

## 3·4 Spittal of Glenshee to Kirkton of Glenisla

**Map** panels 2 and 1

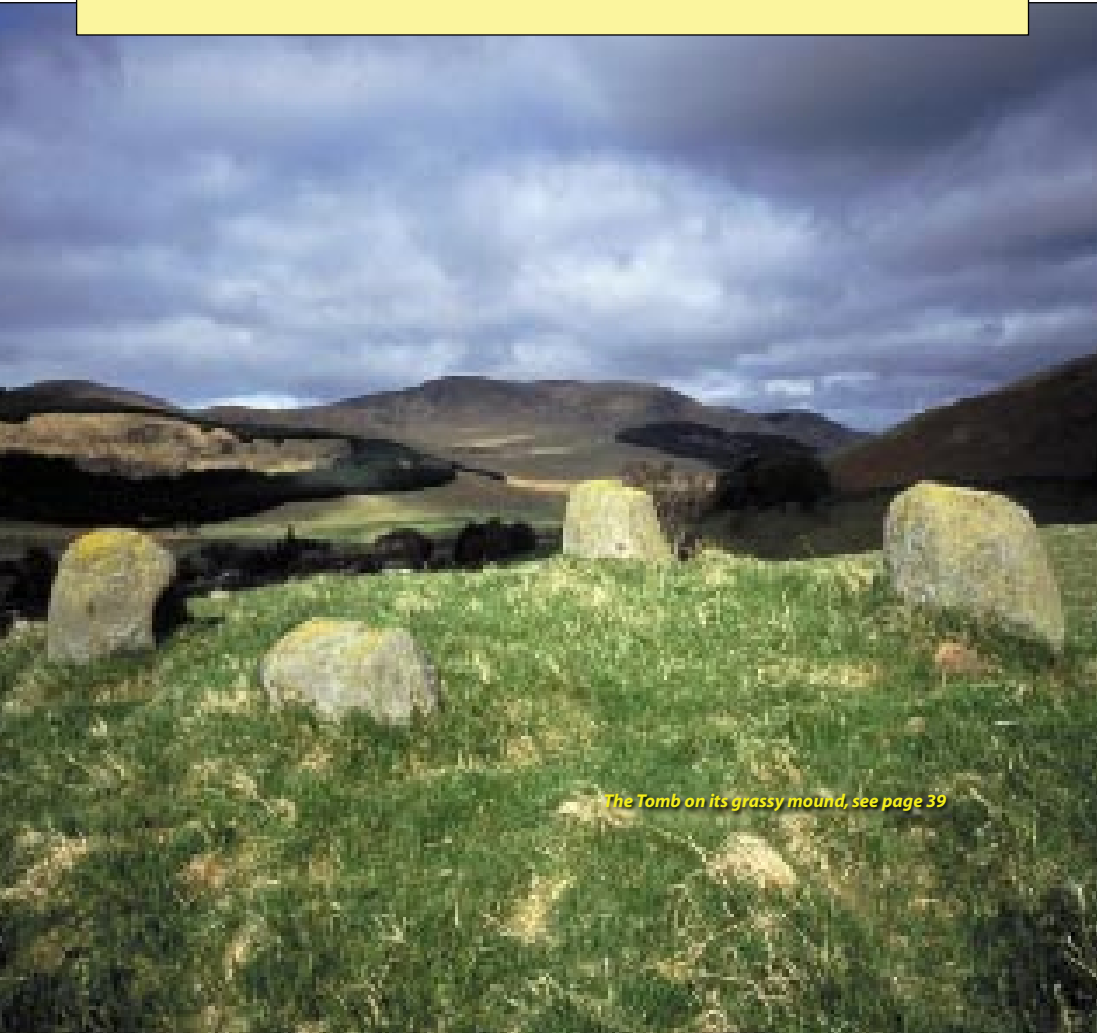
**Distance** 8 miles (13 km)

**Terrain** the first 5 miles (8 km) is on rough moorland path with boggy bits and several stream crossings, with the remainder on minor roads

**Grade** gradients are slight for most of the day, although the off-road section includes some rugged walking

**Food and drink** Spittal, Kirkton

**Summary** after some rough walking in Glen Shee, the Trail reaches Glen Isla largely by road, with the option to ascend Mt Blair en route



*The Tomb on its grassy mound, see page 39*

- To continue with the Trail, follow the minor road through the village, walking across the Old Brig, the bridge built in 1748 as part of the military road from Edinburgh to Fort George.
- Turn left after the bridge to see the slate standing stone which tops an impressive mound of glacial deposit, above you and to your right as you walk briefly upstream between river and Kirk. The graveyard has a number of interesting gravestones.



*The Kirk at Spittal*

- Returning to the road, pass through the village and cross the A93 with care. Turn left to follow the grassy verge for 100 m to the stile which takes you over the fence of Old Spittal Farm.

- Cross the stream by the timber footbridge, bear left and follow the obvious road uphill and eastward towards the steading. Just after a derelict building, you pass over a stile: within 50 m, look out for some isolated trees above you to the left.

- To divert for the Tomb (see panel), leave the Trail here and walk steeply uphill between the scattered trees towards a patch of scree. Climb past the scree and soon you will see a large mound (see main photograph on pages 8 and 38) with four standing stones. NB: the Tomb is 500 m further west than shown on OS Explorer 387, actually at grid reference 117 701.



#### **The Tomb**

*The Tomb is the legendary and atmospheric sixth century burial place of Diarmid, the great warrior nephew of King Fingal. His love of Fingal's queen Grainne echoes the Arthurian legend in which Launcelot's love of King Arthur's wife Guinevere brings about the fall of Camelot. In a reminder of Wagner's Ring Cycle, the jealous fight was resolved in the hunt for a wild boar, where although Diarmid managed to kill the boar in a desperate battle, he was poisoned by its spines. Fingal refused him the antidote, and Diarmid is buried, according to legend, under this mound. Its four stones create the shape of a spearhead which points to where the boar died. Clan Campbell consider themselves to be descendants of Diarmid, and their badge is the head of a wild boar.*

- Return to the Trail across the hillside. After passing through or over the next gate, the track approaches the renovated steading, but turns left uphill, in front of it.

