



# Cothiemuir Hill

Natural Burial Ground

  
Leedam





## An enchanting place

The woodland at Cothiemuir Hill is a peaceful, natural place. Somewhere special to spend time listening to the birdsong in the surrounding woodland, admiring the Neolithic stones, and taking in the view towards Bennachie. A place of escape, away from it all.

The burial ground is a central part of the historic Forbes Estate, located within the beautiful Strathdon landscape.

As the hardwood trees in the burial ground next to the ancient pinewood have matured, a variety of wildlife has been attracted to it including red squirrels, pine martens, both red and roe deer, badgers and foxes. Overhead you may see ospreys and buzzards.

The site is managed to encourage wildflowers in the spring and summer.

# How it works

You can purchase rights for a full burial, ashes interment or ashes scattering at the burial ground...

## In advance

Visit the burial ground and spend time there getting to know it and deciding whether it's right for you.

Complete an online application or download a pdf form from our website. If you'd like a printed information pack, please contact the office.

Pre-purchase at today's rate. Options available to pay by standing order.

## Practicalities

We recommend stout footwear as the ground is uneven. A foldable chair is a good idea for those who find it difficult to stand and remember, there's no such thing as bad weather, just the wrong sort of clothes...

There is a wealth of information about natural burial on our website [leedam.com/locations/cothiemuir-hill](http://leedam.com/locations/cothiemuir-hill) and we are here in the Leedam office to answer your questions - 01600 716438.

## When planning a funeral

Complete an online application form, or download an interment form to let us know your plans for the day so that we can help you achieve your wishes.

Make the arrangements yourself or ask your funeral director to do this for you.

Book the date and time with us. Burials may take place 10am-3pm and at weekends by special arrangement.



# Our custodian



## Malcolm Forbes

Phone: 01975 562524

Office: 01600 716438

Email: [cothiemuir@leedam.co.uk](mailto:cothiemuir@leedam.co.uk)



Malcolm, 23rd Lord Forbes (Premier Lord of Scotland) is the Landowner and custodian at Cothiemuir Hill. Castle Forbes has been the seat of Premier Lord of Scotland for almost six hundred years.

On the day of a funeral Malcolm, or a member of his team will be there to welcome and look after you.

Please contact Malcolm if you would like to arrange a guided visit or would just like to learn more about having a natural burial at Cothiemuir Hill. If you prefer to explore the burial meadow independently, please feel free to visit and have a wander around.

# More time and space

An unhurried and private place away from the hustle of daily life. Somewhere to remember, replenish and reflect. A place of peace and solitude, when you need it, and love.

Spend time in nature, experience the weather and watch the seasons change. And for those at rest here, it offers a simple return to nature.



"A sad occasion became  
full of love, friendship  
and time for reflection"





# Make the day your own

The burial ground gives you the freedom to be yourselves.

Whether you are planning a simple interment with only a few in attendance or a larger funeral event we will offer inspiration, support and guidance, so you can organise the day exactly as you'd like it.



## Flowers

Consider using flowers from your garden, or a friend's, or produce from the veg patch to create a hand-tied bouquet. Ask florists to use these or locally grown flowers. No plastic, Oasis foam or wire, please.

Think about scattering petals from a basket or single stems into the grave.

## Pets

Dogs offer comfort and companionship, especially at funerals. Dogs on leads are welcome at the burial ground.

A pet's ashes may be included in its owner's grave at the time of interment.

# Memorial stones

Memorial rights are granted for the display of a memorial stone on the grave. In keeping with the wild and natural character of the burial ground, memorial stones need to be rustic in shape and laid flat to the ground.

Letter cutting can be undertaken by a family member, local stonemason or memorial mason. In keeping with the natural setting, the stone should not be cut or polished, and no paint should be used in the letters.



# Memorial trees

We have a number of spaces where we can offer a place to plant a native tree at the natural burial ground in memory of someone special. New native trees will enhance the development of the extended woodland, improving biodiversity and encouraging more wildlife to visit.



# Finding the spot

The plots are carefully mapped and their locations are recorded and shared with you so that you'll know where to visit.

If you struggle with any of these, don't worry, we will be able to flag the spot for you. You'll be able to return to the spot at any time and you'll have helped preserve a much loved landscape for future generations to enjoy.



## Burial ground map

The burial ground is divided into areas, so you can choose the place that feels right.

You can find the current prices on the forms and prices page on our website:

[leedam.com/locations/cothiemuir-hill](http://leedam.com/locations/cothiemuir-hill)



Scan the QR code to view the forms and prices page.





### **Cothiemuir Hull Natural Burial Ground**

Castle Forbes, Keig, Alford, AB33 8BL

*(not for correspondence)*

Google Maps Plus Code: [7999+34 Alford](https://www.google.com/maps/place/7999+34+Alford)

[what3words.com/bloomers.softly.seasick](https://what3words.com/bloomers.softly.seasick)

Find us as you leave Keig, head north and take the right turn towards Glenton. Continue for just under a mile and there will be a left hand turn for the burial ground. Follow the track and you will arrive at the burial ground car park.

### **Custodian**

Malcolm Forbes

01494 881 586

[cothiemuir@leedam.co.uk](mailto:cothiemuir@leedam.co.uk)

### **Office**

Leedam Natural Heritage

26 Agincourt Square

Monmouth, NP25 3BT

01600 716 438

Facebook [@cothiemuirnaturalburials](https://www.facebook.com/cothiemuirnaturalburials)

Instagram [@cothiemuir\\_natural\\_burials](https://www.instagram.com/cothiemuir_natural_burials)

[leedam.com/locations/cothiemuir-hill](https://leedam.com/locations/cothiemuir-hill)



**Leedam**

Leedam Natural Heritage is a trading name of  
Native Woodland Ltd, registered in Scotland  
Company No. SC240278

Interment form - Valid from 1 April 2025 - 31 Mar 2026

Please complete the relevant Scottish Government Application Form before completing this form. The forms can be [downloaded from their website](#). Once completed, please email the completed forms to [cothiemuir@leedam.co.uk](mailto:cothiemuir@leedam.co.uk).

## Nominee Details

Name of deceased	
------------------	--

### 1. Lair options

Next to an existing lair?	<input type="checkbox"/> No		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
If yes, next to whom?				
Would you like to reserve the adjacent lair?	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Provisional (1 year limit)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes Burial lair	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes Ashes lair
If yes, for whom will it be?	Name			
	Address			
	Date of birth			
	Phone no.			
	Email			
Would you like to place extra ashes in the lair?	<input type="checkbox"/> No		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <i>(Incurs additional registration fee)</i>	
If yes, whose ashes will be added:	Name			
	Their last address			
	Date of birth			
	Date of death			

Return form via email to [cothiemuir@leedam.co.uk](mailto:cothiemuir@leedam.co.uk)

or post to: Leedam, The Market Tavern, Monmouth, NP25 3BT | 01600 716 438

## 1. The event

Requested date <i>(weekdays only)</i>			
Requested arrival time: <i>(11am-2pm in winter / 11am - 4pm in summer)</i>		Estimated departure:	
What type of event are you planning?	<input type="checkbox"/> Simple committal with a graveside service <input type="checkbox"/> Committal after a service elsewhere <input type="checkbox"/> A longer celebration of life <input type="checkbox"/> Other...		
Who will carry the coffin?	<input type="checkbox"/> Funeral director's staff <input type="checkbox"/> Family and friends <input type="checkbox"/> A combination (FD + Family and friends)		
Number of people expected		Number of cars:	
Name of officiant (if any)			

## 2. Optional items

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Memorial rights</b> to place and display a 'natural' memorial stone for 25 years (renewable)			
Memorial stones need to be locally sourced, flat, rustic in shape and laid level with the ground and no larger than 45cm x 45cm. A river or field stone, inscribed by a local craftsman would be ideal.			
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Dedicate a tree</b> in memory of someone. The type of tree and position will need to be agreed with the custodian. The sapling will be planted in the next dormant season.			
<b>Tree label</b> displayed for 10 years (renewable). <b>Inscription</b> - Dedicated in memory of...			
Name			
Year of birth		Year of death	
Words (max 10)			

## 3. Applicant's signature and declaration

The information given on this form is accurate. I am the person to whom all correspondence should be sent and am responsible for paying the amounts shown in the table below and agree to be bound by Leedam's Terms and Conditions ( <a href="http://www.leedam.co.uk/burial-contract">www.leedam.co.uk/burial-contract</a> ) and the Burial Ground Regulations ( <a href="http://www.leedam.com/rules-and-regulations/">www.leedam.com/rules-and-regulations/</a> ) which apply.			
Signature		Date	
Full name			

Valid from 1 April 2025 - 31 March 2026

## How did you find out about us?

Please let us know how you found out about the Natural Burial Ground...

## Payment options

Item	Price	£
Burial Plot - Ash	£1,100	
Burial Plot - Beech	£1,100	
Burial Plot - Blackthorn	£1,100	
Burial Plot - Oak	£1,100	
Burial Plot - Rowan	£1,100	
Ashes Plot - Ash	£550	
Ashes Plot - Beech	£550	
Ashes Plot - Blackthorn	£550	
Ashes Plot - Oak	£550	
Ashes Plot - Rowan	£550	
Ashes Scattering	£65	
Registration Fee	£245	£240
<b>Optional</b>		
Adjacent Burial/Ashes Plot	Please insert price	
Extra Ashes in Same Plot	£245	
Memorial Rights	£345	
Custodian Weekend Attendance Fee	£80	
TOTAL:		
Payable to Leedam Natural Heritage, Account No: 06006136, Sort Code: 80-02-38		

Grave digging for burial	Price	£
Gravedigging - Weekdays	£545	
Payable to Lord Forbes Estate, Account No: 60303314, Sort Code: 82-60-20		
Grave digging for ashes	Price	£
Gravedigging Ashes - Weekdays	£210	
Payable to Lord Forbes Estate, Account No: 60303314, Sort Code: 82-60-20		

Return form via email to [cothiemuir@leedam.co.uk](mailto:cothiemuir@leedam.co.uk)

or post to: Leedam, The Market Tavern, Monmouth, NP25 3BT | 01600 716 438

**Who will be responsible for payment?**

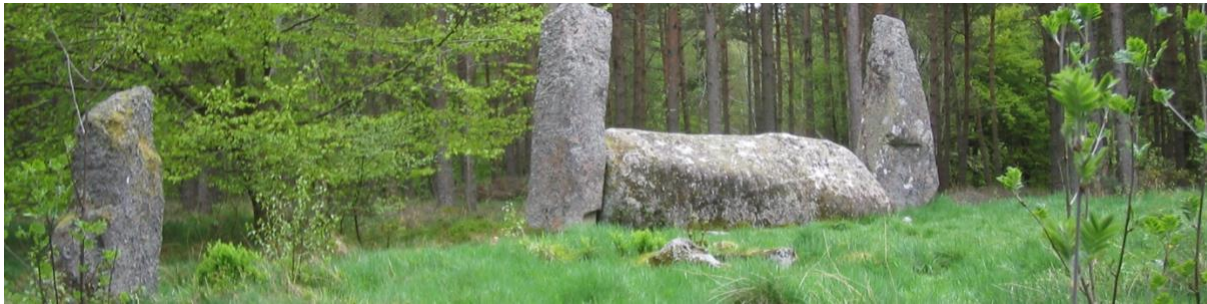
- ☐ Applicant                      ☐ Funeral Director                      ☐ Other (*please provide name & address*)

**Data protection**

We would like to be able to contact you about future matters concerning the burial ground and any new options that might become available. If you agree to being contacted this way please tick the relevant boxes:

☐ Email    ☐ Post    ☐ Phone    You can withdraw your consent at any time. View our privacy policy for further information ([www.leedam.co.uk/privacy-policy](http://www.leedam.co.uk/privacy-policy)).

## Funeral arrangements



<b>Burial ground name:</b>	Cothiemuir Hill Natural Burial Ground
<b>Location:</b>	Cothiemuir Hill, Castle Forbes, Keig, Alford, AB33 8BL (not accurate when used with Satnav). Instead use this <a href="http://w3w.co/printers.kidney.armed">w3w.co/printers.kidney.armed</a>
<b>Access:</b>	Open year-round. The gate into the burial ground is not locked. Please let wheelchair users know that there are no paths across the grass.
<b>Description:</b>	The woodland at Cothiemuir Hill is a peaceful, natural place, with the Neolithic stones nestled among the trees, and a beautiful in the view towards Bennachie. The burial ground is divided into named areas, each of which offers something different.
<b>Ethos:</b>	Keep things simple, natural and sustainable. Real countryside preserved for future generations.
<b>On-site facilities:</b>	Car parking and woodland trail. The nearest WCs are at <a href="#">Back o' Bennachie Car Park</a> (April – Oct). No rooms, chapels, toilets or mortuary facilities.
<b>Operator and Owner:</b>	Operator: Leedam Natural Heritage. Owner - Forbes Estate.
<b>Custodian:</b>	Malcolm Forbes, tel 01975 562524

## Procedures

<b>Provisional booking:</b>	Call 01600 716438 to make a provisional funeral booking, after the death has been certified, and let us know the requested date, name of the deceased, your own contact details and any prior purchase information.
<b>Confirmation:</b>	We will check the calendar to make sure it's not already taken, then contact the gravedigger and custodian to make sure they are available before confirming the booking.
<b>Submit forms:</b>	Download the <a href="#">Interment Form</a> and complete the details as soon as possible and <u>at least two days before the event</u> . Email it to <a href="mailto:cothiemuir@leedam.com">cothiemuir@leedam.com</a> with a scanned copy of the Coroner's Order for Burial or a Registrar's Certificate (or cremation certificate for an ashes interment).
<b>Payments:</b>	Payment by bank transfer is required before the event. The gravedigger is paid separately, but also before the event. We will send you a receipt and confirm that everything is OK.
<b>Prices and forms:</b>	A price list and all forms are available on the website <a href="http://www.leedam.com/locations/cothiemuir-hill/forms-and-prices/">www.leedam.com/locations/cothiemuir-hill/forms-and-prices/</a>
<b>Embalming:</b>	Embalming fills the body with toxic chemicals which we do not wish to introduce into the soil. We would only accept embalmed remains in exceptional circumstances, e.g. repatriation.
<b>Choosing a plot:</b>	Arrange a family visit to the burial ground with the Custodian (07511 684099) to select the area that suits you. Liaise with the office directly (01600 716438) using the mobile app What3Words.com to make sure the location is right.
<b>Double plots:</b>	Plots are single depth. Double plots are arranged side by side. Choose which side is which. The second plot can be paid for in full or costs can be spread over 10 or 20 months by setting up a monthly standing order (extra admin charge applies). If undecided, we can provisionally reserve it for 1 year, after which it may be offered to others.
<b>Coffins etc:</b>	Choose an eco-coffin, casket or shroud. All materials, including linings and clothing, should be natural and biodegradable. No

	veneered MDF or chipboard, please. Standard nameplates are OK or a handwritten card label with the deceased's name and dates. <i>TIP - Use calico canvas instead of polythene Crem Film.</i>
<b>Coffin size:</b>	Please measure and include the true maximum external dimensions of the coffin on the Interment Form. If in doubt please call us.
<b>Grave digging:</b>	Our nominated gravedigger will prepare the grave ready for your arrival. Graves are single depth 1.3m; double plots are arranged side by side. Families can backfill the soil to cover the coffin if they choose, but the gravedigger will complete the work.

**On the day:** There is usually only one burial on the day and time is not limited. The Custodian will be there to meet and direct you.

The track into the meadow will be open for the hearse, limousine and family mourners with limited mobility who display the priority parking sign in the windscreen.

*TIP - Estate cars are popular with families instead of the formal hearse.*

**Dogs and pets:** Dogs offer comfort and companionship, especially at funerals. Dogs on leads are welcome at the burial meadow. A pet's ashes may be included in its owner's grave at the time of interment.

**Music:** There is no electrical power supply in the burial ground. Make sure that battery-powered speakers are powerful enough to deliver good sound quality. Live, acoustic music is always beautiful.

**What to wear:** Wellies/hiking shoes (not high-heels); warm, windproof clothes.  
*TIP - Bring folding chairs, scarves, hats and blankets for the elderly.*

**Carrying the coffin:** The ground is uneven, so the usual church trolley won't work. Carry the coffin underarm rather than on shoulders, feet-first. Set up trestles at regular resting points if the carry distance is long.

**Webbing:** Please bring your own webbing. The custodian or gravedigger will have a backup set in case you come without.

**Flowers:** Seasonal flowers from the garden or produce from the veg patch are perfect. Let florists know it is for a natural burial, so no plastic, Oasis foam or wire, please. Arrangements should be taken away at the end of the event. Please let the custodian know if a posy of flowers is to be left on the grave. *TIP - Bring a basket of petals from the garden to scatter into the grave.*

**Items in the grave:** Additional cremated remains can be included the grave, even those of a pet; please include details on the application form. You can also include natural tributes e.g. a wooden boat, sea shells; a sealed museum jar with significant pieces, or other inert objects.

**After the funeral:** We will issue a certificate of interment, by email, with the precise grave location details. This will be in pdf format for sharing.

**Finding the grave:** The certificate of interment will include links to Google Maps, GPS coordinates and the What3Words address of the grave. The What3Words mobile app is an easy way to navigate to the grave. If there is ever concern, we can flag the spot.

**Memorials:** To keep the land sustainable for the future as pasture, individual graves are not marked. Instead, slate plaques inscribed with the names and dates are mounted between the upright timbers of the memorial frame. Memorial rights to display a plaque are granted for 25 years (renewable). The memorial can be ordered on the Interment Form or a separate application form is available [here](#).

**Plants and trees:** To conserve the Listed parkland landscape and the natural habitat, no trees are planted on graves. Groups of trees were planted to define the separate glades and these are now maturing well. To protect wildlife and bereaved families from unwanted change, nothing should be planted and no seeds should be scattered without our consent.

## Further Information

- Baby/infant funerals:** Scotland has a scheme in place, whereby no fees should be charged for the burial of a child or person under the age of 18 (including stillborn and foetal remains), which we support.
- Direct burials:** A direct /simple natural burial can be arranged for families who do not wish to attend the burial. Full grave location details will be provided on the burial certificate.
- Burial Ground Rules:** Outlined in full [here](#)
- Maintenance:** The burial ground is maintained as agricultural grassland. It will be mown three times a year. Sheep may be brought in to graze the land and when they do, be careful where you tread.
- Long term security:** The land is within the boundaries of the Cairngorms National Park. This gives it a very high level of protection. There is no real chance of the land being redeveloped at any time in the future.
- Contact us:**
- Office: Leedam Natural Heritage, t. 01600 716438
  - Email: [cothiemuir@leedam.com](mailto:cothiemuir@leedam.com)
  - Website: [aberdeennaturalburials.co.uk](http://aberdeennaturalburials.co.uk)
  - Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Aberdeennaturalburials>