

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

## Pitfichie-Whitehill Stone Circle-Green Hill (Aberdeenshire)

### Route Summary

One of our longer walks at nearly 10 km, with a fairly strenuous 350 m overall ascent. Mainly a forest walk with a mid-section amongst heather moorland on the Green Hill. Interesting historical aspects and marvellous views from the summit and at other points during the route.

Duration: 3.5 hours



### Route Overview

**Duration:** 3.5 hours.

**Transport/Parking:** Leave the A944 at Tillyfourie joining the B993. After about one mile, turn left at the sign for the Whitehills Cycle Trails, then left again in about half a mile for the car-park. Stagecoach services between Aberdeen and Alford stop at Tillyfourie. Check timetable. Rough-surfaced car-park at the start/finish point.

**Length:** 9.920 km / 6.20 mi

**Height Gain:** 346 meter

**Height Loss:** 346 meter

**Max Height:** 391 meter

**Min Height:** 200 meter

**Surface:** Moderate. A mix of good forest roads and paths. The section ascending to Green Hill summit is quite stony.

**Child Friendly:** Yes, but this is quite a strenuous walk. Only if children are used to walks of this distance and overall ascent.

**Difficulty:** Medium.

**Dog Friendly:** Yes, but watch out for mountain bikers, though!

**Refreshments:** Nearest options in Alford and Westhill.



### Description

This is a moderately strenuous hill and forest walk in a very scenic area popular with mountain bike enthusiasts. The walk starts and finishes along the main forest road at the base of the Menaway Hills – Pitfichie, Cairn William and Green Hill being the most prominent peaks of the range. At various points along this road, marvellous views open up of the farmland and forests in the Monymusk area, to the east. About one mile into the walk the Whitehill Stone Circle is encountered. This late Neolithic stone monument, as with the many other recumbent stone circles found in the NE of Scotland, was probably constructed and used for ceremonial purposes, during the second and third millennia B.C. Most of the upright stones have fallen, but the raised low cairn and pit within the circle are still very obvious, possibly the site of ancient cremation burials.

Climbing up through the forest, the environment changes to open moorland in the approach to the summit of Green Hill. This is a great all-around viewpoint, looking down on the fertile Howe of Alford. In particular, there are magnificent sweeping views on all the western aspects. On a clear day you can easily pick out the following prominent hill-tops: Mount Keen; Lochnagar; Morven; Ben An; Buck of Cabrach; Ben Rinnes; Knock Hill; Hill of Foudland. Descending from the hill-top, a solitary standing stone is seen amongst the heather. This is the Luath Stone, traditionally associated with marking the spot where Lulach, the stepson of King Macbeth of Scotland (c.1005-1057), was murdered. However, the evidence for this is thin. The return route is on forest roads, sometimes with fine open views to the east.



## Waypoints

### (1) Start at the Pitfichie Forest Car-park

(57.20827; -2.57281) <https://w3w.co/sprayed.thin.storyline>

Start the walk at the Pitfichie Forest-Whitehill Stone Circle car-park. Walk gently uphill past the steel gate and proceed along the forest road as it climbs away from the car-park in a westerly direction. At various points along this road, marvellous views open up of the farmland and forests in the Monymusk area, to the east.



### (2) Right and gently uphill at y-junction

(57.20901; -2.59267) <https://w3w.co/fail.output.hockey>

In 1.2 km from the car-park, at a y-junction, follow the main forest road as it bends right and goes gently uphill. (1.2 km)



### (3) Check out Whitehill Stone Circle

(57.21084; -2.59231) <https://w3w.co/bongo.cascaded.tripled>

In another 300 m, you will arrive at the Whitehill Stone Circle on your left. As with the many other recumbent stone circles found in the NE of Scotland, it was probably constructed, and used for ceremonial purposes, during the the second and third millennia B.C. Most of the upright stones have fallen, but the west flanker stone to the recumbent still stands, as does an upright to the NW of the circle. The raised low cairn and pit within the circle are still very obvious, possibly the site of cremation burials. When you are ready to move on, return to the forest road, turn left along it and carry on. (1.5 km)



### (4) Left and up forest track

(57.21703; -2.58712) <https://w3w.co/drifter.crumb.blinking>

After a further 800 m, or so, at a green post on your right where the road widens and veers to the right, go left to follow a path into the trees. The immediate ascent onto the path is quite steep, but the path soon assumes a more gentle ascent through the forest. Continue up through the trees, eventually reaching more open moorland to the west. Here, the path turn sharply right and ascends more steeply towards the summit of the Green Hill. There are great views to your left. (2.3 km)



### (5) Cairn on summit of Green Hill

(57.22053; -2.59342) <https://w3w.co/dishes.treaty.skims>

In about 1 km from leaving the forest road you will have arrived at the summit of Green Hill, where there is a small cairn of stones. This is a great all-around viewpoint, looking down on the fertile Howe of Alford. In particular, there are magnificent views to the west. On a clear day you can easily pick out the following prominent hill-tops: Mount Keen; Lochnagar; Morven; Ben An; Buck of Cabrach; Ben Rinnes; Knock Hill; Hill of Foudland. When you are ready, continue along the path in a northerly direction as it starts to descend. (3.3 km)



### (6) Passing the Luath Stone

(57.22493; -2.59336)

<https://w3w.co/commenced.contemplate.textiles>

In 600 m from the Green Hill summit cairn, watch out for a single standing stone in the heather below you on your left, about 150 m away. There are three small pine trees close to the stone. This is the Luath Stone. Traditionally, it is associated with marking the spot where Lulach, the stepson of King Macbeth of Scotland (c. 1005-1057), was murdered. However, the evidence for this is thin, and the stone may have had a less colourful purpose. Carry on down the path, with a wide expanse of heather on the left, and Pitfichie Forest, getting closer and closer, on the right. (3.9 km)



### (7) Go right at open space

(57.22990; -2.58788) <https://w3w.co/gallons.prowl.positions>

In another 700 m, (now 1.3 km from the Green Hill summit cairn), you arrive at an open space beside a forest road, with a green marker post on your left. On one side, facing you, the road ascends to your left. Your route, however, is to go right and take the forest road downhill through the trees. (4.6 km)



### (8) Right to start return on forest road

(57.22923; -2.57218) <https://w3w.co/patching.backed.squares>

After a gentle descent of 1.2 km, you will have arrived at the main forestry road at the base of Pitfichie Forest. Turn right here to start your return to your starting point at the car-park. This return leg is approximately 4.1 km in length. Intermittently, there are superb open views to your left of the countryside around Monymusk and further beyond. (5.8 km)



## (9) Finish walk back at car-park

(57.20830; -2.57290) <https://w3w.co/sprayed.thin.storyline>

After 4.1 km you will have arrived back at the car-park where you started the walk. (9.9 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 Walk on OutdoorActive](#)

[Access Walk on OSMaps](#)

[Access Walk on Wikiloc](#)