

The Mack Walks: Short Walks in Scotland Under 10 km

Inverurie-River Urie-The Bass-River Don Circuit (Aberdeenshire)

Route Summary

This easy, and surprisingly rural, walk provides a peaceful escape from the constantly busy comings and goings of Inverurie town centre. Historical interest from different periods is provided by the eye-catching Bass and Little Bass, the site of a Mediaeval motte and bailey castle, and an impressive set of carefully restored and preserved Pictish symbol stones.

Duration: 3 hours.



Route Overview

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Transport/Parking: Inverurie is well served by bus and rail links. Check timetables. There is a free car-park at the walk start point at George Square.

Length: 7.92 km / 4.92 mi. **Height Gain/Loss:** 50 meter.

Max Height: 72 meter. **Min Height:** 66 meter.

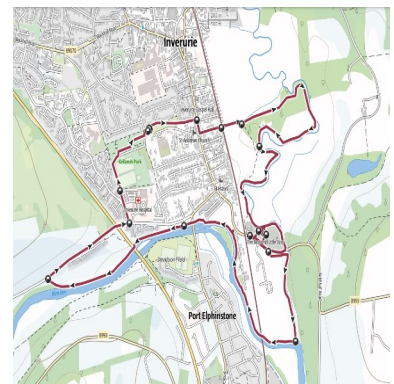
Surface: Moderate. A mix of paved surfaces, hard-surfaced paths, narrow, sometimes uneven, grassy paths. The circuit is not suitable for off-road mobility scooters due to narrow paths, and steps.

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 Inverurie.



Description

Capital of the Garioch, Inverurie is a busy, bustling town, much expanded by new housing in recent years, and perhaps not a place that would immediately spring to mind for a tranquil and scenic rural walk with the added injection of special historical interest. However, this route along the banks of the River Urie to its confluence with the River Don, and then upstream by the Don, although never far from the centre of the town, readily fulfills that description. At the mid-point of the walk there is a short diversion to the attractive old cemetery of Inverurie where there once stood a Mediaeval castle, associated community, and kirk. Here, the eye is immediately drawn to the Bass of Inverurie, a distinctive part-conical mound. In fact, the Bass is the remnant of a motte-and-bailey castle, believed to be based on an extensively re-worked natural mound, and is about 15 m high and 18 m in diameter. The Bass (motte) and the adjacent Little Bass (bailey) to the east are the remains of the Castle of Inverurie, the administrative centre of the Earls of Garioch in the 12th and 13th centuries. The timber constructed castle was used as a base by Robert the Bruce before his defeat of the Earl of Buchan in May 1308 at the Battle of Barra. The motte and bailey style of castle construction was prevalent in the early to mid Mediaeval period but the many examples were either abandoned and absorbed into the rural or urban landscape, or were developed into later stone castles. The extant infrastructure for the Bass of Inverurie is one of the few in Scotland to survive to this day. Between the Bass and Little Bass, now positioned in a modern glass shelter, stand four Class I Pictish symbol stones which were formerly built into the walls of the old kirk. One of the stones portrays the only occurrence of a single incised horse on a Pictish stone [see *Waypoint 8 for more information*]. This area, around where the Urie and Don meet, is the site of the Battle of Inverurie in 1745, the third last battle on British soil.



Waypoints

(1) Start the walk at the George Square car-park

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Start the walk from the car-park near the top of George Square, at the northern end of Kellands Park, in Inverurie. Walk down the pavement on George Square towards the junction with the High Street, at the bottom.



(2) Cross the High Street and go down Gatehouse Lane

In 340 m, or so, turn right upon meeting the High Street. In about 70 m, after passing St Andrews's Church, on your right side, cross the busy road with care, using the traffic island. Go left briefly, then go right to walk down Gatehouse Lane. (340 m)



(3) Cross railway line

In 220 m, at the end of Gatehouse Lane, assuming it is clear, cross the railway line at the crossing point. Now, carry more or less straight on, taking a path into a field, with the access drive for a house on your immediate right across the fence. (570 m)



(4) Veer left at y-junction

In just under 150 m, the path turns sharp right, past the boundary of the house and garden. Almost immediately, there is a y-junction where you take the left fork, heading through the open woodland in the direction of the River Urie. When you arrive at the riverbank, follow the riverside path as it follows the meandering course of the river. (720 m)



(5) Veer left at y-junction - along riverbank

In 1.22 km, facing an open area of grassland, take the left fork at a y-junction, continuing to follow the path along the riverbank. In about 650 m, approaching the Inverurie Cemetery, ahead of you, veer left to continue taking the riverside path, now with the cemetery wall fairly close on your right side. Soon, as you near the stone road bridge over the River Urie, follow the path as it turns sharp right and gently ascends to meet the pavement on the B993, Keithhall, road. Keep going for about 235m, back in the direction of Inverurie centre, with the road on your left side and the cemetery wall on your right side, until you arrive at the main gates for the cemetery. (1.94 km)



(6) Enter through main gates to Inverurie Cemetery

In 1.29 km, enter through the main gates to Inverurie Cemetery and make your way, forward then left, towards the obvious and striking "Bass"* mound (or "motte"). (3.23 km)



(7) Through gate and up steps of The Bass

In about 80 m from the gate, at the western end of the Bass mound (the "motte") there is an information board and a pedestrian gate leading to rough steps that take you to the top, where, despite the modest height (15m) there are fine views all around, and down to the "Little Bass" (the "bailey" area). When you are ready, descend the steps and through the gate, then turning right and following the path to the gap between the Bass and the Little Bass where Pictish stones now sit in a glass enclosure. (3.31 km)



** Note: The Bass of Inverurie is the remnant of a motte-and-bailey castle, believed to be based on an extensively re-worked natural mound about 15 m high and 18 m in diameter. The Bass and the adjacent Little Bass to the east are the remains of the castle of Inverurie, the administrative centre of the Earls of Garioch in the 12th and 13th centuries. The castle was used as a base by Robert the Bruce before his defeat of the Earl of Buchan in May 1308 at the Battle of Barra. The motte and bailey style of castle construction was prevalent in the early to mid Mediaeval period but the many examples were either abandoned and absorbed into the rural or urban landscape, or were developed into later stone castles. The extant infrastructure for the Bass of Inverurie is one of the few in Scotland to survive to this day.*

(8) Pictish Symbol Stones

Between the Bass and Little Bass sits a glass enclosure with three Pictish symbol stones*. At the time of writing there is no interpretation board (but that may come). When you are ready to move on, make your way back to the entrance gates, go out and turn sharp left, back on yourself, to re-trace your steps along the pavement, with the road on your right side, for about 145 m. You will see the entrance to a path across the road. (3.49 km)

** Note: These four Class I Pictish symbol stones were formerly built into the old churchyard walls and possibly removed from the foundations of the old church for the purpose of building the churchyard wall. One is a tall pillar bearing incised symbols of a crescent and V-rod, a mirror case symbol, serpent and Z-rod and a double disc and Z-rod. The second is a truncated slab with a disc and rectangle and the arch or horseshoe symbol. The third stone bears an incised double disc and Z-rod. The fourth stone is the only occurrence of a single incised horse on a Pictish stone. The stones were removed from their free-standing position in the churchyard for conservation in 2017, and were returned in 2019 to a new shelter within the cemetery between the Bass and Little Bass. Thanks to Aberdeenshire Council: https://online.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/smpub/master/detail.aspx?ref_no=NJ72SE0011*



(9) Cross road and follow path to riverbank

In 300 m from the Pictish Stones, cross the busy road with care, and veer left to follow a path (may be muddy) into the trees, and towards the River Urie. When you arrive at the riverbank, turn right, with the stone bridge behind you, and follow the riverside path, with the River Urie on your left side. (3.79 km)



(10) Hut at confluence of Urie and Don rivers

In 600 m, you will arrive at a tin shelter hut at the the point where the rivers Urie and Don meet. After taking in the scene, follow the riverbank path as it swings right, with the River Don now on your left side. Keep going along this path as it goes under a railway bridge. In just over 800 m,, after passing the sewage works on your right side, there is an option to divert a few meters to you right to check out a cairn to the Battle of Inverurie (1745)*. Unfortunately, at the time of writing, the information board has been damaged by the elements and is unreadable. After this point, keep following the riverbank path as it leads you under the road bridge at Elphinstone Road. You are likely to encounter ducks and swans here! (4.39 km)



** Note: The second Battle of Inverurie took place on 23 December 1745 and was part of the second major Jacobite rising in Scotland. The first Battle of Inverurie (also known as the Battle of Barra) occurred during the Wars of Scottish Independence in 1308. See: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Inverurie_\(1745\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Inverurie_(1745))*

(11) Veer right and up path above riverbank

In 1.32 km from Waypoint 10, the tin hut at the meeting of the two rivers, and about 50 m after passing under the stone road bridge at Elphinstone Road, veer slightly right to take a higher path that rises up above the level of the riverbank. Keep going on this tree-lined path, ignoring any steps to right or left until you reach the end of this section (in about 350 m), when you take the steps back down to the level of the riverbank. Turn right after descending the steps and carry on along the riverbank path, soon passing under the bridge for the A96 Inverurie By-pass Road. Keep going on this path for another 500 m, or so, until you reach a grassy field that rises up to your right towards a minor road. At this point, leave the riverside path and follow the path up to the road, (5.72 km)



(12) Go right along tarred minor road

In 920 m from Waypoint 11, after following the path up to the minor road (for Polner Dam), go through the gap (there is no field gate at the time of writing), turn right and walk along the road, soon passing houses below you on your right, and then crossing over the A96 Inverurie By-pass Road. 6.64 km)



(13) Left into Upperboat Road

In 630 m, soon after crossing over the A96 Inverurie By-pass Road, go left to cross the road and walk along the pavement on Upperboat Road, soon passing the entrance to the Inverurie Health Hub on your right, as you approach a pedestrian entrance to Kellands Park. (7.27 km)



(14) Right into Kellands Park

In 180 m, turn right into Kellands Park at the pedestrian entrance. At this point you may wish to take whatever route you like through the park, towards the far end of the Park at George Square (nearer to Inverurie town centre), where you started the walk. However, the route we suggest is: go left, then right, then left after the pavilion buildings to pass through the garden area with flower borders. (7.44 km)



(15) Finish walk back at the car-park off George Square

In 480 m, or so, after exiting Kellands Park at the George Square end (nearer to Inverurie town centre), finish the walk back at the George Square car-park where you started the walk. (7.92 km)

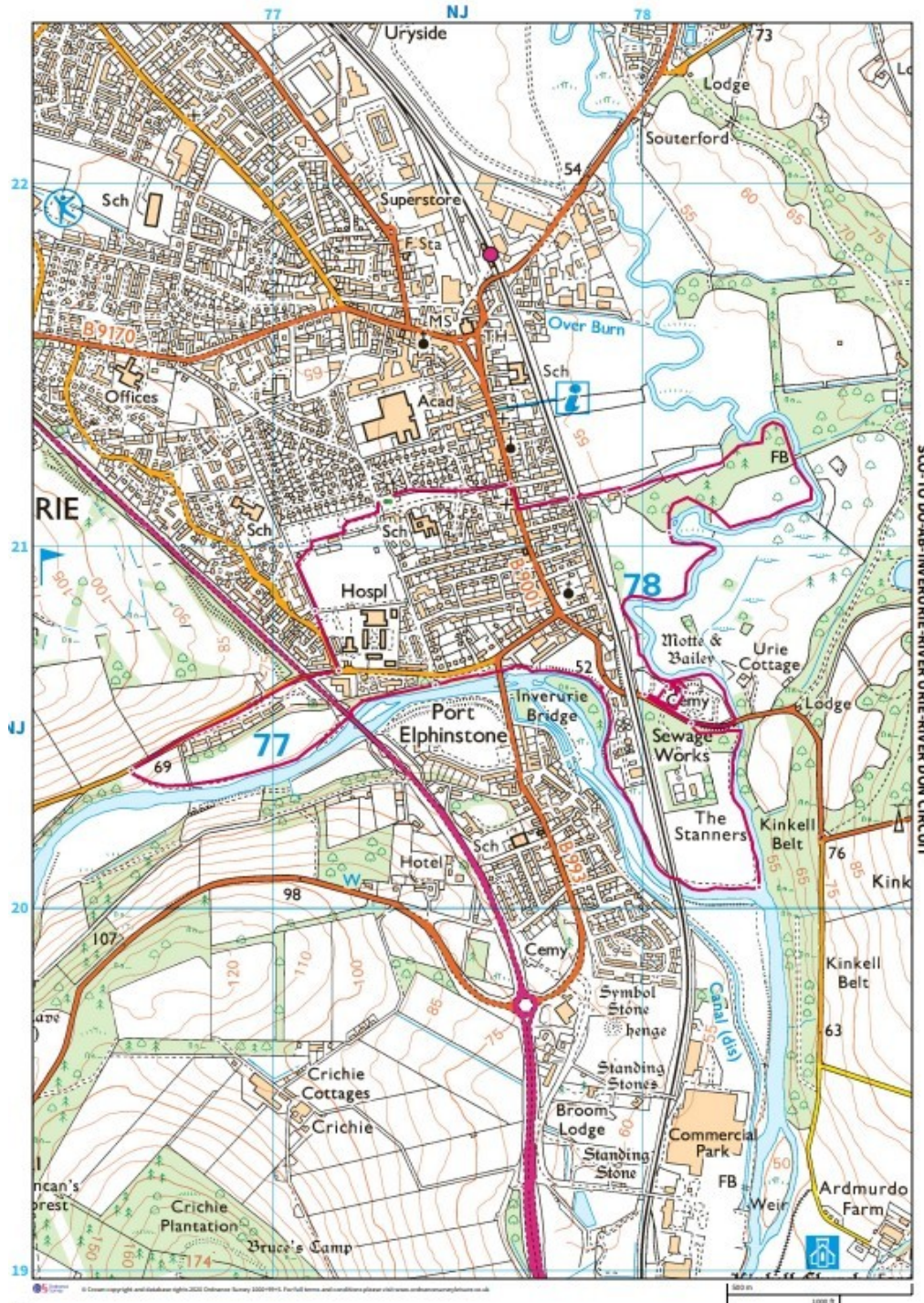


Route Map (with waypoints)

199-Inverurie-River Urie-River Don Circuit



Route Map



v1

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](#)

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