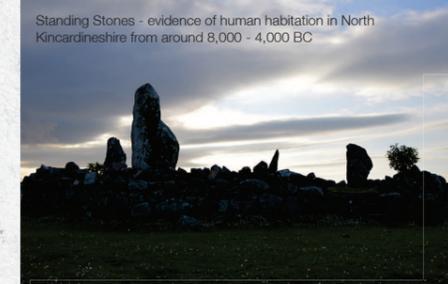
## 4 Newtonhill/Skateraw Walk

Since the 17th Century the fishing villages around North Kincardine were a hive of activity. Many bays along the Kincardine coast from Cowie to Torry were filled with boats. The fishing peaked in the mid, to late 19th century.

While the men were risking their lives line fishing several miles out at sea, it was not so easy at home for wives and families. At daybreak the women started collecting bait from the shoreline, baiting over 500 hooks per boat before breakfast and household chores. The women carried their men on their backs to and from the boats through the surf to prevent the men from getting wet and catching life-threatening illnesses. When the men were away, the women organised peat and sawdust for fuel and for smoking haddock. Once the catch was onshore, it was gutted and prepared, the women carried the fish, in creels, to the market in Aberdeen, some 12 miles away.

There is a lovely short walk of about one mile around this historic village. It's quite steep and sometimes may be slippery and muddy after a lot of rain. Look out for the original fishing cottages and smoke house.

The walk starts and finishes at Newtonhill Pharmacy and local store close to the bus stop.

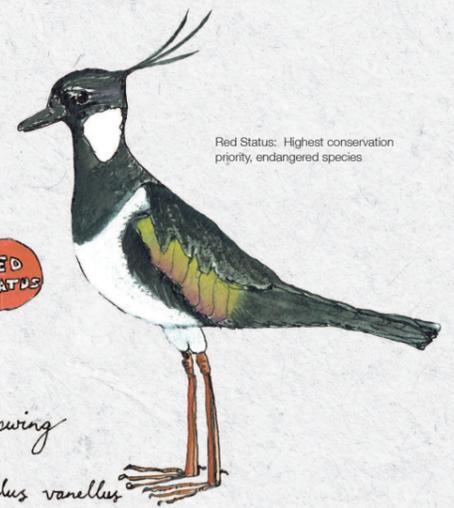


Standing Stones - evidence of human habitation in North Kincardineshire from around 8,000 - 4,000 BC



Kincardine Fishwife  
Longest wader in Scotland with a 'pee-wit' call. Likes meadow, marsh land, farm land and waste land feeding on small invertebrates.

RED STATUS



Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Red Status: Highest conservation priority, endangered species

## 5 Mounths, Post and Templars

North Kincardine has a network of interesting routes both very old and new. Just a few metres away from the A90, the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route and the railway line, you step back in time to stories of highway men, ghosts, knights, kings and the church.

Take time to look more closely at the landscape and see signs of earlier communities - cairns, hut circles, stone circles, field systems, more recently to 'improvements' in land management and features such as Bridge of Dee and Boswell's Monument. The changing priorities and status of land owners has shaped this area as it passed through the hands of the people, kinships, clans, kings, queens, church, estate owners, communities and individuals.

To get the full effect of how your predecessors discovered the landscape, these routes are better appreciated on foot, by bicycle or on horseback.