

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

## Millstone Hill-Heather Brig-Bennachie Forest Loop (Aberdeenshire)

### Route Summary

In our terms, at 12 km, this is a long walk, with almost 500 m of overall ascent. However, the slopes encountered are generally gradual in nature. The views from the summit of Millstone Hill are tremendous, and the peaceful mature forest environment is also very satisfying.

Duration: 4 hours



### Route Overview

**Duration:** 4 hours.

**Transport/Parking:** No public transport links nearby. The Donview car-park is a small car-park at the start/finish of the walk.

**Length:** 11.980 km / 7.49 mi

**Height Gain:** 483 meter **Height Loss:** 483 meter

**Max Height:** 394 meter **Min Height:** 112 meter

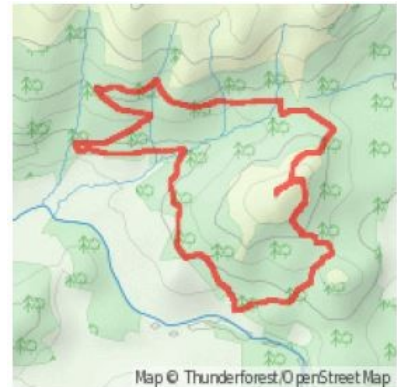
**Surface:** Moderate. Mostly well surfaced paths and forest roads.

**Child Friendly:** This walk exceeds our normal limits for distance and overall height gained. Be very sure that children are used to walks of this distance and overall ascent.

**Difficulty:** Hard.

**Dog Friendly:** Yes, but keep dogs on lead near to any livestock.

**Refreshments:** Options in Kemnay or Inverurie.



### Description

This leg-stretching ramble in the Bennachie range of hills is longer than our normal limit, caused by encountering forestry operations that required us to re-route on the fly! The walk ascends steadily to Millstone Hill, a southern spur of the Bennachie hills, from the fairly quiet Donview car-park near the beautiful banks of the River Don, in an area known as "My Lord's Throat", on the Monymusk side. The surrounding conifers are in various stages of maturity as you climb, eventually clearing to open, natural pine forest and heather as you start to get nearer to the hilltop. The final approach to the 409 m summit area, where there is a stone cairn, is surrounded by wind-blown heather moorland. The going here is fairly steep, but you are rewarded with fantastic panoramic views. To the north, the hugely impressive profile of the Mither Tap of Bennachie stands out, with the eye also drawn west along the other tops on the massif. Turning to the western aspect, on a clear day, you can pick out Mount Keen, Lochnagar, Morven, Buck of Cabrach, Ben Rinnes, to name a few of the more prominent peaks. Our route then descends the northern hillside, wonderfully open now as a result of major tree-felling work in recent years, to the boggy area known as the Heather Brig. Here two burns set off in opposite directions – the Clachie to the east, and the Birks to the west. From here the route gently ascends the southern flank of Bruntwood Tap, amongst mature pine forest, before gradually looping back through the trees to the Donview start-point, passing the dry-stone dykes of hill farmland on the way.



## Waypoints

### (1) Start from Donview car-park

(57.26050; -2.54494) <https://w3w.co/dusts.occupations.market>  
Start the walk from the information board at the Donview car-park. Turning to your right, there are two paths. The one on your immediate left is signposted the 'Millstone Hill Trail'. Do NOT take this path. Instead, take the unsigned path slightly to your right that heads up the hill in an easterly direction (this is actually the end section of the marked 'Millstone Hill Trail').



### (2) Follow path over x-roads with forest road

(57.26122; -2.54121) <https://w3w.co/positive.afraid.treatable>  
In about 250 m, follow the path over a junction with a forest road. (247 m)



### (3) Over forest road at x-roads again

(57.26132; -2.53603) <https://w3w.co/struggle.lamppost.tradition>  
In another 300 m, or so, again follow the path as it crosses over a forest road. (565 m)



### (4) And path crosses forest road once more

(57.26686; -2.52803) <https://w3w.co/tribal.query.spoke>  
In about 800 m, the path crosses over a forest road once more. Keep following this path uphill. The surrounding trees will start to clear as you get nearer to the top of Millstone Hill and eventually you will be walking above the tree line as the path swings left towards a heathery area below the hill-top. (1.4 km)



### (5) Take path left up to summit

(57.27293; -2.53488) <https://w3w.co/crisis.shielding.mouths>  
In 1.3 km. at a signposted junction, veer left to take the steep path to the summit of Millstone Hill. (2.7 km)



### (6) Summit of Millstone Hill

(57.27193; -2.53752) <https://w3w.co/added.messy.animates>  
After a steep 200 m ascent you are at the summit area of Millstone Hill where there is a stone cairn. Needless to say there are marvellous views all around. On the western aspect, on a clear day, you can pick out Mount Keen, Lochnagar, Morven, Buck of Cabrach, Ben Rinnnes, to name a few of the more prominent peaks. When you are ready, re-trace your steps back to the walk signpost at Waypoint 5, 200 m steeply downhill. (2.9 km)



### (7) Veer left and down for Heather Brig

(57.27297; -2.53495) <https://w3w.co/crisis.shielding.mouths>  
After a 200 m descent from the summit of Millstone Hill, at the y-junction where there is a walks signpost, do not take the path on the right that you ascended on but instead, go left and downhill in the directions signed for the 'Heather Brig'. (3.1 km)



### (8) Left along forest road

(57.27996; -2.53219) <https://w3w.co/isolated.incoming.afterglow>  
In 1.2 km, after descending from Millstone Hill, go left along the forest road. In about another 70 m, ignore the track on your right signed for the Heather Brig and carry on walking on the forest road for another 130 m, or so, after that, passing an opening on your left first, then arriving at a turn-off to your right. (4.3 km)



### (9) Go right to follow another forest road

(57.27954; -2.53655) <https://w3w.co/threaded.basic.landscape>  
In just over 200 m from turning on to the forest road at Waypoint 8, and just after passing a junction on your left, go right to follow an unsigned forest road. This road soon turns left to gently ascend through the forest, heading in a westerly direction. (4.5 km)



### (10) Veer left at this y-junction

(57.28198; -2.56516) <https://w3w.co/blanking.reserve.mimes>  
After 2.1 km gradual ascent through the Bennachie Forest you arrive at a fork in the road. The right-hand fork climbs up to join the Gordon Way path. Veer left at this y-junction as the forest road you are taking starts to gently descend in large zig-zag sections. (6.6 km)



### (11) Through x-roads and uphill

(57.27476; -2.55528) <https://w3w.co/ordinary.copycat.nightcap>  
After a long 3.4 km descent through the forest, with farmland now appearing at times on your right, go through an open x-roads area, taking the road, more or less ahead of you, that veers very slightly right and uphill (do NOT take the forest road options going sharp left or sharp right). (10.0 km)



### (12) Right off forest road

(57.26999; -2.55482) <https://w3w.co/pizzeria.anchorman.bandage>  
In 600 m, look out for a narrow path on your right that leaves the forest road. Follow this path, at first with fields on your immediate right, as it gently descends back through the forest towards your start-point, eventually passing through an area with young trees and high deer fences on both sides. Ignore any options to left and right, eventually passing signposts for the Millstone Hill Trail as your route nears the Donview car-park. (10.6 km)



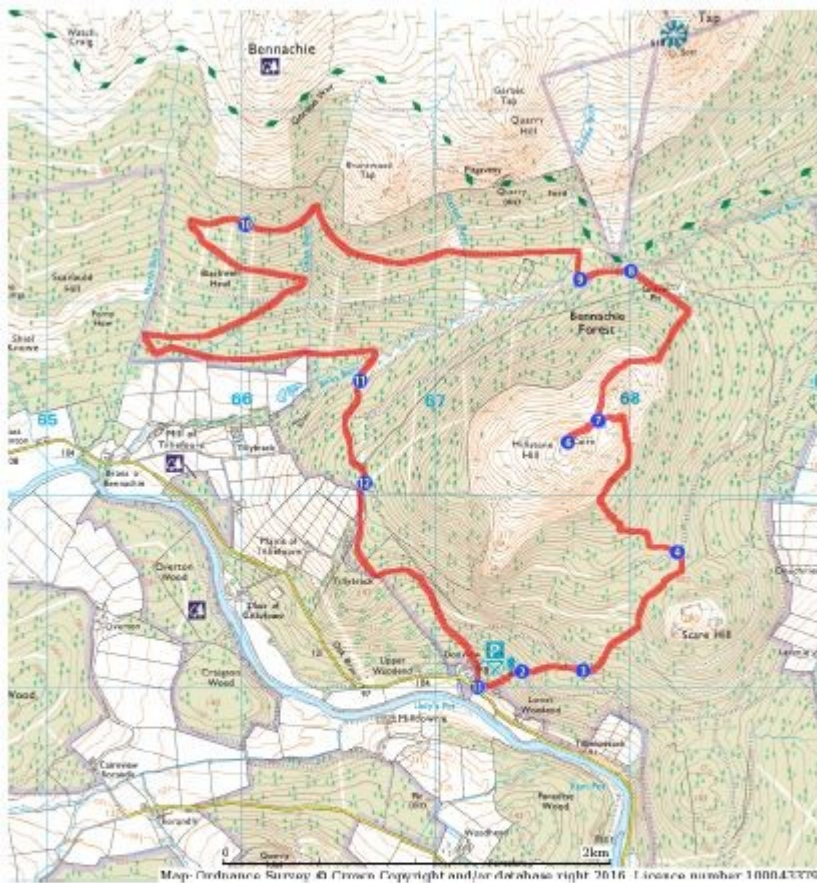
### (13) Finish walk back at Donview car-park

(57.26052; -2.54503) <https://w3w.co/dusts.occupations.market>

In 1.4 km you will have descended to the Donview car-park where you started the walk. (12.0 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](#)