

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

## Rafford-Califer Viewpoint Circular (Moray)

### Route Summary

A good leg-stretching excursion amongst farmland and mixed woodland in rural Moray to achieve a popular vantage point high above the inner Moray Firth where the views are guaranteed to be breathtaking, whatever the weather.

Duration: 2.5 hours.



### Route Overview

**Duration:** 2.5 hours.

**Transport/Parking:** No public transport nearby. Parking in rough-surfaced church car-park at walk start/end point.

**Length:** 7.420 km / 4.64 mi

**Height Gain:** 197 meter. **Height Loss:** 197 meter.

**Max Height:** 205 meter. **Min Height:** 49 meter.

**Surface:** Moderate. Rough roads and grassy paths. May be muddy in places. Return leg from Califer Viewpoint on quiet minor roads.

**Difficulty:** Easy.

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

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

**Refreshments:** Options in Forres.



### Description

This is a very pleasant ramble in typical lower-Moray countryside, a mostly sheltered and benign landscape, characterised by mixed farmland and wooded hillsides. The route takes a wide circumference around the ruin of Blervie Castle, with the high tower often in sight across fields on the walker's left side. The undoubted focal point on the route is the celebrated viewpoint on Califer Hill, where there is a marvellous vista over the Forres area, with Findhorn Bay particularly prominent, and with the cliffs of the 'Black Isle' and the Sutors of Cromarty further away over the Moray Firth, providing an impressive backdrop. On a clear day, the hills of Caithness, and others, more widely across northern Scotland, are visible. To



assist, there is a viewfinder which identifies places and hilltops, near and far. The descent from the viewpoint on quiet minor roads provides further extended opportunities to enjoy the views. It is on this return leg that the route gets closest to Blervie Castle. Thanks to Wikipedia for the following: "*Blervie Castle is a ruined 16th-century Z-plan tower house. The property was originally held by the Comyns, and it is thought that there was a royal castle here in the 13th century - the Exchequer Rolls mention repair of the royal castle in anticipation of Haakon IV of Norway's invasion of 1263. It passed to the Dunbars, who built the present castle in about 1600. The Mackintoshes purchased it early in the 18th century, and subsequently sold it to the Duffs of Braco, Earls Fife. In about 1776 the castle was partly demolished to build Blervie Mains*". The walk starts and finishes at Rafford Church, a large and very visually attractive example of the Gothic Revival style, built in 1820 to replace a smaller older parish kirk.

## Waypoints

### (1) Start walk outside door of Rafford Church

(57.58747; -3.57318) <https://w3w.co/follow.supposes.encounter>

With your back to the Rafford Church main entrance door, go left and follow the rough road going through the trees in an easterly direction. Soon, you emerge from the trees, with open fields on either side.



### (2) Follow road bending left - away from Granary Farm

(57.58576; -3.55894) <https://w3w.co/await.third.innovate>

In 1km, or so, now in trees again, ignore the access road signed for Granary Farm on your right and keep following the rough road as it bends left. (945 m)



### (3) Sharp left off rough road onto grassy path

(57.58456; -3.55356) <https://w3w.co/slipped.browsers.populate>

In 450 m, as the rough road approaches a farm gate on your left and starts bending to the right, go sharp left onto a grassy path between fields. The Rafford Burn is close-by on your left side as you head towards some houses ahead of you. (1.4 km)



### (4) At tarred road - carry straight on - uphill

(57.58526; -3.54847) <https://w3w.co/mediate.arrives.awakening>

In 300 m, the grassy path meets a tarred road. Carry straight on, following the road gently uphill and passing a house on your right side. (1.7 km)



### (5) Through gate onto woodland path

(57.58622; -3.54738) <https://w3w.co/grocers.adapt.farmland>

In about 100 m, passing an old farm/mill building on your left, and at the entrance to a new house on your right side, go through the field gate straight ahead of you to join a woodland path going uphill through the trees. The Rafford Burn is still fairly close on your left side as you ascend. (1.8 km)



### (6) Take left fork - straight on - at y-junction

(57.58816; -3.53644) <https://w3w.co/initiates.ignoring.denoting>

In 700 m, where there is a path forking to the right, ignore it and keep straight on, continuing on the main path (the left fork), with the Rafford Burn still below you on your left side. (2.5 km)



### (7) Left onto rough road - signed for Califer

(57.58841; -3.53394) <https://w3w.co/doped.voice.deriving>

In another 200 m, where the path meets a rough road at a t-junction and there is a walks signpost. Go left along the rough road, signed for Califer, cross the bridge over the Rafford Burn, and passing houses on your left, continue up the rough access road. (2.7 km)



### (8) Take left fork at y-junction on rough access roads

(57.59159; -3.53514) <https://w3w.co/mocked.sending.worms>

In 400 m, at a y-junction on the rough access road, take the left fork. (3.1 km)



### (9) Right and uphill at junction with tarred public road

(57.59351; -3.53772) <https://w3w.co/decompose.manly.easily>  
In 200 m, where the rough access road meets a tarred minor road, go sharp right and uphill. At the top of the incline, follow the public road as it bends left. Soon, you are at the entrance to the Califer Viewpoint on your left side. Go left into the car-park and follow the path to the stone enclosure at the viewpoint. (3.3 km)



### (10) Califer Hill viewpoint

(57.59443; -3.53392) <https://w3w.co/clusters.estimated.banks>  
In 500 m, you will have arrived at the Califer Viewpoint\* where there is marvellous vista over the Forres area, with Findhorn Bay particularly prominent in one aspect, with the cliffs of the 'Black Isle' and the Sutors of Cromarty much further away, more to the left. There is a viewfinder which identifies places and hilltops, near and far, to assist. When you are ready, re-trace your steps back down the tarred road, passing Waypoint 9 as you carry on downhill in the direction of Forres. (3.8 km)

*\*Note: there is a garden of remembrance (now full) amongst the young trees on the south side of the viewpoint.*



### (11) Left at x-roads - to Rafford

(57.59847; -3.55320) <https://w3w.co/steady.plants.survived>  
In 1.6 km, at a x-roads, go left in the direction signed for Rafford. (5.4 km)



## (12) Passing Blervie Castle

(57.59638; -3.55681) <https://w3w.co/strut.paces.towels>

In 300 m, you will pass the entrance for Blervie Castle\* Farmhouse as you continue on and gently downhill towards Rafford. The best views of the castle ruin on your left are probably seen after you have passed the entrance. Follow the public road down to Lower Rafford. At a t-junction with the B9010 road, by the War Memorial, cross the main road with care and go left along the verge, walking back towards your starting point at Rafford Church. At the entrance to the church, cross the road and veer right to walk up the rough access drive to your start-point outside the main doors to the church. (5.7 km)



*\*Note: thanks to Wikipedia for the following: 'Blervie Castle is a ruined 16th-century Z-plan tower house. The property was originally held by the Comyns, and it is thought that there was a royal castle here in the 13th century - the Exchequer Rolls mention repair of the royal castle in anticipation of Haakon IV of Norway's invasion of 1263. It passed to the Dunbars, who built the present castle in about 1600. The Mackintoshes purchased it early in the 18th century, and subsequently sold it to the Duffs of Braco, Earls Fife. In about 1776 the castle was partly demolished to build Blervie Mains'*  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blervie\\_Castle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blervie_Castle)

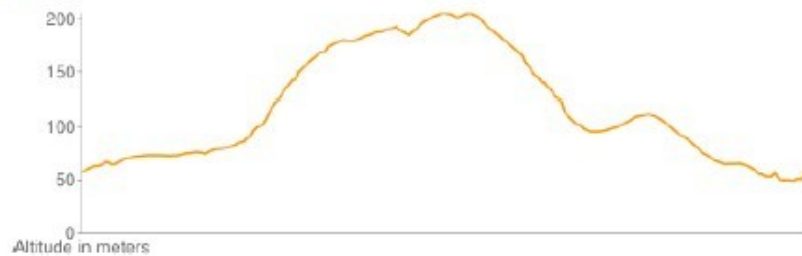
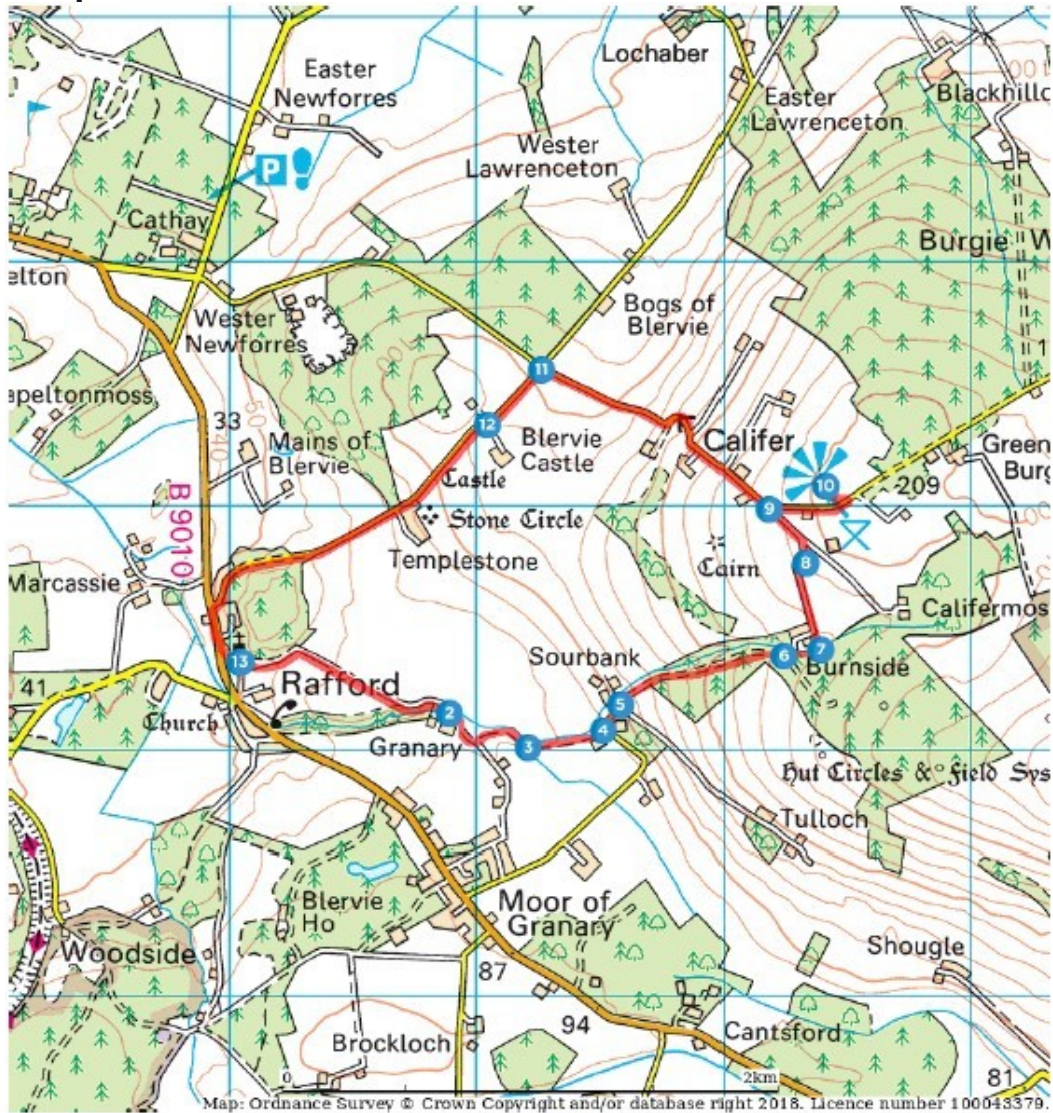
## (13) Finish walk back at Rafford Church

(57.58747; -3.57326) <https://w3w.co/follow.supposes.encounter>

In 700 m from passing the entrance to Blervie Mains at Waypoint 12, you will have arrived back at your start-point outside the church doors. (7.4 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 the Walk on OutdoorActive](#)

[Access Walk on OSMaps](#)

[Access Walk on Wikiloc](#)