

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

## New Aberdour Beach-Pennan Path Ramble (Aberdeenshire)

### Route Summary

This is a fine leg-stretching walk taking you high above the N Aberdeenshire coast. In summer you will be surrounded by wild flowers and butterflies. The pink rocks and arch at the beach are attractive. There is historical interest associated with Celtic missionary, St. Drostan.

Duration: 3 hours.



### Route Overview

**Duration:** 3 hours.

**Transport/Parking:** Stagecoach #74 Stagecoach service from Fraserburgh. Check timetable. If arriving by car, heading west on the B9031 take a right turn (toward the sea) after passing through New Aberdour and follow signs for beach. Large free car-park at the walk start/end point.

**Length:** 8.030 km / 5.02 mi

**Height Gain:** 198 meter. **Height Loss:** 198 meter.

**Max Height:** 160 meter. **Min Height:** 7 meter.

**Surface:** Moderate. Mostly on good farm access roads. A section on a grassy track which may be a little overgrown in summer.

**Difficulty:** Medium.

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

**Dog Friendly:** Keep dogs on lead near to farm animals.

**Refreshments:** Options in Fraserburgh.



### Description

This "there and back" coastal walk visits the unusual rock arch tunnel at the attractive shingle beach at New Aberdour before a continuous ascent between fields on the old right of way path to Pennan to reach a high vantage point where there is a fine view down to Pennan Bay and Troup Head. On the return leg there are good views back along the rugged North Aberdeenshire coast toward Rosehearty. The rock arch tunnel through the Old Red Sandstone cliff at New Aberdour beach is unusual and photogenic. At low tide you will be able to walk through the tunnel to the sea side. All along this area of beach there are low flat platforms of polished Old Red Sandstone rock in pink hues that reflect the sunlight in a very visually pleasing way. These are, of course, covered up as the tide advances. Just back from the beach is St. Drostan's Well. The original well is reputed to have been used by early Celtic missionary, St Drostan, for baptism ceremonies. The current structure, built in the 19th C, features a pink granite basin and cover carved with a scallop shell motif. In the early stages of the route away from the beach there is an opportunity to check out the old church of Aberdour, also known as St. Drostan's Kirk. It probably dates from the 16th C, although it is built on the site of an earlier church and incorporates some earlier stonework. The church is surrounded by a graveyard which has many old gravestones, including some from the mid 15th C. It is believed that there has been a church or chapel on this site since St. Drostan founded the original here in around 590. Drostan was one of the twelve companions who sailed from Ireland to Scotland around 563 with St Columba. He is believed to have been particularly active in the Buchan area.



## Waypoints

### (1) Start walk at New Aberdour Beach car-park

(57.67112; -2.19281) <https://w3w.co/launched.binds.loaders>  
From the car-park at New Aberdour beach, assuming the state of the tide allows\*, make your way onto the stony beach and turn right to go east along the beach, passing a cave on your right side. Make your way around the rock promontory to the next, small beach. All along this area there are low flat platforms of polished Old Red Sandstone rock which are covered up as the tide advances.

*\*Note: if the tide is too high, go to Waypoint 3, St. Drostan's Well, to the left and behind the car-park, with your back to the sea. There is every possibility that you can go back to the beach and reach the rock arch tunnel at Waypoint 2 at the end of the walk.*



### (2) Rock arch tunnel

(57.67195; -2.18783) <https://w3w.co/officers.pens.standards>  
In 360 m, or so, from the car-park you will have reached the very photogenic rock arch tunnel through the Old Red Sandstone cliff. At low tide you will be able to walk through the tunnel to the sea side. After taking in the scene, walk back to the main beach and take a path onto the grassy shoreline, heading back towards the car-park. (362 m)



### (3) St Drostan's Well

(57.67103; -2.19131)  
<https://w3w.co/personal.watchdogs.delivers>

In 250 m from the rock arch tunnel at Waypoint 2 you will pass the curious St. Drostan's Well\* on the grassy bank on your left side. When you are ready, carry on towards the car-park. (603 m)

*\*Note: thanks to <https://www.megalithic.co.uk/article.php?sid=8076> for this information - the original well is reputed to have been used by early Scottish missionary, St Drostan, for baptism ceremonies. The current structure - 'features a Victorian pink granite basin and cover carved with a scallop shell motif. The well bears the inscription "St Drostan's Well 1884 Erected by J Findlater LLD, a native of Aberdour'.*



### (4) Veer left up beach access road

(57.67098; -2.19308)  
<https://w3w.co/supreme.descended.tweezers>  
In 100 m from the well, after passing through the car-park, veer left to take the narrow access road uphill, away from the beach area. (709 m)



## (5) Visit St Drostan's churchyard

(57.66944; -2.19520) <https://w3w.co/merge.quickly.sugar>

In 250 m, you will arrive at the ruin of St. Drostan's Church\* and graveyard. We suggest that you enter the churchyard to have a look around. There are many interesting gravestones, some very old indeed. When you are ready, continue uphill on the beach access road passing an old doocot and the white-walled former manse, now called Beach House. (958 m)

*\*Note: 'The old church of Aberdour probably dates from the 16th century, although is built on the site of an earlier church and incorporates some earlier stonework ... The church is surrounded by a ... graveyard which has a number of old gravestones, including a number from the mid 15th century. The large former manse, complete with steading, outbuildings and dovecot, stands just to the south and [was] a hotel for many years. There has been a church or chapel on this site since St Drostan founded the original here in around 590. The latest church closed in 1818 when the new parish church in New Aberdour opened.' Thanks for the above information to: POWiS - <http://www.scottishchurches.org.uk/sites/site/id/10839/name/St+Drostan%27s+Old+Church%2C+New+Aberdour+New+Aberdour+Grampian>*



## (6) Right down Clinterty Farm road for Pennan Path

(57.66801; -2.19481) <https://w3w.co/pipe.quiz.snowstorm>

In 150 m, or so, from St. Drostan's Church turn sharp right and downhill to take the path\* to Pennan. The first section is also the rough access road for Clinterty Farm. Initially you will drop down into the Den of Dour, crossing a bridge over the Dour Burn, before gradually ascending higher and higher onto the plateau of coastal farmland between New Aberdour and Pennan. (1.2 km)

*\*Note: this path is designated as an old, established 'Right of Way' by the Scottish Rights of Way Society. Of course, since the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 everyone has the right to be on most land in Scotland in accordance with the 'Right to Roam' code. See: <https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/>.*



## (7) Veer left onto rough road for Pennan Path

(57.66906; -2.21131) <https://w3w.co/seabirds.fanfare.magnets>

In 1.4 km, at a house where the rough road goes right (for Clinterty Farm) veer slightly left by the sign for Pennan to take the grassy Pennan Path track. Depending on when it was last cut, it may be slightly overgrown in places during the summertime. (2.6 km)



### (8) Over stile and straight on

(57.66968; -2.22070) <https://w3w.co/afternoon.bullion.steadier>  
In 600 m, you will cross over a stile to leave the grassy track and rejoin the rough farm access road. (3.2 km)



### (9) Pouk Howe ponds

(57.66975; -2.22772) <https://w3w.co/serious.woof.emulating>  
In 400 m, you will pass the scenic ponds at Pouk Howe, in a small scenic glen. We believe that the ponds were created, or developed, in previous times to provide water power for a mill at New Aberdour. (3.6 km)



### (10) Turning point overlooking Pennan Bay

(57.66808; -2.24083) <https://w3w.co/recapture.recap.rises>  
In 800 m from Pouk Howe you will reach the highest point on the walk at a signposted t-junction\* with another farm access road. From this vantage point there is a fine view over Pennan Bay and towards Troup Head. When you are ready, turn back and re-trace your steps to the walk start-point at New Aberdour beach. (4.4 km)



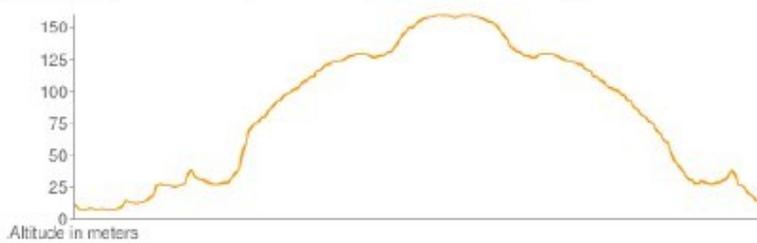
*\*Note: If you go right you can follow the Pennan Path to Pennan Farm and then steeply down to the pretty (and pretty famous!) seaside village at Pennan, nestled under the cliffs. This adds 2.3 km to the route, making a total walk distance of around 13 km if you then re-trace your steps to New Aberdour beach. Alternatively, you could arrange transport, e.g. a second car, to take you back to New Aberdour beach, in which case the overall route distance is 6.7 km.*

### (11) Finish walk back at New Aberdour Beach car-park

(57.67110; -2.19267) <https://w3w.co/launched.binds.loaders>  
In 3.6 km you will have arrived back at your walk start-point in the car-park at New Aberdour beach. (8.03 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](#)