

## Walk to Cairnbeathie (with reminiscences of Macbeth)

Lumphanan, Macbeth's well, Peel ring, Macbeth's execution stone, Lumphanan park and car park. Leisurely stroll 1¼ hours. Involves crossing a field.

The objective of this walk is to see the place where Macbeth was killed by Malcolm or his men. Contrary to the plot of Shakespeare's play, Macbeth did not kill Duncan while he was his guest. Rather it appears that Duncan was killed while attempting to subjugate Macbeth in Macbeth's homeland of Moray. Seventeen years later Malcolm raised an army with the assistance of his English relatives from Northumberland. Macbeth appears to have been fleeing back northwards when he was overtaken in Lumphanan. Local legend has it that he was decapitated on a stone at a farm called Cairnbeathie (the farm's name recalling the event). Macbeth was no saint, but other sinners have been worse.

To begin the walk, park your car in the public car park at the end of School Road (with the Meet Again Tea Shop on the corner). After leaving your car, return on foot down the road you came. Turn left at the Meet Again Tea Shop. Walk past the Macbeth Hotel and cross the road. Turn right at the T-Junction. Walk past the bungalow, then turn into the public footpath. Continue to its end. Turn right on leaving the path and follow the lane. The old church (now a private house) is on a bank high on your left. Cross the stream and you will soon see 'Macbeth's Well' on your right. Perhaps he did drink the water here as the plaque suggests. I remain sceptical.



Follow the lane and you will come to a gate on your left that overlooks an old castle mound. It was built about one hundred years or so after the death of Macbeth. However, it may be on the site of a former castle or settlement. Perhaps Macbeth was trying to defend himself here. If you take care climbing the gate it is an easy walk down to the 'Peel ring'. For the less agile, the alternative is a mile or so additional walk. (Follow the lanes and keep taking left turns until you arrive at the signpost to the Peel Ring).



If you have come directly over the field you will enter the circle of trees that encloses the Peel Ring. It is a good spot for a picnic or just to have a look around. After the castle was demolished the site was used to build a small house. It stands somewhat higher than the boggy ground below, with its moat and its feeder stream. The line of the foundations



is still visible. This house and many other buildings in the area would have used the masonry of the castle so that nothing now remains of the latter.



If you leave the Peel ring and join/rejoin the road turn right and you will soon see gate on your left. Macbeth's execution stone is a hundred yards or so across the field and stands on a little knoll near the side of what used to be a railway line. After pondering Macbeth's fate, return to the road and turn right when you get there. Follow the road back to Lumphanan, or go back across the field if you prefer to return the way you came.