

The Airthrey Dance Trail

Commentary and Directions by choreographer Grace Turner

www.turnarounddancetheatre.co.uk/airthrey-dance-trail

INTRODUCTION- PART I

Welcome to The Airthrey Dance Trail, I'm Grace Turner the performer and choreographer.

My commentary is going to give you directions to follow the route, as well as "Behind the Scenes" information about the creative process between myself and film maker Michael Rea, I'll also include some extra details about the campus and surrounding area.

As you follow this route around the University of Stirling Campus you will be invited to watch 7 dance films on your phone or portable device. Each film is set in and inspired by the exact locations that you will be in. To offer you a multi-sensory experience each dance is accompanied with original poetry by Frances Ainslie, these poems are voiced by Hannah Uttley.

We begin our journey looking out onto Airthrey loch by the boat house, there is a bench to the left of the boat house which is the perfect place to rest and watch the first dance film entitled 'Loch'. This dance film considers the awe-inspiring power of nature, particularly how looking out across the Loch feels like a suspended moment in time.

[Please watch the first film 'Loch'.](#)

PART 2- LOCH TO FOREST

The next part of your journey is roughly 10 minutes travelling anti clockwise around the loch.

While you are travelling consider your breathing pattern, can you match it to your pace of moving, breath in for 4 and out for 4.

Take the path behind the boat house with the Sports Centre on your right, stay on the path by the loch. You'll pass a **Stone Sculpture on your left by Hironori Katagiri entitled**

[21 June 1985](#) you can learn more about the sculptures on campus at the [Art Collection website](#) [CLICK HERE](#). This is also a great spot to look out over Airthrey Loch and up towards the Ochils which provide the impressive backdrop beyond the University. Shortly you will leave the path by the road and take the first path on your left between the trees staying by the water's edge. As you travel around the loch glance your eyes upwards to the trees and you may see some of [Alec Finlay's bee libraries](#), **these are library books that have been made into bee hotels.**

Continue along the path by the Lochs edge, go underneath the bridge (you can find toilets in the Atrium which is accessed by the end of the link bridge). After the bridge, the path curves around a reedy area of the loch which is a popular place for nesting swans and water birds, please take care not to disturb them. Keep going until the path starts to move away from the loch and there will be trees on both sides of the path. On the left is a corridor of tall thin trees and this is the location for the second dance film 'Forest'.

This film is about escaping our racing day to day thoughts and finding a sense of calm in nature. Before watching this film have a think about the hustle and bustle of your day up to now. After watching the film, take a moment to absorb the calmness of your natural surroundings.

[Please watch the second film 'Forest'.](#)

PART 3- FOREST TO ISLAND

Return to the path and continue your journey in the same direction for about 6 minutes.

On this section of your walk take time to notice the sounds you can hear; birds, wind, voices, your own footsteps.

As you follow the bend in the path ahead of you in the distance is the towering Wallace monument built in 1860s to commemorate Sir William Wallace. And if you look to the right between the trees you may see a **large steel and wood sculpture in the shape of a 'Shoe' by Diane Maclean.** [CLICK HERE to learn more.](#)

As you continue on the Lochside path you'll begin to move away from the car park and on your left you'll see an Island in the centre of Loch Airthrey, this is a great place for bird watching and the abundance of wildlife is the inspiration for the third dance film 'Island'. The location for this dance film is at the peak of the loch where there is a large oak tree by the water's edge dipping its branches into the water.

[Please watch the third film 'Island'.](#)

PART 4- ISLAND TO HORNBEAM

The next section of your journey takes 10-15 minutes and will lead you away from the Loch.

Shortly after the oak tree take the path to the right going up the hill. This leads you around the University Sports Fields. On this path you get wonderful views of Dumyat and the following rolling Ochils. As you continue around the path look across the Sports Field in

the centre of the Rugby pitches you can see the **Historic Standing Stone, which is one of two standing stones on campus thought to commemorate a great battle won by the founder of Scotland Kenneth MacApline in 839AD.** Consider on this stretch of your journey how this landscape might have changed from that time to this.

As you reach the end of the Rugby pitches you will join a track continue along this with the student accommodation on your right. At the end of this drive you can find The Garden of Time whose entrance is flanked by two pillars. This is an area of reflection. Feel free to enter for a little while and you can pick The Airthrey Dance Trail by these pillars. **For more information about the Standing Stone and the Garden of Time [CLICK HERE.](#)**

Continue to follow the pedestrian path alongside the road with the Sports pavilion on your left. Directly opposite the entrance gate to the Pavillion is a path that crosses over the road and enters the trees, this path leads you behind the car park to the start of Hermitage wood. The first thing you'll see is a large, old 'Hornbeam' tree and this is the location of the fourth dance film. This tree is more than 200 years old as you watch, think about the stories she could tell, the people who have stopped to touch her bark leaving their imprint on her story.

[Please watch the fourth film 'Hornbeam'.](#)

PART 5- HORNBEAM TO LAUREL

Before you leave the Hornbeam, take a moment to experience your own connection with this tree.

You can now take two routes to the next location which is only 3 minutes away.

The most direct route is to go behind the hornbeam to the fork in the path and take the lower path to the left (don't go up the hill into Hermitage wood). This path is a flat path called the Joyce Dunn Walk, taking you through the botanical gardens with beautifully coloured Rhododendrons, and dramatic cliff faces, but take care it can get muddy!

Alternatively, you can go back to the road and follow the pedestrian path towards the castle and take the first side road on your right. On either route you may see a **steel sculpture called Wing by Diane Maclean representing the skeletal structure of a birds wing this is nestled beside the soaring Giant Redwood which is the tallest tree in the gardens [CLICK HERE for more information.](#)**

As you reach the junction of the side road there is a sign for the Joyce Dunn Walk cross the road at this sign and continue along the woodland path in the direction of the castle. Not far along this path is the location of the fifth film under a Laurel tree on your left. In spring-time there is a meadow of daffodils in front of the tree and you can either stay on the path or carefully make your way under the trees canopy to explore the twisted growth of this playful tree.

[Please watch the fifth film 'Laurel'.](#)

PART 6- LAUREL- CASTLE GARDEN

The journey to the sixth film is just 2 minutes.

Keep following the woodland path you are on but, be aware of uneven ground. For a more accessible route you can return to the lower road and follow this past Airthrey castle and enter the garden by crossing the road behind the car park. **It's hard to miss Airthrey Castle to your left. The castle was built in the 18th century by architect Robert Adam, and has been a family home, a maternity hospital and now part of the University** [CLICK HERE for more information.](#)

Follow the woodland path past a craggy rock face and around a corner and here, just before the road, is the location of the final solo in front of the memorial arch inlaid into the cliff. If you follow the zig zag path down to the lower section this is the best angle to observe the film.

The 'Castle Garden' film considers the fleeting nature of our footsteps and how nature will endure and reclaim through moss and growth.

[Please watch the sixth film 'Castle Garden'](#)

PART 7- LAUREL- REFLECTION

Roughly a 10 minute journey will lead you back to reality and return you to the start of your journey.

Leave the garden via the lower path and cross the road follow the path to the right, away from the Castle and you can either take the left fork leading you in front of the accommodation but this route has steps or you can continue along the road to turn left behind Juniper Court accommodation block. Keep following the paths as they converge and continue past the bridge. As you come to the end of the Loch you have returned to our starting place by the Boat House.

Before you leave, please watch the final film in this series which allows you to reflect on the journey you've been on. While you listen to the poem consider if you feel any differently than you did at the start.

[Please watch the final film 'Reflection'](#)

Thank you for joining me on the Airthrey Dance Trail, please share your experiences of today's journey and find out more at our facebook page website TurnAround Dance www.turnarounddancetheatre.co.uk

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