

The Mack Walks: Short Walks in Scotland Under 10 km

Finzean Water Mills-Feughside Ramble (Aberdeenshire)

Route Summary

A short walk in a beautiful rural environment. Initially, there is a gradual ascent through open woodland, followed by a descent to the banks of the fast-flowing Water of Feugh. The water mills at the walk start/end are an interesting reminder of previous times in the valley.

Duration: 1.75 hours.



Route Overview

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Transport/Parking: No public transport nearby. There is a small parking area at the walk start/end point.

Length: 5.280 km / 3.30 mi

Height Gain: 103 meter. **Height Loss:** 103 meter.

Max Height: 193 meter. **Min Height:** 126 meter.

Surface: Moderate. Mainly a mix of good forest roads and grassy riverside paths. There are three small sections on quiet single track tarred access roads. The complete circuit is not suitable for off-road mobility scooters due to high steps to the bridge and boardwalk at Waypoint 7 (and fallen trees after Waypoint 8). Instead, return to the start from Waypoint 7 along the tarred road. **Difficulty:** Easy.

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

Dog Friendly: Yes, keep dogs on lead near to farm animals (*see note at Waypoint 8*).

Refreshments: We can recommend the Finzean Farm Shop and Cafe.



Description

This is a very pleasant walk in the valley of the Water of Feugh at Finzean. The first part of the route is gently uphill in open pine forest at Perciemuir Wood, with naturally seeded silver birch and other native trees complementing the agreeable woodland environment. Descending to the valley floor again, the second part of the walk is in open countryside and broad-leaved woodland along both banks of the tumbling Water of Feugh. The walk starts and finishes in beautiful surroundings at the Finzean Water Mills. The Birse Community Trust has preserved three watermills for woodworking on the Water of Feugh, all that remains of over 40 mills that operated in the area at one time. In



recent years the Sawmill provided oak floor boards for the Scottish Parliament. The Turning Mill once majored on making bungs for herring barrels, whilst the Bucket Mill specialised in buckets made with Scots Pine staves. The Sawmill and Turning Mill are still in occasional operation. The area around Finzean is renowned for its scenic beauty, and was the subject of landscape paintings by the celebrated 19thC Scottish artist, Joseph Farquarson (the "Painting Laird"). Finzean, on the banks of the fast-flowing Water of Feugh, is set in a wide valley comprised of a patchwork of fields and small woodlands, with scattered houses, farms and hamlets. A ridge of low hills, with their highest point at Tom's Cairn (310 m), delineate the valley to the north, separating it from the River Dee. To the south and west, Finzean is sheltered by higher hills. Especially prominent in the views towards this aspect are the distinctive granite tor of Clachnaben (589 m) and the broad mass of Peter Hill (617 m). The Birse Community Trust (BCT) is a local charity that promotes the common good of the inhabitants of Birse Parish and wider public benefits. For more information see:

<https://www.birsecommunitytrust.org.uk/>

Waypoints

(1) Start walk at information board opposite Finzean Water Mills

(57.01383; -2.67486) <https://w3w.co/widen.shelter.budding>

Start the walk at the small parking area just off the public Forest of Birse access road*, opposite the Sawmill and Turning Mill at Finzean where there is an information board about the water mills in this area**. Facing the mills, turn left to walk back along the access road, in a NE direction, passing a number of houses on either side.



**Note: to get to the Finzean Water Mills:*

1. From Banchory – take B974 to Strachan.

2. Continue west from Strachan on B976 (South Deeside Road) for 6 km.

3. At Farquarson Park in Finzean, as the B976 bends right, towards the north-west, take the minor road going straight ahead and west, signposted for Forest of Birse and Finzean Farm Shop and Tearoom.

4. In 900 m, or so, ignore the turn off veering right for the Finzean Farm Shop and Tearoom and carry straight on, going in a westerly direction on the Forest of Birse access road.

5. In another 2 km you will arrive at the Finzean Sawmills where there is an information board on your right side (the Forest of Birse access road carries on for another 6.3 km to the Forest of Birse Kirk at the opening to the Forest of Birse glen).

***Note: The Birse Community Trust has preserved three watermills for woodworking on the Water of Feugh, all that remains of over 40 mills that operated in the area at one time. In recent years the Sawmill provided oak floor boards for the Scottish Parliament. The Turning Mill once majored on making bungs for herring barrels, whilst the Bucket Mill specialised in buckets made with Scots Pine staves.*

(2) Left up access road

(57.01647; -2.66637) <https://w3w.co/detained.lifts.overpower>

In just over 600 m, just after a house with a high conifer hedge on your left, turn left up a narrow access road, soon passing Percie Croft on your right side as you ascend up the gentle slope. (614 m)



(3) Left off access road onto forest track

(57.01784; -2.66972) <https://w3w.co/globe.interlude.ideal>

In 250 m, just after passing a house on your right side, go left off the tarred access road onto a forest road which soon passes a small quarry on your left. Carry on walking along this forest road. (876 m)



(4) Left and uphill at y-junction clearing

(57.01845; -2.68589) <https://w3w.co/soccer.zinc.router>

After walking for 1.1 km through the open pine woodland you will arrive at a clearing where the main track bends right and another forest road goes left and uphill. Leave the main track to take the forest road going left and uphill. (2.0 km)



(5) Left at fork on forest tracks

(57.01733; -2.68575) <https://w3w.co/detection.forgiven.housework>

In about 100 m, or so, you will arrive at a fork in the forest roads. Take the left fork. Soon, you will arrive at the highest point on the route and the forest road then starts to go downhill in a southerly direction towards the public Forest of Birse access road. (2.1 km)



(6) Left along tarred road

(57.01303; -2.68396) <https://w3w.co/ruin.aware.crouches>

In 600 m, the forest road meets the public Forest of Birse access road. Go left to walk back along the tarred road in the direction of the Water Mills where you started the walk. (2.7 km)



(7) Right and across wooden bridge

(57.01303; -2.67782) <https://w3w.co/trinkets.ballroom.mediate>

After 400 m on the tarred road, go right and down the embankment to cross a small wooden bridge over the Backbog Burn. Veer slightly right to now follow the grassy path along the banks of the Water of Feugh river, heading upstream, with the river on your left side. (3.1 km)



(8) Left and across Water of Feugh bridge

(57.01006; -2.69025) <https://w3w.co/cupboards.screeches.plenty>

After 900 m, veer left towards a wooden bridge over the Water of Feugh. Cross the bridge and then go left to walk back along the river, downstream, with the water now on your left side.

(4.0 km)

**Note: you may meet sheep in this section. Please ensure dogs are on lead.*



(9) Left to return to Finzean Water Mills

(57.01297; -2.67481) <https://w3w.co/indicated.initiates.double>

After 1.1 km, at a t-junction with a tarred road, go left to return to the Finzean Water Mills area where you started the walk. After crossing the road bridge over the river we suggest that you go left to explore the water mill buildings before reaching the information board and parking area where you started the walk.

(5.1 km)



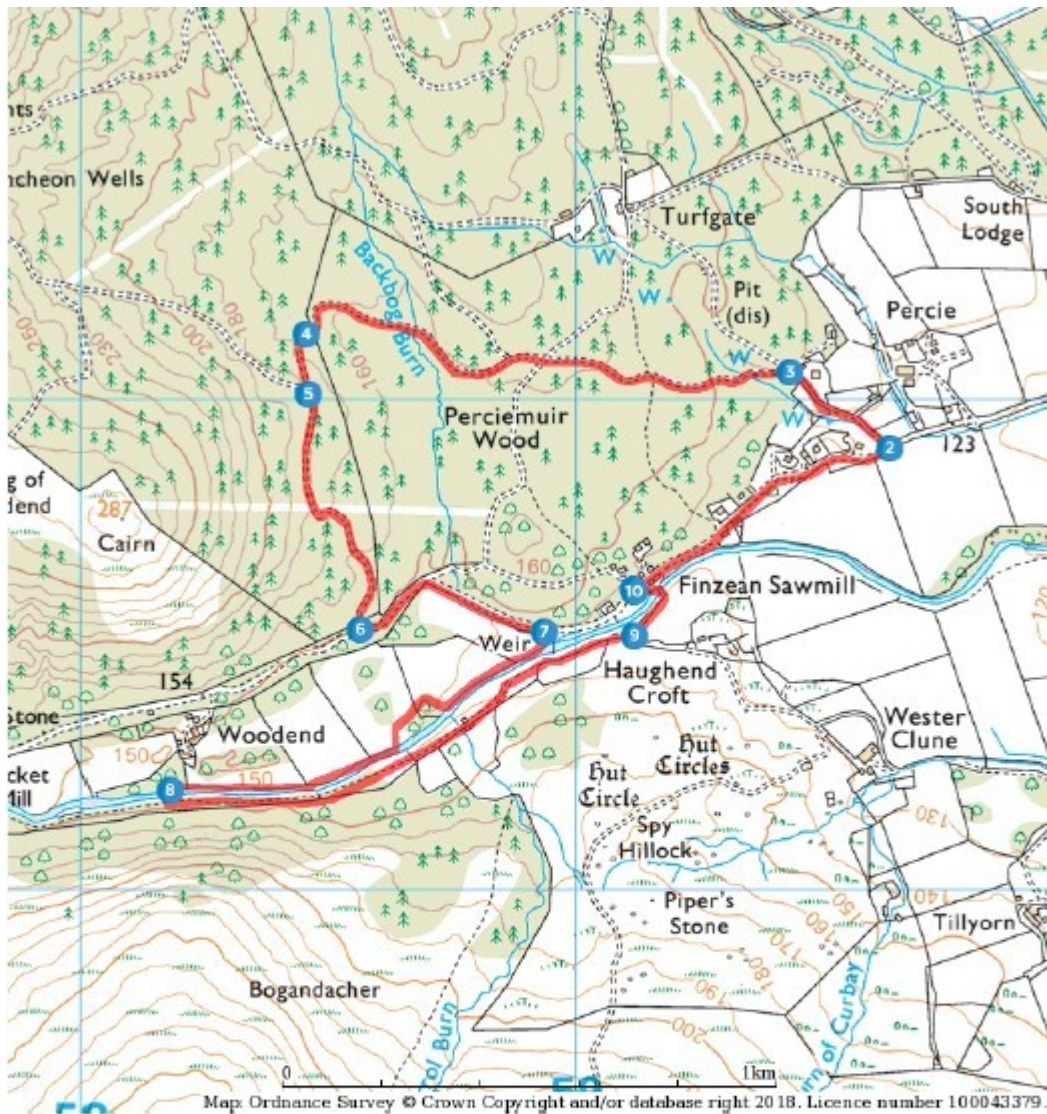
(10) Finish walk back at info board car-parking area

(57.01378; -2.67483) <https://w3w.co/widen.shelter.budding>

In 200 m, after checking out the mills, you will have arrived back at your starting point near the information board. (5.3 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](#)