

The Mack Walks: Short Walks in Scotland Under 10 km

Potarch-Shooting Greens-Slewdrum Circuit (Aberdeenshire)

Route Summary

This is a good leg-stretching walk without too much time or effort involved. There are nice views of the Deeside valley and hills beyond. In summer, the Deeside Way path is embroidered with an array of pretty and colourful wildflowers on either side.

Duration: 2.75 hours.



Route Overview

Duration: 2.75 hours.

Transport/Parking: Frequent Stagecoach bus services along the A93 Deeside route. There is a stop on the A93, close to the Potarch Bridge. Check timetables. Free parking at the fairly large rough car-park at Potarch Green.

Length: 9.150 km / 5.72 mi

Height Gain: 199 meter. **Height Loss:** 199 meter.

Max Height: 206 meter. **Min Height:** 87 meter.

Surface: Moderate. Good hard-surfaced paths and forest roads throughout.

Difficulty: Easy.

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

Dog Friendly: Yes, but keep dogs on lead during the lengthy ascent and descent when the path is close to the Old Military Road. There are gaps in the dry-stone wall, and vehicles drive fast on the long straight.

Refreshments: Potarch Café and Restaurant, if open. Finzean Farm Shop and Tea Room. Take-away sandwiches at the Kincardine O'Neil village shop. Other options in Torphins, Aboyne and Banchory.



Description

This walk provides a fairly gentle excursion into the Deeside countryside with good open views at many points. Much of the route is on the Deeside Way path and cycle-way, in parallel with the Old Military Road. There is a gentle, but relentless, ascent for the first 4 km which may surprise you. On a Saturday morning we were also surprised by how quiet the trail was. We encountered only two biking groups, and two other walkers. The route turns at the Shooting Greens car-park. Soldiers building the road reputedly camped here and practised rifle shooting. Circling Muckle Ord hill in Slewdrum Forest, there is a good viewpoint over the River Dee. The walk starts and ends at the Potarch Green, once the site of an old market and fair. Before or after the walk we suggest taking a stroll over the nearby 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. 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 before 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". For more info, see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dinnie_Stones



Waypoints

(1) Start walk at Potarch Green car-park

(57.06353; -2.64998)

<https://w3w.co/airports.suggested.presented>

The walk starts and ends at the Potarch Green* car-park in Potarch. With your back to the road (Old Military Road), go to the far-left (SE) corner of the car-park where there is a sign for the Deeside Way and partial barriers. Join the Deeside Way path here and head into the trees with the Old Military Road always fairly close on your left side. In just over 500 m the path goes left and crosses the Old Military Road. Continue taking the Deeside Way path for 3.5 km as it soon starts to gently, but relentlessly, climb past fields towards, and then into, Slewdrum Wood, with the Old Military Road fairly close on your right side.



**Note: Potarch Green was once the site of an old market and fair.*

(2) Left and downhill at Shooting Greens car-park

(57.03908; -2.60734) <https://w3w.co/mile.coasters.musician>

In 4 km from the start of the walk at Potarch Green turn sharp left and downhill to continue following the signposted Deeside Way at Shooting Greens* car-park. In 20 m, turn sharp left again, and through a gate, to take the forest road (Deeside Way) going gently downhill into the trees. (4 km)

**Note: Shooting Greens gets its unusual name because soldiers building the Military Road road reputedly camped here and practised rifle shooting.*



(3) Left off Deeside Way

(57.04287; -2.60205) <https://w3w.co/scorching.curbed.logs>

In 500 m, at a Deeside Way signpost, turn left onto another forest road to leave the Deeside Way. Continue gently downhill. In about 500 m you will pass a cut-out on the road where there is a good viewpoint over the River Dee. (4.5 km)



(4) Take left fork at y-junction

(57.04846; -2.60655) <https://w3w.co/captures.grounding.dilute>

In 800 m, at a fork in the forest roads, take the higher left fork and start walking gently uphill on the forest road. (5.3 km)



(5) Left and uphill

(57.04993; -2.61320) <https://w3w.co/fork.motivator.growth>

In 400 m, walking uphill on the forest road, veer left onto another forest road, also climbing gently uphill (5.7 km)



(6) Right to re-trace steps on Deeside Way

(57.04645; -2.62008) <https://w3w.co/mystified.survive.forgot>

After 700 m, the forest road arrives at a metal barrier. Go past the barrier and turn right onto the Deeside Way path. You are now re-tracing your steps back to the start in Potarch. After a very short ascent, the route is all downhill from now! (6.4 km)



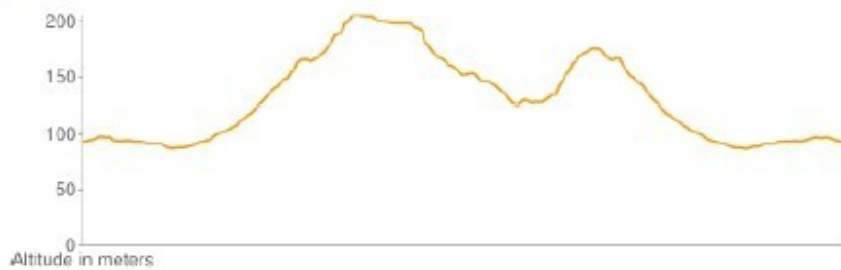
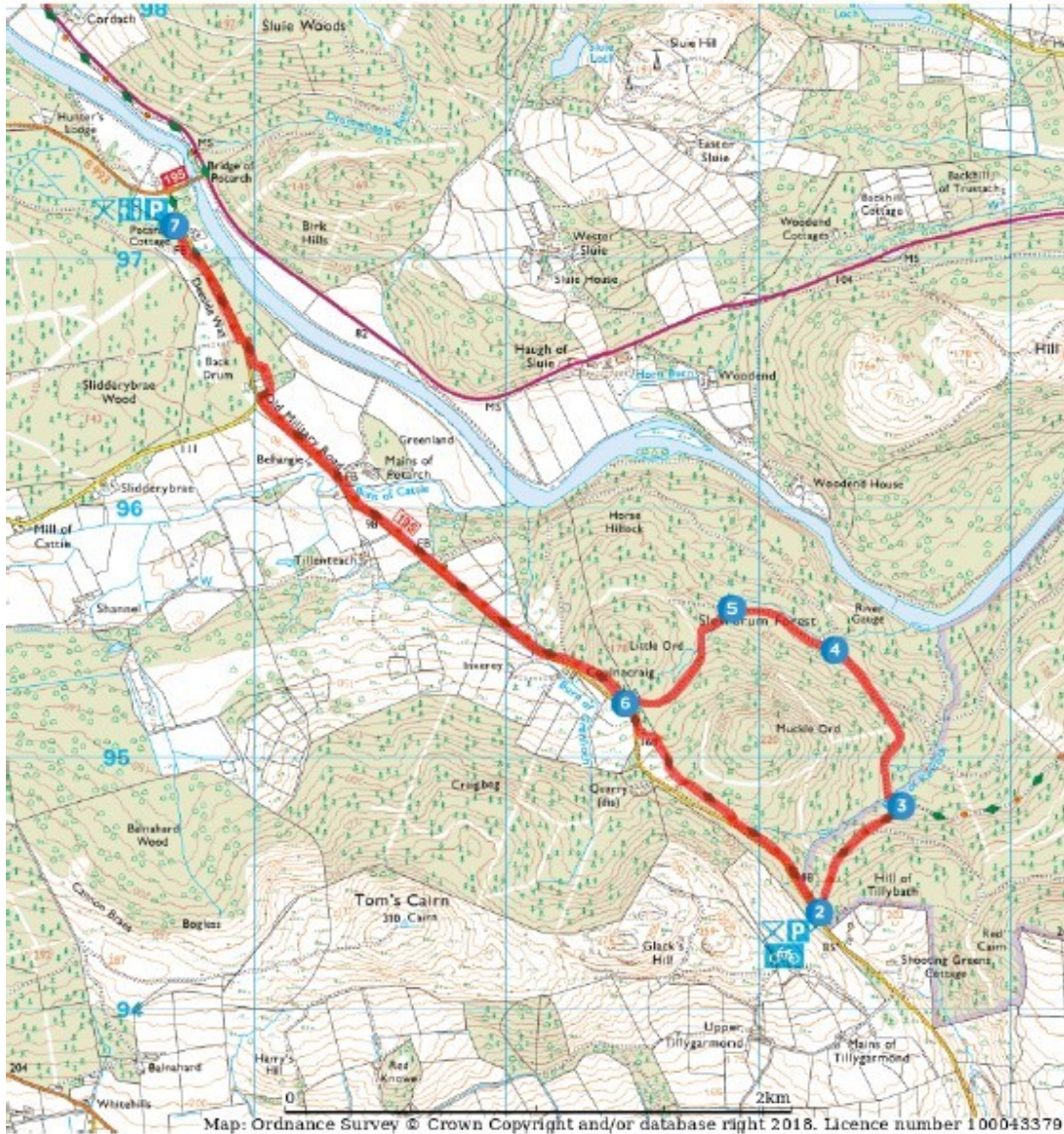
(7) Finish walk back at Potarch Green car-park

(57.06353; -2.64989) <https://w3w.co/airports.suggested.presented>

After 2.8 km, you will have arrived back at your start-point in the car-park at Potarch Green. (9.2 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 Wikiloc](#)