

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

## Old Portlethen-Findon Moor Circuit (Aberdeenshire)

### Route Summary

A scenic coastal circuit. The pretty cove where boats haul out onto the shore at Old Portlethen kicks off the cliff-top section of the walk which ends at the wild area of moorland at Findon Moss. Check the safety note in our walk description before embarking on this route.

Duration: 2.5 hours.



### Route Overview

**Duration:** 2.5 hours.

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

**Length:** 7.260 km / 4.54 mi

**Height Gain:** 189 meter. **Height Loss:** 189 meter.

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

**Surface:** Moderate. A mix of grassy paths, rough roads and tarred surfaces. Sections of coastal path a bit overgrown in summer months. Also, see Findon Burn safety note in walk Description. **Difficulty:** Medium.

**Child Friendly:** Yes, if children are used to walks of this distance and overall ascent. But see Findon Burn safety note in walk Description. Ensure that children stay on the path beside steep cliffs.

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

**Refreshments:** Options in Portlethen.



### Description

This is a varied and scenic coastal walk from the commuter and commercial settlement at Portlethen, close to the city of Aberdeen. It is a variation and extension of our [Old Portlethen Ramble](#) walk. The route takes in farmland, an unusual expanse of coastal moorland, two old fishing villages, 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. Our route eventually turns away from its north-bound coastal track, back towards Portlethen, at Findon Moss, an area of heather moor on a headland below the modern village of Findon. Findon (or 'Finnan') was once a fishing village. In the late 19thC around 30 boats were hauled out on the rocky shore, and around a 100 fishermen made a living from the sea. The style of smoked haddock, famously called the 'Finnan Haddie' originated here! The modern town of Portlethen is to the west of the Parish 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 now 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.



**Safety Note:** At Waypoint 6, where there is a wooden footbridge over the Findon Burn, there is an Aberdeenshire Outdoor Access sign indicating that the next section of the path, over the bridge, has been damaged and walkers should proceed at their own risk. With appropriate care, we found that the path on the eroded bank of the burn is quite passable, but may not suit all walkers. Also, watch out for any broken planks on the bridge itself.

## Waypoints

### (1) Start walk at the car-park for Porthlethen Parish Church off Cookston Rd.

(57.05992; -2.12829)

<https://w3w.co/appointed.spearhead.recording>

Start the walk from the car-park for Porthlethen Parish Church off Cookston Road. Walk downhill on the car-park access road back to Cookston Road. Cross the road and turn right to walk along the pavement with the Portlethen Medical Centre on your left side. Immediately after passing the Centre, turn right to cross the road again and take a rough road going gently uphill. As the road ascends there are fields on either side and good views all around.



### (2) Leave the rough road and veer left onto the tarred road

(57.05779; -2.12499) <https://w3w.co/podcast.buggy.laugh>

In about 550 m the rough road meets a narrow tarred road at a bend. Leave the rough road and veer left onto the tarred road which soon bends sharp left at a house. Keep following the road for a short distance until it ends at an entrance to a grassy path. Now follow the grassy path downhill towards the sea and the little settlement of Portlethen Village (also known as 'Old Portlethen') (564 m)



### (3) Right into Portlethen Village then veer left down Broadhaven Road

(57.05697; -2.11665) <https://w3w.co/sleep.ambient.proudest>

In 550 m, passing the Neuk bar and restaurant on your right side, you will emerge onto Craigmarn Road in Portlethen Village. Turn right here to walk along Craigmarn Road for 30 m, then veer left to walk down Broadhaven Road. As you get closer to the sea and cliffs, the public road ends and becomes a rough road descending towards a little cove with fishing/leisure boats hauled up under an old white-painted salmon fishing station on the headland. (1.1 km)



### (4) Veer left onto coastal path behind old Salmon Fishing Station

(57.05768; -2.10829) <https://w3w.co/glossed.dent.deal>

In 600 m, just before arriving at the white-painted old fishing station (now a private residence, so not accessible) veer left, through a gap in the fence by an old stone stile, then go right, onto the coastal path as it passes behind the white building then heads left, north along the clifftop at the edge of fields. Keep following this clifftop path, with fields on your left side and some wonderful coastal views on your right, for 700 m. (1.7 km)



## (5) Sharp right to continue on coastal path

(57.06155; -2.10922) <https://w3w.co/feathers.spaceship.froth>

In 700 m, the coastal path arrives at a field gate to a grassy lane going inland. You are turning sharp right here to walk away from the gate and continue on the coastal path which becomes more overgrown, passing through some thick gorse bushes for a section before turning left at a headland and dropping fairly steeply to a little footbridge over the Burn of Findon. Watch out for the high steps on the path, partially obscured by vegetation in Summer. (2.4 km)



## (6) Cross wooden bridge and go right up steep path

(57.06260; -2.10755) <https://w3w.co/pokes.stance.rods>

In 200 m from the gate at Waypoint 5, you will have descended to the little wooden footbridge over the Burn of Findon. At the bridge there is an Aberdeenshire Outdoor Access sign indicating that the next section of the path, over the bridge, has been damaged and walkers should proceed at their own risk. With appropriate care, we found that the path on the eroded bank of the burn is quite passable, but watch out for any broken planks on the bridge itself. Again, there are steps to negotiate as you ascend the (overgrown in Summer) path steeply uphill towards the Survitec lifeboat yard above you. However, there is a wooden handrail to assist in places. Once up at the level of the Survitec yard, follow the clear and obvious signs to walk around the perimeter of the yard, eventually passing the main buildings on your right as you head out of the yard, uphill on a tarred road. (2.6 km)



## (7) After Survitec yard follow tarred road uphill

(57.06442; -2.10589) <https://w3w.co/resides.assist.refilled>

In 300 m, you will have cleared the main area of the Survitec yard. Now head uphill on the tarred access road towards the little village of Findon\*. (2.9 km)

*\*Note: Findon (or 'Finnan') was once a fishing village. In the late 19th Century around 30 boats and around 100 fishermen worked from the rocky shore, and the style of smoked haddock called the 'Finnan Haddie' originated here!*



## (8) Right onto rough road

(57.06744; -2.10524) <https://w3w.co/shifts.century.noses>

In 400 m, ascending in an inland direction on the access road from the Survitec yard, you will arrive at a rough public road (part of Findon's Old Inn Road) on your right. Turn right here and follow this road as it soon bends left at a house, then right onto a tarred road with houses. Follow this short road until it reaches a dead-end for vehicles. (3.3 km)



### (9) At end of cul-de-sac road take rough coastal path

(57.06781; -2.10232) <https://w3w.co/carriage.nozzle.greet>

In 200 m, at the end of Old Inn Road cul-de-sac, take the rough grassy path towards the coastline and Findon Moss. Soon you will arrive at the broad heathery headland where you follow the obvious main path around the moorland for about 800 m, with the clifftop always fairly close (but not too close!) on your right side. (3.5 km)



### (10) Left at t-junction with rough road

(57.07165; -2.09811) <https://w3w.co/fatigued.upwardly.caring>

In 800 m, approaching a large rock, the path meets with a rough road at a t-junction. Go left to follow the rough road. In 100 m, the track meets another, more well defined rough road, at a t-junction. Go left here to follow this road back towards the village of Findon where it joins a tarred access road for a short section. (4.3 km)



### (11) Veer left onto minor tarred road

(57.07032; -2.10386) <https://w3w.co/then.elevates.chromatic>

In 500 m, at a road junction go second left (don't go first left, down Old Inn Road) to follow Findon Road, ensuring that you walk on the right side of the road, facing any oncoming traffic (it is a quiet road). Soon you will have passed through the little village of Findon. At a junction in the centre of the little settlement, swing right and inland (the narrower road going downhill on your left at this point is for the Survitec yard on the clifftops). (4.8 km)



### (12) Left at t-junction on tarred roads

(57.06928; -2.11485) <https://w3w.co/finishes.submits.buying>

In 800 m, with a house on your left side, go left at a t-junction to continue following Findon Road. In 140 m, where a road veers left, ensure that you follow the main Findon Road as it bends sharply right towards the railway embankment and the large tunnel underneath it, clearly visible ahead of you. Go through the short tunnel, underneath the railway embankment. (5.6 km)



### (13) Left after railway tunnel down Thistle Drive then follow path parallel with railway line

(57.06799; -2.12278) <https://w3w.co/wriggle.agreed.somewhere>  
In 700 m, turn left after the railway tunnel down a section of Thistle Drive then, at another railway embankment tunnel, carry straight on, now following a path below, and parallel with, the railway embankment above you on your left, with a metal fence close on your left side and houses on your right side. From here, it is just over 400 m on the, at times slightly overgrown, path to the railway station car-park. (6.3 km)



### (14) Cross pedestrian rail bridge at station

(57.06181; -2.12784) <https://w3w.co/blogging.groups.abandons>  
In 700 m from the last waypoint, turn left from the car-park onto the Portlethen railway station platform, then left again to cross the railway line to the other platform using the pedestrian bridge. On the other side, leave the platform to walk up the access road, with your start point for the walk, at the Parish Church car-park clearly visible a short distance ahead of you, with the Portlethen Medical Centre on your left side and the railway line on your right side. (7.0 km)

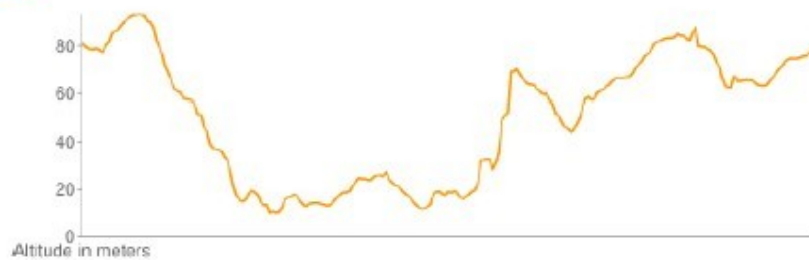
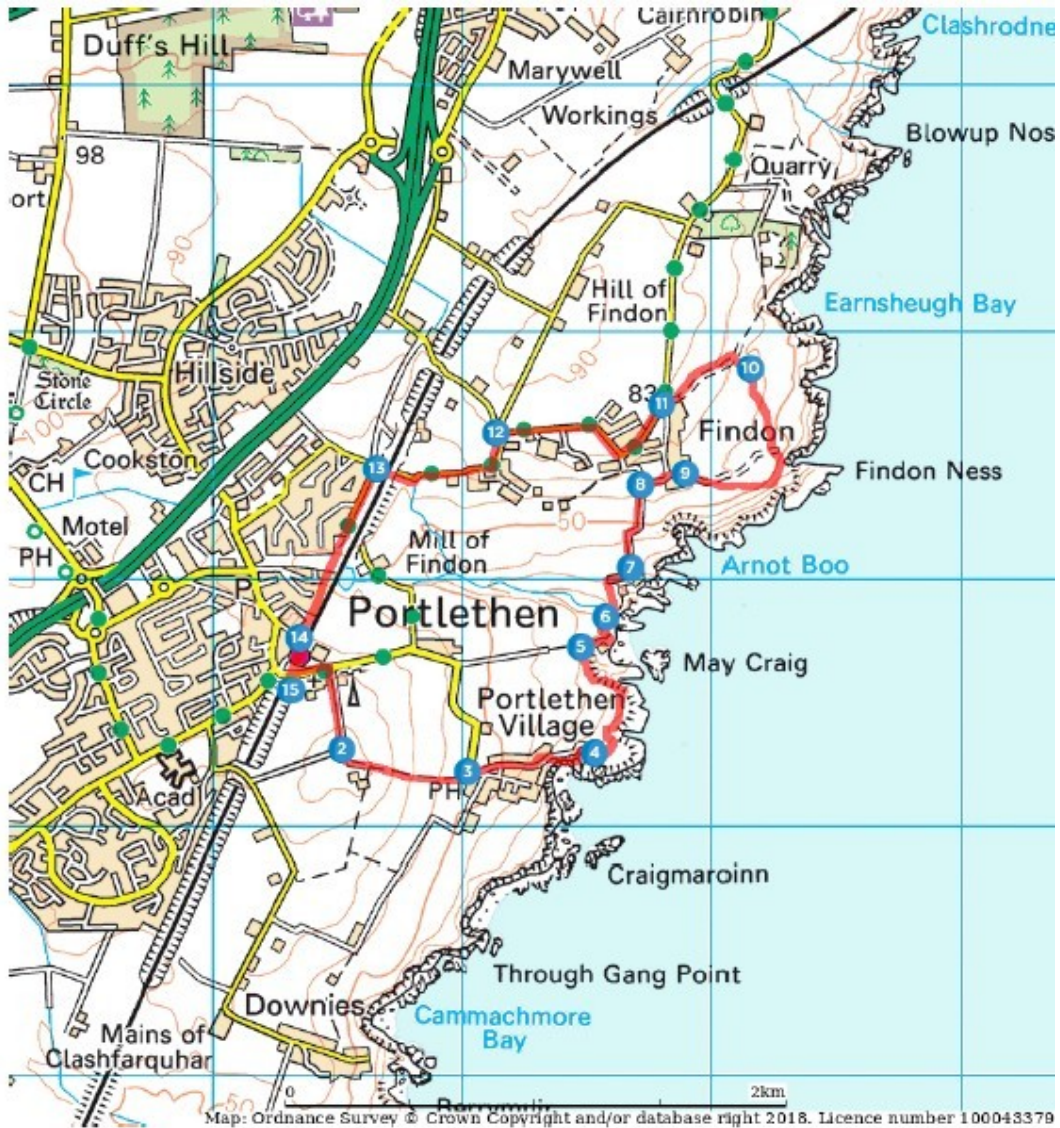


### (15) Finish the walk back at the car-park for Porthlethen Parish Church

(57.05992; -2.12839) <https://w3w.co/appointed.spearhead.recording>  
In 300 m, after crossing Cookston Road and ascending to the church and cemetery car-park, you will have arrived back at your start point. (7.3 km)



## Route Map



### Links:

[Photos from Walk](#)

[Download Route Guide](#) (PDF with illustrated Waypoints)

[Download GPX file](#) (GPS Exchange Format)

[Access Walk on Viewranger](#)

[Access the Walk on OutdoorActive](#)

[Access Walk on OSMaps](#)

[Access Walk on Wikiloc](#)