

The Mack Walks: Short Walks in Scotland Under 10 km

Tarland-Tomnaverie Stone Circle Circuit (Aberdeenshire)

Route Summary

The walk, in a figure of 8 loop, at first encircles the pretty Tarland golf course before setting out for the evocative Tomnaverie stone circle, where the panoramic views are even more breath-taking. The return leg, through a large mature woodland makes for very pleasant walking.

Duration: 3 hours



Route Overview

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Transport/Parking: Infrequent Stagecoach bus options. Check timetables. Park opposite the church at the start/end of the walk.

Length: 8.110 km / 5.07 mi

Height Gain: 117 meter

Height Loss: 117 meter

Max Height: 179 meter

Min Height: 143 meter

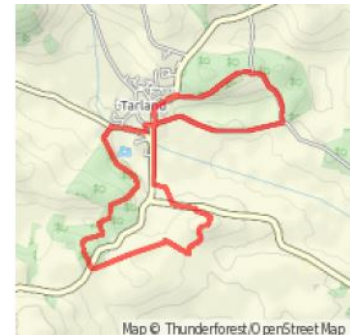
Surface: Moderate. Mostly a mix of minor roads, hard-surfaced paths and grassy forest tracks.

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

Difficulty: Medium.

Dog Friendly: Yes, on lead on public roads and near farm animals.

Refreshments: Options in Tarland - Angie's Cafe, Commercial Hotel, Aberdeen Arms.



Description

This is a gentle and undemanding walk in beautiful surroundings, rubbing shoulders with ancient history along the way. On a fine day there are majestic views of the rugged Lochnagar Mountain, 20 miles away on the edge of the Cairngorms. Much closer, and dominating the scene at many points on the walk is the hill known as Morven. With its rounded slopes, it is sometimes compared to a sleeping giant. Tarland sits at the centre of The Howe of Cromar, a wide bowl on the eastern edge of the Grampian Mountains between the rivers Dee and Don. If arriving by car from Aberdeen on the B9119 it is likely that your attention will be immediately grabbed as the road passes over the hill into the Howe of Cromar, with the mountains of Lochnagar, Morven and Mount Keen setting an exceptionally beautiful backdrop to a rolling patchwork of fields and woodlands. Queen Victoria was said to be enchanted by this view of the Howe and a viewpoint is named after her – “The Queen’s View”. Try not to miss it on your left as you enter the Howe. There is a small car-park across the road. As result of excavations at the Tomnaverie Stone Circle and other ancient sites in the area it is understood that there has been human activity in this area for at least 6,000 years. The recumbent stone circle is at the mid-point on the route on a low hill that enables wonderful all-around views – framing Lochnagar over the recumbent stone in a truly spectacular fashion. The village of Tarland itself has a fine old Square with some buildings dating back around 300 years. The route also passes Alastrean House with its tragic story, associated with the MacRobert family. All in all, this is an excellent introduction to walking in the Tarland area. Useful links:

<http://www.tarland.org.uk/walking/>

<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/visit-a-place/places/tomnaverie-stone-circle/history/>

<http://www.themacroberttrust.org.uk/about-the-trust/history/>



Waypoints

(1) Start walk outside St Moluags Church on Cromar Drive

(57.12984; -2.85303)

Start the walk outside St Moluags's Church* on Cromar Drive. Facing the church, and with the golf course behind you, turn right and walk along the road towards the trees, passing a sign for Alastrean Care Home.

**Note: Saint Moluag (c. 510–592) was a Christian missionary. A contemporary of Saint Columba, he worked to evangelise Pictish society.*



(2) Pass Alastrean House

(57.13172; -2.84289)

In about 700 m you will pass the entrance to Alastrean House*, now a care home. You may wish to divert down the short access drive to check out the eagle sculpture and engravings above the door. When you are ready, carry on taking the road through the trees. The road soon swings around to the south, passing the far end of Tarland golf course on your right. (689 m)

**Note: Alastrean House, formerly known as the House of Cromar, is one of two large country houses on the estate, Douneside House being the other. It was built in 1905 by Lord Aberdeen, as a country retreat for his wife, and was originally surrounded by 9,000 acres of agricultural land which made up the Cromar Estate. An arrangement made in 1920 between Lord Aberdeen and his friend and neighbour, Sir Alexander MacRobert, saw the Cromar Estate and house eventually pass to Lady MacRobert in 1934. The house was to be for the use of the MacRobert boys and their families, but sadly they never had a chance to use it extensively. For the tragic story, see: <http://www.themacroberttrust.org.uk/about-the-trust/history/>*



(3) Turn right onto minor road

(57.12770; -2.83814)

In another 600 m, turn right, out of the trees, onto a quiet minor road that returns to the village of Tarland. Note the views of Alastrean House, over the golf course, on your right, and the emerging views of the hill, Morven, ahead of you. (1.3 km)



(4) Left along Bridge Street at Aberdeen Arms Hotel

(57.12758; -2.85794)

After 1.2 km, the road you are on arrives back at Tarland. Facing The Aberdeen Arms Hotel, turn left to walk along Bridge Street, passing Tarland Square on your right as you start to head for the B9119 exit from the village. (2.5 km)



(5) Left before bridge then right along path

(57.12606; -2.85819)

In 200 m, go left through a gap in the wall just before the bridge over the Tarland Burn to join a path that immediately turns right to take you over a pedestrian bridge. Keep going this path, closely parallel with the B9119 as you leave the village behind. Later, the path takes a left, then a right, to go around a group of cottages. (2.7 km)



on

(6) Cross road and continue on path to left

(57.12093; -2.85536)

In 700 m, cross the B9094 road to re-join the path, turning left go through a pedestrian gate. Carry on taking this path as it goes over a stile then swings right and starts to climb the Tomnaverie hill. Go through a pedestrian gate to ascend to the summit of the little hill where you will find the Tomnaverie Stone Circle and an information board. There are tremendous views in all directions to enjoy. (3.4 km)



to

(7) Veer left and down to South-West after stone circle

(57.11934; -2.84960)

In 400 m from the road crossing you will have arrived at the Tomnaverie stone circle*. When you are ready to move on, facing the recumbent stone, looking south-west towards Lochangar (20 miles away on the horizon), veer slightly left and downhill to follow a path that takes you past the former Royal Observer Corps nuclear bunker. Follow the path as it again veers slightly left and downhill towards a metal pedestrian gate. (3.8 km)

**Note: Tomnaverie is a recumbent stone circle, a kind of monument found only in north-east Scotland. There are about 100 of them. They're defined by a large stone laid on its side (recumbent) , flanked by two upright stones, usually on the south or south-west arc of the circle. These monuments may have been used for: a) astronomical observation – the midsummer moon would have been framed by the recumbent stone in the south-west, and/or to frame sacred landscape features – Tomnaverie has a spectacular view of Lochnagar and Morven. [thanks to Historic Environment Scotland] See: <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/visit-a-place/places/tomnaverie-stone-circle/history/>*



(8) Through pedestrian gate then down

(57.11857; -2.85127)

In less than 200 m from the stone circle, pass through a metal pedestrian gate and follow the path downhill. At the bottom of the hill, follow the path as it turns right over steps on a stone wall into the woodland. Follow the path past an open grazing field and through the woodland again, passing an unusual modern house on your left side. (4.0 km)



(9) Over large stile then right along farm road

(57.11662; -2.85278)

In 300 m you will arrive at a large wooden stile. Cross over the stile and turn right onto a farm road. (4.3 km)



(10) Through pedestrian gate and follow path

(57.11787; -2.85644)

In another 300 m, as the farm road bends right, go through the wooden pedestrian gate and follow the path as it at first swings left, then right, to follow a field boundary. Eventually, in about 750 m the path meets a rough access road where you turn right towards the B9119 road, about 20 m away. Cross the B9119 road with care and pass through the wooden gate into Drummy Wood. (4.6 km)



(11) At junction in woods - keep following main path to right

(57.11764; -2.86924)

In about 1km from Waypoint 10, and 250 m from the gate entering Drummy Wood off the B9119 road, the main path you are on goes fairly sharply right, while a more indistinct path carries on straight ahead. You need to swing right with main path. An arrowed walks post assists with identifying what to do. (5.6 km)



(12) Left onto farm road

(57.11836; -2.86597)

In another 200 m, upon meeting a farm road through the wood, turn left to follow the road for a short distance towards the edge of the wood. (5.8 km)



(13) Right to follow path into trees

(57.11921; -2.86661)

In 100 m, as the rough road approaches the edge of the wood, with fields beyond, turn sharp right off the road to take a path into the trees. This path winds its way through this section of Drummy Wood for about 1 km. It emerges at a car-parking area on the periphery of Tarland, where you turn right to take the obvious access road back to the village. (5.9 km)



(14) Right along Burnside Road

(57.12735; -2.86471)

In 1.3 km, meeting Burnside Road in Tarland, turn right. (7.2 km)



(15) Left across burn to follow lane to the Square

(57.12682; -2.85957)

After 300 m, go left across Burnside Road and cross the pedestrian bridge to follow a lane taking you to the Square in the centre of Tarland. (7.5 km)



(16) The Square in Tarland

(57.12757; -2.85948)

In 100 m you will have arrived at the Square in Tarland, with its evocative war memorial, and many fine old buildings. When you are ready, head to the eastern end of the Square to check out the community and walks information board (there may be walks leaflets to take away). Turn left and go past the Aberdeen Arms on Bridge Street as you follow the B9119 Aberdeen Road back to Cromar Drive and St Moluags's Church where you started the walk. (7.6 km)



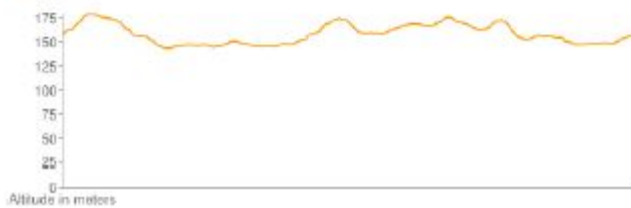
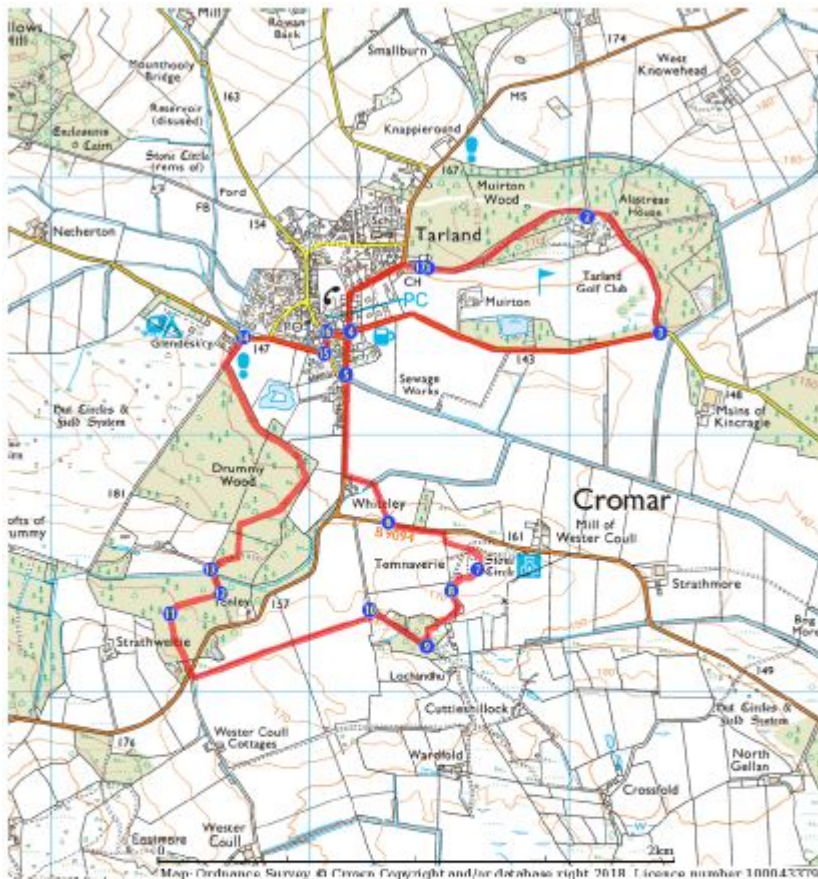
(17) Finish walk back at church beside golf course

(57.12986; -2.85348)

In 600 m from the Square, you will have returned, walking up the Aberdeen Road, to Cromar Drive and St. Moluag's Church where you started the walk. (8.2 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](#)