

The Mack Walks: Short Walks in Scotland Under 10 km

Whitehill Stone Circle-White Lady-Balvenie Stone (Aberdeenshire)

Route Summary

This is a moderate hill and forest walk in a very scenic area popular with mountain bike enthusiasts. The route takes in an ancient stone circle, some very fine views, near and far, and an unusually large boulder left over from the last Ice Age.

Duration: 2.75 hours.



Route Overview

Duration: 2.75 hours.

Transport/Parking: No public transport nearby. Leave the A944 at Tillyfourie joining the B993. After about one mile, turn left at the sign for the Whitehills Cycle Trails, then left again in about half a mile for the car-park. here is a good rough-surfaced car-park at the walk start/end point.

Length: 7.010 km / 4.38 mi

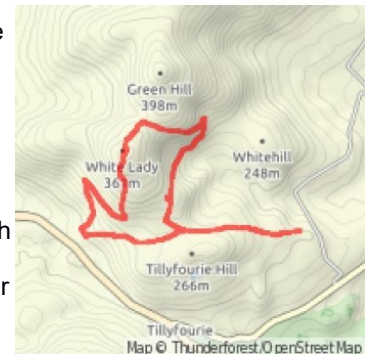
Height Gain: 266 meter. **Height Loss:** 266 meter.

Max Height: 360 meter. **Min Height:** 200 meter.

Surface: Moderate. A mix of good forest roads and woodland paths. The path that descends from the White Lady summit is steep and stony in places. Paths can be muddy in places due to mountain-biking activity. Not suitable for off-road mobility scooters due to steep and stony narrow paths, and wooden bridges, sometimes narrow, with high steps.

Difficulty: Medium. **Child Friendly:** Yes, if children are used to walks of this distance and overall ascent. **Dog Friendly:** Yes, but watch out for mountain bikers.

Refreshments: Options in Monymusk, Kemnay and Alford.



Description

This very enjoyable and varied route takes in a mix of forest and moorland environments with some fine views in places, and especially on the ascent and descent of the White Lady hilltop. The walk starts and finishes along the main forest road at the base of the Menaway Hills – Pitfichie, Cairn William, Green Hill, and White Lady being the main tops on the range. There are a number of popular mountain-biking trails in the area – so be aware that you may encounter trail-biking enthusiasts throughout the route. About 1.5 km into the walk, the impressive Whitehill Stone Circle is reached. This late Neolithic stone monument, as with the many other recumbent stone circles found in the NE of Scotland, was probably constructed and used for ceremonial purposes during the second and third millennia BC. Most of the upright stones have fallen, but the west flanker stone to the recumbent still stands, as does an upright to the NW of the circle. The raised low cairn and pit within the circle are still very obvious, possibly the site of cremation burials. At various points along the base forest road marvellous views open up of the farmland and forests in the Monymusk area, to the east. Climbing up through the woodland to the ridge between Green Hill and White Lady, there is attractive open moorland on the western slopes. From this position, and during the final ascent and descent of White Lady there are great views down to the fertile Howe of Alford. In addition, there are magnificent sweeping views further to the west. On a clear day you can easily pick out the following prominent hill-tops: Mount Keen; Lochnagar; Morven; Buck of Cabrach; Ben Rinnes.

During the return leg, in open forest, the route passes an impressive natural feature, the Balvenie Stone, a so-called “erratic” giant boulder deposited by melting ice sheets after the last Ice Age.



Waypoints

(1) Start walk at Pitfichie Cycle Trail car-park - Whitehill

(57.20826; -2.57322)

<https://w3w.co/sprayed.thin.storyline> NJ6549013203

Start the walk at the Pitfichie Forest-Whitehill Stone Circle car-park. Walk gently uphill past the steel gate and proceed along the forest road as it climbs away from the car-park in a westerly direction. At various points along this road, marvellous views open up of the farmland and forests in the Monymusk area, to the east.

**Note: Leave the A944 at Tillyfourie joining the B993. After about one mile, turn left at the sign for the Whitehills Cycle Trails, then left again in about half a mile for the car-park.*



(2) Follow main forestry road as it bends right and uphill

(57.20903; -2.59277) <https://w3w.co/forever.manual.competing>

After 1.2 km, keep following the main forestry road as it bends right and uphill, ignoring the minor forest road that carries straight on. (1.2 km)



(3) Whitehill Stone Circle

(57.21068; -2.59205) <https://w3w.co/lifted.basically.cycled>

In another 200 m, or so, you will arrive at the Whitehill Stone Circle* on your left. When you are ready to move on, return to the forest road, turn left along it and carry on. (1.4 km)

**Note: As with the many other recumbent stone circles found in the NE of Scotland, it was probably constructed, and used for ceremonial purposes during the second and third millennia B.C. Most of the upright stones have fallen, but the west flanker stone to the recumbent still stands, as does an upright to the NW of the circle. The raised low cairn and pit within the circle are still very obvious, possibly the site of cremation burials.*



(4) Left off road onto uphill path into trees

(57.21712; -2.58698) <https://w3w.co/campsites.hello.rejoin>

After a further 900 m, or so, at a green post (numbered - '3') on your right where the road widens and veers to the right, go left to follow a path into the trees. The immediate ascent onto the path is quite steep, but the path soon assumes a more gentle ascent through the forest. Continue up through the trees. (2.3 km)



(5) Left for path to White Lady summit

(57.21693; -2.59603) <https://w3w.co/ears.informal.connected>
In 600 m, at a paths t-junction, the main path goes right for a steep ascent of Green Hill (also known as 'Pile of Stones'). Your route, however, is on the narrower path going left, with a plantation of trees on your left side and more open moorland with some trees on your right side. This fairly gradual ascent will take you to the broad heathery summit area on the White Lady hill. (2.9 km)



(6) White Lady summit

(57.21451; -2.59880) <https://w3w.co/majors.baths.hurricane>
You will arrive at the summit area in about 400 m. There is no cairn or marker for the highest point that we could see. There are great views* to enjoy on a clear day. Carry on taking the path that now starts to descend on the S side of White Lady, steep and muddy at times, eventually entering woodland. (3.3 km)

**Note: There are sweeping views on the western side. On a clear day you can easily pick out the following prominent hill-tops: Mount Keen; Lochnagar; Morven; Buck of Cabrach; Tap O'Noth.*



(7) Right along forest road

(57.20921; -2.59888)
<https://w3w.co/irritated.snowboard.described>
After 700 m descent, the path emerges from trees onto a forest road. Turn right along the forest road. (4.0 km)



(8) Left off forest road - downhill into trees

(57.21226; -2.60462) <https://w3w.co/momentous.feeds.having>
After 500 m on the forest road, look out for a path* going downhill between bushes on your left side into the trees. (4.5 km)

**Note: Unfortunately there is no marker post or distinguishing features to help locate this path, other than a clump of silver birch trees just beyond it. You need to be vigilant and watch out for it! The path itself, although narrow, is in reasonably good condition. It descends through the forest in a firebreak between different stands of trees.*



(9) Right at paths y-junction

(57.20873; -2.60412)

<https://w3w.co/passion.excavate.custodian>

After descending through trees for about 400 m, views open up on your right side and you arrive at a (possibly indistinct) paths y-junction. A path goes up and over a low embankment on your left into the mature trees. Your route, however, is right and downhill through bracken (no trees), which may be quite high and tend to obscure the path in summer months. Follow this path as it meanders downhill a short distance towards more trees. (4.9 km)



(10) Left along path in trees

(57.20846; -2.60510) <https://w3w.co/forgets.leafing.escapades>

In 100 m, or so, the path descends into larch trees and onto a wider path (formerly a forest road). Turn left here to follow the path/road through the trees in an SE direction, looking out for a very large stone I your left side. (5.0 km)



(11) Left and up to Balvenie Stone

(57.20790; -2.60408)

<https://w3w.co/showrooms.bought.universal>

In 100 m or so, look out for a very large stone in a clearing a little uphill on your left side. Walk up to the stone to check it out. It is called the Balvenie Stone*. At the rear of the stone, with your back to the stone, ignoring the path to your left, take the path that veers off to your right to meander gently uphill through the trees. (5.1 km)

**Note: The origin of the name 'Balvenie' is unclear. Large boulders like this were transported by ice sheets during the last Ice Age. These large boulders are known as 'erratics'.*



(12) Right at t-junction with former forest road

(57.20791; -2.59917) <https://w3w.co/shunning.awaiting.began>

After 300 m ascent through the trees, the path goes up steeply for a short section to join an old forest road, now a path. Turn right here to follow this woodland path in a SE then E direction, ignoring a path going left and uphill almost immediately. In about 620 m the path meets the main forest road that you walked up in the early part of the route. Turn right onto this main forest road to re-trace your steps back to the car-park at the walk start/end point. (5.4 km)



(13) Finish walk back at Cycle Trails car-park

(57.20825; -2.57317) <https://w3w.co/else.enthused.sums>

In 1.6 km from Waypoint 12 you will have arrived back at the walk start/end point in the Pitfichie Cycle Trails car-park. (7.0 km)

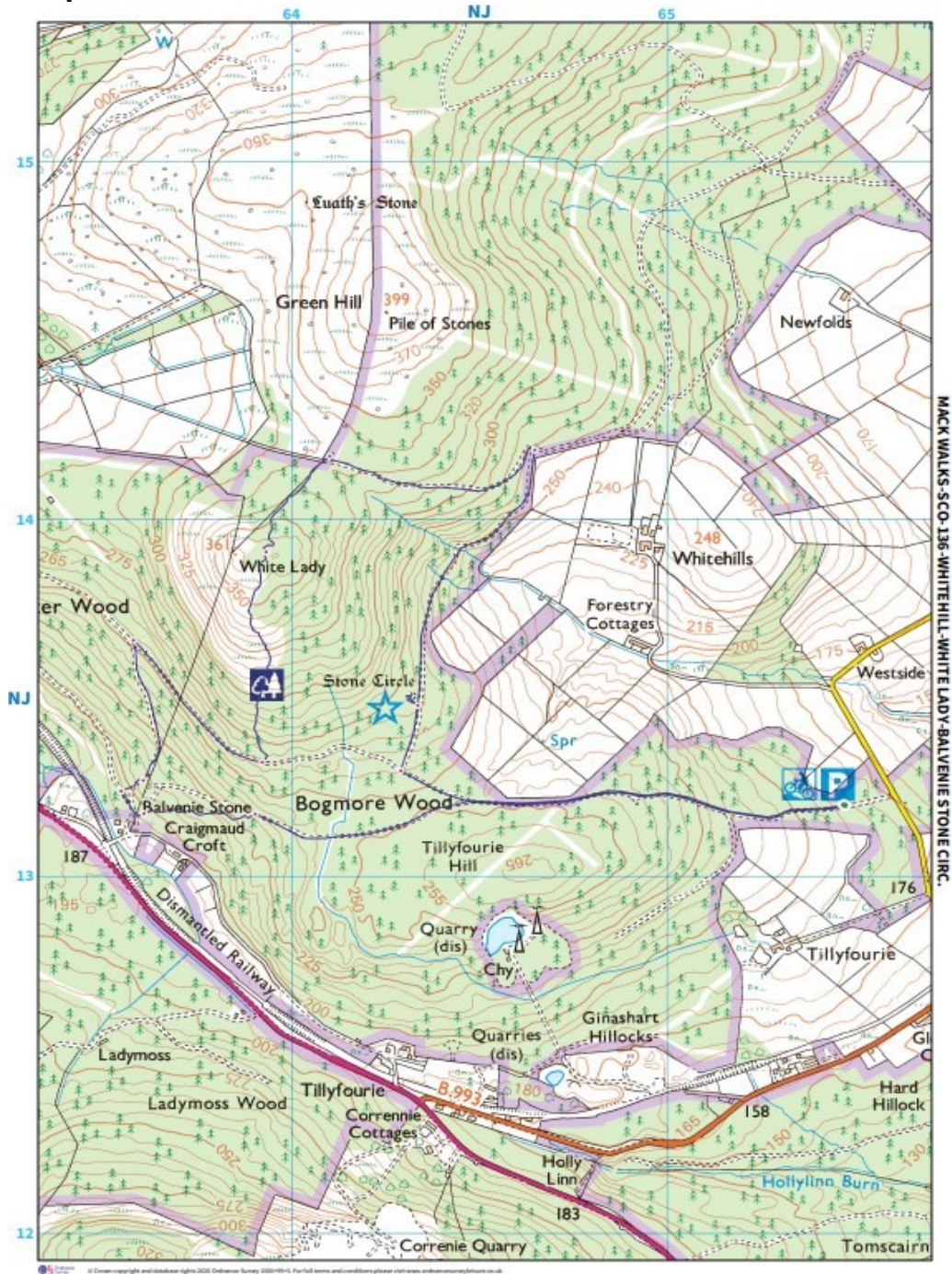


Route Map (with wapoints)

136-Whitehill-White Lady-Balvenie Stone Circuit



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](#)