

The Ramblers - St Andrews & N.E. Fife Group

St Andrews and NE Fife Ramblers set off in 'jaunty and athletic' style on a mild Sunday morning in mid-October for an 8-mile circular walk at Scone. Starting at Quarrymill Woodland Park we made our way along gentle paths towards the village and our first stop at Old Scone Church. There we admired the memorial to David Douglas, a native of Scone who was responsible for bringing many plants to Europe from the Americas, including the Sitka Spruce and the Douglas Fir. We then accepted an invitation from a friendly parishioner to have an impromptu guided tour of the church itself, with its impressive Mansfield Pew. Members of the congregation already seated inside must have wondered at the unusual sight of a dozen Ramblers traipsing in and back out again just before the service started. Setting off again we headed towards the Den of Scone, stopping first at a nearby children's playpark where we perched on various pieces of equipment for our short coffee break. Then it was onwards and definitely upwards, first on woodland paths and a couple of minor roads, before tackling a steep, muddy path which took us (somewhat breathlessly) to Macduff's Monument, a folly built in the 1780s. Our efforts were well rewarded with lovely views over the still slightly mist-covered landscape below as we ate our lunch beneath the remains of the monument. A path across the moor and a less testing ascent took us to our next port of call, the Lynedoch Obelisk, erected in memory of Lord Lynedoch who fought with Wellington in the 1811 Battle of Barossa. From here we enjoyed even more extensive views towards the Tay and the hills of Fife. We admired the autumn colours as we descended towards Scone via the golf course and Murrayshall Hotel, and through Robert Douglas Park, named after another famous Scone man who discovered pectin and left his fortune for the benefit of the community. Returning through Quarrymill woodland to our starting point, we headed for tea and scones at the Black Watch Museum where we were ushered to a table in a separate room (had our reputation preceded us, perhaps?). With the weather having held up despite the rain forecast for early afternoon, this was the perfect conclusion to a very enjoyable – and highly informative – day's walking.



View to Scone from Macduff's Folly



View south from Lynedoch Obelisk



Caught unawares



...but not this time!

The weather was not so kind to us the following Wednesday as 16 Ramblers – including one visitor and one long-standing member making a welcome reappearance – defied the steady rain to turn out for a leisurely walk around Kemback and Blebo Craigs. Starting at the church hall in Dura Den we made our way gently uphill and through the woods towards Kemback. As we continued uphill past the village, some opted for the steeper but shorter route up Jenny's Steps while others took the more gradual, winding path to the top of the hill. After a very brief stop for coffee – and hot chocolate for two, eyed enviously by everyone else – in the (relative) shelter of the dripping trees we carried on into Blebo. We first walked to the far end of the village to appreciate the landscape, then retraced our steps to the landmark phone box in the centre and followed a narrow grass path to the upper level of the village. We then turned into the woods with their half-hidden remains of old quarries, long since overgrown. Here the predicted 'may be some muddy tracks' proved entirely accurate as we carefully squelched and splashed our way through the trees to emerge onto more forgiving paths and rejoin the road we had taken earlier towards Blebo. Our descent along the woodland path overlooking Kemback afforded more views of stunning autumn colours as we returned to Dura Den. From there we headed to Cupar for a well-earned lunch after a morning's leisurely walk in good company.

Our next walk is tomorrow (Saturday) 26th October, at Dalgety Bay and Letham Hill, Grade C+, 7.5 miles. This circular walk with some prolonged inclines follows good tracks and paths through woodland, farmland and part of the Fife Coastal Path. All of our walks are open to guests who would like to try out The Ramblers, and full details can be found on our website www.standrewsnefiferamblers.com