

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

## Huntly-River Deveron-Castle Hotel Circuit (Aberdeenshire)

### Route Summary

An easy walk from the centre of Huntly, with minimal overall ascent. The route incorporates some very scenic sections, with the impressive ruins of Huntly Castle, the old Castle Bridge, and the Castle Hotel all adding an interesting historical dimension.

Duration: 2.25 hours.



### Route Overview

**Duration:** 2.25 hours.

**Transport/Parking:** Frequent rail service from/to Aberdeen. A number of Stagecoach bus options. Check timetables. Free public car-park near walk start/end point, off Castle Street and Eastpark Street.

**Length:** 7.010 km / 4.38 mi **Height Gain:** 77 meter. **Height Loss:** 77 meter.

**Max Height:** 144 meter. **Min Height:** 115 meter.

**Surface:** Smooth. Mostly on surfaced paths, pavements and roads. Suitable for off-road mobility scooters with the following modifications. Keep taking the main track, passing the Ski Centre at Waypoint 10. To avoid steps at Plantation Wood at and after Waypoint 12, stay on the pavement along Burnside Drive then go left up Riverside Drive, to rejoin the route at Waypoint 14.

**Difficulty:** Easy.

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

**Dog Friendly:** Yes, but keep dogs on lead on public roads.

**Refreshments:** Options in Huntly



### Description

This is a pleasant extended stroll around and about Huntly, taking in the historic castle, an ancient bridge, the impressive driveway up to the former Castle Lodge mansion house (now the Castle Hotel), the scenic banks of the fast-flowing River Deveron, and a mature area of pine woodland in the centre of the town. In the early part of the route we enter an impressive archway passing through the oldest part of the Gordon Schools complex. The school was founded in 1839 by the Duchess of Gordon as a memorial to her late husband and was designed by the notable Scottish architect, Archibald Simpson. This leads us to the ruins of Huntly Castle, where Historic Environment Scotland have a visitor centre. The core of the present building dates to the late 15thC, based on an earlier motte, the 12thC Peel of Strathbogie. The castle, ancestral home of the chiefs of Clan Gordon, the Earls of Huntly, played an important part in the bloody history of Scotland's development as a nation [see link below]. Passing around the back of the castle we cross over an old single span stone bridge over the River Deveron. The bridge, probably rebuilt in the 17thC on the foundations of an earlier structure (there are medieval mason's marks on some of the stonework), is an extremely scenic spot with fine views up and down river, with the eye also being led up the long and impressive driveway to the [Castle Hotel](#) (formerly the Castle Lodge, built as a family home for the Dukes of Gordon during the 18thC). The route then leads past the hotel and down the West driveway to the main road to Portsoy where there is now a footpath back towards Huntly to cross the Deveron again at the Bridge of Gibston. The route then leads downstream on the banks of the Deveron, passing the Nordic Ski Centre (the UK's only purpose-built all-weather facility for Nordic Skiing). In this section there are attractive open views over the farmland and forests that surround the town. In the final section the route takes us back to the centre through a mature area of conifer woodland. For Huntly Castle info, see: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huntly\\_Castle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huntly_Castle).



## Waypoints

### (1) Start walk at Huntly war memorial

(57.44892; -2.78477) <https://w3w.co/either.sobs.splints>

The walk starts at the Huntly war memorial at the end of Castle Street, where West Park Street and East Park Street intersect, near the Christie Park football ground. From the memorial, walk away from Huntly town centre in a NNE direction, down the narrow road that leads to the Gordon Schools, Huntly Golf Club, and Huntly Castle.



### (2) Gordon Schools

(57.45053; -2.78336) <https://w3w.co/dream.nudge.crumple>

In 200 m you will arrive at the original Gordon Schools\* building, where there is a stag's head commemorative sculpture celebrating the Gordon Highlanders army regiment in the grassy area on the right-hand side. Pass through the central arch and continue on down the avenue of trees towards Huntly Castle. (198 m)

*\*Note: The school was founded in 1839 by the Duchess of Gordon as a memorial to her late husband and was designed by the notable Scottish architect, Archibald Simpson.*



### (3) Huntly Castle

(57.45445; -2.78245) <https://w3w.co/change.calibrate.monkeys>

After 450 m, or so, you will pass the impressive ruins of Huntly Castle\*. After admiring the castle structure (or visiting the Castle and grounds - [tickets and access from the Historic Environment Scotland visitor centre](#)), carry on past the building down the narrow tarred road, heading now towards the River Deveron. (658 m)

*\*Note: the core of the present ruinous building dates to the late 15thC, based on an earlier motte, the 12thC Peel of Strathbogie. The castle, ancestral home of the chiefs of Clan Gordon, the Earls of Huntly, played an important part in the bloody history of Scotland's development as a nation. See: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huntly\\_Castle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huntly_Castle)*



### (4) Follow road around back of Castle - to old bridge

(57.45520; -2.78261) <https://w3w.co/grit.remaking.archive>

In about 100 m, at a road junction, carry straight on towards the old arched bridge over the Deveron (you may wish to deviate onto the rough riverbank path on your left for a short distance to appreciate the old bridge and the fast-flowing river here). (754 m)





## (5) Cross Castle Bridge

(57.45550; -2.78057) <https://w3w.co/palace.uplifting.sampled>  
Soon, in 130 m, cross the old bridge (Castle Bridge, or Elgin's Bridge)\* where there are excellent views up and down river, and the impressive driveway up to the Castle Hotel (formerly the Castle Lodge). When you are ready, carry on up the driveway towards the Castle Hotel. (883 m)

*\*Note: an old single span stone bridge over the River Deveron. The bridge, probably rebuilt in the 17thC on the foundations of an earlier structure (there are mediaeval mason's marks on some of the stonework), is an extremely scenic spot with fine views up and down river, with the eye also being led up the long and impressive driveway to the Castle Hotel.*



## (6) Pass around the Castle Hotel

(57.45964; -2.78041) <https://w3w.co/scaffold.craftsman.reefs>  
In 400 m you will arrive at a y-junction in front of the Castle Hotel\*. You may choose either the left or right fork, as they join up again at the rear of the building. (1.3 km)

*\*Note: the Castle Hotel (formerly the Castle Lodge), was built as a family home for the Dukes of Gordon during the 18thC in the mansion house style of the period. See: <https://canmore.org.uk/site/188148/huntly-castle-hotel> and <http://www.castlehotel.uk.com/>*



## (7) Left down Marquis Drive at Castle Lodge Farm

(57.46117; -2.78036) <https://w3w.co/risky.walls.hamsters>  
At the rear of the Castle Hotel, go left down Marquis Drive, with the Huntly Lodge Farm buildings on your right side. Carry on down Marquis Drive for about 1 km until it meets the B9022 main road. Turn left there to follow the pathway that runs parallel with the road, back in the direction of Huntly. In another 770 m the path meets the Bridge of Gibston over the River Deveron. Veer left here to cross the bridge and follow the pavement back towards Huntly. (1.5 km)



## (8) Left onto path for Meadow Plantings

(57.45191; -2.80269) <https://w3w.co/pull.investor.bloodshot>  
In 2.3 km from the Castle Hotel, at a walks signpost, just after crossing the Meadow Bridge on the outskirts of Huntly, turn left off the pavement onto a rough path through a belt of trees with the high wall of Huntly Cemetery on your right side. (3.8 km)



### (9) Left for riverside path

(57.45179; -2.79959) <https://w3w.co/topples.ends.installs>  
In another 200 m, or so, the path leaves the trees at a y-junction. Go left here to follow the now surfaced and wide path North towards the River Deveron. When the path reaches the banks of the river, follow it as it bends right and goes East, running parallel with the river which is now on your left side. Keep walking in the direction of the Nordic Ski Centre. (4.0 km)



### (10) Left onto rough riverside path

(57.45468; -2.79065) <https://w3w.co/bakers.treatment.kinder>  
In 1 km from Waypoint 9, approaching the Huntly Nordic Ski Centre\*, on your right side, go sharp left to join a rough riverside path. Carry on walking downstream on this rough path close to the water's edge as it soon opens out onto a grassy area, past the Ski Centre. There are lovely river views here. Cross the car-park and head towards the entrance/exit road for the car-park. (5 km)

*\*Note: the Huntly Nordic Ski Centre is the UK's only purpose-built all-weather facility for Nordic Skiing.*



### (11) Right onto minor road away from Castle

(57.45493; -2.78338) <https://w3w.co/command.keyboards.tipping>  
In 400 m, at a t-junction where the short section of Ski Centre car-park entrance/exit road meets the old access road for Huntly Castle, turn right to walk along this narrow road. At the end of the road, where there is an old stone bridge on your left side, veer left to follow Burnside Road going uphill for a short distance, looking out for a waymarked path into the trees on your right side. (5.4 km)



### (12) Right off Burnside Road into Meadow Plantation

(57.45212; -2.78638) <https://w3w.co/rust.enjoys.amplifier>  
In 400 m from the exit junction at the Ski Centre car-park, go right and down steps to join a path through the Meadows Plantation woodland. Keep following this path, running parallel with Burnside Road, visible through the trees on your right side, until you meet steps going up to join Riverside Drive in about 500 m. (5.8 km)





### (13) Up steps and left onto Riverside Drive

(57.45054; -2.79451) <https://w3w.co/distorts.reversed.anode>

In 500 m, ascend on steps to leave the Meadows Plantation and turn left to walk up the pavement on Riverside Drive for a short distance. (6.3 km)



### (14) Left onto smooth path through park

(57.44993; -2.79456) <https://w3w.co/expand.tasks.cobbles>

In about 70 m, just before Riverside Drive meets the A920 Deveron Road, turn left through wooden bollards to follow a surfaced path through a grassy area with the Meadows Plantation on your left side. Follow the path as it dips down and then rises again towards another set of wooden bollards, ignoring a path on your left going through the Meadows Plantation woodland. (6.4 km)



### (15) Straight on at posts - down rough lane to Meadow Avenue

(57.44980; -2.79028) <https://w3w.co/inflation.community.popped>

In 200 m, walk through the wooden bollards and carry straight on down a roughly surfaced lane, heading towards a red post-box visible on a wall ahead of you. In about 60 m, where the lane meets Meadows Avenue, at the red post-box, turn left. (6.6 km)



### (16) Right onto West Park Street

(57.44988; -2.78857) <https://w3w.co/wobbles.chew.garages>

In 200 m you will have arrived at the junction of Meadows Avenue with West Park Street. Cross the road and walk along the pavement of West Park Street in an Easterly direction, passing the impressive St Margaret's Catholic Church, in Italianate style, across the road on your right side. Soon you will arrive back at your walk start-point at the war memorial. (6.8 km)



## (17) Finish walk along Westpark Street - to Huntly war memorial

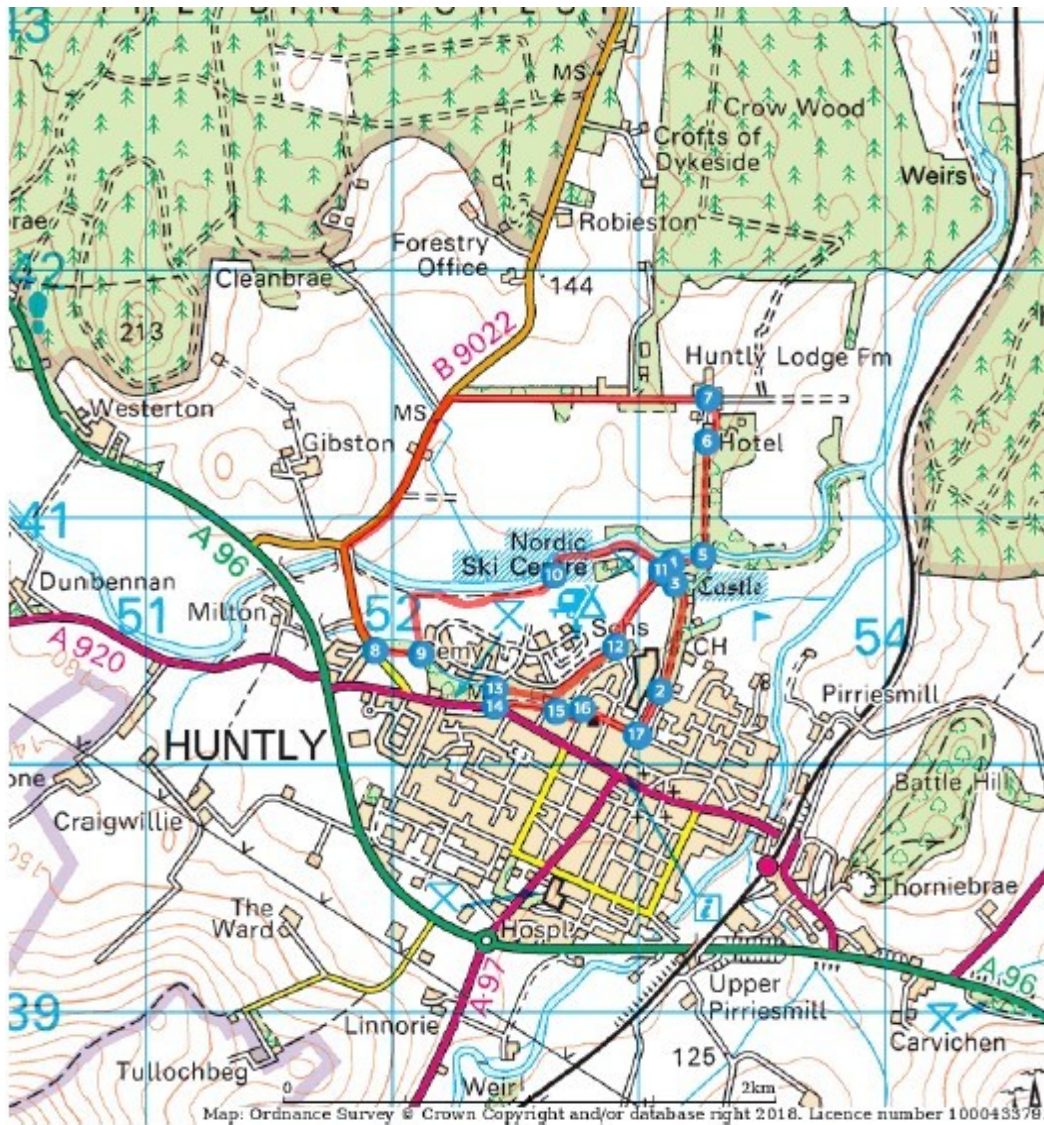
(57.44895; -2.78491) <https://w3w.co/either.sobs.splints>

In 200 m, you will have arrived back at your walk start-point, at the Huntly war memorial. We recommend that you consider walking down Castle Street from here to check out Huntly's impressive Square\*.

*\*Note: A circuit of The Square takes in the main points of interest: the Memorial Fountain; the Duke of Richmond statue, the Gordon Arms building, the Huntly Hotel building, the Brander Library and the old Post Office.*



## 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](#)