



OCTOBER 2022

HEATHERY HEIGHTS MONTHLY

Articles, walks and news



NEXT ISSUE

Black Gates & Puck's Glen

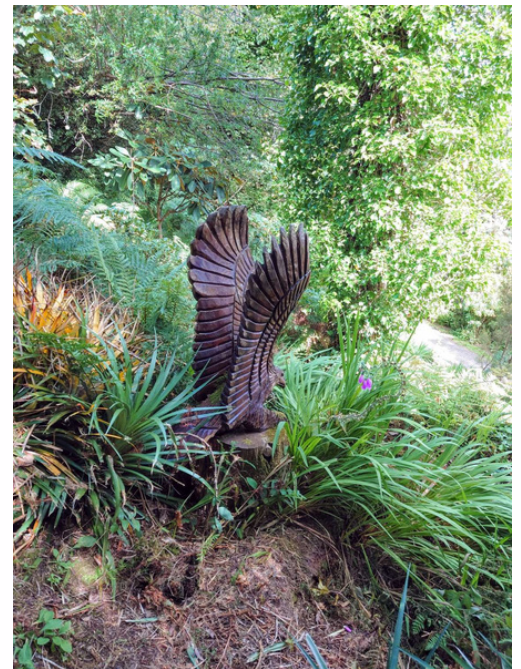
TIME OUT ON GIGHA

Explore Ardminish, Achamore, Kilchattan Chapel, ancient stones & beaches...

There is always something very special about crossing the sea to reach a destination, with the keen sea air and ever changing light and colour. It uplifts the spirits and connects us with nature in a way that cannot be compared to when our feet are firmly on the ground. Being able to visit an island for a walk is always a treat and a trip to Gigha is no exception. And sometimes it is those quiet off season escapes that are so special where you might find that it is just you and the seagulls as you gaze over pristine beaches and rocky headlands that jut far out to sea. Of course, Gigha is an island for all seasons, from balmy summer days to incredible sea and cloud scapes as wintry storms rush in. It is also a designated [Dark Skies Discovery Destination](#).



Bodach and Cailleach



A carved eagle looks on, Achamore Gardens



Achamore gardens

The walks given here can be undertaken directly from the ferry terminal so that you can visit for the day without the need to bring over a vehicle, but they can easily be extended both south and north. There are also lots of options for those staying on the island whether striding out to Gigha's summit of Creag Bhan or exploring by bicycle ([bike hire](#) is near the Gigha ferry terminal); the island has a host of new pathways. The main route directions are given with alternatives to lengthen and shorten (as indicated on the map).

The walk

1. Leaving the small ferry terminal on Gigha you are met with delightful beaches and quiet roads. Note that if you wish to hire bikes or use the facilities they are both just ahead to the left and right. Follow the road for 500m then take the turning left towards The Boathouse (seasonal opening). Just before The Boathouse, opposite the small beach, take a path right.
2. Follow the newly surfaced path for 300m. Ahead you will see a small path dropping down to the beach of Rubha A'Chinn Mhoir, a lovely spot to paddle or enjoy stunning views up the Sound of Gigha. Cross the beach to a small path leading back up to the main path (keep the stone buildings to your left). Keep left and this takes you to the main road.
3. Turn left onto the road and follow for 400m to the Fire Station. Just beyond is a track on your left and a small path on your right. Follow the path into the woodland until you reach the track to the Village Hall.
4. Cross and continue on the path in front of you towards Achamore Gardens. After 100m you will reach an entry point with a map of the gardens, admission is by donation. The lovely gardens were originally acquired by Sir James Horlick in 1944 to allow him to grow his collection of Rhododendron, Azalea, Camellia and many other species that enjoy the Gulf Stream and microclimate found on Gigha. They are well worth exploring.
5. Either follow the main drive, keeping right of the main house, to the walled gardens and viewpoint behind (after which you will need to head south past the toilets) or go directly across the main drive to a path that leads you past the pond. The latter leads to a T-junction where you turn left to reach a gate out of the gardens through the south wall (our main route) or right for the toilets, walled gardens and viewpoint. You can meander on several circuits but essentially you will wish to exit at the south end to continue the walk.

Safety in the Outdoors

Please exercise responsibly and use appropriate clothing and equipment for your chosen outdoor activity. Consider informing a contact about your route/whereabouts and don't forget your phone, snacks, drink, any medication/first aid supplies you may need and to check weather conditions. Please keep your dog under close control, especially around livestock and wildlife, and be aware some open areas of moorland may have snares in use. Please follow the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, bylaws and laws that protect areas including National Nature Reserves (NNRs) and Sites of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSIs).

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The Ogham Stone and small signpost to guide you onwards.

6. To shorten the walk, you can also exit the walled gardens northwest of Achamore House and turn right (north) onto a track. This takes you to a path joining the main route at NR 641 481, near Kilchattan Chapel and the Ogham Stone.

7. For the main route exit the south gate, cross the Achamore Farm track, proceed directly ahead down to Achamore Lodge and back to the main road.

8. Turn right, follow the road for 250m then turn right onto a farm track. Keeping right at the fork go straight up to the 'Dancing Ladies' windfarm.

9. At the top of the hill turn right at the signpost for 'Bodach and Cailleach' onto a newly surfaced path. This takes you past a small knoll with two remarkable stones – the old man and old woman – who keep silent watch over Gigha. Believing it is bad luck for them to fall over they are immediately righted should they do so. A little further and the view opens out over to Jura and up Gigha's more rugged west coast.

10. After 1km you will reach a good farm track. For the main route turn right.

(Turn left if you wish to visit Cuddyport and the Quern Stone Quarry, where mill stones were once carved out of the rocks along the shore. Allow at least an extra couple of hours to explore. The initial track is easy before veering left across the fields to the house 'Tigh nan Cuddainean' and down to the beach. See orange route).

11. Ignoring a turning to a house the ruins of Kilchattan Chapel appear just ahead on your left. Dating back to the 13th Century the site has Christian connections that go back further to St Cathan, a 6th Century Irish missionary. Note the lancet window in its gable end.

12. Return up the track a few meters and keep right at the fork immediately ahead. A signposted path to the Ogham Stone leads right through a gate, then go immediately right again. The Ogham Stone has an early medieval Ogham inscription, possibly a personal monument.

13. Drop down the steep path from the stone and turn right. The narrow path now meanders past a deserted garden, through gorse and up over the hill, with lovely views over Gigha. It is easy enough to follow and eventually drops to the northeast across the fields and back to Ardmish. To cut down to the road take the path that goes right after the Playpark (which can be seen to your right as you cross the fields).



Kilchattan Chapel

14. Turn left onto the road (or right if you wish to go to the [Gigha Hotel](#)). After 100m you will come to a turning right that takes you back down to the ferry terminal. If you require refreshments [Ardminish Stores](#) have a wide range of snacks and are on the corner or you can visit the [Boathouse](#) (seasonal) you passed earlier.

Note:

If you do NOT wish to visit the gardens you can a) turn left on the village hall track (see 4) to join the road, head south (right) for 700m and re-join the main route at Achamore Lodge or b) turn right on the village hall track and continue up to Kilchattan Chapel and rejoin the route at 11 & 12.

If you only wish to visit Cuddyport beach you can also turn right on the village hall track and continue on this past the Chapel, following the main track that bears left. You can either return the same way or via the Ogham Stone.

Walk Information

Route: Ardminish, Achamore, Kilchattan Chapel, Stones & Beaches

Distance: 5 - 12 km (3 to 7.5 miles)

Ascent: 130 - 180m

Time: 2.5 - 6 hours (or more, if you want to swim!)

Terrain: Mixture of road, tracks and paths, occasional pathless or uneven terrain

Map/s: OS Landranger 62 (1:50 000)
OS Explorer 357 (1:25 000)

Start/Finish/Parking: Car parks at ferry terminals (mainland and/or Gigha)

Grid reference: NR 693 465

(Tayinloan) or NR 652 491 (Gigha)

Public Transport: Bus 449, ferry to Gigha

Toilets: at both ferry terminals and Achamore Gardens

OS Map Links:

[Main Route](#)

[Short Route](#)

[Cuddyport add on](#)



The described route and accompanying information are there to be used as a guide and do not replace the use of map and compass and the skills required to use them. Whilst every effort is made to ensure the route is accurate at the time of going to print please be aware that track and path closures can happen at any time. All walks are undertaken at your own risk.

There is plenty of [accommodation](#) on Gigha and a [campsite](#) can also be found near the ferry terminal.