

# Mounth, Post and Templar

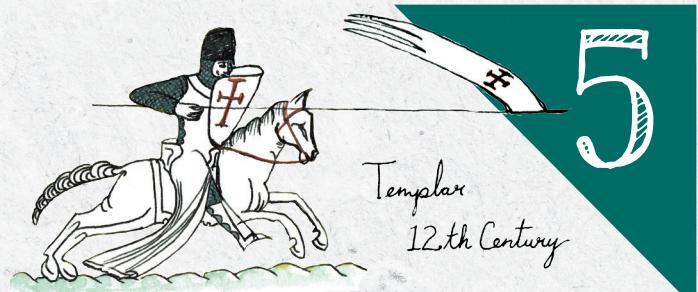
North Kincardine has a network of interesting routes both very old and new. Step a few meters away from the A90, the Aberdeen Western Peripheral route and the railway line and you step back in time to routes with stories of highway men, ghosts, knights, kings and the church.

When you slow down and look more closely at the landscape it is possible to see signs of earlier communities – cairns, hut circles, stone circles, field systems, more recently to the ‘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 has passed through the hands of the people, kinships, clans, between kings and church, to estate owners, communities and individuals.

These routes can be travelled by car, but for their full effect and to get a feeling of how your predecessors experienced the landscape they are better appreciated on foot, on horse or by bicycle.

Navigating these areas has not always been easy, the mosses by their very nature are wet and granite is very hard, so creating routes has not always been an easy task. The Romans are reported to have headed North to Kintore instead of moving towards Aberdeen for fear of getting their feet wet. The Mounths were man made raised and paved routes that were created to navigate through inhospitable moss and heath terrain.

There are ten mounth passes that cut through the eastern slopes of the Grampian range from Braemar to Abedeen. North Kincardine has the furthest East of the Mounths and close by the



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Elsick Mounth or Slug road runs along the Western edge of the area.

There are references to the Causey Mounth in William the Lion's Charter of Aberdeen in 1179 which went on to connect Aberdeen to the rest of the country. By the 18th century people were travelling up and down the Mounth and making use of inns, stores and trading points. Aberdeen was one of the earliest cities to have their own Postal service and their blue uniforms with silver town crests were recorded in 1590. The first mail coach ran between Aberdeen and Edinburgh along the Causey Mounth in 1787.

The South Deeside Road follows the undulations of the Dee which takes you past the impressive and distinctive architecture of Blairs College and Ardoe House Hotel and Maryculter House Hotel. Exploring these sites touches on stories of the Knights Templar, The power of Royalty and the Church and industrialisation of the North East.

Connecting the Causey mounth and the South Deeside Road is an interesting route crossing the inner countryside of North Kincardine and is reported to have been the route of the Knights Templar running between Cammachmore and Templars. This 12th Century religious order of fighting knights who protected pilgrims visiting shrines and travelling to the holy lands are reported to have had a base at Maryculter.

The mounths run between the hills of North Kincardine which provide amazing views and vistas. From Tollohill where Montrose's army stood before the battle of Bridge of Dee (1639) enjoy the vista of Aberdeen, on a clear day Clochandichter is the place to see up to the Buchan Ness lighthouse near Peterhead and to Dunnottar Castle south of Stonehaven and Curnethney has views up to Lochnagar and to the iron age hill forts of Mither Tap on Bennachie and Tap o North.

## Level of Walk

Depending on the stage of the walk or cycle and the terrain, the route varies from easy to strenuous.

## Terrain

The route is mainly along B and country roads, old farm routes and village tracks. OS maps should be referred to in planning a route. Walking, cycling, riding or running dependent on the stage of the route. Make sure you are visible to traffic both during the day and night.

## Distance

The whole route is approximately 26½ miles or 42 Km which can be completed in parts or as a whole.

## Map References

For more detailed routes and information refer to the following maps:

38 Landranger: Aberdeen; Inverurie & Pitmedden  
406 Explorer: Aberdeen & Banchory

## Getting There

Various buses run between Aberdeen and Stonehaven (7A, 7B, 7C, 7N) as well as between Aberdeen and Peterculter (19, 119, 201, 202, N19) - check [www.travelinescotland](http://www.travelinescotland)

A2B bus services run on particular days in the Kincardine area Number 22 runs on a Thursday around the more rural and coastal villages of Kincardine including, Netherley, Cookney, Downies, Findon and Portlethen. For further information please contact [a2bdialabus@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:a2bdialabus@aberdeenshire.gov.uk) or call 01224 664747 during work hours.

Trains run regularly between Aberdeen and Stonehaven stopping at Portlethen. Check [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk) for up to date timings and stations.



## Parking and Starting Point

Parking can be found in the villages along the trail at Portlethen, Tullo Hill, Clochandichter, Maryculter Woods, Ardoe House, Lairhillock, Blairs, Paul Laurie Golf Club, Templars and Maryculter House Hotel. Please do not park in passing places.

Places on the route such as Ardoe House, Lairhillock, Blairs, Maryculter House Hotel, Crynoch burn, Clochandichter, Maryculter Woods could be visited as a day out in themselves.

## Planning Your Walk

Go prepared with suitable clothing, shoes, water and provisions. – due to proximity to the sea haar and mist can come in quickly causing temperatures to drop suddenly and reduced visibility.

Care should be taken whilst walking, cycling or riding along the roads as they are used for heavy farm machinery at certain points in the day. Make sure you are visible to traffic both during the day and night.

Mobile phones do not always pick up service in the area.

## Further Information

### Blairs Museum

[www.blairsmuseum.com](http://www.blairsmuseum.com)

### Archaeology Service Sites and Monuments Record (SMR)

[www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk](http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk)

### Aberdeenshire Council - Paths & Outdoor Access

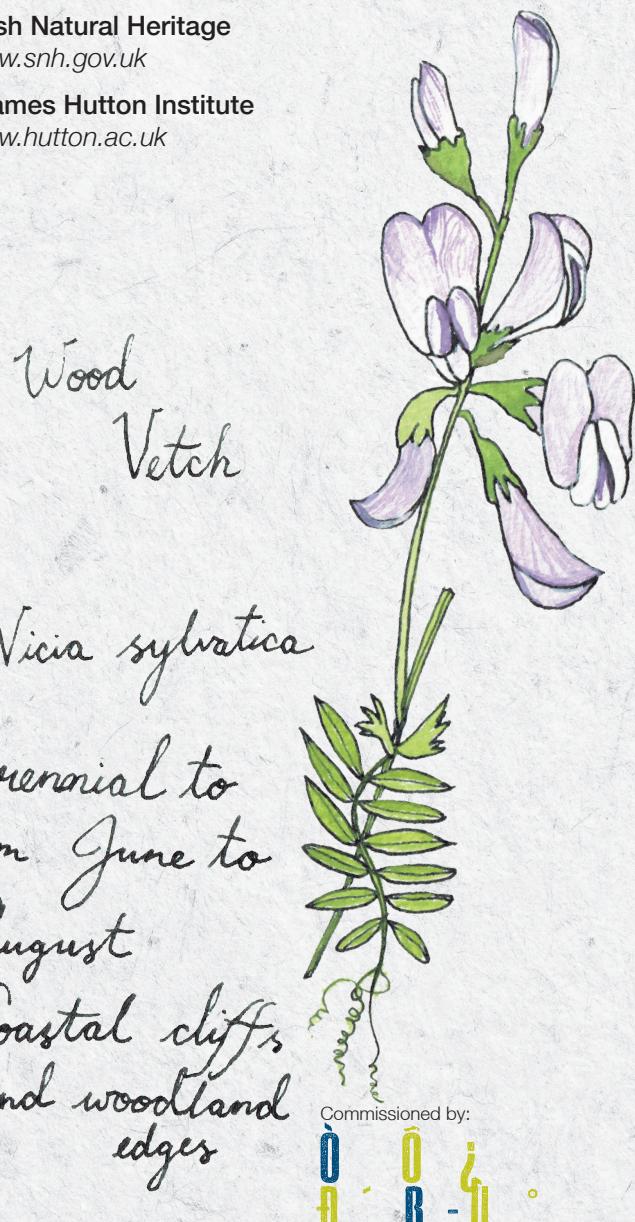
[www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/patterns-and-outdoor-access](http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/patterns-and-outdoor-access)

### Scottish Natural Heritage

[www.snh.gov.uk](http://www.snh.gov.uk)

### The James Hutton Institute

[www.hutton.ac.uk](http://www.hutton.ac.uk)



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[outdooraccess-scotland.com](http://outdooraccess-scotland.com)

[www.discovernorthkincardine.org.uk](http://www.discovernorthkincardine.org.uk)

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