



# Marwick Head and the Kitchener Memorial, Mainland

This clifftop route through the RSPB Reserve at Marwick Head leads to the Kitchener Memorial overlooking the final res Hampshire.

## TERRAIN

Clifftop coastal footpaths and surfaced minor roads.

## PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Bus from Kirkwall to Stromness runs along the B9056 (1.5km from start).

## START

Marwick Bay car park.



Grade ([key](#))



Bog Factor ([key](#))

## Walk Statistics

Distance .....	5.25km / 3.25 miles
Time .....	2 hours
Ascent .....	100m ( <a href="#">Profile</a> )
Start Grid Ref .....	HY229241

## Walk Description

### STAGE 1

There is a car park for this walk at Marwick Bay, signposted from the B9056. It is also possible to make use of the infrequent bus service along the B9056 and walk along the same road to reach the start of the walk. Head north out of the car park round the back of Marwick Bay, walking behind an elaborate buttressed wall designed to protect the farmland beyond from winter storms.



### STAGE 2

Pass through a kissing gate and turn left before bearing right onto a grassy path. A wooden RSPB sign welcomes visitors to the Marwick Head Nature Reserve as the path gently rises atop the increasingly high cliffs. These cliffs provide a breeding ground for a variety of birds, including gannets which can be seen plunging into the sea from heights of 30m in their hunt for fish. Great skuas, kittiwakes, fulmars and guillemots - known locally as 'aaks' - are also prevalent, with Arctic skuas hassling in an attempt to earn an easy meal. Rounding Choldertoo look down to see if you can spot puffins on the cliffs below.



### STAGE 3

Look up for a first full view of the towering Kitchener Memorial ahead. Continue along the path, taking care not to let the spectacular views distract from a safe negotiation of the grass path, to reach the stone tower. The memorial was erected in 1926 by the people of Orkney to commemorate much-loved Minister of War Lord Kitchener and the crew of HMS Hampshire who lost their lives when the ship hit a mine in 1916 around 2.5km offshore from this point. Whilst conspiracy theories abound as to Kitchener's mission, of a crew of over 600 only 12 men survived. On a grey, breezy day, with white horses leaping from the crests of the waves below this is an atmospheric and sombre place to spend time in contemplation.



### STAGE 4

Walk past the memorial with the lighthouse of [Brough of Birsay](#) ahead, but watch for a gate in the fence on the right. Go through this and along the straight path corralled between two fences to reach a car park at Cumlaquoy via a kissing gate. There is an information board

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here. Turn right and follow the surfaced road past Brockan, then take the right-hand fork to pass Steadaquoy and reach the kissing gate alongside the buttressed wall at Marwick Bay. Go through this and retrace your steps to the start.



## STAGE 5

If you wish to extend the walk, it is worth continuing along the coast path in the opposite direction at least as far as a picturesque group of fishermen's huts - around 500m further - which blend almost perfectly into the landscape. Return from here to the car park, unless you want a much longer walk, continuing along the coast to Skail Bay or beyond.

Route: Phil Turner



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