

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

## Fochabers-Whiteash Hill-Winding Walks (Moray)

### Route Summary

A very pleasant and sheltered walk in mature woodland. There are some good views and an opportunity to picnic at a “secret” lochan. There are a couple of historical curiosities along the way – a laird’s memorial monument, and the supposed grave of a “tinker king”.

Duration: 2 hours.



### Route Overview

**Duration:** 2 hours.

**Transport/Parking:** Stagecoach operate a frequent bus service between Elgin and Buckie. Check driver will drop you off at the Winding Walks. Paid parking at walk start/end point (£2 per day, or less, at March 2020)

**Length:** 5.890 km / 3.68 mi

**Height Gain:** 193 meter.

**Height Loss:** 193 meter.

**Max Height:** 250 meter.

**Min Height:** 87 meter.

**Surface:** Nearly all on good forest roads. Final Winding Walks section on a path that may be muddy in places. **\*\*The Peep’s View path (between Waypoints 10 and 12) will be closed for at least a week from 17th March 2020. Carry straight on at Waypoint 10, directly to Waypoint 12 instead. \*\***

**Difficulty:** Easy/Medium.

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

**Dog Friendly:** Yes, keep dogs under close control at all times.

**Refreshments:** Options in and around Fochabers.



### Description

This is a good woodland walk, mostly in a mature pinewood with open spacing, and some mature broad-leaved trees. The Winding Walks name specifically applies to a wooded gorge with some large trees planted in the 19thC. The recreational paths here are long-standing and formed part of the landscaped policies of the Gordon-Lennox estate at Fochabers. On our route we descend into the wooded gorge in the final section of the walk but it would be readily possible to extend the walk to take in more of these “winding” paths if you so wished. The Winding Walks forest is popular with mountain-bikers but our route is mostly separate from the cycle trails. On the outward section we steadily ascend Whiteash Hill, passing by the small but pretty Longhowe Loch along the way, where there is a handy picnic bench. Nearing the summit there are open views down to, and across, the Moray Firth. On a clear day you will easily pick out the Caithness coastline, and the conical shape of Morven, more than 80 kms away. At this high return point on the route there is a useful information board and an imposing and unusual stone monument, built in 1887 as a memorial for Frances Harriet Grenville, wife of Charles Gordon-Lennox, 6th Duke of Richmond and Gordon. Descending on the western side of the hill, the route passes a curious cairn of stones known as Ranald’s Grave. Reputedly, Ranald was a “king of tinkers” and the stone cairn marks the spot where he was summarily executed in his own camp for highway robbery. The cairn is on a hillside which overlooks the Old King’s Highway road between Aberdeen and Inverness. The final focal point, before the lush and atmospheric Winding Walks gorge, is Peep’s Viewpoint, where there is a charming old wooden gazebo overlooking the village of Fochabers.



## Waypoints

### (1) Start walk at the Winding Walks car-park

(57.61279; -3.07583) <https://w3w.co/popped.blocking.limits>

Start the walk at the Forestry Commission information board at the Winding Walks car-park\*. Looking at the info board, turn right and follow the path in a SW direction to the corner of the car-park. Down below you, on your right you will see a small reservoir/pond.

*\*Note: driving from Fochabers in an easterly direction, the Winding Walks car-park is on your right, about 560 m from the large A96/A98 Fochabers by-pass roundabout on the A98 road to Buckie.*



### (2) Veer right then left at fork in roads

(57.61216; -3.07544) <https://w3w.co/founders.decks.entrusted>

In just less than 80 m, at the south-western end of the car-park, take the broad path veering slightly right and downhill. After passing the bollards, turn left and then almost immediately take the left fork on the forest roads. Follow this forest road as it proceeds gently uphill into the woods. (77 m)



### (3) Follow road as it veers slightly left - ignore option down and right

(57.60842; -3.07092) <https://w3w.co/shadows.grandest.molars>

In just over 500 m, at a junction, follow the forest road as it swings very gently left and gradually uphill. Do NOT take the track going down to your right at the junction. In about 450 m you will pass the pretty little Longhowe Loch where there is a picnic bench. (601 m)



### (4) Right at t-junction

(57.61114; -3.06080) <https://w3w.co/mixed.ringside.seeing>

In 800 m, go right at a t-junction on the forest roads. (1.4 km)





## (5) Cross over forest road and up path to monument

(57.60775; -3.05752) <https://w3w.co/absent.poodle.essay>

In 500 m, cross a forest road and veer very slightly left to take a path going uphill. (1.9 km)



## (6) Monument

(57.60294; -3.05048) <https://w3w.co/shrubbery.scarecrow.trams>

In 700 m you will have arrived at an impressive pyramidal stone monument\* where there is also an information board. From here there are good views on a clear day over the Moray Firth to the Caithness Hills. When you are ready, take the path at the back and to the right of the monument (with your back to the Moray Firth). This path goes downhill in a west-south-west direction. The first section of this path is used by mountain-bikers so may be muddy. Keep going downhill, ignoring an extreme mountain bike trail on your left. (2.6 km)

*\*Note: Built in 1887 as a memorial for Frances Harriet Grenville, wife of Charles Gordon-Lennox, 6th Duke of Richmond and Gordon.*



## (7) Ranald's Grave

(57.60205; -3.05774) <https://w3w.co/requires.shapeless.distorts>

In 500 m, just off the path on your left, you will pass a curious cairn of stones known as Ranald's Grave.\* After checking it out, carry on downhill. (3.1 km)

*\*Note: Reputedly, Ranald's Grave. Ranald was apparently a "king of tinkers" and the stone cairn marks the spot where he was summarily executed in his own camp for highway robbery. The cairn is on a hillside above the Old King's Highway road between Aberdeen and Inverness.*



## (8) Cross forest road and carry on downhill

(57.60260; -3.06547) <https://w3w.co/innovate.caused.reshaping>

In about 500 m from Ranald's Grave, at a x-roads and clearing, go straight over the x-roads and carry on walking gently downhill. (3.6 km)



### (9) Carry straight on here

(57.60453; -3.06733) <https://w3w.co/reinvest.ordeals.nightlife>  
In 300 m, where there is a sign for the Winding Walks on your right, carry straight on, on the forest road. (3.9 km)



### (10) Left for Peep's Viewpoint path

(57.60682; -3.07306) <https://w3w.co/collapsed.tonight.swan>  
In another 400 m, at another Winding Walks sign for a path going right, take the Peep's View path on the other side, going left. To emphasise, GO LEFT HERE! (4.3 km)



### (11) Peep's viewpoint

(57.60880; -3.08077) <https://w3w.co/sagging.empire.jumbo>  
In 700 m you will arrive at a wooden gazebo (sadly, fenced off when we visited, March 2020), From here, there is a fine view over nearby Fochabers (Peep's View). When you are ready, carry on taking the track as before. (5.0 km)



### (12) Carry straight on for Winding Walks path

(57.60922; -3.07506) <https://w3w.co/giggle.translate.budgeted>  
In 400 m you will meet another forest road where there is a Winding Walks signpost. This time, cross the road and follow the Winding Walks arrow on the signpost. You are now on a narrow path that zig-zags right then left to descend into the Winding Walks wooded gorge, heading in a northerly direction back towards your walk start-point. Eventually, the path meets the forest road again, close to the car-park. Turn right here and soon you will be passing the small reservoir/pond below you on your left, and re-tracing your steps through the car-park to your start-point. (5.4 km)



### (13) Finish walk back at car-park

(57.61278; -3.07595) <https://w3w.co/popped.blocking.limits>  
In 500 m you will have arrived back at your start-point in the Forestry Commission Winding Walks car-park. (5.9 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](#)