

# The Formartine & Buchan Way

Walking, Cycling and Horse-riding on the  
**Formartine & Buchan Way**

53 miles  
all abilities



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

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## The Formartine & Buchan Way

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53 miles of dramatic landscape just waiting to be discovered! The Formartine & Buchan Way will offer you an immense variety of landscape from the rolling farmland of north east Aberdeenshire to the bustling fishing ports of Peterhead and Fraserburgh.

The Formartine & Buchan Railway Line was opened in 1861 and ran from Dyce to Mintlaw, 29 miles in length, in the North East of Scotland. A connection from Maud to Peterhead, 13 miles long, was opened a year later, and in 1865 the final 15 mile section linking Fraserburgh to Maud was opened, providing a much needed link with Aberdeen.

The Line started at Dyce, the junction which linked with the main line of the Great North of Scotland Railway.

Passenger services were withdrawn in 1965. Freight trains continued to operate until 1979. The track was then lifted and a cycle and footpath was developed for leisure purposes.

It is this route which now forms the Formartine & Buchan Way.



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*'Maud Station was the heart and soul of our existence, the junction where the train from Aberdeen split into two sections, one for Fraserburgh (or Broch, as we knew it) and the other for Peterhead, better known as the Blue Toon. Porters puffing at their Steenhives would dyst along the platform, calling out 'Maud, change for Fraserburgh', and the steam engines would hoot and whistle and thrust themselves into motion.'*



## The Formartine & Buchan Way

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*'It was our platform of life, our chance to gaze at the in-coming stranger, to sense the ebb and flow of a throbbing world that lay out yonder ... Our little station was grand enough to have a John Menzies bookstall, run by Tibby Bruce, who was as blind as a bat.'*

*Jack Webster 'Another Grain of Truth'*

This extract gives us a small insight into a world that existed for the people of Aberdeenshire from 1861 until the line closed in 1965.

Since the closure of the line it has been used frequently by local communities for walking, cycling and horse-riding as well as wildlife watching.

The Formartine & Buchan Way offers the visitor an opportunity to explore the countryside safely, and discover some of the delights only an old railway line can offer:

As the line cuts through the rural landscape, over rolling farmland, through small friendly villages, past spectacular landmarks steeped in history, it connects the visitor with an area which remains to this day full of the charm Jack Webster tells us of, in his memories of the Railway Line.

We can only imagine the steam trains as we make our way along the route today, admiring the scenery, its wildlife and characters of yesteryear.



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# The Formartine & Buchan Way

## Planning Your Journey

If you are thinking of coming to the area to use the Formartine & Buchan Way, this guide will help you plan your journey.

It is full of helpful information which will be valuable to you when deciding which parts of the route you would like to visit. This booklet will provide you with general information that applies to the route, contact information for accommodation, access, visitor attractions and wildlife you might be able to spot along the route.

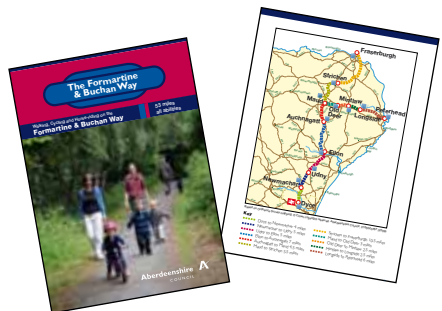
The map opposite provides you with a view of the area and shows the route split into sections which are colour coded to match the enclosed Route Cards.

Each section of the Route has its own Card which gives the user more detailed information about that particular area. The Cards are colour coded according to each section and the distances are given. There are symbols, shown below, which provide

you with information about access and local facilities.

### Key to symbols

- |  |          |  |                                     |
|--|----------|--|-------------------------------------|
|  | Walking  |  | Cycling                             |
|  | Parking  |  | Horse riding                        |
|  | Gardens  |  | Refreshments                        |
|  | Playpark |  | Wheelchair Access                   |
|  | Disabled |  | Access for users of limited ability |





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**Key**

- Dyce to Newmachar 4 miles
- Newmachar to Udney 5 miles
- Udney to Ellon 5 miles
- Ellon to Auchnagatt 7 miles
- Auchnagatt to Maud 4.5 miles
- Maud to Strichen 5.5 miles
- Strichen to Fraserburgh 10.5 miles
- Maud to Old Deer 3 miles
- Old Deer to Mintlaw 2.5 miles
- Mintlaw to Longside 2.5 miles
- Longside to Peterhead 6 miles



## The Formartine & Buchan Way

### A Natural Choice for Walking, Cycling & Horse-riding

The Formartine & Buchan Way is an impressive, safe pathway suitable for all abilities of walkers, cyclists and horse-riders. The Route passes through stunning scenery; small villages full of charm, such as Maud and Old Deer; taking you out to the fishing port of Peterhead, and Fraserburgh with its splendid beach.

Consider the freedom of cycling, as the route is perfect for that day out amongst the rolling hillsides of Aberdeenshire, experiencing the outdoor pursuit that is both inspiring and healthy.

Horse riding is a popular use of the Formartine & Buchan Way for most of the route, due the ease of access and peaceful surroundings of the old railway line. Enjoy a perspective of the rolling countryside from your horse and delight in the natural flora and fauna that abounds the area.

The Formartine & Buchan Way The route provides a safe learning environment for schools and community groups to experience all that is on their doorstep within the countryside. Children can learn to respect the wildlife and understand the value of getting outdoors and having fun.

This is the ideal opportunity for an easy and fun way to learn about the diversity of flora and fauna that is in abundance within this natural wildlife corridor.

Walking and cycling are the ideal leisure pursuits for improving your health and wellbeing. In our busy day-to-day schedules it is good to take a little time out to breath in some fresh air. Whether you are looking for a long trek or a short walk, you can decide which section of the route is right for you.



## The Formartine & Buchan Way

As well as the Formartine & Buchan signage you will see the National Cycle Network signs.



The National Cycle Network (Sustrans) Route 1 and the North Sea Cycle Route both use sections of the Formartine & Buchan Way between Dyce and Newmachar and again between Auchnagatt and Maud.

The National Cycle Network is a linked series of traffic free paths and traffic-calmed roads being developed throughout the UK, linking towns and villages with the countryside. Route 1 runs along the east coast of Scotland, passing through Aberdeen, continuing up to John O Groats and on to Orkney and Shetland.

For further information visit:  
[www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)



The North Sea Cycle Route is the same route as National Cycle Route 1 but it is part of an unbroken, signposted cycle route that follows the entire coastline of the North Sea - a total distance of around 6,000km.

For further information visit:  
[www.northsea-cycle.com](http://www.northsea-cycle.com)





# The Formartine & Buchan Way

## Know the Code

### Access for All

The route is extremely safe for children, dogs and cyclists. Some of the route is suitable for wheelchair users. Please check the individual route cards for more information.



## Enjoy Scotland's outdoors responsibly

Everyone has the right to be on most land and inland water for recreation, education and for going from place to place providing they act responsibly. These access rights and responsibilities are explained in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. The key things are:

When you're in the outdoors:

- take personal responsibility for your own actions and act safely
- respect people's privacy and peace of mind
- help land managers and others to work safely and effectively
- care for your environment and take your litter home
- keep your dog under proper control
- take extra care if you're organising an event or running a business.

If you're managing the outdoors:

- respect access rights
- act reasonably when asking people to avoid land management operations
- work with your local authority and other bodies to help integrate access and land management
- respect rights of way and customary access.

Visit [outdooraccess-scotland.com](http://outdooraccess-scotland.com) or call your local Scottish Natural Heritage office



SCOTTISH  
OUTDOOR ACCESS CODE

**KNOW THE CODE  
BEFORE YOU GO**

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



# The Formartine & Buchan Way

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## Accommodation and local transport

As a visitor to the area you should plan your journey before you leave. Consider spending a few days exploring different parts of the route and discover the hidden gems of Aberdeenshire.

If you are staying for a few days, plan where you might stay at the end of your days' activities. You might feel quite tired and the last thing you want to do is then try and find accommodation.

You can choose from the warm, friendly service you can expect from a local bed and breakfast establishment, or book yourself into a more prestigious hotel, where you can relax in luxurious surroundings and be pampered.

To book accommodation visit <http://guide.visitscotland.com/vs/guide>



If you would like to travel to the area by bus or by train from Aberdeen you can access timetables by visiting the following websites:

- [www.scotrail.com](http://www.scotrail.com)
- [www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations/dyc/details.html](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations/dyc/details.html)
- [www.aberdeenairport.com/](http://www.aberdeenairport.com/)
- [www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/publictransport/timetables/](http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/publictransport/timetables/)

### Dial-a-Bus

Buchan Dial-a-Community Bus serves the Central Buchan area of North East Aberdeenshire, Scotland.

Telephone: 01771 619191

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

## The Formartine & Buchan Way

### The towns and villages along the way.

The old Formartine & Buchan railway line started at Dyce Railway Station. To this day the Railway Station is still in full use connecting Dyce to Aberdeen and Inverness.

**Dyce** is very much an industrial hub on the outskirts of Aberdeen and is home to Aberdeen airport. You can find all the amenities expected of a large city with four star hotels, cinema complex and leisure activities.

This makes Dyce a good place to stay and plan your journey ahead.

The line from Dyce crosses the River Don and there is some stunning scenery here including Bennachie in the distance.

**Newmachar** used to have a lovely little stone station house on the platform.

Beyond Newmachar the line reaches a summit of

450 feet and passes through a steep cutting in which a train was stuck in snow and had to be cleared by many men with shovels.

From Newmachar you pass over the rolling countryside of Aberdeenshire to **Udny Station**.

The few houses at Udny Station were built as a result of the Railway Station. Today the Udny Station Hotel provides visitors with a welcome stop, and chance to have a chat with the locals.





## The Formartine & Buchan Way

Looking through the trees you can see Tillycorthie Mansion, a beautiful private home which was built in 1911 and is one of the first Scottish mansions to be made of concrete.

**Ellon** is an expanding small town with a rich natural environment. The river Ythan runs through the town and woodlands surround the edge.

The Formartine & Buchan Way, in Ellon, runs along the striking viaduct, which at the time of building the railway, gave builders many problems. Today the viaduct still stands proud offering the walker and cyclist a splendid view of the town.

After the bustling town of Ellon, **Auchnagatt** is a quaint



Aberdeenshire village, in which you can still see the remains of the old railway station behind the houses.

**Maud**, previously known as Brucklay, is a charming small village, which at one time was the junction for the Fraserburgh and Peterhead lines. The Station still remains to this day and hosts the Formartine & Buchan Railway Museum. The museum is only open in summer so be sure to check opening times before you travel.



## The Formartine & Buchan Way

**Strichen** is a world away from the busy pace of life found in Aberdeen and Dyce. Nestled below Mormond Hill, famous for its white horse made from stones on the side of the hill, Strichen is a small but friendly village.

From Strichen is a longer stretch winding its way through the Buchan countryside and into Fraserburgh.

**Fraserburgh** is very much a seaside town, with a beautiful golden sandy beach. Ideal for a stop over if you are planning to cover quite a bit of the the Formartine & Buchan Way, it has all the amenities you would expect. A warm friendly welcome awaits your visit.



Maud was the main junction to Peterhead and from here you turn eastwards following the valley of the South Ugie Water. On this route you pass **Old Deer** which is a quaint little country village, situated beside Deer Abbey. It is surrounded by rolling hillsides and mediaeval landmarks.



Drinnies Wood Observatory

**Mintlaw** hosts a cairn which was unveiled by David Bellamy to commemorate the opening of the Formartine & Buchan Way and is surrounded by beautiful country parks and natural woodland, offering the visitor many opportunities for watching wildlife.



## The Formartine & Buchan Way

The land starts to flatten out after the rolling hillsides of Old Deer and Mintlaw, and due to this it made **Longside** the ideal home for the Lenabo Airship Station, and during the Second World War vast squadrons of planes were based all around here.

**Peterhead** is home to one of Scotland's largest North Sea fishing ports and in fact fish was the principle traffic for the old railway line in Peterhead. The harbour is lively and bustling, full of colourful boats entering and leaving the harbour at all times of the day.

Discover how the largest town in Aberdeenshire, was and still is, a traditional, commercial and shopping centre for Buchan's agriculture and fishing families.





# The Formartine & Buchan Way

## A Natural Learning Environment

The old Formartine & Buchan railway line has provided a natural wildlife corridor for many local and migrating species.

The **River Ythan** is the ideal place to catch a salmon or see them leaping up river to get to their breeding grounds in the autumn.

The **Waters of Philorth Local Nature Reserve**, just lying to the south east of Fraserburgh is an attractive haven for wildlife. Enjoy a picnic and walk by the shores, while you watch for the many variety of birds passing by.

Pied wagtail



Fieldfare

Bird watching is an ideal pastime anywhere on the Formartine & Buchan Way. There are many species native to the area, but also some interesting birds such as the fieldfare or pink-footed goose, visiting here before migrating back for the summer.

Bitterns have also been spotted in winter on the **RSPB Loch of Strathbeg**, Britain's largest dune loch.

The coastline of Aberdeenshire offers a splendid chance to view the our native species, all a short walk beyond Peterhead or Fraserburgh.



## The Formartine & Buchan Way

Much of the old railway line is flanked with rosebay willowherb, which bumblebees love! Many flowers banished from intensively farmed land are widespread on the line, such as harebells, oxeye daisies, yellow toadflax, foxglove, St John's wort, red campion, cat's ear and the heady-scented meadowsweet.



Foxglove

Butterflies, such as the pearl-bordered fritillary and the common blue (no longer common), can often be seen, attracted by the patches of dog violets and the bird's foot trefoil.



Roe deer

Roe Deer are a popular sighting and Red Squirrels can be seen in the natural woodland areas of the Formartine & Buchan Way.

The visitor may even be fortunate enough to spot a badger after dusk on a summer's evening.

The Formartine & Buchan Way is a natural education opportunity for children and adults of all ages!





## The Formartine & Buchan Way

### The natural choice for an active life.

There are many events held throughout the year in the small towns and villages up and down the Formartine & Buchan Way.

Throughout the summer local galas give communities the chance to gather, in the sunshine, and take part in games and competitions. Enjoy an evening of music or join in a pub quiz.

There is something for all the family to take part in or just watch and listen to the local banter.

The **Buchan Heritage Festival** at Strichen, usually the third weekend in May, is one of the finest places to appreciate our rich tradition of music, song, verse, drama and local stories.

For the musically minded the **Wizard Music Festival** in New Deer, offers the visitor a chance to listen to a variety of bands at the end of August. It's a family music festival with 4 stages, a dedicated childrens area, family camping, fairground rides, carefully selected food and craft stalls and a village shop.

**Aden Country Park** which lies adjacent to the Formartine & Buchan Way, offers the visitor a fun day out. There are lovely walks through the grounds, gardens for the visitor, and the **Aberdeenshire Farming Museum** is well worth a visit.

Take your picnic or allow the children to run around enjoying the open spaces and large children's play area.





## The Formartine & Buchan Way

**Haddo House and the surrounding Country Park** is another opportunity for the visitor to enjoy the historical importance of such a grand building as well as taking a walk through the colourful gardens in the grounds of the house.

**Deer Abbey** is also worth a visit. Founded in 1219 by William Comyn who was the Earl of Buchan, it was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin St Mary. Fraserburgh is home to **The**

**Museum of Scottish Lighthouses**, the first lighthouse built on mainland Scotland, now a purpose-built museum. The highlight of a visit is a 45 minute guided tour to Kinnaird Head Lighthouse.

Fraserburgh also boasts a beautiful sandy beach, which offers fun for all the family. Discover the **Fraserburgh Heritage Centre** or play a round of golf on the challenging **Fraserburgh Links Golf Course**.





## The Formartine & Buchan Way

Peterhead is home to one of the largest of Scotland's North Sea fishing ports. The harbour is lively and bustling, full of colourful boats entering and leaving the harbour at all times of the day.

Explore the maritime past of Peterhead at the Arbutnott Museum, one of Aberdeenshire's oldest museums.

Peterhead is the wildlife enthusiasts dream with many coastal habitats for a wide variety of bird species. These can be seen at the mouth of the river Ugie on the north side of Peterhead.





## The Formartine & Buchan Way

### Further Information

Further information on the area can be found by calling Aberdeen Visitor Information Centre on 01224 632 727 or by visiting **[www.aberdeen-grampian.com](http://www.aberdeen-grampian.com)** or by calling into the Visitor Information Centre: Fraserburgh Visitor Information Centre  
3 Saltoun Square, Fraserburgh  
Tel: 01346 518315

Neighbourhood Information Point:

**Aden:** Aberdeenshire  
Farming Museum  
**Ellon:** Library  
**Peterhead:** The Gift Shop,  
Drummers Corner

Information websites:

**[www.visitfraserburgh.com](http://www.visitfraserburgh.com)**  
**[www.visitpeterhead.com](http://www.visitpeterhead.com)**  
**[www.peterheadonline.com](http://www.peterheadonline.com)**

For more information about the route: Please contact the Aberdeenshire Council General Enquiries number to be directed to the relevant person - 08456 081 207

### Useful Contacts

National Trust for Scotland:  
**[www.nts.org.uk](http://www.nts.org.uk)**  
Buchan Countryside Group:  
1771 637394  
Buchan Heritage Festival:  
**[www.plr.rapidial.co.uk/festival.htm](http://www.plr.rapidial.co.uk/festival.htm)**  
Wizard Music Festival:  
**[www.wizardfestival.com](http://www.wizardfestival.com)**  
New Deer Show:  
**[www.newdeershow.co.uk](http://www.newdeershow.co.uk)**  
Aberdeenshire Council Ranger Service:  
01467 628399  
Aden Caravan & Camping Site:  
01771 623 460  
Bluebird Buses Information:  
01224 212 266  
Museum Information:  
01779 477 778  
Scottish Outdoor Access Code:  
**[www.outdooraccess-scotland.com](http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com)**

Aberdeenshire Council is committed to ensuring that our environment, upon which our tourism is so dependent, is safeguarded for future generations to enjoy. Please recycle this guide when you are finished with it, or pass on to a friend.

All information in this brochure is believed to be correct at the time of publication (June 2010). No responsibility can be accepted for any errors or omissions.