

The Mack Walks: Short Walks in Scotland Under 10 km

Monymusk-River Don-Clyan's Dam Circular (Aberdeenshire)

Route Summary

*****As at Jan 2022, fallen trees are blocking the path between Waypoints 7 and 8. It is possible to go right on an indistinct path towards the adjoining field to go around the obstacle, returning to the route beside the last of a series of Redwood trees.*****

A short and easy walk in pleasant rural surroundings and on established paths from the eye-catching little village of Monymusk. There is negligible overall ascent over the varied circuit taking in mature woods, a riverside track, and a delightful little loch.



Duration: 1.25 hours.

Route Overview

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Transport/Parking: Infrequent Stagecoach #421 bus service from Inverurie. Check timetable. Easy parking in the village square at the start/end of walk.

Length: 3.870 km / 2.42 mi **Height Gain/Loss:** 55 meter

Max Height: 120 meter **Min Height:** 90 meter

Surface: Moderate. Mostly on good paths and farm tracks. A short section on a quiet minor road.

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

Difficulty: Easy. **Dog Friendly:** Yes, on lead on public roads and near wildfowl, as advised by signs during the walk.

Refreshments: The Grant Arms inn in Monymusk has limited opening hours. Options in Kemnay and Inverurie.



Description

This is a short but scenic walk from the tidy and architecturally interesting little village of Monymusk through mature woodlands on the Monymusk Estate, along the banks of the River Don, and by the pretty artificial loch at Clyan's Dam. There are good views of the Bennachie and Mennaway Hills, especially from the riverside. The Monymusk Estate was acquired by the Grant family in 1712 and Archibald Grant was made factor on his 20th birthday in 1716. Over the following 62 years Archibald, later 2nd Baronet, transformed the estate into one of the best examples of 18th century agricultural improvements, including a rebuild of the original 13th C Monymusk House.

In the course of laying out a large formal landscape he planted over 48 million trees. Sir Archibald was also responsible for a re-made planned village at Monymusk. His design comprised of cottages, an inn, and places of work and trade surrounding a central square, partly with a view to encouraging cattle drovers bound for Aberdeen to rest up their cattle in safety, and some comfort for themselves. Most of the buildings in the first incarnation of the new village were replaced in the 19th C. However, the origins of the village church go back much further. The history is not entirely certain but it seems that Malcolm "Canmore" (King Malcom III of Scotland) passed through Monymusk prior to a battle with Lulach, son of Macbeth, in 1058. He broke his journey to pray at an ancient Celtic church in the village and vowed that, if the battle was won, he would build a tower to improve the existing humble church building. He defeated Lulach, and his rebuilt church, with tower (still standing), later became the basis for an Augustinian priory which existed until it was damaged in a fire in the early 16th C. Today, the village is a dormitory settlement for commuters, and a base for salmon fishing on the River Don. Monymusk House is available for events, such as weddings. For more information see:

<https://www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk/monymusk/monymusk/index.html>

<http://www.monymusk.com/>



Waypoints

(1) Leave Monymusk Square on lane past church

(57.22658; -2.52439) <https://w3w.co/output.quilting.passage>

From the square in Monymusk go east down the lane that takes you past the church tower, passing an information board about the village on your left. Keep following the lane as it goes past a graveyard on either side and then through large metal gates*. Follow this access road as it proceeds down an avenue of mature conifers.

**Note: we have received a review indicating that these gates can be closed and locked. We revisited the walk to check out the situation. On our return visit, the gates were open. As the reviewer noted, if the gates are locked, you can obtain access to the access road beyond the gates by entering the child's playground a short distance away on your left. Go to the right-hand side of the far end of the playground and then go through the gap at the end of a stone wall to take a path to the access road and avenue of trees mentioned above.*



(2) Gates of Monymusk House

(57.22837; -2.51869)

After 420 m, the road veers left past gates for Monymusk House* where there is a limited view of the House. When you are ready to move on, carry on down the road you are on towards the river, with the grounds and Monymusk House on your right side. (420 m)

Note: for information about Monymusk House and Estate see: <http://www.monymusk.com/>



(3) Turn left along riverside path

(57.22957; -2.51808)

In 240 m, when the access road reaches the banks of the River Don, turn left and go through the metal pedestrian gate to follow the riverside path. (560 m)



(4) Right to memorial stone above riverside

(57.23343; -2.53074)

After 840 m on the riverbank path, go right to divert into a field, taking an indistinct grassy path towards the banks of the river, where there is a large memorial stone. (1.4 km)



(5) Memorial stone

(57.23381; -2.52992)

In 100 m, or so, you will have arrived at the large dressed stone in memory of one of the members of the Grant family*, landowners of the Monymusk Estate. There are great open views here towards the Mither Tap of Bennachie and elsewhere. It is possible to take a path upriver to a road bridge (and then return) if you wish to extend the walk. When you are ready, re-trace your steps to the woodland path at Waypoint 4 and turn right to carry on the direction you were going. (1.5 km)

Note: the late Francis T Grant, author of -

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Salmon-Flyfishing-Dynamics-Francis-Grant/dp/1853103942>



(6) Left at gates and along road-side verge

(57.23349; -2.53275)

In 200 m you arrive at metal gates leading out onto a minor road. Go through the pedestrian gate and turn left, crossing the road with care. Now walk along the verge back in the direction of Monymusk, passing a couple of cottages on your right and looking out for some large stones by the roadside barring access to a former car-parking area. (1.7 km)



(7) Right off road onto Clyan's Wood path

(57.23188; -2.53108)

In another 200 m, after passing a couple of cottages, turn right into a former car-parking area where vehicle access is now prevented by large stones set at the roadside. Follow the path up a slope into Clyan's Wood. (1.9 km)



(8) Left for Clyan's Dam path

(57.22879; -2.53720)

In 500 m, go left and over a wooden bridge to access the path along Clyan's Dam, with the lovely little loch on your right side. You are likely to see swans, ducks and other waterfowl. Ignore the first path going left away from the loch. (2.4 km)



(9) Left onto short path to farm road

(57.22697; -2.53944)

In 400 m, go left to leave the Dam path onto a path that goes through some derelict buildings. After about 60 m turn left to follow a rough field access road back towards Monymusk village. (2.8 km)



(10) Right at second St Andrews junction

(57.22767; -2.52692)

In 800 m, entering Monymusk Village, turn right into the second St Andrews housing development junction, looking for a lane to your left very soon. (3.6 km)



(11) Left down lane towards village square

(57.22707; -2.52657)

In 70 m, just before a car-parking area, turn left down a pedestrian lane and follow this lane as it veers right between houses back towards the village square. (3.7 km)



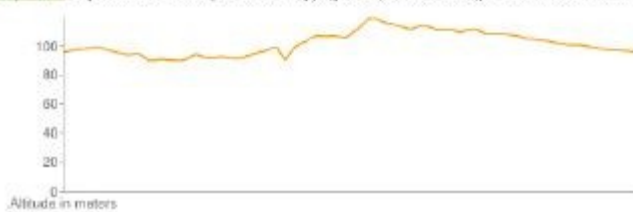
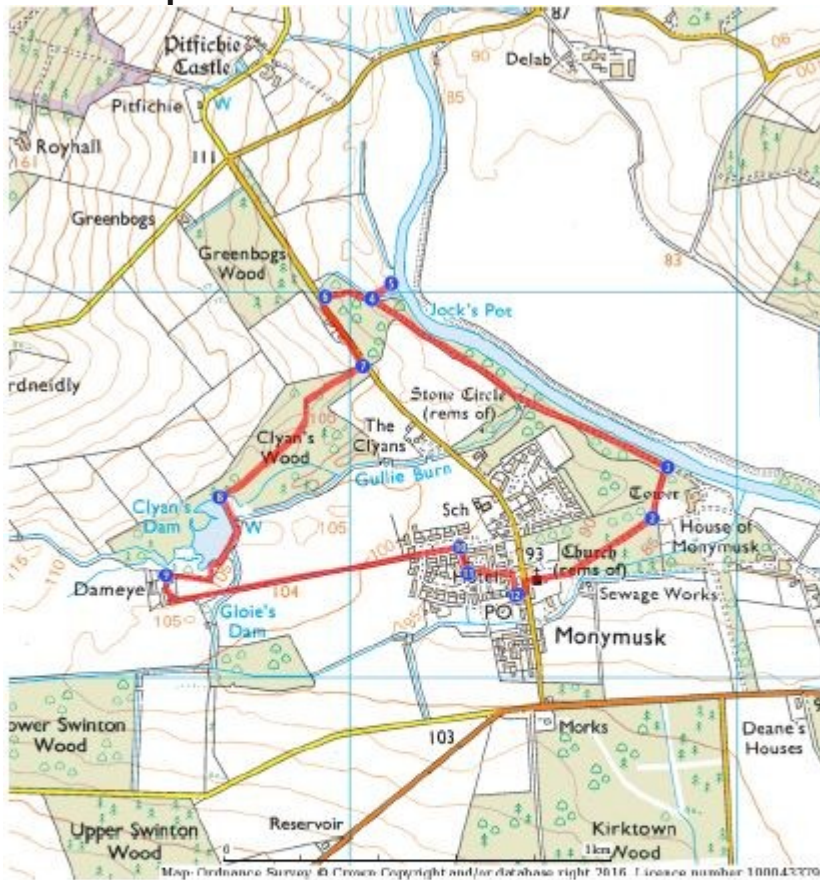
(12) Finish walk back at Monymusk village square

(57.22656; -2.52451) <https://w3w.co/output.quilting.passage>

After 200 m, you are back where you started the walk in Monymusk Square. (3.9 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](#)