

### Deeside Rocks

The strength of stone and the power of water can be taken for granted. This route takes in some of the enduring features of the local landscape, events that have shaped it and some of the evidence for a number of distinct cultures that have manifested themselves here over the ages from as early as 4000 BC. Those early peoples seem to have had a connection to these open spaces. Step into that outdoor life and enjoy the freedom and peace.

### Summary

Drive Distance :Ballater/Dinnet 7 miles; Dinnet/Culsh 10 miles; Culsh/Tarland 1.5 miles; Tarland/Burn o Vat 5 miles;  
:Burn o Vat/Ballater 6 miles  
:Total 29.5 miles  
Drive time :1 hour  
Accessibility :Be prepared for walking over short distances and for being outside  
Year round :Yes but not daily - see descriptions & links below for a guide to opening.  
Child friendly :Yes

### Route

Depart Ballater on the A93 heading east. On arriving in Aboyne turn left onto the B9094, after about 4.5 km turn right towards Coull and continue through Coull heading north to the junction with the B9119. Turn left – this is a sharp turn. – Almost immediately there is a lay-by to stop for the **viewpoint** over the Howe of Cromar. 2 km along the road there is the **Culsh Earth House** souterrain. Continue into Tarland and park in the town square. From Tarland continue on B9119 through staggered crossroads. Pass Loch Davan and stop at the visitor centre for **Burn O Vat**. From here continue on B9119 until you meet the A93, turn right and you will head due west to Ballater. *[OS map 37 very useful]*

**Queen's View, Howe of Cromar** The feeling for the huge fertile basin shape of the Howe of Cromar is fully realised from this viewpoint. A panorama pedestal helps with identifying the skyline summits to the south, most notably Mount Keen, Lochnagar & Morven. There is beauty also in the chequered landscape of farming and forestry.

**Culsh Earth House** Sometimes called a souterrain, this is an Iron Age storehouse, *[Iron Age Britain 800BC to 100 AD]* which would likely be part of a dwelling no longer discernible. Park on the verge off the road. A torch is recommended if you wish to go in – beware of the entrance lintel especially on the way out!

**Tomnaverie Stone Circle** It is possible to walk to the stone circle from the square in Tarland. If you walk on to the B9119 you will see a way marked route, which at first runs parallel to the road. Follow the markers and it will take you up hill – reasonably gentle incline – to Tomnaverie Stone Circle. *[Distance 1.5 km]* Dating from around 4000 BC, this is a splendid example of a recumbent stone circle. This is a unique expression of the stone circles that occur across the UK & Brittany, peculiar to northeast Scotland. The recumbent stone, the largest lying on its side, lies about the SW point of the circle. It is thought that this configuration was used for lunar observations and the changing of the seasons. The circles are usually in good farmland, near hill-tops. The view of the village and the surrounding hills is worth the walk. You will notice Alastrean House, a large pink granite mansion house, now a care home. Alternatively, drive to the circle's car park.

**Dinnet Nature Reserve & Burn o Vat** There is a visitor centre here with toilet facilities. The exhibition space has some great hands-on stuff for kids in addition to simple explanations for the geology of the surrounding area and Burn O Vat. There is a walk to the Vat, with purple way markers. If it has been very wet then it may not be possible to go into the Vat area. The opening looks blocked and you have to cross the stream using stepping-stones. Boots may be a good idea. There is also a short route to a viewpoint above Loch Kinord. On a good day you may see gliders being released after being towed up from nearby Deeside Gliding Club. A longer circular way-marked path of around 4 miles in length continues from the Vat back to the car park. *[Toilets Open daily; exhibition at weekends]* Walk description details: [www.walkhighlands.co.uk/cairngorms/burn-o-vat.shtml](http://www.walkhighlands.co.uk/cairngorms/burn-o-vat.shtml)

**Contact Information** *[we recommend checking opening for your planned visit]*

### Visits

Muir of Dinnet Nature Reserve;

[www.nnr-scotland.org.uk](http://www.nnr-scotland.org.uk)

### Refreshment Options

Aberdeen Arms Hotel, The Square, Tarland, AB34 4TX; 01339 881225  
The Commercial Hotel, The Square, Tarland, AB34 4TX; 01339 881922  
Loch Kinord Hotel, Ballater Road, Dinnet, AB34 5JY; 01339 885229;  
Victoria Restaurant, Dinnet, Aboyne, AB34 5JY; 01339 885337  
Picnic during any of the walks or as an alternative to them!

[www.aberdeenarmshotel.co.uk](http://www.aberdeenarmshotel.co.uk)  
[www.thecommercial-hotel.co.uk](http://www.thecommercial-hotel.co.uk)  
[www.lochkinord.com](http://www.lochkinord.com)  
[www.victoriarestaurant.co.uk](http://www.victoriarestaurant.co.uk)