

The Mack Walks: Short Walks in Scotland Under 10 km

Braes of Gight Circular (Aberdeenshire)

Route Summary

A very scenic walk through farmland and forest on the banks of the River Ythan in the depths of rural Aberdeenshire. Gight Castle is an interesting highlight of the route, as are the ancient broad-leaved woodlands that surround it. Be aware that you may encounter farm animals.

Duration: 2 hours



Route Overview

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Transport/Parking: Check Stagecoach service between Ellon and Methlick. Return walk from Methlick to walk start-point adds 6.5 km. Small fishers' car-park at start of walk.

Length: 6.780 km / 4.24 mi

Height Gain: 169 meter

Height Loss: 169 meter

Max Height: 93 meter

Min Height: 28 meter

Surface: Moderate. Generally good walking surfaces but some sections may be muddy after wet weather.

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

Difficulty: Medium to easy.

Dog Friendly: Keep dogs on lead near to any cattle and sheep encountered. Pick up, bag and remove any mess!

Refreshments: Can recommend the Ythanview Hotel in Methlick - good food and real ales.



Description

This is a very pleasant and scenic rural walk on the banks of the River Ythan, near Methlick. The main focal point on the route is the ruin of Gight Castle, ancestral home of the poet, Lord Byron, who spent some time there in his youth. The castle sits in isolation high above the river and has been abandoned for a very long time. It is unsafe to enter. The following mid-section of the walk, climbing up and into Gight Wood, is managed by the Scottish Wildlife Trust as it is one of the last remnants of ancient woodland in Aberdeenshire. The broadleaved woodland of hazel, oak and rowan supports badgers, brown hares and foxes and is said to be a particularly good area for spotting red squirrels. After crossing the river at the beautiful and tranquil setting of Otter Bridge, the return leg of the walk passes through coniferous woodland and pasture on a good track just above the verdant flood-plain of the river. Here, we pass an area with steep grassy banks and rocky cliffs known as the Braes of Gight. It is likely that you will encounter sheep and cattle on, or close by, the route so take appropriate care, especially with dogs. It is possible to walk to the start-point by taking the Wardford Woods path from Methlick, but this adds 6.5 km (there and back) to the overall distance.



Waypoints

(1) Start at fisher's car-park

(57.44484; -2.26671)

From the fisher's car-park* follow the rough road along the valley of the Ythan with fields on your left and higher ground with trees on your right. Fairly soon the rough road will enter the trees where there are stone gate-posts. Keep following the road through the trees until you come to a wooden gate that takes you into a large grassy area with the ruins of Gight Castle ahead of you and very slightly to your left. From there, walk towards the castle.



***Note:** The walk starts and finishes at a fisher's car-park about 100 m off the B9005 road from Methlick to Fyvie. The rough road veering slightly left off the B9005 that accesses the car-park is 2.75 km from the centre of Methlick just after passing another rough road on the left that crosses a narrow bridge over the River Ythan. You have gone too far if the B9005 starts to ascend from the riverside level, and the fields on your left give way to woods.

(2) Gight Castle

(57.44309; -2.29054)

In 1.8 km from the start, crossing a large field with occasional mature trees you will arrive at the ruins of Gight Castle. You are strongly advised not to enter the castle on safety grounds. Pass by the castle on your left and make for the wooden gate ahead of you. Just after entering through the gate you may notice the graves of dogs by the path on your left. Head down the path looking for a path with steps ascending on your right. (1.8 km)



(3) Up steps to Corby Craig/Gight Wood

(57.44320; -2.29281)

In 200 m from the castle, as you descend a path towards the river, take a path that opens up on your right, with steps ascending up into an area of mature woodland above you, known as Corby Craig, or Gight Wood. Keep following the path as it climbs up through the woodland, levels off and eventually descends to the level of the River Ythan. (2.0 km)



(4) Over bridge and turn right

(57.44051; -2.30341)

In 1.8 km, descending through the dense woodland, you will arrive at a wooden bridge ("Otter Bridge") over the Ythan River. After you cross the bridge, turn right and almost immediately take a narrow path that veers very slightly away from the riverbank. Do NOT take the path along the riverbank going upstream, or an indistinct path that goes sharp left into dense trees. On the correct path you will soon arrive at a rough road. (3.8 km)



(5) Left along rough road

(57.44018; -2.30217)

In around 100 m from the bridge you will have ascended up a gentle slope to a rough road. Go left along this road, with trees on both sides. Soon, you will emerge from the trees, with the river now some way away on your left. On your right, you will pass an area with steep grassy banks and rocky cliffs known as the Braes of Gight. Keep following this rough road back in the direction of Methlick. (3.9 km)



(6) Left and down to bridge

(57.44293; -2.26687)

After 2.7 km, go sharp left and follow a road down towards a bridge over the River Ythan. Cross the bridge and head, between fields, for the B9005 Methlick/Fyvie main road. (6.6 km)



(7) Left at main road and left to fisher's car-park

(57.44444; -2.26619)

In just over 100 m, upon meeting the B9005 main road, turn left and almost immediately veer left to take the rough access road to the fisher's car-park where you started the walk. (6.7 km)



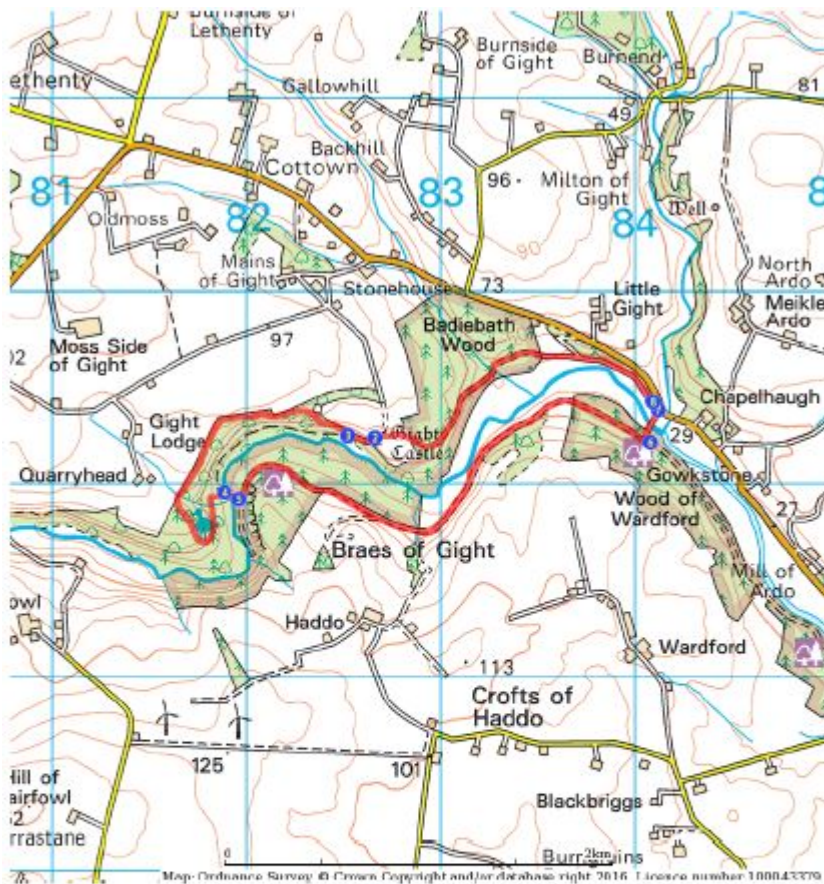
(8) Finish walk back at fisher's car-park

(57.44480; -2.26663)

In 100 m you will have reached the fisher's car-park where you started the walk. (6.8 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](#)