



Mull Head, Deerness

Mull Head is the furthest point of Deerness and offers one of the finest coastal circuits on Mainland Orkney. The route has gloop, impressive cliffs and geos as well wonderful sea views - but the highlight is the narrow path leading out onto the Brough of Deerness. The walk can be extended by linking with the Covenanters' Memorial route.

TERRAIN

Grassy cliff-top path, boggy on return. Slightly exposed path with chain to Brough of Deerness can be omitted.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Bus from Kirkwall to Deerness is 2km from start of the walk.

START

Mull Head reserve car park.



Grade ([key](#))



Bog Factor ([key](#))

Walk Statistics

Distance	6.75km / 4.25 miles
Time	2 - 3 hours
Ascent	196m (Profile)
Start Grid Ref	HY589078

Walk Description

STAGE 1

There is a car park for the Mull Head local nature reserve at the very end of the road through Deerness. The building ahead and to the left here is an interpretation centre for the reserve. The walk itself begins along the path that leads from the information board directly towards the sea. Soon the Gloop is reached - Gloop is a word of Norse origin describing a collapsed sea cave or large blow hole. The Gloop here has a viewing platform at each end - the inland one giving a view of the archway that links the Gloop to the sea.



STAGE 2

At the coast, the path passes through a gate and then turns left to continue just back from the cliff-top. After around 800m the coast changes direction and there are views ahead to an almost detached headland - the Brough of Deerness. Continue on the path until a signpost indicates the route out onto the Brough - first down steps to the shore, then up a narrow exposed path climbing across the southern cliff. Although exposed, there is a chain handrail against the cliffs to aid the ascent - though care is needed.



STAGE 3

The extensive grassy top of the Brough was once a Viking settlement, and various faint mounds can still be seen. The most obvious ruin now is that of a chapel - originally built in the 10th century though it later fell into disuse and was refounded in the 11th or 12th century, before falling into disrepair by the sixteenth. As well as its archaeological remains, the Brough offers views of some superb cliff scenery.



STAGE 4

Retrace your steps back to the main path before continuing the walk along the coastline. Soon the route passes through a kissing gate and runs around the back of a bay and Lang

Geo. After a second kissing gate the path leads behind a very narrow geo before continuing to the Chip of the Mull, from where views extend to the northern Orkney isles.



STAGE 5

From the Chip the path switches west and climbs up to Mull Head itself - with a trig point set just back from the cliffs. Now the path heads down the other side of the peninsula, passing round the back of Ramna Geo.



STAGE 6

The path is a little less distinct and boggy on this stretch of coast. Continue along the cliff tops, now with views towards the [Covenanters' Memorial](#) further along the coast. This can be done as an extension to this walk.



STAGE 7

Just before a boardwalk a sign ('Mull Head footpath') indicates where to turn left away from the coast. Follow a path uphill, keeping to the left of a fence. Further up the path turns right through a kissing gate, then left onto a track (with an old mill visible to the right). When the track reaches a junction, go through a gate directly ahead and continue between two fences. The route then cuts left at a small turbine, soon rejoining a track. When this turns right, go left through a kissing gate onto a path. Further on this bends right to return to the car park.



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