

The Mack Walks: Short Walks in Scotland Under 10 km

Dinnet-Old Kinord History Trail (Aberdeenshire)

Route Summary

This is an easy walk with minimal overall ascent in a beautiful area of Deeside that possesses considerable ecological and historical importance.

Duration: 2.5 hours.



Route Overview

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Transport/Parking: Regular Stagecoach bus service along Deeside, stops at Dinnet. Check timetables. There is a Cairngorms NPA car-park at the walk start/end point. Charge at 2020 is £3.

Length: 7.150 km / 4.47 mi

Height Gain: 62 meter. **Height Loss:** 62 meter.

Max Height: 180 meter. **Min Height:** 162 meter.

Surface: Moderate. On good paths and tracks.

Difficulty: Easy.

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

Dog Friendly: Yes, but keep dogs on lead near to farm animals.

Refreshments: Options in and around and Aboyne and Ballater.



Description

This is a very scenic walking route from the Deeside hamlet of Dinnet, skirting the shores of Loch Clarack, Loch Kinord and Loch Davan, while also incorporating a number of interesting historical features. The route is within the Muir of Dinnet National Nature Reserve, part of the Cairngorms National Park. The Reserve extends 1166 hectares from the River Dee to Culbean Hill, and encompasses a wide range of habitats including dry heath, raised bog, woodland, and lochs. Due to its shallowness, light penetrates to the floor of Loch Kinord. Consequently, many species of aquatic plants thrive, and in the summer white water lilies bloom on the loch and Blue Northern Damselflies are everywhere to be seen. A quick glance at the Ordnance Survey



map reveals that a wealth of ancient sites pepper the landscape. Clearly this area has been an important place of human habitation since the ice sheets melted. The route passes Crannog Island where an Iron Age defensive crannog housed a small community. Nearby is Castle Island where it is believed there was a defensive structure since at least the 11th C. During the Civil War in 1648, the Royalist-held castle was razed by an act of Parliament. On the shore close to Castle Island the route passes a possibly 9th C Pictish stone with a cross carved in intricate knot work. A little further on, towards Loch Davan, we pass the ruined remains of the Old Kinord "ferm-toun" where the 1841 Census registered a little farming community of 22 people making their living there. Further on, between Loch Kinord and Loch Davan, there are the impressive "hut circle" remains of an extensive prehistoric settlement, believed to have been an Iron Age village. Archaeological examination has determined that the ancient settlement was enclosed by a wall and comprised eighteen structures, ten or more hut circles, cairns, walls and rows of placed stones, two earth-houses for storage, and a chambered enclosure.

Waypoints

(1) Start from Cairngorms NPA car-park in Dinnet

(57.07671; -2.89344) <https://w3w.co/squares.unique.pocketed>
Start the walk from the Cairngorms National Park Authority car-park* in Dinnet. Follow the path going NW out of the car-park into the trees, passing a play-park on your right and the Loch Kinord Hotel lodges on your left.

**Note: The the Cairngorms National Park Authority car-park in Dinnet is next to the Loch Kinord Hotel and Lodges, about 7km west from the centre of Aboyne, at the x-roads where the A93 Deeside Road meets the A97 and the B9158.*



(2) Loch Clarack viewing platform

(57.07770; -2.89879) <https://w3w.co/slippery.scrubber.commuter>
In 350 m the path passes a viewing platform for Loch Clarack. After taking in the very scenic views, carry on walking along the path. (941 m)



(3) Through gates to cross farm road

(57.07805; -2.90757) <https://w3w.co/hindering.rope.heads>
In 600 m pass through the pedestrian gates to cross over a farm road. (941 m)



(4) Take path going right at Muir of Dinnet NNR sign

(57.07807; -2.90856) <https://w3w.co/letter.ambushed.warbler>
In less than 60 m from crossing the farm road, where there is a large Muir of Dinnet NNR sign, veer right to join the Loch Kinord circular path to continue onwards in a NW direction. (1.0 km)



(5) Left for loch-side path

(57.08052; -2.91180) <https://w3w.co/standards.migrate.haircuts>
In 400 m, at a NNR post, go left off the main path for a short detour by the side of Loch Kinord. In about 100 m, this short section of loch-side path veers right, away from the loch, to ascend the bank and re-join the main path. Go left to carry on walking along the main path. Keep taking the path as it skirts the loch-side, with fields and open ground on your right side. Eventually, the path veers left to drop down into birch trees at the loch-side. (1.4 km)



(6) Loch Kinord crannog information point

(57.08493; -2.91951) <https://w3w.co/confusion.shout.organist>
After 1.1 km you will arrive at a little clearing where there is an information board for the Loch Kinord crannog*. The crannog is now a small wooded island, about 180 m offshore. When you are ready, carry on along the loch-side path. (2.5 km)

**Note: A crannog is typically a partially or entirely artificial island, usually built in lakes (lochs), rivers and estuarine waters of Scotland, Wales, and Ireland. An iron age crannog was built on Kinord Loch, probably for defensive purposes. Oak tree trunks were driven into the loch bed and stones built up around them. A hut was then built on top of the structure. It is possible that there was more than one crannog on the loch. Thanks to the Scottish Crannog Centre for this image.*



(7) Loch Kinord castle island information point

(57.08531; -2.92500) <https://w3w.co/keepers.handbags.homecare>
In 400 m, you arrive at another clearing where there is an information board for the Loch Kinord castle*. The castle, on the now wooded island about 90 m offshore, was burned down in the 1600's and there are no remains visible from the shore. When you are ready, facing the info board, follow the main path that veers right and gently uphill through the birch trees, away from the loch-side. (2.9 km)

**Note: First mentioned in 1335, when supporters of David de Strathbogie sought refuge after the battle of Culblean. The castle on the island in Loch Kinord is mentioned further in 1505 and was used by the Alexander Gordon, Earl of Huntly as a mansion in 1511. Restored and garrisoned in 1646, the castle was razed by an act of Parliament in 1648.*



(8) The Kinord Cross

(57.08571; -2.92552) <https://w3w.co/surfacing.mailing.opinion>
In about 50 m, the path going gently uphill arrives at the Kinord Cross*, standing in a fenced enclosure, with an information board close by. When you are ready, carry on gently uphill towards a single tree, with bench. Pass the tree and carry on along the grassy track in a NW direction. Be aware that adders are often sighted in this area in summer-time, sunning themselves amongst the boulders from the broken-down dry stone wall on your right side. (2.95 km)

**Note: a 9th-century (?) cross slab Pictish stone. It is carved with intricate knot work and indicates that there may have been a small monastery or chapel located nearby. At some point in history, the cross was lost and buried however it was dug up again 1820's and erected at Aboyne Castle. In 1959 it was returned to its current location. Thanks to deesidewalks.com for the following: 'There are two theories regarding the origin of the stone. First of all, it is thought that it may have been commissioned by St Furnoc around 800 AD, in the period following the collapse of the Roman Empire and when Christianity was sweeping across Europe. Alternatively, some believe that it was carved 200 years later, around 1058 AD, on the instructions of Queen Margaret, the wife of Malcolm Canmore. Malcolm Canmore, or Malcolm III of Scotland (1031 - 1093) is the 'Malcolm' in Shakespeare's MacBeth. In 1040 MacBeth killed Malcolm's father Duncan I and Malcolm fled to England. He returned in 1057, defeated MacBeth in battle and killed him in Lumphanan, near Loch Kinord.'*



(9) Right at NNR post for Old Kinord ruins

(57.08773; -2.92632) <https://w3w.co/song.dealings.rainwater>
In 250 m from the Kinord Cross, at a NNR post, go right off the main path to take the grassy access track to the Old Kinord ruins. (3.2 km)



(10) Old Kinord information point

(57.08869; -2.92468) <https://w3w.co/ratty.lamenting.brink>
In 200 m, you will arrive at the ruins of the Old Kinord* farm buildings, where there is an information board. When you are ready, continue taking the grassy track in a broadly NE direction, passing a couple of unusual wooden seats, looking north towards Loch Davan. Carry on through a gate into woodland, with Loch Davan occasionally glimpsed on your left side. Keep following the grassy road. In 800 m, or so, the main track veers right while a more indistinct, less well-used track carries straight on. Follow the main track as it veers right. (3.4 km)

**Note: Old Kinord was a thriving farming community in the 1840s, with the 1841 Census registering 22 people living there.*



(11) Iron Age village information point

(57.08880; -2.91036) <https://w3w.co/composts.shifting.notched>
in 1 km from the Old Kinord information board you will arrive at an information board for the ruined remains of the 'hut circles' where there was an Iron Age village*. You will probably want to divert off the main track here to check out the impressive foundations that remain of these ancient dwellings. When you are ready, carry on taking the grassy track you were on. (4.4 km)

**Note: the remains of an extensive prehistoric settlement. Archaeological examination has determined that the ancient settlement was enclosed by a wall and comprised eighteen structures, ten or more hut circles, cairns, walls and rows of placed stones, two earth-houses, and a chambered enclosure.*

See:

<https://canmore.org.uk/site/17072/old-kinord>

https://www.themodernantiquarian.com/site/15619/old_kinord.html



What an Iron Age village may have looked like:



Thanks to Nigel Cross for the image.

(12) Veer slightly right towards New Kinord farm buildings

(57.08780; -2.91009) <https://w3w.co/cleanser.plenty.many>
In about 120 m from the information board, at a NNR post, there is an option to go left and downhill for an NNR car-park. Instead, veer slightly right to carry on taking the grassy path in a roughly SW direction, soon meeting the access road to the New Kinord farm buildings. (4.7 km)



(13) Carry on - passing rear of New Kinord farm-house

(57.08682; -2.91148) <https://w3w.co/armrest.disbelief.samplers>
In 200 m, ignore the rough road going left at the end of the New Kinord farm steading buildings. Carry on towards the rear of the New Kinord farm-house where you veer slightly right to go through a gate to follow a grassy track into the trees. (4.9 km)



(14) Left off rough road onto path at NNR post

(57.08648; -2.91288) <https://w3w.co/indulgent.delays.heartless>
In about 100 m from the last waypoint, veer left off the rough track to take a footpath through bracken and trees into an open grassy area. This soon takes you to the Loch Kinord circular path that you were on earlier. Turn left here to re-trace your steps back to your walk start-point at the Dinnet car-park. (5.0 km)



(15) Finish walk back at Cairngorms NPA car-park beside Dinnet Hotel and Lodges

(57.07676; -2.89331) <https://w3w.co/squares.unique.pocketed>
In 2.2 km, you will have arrived back at the Cairngorms NPA car-park beside Dinnet Hotel and Lodges. (7.2 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](#)