

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

## Boddam Castle-Stirling Hill Quarries Walk (Aberdeenshire)

### Route Summary

A varied and interesting walk over a moderate distance and overall ascent with some fantastic viewpoints. Nature has largely healed the post-industrial landscape, with picturesque flooded quarries sitting on heather hillsides. A coastal walk guaranteed to blow away the cobwebs!

Duration: 3 hours



### Route Overview

**Duration:** 3 hours.

**Transport/Parking:** Stagecoach services to Boddam (e.g. #67 or #68, Aberdeen to Ellon, then #61, Ellon to Peterhead). Check timetables. On-road parking options close to walk start-point

**Length:** 7.340 km / 4.59 mi

**Height Gain:** 181 meter **Height Loss:** 181 meter

**Max Height:** 95 meter **Min Height:** 12 meter

**Surface:** Moderate. A mix of sometimes rough and uneven coastal paths and rough-surfaced roads.

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

**Difficulty:** Medium.

**Dog Friendly:** Yes, but keep dogs on lead near to any livestock, and near the main A90 road.

**Refreshments:** Buchan Braes lounge bar in Boddam. Otherwise, options in Peterhead or Ellon.



### Description

This is an exhilarating coastal walk along visually stunning cliff-tops. It also ascends Stirling Hill, a low hill but with wonderful views, and a wealth of history to absorb. The walk starts at the often overlooked ruins of Boddam Castle, sitting on a finger-like rocky promontory, and dating from the 16th Century. The remains consist of the entrance archway, as well as the complete foundation of the larger building. The castle was an important residence for the Keiths of Ludquharn, a key family in the politics of medieval Scotland. From here there are fine views of Buchan Ness Lighthouse. The area between Boddam and Cruden Bay had over twenty granite quarries and Stirling Hill was the most extensively worked in the area, the red "Peterhead" granite being an excellent decorative and monumental stone that was used across the world for famous buildings and statues. During the walk we encounter what is left of two separate railway systems. The Boddam Branch Line ran from Ellon and opened in 1897. The line was closed to passengers in 1932, and to freight in 1945. In 1884, the Admiralty started to build the breakwaters for Peterhead Harbour of Refuge. A railway was built between Stirling Hill and Peterhead Prison to transport prison labour and granite. This huge project was completed in 1956. At the furthest point on the route we come upon the very scenic Den Dam, whose water once drove granite polishing machines. The dam is used in modern times by model boat enthusiasts. On the far side of the dam is one of the few areas in Scotland where flint can be found, and the site was hugely important as a source of tools for the Neolithic people who lived here 5,000 years ago. On the return leg, there are excellent views of Boddam Power Station and Peterhead, beyond.



## Waypoints

### (1) Start at information board for Boddam Castle

(57.46648; -1.78453) <https://w3w.co/rebel.consoled.backers>

The walk starts at an information board for Boddam Castle opposite the Boddam Evangelical Church building on Queen's Road/Rocksley Drive in Boddam. After checking out the info board, take the path through rough ground towards the sea and the remaining ruins of the castle ahead of you, sitting on a finger-like promontory.



### (2) Boddam Castle

(57.46643; -1.78185) <https://w3w.co/coupler.angry.important>

In 175 m, or so, you will have arrived at the one standing wall of Boddam Castle\*, surrounded by collapsed walls. After checking out the ruins we advise that you walk towards the sea and clifftop where there are fine views of Buchan Ness Lighthouse and the coastline. When you are ready, return to the castle ruins. (175 m)

*\*Note: The remains of the 15-16th century Boddam Castle consist of the entrance archway, surmounted by a low gable, and one or two smaller arches as well as the complete foundation. This was a seat of the Keiths of Ludquharn [Canmore].*

See also:

[http://www.castlesfortsbattles.co.uk/grampian/boddam\\_castle\\_aberdeenshire.html](http://www.castlesfortsbattles.co.uk/grampian/boddam_castle_aberdeenshire.html)



### (3) Take path to left after the castle

(57.46621; -1.78238) <https://w3w.co/seagulls.untrained.batches>

After checking out Boddam Castle, re-trace your steps a short distance to the initial access path and go left to follow the path along the coast in a southerly direction, away from Boddam. At first the path goes around a grass-covered circular area near the cliff-tops before veering slightly inland to join another path, making towards a small abandoned quarry. (407 m)



### (4) Flooded quarry

(57.46393; -1.78330) <https://w3w.co/restless.cello.bins>

In 370 m, the path takes you to the edge of small, water-filled former quarry. It's a picturesque spot, with fine cliff-top views in the other direction. When you are ready, re-trace your steps a short distance from the quarry edge, veer left and take the indistinct path going uphill through the heather in an inland direction, with the flooded quarry on your left. (777 m)



### (5) Left along fence

(57.46396; -1.78464) <https://w3w.co/land.sleeping.daffodils>

In 125 m you will arrive at a t-junction, meeting a better-defined path along the fence surrounding a field. Go left to follow the path alongside the fence. Keep following this path with the fence on your right side and the cliffs on your left as it eventually goes around a field (there may be Highland cattle in the field). (913 m)



### (6) Sharp left to follow old railway line

(57.46125; -1.78719) <https://w3w.co/goodbyes.never.mice>

After 700 m, following the path with a fence on your right, and having walking part-way around a field, turn sharp left under a high bank of granite boulders and earth. You will now be following the line of the old Cruden Bay to Boddam railway line\* for about 700 m. Where possible, keep on a dry, grassy path on the coastal side of the line itself. (1.6 km)

*\*Note: The Boddam Branch Line was a 15-mile branch line constructed by the Great North of Scotland Railway from Ellon railway station to Boddam in Aberdeenshire in 1897. The line and associated Cruden Bay tramway were closed to passengers in 1932 due to lack of traffic. The line was closed to freight in 1945. [Wikipedia]*



### (7) Across main road and uphill

(57.45679; -1.79436) <https://w3w.co/extreme.decimals.cheerily>

After 700 m, taking great care, cross the busy A90 road and take the rough road going uphill and veering right past a gate. (2.3 km)



### (8) Left at Y-junction

(57.45918; -1.79517)

<https://w3w.co/developer.mouths.informer>

In 300 m, go left at a y-junction on the rough roads. (2.6 km)



### (9) Left and uphill

(57.45910; -1.79633) <https://w3w.co/bloodshot.slacker.soggy>  
In just another 100 m, or so, take a rough road going left and uphill. (2.7 km)



### (10) Viewpoint

(57.45860; -1.79705) <https://w3w.co/meals.greet.decisive>  
In another 100 m, you will arrive at a viewpoint with viewfinder indicator. When you are ready, move on, continuing inland on the rough road which turns sharp right in 600 m, or so. (2.8 km)



### (11) Left and through gate

(57.46391; -1.80624) <https://w3w.co/trombone.breezy.toolbar>  
After 1.1 km, arriving at a junction with some trees/shrubs and a house (Highfield) on your right, go sharp left and through a pedestrian gate beside a field gate. Carry on down the track through the field and through another gate at the other side of the field. (3.9 km)



### (12) Den Dam and flint mines

(57.46404; -1.80995) <https://w3w.co/votes.surpassed.archduke>  
In 200 m you will have arrived at a very scenic area above the Den Dam reservoir with some picnic benches and an information board. The water power originating from the dam once drove granite polishing machines. The dam is used in modern times by model boat enthusiasts. Take the steps down towards the dam-head and cross towards the low hillside on the other side of the dam. This is one of the few areas in Scotland where flint stones can be found and the site was hugely important for the Neolithic stone-age people who lived here 5,000 years ago. When you are ready, re-trace your steps back to the picnic area and then back through the gates and field that took you to this spot. (4.1 km)



### (13) Left past out-house buildings at Highfield

(57.46395; -1.80619) <https://w3w.co/decisive.rides.prevented>  
In 400 m, back at the junction by the house called 'Highfield', go left to take the access road away from the house, passing the out-house buildings on your right. Great views open up towards the Boddam Power Station and Peterhead beyond. (4.5 km)



### (14) Right down minor road

(57.46629; -1.80521) <https://w3w.co/eating.flocking.rattled>  
In 300 m, walking gently downhill, you will arrive at the junction between the rough access road and a tarred minor road. There is a marvellous view of the power station. Go right and downhill here past some interesting old stone buildings. (4.8 km)



### (15) Right towards quarry paths again

(57.46653; -1.80059) <https://w3w.co/sleepless.breezes.mailings>  
In 200 m, arriving at a wide junction on your right, go right, first checking out the information board for the Stirling Hill paths network. Carry on down the road towards the working quarry (watch out for any heavy traffic!). (5.0 km)



### (16) Veer left towards quarry then right along fence

(57.46364; -1.80056) <https://w3w.co/reseller.issue.safe>  
After 400 m, or so, veer left towards the quarry gates but then go right to follow a path, with a fence and the quarry on your left side. (5.4 km)



### (17) Veer left to continue along Tattie Road

(57.46166; -1.79959) <https://w3w.co/exulted.binder.node>

In 200 m, at a paths network signpost, veer left to follow the 'Tattie Road'. (5.6 km)



### (18) Veer left again to stay on Tattie Road

(57.46081; -1.79483) <https://w3w.co/tangling.slacker.online>

In another 300 m, at another paths network sign, veer left again to follow the 'Tattie Road' sign. A little way further along you may wish to briefly take a short diversion up a rough road your right. There are good views of flooded quarries and the coastline to the south. (5.9 km)



### (19) Veer left through boulders

(57.46125; -1.79330) <https://w3w.co/reactions.bench.potato>

In less than 200 m, veer left to take a track between a set of blocking boulders. (6.1 km)



### (20) Take short diversion right for views

(57.46251; -1.79036) <https://w3w.co/collides.faded.trombone>

In 200 m, arriving at a y-junction with a roofless building ahead of you, take a short diversion to the right down a grassy path. This will soon take you to a fine view of a grass-floored quarry area to your left and great views to the north and east (we also saw two deer in the quarry!). When you are ready, return to the junction and go right to follow the main path. This will take you past a former 'powder house' (now Shelter House) on your left, once used to store quarry explosives. Unfortunately, the information board inside has been broken into pieces. Carry on as the path veers right and downhill towards Stirling Village. (6.3 km)



## (21) Right - parallel with main road

(57.46618; -1.78680) <https://w3w.co/vine.copycat.grumbles>

In 600 m, having descended to the level of Stirling Village and the main A90 road, go right along the pavement towards a large open tarred area, with houses on the right. (6.9 km)



## (22) Cross main road and through Jubilee portal

(57.46493; -1.78650) <https://w3w.co/alternate.shorten.slope>

In 150 m, or so, take great care to cross the A90 road at a 'Cadet Centre' sign and go through the Jubilee Portal onto the Queen's Road (formerly Rocksley Drive), with a statue on your left. (7.05 km)



## (23) Statue of RAF serviceman

(57.46481; -1.78603) <https://w3w.co/denim.multiply.overjoyed>

Having crossed the road, check out the statue and plaque to RAF servicemen who served at the nearby, now closed, RAF base. Now walk downhill on the pavement towards Boddam. (7.1 km)



## (24) Finish walk back at start point on Rocksley Drive

(57.46651; -1.78445) <https://w3w.co/rebel.consoled.backers>

After 200 m you will have arrived back outside the Boddam Evangelical Church building on Queen's Road/Rocksley Drive in Boddam where you started the walk. (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 OutdoorActive](#)

[Access Walk on OSMaps](#)

[Access Walk on AllTrails](#)

[Access Walk on Wikiloc](#)