

The Mack Walks: Short Walks in Scotland Under 10 km

Cambus O'May-5 Bridges Pinewood Trail (Aberdeenshire)

Route Summary

This is a short and easy walk through pinewoods, suitable for all abilities, with minimal overall ascent. The winding trail crosses the tumbling Queel Burn 5 times and passes by 2 pretty lochans, where you will see dragonflies, damselflies and rare butterflies in Summer.

Duration: 1.75 hours.



Route Overview

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Transport/Parking: Fairly frequent Stagecoach bus services along Deeside, from Aberdeen. There is a bus-stop on the A93 close to the walk start/end point. Check timetables. There is a free Forestry Commission car-park at the walk start/end point.

Length: 4.910 km / 3.07 mi

Height Gain: 82 meter. **Height Loss:** 82 meter.

Max Height: 257 meter. **Min Height:** 201 meter.

Surface: Moderate. Good surfaced paths and forest roads. May be muddy in places. *Note: Recent forestry ops ceased on 29 Feb 2020. Some signs/fences still present on 3rd Mar. Standard Forestry Commission advice is "Please do not pass any prohibition signage."

Difficulty: Easy. **Child Friendly:** Yes, if children are used to walks of this distance.

Dog Friendly: Yes. Keep your dog under close control in the car-parking area.

Refreshments: The nearby Riverside Cottage cafe is open Fri-Sun, 12-3pm. Options in Ballater.



Description

This is a delightful extended stroll around the mature conifer woods at Cambus O'May, near Ballater. Along the way, through the pines and firs and juniper bushes, you will catch some fine views to the west of the Pass of Ballater and the Cairngorms, particularly Lochnagar. The winding route through the trees crosses the Queel Burn 5 times, including on 3 wooden bridges, and visits two very picturesque little lochans. The wider Cambus O'May woodlands are recognised as a sanctuary for the rare Black Grouse and Capercaillie. On this route you are likely to be observed from above by Red Squirrels, and may be fortunate to see one scurrying along the forest floor or up a nearby tree trunk. In summer months, the lochans sparkle with shafts of bright colour due to the prevalence of different species of dragonflies and damselflies. This special environment also attracts many types of butterfly, including the rapidly disappearing Pearl Bordered Fritillary Cambus. O'May came into its own during the railway boom of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, with the Cambus O'May Halt, the last stop before Ballater on the Deeside Line, being particularly favoured by rod fishers who also patronised a substantial Victorian fishing lodge set in 16 acres, featuring a walled garden, kennels and coach house. The area is also famous for the Cambus O'May suspension footbridge over the River Dee, about 2 kms east of this walk, where there is a signed car-park just off the A93. This pretty white-painted iron bridge, popular with sightseers taking in the delights of Deeside, was built in 1905 by a locally born businessman to replace a rowing boat ferry. In 1988 the bridge had to be rebuilt for safety reasons, with the new bridge being constructed to the same design as the original, maintaining its Victorian heritage. Sadly, at the time of writing in 2020, the bridge has been closed since the destructive river spate following Storm Frank, in the winter of 2015.



Waypoints

(1) Start walk at Forestry Commission Cambus O'May car-park

(57.07004; -2.98513) <https://w3w.co/ballroom.spectacle.common>
Start the walk from the Forestry Commission Cambus O'May car-park*. There are a couple of information boards here. There is also a viewpoint facing west towards the Cairngorms (at the east end of the car-park). Just to the right of the large 2-panel info board are waymark post for the 3 advertised walks** which all start along the same pathway. In about 350 m you will pass the western end of the West Lochan where the Blue trail goes off to the right. Instead, carry on taking the Yellow/Red marked main route (for about another 600 m) through the trees.



**Note: The turn-off for the car-park and forest walks is signposted on the A93 Dinnit to Ballater road, 6 km from Dinnit (4.5 km from Ballater). The car-park and walks are on the north side of the road.*

***Note: our walk is a modified version of the Pine Tree Trail (Yellow), diverting to take in the West Lochan bridge and info board near the end.*

(2) Carry straight on - crossing forest road

(57.07385; -2.98884) <https://w3w.co/rosier.office.immune>
In 950 m from the start, in a section with electricity cables overhead, cross over a forest road and carry straight on, taking the yellow/red signposted path. (949 m)



(3) Cross bridge and carry straight on

(57.07629; -2.98274) <https://w3w.co/stirs.harnessed.sleeps>
In 450 m you will cross a wooden bridge over the Queel Burn. Almost immediately the Red Trail goes right and downhill. However, you must carry straight on, taking the yellow-marked path ahead of you. (1.4 km)



(4) Turn right down forest road

(57.07951; -2.97327) <https://w3w.co/months.tuck.lengthen>

In 700 m, at a Yellow Trail post, turn sharp right down a forest road. Keep on walking down this forest road for about 1.1 km, looking for a Yellow Trail marker post and path on your right. (2.1 km)



(5) Right off forest road onto waymarked path

(57.07150; -2.97829) <https://w3w.co/kept.skyrocket.enormous>

After walking down the forest road for about 1.1 km, turn right at the Yellow Trail marker post to follow a path into the trees. In about 520 m, ignore a turn-off going uphill to the right marked for the Red Trail. Keep going and you will soon cross the Queel Burn again on a narrow stone bridge. (3.2 km)



(6) Left at paths t-junction and cross bridge

(57.07285; -2.98305) <https://w3w.co/risks.strongly.scrapping>

In 800 m from Waypoint 5, when you left the forest road, you will arrive at a paths junction. Go left here to pass a Yellow Trail marker post and follow the path as it descends to cross the Queel Burn once again on a wooden bridge. Keep going on the path after crossing the bridge. Soon the East Lochan is reached on your right side. Keep going past the lochan, again crossing the Queel Burn. (4.0 km)



(7) Cross forest road and continue straight on

(57.07186; -2.98590) <https://w3w.co/microchip.enacts.oaks>

In 300 m you will arrive at a forest road. There is yellow/red marker post on your left side indicating a left turn down the forest road. Do NOT go left down the forest road. Instead, carry straight on across the forest road to take the path heading into the trees. (4.3 km)



(8) Cross long bridge

(57.07119; -2.98887) <https://w3w.co/sharpness.forehand.swordfish>
In 200 m, you will arrive at a long bridge over the Queel Burn as it enters the West Lochan*. Turn left here to cross the bridge, with the lochan on your right side. After crossing the bridge, turn sharp left to follow the Blue Trail marked path (don't take the disused path going straight ahead, after the bridge). (4.5 km)

**Note: There is useful information board on the bridge about the dragonflies and damselflies to be seen here in the summer months.*



(9) Turn right along forest road

(57.07156; -2.98549) <https://w3w.co/tycoons.incurs.eggshell>
In another 200 m, just after a Blue Trail post, the path you are on will meet the forest road you crossed earlier at Waypoint 7. Turn right here and, very soon, veer right to follow a yellow/red/blue post back to the close-by car-park. (4.7 km)

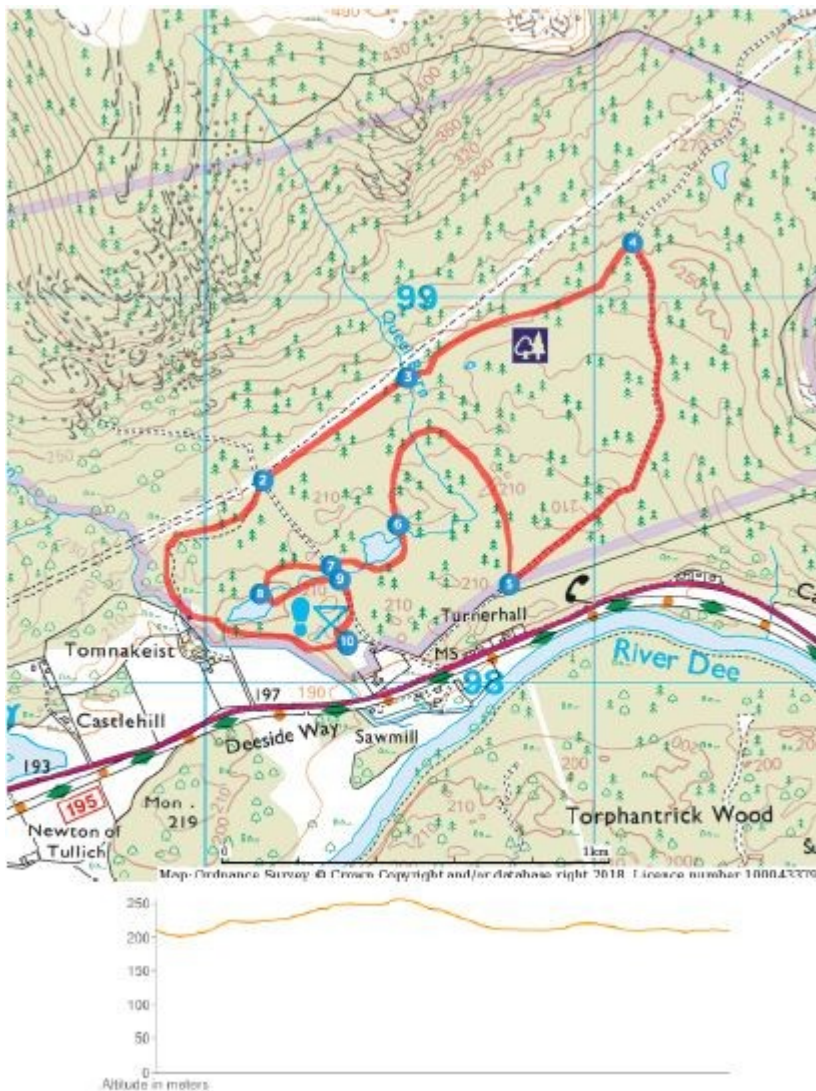


(10) Finish walk back at Forestry Commission car-park area

(57.07012; -2.98514) <https://w3w.co/ballroom.spectacle.common>
In 200 m you will have arrived back at your start-point in the Forestry Commission car-park area. (4.9 km)



Route Map



Links:

[Photos from walk](#)

[Download Route Guide](#) (PDF with illustrated Waypoints)

[Download GPX file](#) (GPS Exchange Format)

[Access Walk on OutdoorActive](#)

[Access Walk on OSMaps](#)

[Access Walk on AllTrails](#)

[Access Walk on Wikiloc](#)