

The Mack Walks: Short Walks in Scotland Under 10 km

Potarch Bridge-Craigmore Circular (Aberdeenshire)

Route Summary

A relatively gentle forest walk over a tranquil wooded hillside in the Deeside valley. The attractive arched Potarch Bridge at the start/end of the walk makes for a very scenic outlook over the River Dee and surrounding countryside.

Duration: 2 hours.



Route Overview

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Transport/Parking: There is a bus stop at the public car-park at the walk start/end point. Frequent Stagecoach Deeside bus services. Check timetables. There is a public car-park at the walk start/end point.

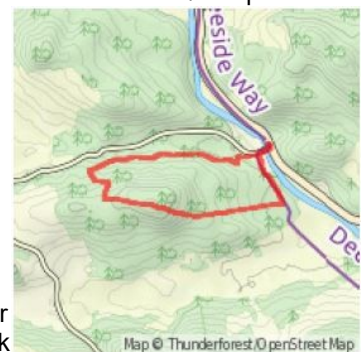
Length: 6.120 km / 3.83 ml

Height Gain: 164 meter. **Height Loss:** 164 meter.

Max Height: 221 meter. **Min Height:** 89 meter.

Surface: Moderate. A small section on tarred road/pavement at start/end. Otherwise, good forest roads and paths. Not suitable for off-road mobility scooters due to steep, narrow paths with tree roots. An alternative route is possible by staying on forest roads (avoiding summit and other footpaths). In which case, go straight ahead at Waypoints 5 and 10. Click [here](#) for alternative route map.

Difficulty: Easy/Medium. **Child Friendly:** Yes, if children are used to walks of this distance and overall ascent. **Dog Friendly:** Yes, on lead at start/end on, or near, public roads. **Refreshments:** The Potarch Cafe/Restaurant near the walk start/end serves snacks. We can also recommend the take-away sandwiches and hot snacks at the Village Store in Kincardine O'Neill.



Description

This is a very pleasant woodland walk in the Ballogie Estate woodlands close to the hamlet of Potarch on Deeside. The Estate encourages walkers to enjoy this route, which is quite short and readily accessible to all. Less experienced walkers can be assured that the ascent to the tree-covered summit of Craigmore, a low hill on the southern banks of the River Dee, is very gradual. The woodland environment is mixed, with fairly widely spaced pines sharing the space with birch, rowan and alder. A very attractive feature of the walk, at the start/end point, is crossing the Potarch Bridge, where there are fine views of the River Dee and the Dee Valley. Completed in 1813, to a design by engineer Thomas Telford, this is a handsome 3-span bridge with pedestrian refuges. There were considerable delays during its construction due to timber being floated downstream during river spates (no HGV timber lorries to do the job in those days!) causing damage to the developing bridge structure. Just upstream from the bridge is a place called "Jock's Leap", where the river rushes between ledges of rough flat rocks. A local story from the 18thC tells of Jock Young, a local Deeside lad accused of theft, who escaped from his captors by jumping across the rocky gap where the river narrows. Apparently, his freedom did not last, and Jock eventually encountered the hangman's noose. Just over the bridge you will pass a fine old building, the former Potarch Hotel, now an attractive bistro-style café/restaurant looking out over the Potarch Green. The first inn was built at Potarch in 1740, becoming a popular stopping point for travellers after the construction of the bridge. Outside the hotel you will find the "Dinnie Stanes", a pair of lifting stones made famous by local stonemason Donald Dinnie, who carried the stones across the width of the Potarch Bridge in 1860, and went on to have an illustrious international career as a "strongman". The stones are composed of granite, with iron rings. They have a combined weight of 332.49 kilograms (733 lb). For more info, see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dinnie_Stones



Waypoints

(1) Start walk from the Potarch car-park off the A93

(57.06573; -2.64840) <https://w3w.co/vanish.replying.into>

Start the walk from the Potarch car-park off the A93 North Deeside Road, near the Potarch Bridge*. After checking out the interesting information board**, turn right onto the B993 road in order to cross the bridge. The road can be busy so take appropriate care, especially when stopping on the bridge to admire the fine views of the River Dee and the Dee Valley. Once over the bridge, carry on walking along the pavement towards the Potarch Cafe/Restaurant.

**Note: Built 1811-13 to a design by engineer Thomas Telford. A 3-span bridge with semi-hexagonal pedestrian refuges. There were delays during its construction due to timber being floated downstream (no HGV timber lorries in those days!) causing damage to the developing bridge structure.*



***Note: The information board relates a story from the 18th C of Jock Young, a local lad accused of theft who escaped from his captors by jumping across a rocky outcrop where the river narrows, just upstream from where the Potarch Bridge is now. Apparently Jock was eventually hanged for his crimes. You can access this area of the river from the Deeside Way path at the western end of the Potarch Bridge car-park. Take great care when close to the river's edge.*

(2) Turn left off B993 for Forest Walks opposite Potarch Cafe

(57.06476; -2.65043) <https://w3w.co/trudges.womanly.strapped>

In about 200 m, at the Potarch Cafe/Restaurant road junction with the Old Military Road, turn left to cross the B993 road with care. There are various signs for destinations along this Old Military Road. The sign relevant to our route is the one for 'Forest Walks'. Cross the Old Military Road if required and then walk along the edge of the Potarch Green, at the side of the Old Military Road, making for a car-park ahead of you. (201 m)



(3) Right into car-park and veer slightly left for Deeside Way

(57.06366; -2.64959) <https://w3w.co/sour.pages.crescendo>

In just over 130 m, turn right off the Old Military Road to cross the car-park at Potarch Green, veering slightly left towards the access to the Deeside Way path at the edge of the trees. Join the Deeside Way path going left into the trees and follow the path as it runs parallel with the Old Military Road on your left side. (334 m)



(4) Right and through gate by information board

(57.05928; -2.64544) <https://w3w.co/misty.growth.momentous>

In 600 m, where there is a Ballogie Estae information board, leave the Deeside Way path to go right and through the gate just beyond the information board. This path quickly joins a forest road that goes gently uphill through the forest in a fairly straight line for over 1 km. (918 m)



(5) Right and uphill

(57.05788; -2.66291) <https://w3w.co/those.agency.intensely>

After 1.1 km, at a y-junction on the forest roads, veer right and uphill, looking for a walks post and narrow path almost immediately on your left, 30 m up the track. (2 km)



(6) Almost immediately left onto Craigmore summit path

(57.05801; -2.66335) <https://w3w.co/steady.homes.essay>

In 30 m, go left onto a path into the trees beside a forest walks post. Now follow this path as it gradually ascends through the woodland to the summit of Craigmore hill. (2 km)



(7) Craigmore summit cairn and trig point

(57.05920; -2.67186) <https://w3w.co/curious.goodnight.resort>

In 600 m you will arrive at the trig point and small cairn at the wooded summit of Craigmore Hill. Follow the path past the cairn and carry on taking the undulating woodland path. (2.6 km)



(8) Right and gently downhill

(57.05984; -2.68116) <https://w3w.co/hampers.performs.forwarded>
In 500 m the path joins a forest road at a t-junction. Go right here to follow the forest road as it meanders gently downhill through the trees. (3.1 km)



(9) Right at t-junction

(57.06292; -2.68417) <https://w3w.co/each.explores.commuter>
In 600 m, at a t-junction the forest roads, turn right. (3.7 km)



(10) Left and down path

(57.06360; -2.65456) <https://w3w.co/masters.opts.chaos>
After 1.9 km, look out for a path and forest walks guide-post on your left side. **checking the route at Feb 2023, the post is missing. However the opening for the path is wide and fairly obvious. As you look down the path there is a very prominent large pine tree.** Go left and down the path to emerge onto the Potarch Green. Walk along the edge of the Green, passing the Potarch Cafe/Restaurant* on your left side, across the B993 road. Carry on across the Potarch Bridge. (5.6 km)



**Note: you may want to stop at the Potarch Cafe for a snack, and/or check out the famous Dinnie stones. The 'Dinnie Stanes' are a pair of lifting stones made famous by local strongman Donald Dinnie, who reportedly carried the stones barehanded across the width of the Potarch Bridge in 1860. See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dinnie_Stones*

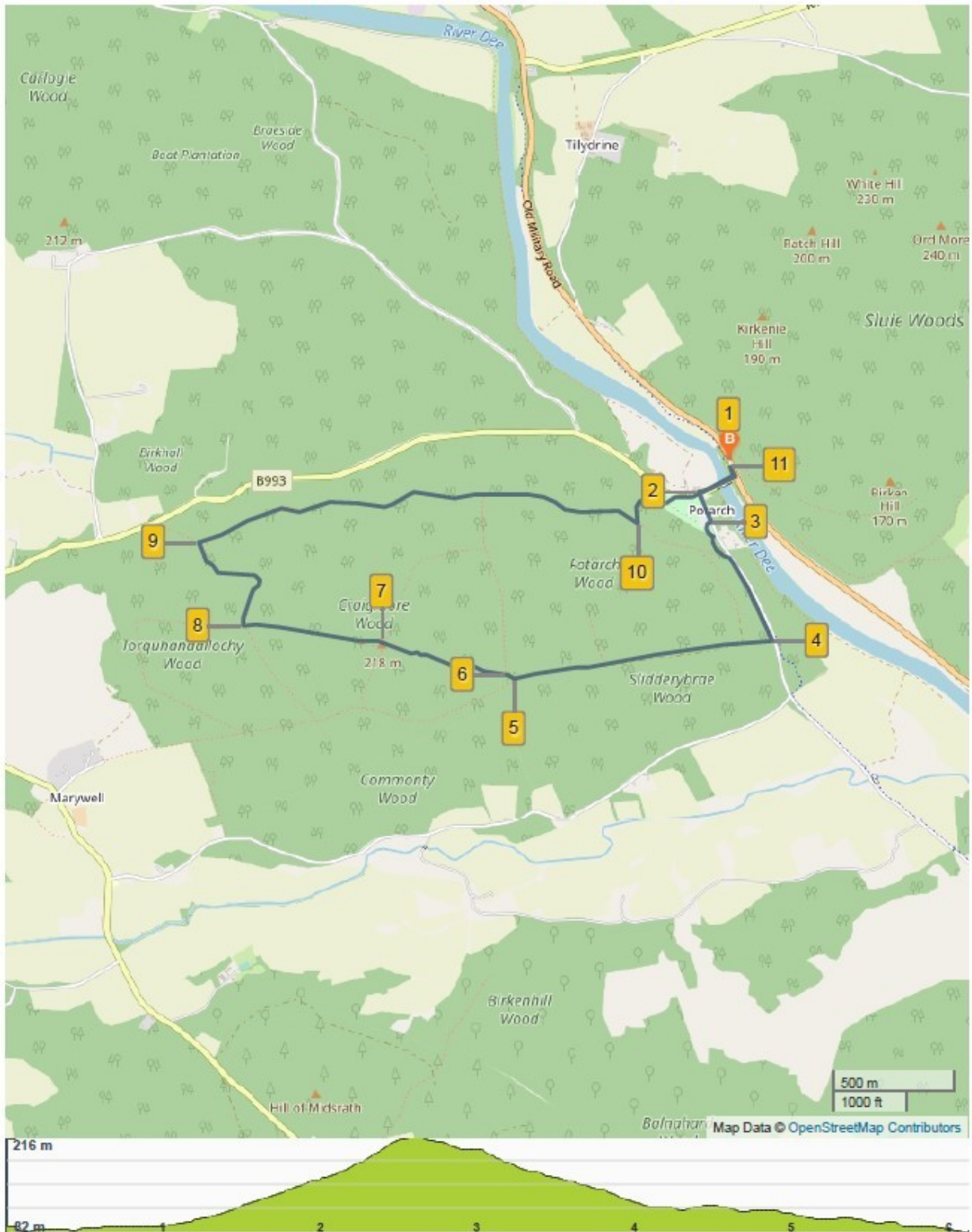
(11) Finish walk by crossing Potarch Bridge and returning to car-park

(57.06574; -2.64830) <https://w3w.co/vanish.replying.into>
In 500 m, after crossing the Potarch Bridge, you will have returned to your walk start-point in the Potarch Bridge car-park. (6.1 km)

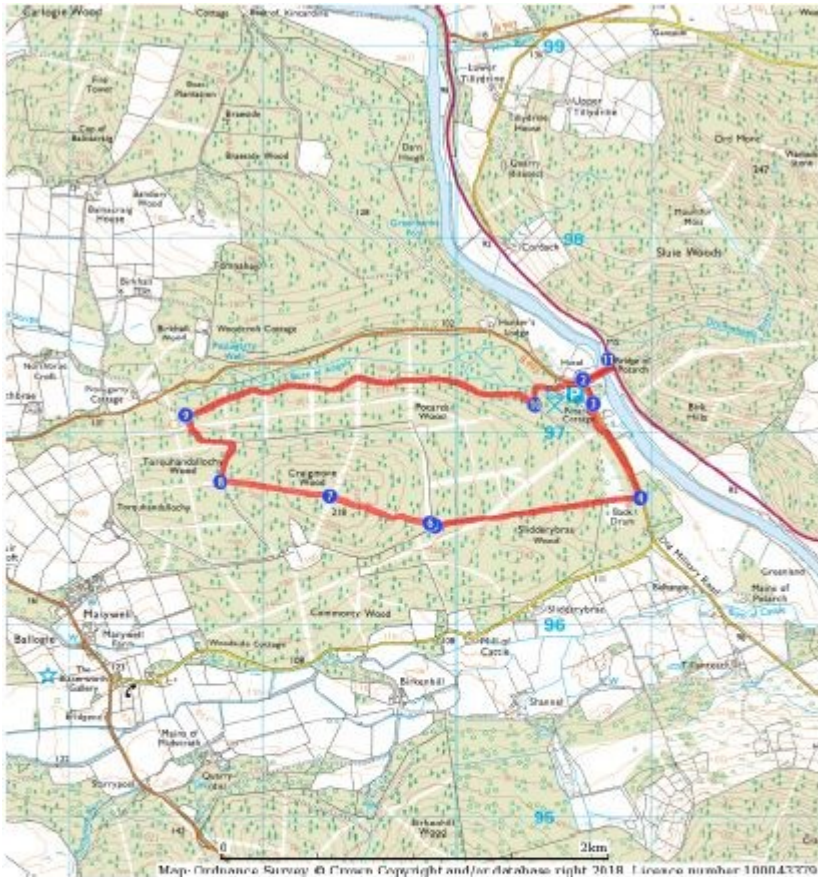


Route Map (with waypoints)

092-Potarch Bridge-Craigmore Circular



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](#)