

# A tasty tour of SCOTLAND

## A journey with a difference on this mouth-watering ice cream trail

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY: Carol Kubicki



Carol Kubicki...

...and her husband, Anthony, use their Devon Tempest to pursue their hobbies of walking and cycling while exploring historical and natural environments

### TOP TIP

VisitScotland has a list of trails, tours and itineraries to suit varied interests  
[visitscotland.com/see-do/itineraries](http://visitscotland.com/see-do/itineraries)

Motorhomes can park by the golf course on Golf Place, 15 minutes' walk from the centre of St Andrews (except when large events are being held)

**TOP RIGHT** The headland at Burghead

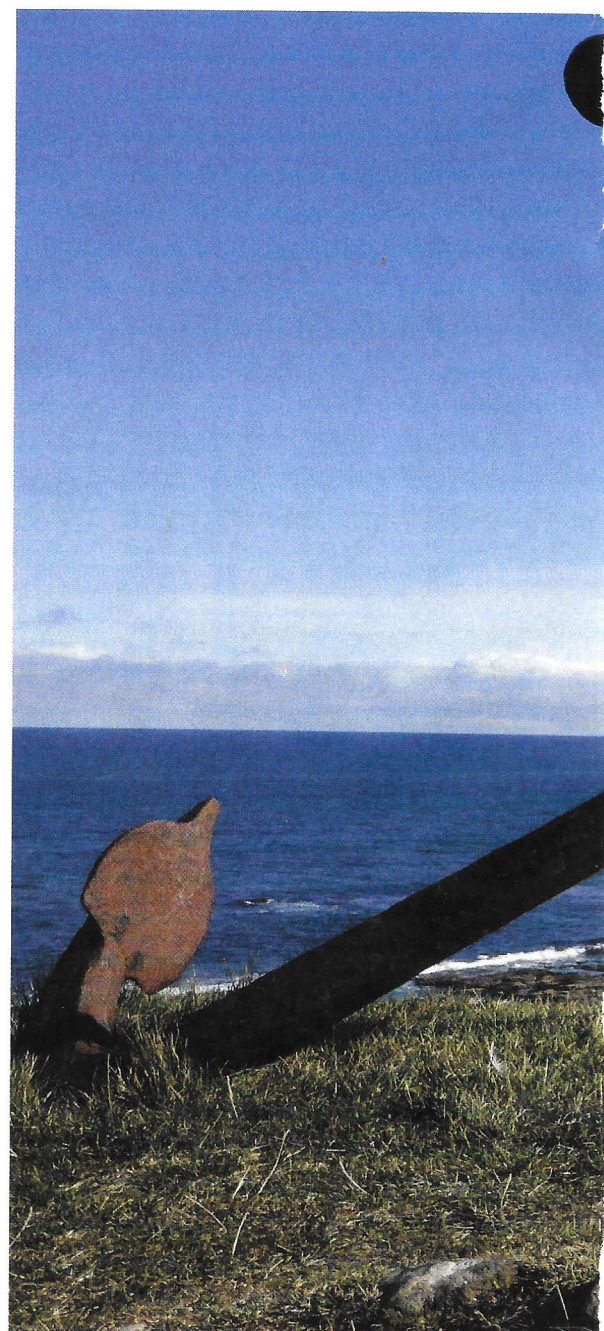
Everything about the experience of eating ice cream at Jannettas Gelateria in St Andrews was worth the journey north for. The gleaming parlour in sherbet hues was straight from the 1950s and my sundae came with a glittery decoration and a wafer and it tasted luxurious. The time spent choosing the right combination of three flavours from the long list and a suitable topping had been well spent. Pistachio, pecan and vanilla with toffee sauce proved a good selection.

Jannettas was our first stop following Scotland's Ice Cream Trail and would be hard to beat. Savouring the scrumptious sundae, I tried to calculate how many days we would have to stay to taste all the combinations of flavours and toppings.

Scotland isn't the obvious association with ice cream but, due in a large part to Italian immigrants over 100 years ago, there are now four generations of Scots with links to Italy, the home of the frozen dessert. The earliest arrivals were young men, selling ice cream from barrows, shouting, "Gelati, ecco un poco," (ice cream, here is a little) to attract customers. They were soon joined by family members and established cafés, often selling both ice cream and fish and chips. By the early 1900s there were over 300 Italian cafés in Glasgow; so began the journey that led to ices and the fish supper becoming an intrinsic British treat.

In those early days, some Scottish Presbyterians campaigned against Sunday and evening opening of cafés and thought eating ice cream was wicked. The exotic luxury was brightly coloured, melted before your eyes and was deemed ungodly.

One wall of Jannettas is covered in sepia photographs of the four handsome generations in this family business. As I enjoyed their delicious ice cream I knew this wasn't evil; this was the food of the gods.

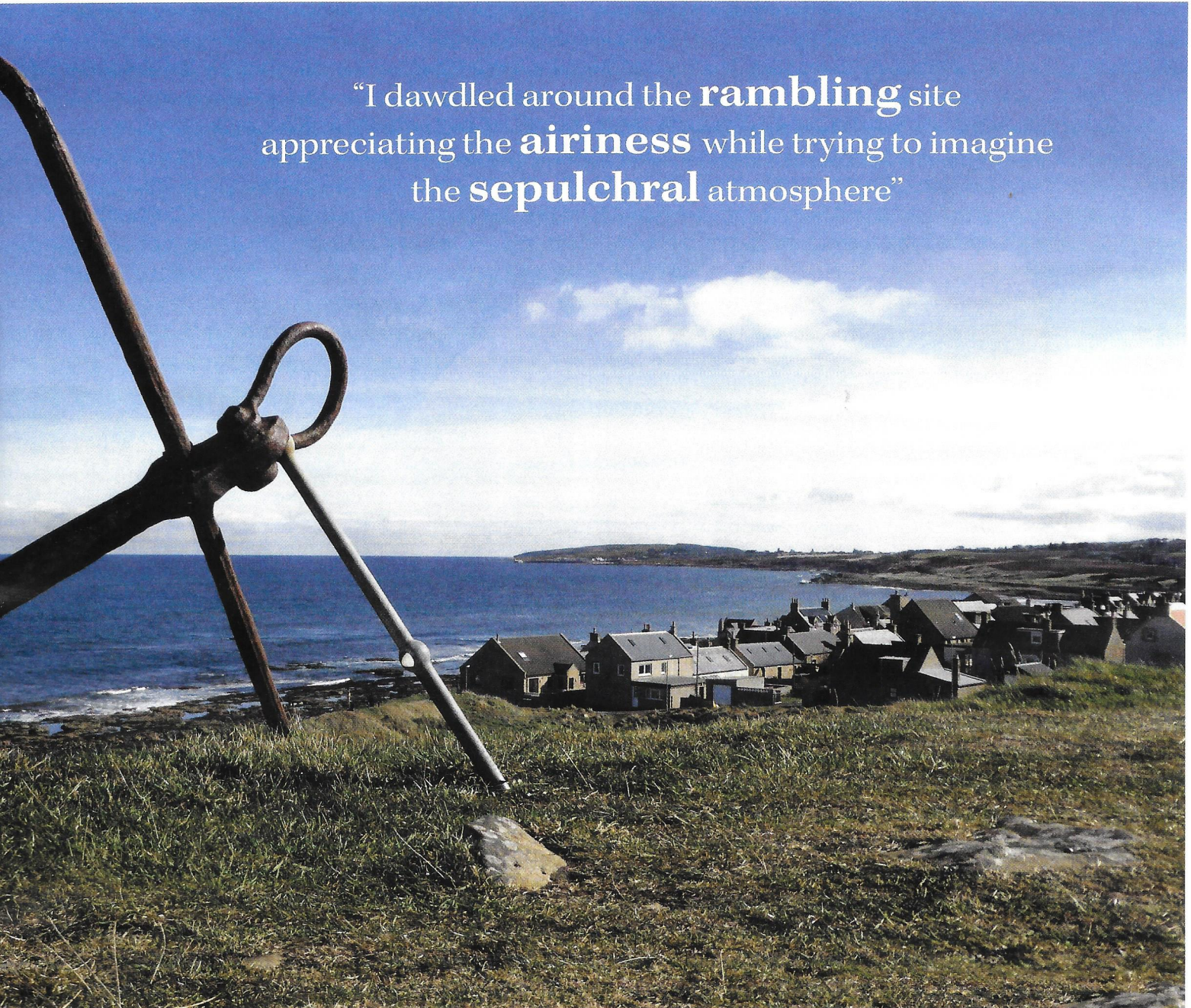


Fuelled with frozen cream and sugar, there were plenty of other things to do in the coastal town of St Andrews. This ancient and cultured town is well-known for its university and golf course. Anthony and I explored the wide streets and narrow alleys of grey stone buildings, took a stroll on the vast stretch of the West Sands and potted around the pretty harbour, accompanied by the mournful cry of herring gulls.

St Andrews Holiday Park is only a 10-minute walk from the town, but the return trip is a steep uphill path, useful if you are walking off a triple ice cream sundae! The views over the East Sands provide an excuse to pause.



"I dawdled around the **rambling** site appreciating the **airiness** while trying to imagine the **sepulchral** atmosphere"



The next morning we visited St Andrews' ruined twelfth century castle picturesquely perched on the cliffs with dazzling views along the coast. I was initially confused by the Historic Environment Scotland staff's directions to the countermines, understanding this as a word for conspiracy or plot, rather than something to see. But the tunnel turned out to be a highlight.

In the sixteenth century, Protestants took refuge in the castle, remaining under siege for more than a year. The attackers dug a tunnel or mine, which they planned to fill with dynamite, but the defenders in the castle determined where the tunnel was and met it with their own countermines. Visitors

can now make their cautious and doubled-up way through this claustrophobia-inducing attraction. As I waited to access it, a small child solemnly advised me that it was very dark and that I might want to take my sunglasses off!

I dawdled around the rambling site appreciating the airiness while trying to imagine the sepulchral atmosphere the original buildings would have had. It is worth climbing the tower's steep spiral steps for the aerial view of the layout and the panorama over the roofs of the town.

I had a pact with my waistline to limit our ice cream consumption to one per day; this allowed us to break our journey further ►



*Trip summary***OUR MOTORHOME**

2015 Devon Tempest on a Renault Master MWB 2.3-litre Energy DCI.

This is our second Devon Conversions 'van. At 5.3m we think it's enormous and, with a bathroom, also luxurious



**2015 Devon Tempest**

**THE JOURNEY**

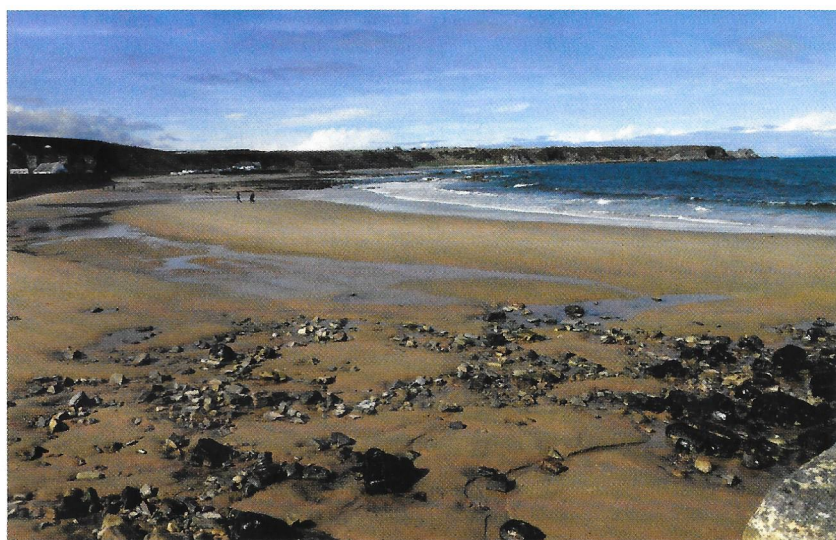
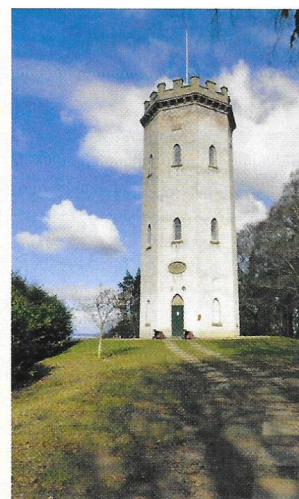
We travelled from **Salford** to **St Andrews** on the M6, M74, M90 and A91, on to **Nairn** via the A9, then to **Cruden Bay** via **Banff** and home via **Huntly** and **Dundee**. We spent four nights on sites in March

**THE COSTS**

Fuel average 34mpg.....	<b>£133</b>
Site fees.....	<b>£50</b>
Attractions two adults: St Andrews cathedral and castle.....	<b>£16</b>
Parking Brodie Castle.....	<b>£2</b>

**935 miles**

**Total £201**




**ABOVE CLOCKWISE** Nelson's Tower on top of Cluny Hill; The tower of St Andrews cathedral offers good views over the town; The beach at Cullen, home of Cullen Skink, a smoked haddock soup

**INFORMATION**


**St Andrews Castle and Cathedral**

 [historic-scotland.gov.uk](http://historic-scotland.gov.uk)


**Nelson's Tower and Cluny Hill**

 [forresheritage.org](http://forresheritage.org)

**Brodie Castle**

 [nts.org.uk/Property/Brodie-Castle](http://nts.org.uk/Property/Brodie-Castle)


**Duff House**

 [duffhouse.org.uk](http://duffhouse.org.uk)

**The Bulls of Buchan sea cave**

 [bullsofbuchan.me.uk](http://bullsofbuchan.me.uk)

**2015 Ice Cream Trail leaflet**

 [static.visitscotland.com/pdf/ice-cream-trail.pdf](http://static.visitscotland.com/pdf/ice-cream-trail.pdf)

north at Stewart Tower Dairy, beyond Perth. It produces excellent farmhouse ice cream from the milk of its cows. The former circular horse-engine shed is now a charming café with a farm shop in the adjoining barn. Despite, or because of, the passing shower, the café was full and we ate our creamy cornets in the 'van, enjoying the views over the Perthshire countryside.

Geddes House CL is in a walled garden of an elegant Georgian house close to Nairn and you are welcome to explore the grounds. The spring morning sun was perfect for a seven-mile walk along quiet lanes and a lovely riverside path to Nairn (it would be a splendid cycle ride). Nairn has a colourful harbour and is justly proud of its wide sweep of beach that is ideal for promenade walks and sandcastle building.

We took the 'van to nearby Forres to sample Miele's ice cream, sold from a traditional combo of ice cream and chippy and boasting three generations of production. To walk off the calories, we made the short and steep climb up Cluny Hill for the spectacular view over Findhorn

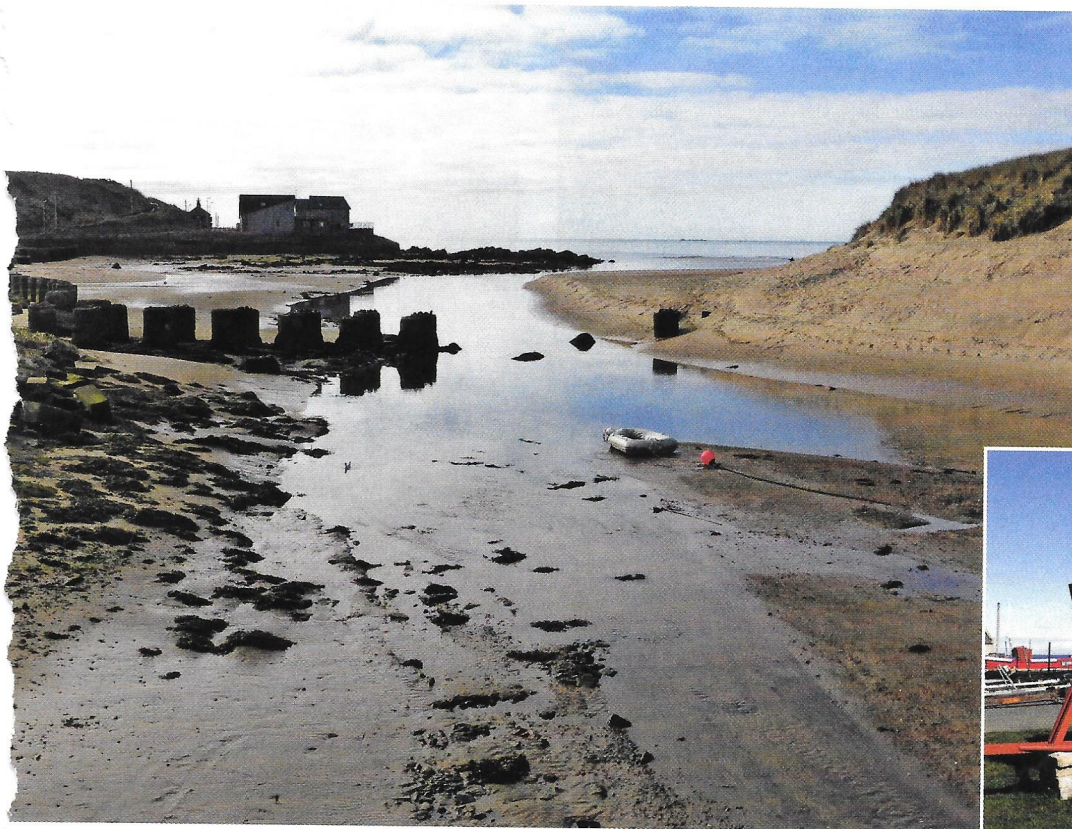
Bay and the coast. Nelson's Tower, built as a memorial to the Admiral, looks down on Forres from Cluny Hill and, if it is open, gives a panorama over the trees.

After chatting to the volunteer working at Burghead's visitor centre, I started remarking on how welcome visitors were made in this part of Scotland. He not only pointed out the landmarks visible across the Moray Firth from the splendid rocky promontory and recommended other places to visit, he also recounted his life story.

The former coastguard lookout on the headland has been creatively transformed into a small visitors' centre packed with information. I was interested in the history of the herring fishing and the photographs of the local fire festival on 11 January to celebrate the Old Julian Calendar New Year, when the Clavie, a burning barrel, is carried around the town in a procession.

We arrived at Brodie Castle, managed by the National Trust for Scotland, late in the afternoon and walked around the grounds, admiring the turreted Scots Baronial house finished in pink lime harling and finding ►





“From the **colourful** display,  
I chose a scoop of cranachan that  
was **full** of raspberries”

Rodney's Stone, a beautifully decorated Pictish stone. A trail led around the pond and we sheltered in a bird hide while a sudden shower passed overhead, watching the ducks seemingly oblivious to the cloudburst and the interlocking patterns the raindrops made on the pond.

The Inverness to Aberdeen road was busy with traffic the next morning and it was a relief to turn off onto the quieter coast road. We were soon drinking fresh coffee in picturesque Cullen with a view over the beach through the sliding door of our 'van.

Cullen has a stone harbour and low fishing cottages all showing their gable end to the sea to protect the front door from the winds. Above the town is a viaduct that once carried the railway and is now a good footpath to Portknockie and the Bow Fiddle Rock, a natural sea arch.

If you are drawn to harbours, you will be in seventh heaven along this coast. They come so thick and fast, each one a gem. We moved on to Portsoy for award-winning ice

**ABOVE CLOCKWISE** Looking towards Port Erroll from the village of Cruden Bay; St Andrews castle was built as the bishop's residence; A colourful boat above the bay at Portsoy

**BELOW** The display of ice cream at Portsoy



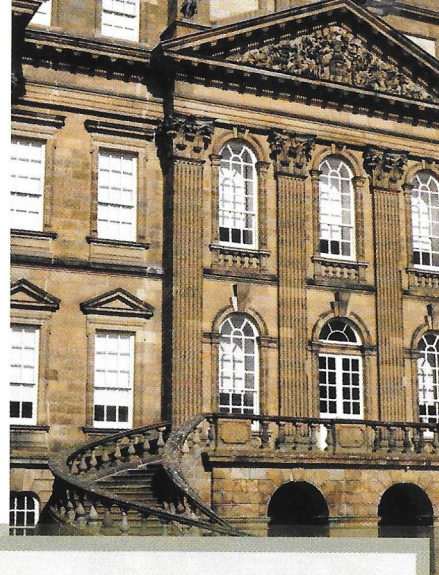
cream and, from the colourful display of flavours, I chose a scoop of cranachan that was full of raspberries. Anthony, the risk-taker when it comes to ice cream, enjoyed blackcurrant and liquorice. Another warm welcome encouraged me to chat and I ate the rich and velvety Portsoy ice cream while finding out about the awards the ice cream has won in its 10-year history and some highlights from the assistant's own life story.

The delightful village of Portsoy has a small bay with a campsite and a sturdy old harbour surrounded by handsome stone buildings and a 'new' nineteenth century harbour. Climbing up the rugged headland, I could admire the weather-beaten harbour walls finished in elegant curves, attractively incorporating natural coastal rock features.

I had planned to visit the classical grandeur of Duff House in Banff, designed by the renowned Scottish architect, William Adam. But the sun kept shining and it seemed a shame to go indoors even to see paintings from the National Galleries of Scotland. Instead, we admired the house from the outside and followed the woodland walks, finding the ice house but failing to spot the woodpecker we could hear.

Port Erroll Harbour at Cruden Bay, north of Aberdeen, offers a welcoming overnight stop for motorhomes. The nineteenth century secluded harbour was built for ►





## WE STAYED AT

**St Andrews Holiday Park**, Kinkell Braes, St Andrews, Fife KY16 8PX

☎ 01334 474250

🌐 [abbeyford.com/our-parks/st-andrews-holiday-park](http://abbeyford.com/our-parks/st-andrews-holiday-park)

📅 March – October

£ Two adults, pitch and electric: From £16

**Geddes House CL**, Geddes, Nairn IV12 5QX

☎ 01667 452241

🌐 [caravanclub.co.uk](http://caravanclub.co.uk)

📅 1 April – 1 October

£ Two adults, pitch and electric: From £10 (Members only)

**Port Erroll Harbour**, near Cruden Bay, Aberdeenshire

☎ 07831 222989/07730 412966

🌐 [porterroll.net/facilities.htm](http://porterroll.net/facilities.htm)

📅 All year

£ Pitch (no electric): £10 suggested donation

## ALTERNATIVE SITE

**PREMIER PARKS 2017** **Cairnsmill Caravan Park**, Largo Road, St Andrews, Fife KY16 8NN

☎ 01334 473604

🌐 [cairnsmill.co.uk](http://cairnsmill.co.uk) 📅 April – October

£ Two adults, pitch and electric: From £24.50

the local fishing boats and, in 1923, was gifted to the fishermen. It remains community-owned and we were happy to contribute to the upkeep of this lovely spot. From our pitch we watched eider, oystercatchers and redshanks and later watched the sky turn crimson as the sun went down.

On the track towards the romantically positioned Slains Castle above Cruden Bay, Bram Stoker, whose *Dracula* novel was reputedly inspired by this castle, was in my thoughts. This sixteenth century ruin is balanced so close to the cliff edge the towers appear to be an extension of the rock. The maze of corridors and rooms in different styles reflect 300 years of extensions, with numerous towers and winding staircases leading nowhere. Today, it is more wildlife reserve than Gothic pile and we spotted a pairs of fulmars carrying out their noisy courtship on a sheltered ledge.

After a brew we moved the 'van a short distance to the parking for the Bullers of Buchan. This dramatic, collapsed sea cave is a circular chasm around 100ft deep, the ocean surging in through a natural archway.

The cliff scenery here is spectacular and we watched scores of dainty kittiwakes crammed onto the narrow ledges along with guillemots, razorbills and fulmars. As we scrambled on the rocks and walked above the cliffs, the sea electric blue in the bright sunshine, I soaked in the sounds of the roaring waves accompanied by the cacophony of the kittiwake's cheerful call.

**ABOVE LEFT** The impressive coastal cliffs at the Bullers of Buchan

**ABOVE RIGHT** The classical splendour of the William Adam-designed Duff House

We headed back home via Huntly for our last ice cream of the trip. I had chosen Rizza's, another ice cream producer with an Italian heritage, for our final treat. As the amiable assistant piled generous scoops on our cornets, I asked about the number of flavours they made. She replied that they made 200 flavours, but only had 58 on display. Clearly one visit to Rizza's isn't enough! I wondered how a small inland town supported so much ice cream.

On the journey home, I mused how my search for a luxurious taste of Scots-Italian ice cream had taken us to some beautiful places and that there is a trail for every interest in Scotland. As well as discovering some of the Ice Cream Trail, we had dipped into the Castle Trail and the Aberdeenshire Coastal Trail. Your interests might take you on the Malt Whisky Trail, a TV and film locations itinerary, the tour of historic golf courses or one of many others.

Whatever you explore in this area, I am sure you will find a warm welcome! **MMM**

## YOUR TRAVELS

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