

## 2 HMS ALACRITY

This is the perfect orientation hill stroll for keen walkers, a warm-up for Mount Maria or a short hike for those less enthusiastic about large hills but who enjoy good views from a low ridge or summit. The focus is the memorial for HMS Alacrity and the vistas are glorious.

The walk combines a well-worn vehicle track with some "off-roading" if wished and reaches a height of around 100m.

### Main route

Leave the settlement on the road which leads out-of-town in a northerly direction. An old vehicle track is easily visible on the east side of Clippy Hill. Follow the track which very soon leads alongside a small concrete building, a spring-head. Close to the top of the ridge is a wire-gate and the track continues in the same direction, but to find the HMS Alacrity memorial, turn left to walk back along the ridge line. There are small rocky outcrops which make ideal places to stop and enjoy the views over the settlement, across the water and to the hills in all directions.

It's a short walk along to the cairn and plaque "dedicated to the memory of the brave men of both sides". Return by re-tracing the route or, for the sure-footed, simply take a more direct route by continuing to a fence-corner with a wire gate which leads down the hill. This does involve negotiating a small amount of scree and a fairly steep slope.

### Tips:

- Binoculars are great to scan the horizon.
- An excellent early morning walk to enjoy a sunrise and work up an appetite for breakfast.



## 1 SETTLEMENT

Port Howard is a pretty settlement with many interesting buildings and features. This short, circular route provides an introduction to life on a busy farm with lovely views and insights to the past.

The walk is along vehicle roads and tracks but some are fairly steep due to the settlement location on the slope of a hill.

### Main route

With the door of the 1982 museum behind, walk straight ahead to leave the grounds by Port Howard Lodge through the gate in the gorse hedge. Turn left immediately to follow the road, into the main settlement, passing the school building on the left. Opposite the school is an impressive storage shed with an array of solar panels and beyond it, the housing for the working of the wind turbines. Port Howard Farm is a leader in the use of renewable energy technology.

Continue past the store and cross the bridge. Follow the road along the shore between various farm buildings including the shearing shed to the right and another large black storage shed to the left. Immediately after this look left to see an old trypot – a large circular pot once used to boil unfortunate penguins and seals to obtain oil.

Stay with the road to the jetty then make a right turn to walk uphill. Cross a cattle grid after which there is a white building on the right. (It is planned for this large white building to become a café and motel.) Go through the gate to it. There are excellent views over the settlement and across to Bold Cove. Walk to the lower side of the building and on past a small clump of trees to the right. The road forks. Take either route to "snake" down the hill to return to the shore-road and back across the bridge to the starting point.

### Tips:

- Include the 1982 war museum if possible; take local advice about entry.
- Add in beach-combing along the settlement shore; there are many things to discover with octopuses found here on more than one occasion.



## 3 TO THE WOODS

This hill walk is a slightly longer version of the HMS Alacrity route for those who have a little more time available. It takes in two areas of woodland. Princess Alexandra woods can be explored, the HMS Alacrity memorial is included and views of the settlement are glorious, especially at sunrise. Mount Maria may bask in a warm glow.

The walk is over easy ground including some vehicle tracks, reaching a height of around 100 m.

### Tips:

- Princess Alexandra woods are there to enjoy for a walk, picnic or as a quiet area – take time out to explore them.
- Choose the route up the hill to the copse of trees carefully – look and plan ahead!

### Main route

Leave the settlement on the road which leads out-of-town in a northerly direction. Pass Princess Alexandra woods on the left. Around 1km from the settlement, another small "forest" is visible to the left, on the side of Clippy Hill. Turn left on to a soft track, passing through a gate and walking along the settlement side of a fence-line to these trees.

It's a simple left turn once at the top to return to the settlement along the ridge. Stay on the lower-side of the fence for easy direction finding but carefully cross it (climbing through or over it, not stepping on to it) to include the HMS Alacrity memorial. There are small rocky outcrops which make ideal places to stop and enjoy the views over the settlement, across the water and to the hills in all directions.

From the memorial continue to a fence-corner with a wire gate which leads down the hill. This does involve negotiating a small amount of scree and a fairly steep slope. To avoid this steep slope, backtrack from the memorial to pick up a vehicle track which provides a more solid route back down to the settlement.

### Tips:

- Low tide will make the crossing to the cemetery a great deal easier.
- Young children may enjoy taking "rubbings" of the gravestones if suitable materials are taken for this activity.

## 4 CEMETERY CREEK

This short, circular trail takes in the settlement airstrip, a pleasant walk along a sheltered shore, the Port Howard cemetery and the Princess Alexandra woods. Captain Hamilton, who lost his life towards the end of the Falkland War is buried here, along with locals whose names tell the stories of Port Howard's past.

The terrain is fairly even underfoot though the cemetery can be difficult to reach at high tide. There is a short uphill to the cemetery.

### Main route

From Port Howard Lodge, take the road to the nearby airstrip in an easterly direction. Continue in the same direction to cross the airstrip towards gorse hedges which run down to the shore. Walk any side of the hedges to find a gate which leads down to the water's edge. Turn left and follow the shoreline, now keeping to the right hand side of the gorse. After around half an hour of walking, the cemetery, with its white picket fence, will come into view just above a small inlet.

Unless the tide is very high, the water can be crossed and the cemetery reached. This can be an out-and-back route or a circular trail created by following the vehicle track away from the cemetery towards the main road. Gates can be seen to reach the road. Turn left on to it and take the left fork to return to the settlement, Port Howard Farm, passing the large group of evergreen trees, Princess Alexandra Woods, on the right.

### Walk further

Add on "To the Woods" (walk 3) by picking up any suitable track which heads upwards to the copse of evergreen trees on Clippy Hill and following the ridge-line back to the settlement. Allow an additional half hour.



# Self-Guided WALKS

## PORT HOWARD



### Flora & Fauna highlights

Dark-faced Ground Tyrant	Skua	Pig vine
Falklands Flightless Steamer Duck	Southern Giant Petrel	Scurvy Grass
Falklands Thrush	Turkey Vulture	Small fern
Kelp goose	Upland goose	Snake plant
Kelp gull	White-bridled finch	Tall fern
Magellanic Oystercatcher		Teaberry
Patagonian Crested Duck	Diddle dee	White grass
Rock Cormorant	Christmas bush	
Rufous chested dotterel	Fachine	



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# Self-Guided WALKS

## PORT HOWARD



The attractive green-and-white settlement of Port Howard nestles into the hillside below the imposing but beautiful Mount Maria. It is the largest privately owned farm in the Islands. Hiking opportunities range from strolls around the settlement to invigorating hill climbs, and include an easy, undulating route to a lovely Nature Area.





## Countryside Code

Our Islands for all to enjoy. Help us protect them by:

1. Always ask for permission before entering private land.
2. Keep to paths wherever possible. Leave gates, open or shut, as you find them.
3. Be aware of the high fire risk throughout the islands; particularly when lighting fires, BBQs or smoking.
4. Do not litter\*. Take your rubbish home with you or use a bin provided
5. Never feed, touch, handle, injure or kill any wild bird or animal\*.
6. Always give animals the right of way. Do not block the routes of birds or animals coming home to their colonies. Do not startle or chase wildlife from resting or breeding areas\*.
7. Prevent disturbance to wild birds and animals. Always stay on the outside of colonies, remain at least 6 m (20 ft) away.
8. When taking photographs or filming, stay low to the ground. Move slowly and quietly. Make sure your flash is turned off\*. Always be aware of the location of your camera and equipment, including "selfie-sticks". Do not use this to get closer to wildlife.
9. Some plants are protected and should not be picked\*. Wildflowers are there for all to enjoy.
10. Whalebones, skulls, eggs, etc. may not be exported from the Falkland Islands\*. They should be left where they are found.
11. Do not disfigure rocks or buildings\*.

\*Such actions may constitute an offence in the Falkland Islands and could result in significant fines.

## Stay Safe

Always seek local advice before heading out on any walk in the camp (countryside). Weather changes quickly and the terrain can be tough. **Permission is needed from the landowners to drive or walk off-road.** Always tell someone where you are going with an estimated return time. Ensure you have plenty to eat and drink along with additional warm clothing.

Walkers not familiar with wire gates may prefer to carefully climb the fences at the side. Any fence in the Falklands can be crossed, it is not necessary to find a gate, **unless it is electrified.** Please respect fences, stepping over or through the wires not onto them, and **leave all gates as found**; they are there for a reason!

Following the hard work of the de-mining teams, the Falklands are now mine-free. In the extremely unlikely event of finding any suspect item, photograph, log and mark the position. Inform the landowners and/or the Royal Falkland Police on 28100. DO NOT touch the object.

Distance: variable Time: upto a day Terrain: Challenging

## 7 SHAG COVE

Shag Cove presents a range of possibilities for exploration. Beginning with a drive, walks can be devised to simply bumble out-and-back along the shoreline, incorporate the coast into a circular route or, for the more energetic, climb to the crest of the ridge and beyond. Visit in the summer and at low tide when the ground is driest.

Routes traverse a variety of terrain including white grass flats, rocky shores and through shallow streams.

### Main route

From the head of the jetty, drive uphill to skirt the south side of the settlement. At the crossroads, turn left and continue to the Neil Clarke Nature Area. Just beyond the signed parking place, the track goes through a gate and onwards, eventually dropping to Ballion's stream. Cross the stream and drive on in the same direction, following the coastline. Walks can begin from any point but a gate, after roughly 8km drive, is convenient and from here the ground becomes more difficult to drive.

The track is easy to follow on foot. Follow it to cross Double Stream. From here choose to continue on the track, routing back in a circle along the coast or walk out-and-back on the coastline. There are interesting rock formations, rock-pools, sandy areas, birdlife, an inlet with the remains of a fish-wall – look for tiny fish – and many scrub-heath plants including berries and scurvy grass for some local flavours.

### Walk further

If time is plentiful, climb to the crest of the opposite ridge for excellent views and over the top to drop down to the shore of Falkland Sound, for sandy coves and views to small islands.



Distance: 12 km Time: 3-4 hours Terrain: Challenging

## 5 MOUNT MARIA

At 658m (2,158 feet) Mount Maria is one of the highest peaks of the Falklands. Like many others, it has a convex shape which makes the summit elusive on approach, but it is definitely worth the effort of the walk to get there. Views from the top are amazing, stretching as far as East Falkland and the northern islands on a good day. It's always an exhilarating hike.

The walk is mainly over uneven ground and can cover a variety of terrain including stone runs and deep scrub heath.

### Main route

From the head of the jetty, follow the road uphill which skirts the south side of the settlement. At the crossroads, stay straight ahead on the vehicle track to the Port Howard waste area (dump!) which makes an easy start to the route. From here the track is faint but still visible, heading towards "Freezer Rocks" (Ask for these to be pointed out before leaving.) Aim for the left hand side of this rocky outcrop and then onward to the summit. The ground is steep but cairns have been constructed, by shepherds with some time to spare, offering respite points with stunning outlooks. At the top are the remains of military installations.

The easiest return is a rough retracing of this outward route to avoid the stone runs, extremely steep slopes and more difficult scrub-heath ground.

### Walk further

Fit, intrepid walkers may wish to add in any of the surrounding hills or return via the spectacular "Castle Rocks" and pick up the pretty coastline in a north-easterly direction. Discuss options before setting out and allow plenty of time. Including stone-runs, intentionally or otherwise, can add significant time to the journey.



### Tips:

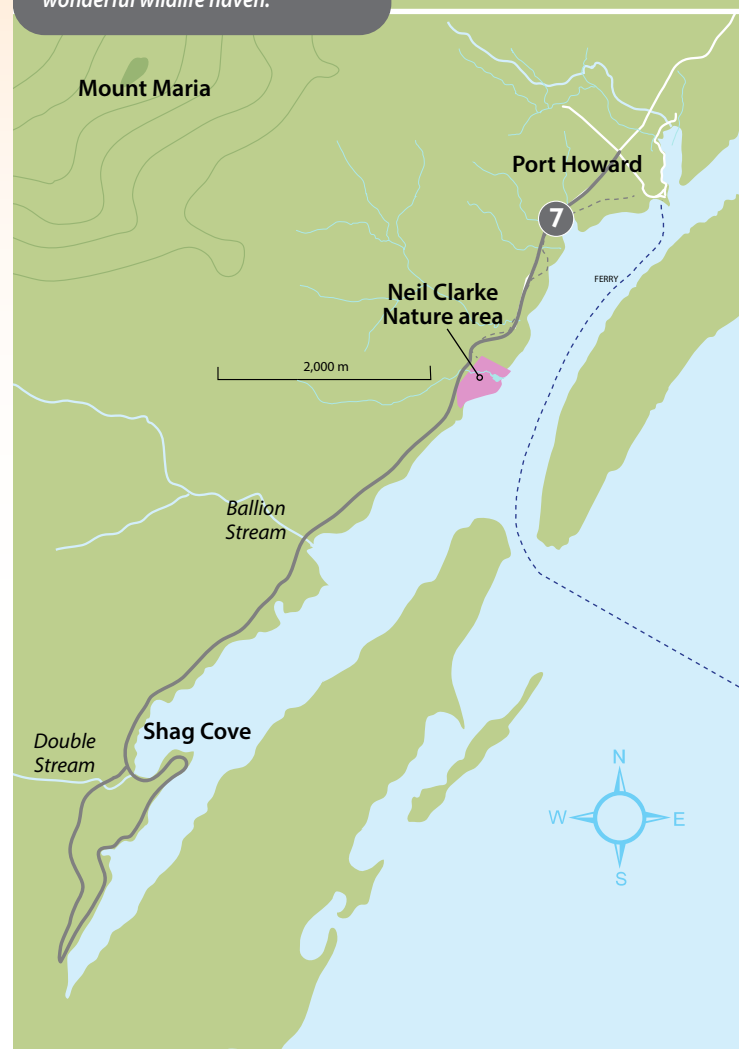
- Walking poles are an asset for the steep sections of the route and the stone runs, if chosen.
- Take local advice for the best route to suit weather conditions and fitness levels – never underestimate any Falkland hill.

### Tips:

- Castle Rocks and the "Neil Clarke Nature Area" are both places worthy of further exploration or just to sit and soak up the surroundings; take snacks & drinks and allow sufficient time.
- Walking poles can be of assistance on some of the steeper slopes and at Castle Rocks.

### Tips:

- Take food and drink to enjoy a picnic but also bags to take litter home.
- Allow plenty of time to explore this wonderful wildlife haven.



Distance: 6 km Time: 1.5-2 hours Terrain: Moderate

## 8 NEIL CLARKE NATURE AREA

This out-and-back route is a relatively simple stroll to a delightful, tranquil area that has been set aside to remain free of farm animals, to allow nature to return. It is perfect for families; indeed the vision for the area is to be "a striking showcase of Falkland's plants and wildlife to be enjoyed by all." Views are stunning in all directions and it's an ideal location to watch the ferry come-and-go through the Narrows.

The walk is over even ground on a well-marked vehicle track and with very little height gain or loss.

### Main route

From the head of the jetty, follow the road uphill which skirts the south side of the settlement. At the crossroads, take the left turn which is sign-posted to the nature area. Simply follow the signs and the vehicle track which runs parallel to the general direction of the coastline. Return the same way.

### Walk further

Explore the area. If the tide permits, return some, or all of, the way along the coastline instead of the vehicle track. Allow as much time as is available!

Distance: 12 km Time: 3-4 hours Terrain: Moderate

## 6 CAPTURE THE CASTLE!

This out-and-back route provides the exhilaration and good views of a hill walk but without a difficult climb or the great height gain of the more imposing surrounding mountains. Castle Rocks is an impressive rock formation. The return route can include the lovely "Neil Clarke Nature Area".

The walk is on a well-marked vehicle track and climbs to around 300m; in some places the slopes are quite steep but walkable; there are no stone runs or scrambles necessary.

### Main route

From the head of the jetty, follow the road uphill which skirts the south side of the settlement. At the crossroads, take the left turn which is sign-posted to the nature area. Just before the parking place for the nature area is reached, turn right to follow the vehicle track heading uphill – a gate can be seen with the rock formation, and the track to it is visible beyond.

Once through the first gate, the vehicle track is easy to follow as it meanders up the hill. A second gate is reached and the track a little difficult to see at the other side; veer to the left and then upwards to find it. Castle Rocks are ultimately to the right of the track and through a wire fence but, of course, cannot be missed!

Return via the same route or incorporate the nature area and the coastline as an alternative if the tide permits.

### Walk shorter

The drive to the Nature Area is straightforward and the parking area provides an ideal start point for a shorter walk.



### Tips:

- Sturdy, waterproof footwear is essential as exploration of the area will include walking through streams.
- Ask for local advice regarding ground and tide conditions before embarking to the area.

