

# The Mack Walks: Short Walks in Scotland Under 10 km

## Craiglich Hill (Howe of Cromar) (Aberdeenshire)

### Route Summary

Over a relatively short distance, this is a fine hill-walk through mixed woodland, pine forest and heather moors. The views over the Howe of Cromar to the Cairngorms are particularly stunning, but there are wonderful perspectives all around Deeside and Aberdeenshire to enjoy.

Duration: 2.75 hours.



### Route Overview

**Duration:** 2.75 hours.

**Transport/Parking:** Stagecoach #201/202 service from Banchory. Check timetables. There is a large lay-by to park in at the walk start/end point. See Waypoint #1.

**Length:** 5.440 km / 3.40 mi

**Height Gain:** 206 meter. **Height Loss:** 206 meter.

**Max Height:** 471 meter. **Min Height:** 286 meter.

**Surface:** Moderate. The route doesn't appear to be well used, so may be a little overgrown in summer months. We encountered a couple of very wet sections on the early part of the ascent.

**Difficulty:** Medium.

**Child Friendly:** Yes, if children are used to walks of this distance and overall ascent.

**Dog Friendly:** Yes, but keep dogs on lead on the public road, on or near the B9119.

**Refreshments:** We can recommend the Commercial Hotel and Angie's Cafe in Tarland Square. Other options: Aberdeen Arms, and Tarland Pharmacy and Coffee Shop.



### Description

This is a fairly straightforward hill walk, with an initial ascent through open mixed woodland on the north-western shoulder of Craiglich Hill before passing through moorland, some commercial pine forest, then moorland again at the extensive summit area. The first part of the walk is close to the Queen's View viewpoint on the B9119 road to Tarland (from Westhill). Here, the mountains of Lochnagar, Morven and Mount Keen set an exceptionally beautiful backdrop to the rolling patchwork of fields and woodlands of the Howe of Cromar. Queen Victoria was said to be enchanted by this view of the Howe, and the viewpoint is named in recognition of that. It's no surprise, therefore that the views ahead of you and below you, as you climb and descend on this route, are equally, if not more, breath-taking. On reaching the summit, you will find that there is a trig point, a partly broken down memorial cairn, some fire beating implements, and a small tree. On a clear day, the views in every direction, near and far, are truly fantastic. If you are like us you will spend some time identifying hilltops all around the splendid panorama! There is no sign of a memorial plaque now on or about the crumbling cairn, but, apparently, the "...monument was erected by the tenantry of the estates of Farquharson of Finzean, who owned three quarters of the land hereabouts in the 19th century ..."

Thanks to Stanley Howe for this information, who photographed the monument's (then broken) plaque in the 1980's. See: <https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/3473742>. There is archaeological evidence of an ancient hut circle and field system on the SW slope of Craiglich but these have been largely obscured by forestry, and the site is not passed on our route. The nearby village of Tarland is certainly worth a visit, perhaps for a post-walk snack. It has a fine old square, with some buildings dating back around 300 years.



## Waypoints

### (1) Start walk from lay-by on B9119 road to Tarland

(57.14559; -2.78384) <https://w3w.co/parsnips.digit.paving>

Start the walk from the large car-parking area on the right side, off the B9119 road from Westhill to Tarland, about 5.5 km from Tarland, and before you come to the Queen's View viewpoint. There is a smaller lay-by on the other side of the road about 50 m further on. You may wish to park and start the walk from there. Walk down the verge of the road, facing the oncoming traffic, until you come to a junction with the minor road on the left signposted for Coull. There is a cottage on the corner there. Cross the busy B9119 with care to the Coull road opening.



### (2) Left through gate at Coull Road junction onto woodland path

(57.14395; -2.78721) <https://w3w.co/moats.lamplight.random>

In just less than 300 m from the start, having just entered the Coull road opening, off the B9119 on the left by the cottage, look to your left, up the bank, and you will see a broken pedestrian gate and a faded Craiglich Woodland walk signpost. Go through the gate and start ascending on the path. It is a little overgrown at the start but opens up as you climb up the side of the hill through the mixed woodland. The path may be boggy in a couple of places. Eventually you will reach an area of moorland (there is a small cairn off the path as you ascend, which you should visit to take in the views). The path swings around to the left as it climbs and enters an area of commercial forest. (278 m)



### (3) Right onto forest road

(57.13543; -2.78776) <https://w3w.co/workloads.suddenly.atom>

After 1.5 km, the path meets a forest road at a t-junction. Go right here for a short distance (40 m) until you meet a y-junction with a track going uphill on your left side. (1.8 km)



### (4) Veer left off forest road onto uphill path

(57.13521; -2.78719) <https://w3w.co/devotion.downturn.slugs>

In 40 m, go left and uphill at a y-junction onto a track going uphill in a break between the commercial forestry plantation. The break between the areas of trees is wide and there are great views looking back towards the Cairngorms, in the distance. As you climb, the woodland environment ends and you enter a large area of moorland. Keep following the track as it gently ascends through the heather. (1.8 km)



## (5) Summit cairn and trig point

(57.13734; -2.77320) <https://w3w.co/facelift.captures.moguls>

After 900 m, you will have arrived at the summit of Craiglich, where there is a trig point, partly broken down memorial cairn\*, some fire beating implements, and a small tree. On a clear day, the views in every direction, near and far, are truly fantastic. If you are like us you will spend some time identifying hilltops all around the splendid panorama! When you are ready, re-trace your steps down through the moorland and commercial plantation to the junction with the forest road at Waypoint 4 on the ascent. Turn right here for 40 m, or so, looking for the downhill track on your left (easily missed) where you emerged at Waypoint 3 on the outward leg. (2.7 km)



*\*Note: There is no sign of a memorial plaque now, but many thanks to Stanley Howe for this information*

*(and photo) '... fragments of a plaque from the partially broken down cairn at the summit of Craiglich were photographed by me on the ground near that monument in the early to mid-1980s. They appear to indicate that the monument was erected by the tenantry of the estates of Farquharson of Finzean, who owned three quarters of the land hereabouts in the 19<sup>th</sup> century ...' For a photo of the plaque, see Stanley's Geograph post: <https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/3473742>*

## (6) Left off forest road and down track

(57.13545; -2.78781) <https://w3w.co/workloads.suddenly.atom>

In about 1 km from Craiglich Hill summit, turn left off the forest road (at Waypoint 3 on the outward ascent) onto the slightly overgrown track/path going downhill through the trees. This soon emerges at the area of moorland passed tough on the ascent. Carry on re-tracing your steps down the hillside in order to return to the start-point. Take extreme care walking on the verge of the B9119 road when you reach it. Always face the oncoming traffic. (3.7 km)

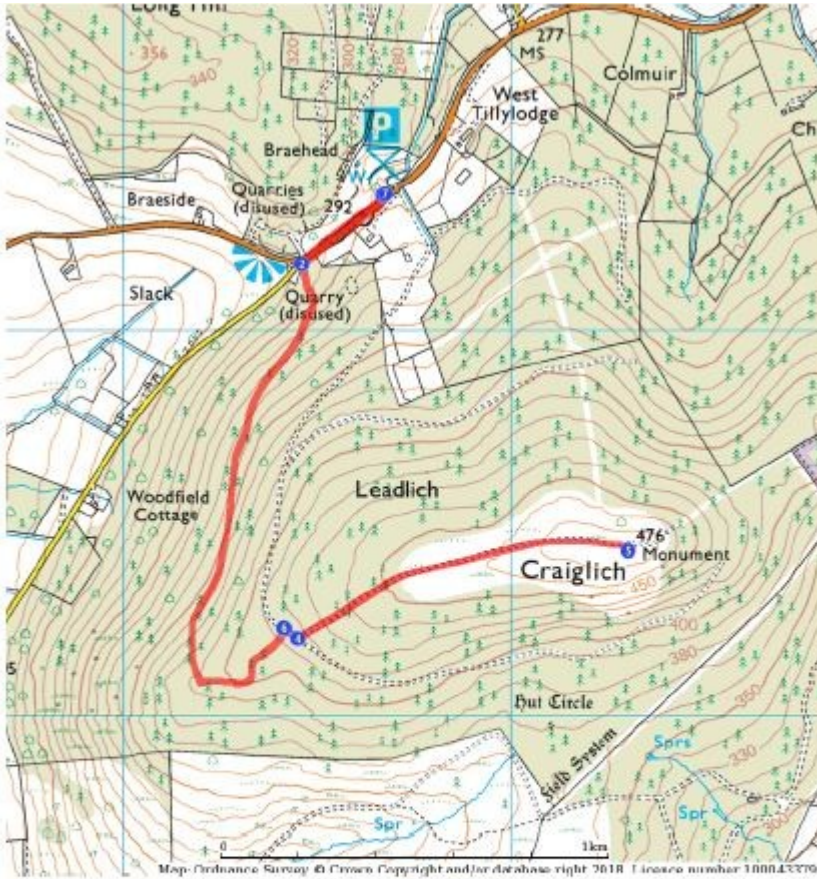


## (7) Finish walk - exit path and return along B9119 road verge

(57.14561; -2.78372) <https://w3w.co/parsnips.digit.paving>

Finish the walk at the lay-by off the B9119 road where you started. (5.4 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](#)