

The Mack Walks: Short Walks in Scotland Under 10 km

Blue Cairn Stone Circle-Hill of Allamuc Circuit (Aberdeenshire)

Route Summary

There are great views, particularly of the Howe of Cromar, on this varied walk up to and around the summit area of Hill of Allamuc, on the north-eastern slopes of Morven Hill. After visiting an ancient burial cairn and stone circle on the wooded ascent, a steady climb through moorland achieves some very fine outlooks in all directions.

Duration: 3 hours.



Route Overview

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Transport/Parking: No public transport nearby. See Waypoint 1 for directions to the walk start point by car. Rough parking for one or two vehicles at the walk start/end point.

Length: 9.2 km / 5.7 mi

Height Gain: 310 meter. **Height Loss:** 310 meter.

Max Height: 520 meter. **Min Height:** 211 meter.

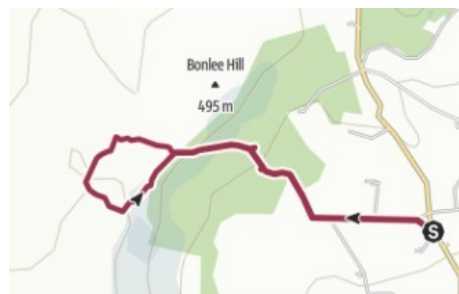
Surface: Moderate. A mix of hard-surfaced access roads, rough farm/forest roads, and moorland land-rover tracks. Suitable for an offroad mobility scooter, with the probable exception of the 30 m diversion to visit the Blue Cairn stone circle. Also, the steep and rough descent to Waypoint 8 may cause difficulties.

Difficulty: Medium/Hard.

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

Dog Friendly: Yes, but on lead on public access road.

Refreshments: Options in Logie Coldstone, Tarland, Alford, Aboyne, and Ballater.



Description

This is a varied and very scenic walk through upland farmland and mature conifer forest onto the heathery slopes of the Hill of Allamuc, one of the rounded hilltops to the north-east of Morven, an imposing Corbett hill that sits between Deeside and Donside, on the eastern boundary of the Cairngorms National Park. Particularly on the descent, there are marvellous views from on-high of the broad bowl of the Howe of Cromar, with its appealing patchwork of fields and woodland, protected by surrounding hills, with the village of Tarland visible to the east, and Loch Davan and Loch Kinord at Muir of Dinnet, visible to the south-east. At the mid-point on the route, on undulating high ground, with wide-open views over a far-ranging wild landscape, there is an exhilarating moment as the gloriously imposing mass of Morven, with a peaked summit from this perspective, suddenly appears, towering above, ahead of you. Morven Hill ("A' Mhòr Bheinn", in Gaelic) and its surrounding lower summits, is a recognisable feature throughout much of western Aberdeenshire, immortalised by Lord Byron in verse as follows: "...when I rov'd a young Highlander o'er the dark heath, And climb'd thy steep summit, oh Morven of snow ...". At an early point on the ascent, in Balronald Wood, the route passes the "The Blue Cairn of Ladieswell", so named because of the blue tinge to the stones of the ancient cairn (although this coloration was not immediately apparent to us!). Surrounding the Neolithic burial cairn are the diminished remains of a large recumbent stone circle. The stone circle and cairn have been considerably damaged by human intervention, with the cairn being apparently broken up by amateur archaeological activity in the 19thC. The large and impressive recumbent stone from the circle has a very flat and level surface. It is missing both its flanker stones and other stones from the circle are either missing or mostly fallen. The 19thC Ordnance Survey Name Book indicates that there had been upright stones during the lifetime of a neighbouring farmer, but that various stones, presumably including the flanker stones, had been removed for building purposes. For more info on the Blue Cairn Stone Circle, see: <https://bit.ly/34YR8X4> (Circle #14, p 314).



Waypoints

(1) Start walk at the road-end for Kinaldie Farm

<https://w3w.co/stung.exploring.televise> NJ4294205689

The walk starts and finishes at the wide road-end for Kinaldie Farm (and others), about 1.44 km north of Logie Coldstone on the A97 road. Please take care to park in a way that does not obstruct field or road access. Start walking along the access road which, initially goes NW, passing Loanhead Farm, then heads west.



(2) Right off A944 and down minor road before Water of Nochtly bridge

In 1.31 km, after passing Kinaldie Cottage, and the access road to Kinadie Farm, on your left side, you will arrive at the ruined cottage of Belbo on your right side, with a modern house behind it. Turn right at the junction just after passing the house and go through the farm gate (carefully closing it behind you) to walk up the rough access road to (the now abandoned) Ladieswell Cottage which you pass on your left side in just under 500 m. Keep going to follow the forest road as it ascends into Balronald Wood. (1.31 km)



(3) Blue Cairn Stone Circle

In just over 800 m you will arrive at the site of the Blue Cairn Stone Circle* which is situated about 30 m to the left of the forest road. From the road, all you can see is a pile of stones (surrounded by bracken in the summer months), so the site is easily missed! When you are ready to move on, return to the forest road and continue your ascent. (2.14 km) *Note: The Blue Cairn of Ladieswell is so named because of the blue tinge to the stones of the cairn, although this colouration was not immediately apparent to us. The stone circle and cairn have been considerably damaged by human intervention. The cairn was apparently broken up by archaeological activity in the 19th C. The impressive recumbent stone from the circle has a very flat and level surface. It is missing its flanker stones and other stones from the circle are either missing or mostly fallen. The



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<https://online.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/smrpub/master/detail.aspx?tab =main&refno=NJ40NW0004>

<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/media/4427/great-crownsstone-illustrated-gazetteer.pdf> (#14, p 314)

(4) Right at t-junction

After ascending on the forest road for another 240 m, you will arrive at a steep t-junction with another forest road. Go right here for a short distance until you arrive at the entrance to another forest road, on your left, going uphill. (2.38 km)



(5) Sharp left and uphill

In 40 m, or so, as you approach a clearing ahead of you, go sharp left and uphill on another forest road. (2.43 km)



(6) Through gates and straight on

After a fairly relentless 850 m ascent on the forest road, you will arrive at gates, before a break in an old dry-stone wall. There are tracks going off right and left*, but your route is straight ahead and uphill. Now follow this land-rover track into open moorland on the slopes of Hill of Allamuc. In about 1 km you will begin to see some impressive views of Morven Hill, towering above you. (3.27 km) *Note: you will return to this point from Waypoint 8, on your return route.



(7) Left to go around Hill of Allamuc

After 1.3 km, looking up towards the summit of Morven, the landrover track arrives at a junction where there is a large pile of stones and a parking area. Go left here to continue the gentle ascent around the Hill of Allamuc. Soon you pass a couple of small lochans on your left side at the area called the Howe of Rieganachie. As you pass the highest point on the route you will pass a series of grouse butts, and tremendous views open up to the Howe of Cromar below you. If you look to your right you will pick up Lochs Davan and Kinord in the distance. The land-rover track gets rougher and steeper as you descend from the open hillside towards the trees of Balronald Wood again. (4.57 km)



(8) Left at t-junction

In 1 km, you will have descended on the rough land-rover track to the treeline of Balronald Wood. There is a t-junction here, where you will turn left. This vehicle track now gently ascends along the edge of the forest, with the trees on your right side, and the heather hillside on your left side. In about 500 m you will arrive at the gate you passed through at Waypoint 6 on your outward route. Turn right here to start your descent through Balronald Wood, re-tracing your steps on the outward route all the way back to the start point on the A97 road.



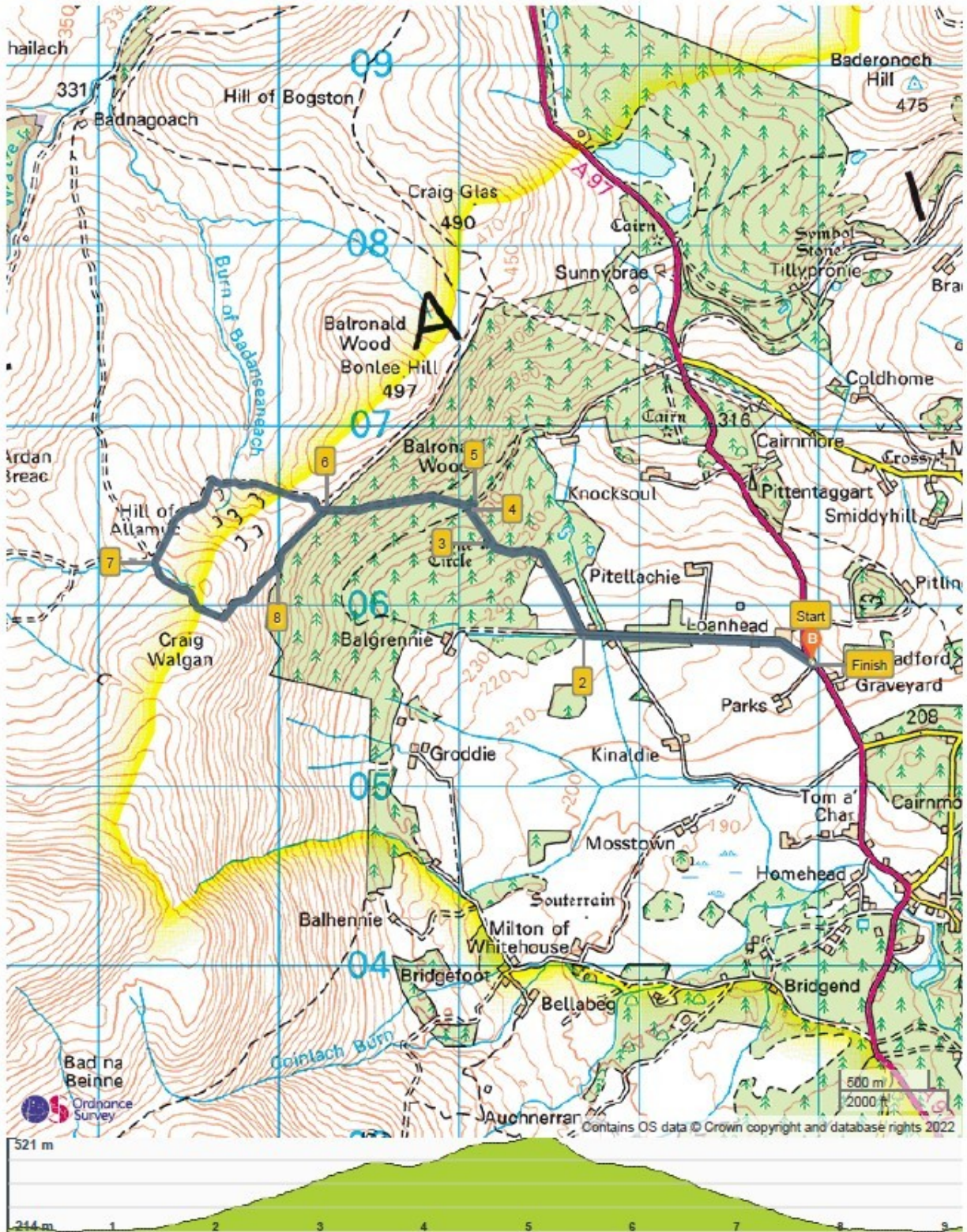
(9) Finish walk back at start-point

In 3.7 km, re-tracing your earlier steps, you will have arrived back at the walk start-point at the access road junction on the A97 road. (9.19 km)

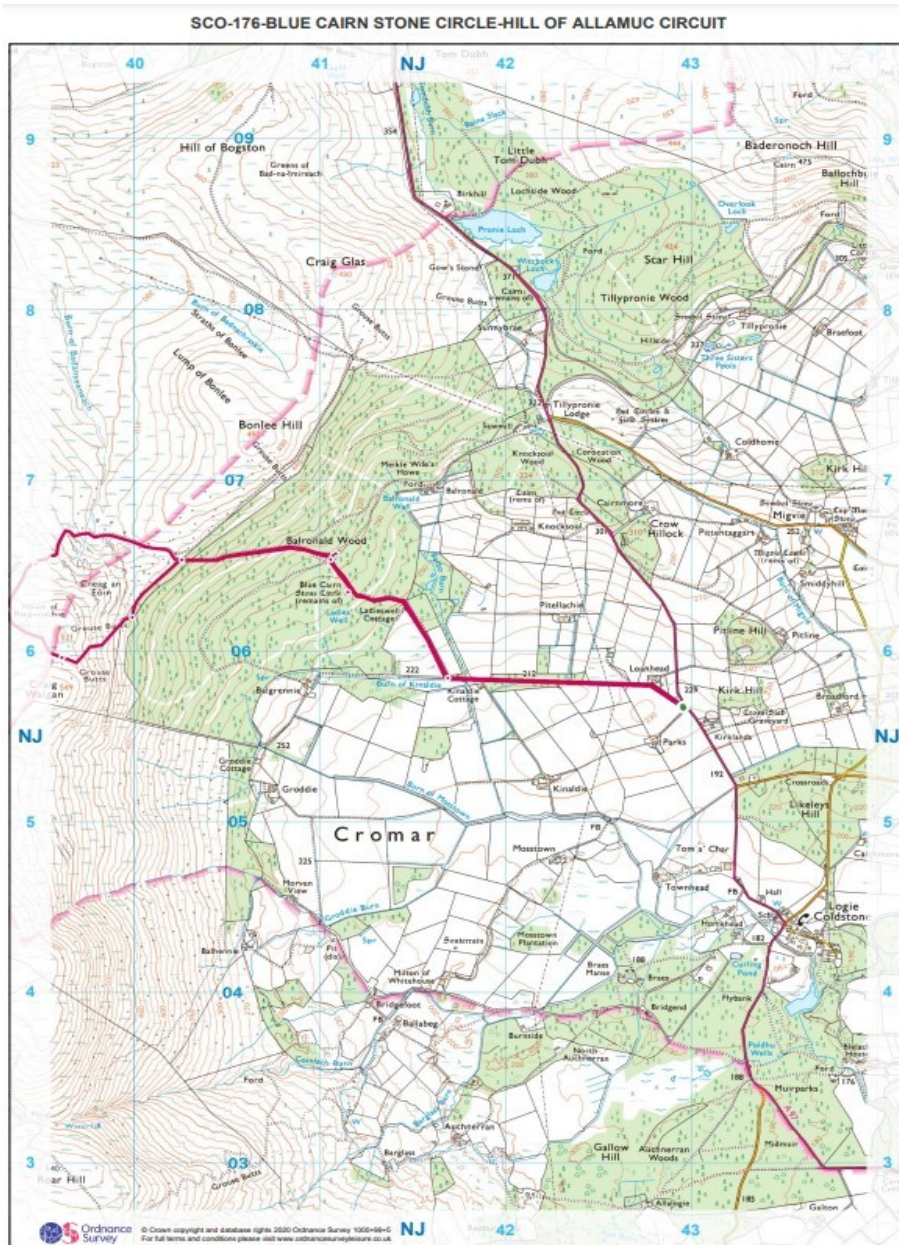


Route Map (with waypoints)

SCO-176-Blue Cairn Stone Circle-Hill Of Allamuc



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](#)