

Fraserburgh to Buckie

The buildings on the west date from 1455, when James II allowed Sir Walter Ogilvie of Deskford to fortify this site. About 1560, the Ogilvie Laird argued with his son, disinherited him, and signed the property over to Sir John Gordon, third son of the Earl of Huntly. In 1562, the Gordons rebelled against Mary, refusing her entry to the castle, and when they were defeated at the Battle of Corrochie, the Earl was beheaded and the castle was abandoned in 1600. It was in ruins by 1638 and has not been habitable since. Carry on along the cliff path



pas Logie head where the path narrows as you approach Cullen. Although the path is narrow and rocky in places, and there is a dramatic descent and climb, the route is easy to follow. Soon a long flight of steps is reached with a memorial to the man who built them single-handedly in the 1980's. The next bay is littered with massive upstanding rocks and the area is popular with climbers who climb the sea facing crags. As you come into Cullen you will pass the pet cemetery on the outskirts of the village, with many little memorials made from the local pebbles and stones found along the foreshore. Cullen is a lovely seaside town dominated by the large railway viaduct that used to carry the railway through the town but is now used as part of the main cycleway through the area.

Cullen was established by 1189 and a church was built in 1236. In the 1700s Cullen was built on textiles, and threadmaking in particular. However the main period of growth came with the herring boom in the 1800s. The fishermen's cottages on the foreshore is called Seatown which was built in the



1820s, close to the pier built by Thomas Telford in 1819. Cullen is also famous for its "Cullen Skink" - a form of smoked haddock, potato and onion soup. The slightly odd name comes from the Gaelic word for "essence". Cross the bridge near the harbour and follow the path past the golf club house towards the sandy beach to the west of the village in the direction of Port-

knockie.

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As you reach the end of the beach the shore becomes rocky and the path picks its way through some unusual rock formations - the best of which is the one known as the Bow and Fiddle rock. A large rock about 50 feet high just off the coast. The quartzite rock has a large sea arch, which somewhat resembles the bow of a fiddle. The rock is a favourite nesting area for a wide variety of sea-birds including gulls, fulmars, kittiwakes and razorbills. and the white colour of the rock is due to centuries of bird droppings or guano on the rock itself. A short distance from the rock lies Portknockie with its little harbour. Early settlement at this location is suggested by the remains of Iron Age and Pictish fortifications that have been found on a promontory that shelters the harbour known as the Green Castle. The village was founded in 1677 and it became a significant herring fishing port during the nineteenth century. At the height of the herring fishing boom about 100 sailing boats crowded its harbour, many of them being of the famous Zulu design. The present harbour features date from 1890 and, as late as 1929, it was still being used by up to 58 steam drifters. Today, Portknockie's fishing fleet comprises ten modern boats, which land their fish at Scotland's east and west coast ports with just five smaller boats locally landing creels and mackerel.



Carry on along past the cliffs that are studded with caves until you reach the next village along the coast. Findochty. The little harbour sees mostly pleasure boats rather than fishing boats these days, but like many of these coastal villages it once a thriving fishing port. The harbour is sandwiched between the white church of Scotland that

stands on a hill to the west of the village and the Admiral pub at the far end. At the eastern end of the village is a row of fishermen's cottages called the long row, which typically have their backs to the sea so as to avoid most of the effects of the stormy winter gales. The path east continues along past the Strathlene golf course and then rejoins the main trunk road just outside Buckie where this section of the walk ends. The next section goes from Buckie all the way out to the end of the walk at Inverness.