

The Mack Walks: Short Walks in Scotland Under 10 km

Ben Newe (from the East) (Aberdeenshire)

Route Summary

This walk through pine forest and heather, above upland pasture at Glenbuchat in Strathdon, provides many opportunities for exhilarating views. The route is short, at just over 6 km, but involves a fairly steep climb with just over 360 m in overall ascent.

Duration: 3 hours.



Route Overview

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Transport/Parking: There is a very limited Stagecoach #219 bus service to the Strathdon area from Alford. Check timetables. You can park at the walk start/end point off the A97, or in the small forest car-park (may be muddy) uphill, close by.

Length: 6.090 km / 3.81 mi

Height Gain: 366 meter.

Height Loss: 366 meter.

Max Height: 552 meter.

Min Height: 257 meter.

Surface: Moderate. Partly on good forest roads. The main ascent and initial descent between Waypoints 3 and 8 is on narrow paths, fairly steep at times. Occasional sections may be muddy or waterlogged.

Difficulty: Medium.

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

Dog Friendly: Yes, on lead at the start/end point on edge of the busy A97 road.

Refreshments: The Goodbrand and Ross Tearoom in Corgarff is about 9 miles away on the A944. Otherwise, options in Alford, 15 miles away.



Description

This is a short but steep walk to the summit of Ben Newe in Strathdon, at the north-eastern corner of the Cairngorms National Park. Although the slopes of Ben Newe are extensively forested with commercial plantations, the walking environment is mostly composed of mature, widely spaced, conifers. A long section on the fairly relentless ascent has a marvellous open perspective, overlooking upland pasture in Glenbuchat, above the old castle ruins. The views all around from the summit top, where there is a cairn with seats and a trig point, are tremendous. In the middle distance, Morven is prominent to the south, and the more distant distinctive peak of Lochnagar is also visible. The unusual granite tors of Ben Avon are particularly prominent to the south-west, and the Buck of Cabrach stands out to the north. There is a



stunning picture-postcard view down to Glenbuchat, on the north side, with the ruin of Glenbuchat Castle just visible on your right side, guarding the entrance to the glen. The summit of Ben Newe is known for its "sacred well", supposedly with supernatural qualities. Actually a small sheltered rock-pool filled with rainwater [from [Canmore](#)] "...the well was renowned for its cures ... many pins were found in the well, and coins and charms were offered ... [and it] ... may be the sacred place (the Celtic 'nemeton') preserved in the 'Newe' element of Ben Newe ...". Remote Glenbuchat was once home to a diverse community of 500 people – living off the upland landscape in a mostly self-sufficient and inter-dependant way, and having little need for the outside world. Today, the population is a tenth of that. 16th Century Glenbuchat Castle played its part in Scotland's bloody history, and, although now a crumbling ruin, it is certainly worth a visit after the walk.

Waypoints

(1) Start walk at entrance to Ben Newe forest off A97

(57.21266; -3.00037) <https://w3w.co/mouths.pets.optimally>

The walk starts at a wide opening into the Ben Newe forest just over 1 km south of the sign for Genbuchat Castle on the right side of the A97 road. There is space to park at the opening onto the forest road. Alternatively you can park about 150 m further on, turning right where there is a small car-parking area. Walk uphill, away from the A97 road.



(2) Carry on uphill on forest road

(57.21169; -3.00091) <https://w3w.co/airstrip.torn.thundered>

In about 120 m, pass the opening to the small car-parking area on your right and carry on uphill, following the main forest road. (119 m)



(3) Veer slightly right off main forest road

(57.21324; -3.00613) <https://w3w.co/grape.snares.upwardly>

In about 800 m, as the main forest road bends sharply to the left and uphill, take the slightly over-grown, less well-used, forest road veering slightly right/straight ahead. Keep following this track for 1.6 km as it soon becomes more of a path, turning left and uphill when it meets the edge of the woodland, with the Glenbuchat farmland to your right as you continue a fairly relentless ascent. In the last section the path starts to veer left away from the farmland, with mature trees continuing on your left and more open hillside on your right. (900 m)



(4) Sharp right onto steep path to summit

(57.21298; -3.02427) <https://w3w.co/melons.producing.skews>

After a 1.6 km ascent, much of it on the edge of the forest with open views of upland fields on your right side, you will have swung around to the west and started a short descent. As you begin descending towards a clear junction ahead of you at the bottom of the hillside, watch out for a narrow path on your right going steeply uphill towards the summit of Ben Newe. The path is not marked and can be easily missed. (2.5 km)



(5) Summit tor and trig point

(57.21523; -3.02501) <https://w3w.co/pegged.metals.optimally>
After a fairly steep ascent over 300 m, or so, you will have arrived at the summit tor of Ben Newe where there is a cairn with seats and a trig point. The views all around are tremendous. There is a particularly good view down to Glenbuchat, on the north side. (2.8 km)



(6) North side of tor for 'ancient well'

(57.21538; -3.02535) <https://w3w.co/melon.knots.canoe>
In order to find the 'sacred well'* of Ben Newe, walk down to the underside of the area with the stony tor and trig point. The 'well' is actually a little rock pool filled with rainwater. It is about head height on your left as you go around the underside of the tor, a little off centre, more to the western side. When you are ready to start your return, re-trace your steps down the summit access path to Waypoint 4. Turn left here to re-trace part of your outward route down the hillside on the edge of the forest, with the trees now on your right side and the open fields on your left. Look out for a post on your right, part way down the hill. (2.8 km)



**Note: From Canmore: "There is an alleged holy well (a pool of rainwater) on the summit of Ben Newe ... the well was renowned for its cures ... Some years before 1866 ... many pins were found in the well, and coins and charms were offered ... The well may be the sacred place (the Celtic 'nemeton') preserved in the 'Newe' element of Ben Newe ..." See: <https://canmore.org.uk/site/16782/ben-newe>*

(7) Right and uphill through trees

(57.21618; -3.01628) <https://w3w.co/interviewer.hangs.newest>
After 1 km from the summit tor as you descend on the path by the edge of the forest that you took on the outward leg, turn right and uphill just after a post with an arrow sign pinned to it. This path/forest track ascends for a short way through dense forest (2019). (3.8 km)



(8) Carry straight on here

(57.21442; -3.01697) <https://w3w.co/airbase.pipeline.sandbags>
In 200 m, or so, the track emerges from the deep forest cover to join a rough forest road. Do not take the option to go sharp left and downhill. Instead, carry more or less straight on, gently ascending to the top of a brow before dropping down towards the main forest road ahead of you. (4.0 km)



(9) Left and downhill at forest road clearing

(57.21340; -3.01767) <https://w3w.co/scrap.month.browsers>

In just over 100 m, arriving at a wide clearing and y-junction, take the main forest road veering left and downhill. Keep following this road for about 2 km as it bends one way then the other making its descent to the start point at the edge of the A97 main road. (4.1 km)



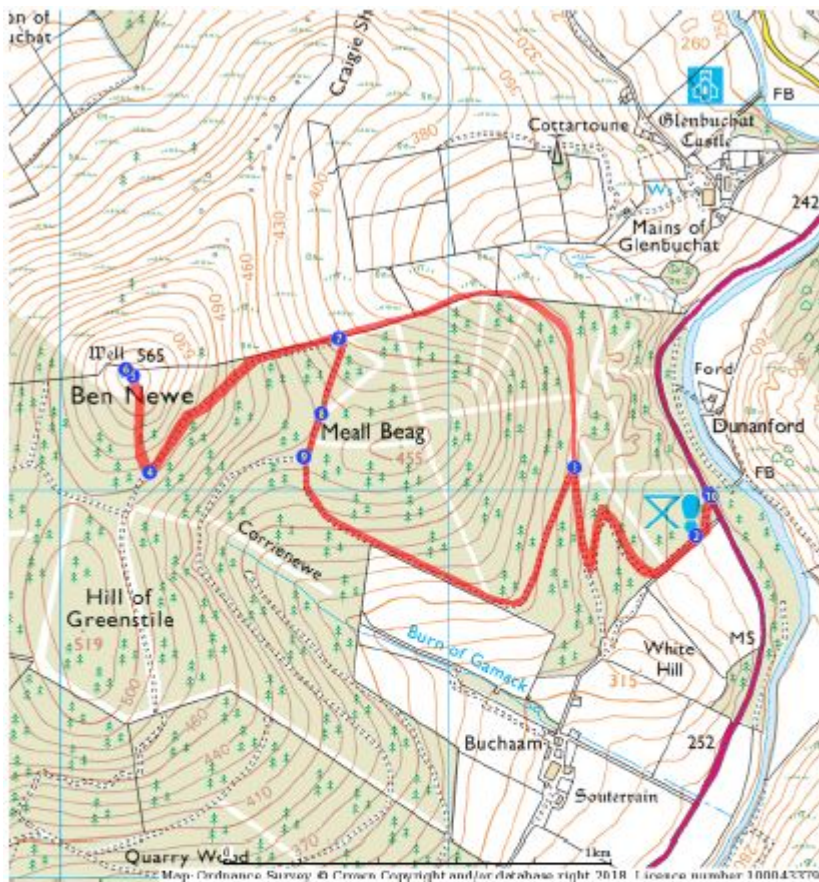
(10) Finish walk back at start-point on A97

(57.21262; -3.00027) <https://w3w.co/utter.cluttered.genius>

In 2 km, you will have descended to your start point at the A97 road. (6.1 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 Wikiloc](#)