

The Mack Walks: Short Walks in Scotland Under 10 km

Old Portlethen Ramble (Aberdeenshire)

Route Summary

An easy coastal ramble, mostly through arable farmland. The old fishing station and haul-out inlet for boats at Old Portlethen is a scenic highlight. It is important that walkers keep to the path on the stretch along the cliff-tops, where the slopes are steep and slippery.

Duration: 1.75 hours.



Route Overview

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Transport/Parking: Frequent bus, and some train services, to Portlethen from Aberdeen. Check timetables. Park in the Parish Church car-park at the start/end of walk.

Length: 4.900 km / 3.06 mi

Height Gain: 119 meter **Height Loss:** 119 meter

Max Height: 94 meter **Min Height:** 10 meter

Surface: Moderate. A mix of paved paths, tarred road, and grassy paths. Sections may be muddy after wet weather. Stay on the path beside steep cliffs. Not suitable for off-road mobility scooters due to narrow cliff-top paths and high stone steps.

Child Friendly: Yes, if children are used to walks of this distance and overall ascent. Ensure that children stay on the path beside steep cliffs.

Difficulty: Easy.

Dog Friendly: Yes, on lead on public roads and near farm animals.

Refreshments: Options in Portlethen.



Description

This is a short but varied coastal walk from the commuter settlement at Portlethen, close to the City of Aberdeen. The route encompasses a new community woodland, farmland, an old fishing village and a rugged coastline with steep cliffs, stony beaches and rocky inlets. Portlethen was originally a small fishing village. The haul-out inlet that serves as a safe haven now for “hobby” fishing craft is located in what is now called “Old Portlethen” or “Portlethen Village”, on a cliff-top position about 1 km east from Portlethen Parish Church, built in the 19thC, where the walk starts and ends. The modern town is to the west of the church, much of it built between 1985 and 2005 on an area of raised bog. Only about one half of the original moss survives and is recognised as an important nature preserve by the Scottish Wildlife Trust. The track of the ancient Causey Mounth road lies on higher ground near the moss. This important passage once connected the Bridge of Dee with Muchalls Castle and Stonehaven, and played its part in the turbulent history of Scotland. What little remains of Portlethen Castle has been subsumed within the farm-house at Mains of Portlethen, passed on the walk. The castle was built by Robert Buchan, who owned the estate of Portlethen in the 17th century, and is reputed to have had a secret underground passage to the seashore. Also passed en-route is the Mill of Findon, by the Burn of Findon, an early 19th C three-storey rubble building on an L plan, now converted as a dwelling house.



Waypoints

(1) Start walk at Parish Church car-park

(57.06000; -2.12819)

From the church car-park take the path, away from the church, through the trees, and signposted for the Community Woodland. You are heading in a broadly southerly direction, parallel with the railway line on your right.



(2) Sharp left to take path around Community Woodland

(57.05835; -2.13012)

In just over 200 m, upon entering the Community Woodland area, go sharp left at the signposts to take the path circling around the periphery. (233 m)



(3) Pass information board

(57.05728; -2.12849)

In another 200 m, or so, check out the information board then continue taking the circular path, now in a westerly direction. (419 m)



(4) Leave community woodland and go left along tarred road

(57.05690; -2.13165)

In just under 200 m, go out through the pedestrian gate and then left onto Downies Road, heading east, away from Portlethen. Very soon, take the tarred access going left. Follow this tarred road as it eventually bends right then left to arrive at a small group of houses at the top of the low hill. (626 m)



(5) Pass houses on right and straight ahead down grassy path

(57.05730; -2.12404)

In 600 m, or so, as you pass a small group of houses on your right, go straight on down a grassy path towards the coast. (1.2 km)



(6) Right to enter Old Portlethen the veer left down Broadhaven Road

(57.05694; -2.11664)

In 400 m, the grassy path arrives at the hamlet of Old Portlethen. Go right onto the tarred road entering Old Portlethen then quickly veer left onto Broadhaven Road, heading towards the coast. Keep following this road downhill until it becomes an access road to an old fishing station on the headland, just beyond a haul-out area for small fishing boats in a little cove. (1.6 km)



(7) Up stone steps on left before white house then through gap into field

(57.05769; -2.10837)

In 600 m, just before the old white-washed fishing station (salmon?), turn left off the access road and up some stone steps to go through a gap into the field. Turn right here to follow the field boundary. Follow this path above the sometimes steep cliffs (take care - stay on the path!), eventually passing above the stony beach at May Craig. (2.2 km)



(8) Through gate and up grassy lane

(57.06155; -2.10924)

In 700 m, after passing above the stony beach at May Craig, go left through a pedestrian gate, and head away from the coast up a grassy lane between fields. (2.9 km)



(9) Leave grassy lane and straight on at tarred road

(57.06083; -2.11743)

In 500 m, at the end of the grassy lane, go straight on up the tarred road, passing the Mains of Portlethen farm on your right side. (3.4 km)



(10) Right down to Mill of Findon

(57.06131; -2.12039)

In just over 100 m, after passing the Mains of Portlethen farm buildings, go right down a tarred road that will take you past buildings on both sides of the road at the Mill of Findon. Keep going until you enter a tunnel, passing under the railway lines. (3.5 km)



(11) Left after tunnel to follow path alongside railway line

(57.06564; -2.12471)

In 700 m, after passing through the tunnel under the railway lines, go left through a car parking area and then follow the path alongside the railway line on your left. Pass by the railway station on your left. (4.2 km)



(12) Left across bridge after railway station

(57.06067; -2.12899)

In 600 m, after passing the railway station, go left across the road bridge. (4.8 km)



(13) Finish walk back at church car-park

(57.06009; -2.12817)

In just over 100 m, you will have returned to the church park where you started the walk. (4.9 km)



car-

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](#)