

## 4.3 Lossiemouth to Buckie

**Map** panels 2 and 3

**Distance** 15.9 miles 25.6 km

**Terrain** long sandy beach, paths through dunes, vehicle track, quiet roads, footpath, tracks, roadside and woodland paths

**Grade** minimal rise and fall (except possible detour via Binn Hill)

**Food and drink** Lossiemouth, Garmouth, Spey Bay, Portgordon, Buckie

**Side trips** Lossiemouth Museum; Spey Bay Wildlife Centre

**Summary** long beach walk and through sand dunes (or via Binn Hill) to Kingston and Garmouth; cross River Spey by impressive viaduct, then woodland and farmland to Buckie



Check tide times before setting out; the first stage of the walk is best done on an outgoing tide: see page 61 and below.

The coastal route crosses the Binn Hill MOD firing range where live ammunition is occasionally used. Sentries are posted and red flags flown at both ends, and that section of route is then closed to walkers. To find out in advance, phone the Warden (01343 870 259) between 09.00 and 12.00 the day before.

*Lossiemouth Marina*





Footbridge across River Lossie

- Set out from the Stotfield disaster memorial at the eastern end of Lossiemouth West Beach. Follow a rough track left of the nearby building and past a boat compound.
- Walk up a concrete ramp to a path beside houses on the right. At the end of a concrete sea wall on the left, follow a narrow path to the left.
- It passes through gorse and bends seaward of the Beach Bar to a road junction. Continue straight ahead along a roadside footpath, soon passing Lossiemouth Harbour.
- At a T-junction, turn left and continue beside the outer harbour (private road). The road bends right past the Harbourmaster's office where you can check the time of the next high tide.
- The road then passes Pitgaveny Quay, a row of shops and the Lossiemouth Fisheries and Communities Museum: see panel.
- Continue beside the marina and past a play area. Opposite the Lossie Inn, bear left beside Seatown Road. Pass toilets and houses, then turn left across Spynie Canal.
- Built 1808-12 by Thomas Telford to drain Loch Spynie, the canal is 8 miles (12 km) long. Sluices under the bridge prevent flooding at high tide.
- Just after the canal, with the cottages of historic Seatown on your right, turn left across the long footbridge over River Lossie. Continue ahead toward the open sea and along East Beach.



#### Lossiemouth Museum

*Located in a former fishing net-mending building, the Lossiemouth Fisheries and Communities Museum highlights the history of fishing in Scotland and Lossiemouth in particular. There's a detailed record of the Stotfield disaster of 1806 and a memorial to the men who died. Lossiemouth's most famous son, James Ramsay Macdonald, is remembered in a reconstruction of his study in his home. A controversial figure, he became Britain's first Labour Prime Minister in 1924, and again 1929-35. The museum is open Monday-Saturday, 10.00 to 16.45; adult entry fee was £1.50 in 2010. Tel 01343 813 772 or visit [www.morayconnections.com](http://www.morayconnections.com).*

- Except at high tide, the beach provides wonderfully easy walking for at least 2 km. Look east for a forested hill on the skyline, the Bin of Cullen, just inland from your final destination.
- Further on, the shingle bank shelves more steeply, and the distance between bank and sea narrows. If need be, you can retreat inland to a path below the sand dunes or, later, between the line of concrete blocks and the forest edge.
- If you stick to the beach and the tide isn't high, Boar's Head Rock may gradually become visible. It's the largest of the offshore rocks and marks the point where you must head inland. Continue along the grass and shingle path alongside the blocks.
- After about 1 km, you come to the signposted start of the Binn Hill detour. This makes a change from the beach, has good views and adds about 2.5 km to the day's walking. It's described on page 50.
- For the seaward main route, continue ahead for about 2 km, passing the outer reaches of the firing range – a watchtower, white flag posts and derelict buildings. Turn slightly inland on a path past the watchtower to join a grassy vehicle track.
- About 30 m beyond buildings, ignore the MCT sign pointing to Binn Hill. Continue along the track, past another sentry box where the Binn Hill detour rejoins the main route. After a further 500 m, the concrete blocks finally come to an end near a grassy mound.

*Lossiemouth from its east beach*





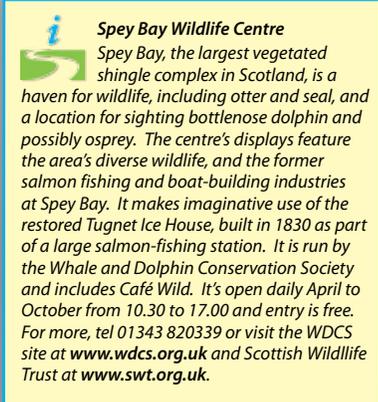
Wartime coast defences between Lossiemouth and Kingston



### Binn Hill detour

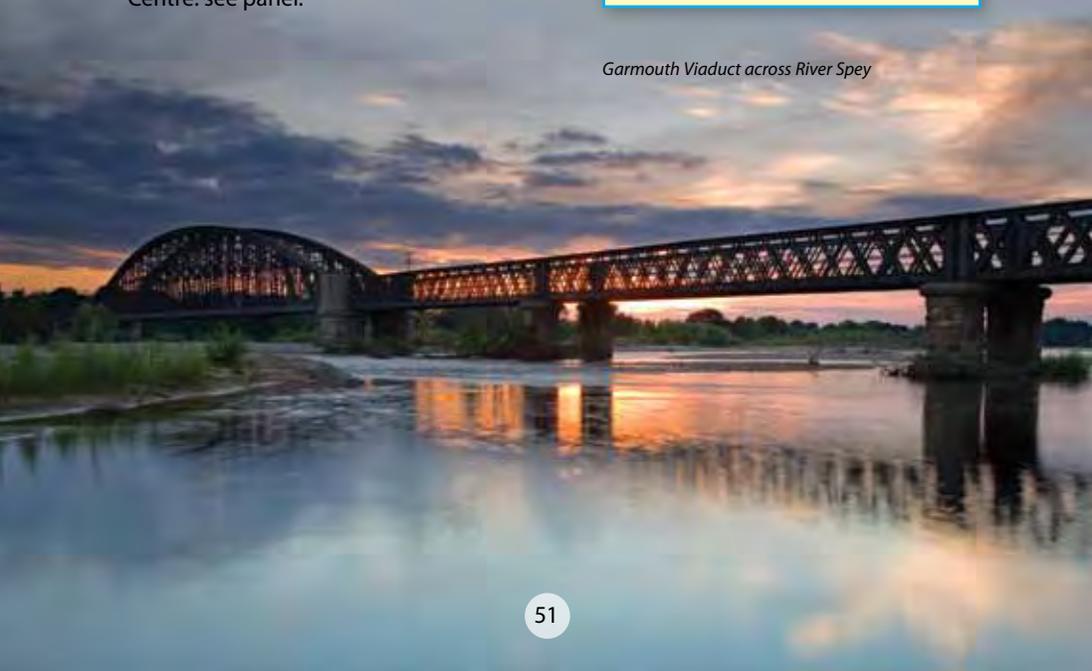
- Follow the signposted and waymarked path inland, through a narrow band of trees, across a clearing and a track, into taller forest. Continue for a few hundred metres to a junction and turn left. At the eastern edge of open ground, a track joins from the left.
  - About 75 m further on, at a signposted junction, continue straight on past a Binn Hill summit path to the right. This route isn't waymarked, through bracken and woodland, though well-used paths can be followed up to and generally east across undulating ground. The best views are left of the paths. On the main route, after 1 further km you come to a Nissen hut, flagpole and signpost to Binn Hill summit.
  - Return from the summit and continue across the edge of the firing range to a signposted junction. If red flags are flying, you won't be able to proceed. Otherwise, turn left to return to the Trail or else go straight on along the track for about 600 m. Pass a barrier and flagpole and turn left along a track. Follow it to rejoin the Trail near a watchtower and flagpole.
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- About 200 m further on, at an informal parking area, follow a gravel track which bends to the right. Soon, from a larger parking area, continue more or less straight on, within a few metres along a minor road, towards Kingston and Garmouth.
  - Here you'll find information boards about local paths and the Lein Wildlife Reserve, managed by the Scottish Wildlife Trust. Since shingle extraction ceased here in the 1970s, the area has reverted naturally to grassland and marsh.
  - Continue past a formal car park. Just past a playing field, turn right down a lane between houses in Kingston.
  - Cross Lein Road and continue along a track and then a path. Follow the MCT signs via School Brae (¾ mile): keep to the path, cross a footbridge then follow a path to a minor road. Turn right and go straight on, past junctions on the right.

- At a fork near farm buildings, bear left along a path marked 'Pedestrians Only'. The path traverses a grassy ridge with views of Spey Bay and Garmouth Viaduct ahead.
- Where the path begins to lose height, a narrow path on the right leads to the old water tower nearby, well worth a short detour for its panoramic view. An indicator plate identifies the visible features.
- Descend to a road and turn right in Garmouth. Soon you pass a house on the left on the corner of The Loanie where, according to a wall plaque, Charles II signed *The Solemn League & Covenant* in 1650.
- Keep ahead at the war memorial, past the post office. After 100 m, turn left along Church Road.
- Just after the last house on the left, descend steps to the tarmac track of the old railway. This takes you on to the impressive Garmouth Viaduct across the River Spey on a route shared with National Cycle Route 1.
- Continue for 250 m along the track through leafy woodland to Garmouth junction, marked in 2010 with a Moray Way board. Turn left to join the Speyside Way heading north along a vehicle track. This leads to a minor road at Spey Bay near the Wildlife Centre: see panel.



**i Spey Bay Wildlife Centre**  
 Spey Bay, the largest vegetated shingle complex in Scotland, is a haven for wildlife, including otter and seal, and a location for sighting bottlenose dolphin and possibly osprey. The centre's displays feature the area's diverse wildlife, and the former salmon fishing and boat-building industries at Spey Bay. It makes imaginative use of the restored Tugnet Ice House, built in 1830 as part of a large salmon-fishing station. It is run by the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society and includes Café Wild. It's open daily April to October from 10.30 to 17.00 and entry is free. For more, tel 01343 820339 or visit the WDCS site at [www.wdcs.org.uk](http://www.wdcs.org.uk) and Scottish Wildlife Trust at [www.swt.org.uk](http://www.swt.org.uk).

Garmouth Viaduct across River Spey



- To continue, follow a path past the grass-covered ice house, turn right to cross the car park, passing information boards about the Speyside Way, River Spey and MCT.
- Follow the minor road. Around a bend there's a roadside footpath for about 150 m.
- Then cross the road to follow a tarmac driveway then waymarked path past a fenced area. Descend steps to a path that leads through gorse then woodland. Two short diversions caused by flooding were in force here in 2010.
- From the eastern boundary of the forest, turn right along a path between a vehicle track and field, then left along the railway track. Further on, a footbridge spans the Burn of Tynet. Go through stiles, under a road bridge and on to a gate.
- Turn right along a road into Portgordon and follow it to the coast then turn right along Stewart Street. This forks at the end of the beach: turn left beside the harbour and left again at its far end.
- Beside a parking area here information boards cover the Speyside Way, and local walks and cycle routes. Beyond a picnic area, turn right along a minor road. The MCT is signed along the former railway, now a cycle route to Buckie. We suggest you follow the Speyside Way along the coast to Buckie instead.
- Continue past houses, soon on a gravel road. After the last house, cross open ground between the main road and the shore.
- Pass an old ice house. Beside the adjacent parking area there's an information board about Portgordon's seals. Go on to a roadside footpath and follow it for about 150 m, then bear left along a path across open ground for a few hundred metres.
- At a path intersection, turn right to join the roadside path beside Great Western Road into Buckpool and Buckie. At the second open area on the left, turn left to a vehicle track between houses and the shore.
- It becomes a road leading to Buckpool Harbour and picnic area. At the far end of the small park pass information boards for the Speyside Way and Moray Cycle Route; continue along the roadside footpath to The Yardie Conservation Area.
- Go left to a shoreside path, leading to a minor road. Back on the roadside path, pass the coastguard and ambulance stations to a major junction. Take the road to the right, North High Street, which leads to Buckie town centre with Heritage Centre: see panel.



#### **Buckie Fishing Heritage Centre**

*Buckie's history as a fishing station dates from the mid-17th century; the industry flourished during the 19th century and survives to this day. The centre houses more than 8000 photographs featuring fishing and local history, and a collection of model fishing boats. There are also records of interviews with local fisherfolk, some in their own dialect. The shop sells reproductions of some photographs.*

*You'll find the centre behind the library, near Cluny Place which is just west of Cluny Square (intersection of High and Church Streets). It's open Monday to Friday 10.00 to 12.00 and 14.00 to 16.00, and on Saturday mornings April to September. For more, visit [www.buckieheritage.org](http://www.buckieheritage.org).*