

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

## Terpersie-Manabattock-Lord Arthur's Hill (Aberdeenshire)

### Route Summary

A circular route to the highest of the Correen Hills where there are outstanding views, not only of the Howe of Alford and Strathdon countryside below, but also to many of the distinctive hills and mountains in the Grampian area. There are interesting historical associations.

Duration: 4 hours.



### Route Overview

**Duration:** 4 hours.

**Transport/Parking:** No public transport links close to the walk start/end point. Nearest bus service to Alford. There is a good off-road area suitable for parking at the walk start/finish.

**Length:** 9.580 km / 5.99 mi

**Height Gain:** 364 meter **Height Loss:** 364 meter

**Max Height:** 514 meter **Min Height:** 207 meter

**Surface:** Moderate. Some indistinct paths but mostly well defined. Steep inclines in places. Expect some muddy sections after wet weather.

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

**Difficulty:** Medium.

**Dog Friendly:** Yes, on lead on public roads and near farm animals. You are likely to encounter sheep on the Fouchie Shank section between Waypoints 12 and 14.

**Refreshments:** We can recommend the Alford Bistro, and Haughton Arms in Alford.



### Description

The walk starts in an enchanting "hidden valley" near the pink-walled Terpersie Castle, close to Tullynessle. This small z-plan manor house was constructed in 1561 by the Gordon family. In 1665 it was restored after being burnt down before the Battle of Alford in 1645. It is now restored again, as a private residence. Fantastic views feature throughout this varied hill-walk. The steady ascent is rewarded by extensive views of the main summits in the NE of Scotland – too many to list here! From old parish records, the name of Lord



Arthur's Hill arises from an incident in 1571 when the body of Lord Arthur Forbes (the 6th Lord's youngest son), called 'Black Arthur' because of his dark complexion, was being carried over the hill for burial in Auchindoir church yard (the notable St Mary's Kirk, there, was built in the early 13th C). During an unseasonable snow storm, the coffin bearers rested near the summit (there is now a ruined stone shelter there, "The Summer House", believed to be built on a much older cairn). 'Black Arthur' was killed at the Battle of Tillieangus, near Clatt, during the Marian civil war in which the Catholic Gordons supported the abdicated Mary, Queen of Scots, and the Forbes family supported her infant son, James VI of Scotland. On 10 October 1571, a force of Gordons was advancing on the Suie Hill road on their way to Edinburgh, the focus of the conflict. They were opposed by a force of Protestant Forbes under the command of 'Black Arthur' Forbes. The Gordons were victorious and 'Black Arthur' was killed whilst defending the retreat. Apparently *"he stooped down to quench his thirst and one of the Gordons gave him his death blow through an open joint in his armour"*. On the return from the summit the route follows the "Fouchie Shank" - an old right of way through the Correen Hills from Lumsden to Tullynessle. Well down this track, on a sheltered spot, we pass the site of an ancient Hut Circle settlement. All that remains to the un-practiced eye is a low mound amongst the heathery tussocks.

## Waypoints

### (1) Start walk at the access road to Dubston Farm

(57.26901; -2.75051)

Start the walk at the access road to Dubston Farm, which is approximately 1.5 km from the turn-off at Tullynessle Church. The other road at the farm junction leads to Terpersie Castle\*. Walk up the access road to Dubston Farm. Just after you cross the bridge over the Esset Burn, look to your right to gain a fleeting glimpse of Terpersie Castle. Now follow the rough road that eventually leads towards trees, bending to the right past the large open Dubston Farm outhouse (byre) below you on your right, and a farm (now holiday) cottage above you on your left. Soon you will arrive at a gate. Please ensure you secure it properly after passing through it. Keep walking on the rough road between trees.



*\*Note: Pink-walled Terpersie Castle is a small z-plan manor house was constructed in 1561 by the Gordon family. In 1665 it was restored after being burnt down just before the Battle of Alford in 1645. It is now a private residence.*

### (2) Sharp left and uphill on grassy track

(57.27277; -2.76678)

After 1.2 km go sharp left to follow a grassy former forest road uphill, reversing your prior direction. Now you have conifer trees on your left and open hillside where the woodland has been felled. on your right. (1.2 km)



### (3) Go right and steeply uphill

(57.26870; -2.75766)

In about 700 m, the rough former forest road arrives at the end of the trees on the left side and views open up of Dubston Farm below you and across the Howe of Alford towards the Menaway Hills in the distance. The road is extremely rough at this point due to the tracks of heavy forestry vehicles during the now completed tree felling operations. Continue walking forward, passing a bulldozed track going downhill, for about 30 m. Here, turn right onto an indistinct grassy track going steeply uphill between with areas of felled woodland on both sides. You will clearly see your next waypoint objective, a high deer fence about 200 m uphill. (1.9 km)



### (4) Through gate or over the deer fence ladder

(57.26778; -2.76008)

In 200 m you will have arrived at the deer fence and large gate. When we first did the walk, there was chicken netting at the bottom of the gate which was held down with stones, so rather than disturb that we climbed the 'ladder' to the right of the gate. On a more recent visit the chicken wire was no longer held down so the gate can readily be opened. Please ensure that you close and secure it properly after opening. (2.1 km)



### (5) Go a little right to find old road going uphill

(57.26781; -2.76028)

Immediately on climbing over the 'ladder' go right a few metres to find the old road going uphill and veering slightly left. As you climb the old road becomes a narrow path. Keep going uphill past old grouse butts as the direction gradually swings around to the west. Be aware that young trees (larch) have been planted in this area. Take care not to stand on them or damage them when they are close to the path. Eventually the path becomes a rough road again as you enter the mature trees on the top of Manabattock Hill. Continue through the trees. (2.1 km)



### (6) Through deer fence gate

(57.26480; -2.77355)

After 1 km, uphill and through the Manabattock woodland, the rough road takes you to another section of the deer fence. Here, you can go through the gate, ensuring that you secure it properly afterwards. Go left for a few metres, looking for a rough road on your right. (3.1 km)



### (7) Go a little left then right onto rough road

(57.26462; -2.77362)

After a few metres on the track that heads downhill from the deer fence gate, go right onto an old rough road that heads over the moorland in a westerly direction. (3.1 km)



### (8) Right and uphill onto hill access road

(57.26333; -2.78303)

In 700 m, the rough road over the moorland drops down a little to meet a better defined hill road beside some conifer trees. Go right here as this road heads uphill. (3.8 km)



### (9) Veer left and keep left at y-junction

(57.26458; -2.78627)

In 200 m, at a y-junction, take the left fork. Almost immediately there is another y-junction. Again, take the left fork. (4.0 km)



### (10) Old stone shelter

(57.26593; -2.80736)

After climbing gradually for 1.5 km you will have arrived at the ruined stone shelter on the summit area of Lord Arthur's Hill\*. There are superlative views all around. Many distant hilltops are visible on a good day. Looking to your left, and working clockwise around the vista, are: the Bennachie and Menaway Hills; Hill of Fare; Clachnaben; Morven; Mount Keen; Lochnagar; Ben Avon; Cairngorm (?); Buck of Cabrach; Ben Rinnes; Tap o' Noth; The Knock; Hills of Foudland and Tillymorgan. When you are ready head for the trig point about 60 m away to the NW. (5.5 km)



*\*Note: From old parish records, the name of Lord Arthur's Hill arises from an incident in 1571 when the body of Lord Arthur Forbes (the 6th Lord's youngest son), called 'Black Arthur' because of his dark complexion, was being carried over the hill for burial in Auchindoir church yard. During an unseasonable snow storm, the coffin bearers rested near the summit (there is now a ruined stone shelter there, "The Summer House", believed to be built on a much older cairn). 'Black Arthur' was killed at the Battle of Tillieangus, near Clatt, during the Marian civil war in which the Catholic Gordons supported the abdicated Mary, Queen of Scots, and the Forbes family supported her infant son, James VI of Scotland.*

### (11) Trig point

(57.26619; -2.80826)

At the trig point you gain another perspective on the surrounding countryside and hilltops. When you are ready, retrace your footsteps back to the rough road near to the ruined stone shelter and start heading back, downhill and north-easterly, in the direction of Tullynessle. (5.6 km)



## (12) Veer left for Fouchie Shank path downhill

(57.26654; -2.80620)

In 100 m, or so, from the trig point, after passing the stone shelter on your right, take the left fork at a y-junction as the rough road heads downhill on the so-called "Fouchie Shank", an old right-of-way connecting Lumsden and Tullynessle. (5.7 km)



## (13) Site of Hut Circle

(57.27088; -2.77920)

After 1.9 km walking downhill, and nearing the valley bottom, you may want to check out the site of an ancient hut circle on the sheltered hillside. The buried (now) stone foundations are all that remains of a prehistoric wooden structure, probably a roundhouse with a conical roof. It is marked on the OS map as just off the Fouchie Shank path on your right as you descend. All that remains to the un-practiced eye is a low mound amongst the heathery tussocks. Return to the path and continue downhill, crossing a burn and following the rough road back to your start-point through woodland before passing by Dubston Farm again. (7.6 km)



## (14) Finish walk back at Terpersie-Dubston Farm junction

(57.26905; -2.75059)

In 2 km from the site of the hut circle you will have arrived back at your start-point. Near to the end, just before you cross the bridge over the Esset Burn, look to your left to gain a fleeting glimpse of Terpersie Castle. (9.6 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](#)