

The Mack Walks: Short Walks in Scotland Under 10 km

Stonehaven-Dunnottar Castle Circular

Route Summary

An easy but hugely satisfying walk through a variety of environments – harbour, old town, woodland, farmland, and coastal. Points of interest along the way include the old harbour, an architectural folly, a historic cliff-top castle, and unusual and striking war memorial.

Duration: 2.5 hours



Route Overview

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Transport/Parking: Bus and rail services to Stonehaven. Parking at the harbour in Stonehaven, or on-street nearby.

Length: 6.240 km / 3.90 mi

Height Gain: 151 meter **Height Loss:** 151 meter

Max Height: 88 meter **Min Height:** 5 meter

Surface: Mostly smooth. A mix of paved surfaces, good woodland and clifftop paths. Not suitable for off-road mobility scooters due to narrow paths on steep lateral slopes, and a fallen tree, in Dunnottar Woods. Kissing gate at the war memorial.

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

Difficulty: Easy.

Dog Friendly: Yes. On lead in built-up areas and public roads.

Refreshments: A number of options at Stonehaven harbour and elsewhere in the town.



Description

This a gentle walk through a variety of pleasant and interesting environments. Starting and finishing at the picturesque harbour and old town area of Stonehaven, the route progresses through mature broadleaf woodland, then on a country lane through mixed farmland, with the final section on a cliff-top path with wonderful coastal views. The focal point of the walk, in the mid-section is, of course, the spectacular views of Dunnottar Castle, a world-wide attraction evidenced by the many foreign visitors. Walkers on this route may, optionally, visit the castle (website link: <https://www.dunnottarcastle.co.uk/>). In the woodland section, the route passes an odd and interesting architectural curiosity – the Shell House, provided as an amusement for the children of the landowner, 200 years ago. In the later stage of the cliff-top section, the route



takes you to the top of Black Hill and the Stonehaven War Memorial. This is a unique and particularly thought-provoking structure in the form of a ruined or unfinished temple (see the information board for background) that sits on a striking location overlooking the bay and the town in one direction and the rolling farmland, hills and forests of the Mearns on the other.

Waypoints

(1) Start walk at Stonehaven harbour

(56.96078; -2.20345) <https://w3w.co/greyhound.sprinter.profiled>

Start walk at Stonehaven harbour, outside the RNLI Lifeboats base. From there, head up the High Street, passing the Old Clock Tower building on your left. Carry straight on when the High Street meets the A957 main road.



(2) Cross main road and carry on

(56.96175; -2.21247) <https://w3w.co/resonated.mash.innovator>

In around 570 m, cross the road with care at the point where it bends sharp left. Carry on down Dunnottar Avenue, passing the Invercarron Resource Centre on your left. (570 m)



(3) Left up Carron Gardens

(56.96162; -2.21416) <https://w3w.co/brain.rinses.broached>

In just over 100 m, turn sharp left up Carron Gardens. (678 m)



(4) Veer right and up path through woods

(56.96037; -2.21599) <https://w3w.co/means.enacts.sheepish>

In just over 200 m, veer right and up a path through the woods, passing a sign for Dunnottar Woods on your left. (900 m)



(5) Left and down at y-junction

(56.95731; -2.22006) <https://w3w.co/accusing.flips.juicy>

In about 400 m, walking through the woods, go left and down at a y-junction of paths. (1.3 km)



(6) Pass Shell House

(56.95558; -2.22153) <https://w3w.co/barks.best.kilowatt>

In 200 m, having checked it out, pass the "Shell House" and carry on. (1.5 km)



(7) Left and up old access road

(56.95470; -2.22248) <https://w3w.co/fewer.lost.woes>

In another 200 m, or so, go left and up an old road (once an access road to the nearby walled garden - now a plant nursery) towards the main A957 road. (1.7 km)



(8) Right along verge on A957 road

(56.95402; -2.22070) <https://w3w.co/cape.rejoiced.admiringly>

In 100 m you arrive at the A957 main road. Go right along the path at the verge of the road. (1.8 km)



(9) Cross main A957 road and up country lane

(56.95279; -2.22333) <https://w3w.co/prepare.friction.dumps>
In 200 m, cross the main A957 road with extreme care and proceed up the very quiet country lane. (2.0 km)



(10) Right at t-junction

(56.94600; -2.20586) <https://w3w.co/mule.removers.skills>
In 1.5 km, arriving at a t-junction, go right for a short distance (100 m, or so), passing an old lodge-house and the main gates for Dunnottar Castle. (3.5 km)



(11) Left to access gate and down path to castle

(56.94554; -2.20601) <https://w3w.co/sanded.instincts.excusing>
In 100 m, or so, go down and left a short distance to pass through the pedestrian access gate to the path leading to Dunnottar Castle. Carry on down this wide path towards the coast and the castle. (3.6 km)



(12) Left along clifftop path

(56.94590; -2.20075) <https://w3w.co/crank.runs.disclose>
In 300 m, go left along the clifftop path. Do not take the path going downhill to the castle entrance unless you wish to make a (paid) visit to the castle. (3.9 km)

NB: adult visitor prices, Summer 2018, are £7. Link to website: <https://www.dunnottarcastle.co.uk/>



(13) Left up path to war memorial

(56.95571; -2.20151) <https://w3w.co/circling.nudge.toolkit>
In 1.3 km, walking along the clifftops, go left and through the gate to ascend to the unique and thought-provoking spectacle of the Stonehaven War Memorial. There are also wonderful views from the top of the Black Hill on which it sits. An information board explains its history and purpose. When your visit to the memorial is finished, return to the clifftop path, turning left at the gate to continue your return to Stonehaven. When the path meets the old coastal road to Stonehaven carry on downhill. (5.2 km)



(14) Veer right down path to harbour

(56.95815; -2.20419) <https://w3w.co/rationing.curries.vandalism>
In 700 m from the War Memorial waypoint, just after a fine viewpoint of the harbour, veer right and down a path to the harbour area. (5.9 km)



(15) Right down Wallace Wynd

(56.95977; -2.20456) <https://w3w.co/windows.boomed.dumps>
After 200 m descent, go right down the narrow Wallace Wynd to the harbour. Turn left here to make for your start point, passing the Marine Hotel and Ship Inn on your left. (6.1 km)



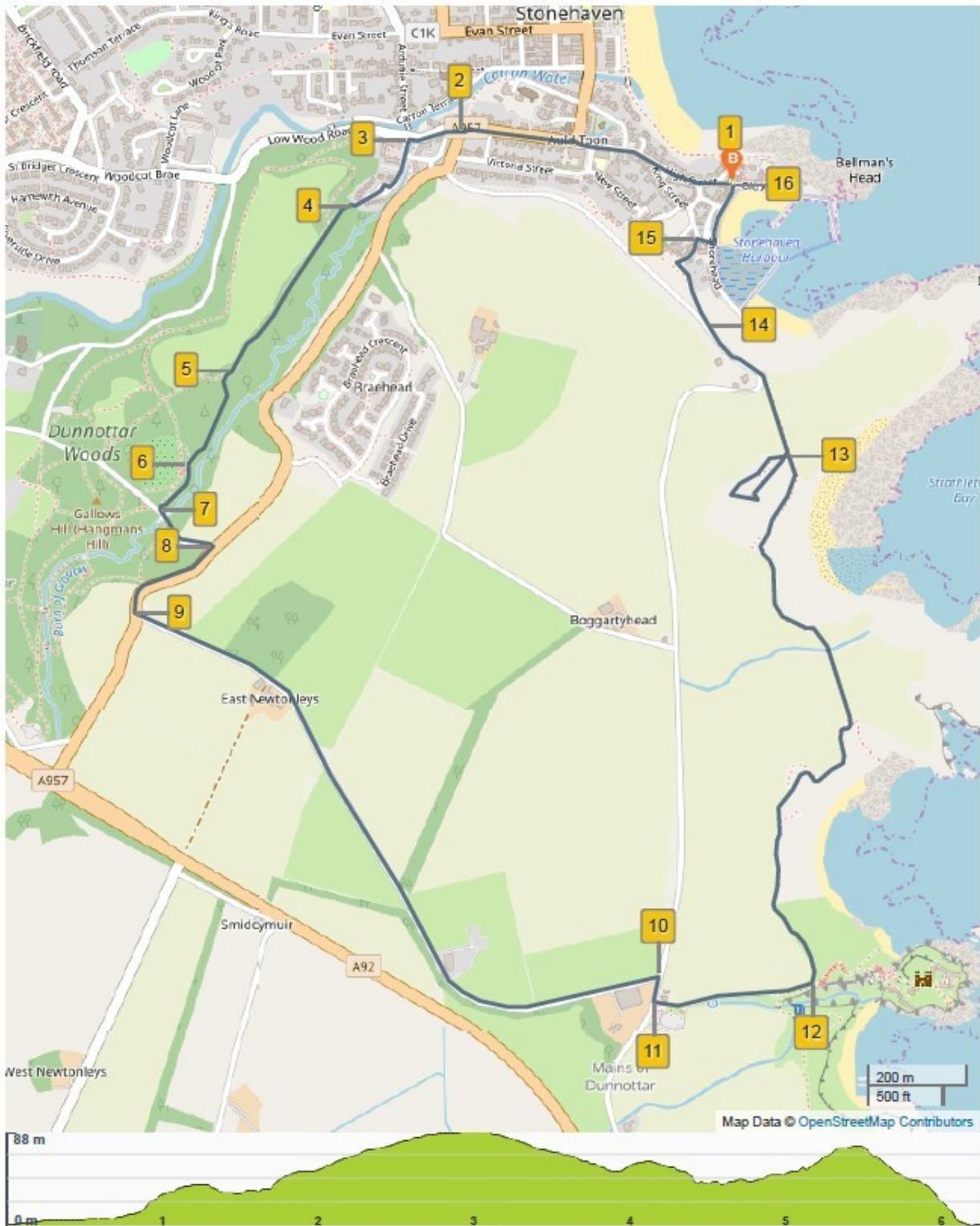
(16) Finish walk back at harbour start-point

(56.96077; -2.20337) <https://w3w.co/greyhound.sprinter.profiled>
In 100 m, you are back at your start point opposite the RNLI base, at Duthie's Well. (6.2 km)



Route Map (with waypoints)

001-Stonehaven-Dunnottar Castle Circular



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](#)