

Exploration walk of Sheriffmuir on 14th September 2026

Nine members departed Broxden at 08.30 for the short drive to the car park at Sheriffmuir above Dunblane. The walk planned to incorporate a range of geology, archaeology and historic features of the area and information was sent to members in advance. The car park was close to the site of the Battle of Sheriffmuir, the monument and information displays. Chris outlined the participants, appalling weather and general confusion of the battle of 13th November 1715 followed by a safety brief for some aspects of the following walk.

Only a kilometre or so from the cars was a feature called the “Devil’s Bucket” which is where a small burn runs off the moor creating a cascade into a natural spa pool. The feature is caused by the differing hardness of the Devonian volcanic rocks.

A couple of km east past the old Sheriffmuir Inn (Famous for Hercules the bear in the 1970’s) is the Scheduled Monument Lairhill alignment of 5 stones running SW to NE. Some stones were quite tricky to find in the deep heather. The first stone had some visible cup marks, and the 5th called the Wallace Stone was the only one standing. One member chose a shorter route at this point but was kept in touch by phone to arrange meeting.

Following coffee at a convenient stone wall, the group set off through a gate, over the “Reiver’s Burn” for the ascent of Glentye Hill. On the ascent and later descent of the hill the OS map showed large 70m circular marks. There was evidence of the marks on the walk, but their large scale meant observation was more “inferred”. The marks were probably used for targets or bombing indicators during WW2.

Heading down off the high ground, the large expanse of moor and heather patches became visible with the A9 in the distance heading NE. Descending further through a deer fence the large linear structure of the “Atlantic Wall” became visible.

The area comprises the Whitestone Range, Sheriffmuir, which is 19th-20th century in date and is visible as upstanding ruins, ditches and earthworks. From c. 1860 to 1906 a rifle range is still discernible. There is also evidence for ranges for Infantry Musketry Training dating to the Boer War or WWI. The extensive WWI and WW2 Infantry Trench Systems is one of the best surviving in Scotland. In late 1943 a number of defensive and offensive structures were built to rehearse for Allied D-Day landings, the most impressive of which is the section of replica German Atlantic Wall. This, with a Double Tobruk Stand, a Beach Flanking Gun Emplacement, a Field Dressing Station, and 3 bunkers represents defensive positions.

The Wall, bunkers and trenches were explored and lunch was taken amongst the remains. As time was pressing at this point, it was decided to head back along the small road to allow time to visit “The Gathering Stone” just beyond the car park.

Coffee and cakes were taken at The Woodside in Doune.



The Devil's Bucket



Double Tobruk gun emplacement



Inspecting a breach in the wall



Lunch sheltered by the main wall



Inspecting The Gathering Stone