

Rural Carvings

The Back Walk carvings are part of an ongoing series of artworks all over Stirling.

At Doon hill near **Aberfoyle** you'll see the intricate little homes inspired by a scientific paper written in 1691 by local clergyman Robert Kirk called the "Secret Commonwealth of Elves, Fauns and Fairies".

Author Robert Louis Stevenson used to holiday in Stirling and on the Darn Road between **Bridge of Allan** and **Dunblane** is a cave known as "Stevenson's Cave" and is said to be the inspiration for Ben Gunn's cave in the classic "Treasure Island". Rather than X marks the spot, look out for a pirate bench!



The rocks in **Bridge of Allan's** Mine Wood were laid down 415 million years ago when Stirling was located south of the equator and part of a prehistoric continent called "Laurussia".



Today you'll find a carving of a fossil fish to represent a number of fossils found in the nineteenth century which were new to science.

In **Strathyre** you'll find a majestic Golden Eagle, in **Killearn** a bench showing local flora of the glen and the historic Ladies Linn water feature and in **Fintry** you'll find heron, bats and other local wildlife.

We're constantly looking for suitable trees to carve into stories of Stirling's past - who knows where our next tree will be and what story will inspire our talented carvers.



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17| **Bridge of Allan**, © Stirling Council

18| **Strathyre**, © Stirling Council

19| **Darn Road, Bridge of Allan**, © Stirling Council

20| **Killearn**, © Stirling Council

This leaflet is one of many produced in partnership with Stirling's communities to help you explore the rich and varied heritage of our wonderful city. You'll find them at www.stirlingheritagetrails.co.uk

For led walks in the area see the Stirling Walking Network at www.activestirling.org.uk

This leaflet is intended to help you explore Stirling Heritage Trails and enjoy Stirling as a "Walkable City".

The trails on the map allow you to enjoy and plan circular routes.

Visit travelinescotland.com to help you plan your journey to, in and around Stirling.



Since opening in 1874, The Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum has been a major custodian of objects relating to Stirling's past. It is a free attraction and open from Tue-Sun. Visit www.smithartgalleryandmuseum.co.uk for more information.

Visit walkit.com to help you plan your way around Stirling on foot.

Remember to follow the **Scottish Outdoor Access Code** while exploring the Stirling Heritage Trails.

Enjoy Scotland's outdoors responsibly

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



**KNOW THE CODE
BEFORE YOU GO**

SCOTTISH OUTDOOR ACCESS CODE outdooraccess-scotland.com

Stirling Wood Carvings Heritage Trail

Xplore Stirling

HERITAGE TRAILS

Designed by Art is an Option, www.artisanooption.co.uk Research and words by Narration Media Ltd, www.narration.media



www.stirlingheritagetrails.co.uk

Welcome to the Stirling Wood Carvings Heritage Trail

Stirling's Back Walk is the "oldest publicly maintained road in Scotland", a pathway which runs alongside the medieval Town Walls to Stirling Castle. The slopes of the Back Walk are covered in trees and the area is managed by Stirling Council.

In 2009, wood carver Tommy Craggs created the first piece of art on the Back Walk from a felled Beech tree; more carvings were added in 2015. In addition to the carvings, there are several stunning viewpoints out over the Carse of Stirling and the northerly views towards the Trossachs.



The Stirling Wolf

A wolf features on Stirling's Coat of Arms. It is said that in the 9th century a Viking raiding party disturbed a sleeping wolf which woke up and howled, alerting the townspeople and saving Stirling from attack. Wolves haven't always been popular – they were hunted to extinction in Scotland by the 1740s.

A Scottish Sword and a Viking Helmet

The sword represents the broadsword used in battle by William Wallace. William Wallace played a key role in the Scottish Wars of Independence, raising an army which defeated English forces at the Battle of Stirling Bridge in 1297. The National Wallace Monument was built in his honour in 1869. On display at the Monument is a sword said to be the actual weapon belonging to Wallace. At the base of our carving is a helmet and a targe, or shield, both inspired by the Viking legend.

A Bomb and a Football

King's Park Football Club formed in 1875 and represented Stirling in the Scottish leagues until a German bomb fell on their stadium, Forthbank Park, on July 20th 1940. The club couldn't afford to rebuild the stadium and, without a home, were not allowed to continue playing the league. In 1945 a new club was formed, Stirling Albion, that still represents the city today and moved into a new Forthbank stadium in 1993.



Stirling is also home to the world's oldest known football which was used in Stirling Castle during the time of Mary Queen of Scots and found again in the 1970s. It is on display at the Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum.



The Stirling Jug

From 1458 until the Union of the Crowns in 1707 the official measurement of Scotland's "Large Pint" was the Stirling Jug. Robert Borthwick, Master Gun Maker to James IV and James V cast the current jug in 1513. A Scottish "large pint" is the same as three and a quarter imperial pints (approx. 1.8litres).



The original jug, on display at the Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum, was duplicated and copies used all over the country to measure volume of wet and dry goods and to ensure drinkers were getting exactly what they paid for.

Postbox

In 1848 Stirling businessman Peter Drummond began printing leaflets, or "tracts", filled with religious messages. These proved hugely popular and within 25 years he had published 60 million leaflets. These leaflets were sent to clergy and missionaries around the world from Stirling's Post Office, which became one of the largest in Scotland to handle the volume of mail. The last tract was produced in 1980.

Although not on the artist's mind when carving the postbox, many people think it refers to tennis player Andy Murray, who was honoured with a gold painted postbox in his nearby hometown of Dunblane after winning an Olympic gold medal in 2012 - we're very happy with the double meaning!



1| Wolf, photo by John McPake

2| Sword, photo by John McPake

3| Bomb, photo by John McPake

4| The bombed Forthbank Stadium, © Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum

5| The world's oldest football, © Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum

6| Stirling Jug, © Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum

7| The Stirling Tract Enterprise, © Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum



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The beheading of Baird and Hardie

In April 1820, the United Kingdom was in the middle of a huge economic depression and in Scotland a National Strike was called. A number of weavers marched towards government weapons factories in Falkirk intent on getting guns to start a revolution. Led by Andrew Hardie and John Baird, they were confronted by government forces and arrested. Twenty of the radicals were deported to Australia but Baird and Hardie were hung and then beheaded in front of Stirling's courthouse in Broad Street. The local executioner wouldn't do the job so a medical student, Thomas Moore was drafted in from Glasgow. His cloak and axe are on display at the Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum.

A juicy apple

In the times of the Stewart monarchs, fruit trees were found all around Stirling Castle, with orchards on the Gowan Hill, down by the River Forth and a famous orchard run by the monks of Cambuskenneth Abbey. The orchards planted around the time of James IV here on the Back Walk were known as the "Hanging Gardens".

Salmon and Forth Oysters

Take in the beautiful view across the Carse of Stirling through which the River Forth, after rising in the Trossachs, winds 29 miles before flowing into the North Sea at Edinburgh.

Forth Oysters were once common along the river and hugely valuable. At its peak the Oysters supported a fishing industry that harvested 30 million of them each year.

Overfishing led to the last fishery closing in 1920, with the Forth Oyster declared extinct in 1957.

However, in recent years scientists at Stirling University have discovered a few oysters have survived and may slowly be making a comeback. You can explore the river further by following the Forth Trail.



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The Archer and the Deer

These carvings reference the King's Park, the Royal hunting ground that once covered much of the land between the Castle Rock and the land out towards the field of the Battle of Bannockburn. Heavily wooded, the men of the Royal Court would hunt deer and boar both for sport and for food. Just visible beyond the archer at the foot of the hill before the Kings' Knot is an enclosed area known as the Butt Well - it takes its name from the water spring which would have irrigated the fountains of the Kings Knot and the archery butts which were used by royal archers to practice in the adjoining field.

Dragon

The 2009 carving is of multiple figures. On the end looking towards the Kings' Knot is a thoughtful Scottish figure wearing a plaid. Behind him is a sleeping dragon draped along the trunk of the tree, next to him is a unicorn and another version of the Stirling Wolf which are both on the Coat of Arms of the City. Over the years the wood will season and all the carvings will darken in colour.



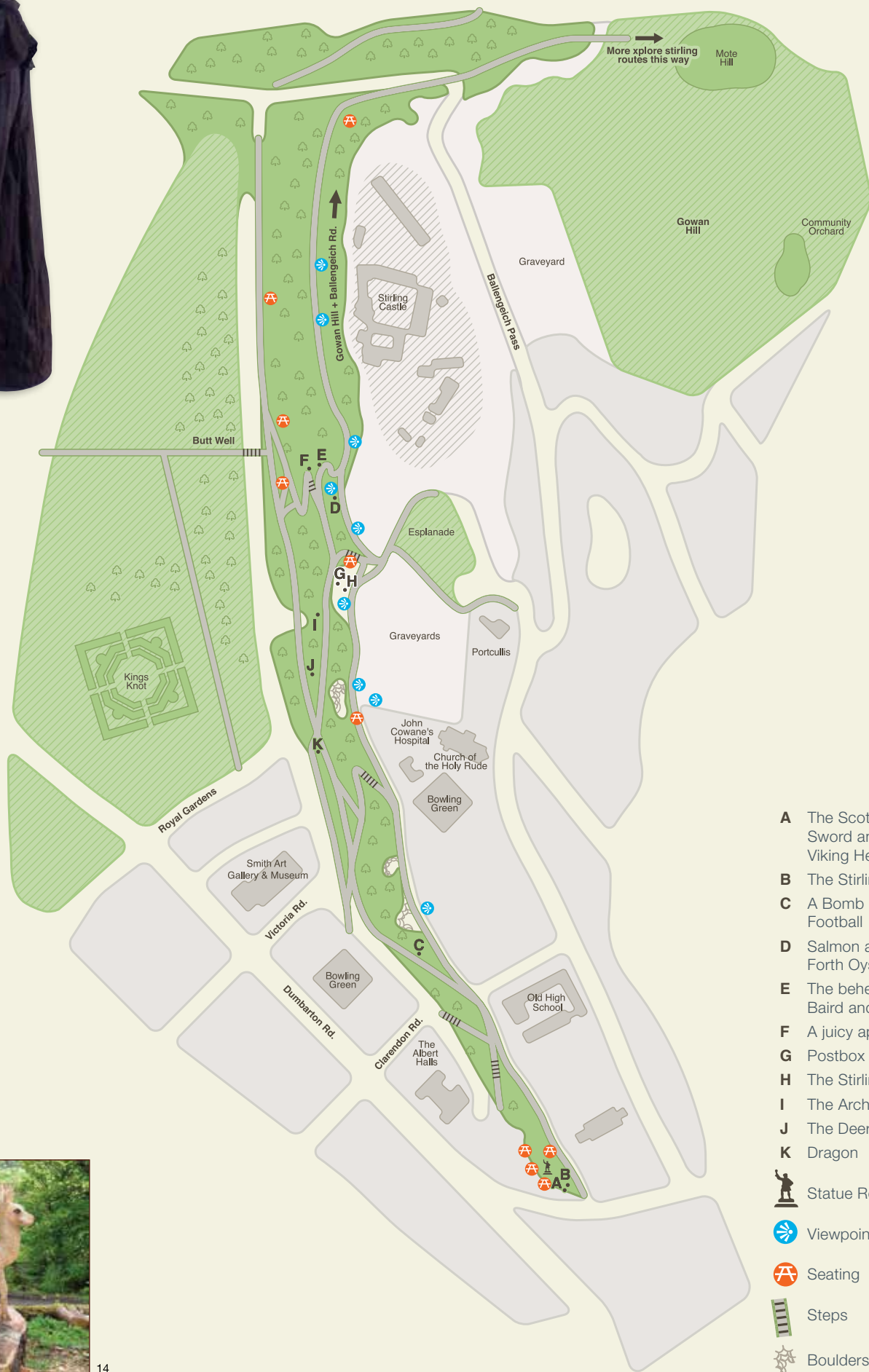
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- Statue Rob Roy
- Viewpoint
- Seating
- Steps
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Xpert Explorer

From the Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum, walk along Dumbarton Road towards the city centre. At the Albert Halls, veer left up the hill to the start of the Back Walk behind the statue of Rob Roy. Turn left onto the Back Walk and you will quickly pass the WOLF and SWORD carvings. Continue up the hill until you come to a crossroads. You will see the BOMB carving on the path towards the left. Walk down for a look but return to the crossroads and continue on the path that leads up the hill, which offers another view of the BOMB carving below you to your left. Look out for the viewpoints marked on the map in this leaflet. As the Back Walk hill begins to crest, you will see a seating area on your left and beautiful views. Immediately after this is another crossroads. Take the second path on your left hand side (along the hill rather than down the hill). Shortly you will see the SALMON carving. After the SALMON carving, the path both continues on towards Gowan Hill (further walks here) or almost doubles back on itself as it heads down the hill. Follow the zigzag path down the hill until you see the BAIRD AND HARDIE carving. Beyond this is a junction where you can turn right down the hill towards the APPLE carving, or left up the hill towards the POSTBOX and STIRLING JUG carvings. After these follow the path downhill and you will see the ARCHER and DEER on the slope to your right. Continue on towards the DRAGON carving at the bottom of the hill. With the DRAGON carving on your right, continue along the path until you reach Victoria Road at the back of the Smith Art Gallery and Museum, where you started.