

The Mack Walks: Short Walks in Scotland Under 10 km

River Divie-Dunphail Castle-Randolph's Leap (Moray)

Route Summary

Walking in beautiful surroundings, especially accentuated when Autumn colours are to the fore, but hugely appealing at any time of year due to the contrast between the tranquil pine forest and the dynamic energy of fast-flowing torrents compressed between rocky gorges.

Duration: 3.5 hours.



Route Overview

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Transport/Parking: No public transport nearby. Parking at the walk start/end point at Logie Steading.

Length: 8.560 km / 5.35 mi **Height Gain:** 209 meter. **Height Loss:** 209 m.

Max Height: 173 meter. **Min Height:** 88 meter.

Surface: Moderate. A mix of woodland paths and tarred surfaces. May be muddy in places. Riverside paths are precipitous in places and may not suit all walkers.

Difficulty: Medium.

Child Friendly: No. We cannot recommend this walk to families with young children due to some precipitous riverside paths, in places.

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

Refreshments: Olive Tree Cafe at the Logie Steading. Options in Forres.



Description

This is a very special and scenic walk, with a fascinating and stimulating mix of historical and environmental features, along the banks of the Rivers Divie and Findhorn. The route kicks off at the Logie Steading buildings, originally constructed as a model farm in the 1920's, but now converted into a high-end food, drink, and retail centre. Logie Estate was purchased in 1924 by the newly ennobled Sir Alexander Grant, originally a baker from Forres, who created the definitive McVities digestive biscuit recipe. The route heads south amongst mature mixed woodland, rubbing shoulders with some particularly massive old Douglal Fir trees along the way, arriving at a beautifully



landscaped feature where three linked ponds sit in an old gorge carved out by the last Ice Age, with the evocative ruins of Dunphail Castle towering above a sheer cliff face. The castle dates back to the 13th C and ghostly myths surround the building, harking back to a gruesome episode when severed human heads were thrown up and over the ramparts to the besieged garrison, with the callous cry "here's beef for your bannocks"! From the castle, the route takes a fabulously scenic path along the River Divie, crossing the river mid-way on a memorable wooden footbridge. The River Divie rises in the desolate hills of Dava Moor and joins the River Findhorn at a later point on our route. This section of the river has a wild and tempestuous beauty as it cascades through tree-lined rocky gorges. The Divie path leads on to the Doune of Relugas, where a low stone rampart is all that remains of an ancient hill-fort dating back to the 1st millennium BC. Before returning to Logie Steading, our walk diverts to the renowned local beauty spot and wildlife area at Randolph's Leap on the River Findhorn, where dramatic rocks, cliffs and waterfalls are surrounded by peaceful pine forest. See our PDF guide for the violent history of the name, originating during brutal conflict between local warlords in the 14th C.

Waypoints

(1) Start the walk from Logie Steading

(57.53367; -3.66023) <https://w3w.co/salutes.childcare.deleting>
Start the walk from the car-park at Logie Steading*. Return to the access road from the car-park and walk up the road towards the lodge at the junction with the B9007 road.

**Note: Logie House and the Logie Estate were purchased in 1924 by Sir Alexander Grant, originally a baker from Forres, who created the definitive McVities digestive biscuit recipe. The Steading visitor enterprise has been created by his descendants - 'Originally built as a model farm in the 1920's, Logie Steading's attractive sandstone buildings now house an enthusiastic group of individual businesses including the acclaimed Olive Tree Cafe, artisan makers and retailers ...'.*

See: <https://www.logie.co.uk/whats-here/>



(2) Right and downhill at t-junction with B9007 road

(57.52756; -3.66380) <https://w3w.co/treat.happening.hides>
In 750 m, after passing the lodge house on your right side, go right and downhill for a short distance at the t-junction with the B9007 road. Keep on the right side of the road, facing the oncoming traffic. (750 m)



(3) Sharp left and uphill on path through trees

(57.52750; -3.66435) <https://w3w.co/deliver.pinging.elephant>
In 40 m, or so, cross the road and take an indistinct path* going sharp left and uphill through the trees, reversing your direction. Keep following this path up through the trees, with the B9007 below you on your left side. The path gets clearer and more obvious as you ascend. At the top of the slope, follow the path as it bends right, in a southerly direction. (790 m)

**Note: the entrance to the path, which is easily missed, is about 15 m before a 'Reduce Speed Now' road sign.*



(4) Right along rough track

(57.52660; -3.66133) <https://w3w.co/congested.pave.hence>
In 200 m, on level ground, in a clearing, the path meets a rough forest road. Turn right along this track. (1 km)



(5) Right upon meeting tarred access road

(57.52226; -3.66026) <https://w3w.co/figs.series.woes>

In 500 m, the rough road meets a tarred access road. Turn right to follow this access road through mature woodland (for about 1.4 km). (1.5 km)



(6) Left off tarred road for Dunphail Castle ponds

(57.51182; -3.66050) <https://w3w.co/clarifies.upward.ketchup>

In 1.4 km, leave the tarred access road to go sharp left towards ponds* under the steep cliff of Castle Hill with the ruin of Dunphail Castle on top. Follow the path in a clockwise direction around the base of the rocky outcrop, passing the ponds in a clockwise direction, with the castle high above you on your right side. Keep going around the outcrop. (2.9 km)



**Note: it is believed that, long ago, perhaps in the aftermath of the last Ice Age, the course of the River Divie was very different, and the river flowed around Castle Hill, where the ponds are now.*

(7) Right and uphill for Dunphail Castle ruin

(57.51193; -3.65872) <https://w3w.co/speeches.shred.thing>

In 300 m, in an open grassy area looking towards a house and some buildings, take the path on your right going fairly steeply in zig-zag fashion, uphill to the ruined castle on the top of the rocky outcrop. (3.2 km)



(8) Dunphail Castle

(57.51235; -3.65898) <https://w3w.co/thrillers.servants.pavilions>
In 100 m, or so, you will have ascended to the ruin of Dunphail Castle*. Take care while investigating the ruin. When you are ready, re-trace your steps back down the access path. At the bottom, walk forward over the grass towards the access road to the house and buildings, then briefly down to meet the tarred access road that you were walking on previously. (3.3 km)

**Note: Thanks to Wikipedia for the following - 'The castle was in existence before 1314. The Comyns owned Dunphail Castle, and the Regent Moray besieged them there in 1330, after their flight from Darnaway Castle. Moray beheaded five of the garrison, whom he had captured when they had been foraging. He had the heads flung over the walls, supposedly saying, "Here's beef for your bannocks". (Five skull-less bodies were discovered buried near the castle, in the 18th century.) The remnant of the garrison were killed by the Regent's troops when attempting to escape. The Dunbars, came into ownership of Dunphail and may have occupied this castle afterwards. Dunphail House was, however, built for the Cummings.' It is believed that most of the current ruins are from a tower house built in the 16th or 17th centuries.*

See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dunphail_Castle



(9) Left along tarred access road

(57.51109; -3.65868) <https://w3w.co/ultra.magnum.wings>
In 200 m, or so, from the ruined castle, join the tarred access road that you left at Waypoint 6. Go left for a short distance until you are at a junction leading to a bridge across the River Divie that you can clearly see below you to your right. (3.5 km)



(10) Sharp right for path along the bank of the River Divie

(57.51073; -3.65846) <https://w3w.co/applauded.dollars.irritated>
In less than 50 m, at a junction where a road goes off right to cross a bridge over the River Divie, go sharp right to immediately join a path along the bank of the River Divie. The river is now below you on your left side. Keep following this up and down path, high above the river, for about 1.3 km. (3.55 km)



(11) Left and over wooden bridge

(57.51950; -3.66601) <https://w3w.co/comically.owner.shuffle>
In 1.3 m, the narrow path you are on arrives at a wood and steel footbridge over the River Divie. Go left and down to cross the bridge. We suggest one person crosses at a time to avoid shaking the structure in a way that might be unsettling for you!. The views upstream and downstream are marvellous. Keep following the path on the other side in a northerly direction, with the river now below you on your right side. (4.8 km)



(12) Take right fork on lower path

(57.52165; -3.66661) <https://w3w.co/rational.newlywed.teaching>
In about 200 m, at a very narrow y-junction, with the fork on the left going gently uphill, take the right fork that carries on ahead at the lower level. (5 km)



(13) Follow arrow sign right and down - then left at river viewpoint

(57.52205; -3.66651) <https://w3w.co/wiggling.crew.dragon>
In less than 100 m, at an arrowed post, go right and downhill for a few metres*, then left and down to join a lower path, with the river still on your right side. Keep going as the path continues through trees above the river. Soon, you emerge from the trees where there is a small grassy field on your left side and buildings ahead of you and above you. Keep on the grassy path, under a house, as it follows the river as it bends sharp right, then, very soon, go sharp left to ascend on a path in mature trees to a position just above the house. (5.1 km)

**Note: you will immediately see a metal gate below you at this point with a sign indicating it is dangerous to descend on steps*



to a river viewpoint where there is a bench. With care, we descended to the bench, but it is YOUR decision! There are great views of the river, whether you descend to the bench, or not.

(14) Follow path going uphill through trees

(57.52471; -3.66515) <https://w3w.co/stews.deluded.mysteries>
In 400 m, as you ascend the wooded hillside, having passed above the house you walked below previously, take the higher (left) path at a narrow y-junction. (5.5 km)



(15) Sharp left and uphill for Doune of Relugas

(57.52507; -3.66385) <https://w3w.co/energetic.firelight.chills>
In 100 m, or so, go sharp left and uphill in a zig-zag fashion to the Doune of Relugas hilltop which is close-by above you. (5.6 km)



(16) Doune of Relugas

(57.52508; -3.66502) <https://w3w.co/custodial.mammals.sunshine>
In 100 m, or so, you will have arrived at the Doune of Relugas* hilltop, where a dry-stone wall goes around the small, mostly open summit area. When you are ready, re-trace your steps back to Waypoint 15, and carry on following the path in the northerly direction you were on before you diverted for the Doune. The path gradually descends, making its way through trees towards the B9007 road and the River Divie stone bridge. (5.7 km)



**Note: The Doune represents the remains of an ancient hill-fort. Thanks to Wikipedia for the following - 'The hill fort was occupied from the 1st millennium BC through to the late 1st millennium AD. At its heart is a timber-laced rampart enclosing an area measuring 53 metres by 33 metres. The enclosure is oval-shaped and has a gap to the east which may represent its entrance ... the site commands an uninterrupted view of the valley of the Findhorn [obscured by current tree cover] ...'. See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doune_of_Relugas*

(17) Take path going left as you approach B9007 road

(57.52671; -3.66470) <https://w3w.co/present.rational.picturing>
In 300 m, as the path you are on is clearly approaching the B9007 and Divie Bridge ahead of you, veer left to take an indistinct path that soon meets a rough road*. Go right there and past a barrier onto the B9007 road. Cross the road to face oncoming traffic and walk gently uphill, passing an access/exit path and information board for Randolph's Leap as you ascend (you will return to this point later). Keep following the road as it bends left at the top of the little hill, with car parking across the road on your left side. You will see another access gate (the main one) for Randolph's Leap ahead of you on your right side. (6 km)

**Note: you can carry straight on if you wish to join the B9007 road sooner, by the stone bridge, in which case, you will be turning left and following the road uphill for a little longer than our suggested route that stays in the trees for a bit longer.*



(18) Through gate for path to Randolph's Leap

(57.52619; -3.67003) <https://w3w.co/implanted.posts.rationing>
In 300 m, turn right and through the pedestrian gate for the path to the Randolph's Leap viewpoint/point of interest on the River Findhorn, passing an information board about 'The Leap' and the notorious flood of 1829. Follow the path downhill, passing an 1829 flood marker stone, to a junction above the river where you turn right to follow the clifftop path (there is a viewing platform on the way to the Randolph's Leap gorge). The River Findhorn is now below you on your left side. (6.3 km)



(19) Randolph's Leap

(57.52624; -3.67126) <https://w3w.co/fended.scoop.overjoyed>
In 300 m, the path following the river diverts briefly for a good view of the rocky gorge at Randolph's Leap* where the water flow is hugely constricted by massive boulders mid-stream and the infamous 'leap' may have occurred. When you are ready, return to the main path and carry on following the river downstream, very soon passing a path on your right heading back towards the B9007 road above you. Follow the rivertop path as it passes the point on your left where the River Divie meets the River Findhorn. Keep taking the path as it ascends to the B9007 road, passing a flood level marker for the 1829 flood. At the tarred road, go left and downhill, soon crossing the stone bridge over the River Divie, looking for a path on your left after you have crossed the bridge. (6.6 km)



**Note: Thanks to Wikipedia for the following - 'This part of the Findhorn is renowned for its dramatic rocks, cliffs and waterfalls, and peaceful surrounding pine forest. Randolph's Leap is also an important wildlife*

area ...'For the history of the name, thanks to Britain Express for the following - 'This scenic beauty spot on the River Findhorn takes its name from a famous incident in local clan warfare. Unfortunately, the name is completely wrong! To find out why, we have to go back in time, to the 14th century, when the land on the west side of the river was owned by Thomas Randolph, the Earl of Moray. The land on the east shore of the river was in the hands of Sir Alexander Cummings ... [during a violent altercation between the families] ... The Cummings men were ambushed, and forced to retreat. Alexander Cummings and three of his men found themselves backed up against the river. Fearing for their lives, the four men leapt across the chasm to the safety of the eastern shore ... So it was not, then, Randolph who leapt, but Cummings ..."

Although not mentioned on the information board for Randolph's Leap, it is believed that Cummings and his companions continued to be pursued by the forces of Randolph and were captured and killed.
See: <https://www.britainexpress.com/attractions.htm?attraction=5027>

(20) Left onto riverside path after crossing B9007 Divie Bridge.jpg

(57.52750; -3.66599) <https://w3w.co/intricate.branch.incisions>
In 700 m, fairly soon after crossing the stone bridge over the River Divie on the B9007 road, go left onto a riverside path, first above the River Divie, then above the River Findhorn, both on your left side. Ignore two return paths to Logie Steading on your right, the first almost immediately, the second about mid-way to the third and final Logie Steading option at Waypoint 21 (about 800 m from this waypoint). (7.3 km)



(21) Sharp right on uphill path back to Logie Steading

(57.53124; -3.66546) <https://w3w.co/validated.enveloped.improves>
In 800 m, at a walks post*, go sharp right on an uphill path at first through trees, then on open ground, back to Logie Steading. (8.1 km)

*Note: the riverside path continues downstream from this point to the Sluie riverside walks at Altyre.

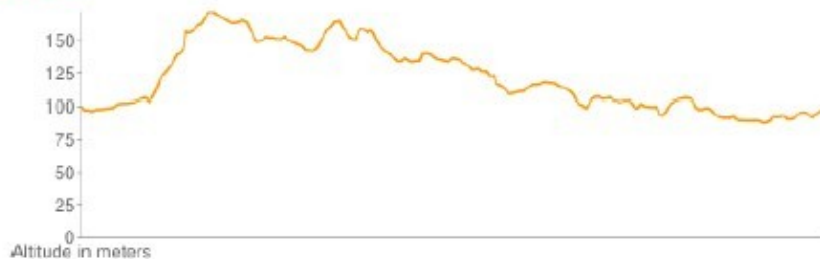
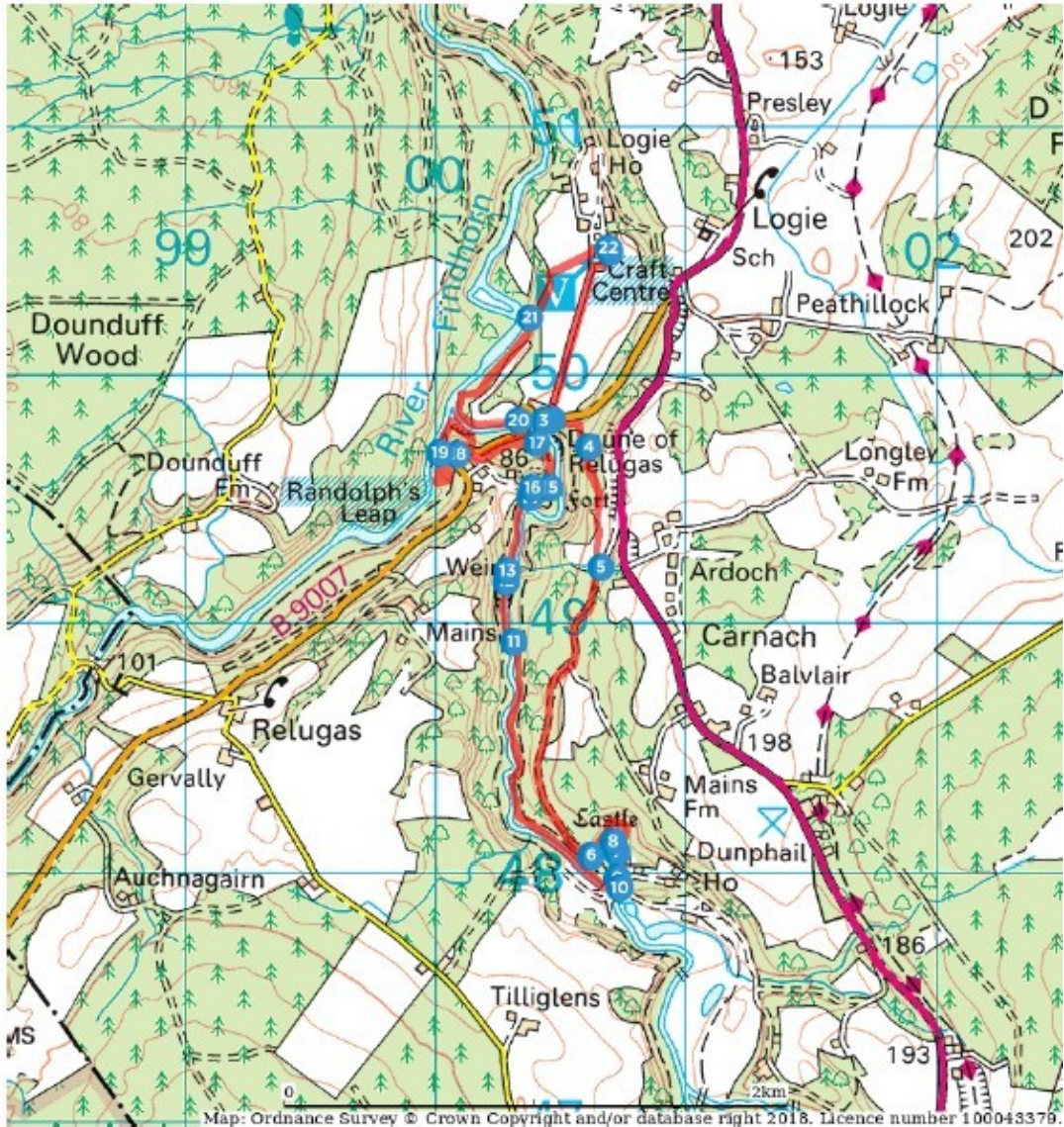


(22) Finish walk back at Logie Steading

(57.53378; -3.66027) <https://w3w.co/salutes.childcare.deleting>
In 500 m, you will have arrived back at your start point at Logie Steading



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](#)