

● **Wester**

Three walks in the north western corner of the island which explore Rousay's inland moorland and its exposed coastal heath.

1 • Sacquoy Head Walk
A 6.4km (return) coastal walk past Sacquoy Head. Arctic skuas nest on the exposed coastal heath and grassland that dominates this walk. This agile graceful bird is the pirate of the skies, chasing other birds to steal their fish. Please keep to the coast to avoid disturbing these birds during the summer breeding season.



2 • Innister path
A short, 1.7km return, walk up the hill near the farm of Innister, with superb views over Rousay towards Faraclett Head and on out towards Westray. There may be cattle in the fields along this walk so please keep dogs under close control at all times.

3 • Loomachun Walk
A 4.7 km return walk over wild moorland to a remote lochan. This walk is over rough and often wet ground and there are waymarkers to help you find the route. The route takes you up onto open, windswept, heather clad hills with dramatic views all around. Red throated divers breed on the Loch of Loomachun and it is important they are not disturbed during their breeding season. So from May to August please do not approach the loch too closely - a sign on the path indicates the best place to stop.



● **Sourin**

A circular walk of 3.5km over coastal heath and grassland, above high cliffs and with spectacular views.

4 • Faraclett Head
The overhanging cliffs of Faraclett Head are very dangerous so please stay well clear of the edge. Where the path is faint in places follow the waymarker posts. Look out for arctic terns on the coastal heath at Faraclett Head. These dainty birds undertake a 3000 mile round trip to Antarctica and back every year, coming to Orkney for the summer months to breed. Returning from feeding on sand eels out at sea, the terns are often harried by skuas, which also nest at Faraclett. A variety of other birds also live here,

including the glossy black raven with its deep croaking 'prruk' call and the occasional peregrine. Plants of the heather family dominate much of Faraclett Head - ling, bell heather and cross leaved heath. You will see other flowers as well, ranging from dainty white eyebright to yellow bog asphodel and purple devil's bit scabious. Near the steading of Faraclett is a massive standing stone called Yetnasteen, which is said to walk to a nearby loch for a drink each New Year!



● **Westside**

Step back in time on this coastal walk and explore settlements spanning from the Stone Age to the crofting times of the 18th century.



11 • Midhowe Heritage Walk
A 2.3 km (return) historical walk along a lovely coastline. The oldest structure along the route is Midhowe Cairn, a huge stalled cairn, 23 m long and divided into 12 compartments. Tombs like Midhowe were the collective burial places of communities of Neolithic farmers, dating as far back as 3000BC. Midhowe Broch is more recent, built during the Iron Age as a fortified residence. It stands on a cliff promontory, with the landward side barred by two ditches with a massive stone wall between them. The Wirk was once a grand ceremonial hall, dating from the 13th or 14th century, with a square tower on the seaward side. Further along is the ruined 16th century St Mary's Church, occupying the site of a much earlier medieval church. The huge stone buttresses were added in the 19th century to try and stop the church sliding down the slope towards the sea! Skaill Farm probably dates from the 18th century and has been empty since the crofting evictions. Here you can see a typical feature of old Orkney crofts, the round kiln in which barley was dried.



10 • Muckle Water

A 3.5 km (return) walk along an old peat track to the largest loch on Rousay - Muckle Water. Red throated divers breed on the loch so please take care to avoid disturbing them. Great views from the track over to Evie and Eynhallow.



● **Froft**

Archeology in abundance here, also great views of Wyre and Orkney Mainland.

9 • The Burn Path
1.1km (return)

A lovely walk following the course of a burn up the hillside. An ideal picnic spot on a fine day with good views of Eynhallow and across to the mainland. On the uninhabited island of Eynhallow are the ruins of an old chapel which may have been part of an early Christian monastic settlement. Look for the strong tidal races - locally known as 'roosts' - which surround the island.

8 • Knowe of Yarso
1.3km (return)

The Knowe of Yarso is a Neolithic chambered cairn set on a terraced hillside. It has a 4m long passage leading into the chamber and it is divided into three compartments. It was excavated in 1934 and bones of at least 29 adults were found along with flint knives and scrapers. Remains of 36 red deer were also found, evidence that while there are no deer in Orkney today, they did roam the hills in the past.



7 • Knowe of Hunclett
1.4km (return)

This short walk to the coast takes you through farmland to the remains of a broch called the Knowe of Hunclett. This mound is one of seven brochs along the five mile stretch of coastline between the pier and Midhowe. From the mound you can look across to the island of Wyre.

● **Brinian**

Enjoyable walks on Rousay's south east corner, not far from the pier where the ferry arrives and departs.

5 • Upper Avelshay Walk
A 2 km circular walk through moorland with lovely views across to Egilsay and Wyre. Follow the waymarker posts along the route. Along this walk there is a mound known as 'Cubbie Roo's Burden.' Cubbie Roo is a folklore 'giant' known for trying to build bridges between the islands and for 'throwing' rocks around Orkney. Folklore tells us that he tried to build a bridge between Wyre and Rousay, but he dropped the stones and these formed the mound now called Cubbie Roo's Burden.

6 • Trumland Nature Reserve
A short 3.3 km circular walk through the RSPB reserve

A longer 6.6 km circular walk to the highest point on Rousay, Blotchnie Field.

The trails are marked by white topped posts. Please follow these carefully for your own safety and to minimise disturbance on the RSPB reserve. Trumland reserve is a good example of typical Orkney moorland and supports a variety of birds such as hen harriers, merlins, short-eared owls and red throated divers. On the longer walk you pass near Knitchen Loch where red throated divers breed. These birds are easily disturbed so please do not approach any closer than the marker post. This path then heads up to the highest point on Rousay - Blotchnie Field - with its spectacular views across the whole of Orkney and even as far as Fair Isle and Foula on a clear day.

