



BLAIR CASTLE
& GARDENS
ATHOLL ESTATES

Sculpture Trail

The gardens at Blair Castle have always enjoyed strategically placed statuary, so it was a delight to be chosen as the Scottish home for some of the works from the Memorial Arts Charity, 'Art & Memory Collection'. (A & M Col.) The collection was first shown at West Dean, West Sussex, in 2009 and this year eight pieces have been placed in the Blair Castle Gardens. They join other contemporary and 18th century sculpture in the collection of the Blair Charitable Trust.

The trail shown on the map is merely a suggested route around the gardens, which takes you past the main statues and other features as listed below. You are of course very welcome to explore the gardens in any direction you like. If following the suggested route you should probably allow at least 40 minutes to take in the various sights. This sheet gives you information on the art works, more general information on the history and planting of the gardens can be found on sheets placed just inside the garden gates.

The 2nd Duke landscaped the gardens from 1730s – 1760, he devised various paths radiating out from the front door of the castle, one such path was 'Hercules Walk', leading up to:

1. Hercules by John Cheere, in lead, placed here in 1743 it has remained in situ since then. At the bottom of the hill on the right is
2. Alphabet Stone by Richard Klose, Caithness stone, (A & M Col.). Now enter Hercules Garden through the gates that were given to the 8th Duke and Duchess for their silver wedding in 1924 by everyone on the estate. On the right is
3. It is the Destruction of the World by Andrew Baxter, Blue Hornton stone, (A & M Col.), further up the path is McGregor's Folly, named after Duchess Louisa's friend and companion Miss Murray McGregor, who designed the building. Originally used as a curling hut it now houses an interpretive display of the garden's restoration. Opposite are
4. The Shepherd and Shepherdess made of lead they are contemporary reproductions cast from moulds taken from the originals by John Cheere.
5. Four 18th century, lead Cherubs. At the top of the path
6. Two heads by John Cheere sit on planting frames, they must have been cut off statues similar to the Shepherd and Shepherdess and finally returned to the gardens after being found in the woods. Originally 17 such figures were placed around the gardens, the invoice is in the archives. Opposite, on the low wall are seven stones.





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7. Memorial to the 2nd Duke, by Ian Newton. This piece was commissioned by the Blair Charitable Trust in 2008 as the 2nd Duke had designed the walled garden with the help of his able gardener, John Wilson. The writing is designed to be sufficiently obscure so you have to examine it carefully to read it, the centre three stones are the Atholl motto: Furth fortune and fill the fetters. On the wall behind is another piece by
8. Ian Newton – ‘All shall be well...’ a quotation from Julian of Norwich. Westmoreland Blue/black honed slate. (A & M Col.). Next it is worth taking a diversion to the Hercules Peninsula where
9. A Standing Stone by Richard Kindersley commemorates the 10th Duke’s restoration of the walled garden. Returning to the top terrace
10. Running Vein and Red Web by Paul Vanstone in Indian Marble take the central spot opposite Hercules, who had two wives – Megara and Deianira. Further along the top terrace, lurking behind one of the Yew buttresses, is a stone designed to make you smile
11. Remember Me by Charlotte Howarth, Kilkenny Limestone, (A & M Col.)
12. Earth’s Patient Timekeeper by Martin Cook, Welsh slate, (A & M Col.) sits on axis with the garden’s other sundial, placed in the herb garden, known as the Melon Ground. By the arch at the bottom of the hill is
13. Three Haikus by Frances Pelly, Caithness flagstones, (A & M Col.). Next enter
14. The Apple House, originally the tool shed with apples stored on the top floor, it now houses estate photographs, a collection of forestry tools and information on The Art and Memory Collection, the Arts Memorial Charity and its associated business Memorials by Artists, which organizes the commissioning of carved stones and other commemorative pieces. Just beyond the Apple House, in niches in the wall are:
15. The Four Seasons by John Cheere, in marble, with an Eagle by Greenaway between them. Originally placed on a false rock in the Canal Pond opposite, it is now housed rather more safely within the wall. As you leave the garden by the other set of gates you will see on the outer wall



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16. Gates of Heaven by Incisive Letterwork, Purbeck Vyebit, (A & M Col.) the quotes come from Milton's Paradise Lost. Turning right and right again the path leads back along the wall and across a field to the site of the old village – Old Blair and St Brides Kirk, surrounded by many grave stones, including a commemorative stone to The Earl of Claverhouse, Bonnie Dundee just within the kirk. To the left after going through the Kissing Gate is

17. Three Hares by Gillian Forbes, Woodkirk Buff Sandstone, (A & M Col.). On the far side of the Kirk, railings surround the Ducal burial ground,

18. The 10th Dukes headstone, by Richard Kindersley, Westmoreland slate. From here follow the path that heads to the right behind the burial ground and down to the bridge across the Banvie Burn to the large Wellingtonia on top of a circular mound, 'Mount Strange'. Take the central path towards

19. Diana copied from the original by John Cheere placed here in 1737 by the 2nd Duke, it heads a path radiating out from the front door, similar to Hercules. The first statue was smashed in the great storm of 1893 and replaced with a stone replica. From here you can return to the castle or walk in the other direction to

20. Wood Piece by Richard Caink, carved in situ by the artist as part of a sculpture symposium, organized by the Forestry Commission, in 2002. Turn left and follow the West Drive back to the castle past the Highland Ponies and the red deer.



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