Welcome to Ballater

Ballater, renowned for its Royal connections lies on a meander of the River Dee under the shelter of Craigendarroch. As you will see, Ballater is a very attractive village that has helped put the ‘Royal’ into Royal Deeside. Ballater is the nearest settlement to, and was the railhead for, Balmoral Castle, which lies eight miles along the River Dee to the west.

Ballater Paths

A network of paths and tracks lead out of the village, providing a variety of routes to enjoy with fine views, a rich local history and abundant wildlife. This leaflet suggests 5 routes of varying length, all starting and finishing in Ballater so you can give the car a rest! Each colour-coded route is shown on the map and there are corresponding coloured waymarkers along each route to help guide you. However, please take a few minutes to read the route descriptions on the map before you set out, just to make sure that your chosen route is suitable for you and others in your group.

About COAT

The Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust works to build and improve paths, it also gives information about access in the Cairngorms area. Leaflet sales help this work. Find out more at: www.cairngormsoutdooraccess.org.uk

Explore Deeside

For information on paths, local events, facilities and accommodation:

Visitor Information Centres:
Ballater: 01339 755 306 (open all year)
Braemar: 01339 741 600 (open all year)
Crathie: 01339 742 414

Useful web sites:
www.visitballater.com
www.visitabdn.com
www.deesideway.org
www.visitcairngorms.com
www.cairngorms.co.uk

If you enjoyed “Ballater Paths” then look out for other Community Path Leaflets to help you explore more of the Cairngorms National Park.
Deeside Way
An attractive walk following the old Deeside railway, with fine views of the River Dee and surrounding hills. The Aboyne and Deeside Railway Company wanted to build the line through to Braemar but Queen Victoria was ‘not amused’ and said no! So the railway line ended at Ballater but this stretch of trackbed is a reminder of the original plan.

The River Dee
The source of the Dee is about 4,000 feet high on the side of Braeriach, one of the highest of the Cairngorm Mountains.

Famous as a great salmon river, the Dee tumbles past Ballater on its way to Aberdeen giving the river a total length of 85 miles.

All of the paths in this leaflet either pass close to the river or give you more distant views. Be sure to watch for salmon leaping as they feed or make their way up the river.

Cambus o’ May Suspension Bridge
Six kilometres to the east of Ballater lies the picturesque suspension bridge over the River Dee, a short walk from the small car park just off the A93. The site is a great place for a picnic and has wonderful views up and down the river.

Walkers, cyclists and horse riders from Ballater can get to both the Cambus o’ May suspension bridge and the forest walks by following the Deeside Way as shown on the map below.
Polhollick Bridge Walk
Distance: 4.5 miles (7.5 km)
Approximate time: 2 hours
Start: Station Square
Terrain: A level route on tracks and paths
A level route that follows much of the old railway line and rewards you with fine views up Deeside and of the River Dee.
Start from Station Square and go along Braemar Road before crossing the railway bridge and following Dundarroch Road to the car park by the river.
Turn right and follow the blue way-markers to Polhollick Bridge before returning via the same route.

Pannanich Woods Circular Walk
Distance: 1½ miles (2.5km)
Approximate time: 1 hour
Start: Station Square
Terrain: path and forest track
A short walk in woods south of the river from Ballater.
Start from Station Square and go along Bridge Street towards the river, before crossing Ballater Bridge to reach Pannanich Woods. After passing the old Canadian loggers camp, return via the pavement.
Please help conserve the local Capercaillie population (a rare ground-nesting bird) by keeping any dogs on leads between early March and September.