

The Mack Walks: Short Walks in Scotland Under 10 km

Fyrish Monument Jubilee Walk (Highland)

Route Summary

A well-known walk that relentlessly climbs through pine woods, thinning out as you reach the massive Fyrish Monument, shaped to represent the gates on the old city wall of the India city of Negapatam during the late 18th C. There are wonderful views of the Cromarty Firth area.

Duration: 3 hours.



Route Overview

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Transport/Parking: Nearest bus service and rail station in Alness. Possibly as much as 8 km round trip to walk start/end point. There is a free car-park at the start/end of the walk.

Length: 6.310 km / 3.94 mi

Height Gain: 291 meter.

Height Loss: 291 meter.

Max Height: 447 meter.

Min Height: 181 meter.

Surface: Moderate. Well maintained forest roads and paths. May be rough and muddy in places.

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

Difficulty: Medium.

Dog Friendly: Yes.

Refreshments: Options in Alness, Evanton and Invergordon.



Description

This is a justifiably popular walk in the Easter Ross area. A fairly straightforward, but relentless, climb through pine forest is rewarded by increasingly splendid views of the Cromarty Firth, Black Isle, and Sutors of Cromarty as you approach the summit area. On a good day you can also see hilltops on the southern side of the Moray Firth. The last section of the climb provides a stunning finale, as the stirring and evocative Fyrish Monument gradually comes into view. It is a huge stone structure with three central arches and four flanking towers. It was commissioned in 1783 by the local landowner, Sir Hector Munro. As commander of the British Army in India his forces had defeated the Dutch at the Battle of Negapatam. On his return to Scotland, the sweeping changes in land use involving the forced removal of local people from their homesteads, known as the "Highland Clearances", was underway. Displaced people were starving and homeless. In order to obtain food and shelter, various "job creation" schemes were devised on the principle that only the "deserving" poor should be helped. A willingness to work in return for assistance was deemed necessary in order to maintain the moral standards of the day and discourage "laziness". The construction of the Fyrish Monument was one of the tasks devised to this end. This rich man's "folly" is intended to represent the gates of the city wall at Negapatam and, despite any reservations we might have, nowadays, about the means and motive for the construction, there is no doubt that it is a hugely impressive and unforgettable sight. During the ascent, we pass a pretty little loch, perfect for a picnic on a fine day. On the summit of Fyrish Hill, just beyond the Monument, there is a fine view of the landscape and hills to the north. To the north-west, the mountainous mass of Ben Wyvis (1046 m) dominates. Directly ahead of you, above the patchwork of fields in the valley below is Cnoc Ceislein (523 m).



Waypoints

(1) Start walk from Fyrish Monument Jubilee walk car-park

(57.71217; -4.30510)

The walk starts from the Jubilee Walk car-park just off the minor road to Boath, off the B9176 Struie Road on the outskirts of Alness. Follow the path uphill into the pine woods.



(2) Carry on across x-roads

(57.70891; -4.31179)

In just less than 600 m, carry straight on across the forest road x-roads. Soon the path dips to cross a wooden pedestrian bridge over the Contullich Burn, then rises again to continue the steady uphill progress through the pine forest. (577 m)



(3) Carry on uphill at x-roads

(57.70410; -4.31697)

In 600 m, at a forest roads x-roads, carry straight on uphill. You v the return leg. (1.2 km)



(4) Lochan

(57.69965; -4.32217)

In another 600 m, divert left to check out the pretty little lochan. When you are ready, continue taking the uphill path. On this final ascending section to reach the Fyrish Monument, views of the Cromarty Firth start to open up on your left side. (1.8 km)



(5) Fyrish Monument

(57.69564; -4.33759)

After another 1.2 km ascent you will have arrived at the evocative Fyrish Monument* where there are marvellous views of the Cromarty Firth, and, on a good day, over to the southern side of the Moray Firth. When you are ready, follow the rough road around to the NW for a short distance. (3.0 km)

**Note: The Fyrish Monument is a huge stone structure with three central arches and four flanking towers. It was commissioned in 1783 by the local landowner, Sir Hector Munro. As commander of the British Army in India his forces had defeated the Dutch at the Battle of Negapatam. On his return to Scotland, the sweeping changes in land use involving the forced removal of local people from their homesteads, known as the "Highland Clearances", was underway. Displaced people were starving and homeless. In order to obtain food and shelter, various "job creation" schemes were devised on the principle that only the "deserving" poor should be helped. A willingness to work in return for assistance was deemed necessary in order to maintain the moral standards of the day and discourage "laziness". The construction of the Fyrish Monument was one of the tasks devised to this end. This rich man's "folly" is intended to represent the gates of the city wall at Negapatam.*



(6) View north from Cnoc Fyrish

(57.69613; -4.33799)

We suggest taking the 'Back of Fyrish' track away from the Fyrish Monument for a short distance in a westerly direction. Then, walk to your right onto the boggy flat summit of Fyrish Hill. With the Monument directly behind you, there is now a fine view of the landscape and hills to the north. To the north-west, the mountainous mass of Ben Wyvis dominates. Directly ahead of you, across the valley is Cnoc Ceislein. When you are ready, walk back the short distance to the Monument and start re-tracing your steps from the outward route, heading downhill with marvellous views of the Cromarty Firth below you on your right. (3.2 km)



(7) Left for alternative route at lochan

(57.69978; -4.32181)

In 1.2 km, close to the little lochan you stopped at earlier, go left to take an alternative downward route for the next section. There are good views to the north as you follow this forest road, eventually sweeping around to the right to re-join the main Jubilee Walk path. (4.4 km)



(8) Left to re-join main path to car-park

(57.70410; -4.31707)

After 700 m, following the alternative downward route on the forest road, it sweeps around to the right to re-join the main Jubilee Walk path (at Waypoint 3 on the outward leg). Go left here to follow the main Jubilee Walk path down to the walk start point. (5.1 km)



(9) Finish walk back at car-park

(57.71217; -4.30520)

After the final 1.2 km descent you will have arrived back at the small car-park where you started the walk. (6.3 km)



