

The Mack Walks: Short Walks in Scotland Under 10 km

Rosehearty-Mounthooly Doocot-Pitsligo Castle (Aberdeenshire)

Route Summary

This is a relatively easy walk, with a gradual ascent into the countryside overlooking Rosehearty. Before heading inland, the route kicks off at the old harbour and samples a section of the coastal path. There are interesting visits to historical sites along the way.

Duration: 2.75 hours.



Route Overview

Duration: 2.75 hours.

Transport/Parking: Stagecoach 74a to/from Fraserburgh. Check timetable. There is a small car-park beside the harbour where the walk starts/ends.

Length: 8.660 km / 5.41 mi

Height Gain: 99 meter. **Height Loss:** 99 meter.

Max Height: 61 meter. **Min Height:** 0 meter.

Surface: Moderate. Mostly good coastal path and tarred surfaces. A couple of grassy sections which may be muddy in places after rain.

Difficulty: Easy.

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

Dog Friendly: Yes. Keep dogs on lead on public roads and near any livestock.

Refreshments: Davron Hotel in Rosehearty. Lighthouse Museum cafe in Fraserburgh, amongst other options.



Description

This is a very interesting historical ramble around and about the old Buchan fishing village of Rosehearty. In addition, there are some great coastal views, particularly along a wide bay on the Moray Firth towards Aberdour, Pennan and Troup Head. To the east of the harbour, there is a fine beach with very attractive, light coloured sand. Apparently, the settlement was founded by a group of shipwrecked Danes in the 14thC and later much expanded in the 17thC to support a booming fishing industry, with the local Forbes landowner, who funded the harbour developments, extracting a much hated 20% "tax" on all landings. With the coming of the railway to Fraserburgh in the 19thC, and consequent access to wider markets, Rosehearty Harbour, always a difficult approach due to offshore rocks, was largely abandoned to small craft. In the early part of the walk, along the coastal path, we pass an unusual tall white building, the "Rosehearty Tower", now a private residence. The "bomb-proof" tower originally functioned as an observation tower for offshore aerial bombing training. At the rural mid-point on the route we visit an imposing early 19thC doocot built in "mock-Gothic" style at Mounthooly, a little hillock with great views all around. On the return section to Rosehearty, our first diversion, at Peathill, is to the ruin of the Auld Pitsligo Parish Kirk. There are some very interesting 18thC gravestones with references to the Jacobite rebellions. The church building itself is notable for its elaborate "bird-cage" bell-cot, and large raised "Laird's Loft", to separate the local landed gentry from the ordinary worshippers. Our final point of interest, overlooking the village, is the very imposing ruin of Pitsligo Castle, clearly once a very grand place indeed. Unfortunately, the Forbes lairds, as staunch Jacobites, chose the wrong side, and the castle was sacked by Hanoverian troops after the Battle of Culloden before being partially dismantled for building materials. In the 1980's, Malcolm Forbes, of Forbes Magazine, with family roots in the area, funded works to stabilise the ruin.



Waypoints

(1) Start walk at Rosehearty Harbour

(57.69948; -2.11622) <https://w3w.co/gasp.basics.oatmeal>

Start the walk from the little car-park by the harbour in Rosehearty on Shore Street. Walk away from the car-park up Shore Street towards Union Street.



(2) Turn right along Shore Street

(57.69919; -2.11699) <https://w3w.co/poet.lushly.bliss>

In about 60 m from the car-park, turn right off Shore Street onto Union Street. Follow Union Street a short distance before it bends left and becomes North Street. Follow North Street to its end and join the coastal path heading south-west. (58 m)



(3) The Rosehearty Tower House

(57.69847; -2.12310) <https://w3w.co/conspired.only.behaving>

In about 450 m you will pass the unusual 'Rosehearty Tower House'* with its distinctive observation turret. From here, it is up to you how much further along the coastal path you wish to walk. We walked on for about 900 m. See next Waypoint. (495 m)

**Note: *Note: this tall white building, the "Rosehearty Tower", is now a private residence. The "bomb-proof" tower originally functioned as an observation tower for offshore aerial bombing training.*



(4) Suggested return point on coastal path

(57.69395; -2.13406) <https://w3w.co/tickling.neatly.tangling>

Our suggested return point on the coastal path, having passed a ruined building a little inland on your left, is about 900 m from the Rosehearty Tower House on a low headland where there are fine views along the coastline towards Troup Head, and around the Rosehearty area. When you are ready, re-trace your steps back towards the Tower House, looking for a pedestrian gate on your right that crosses the field just before the Tower House. (1.4 km)



(5) Right through pedestrian gate to cross field

(57.69776; -2.12389) <https://w3w.co/flames.rinsed.motoring>

In just over 700 m, having re-traced your steps back towards the Tower House, go right through a pedestrian gate and follow the, more or less diagonal, path that crosses the field behind the Tower House towards the village of Rosehearty. Soon, the path reaches Dingwall Street. Carry on walking along Dingwall Street to its junction with Murison Drive. (2.1 km)



(6) Right along Murison Drive

(57.69686; -2.11792) <https://w3w.co/helm.steam.frown>

In 400 m, at the end of Dingwall Street, go right along Murison Drive. In about 80 m, veer left onto the public path through the grounds of Rosehearty School. Pass the school on your right and then veer left for an exit path onto Pitsligo Street. (2.5 km)



(7) Right up Pitsligo Street

(57.69531; -2.11892) <https://w3w.co/tadpoles.pokes.rapport>

In 300 m, leave the school grounds by a pedestrian path between 2 walls and turn right to walk up the pavement on Pitsligo Street, soon passing the Pitsligo Street church on your right side. (2.8 km)



(8) Left off Pitsligo Street and up Cairnhill Road

(57.69305; -2.12062) <https://w3w.co/jacket.pounding.mysteries>

In a further 300 m, go left to cross Pitsligo Street and join Cairnhill Road. Walk up Cairnhill Road, eventually passing the last house on your right side, and ignoring a path on your left side heading up towards the War Memorial tower. Keep walking until you reach a farm gate. Go through the pedestrian gate and carry on taking the grassy track as it heads gently uphill, away from Rosehearty. Keep following this grassy track between fields, in a southerly direction, for about 1 km. (3.1 km)



(9) Right along minor road towards Doocot tower

(57.68382; -2.11920) <https://w3w.co/postings.apprehend.disbanded>

In 1.1 km from the turn-off on Piitsligo Street at Waypoint 8, the grassy track meets a minor tarred road. Turn right here to walk along this very quiet road (on the right side, facing any oncoming traffic). You will pass Smithyhillcock Farm, in a dip, on your left, as you walk towards the very prominent Mounthooly Doocot tower ahead of you on your right. (4.2 km)



(10) Mounthooly Doocot

(57.68281; -2.12803) <https://w3w.co/hubcaps.display.headline>

In 500 m, you will arrive at the entrance gate for the Mounthooly Doocot*. Take the path and steps up to the doocot where there are great views to enjoy. When you are ready, return to the tarred minor road, turn left and re-trace your steps, then passing beyond the point where you originally joined the road at Waypoint 9. (4.7 km)

**Note: *Note: an imposing early 18thC doocot built in “mock-Gothic” style at Mounthooly, a little hillock with great views all around.*



(11) Left to join Castle Street

(57.68432; -2.11461) <https://w3w.co/waitress.photocopy.minds>

After 1 km, at a junction, go left to join a section of Castle Street, now heading back in the direction of Rosehearty. (5.7 km)



(12) The Auld Pitsligo Parish Kirk

(57.68601; -2.11291) <https://w3w.co/lamppost.fight.denser>

In 300 m, you will arrive at the entrance to the ruin of Auld Pitsligo Parish Kirk* (the modern church is a little further on in the same site). When you have finished checking out the ruined church and graveyard, return to Castle Street, turning right to continue your, now downhill, return to Rosehearty. As an access/exit route for Rosehearty, this road is busier than the previous minor road. Take care to walk on the right, facing oncoming traffic, and we recommend stepping up onto the verge when vehicles pass you. (6 km)

**Note: At Peathill, sits the ruin of the Auld Pitsligo Parish Kirk. There are some very interesting 18thC gravestones with references to the Jacobite rebellions. The church building itself is notable for its elaborate "bird-cage" bell-cot, and large raised "Laird's Loft", to separate the local landed gentry from the ordinary worshippers.*



(13) Pitsligo Castle

(57.69225; -2.10848) <https://w3w.co/annual.hello.proud>

In 900 m, you will have arrived at the entrance to Pitsligo Castle*. Go through the entrance arch and follow the path to check out the castle. When you are ready, return to Castle Street, turn right and continue your descent to Rosehearty. (6.9 km)

**Note: overlooking the village, is the very imposing ruin of Pitsligo Castle, clearly once a very grand place indeed. Unfortunately, the Forbes lairds, as staunch Jacobites, chose the wrong side, and the castle was sacked by Hanoverian troops after the Battle of Culloden before being partially dismantled for building materials. In the 1980's, Malcolm Forbes, of Forbes Magazine, with family roots in the area, funded works to stabilise the ruin.*



(14) Right along coast road

(57.69628; -2.10971) <https://w3w.co/video.fumes.headers>

In another 700 m, upon meeting the main coastal road, with the Mason's Arms on your left and the golf club on your right, cross the main road and turn right to walk along the pavement, as if you were leaving the village again. (7.6 km)



(15) Sharp left for grassy path to Rosehearty beach

(57.69687; -2.10758) <https://w3w.co/distorts.chuck.coining>

In about 100 m, take a sharp left onto a grassy path, now returning towards Roshearty Harbour, with the beach on your right side. In about 200 m, you will see a narrow path on your right descending to the beach. Take this path and turn left to walk along the beach towards the old pier. Upon reaching the pier, it is your decision if you want to walk along it (there are safety warning signs due to uneven surfaces). Finally, at the shore end of the pier, take a path to your right, in front of a fenced boatyard, with a wall on your right side, enclosing a further short stretch of beach. Very soon you will emerge at the harbour, close to where you started the walk. (7.7 km)



(16) Finish walk back at Rosehearty Harbour

(57.69948; -2.11609) <https://w3w.co/gasp.basics.oatmeal>

In about 1 km, depending on whether you walked out on the old pier, you will arrived back at the small car-park at Rosehearty Harbour. (8.7 km)



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](#)