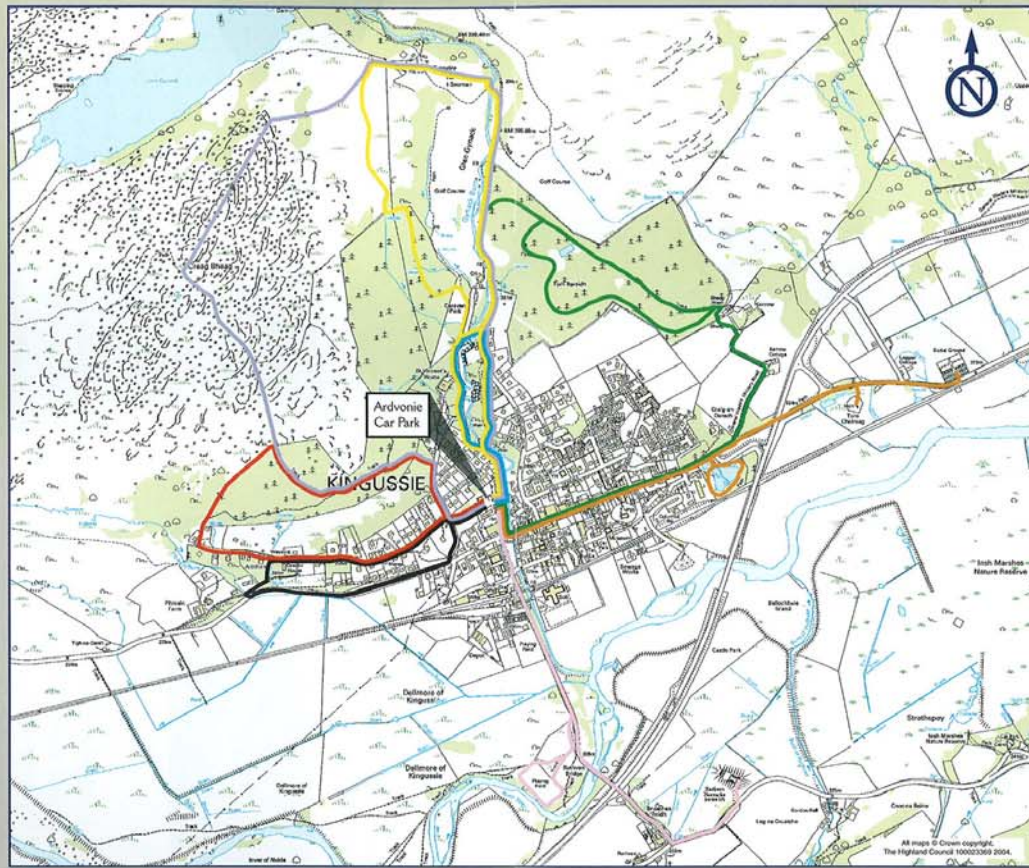


Paths Around Kingussie



THE GLEBE PONDS, WITCH'S HILL AND THE CEMETERY.

Cross the River Gynack, where you may see Dippers bobbing on the rocks, and follow the main street of Kingussie – don't resist the temptation to browse!

Towards the end of the High Street, on your right is St Columba's church. It was built in 1792 on a glacial mound known as Tom a Mhoid, or the hillock of the Court. Continue along the street and the Glebe Ponds come into view, framed by the Feshie Hills in the distance. There is easy access, suitable for wheelchairs, right round the ponds, with picnic tables and benches.

A variety of ducks, both domesticated and wild, make their home here and in the summer months, many species of wetland wildflowers make a colourful display.

Return by the same route, or continue out of town to the Cemetery. Please take care crossing the roads. On the right, shortly before the burial ground, is a small hill known as Witch's Hill – where the burned remains of a local witch were buried. There are great views of the surrounding land from the hill.

The Highland Folk Museum in Kingussie is a treasure trove of information about this and many other local stories and the old ways of life – do try and make time for a visit.

Distance: approx 3 km Time: 1-2 hours.

THROUGH THE HAZEL WOODS (BIRCH WOODIE)

Turn left out of Ardvonie car park and up Gynack Road to the first bend. Follow the path down to a bridge over the river, where you see the Old Tweed Mill, now enjoying a new lease of life as a 'restaurant with rooms'.

The River Gynack tumbles down to join the Spey through a series of rocky gorges and was host to three dams in the past – two for mills and one for a small hydro-electric scheme.

Climb the steps through the hazel woods – red squirrels can sometimes be seen here and the ground flora includes tiny golden saxifrage in the damp hollows and taller graceful woodrush, with its nodding brown flower heads.

When the path joins the road, turn left and continue to a stone cairn. Here you can turn off to a bridge and another view of the river. Return to the road and back down to the village, or continue up the road for more views of the river and the hills beyond and the option of linking with the Tom Baraidh paths.

Distance: approx 2km Time: 1 hour.

THE JUBILEE WALK, THE DELL AND RUTHVEN BARRACKS.

Cross the main road in front of the Duke of Gordon Hotel and through the Gynack Gardens. As you cross Spey Street, you see to your left, the village's oldest and newest sporting facilities – the Bowling Club, established in 1877 and the Badenoch Centre opened in December 2003.

Beyond Kingussie High School, take the Jubilee Walk through the trees to the picnic benches.

A little further along the road is The Dell – home of Kingussie Shinty Team. It is possible to walk round the pitch and beside the River Spey, internationally famous for the salmon fishing and for the wading birds which nest in the catchment area.

Continue along the road, crossing the iron bridge and passing Ruthven Farm on your right – this was the site of a village known as Castleton of Ruthven – and on to Ruthven Barracks.

Historic Scotland provides information about the building and the site offers a wonderful vantage point over the Insh Marshes.

From here, it is possible to continue another kilometre along the road to the RSPB's reserve, where a series of trails and hides explain the importance of the area for wildlife, and to the longer Badenoch Way, through Kineraig and on to Dalraddy. Return to Kingussie by the same route.

Distance: 2-4 km Time: 1-2 hours.

A SHORT WALK IN KINGUSSIE

In Ardvonie car park there is a row of stone cottages – this is all that remains of the Distillery which operated for only 10 years from 1896 and was demolished in 1926. More information about this, and other local facts, can be found on the village website.

Follow the line of tall Scots pine trees and up the steps at the corner of the playing field. A bench at the top gives good views of the surrounding area.

From the top of the steps, continue along West Terrace, passing large stone houses built in late Victorian times.

Opposite Westcott, a small lane leads you back down left to the main road. Cross carefully and follow the cycle track back into Kingussie. You may notice an ornate wooden cottage on the right – this was designed and built by an architect as his office.

Distance: approx 1.5 km Time: 30 -45 mins.

LOCH GYNACK AND CREAG BHEAG

GOLF COURSE CIRCULAR

Distance: Approx. 2.5km. Time: Allow 1-1.5 hours.

WEST TERRACE CIRCULAR

Distance: Approx. 2.5km. Time: Allow 1 hour.

This is a circular walk onto open moorland, with a hidden loch and views to higher hills beyond. This is a moderately strenuous walk with some steep sections.

Head through the hazel woods, cross the river at the stone cairn and up towards the golf course. At the caravan site, the path leads up through the bracken and birch woods and bears right after the stile. Follow the meandering path through junipers and some wonderfully craggy old birch trees to reach a junction at the edge of the wood, where there is a sudden view of Loch Gynack.

To return to Kingussie from here, turn right and go through the plantation to the ruined cottage. This is all that remains of a small agricultural settlement, or township. Follow the ridge path to the bridge over the River Gynack (please remember to give way to golfers), and the road downhill to Kingussie. It is possible to link with the hazel wood paths or Tom Baraidh instead of using the road all the way.

The route to the summit of Creag Bheag (little crag) follows a steepening path through birch, heather and outcrops of glistening schists and quartz. Across the loch on the slopes of Creag Mhor (big crag), you can see the shorelines of a large loch that bordered the Spey glacier during the last Ice Age, about 12000 years ago.

Beyond Creag Mhor, Creag Dhubb (black crag) rises as part of the Monadhliath, the vast sprawling moorland, largely sporting estate, where red deer, grouse and mountain hare are the quarry of both man and golden eagle.

The summit is marked by a dry stone wind break and seat, giving terrific views over the Strath to the Drumochter hills in the south and the mountains of the Cairngorms National Park, across the Spey to the east.

The descent route leaves the ridge and heads down to the plantation, where there is a choice of path. The shortest route enters the wood and arrives back near Ardvonie; a longer alternative follows the edge of the woods to the right, through birch and juniper scrub, reaching the end of West Terrace, and back along the road to Ardvonie car park.

Distance: approx 6km, 250m ascent

Time: 2-3 hours. Allow 2 hours if returning from Loch Gynack.

TOM BARAIDH - A WALK AROUND THE HILL.

Start along the High Street. Just after the Glebe Ponds, take the track which leads left towards Kerrow. This is the line of a road built in 1714, by General Wade, as part of the Government's attempts to control the rebellious Highlanders during the Jacobite risings. Branch left before reaching the farm house and follow the track through gates into the wood. There is a choice of route in the wood, offering alternatives in the same direction or the possibility of a 'circular' walk within the woods. The circular route includes a short, steeper section and gives good view across the Insh Marshes to the Feshie Hills in the East. This path can be boggy underfoot in wet weather. At the other side of the wood, the path leads down to a gate and out onto the road.

Turn left down towards the village – either follow the road or take the path through the hazel woods to return to Ardvonie car park.

Distance: approx 4 km Time: 1 hour.