



DECEMBER 2021

HEATHERY HEIGHTS MONTHLY

Articles, walks and news



NEXT ISSUE

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TORINTURK; DUN A' CHOIN DHUIBH AND THE GIANTS GRAVE

Ancient sites off the beaten track...

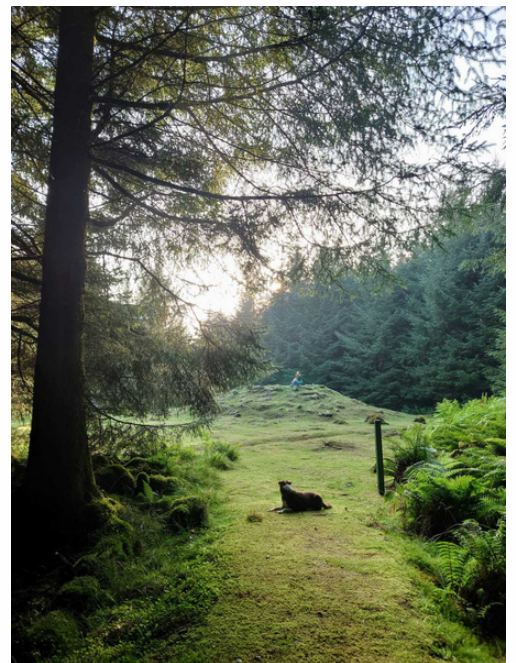
This delightful walk in South Knapdale has been a local favourite with our family for many years and brings back many fond memories of accompanying my dad on his trips working for the Forestry. The walks combine easier tracks with very steep paths and a section on the single-track road if you want to take the longer circuit.

Worthy of the steep walk up, the superb remains of the iron age fort of Dun a' Choin Dhuibh, the fort of the black dog - reputedly named after the black wolfhound that guarded it - harks back to an era pre plantations. Its keen sides are imposing, its far-reaching views still impressive despite the trees. The Dun has retained walls up to 10' thick and would have been in a good position overlooking West Loch Tarbert. Apparently, the legendary hunter Torquil Mor was killed here fighting a wild boar.



How tall are you? The Giant's Grave.

Below the Dun lies the older bronze age Giant's Grave. The headstone and footstone lie some 3.5m apart; it is said that this was the grave of Diarmid, founder of Clan Campbell. Following tracks further into the forest the ruins of the old settlement of Achelach can be found, its stone buildings more likely to have been built in the 18th Century. Beyond man's stonier remains the ancient woods that fringe the forestry plantations are rich in wildlife, including quite an array of fungi in autumn.



The burial cairn near the Giant's Grave.



Angels Wings in Autumn

The walk

1.The walk routes described here start at the small forestry car park (turn right in Torinturk by the phone box and keep left for 500m until you reach it). The routes can also be started from the village if you park with consideration.

2.From the car park walk southwest along the grassy track for 1km. On either side there are many deciduous trees flanking the plantations including oak and hazel. The path initially contours round before starting to rise.

3.At a sharp right hand bend the path rises very steeply for 150m up to the Giant's Grave, a small bench offering respite en route.

4.The clearing with the grave and nearby burial mound is a pleasant spot to dwell before exiting on a path through the trees at the NE corner. This again rises very steeply for 100m before evening out and widening into a forestry track.

5.After 400m (approx. 5 minutes) look out for a small green marker post on your left indicating the turn up to the Dun. The path meanders upwards through the woods for 200m before reaching a clearing. Ahead to the left you will see a grassy path leading up to the Dun, be mindful it is very steep and slippery in places after rain.

6.The vistas over the trees from the Dun are lovely and the ruins impressive. It can easily be walked around, its old entrances and ramparts admired. Please do take care not to scramble over the Dun or cause any damage, this is a scheduled monument.

7.Descend back down the very steep path off the Dun but, instead of turning right along the woodland path you came up, look for a path leading down to the left as you approach the edge of the clearing. This drops you out a little further along the forestry track.

8.Turn left onto the forestry track. Follow this for 250m where you will reach a junction. (You can turn right at the junction if you wish to return to the car park).

9.Turn left. The track now rises steadily for over 600m before reaching a crossroads.

10.Turn left. The main track sweeps left for 100m to the old ruins of Achelach, situated to your right, easier to see when the bracken dies down. If you now wish to return retrace your steps down the hill, turn right at the crossroads, and follow the main track all the way back to the car park, ignoring the right hand turn you came out of earlier.

11.To continue on the longer route follow the main track SW past Achelach for 250m. Ahead you will see a track bearing left. Take this.

12.Follow this track through forestry, fields and woods for over 2km down to the B8024 ignoring all tracks off to the right. After circumnavigating through woods below the Dun the vista gradually opens as you descend. You will pass through a couple of gates and cross farmland so be aware there may be livestock.

Safety in the Outdoors

Please continue to adhere to current guidelines as set out by the government, exercise responsibly and use appropriate clothing and equipment for your chosen outdoor activity. Consider informing a contact about your route/whereabouts and don't forget your phone, snacks, drink, any medication/first aid supplies you may need and to check weather conditions. Please keep your dog under close control, especially around livestock and wildlife, and be aware some open areas of moorland may have snares in use. Please follow the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, bylaws and laws that protect areas including National Nature Reserves (NNRs) and Sites of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSIs).

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Achelach ruins



Dun a' Choin Dhuibh.

13. Turn left onto the B8024 and follow the road back to Torinturk, taking care of any traffic. If you have parked in the forestry car park turn left at the phone box and follow the track left for the last 500m.
14. Please note: both the OS 1:50 and 1:25 maps show other paths/tracks joining the B8024 with the forestry track above. These are extremely overgrown and are not advised as shortcuts.

The described route and accompanying information are there to be used as a guide and do not replace the use of map and compass and the skills required to use them. Whilst every effort is made to ensure the route is accurate at the time of going to print please be aware that track and path closures can happen at any time. All walks are undertaken at your own risk.

Walk Information

Route: Dun a' Choin Dhuibh and the Giant's Grave

Distance: 4.5 - 8.5km (2.8 - 5.3 miles)

Ascent: 185 - 260m

Time: 2 - 3 hours

Terrain: A mixture of good forestry tracks and paths with steep, slippery sections.

**Map/s: OS Landranger 62 (1:50 000)
OS Explorer 357 (1:25 000)**

Start/Finish/Parking: Small forestry car park off the B8024 at Torinturk

Grid reference: NR808640

Public Transport: NA

Toilets: No

[OS Map link short circuit](#)

[OS Map link long circuit](#)

