

## Dava Way central section – traveling from Dava to Dunphail

Distance: 6½ miles (10½ km)

Join the railway line at Dava. There is no official parking but there is space for one or two cars on the grass verge opposite the track near the Highland boundary.

A few yards up the track a bridge on your left crosses the drainage ditch. Follow this track through the woods and across the hillside to join the line within a few hundred yards. You are likely to encounter geese and then free range hens as you pass through Dava, please keep any dogs on a lead. As you pass through the gate leaving Dava behind you the Knock of Braemoray, 456 metres (1496 feet) lies ahead. There is no worn path to its summit. If you wish to climb the Knock to enjoy the view you are welcome to do so and are asked to go up from eastern side, leaving the line about a mile further on.



Knock of Braemoray



Workmen's hut

As you curve to the right leaving the road enjoy the wild landscape around you. In poor weather it is easy to imagine why the railway workmen built themselves a shelter from sleepers. The line soon drops into the shelter of a burn hugging the sheltered leeside of the Knock. There are clear views to Caithness on the far side of the Moray Firth. The conical hill is Morven, near Helmsdale 50 miles (80 km) away. The deserted house at Bogeney marks the halfway point to the Divie viaduct.

As you continue on towards Bantrach Wood about 2 miles ahead notice how the landscape is changing from heath-land to farmland and pasture. At the far side of Bantrach Wood (about ¼ mile from the gate) an obvious short track goes off to the right to join the Bantrach road. This can be a convenient pick up point



Bogeney



Divie viaduct from the air

The embankment now builds rapidly as you approach Divie viaduct. This seven arch viaduct is 477 feet (145 metres) long and stands 170 feet (52 metres) above the River Divie. Pause here a while and enjoy the wonderful views to either side. Be sure to stop and read the commemorative stone in the centre. In 1861-3 the viaduct cost £10,231 to build.



River Divie looking east from the Divie viaduct

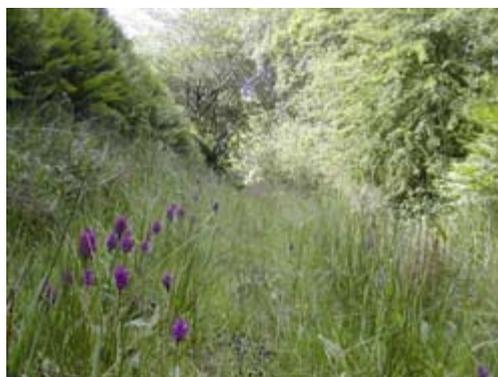


Edinkillie kirk and manse from Divie viaduct

Beyond the viaduct the line enters a cutting. Like many cuttings along the route this is a damp place. Water permanently seeps from the fields above and for many years this cutting was flooded ankle deep or more. It is still a lush wet habitat although the surface underfoot is now mostly dry and firm. We hope to preserve the profusion of orchids and other flora and fauna found here.

A short track to the left at the end of the cutting has space for 1 or 2 cars and could be a finish point for this walk.

Alternatively we can continue on for about a mile towards the old Dunphail station. The old station and platform is now private property and the path follows a short diversion through the woods alongside the line. You rejoin the line at the old sidings for the station near where the Half Davoch road crosses over the line. If you are finishing your trip here cross the line and follow the path to join the minor road in about 100 yards. We hope to form car parking here. If you turn left at the minor road to join the main Forres road, a short distance to your left is Edinkillie Hall where a car can safely be left for a while.



Orchids in the cutting beyond the viaduct

Those continuing on towards Forres would turn right along the railway track and pass under the road bridge.

## Enjoy your day

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Everyone has the right to be on most land and inland water providing they act responsibly. Your access rights and responsibilities are explained fully in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

Whether you're in the outdoors or managing the outdoors, the key things are to:

- take responsibility for your own actions;
- respect the interests of other people;
- care for the environment.

Find out more by visiting <http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com> or phoning your local Scottish Natural Heritage office

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