

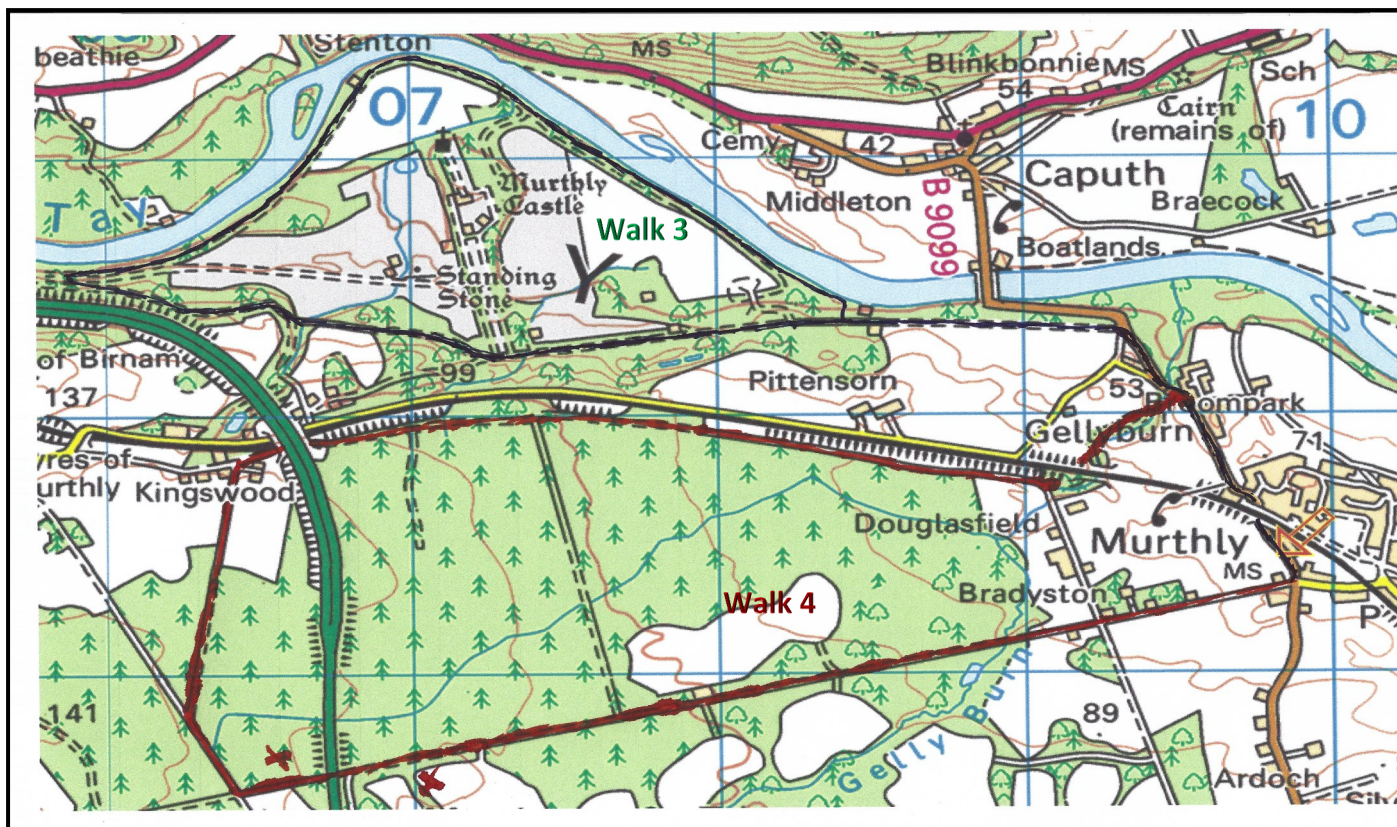
used, as a guardhouse, during WWII. From 1943 to 1945 the drive and policy woods around the castle hid several hundred explosive and ammunition dumps, guarded by Polish troops. Security was tight. Even the laird and his family had to carry passes allowing them in and out.



Head upstream along a broad walk. When the path forks, go right. There is ample evidence here of ambitious beaver activity. Further along, on the other side of the fishing hut, are the dragons teeth. A tiny remnant of the extensive tank traps, ditches, machine gun nests, pillboxes, road, rail, and river blocks hastily erected in 1940.



When invasion seemed inevitable, even imminent. The castle grounds were used as headquarters for the northern sector of



the Scottish Command Line that stretched from the Forth up through Perth, Murthly and Dunkeld all the way to Tummel Bridge.

On a mound to the left, Mòr thulach (from which Murthly is derived), is the chapel of St Anthony the Eremite (hermit). Today it is a popular wedding venue. The track rises steeply to a lovely viewpoint marked by a crenellated wall. Across the river is Boat of Murthly Cottage. There was a public ferry here until 1809. This and other ferries three miles either side of Dunkeld were closed by the Duke of Atholl, forcing everyone to use the bridge designed and built by Thomas Telford. A toll bridge.

The path now follows the West Drive for several hundred metres then turns sharply left onto the old cart track leading

up from the ferry to Kingswood and beyond. At the junction keep straight on across the bridge. (The steep brae to the right leads to old kitchen gardens.) Where the track meets the metalled drive there is a fine view of the old castle. In front stood its intended replacement, the New Castle, a grand stately house designed by Gillespie Graham for Sir John Stewart in the 1830s, but left unfinished. It was blown up and demolished in 1950.

Covid-19: Physical distancing is crucial when outdoors. Be prepared to slow down or stop to help keep your distance.

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Walk 4: To Muir of Thorn & Kingswood

Distance: 9km. Elev. Gain: 75m. Moderate.

Head west from the cross roads along the Great Drive (this section is also the first part of Walk 1). Keep on towards the A9 after the Drive turns sharp right. A new plantation on the left now obscures the Cloven Stone, an ancient boundary marker. This whole area was once the vast Muir of Thorn, since drained and reclaimed for farming and forestry, a process that took several centuries.



Gang warily at the road works on the A9. In due course we will be able to use the bridge (mooted as a 'wildlife corridor') but for now a temporary crossing point has been installed. Once across head up the track to a junction and turn right. The house on the left was formerly known as Three Mile House as it stood

beside the pre-turnpike road from Perth and marked the distance left to Dunkeld.

When this track forks, keep right. There is a fine view of Birnam Hill as the old road descends to Kingswood House, which for a time was the estate factor's home and office. 'Kingswood' is the anglicised version of Colra or Colrie. It is split now by the railway and Pittensorn Road, but in the 18th century this was one of the busiest settlements on the estate. Colrie had two meal mills, a lint mill, smithy and the original Murthly Inn. Tenants had to bring 'all grindable corns' to either the upper or lower meal mill (which one was stipulated in their lease) and handloom weavers were obliged to use the

lint mill. Or face a fine, possibly loss of tenancy.

At the junction turn right. The second cottage back was the inn and would have been a popular spot for drovers and carters heading for Boat of Murthly. With the coming of the railway the centre of gravity on the estate shifted to Murthly Station, so this inn was closed and the name transferred to the hotel beside the cross roads (which burned down in 1928; a house, Balfion, occupies the spot today).



Immediately after you pass under the A9 there is a pedestrian crossing over the railway. If you feel like adding another five kilometres or so to your walk, cross here and follow the waymark for Gellyburn. (Essentially, Walk 3 in reverse.)

Follow this track to the junction with the Great Drive at the site of the Malakoff Arch, described in Walk 1. At the next signpost take the track onto Lantern Drive to the left. Lantern Lodge stood just this side of the bridge. A mound of earth and an iron bed frame are all that remain. The lodge was notorious for a time during the Great War, as a shebeen or illegal drinking den much frequented by the walking wounded from the Asylum, which had been requisitioned by the War Department.

At the end of the drive, turn right and follow the pavement up through the village back to the cross roads.

MURTHLY WALKS 2



Walk 3: To the dragons teeth

Distance: 8km Elev Gain: 90m. Moderate with a couple of steep sections.

This walk starts at the gates to the castle drive (small car park close by). As you follow the avenue of Lime trees keep an eye to the left for a small iron gate. This marks where an ancient path crossed to reach the Caputh ferry, and indicates the drive was originally much shorter. Sir William Drummond Stewart had to petition his fellow directors of the local Turnpike Trust to re-align the road (now the B9099) so as to have this longer, more imposing carriage drive.

At the next set of gates by East Lodge look for a way marker indicating the path to the river. This passes an attractive old drinking fountain, and a summer house. The latter was last