



Other Paths in the Blairgowrie Area

The Cateran Trail

Distance: 64 miles/103 km

Approx time: 4-5 days

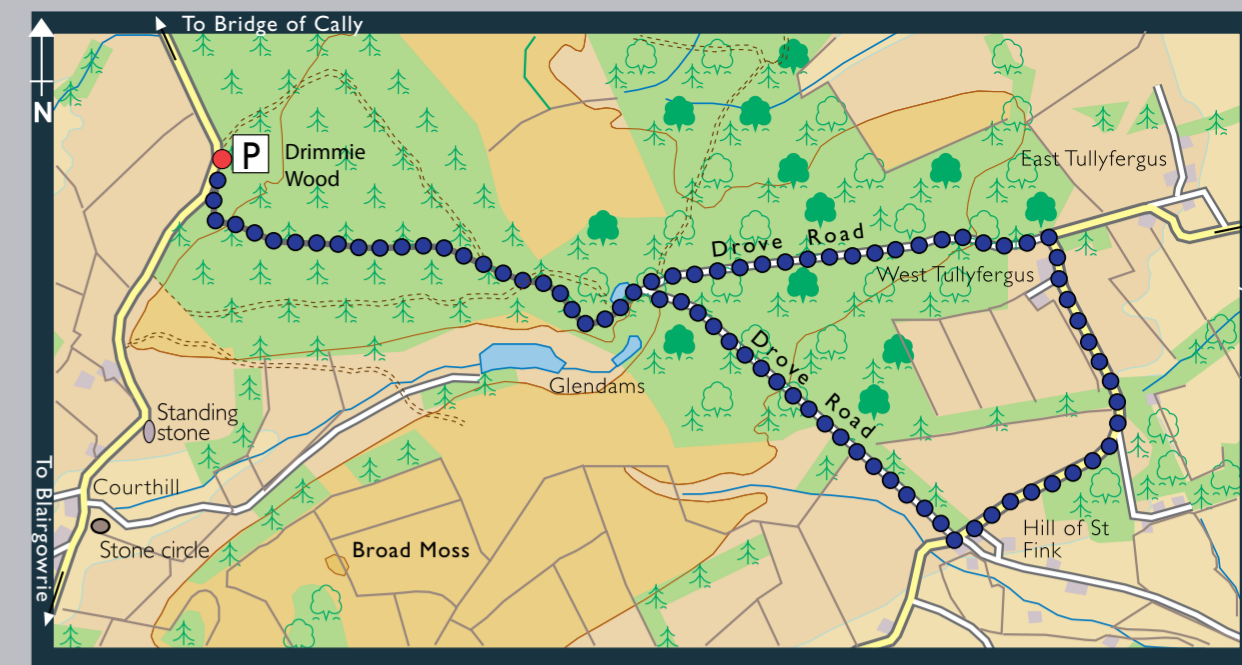
Terrain: The trail follows quiet roads, old drovers tracks and open countryside.



The route goes through farmland with sheep and cattle and much of it is on unsurfaced paths through open countryside. Access for mountain bikes and horses is therefore limited. Blackcraig Forest at Bridge of Cally offers very good access for horses and mountain bikes all year round.

The route will take you through some stunning countryside, passing through Strathardle, Glenshee and Glenisla.

www.caterantrail.org



Drimmie Wood

Distance: 4 miles/7 km

Approx time: 2½ hours

Start/finish: Car park at Drimmie Wood

Terrain: Most of the route follows good tracks with gentle gradients. Suitable for walking, mountain biking and horse riding. Drimmie Wood and Tullyfergus loop are suitable for horses but not the linking section due to soft ground conditions.

It is possible to walk to Drimmie Wood from Blairgowrie following the Drimmie Road for 2 miles. This involves some steep climbs and blind bends so please take care. The standing stone near the road is known as the Kynballoch Stone. The stone has three 'cup marks', small circular depressions believed to be created by our Neolithic ancestors. Drimmie Wood is managed by Forestry Commission Scotland, and

planted with fast growing Sitka spruce for timber production. There are other tracks through the wood but the waymarked route goes directly towards Tullyfergus Estate. Note the difference in types of trees as you leave Drimmie Wood and head across Tullyfergus. The estate has planted a large quantity of native hardwood trees such as ash and oak and also left clearings which are good for wildlife. The path is an ancient drove road used hundreds of years ago to move cattle from the highlands to towns such as Coupar Angus, Blairgowrie and beyond. The view to the north extends as far as the Angus hills and to the east and south lie the Sidlaws. The path leads to the Alyth Road and the town of Alyth can be reached via the Den o' Alyth. The waymarked path loops back up another drove road to regain the original route through Drimmie Wood.



The Knockie Path

Distance: 3 miles/5 km

Approx time: 1½ hours

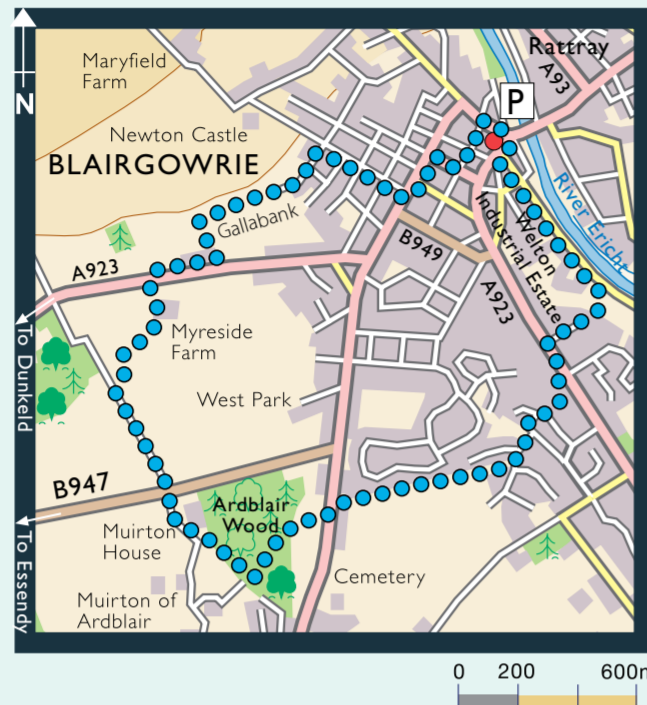
Start/finish: Riverside Car Park

Terrain: Level path by the river, with steep steps beside the Cuttle Burn and a climb to the summit of the Knockie.

One of the two viewing platforms next to the river Ericht looks down to the famous 'Cargill's Leap'. Born in 1610 in nearby Hatton, Donald Cargill became a minister of the Barony Kirk in Glasgow. He refused to acknowledge the laws passed by Charles II to establish bishops in Scotland and was outlawed with a price on his head.

In one infamous adventure he escaped a party of dragoons by jumping the narrow gorge. He was finally executed in 1681. Access to Cargill's Leap is also possible from the Keathbank car park by Balmoral Road, and the bridge across the Ericht. From here the Old Mill Road runs alongside the Ericht. Most of the mills here turned flax into linen, employing nearly 2,000 people at their peak. It is now the route of a wildlife sculpture trail.

The Cateran Trail follows a farm track past the Knockie, leading to views of the Lorn Valley and the hills beyond. The Knockie is actually the last (or first!) foothill of the Grampians. Stop for a rest to view the Sidlaws, before heading back downhill. You can pick up the Ardblair Trail or continue down to Blairgowrie via Newton Street.



The Ardblair Trail

Distance: 3 miles/5 km

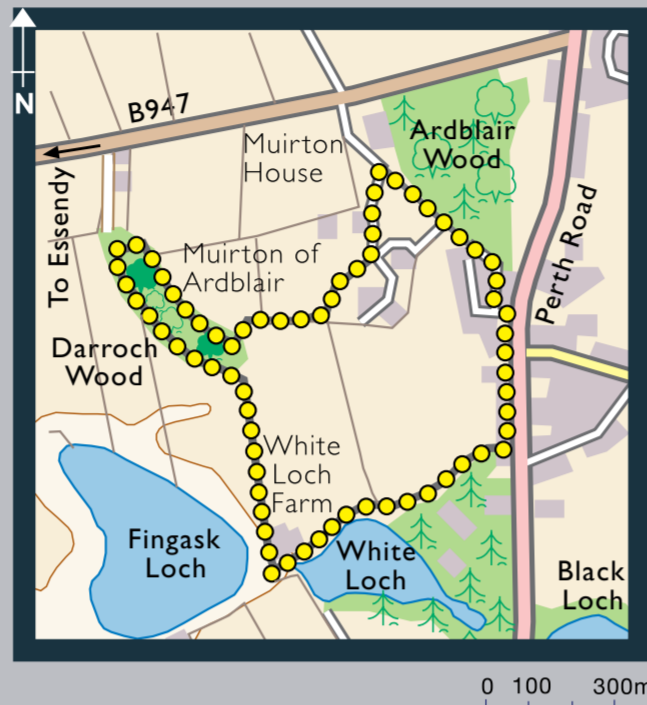
Approx time: 1½ hours

Start/finish: Wellmeadow, Blairgowrie

Terrain: Gentle gradients and level paths make this route suitable for most walkers. Part of the Gallabank path is suitable for wheelchairs. The route from Myreside Farm to Ardblair Wood is suitable for horse riders and mountain bikers.

The Ardblair Trail is a short route, passing castles, and goes through mixed countryside and ancient woodland. The route leaves the town along the Gallabank, aptly named as this is where executions used to take place ('Galla' is Scots for gallows). Nearby is Newton Castle, an ancient fortified farmhouse, once the stronghold of the Drummond Clan but now the home of Sir William Macpherson, Chief of the Clan Macpherson. At Myreside Farm you will find an interesting collection of 19th century farm buildings.

The path leads to a track known as the 'Weasel Roadie'. Not far from this point is Ardblair Castle, belonging to the Blair-Oliphant family, which dates back to 1115. Legend has it that in the 16th century two Drummond men, father and son from Newton Castle, were ambushed and murdered by the Blairs. This did not bode well for Lady Jean Drummond who was in love with a Blair. Heartbroken, Lady Jean wandered out into the marshes... and never returned. Her ghost, dressed in green silk, now divides her time between the two castles.



Bluebell Wood

Distance: 2 miles/3 km

Approx time: 1 hour (allow for an additional 30-40 minutes if walking from the centre of Blairgowrie)

Start/finish: Muirton of Arblair

Terrain: The route mainly follows a mixture of good level paths but there are some uneven sections through Bluebell Wood with gentle gradients. Due to mixed ground conditions the path is only suitable for walkers.

Follow Perth Road and take the Ardblair Trail through Ardblair Wood. Muirton of Arblair was once a weavers' village said to be the last place in Scotland where strip farming took place. Sadly the majority of the cottages have long gone but the area still retains its charm. The path takes you into the 'Darroch Wood' (Gaelic for oak wood). Spectacular from the beginning of April the woodland floor is a carpet of bluebells. Bluebells are susceptible to trampling so please stick to the path. Follow the path at White Loch - a popular place for both anglers and bird watchers - you may see osprey fishing the loch for trout. Enter 'Druidsmere Wood', a remnant of a much larger woodland. Some of the trees appear to have been pollarded, a sustainable process of harvesting tree limbs to be used for firewood, making into charcoal or for building materials.

The path comes out opposite the Dalmore Inn on the main Perth Road, from here turn left back to the start where you have the option of following the Ardblair Trail back to the town centre.

SCOTTISH OUTDOOR ACCESS CODE

Know the Code before you go...

Everyone has the right to be on most land and inland water providing they act responsibly. Your access rights and responsibilities are explained fully in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

Whether you're in the outdoors or managing the outdoors, the key things are to:

- take responsibility for your own actions;
- respect the interests of other people;
- care for the environment.

Find out more by visiting www.outdooraccess-scotland.com

For information about other paths visit www.pkc.gov.uk/paths

For ideas on what else to do in Perthshire visit www.perthshire.co.uk

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Perth & Kinross Council and several private landowners own and manage the Blairgowrie Path Network. Perth and Blairgowrie is one of the six cluster areas included in the Perthshire Big Tree Country Heritage and Access project, celebrating the amazing woodland heritage in the area, and co-ordinated by Perth and Kinross Countryside Trust.

Big Tree Country sites in this cluster area:

- Meikleour Beech Hedge
- Den o' Alyth
- Kinnoull Hill Woodland Park
- Aitken Arboretum
- David Douglas Memorial, Scone Old Church
- Moncreiffe Hill Wood
- Quarrymill Woodland Park
- Scone Palace

www.perthshirebigtreecountry.co.uk

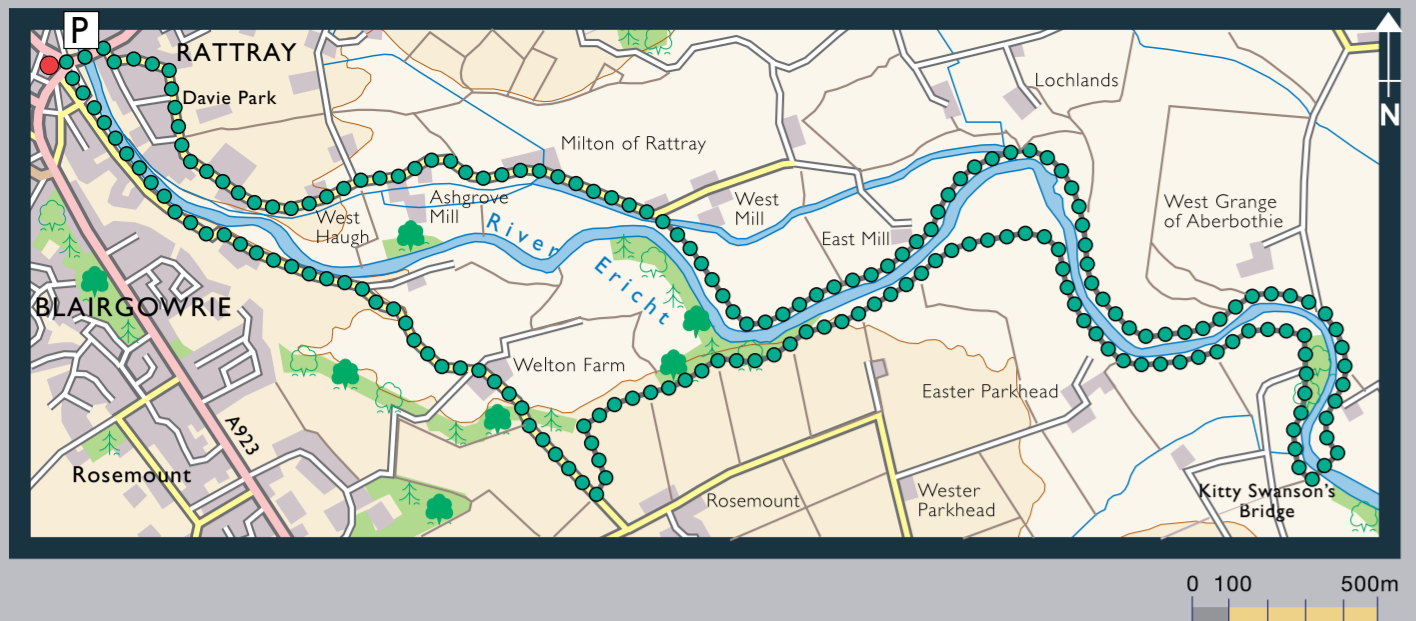


Explore Blairgowrie Path Network



Kitty Swanson's Bridge, River Ericht

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River Ericht Path
 Distance: 8 miles/13 km
 Approx time: 4-4½ hours
 Start/finish: The Wellmeadow, Blairgowrie
 Terrain: The start and finish of the route is on minor roads so please take care. The off-road sections follow a field edge and flood banks with gentle gradients; stout footwear is recommended. Due to soft ground conditions the route is only suitable for walkers.

Welton Road - Blairgowrie Railway Station stood near here. Many local people remember the 'raspberry specials' from the 1950s, bearing their sweet cargoes all the way to London's Covent Garden. The way-marked trail takes you through a mixed landscape with huge barley, wheat and strawberry fields.

Stormont Loch
 Terrain: Even ground with good tracks suitable for walking, mountain biking and horse riding.

Stormont Loch is well worth a visit, there are good tracks around the loch and through the adjacent woodland. The loch is a very important area for over wintering wildfowl. Tufted ducks and great crested grebes nest here.



Other Popular Paths
 The majority of the paths shown in grey are through open farmland so please adhere to the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.



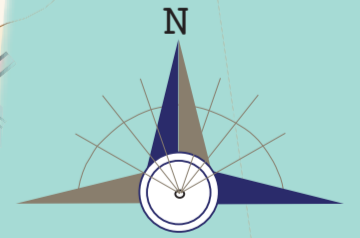
Blairgowrie Further Information

Situated on the south facing slopes of the last foothills of the Grampians, the separate towns of Blairgowrie and Rattray were joined in 1928 by an Act of Parliament. They are separated by the River Ericht, which has its sources in two of the loveliest glens in Scotland, both being natural passes to the north from Strathmore - Strathardle and Glenshee, the Glen of the Fairies.

By the end of the 18th century the Blairgowrie area was a huge centre for the growing of flax. Initially the linen weaving industry was home-based but the first industrial mill was erected in 1798. Others followed in the 19th century. In 1855 the railway arrived as a branch line from Coupar Angus.

Making the most of your visit

Even in summer the weather can change quickly, so always take appropriate clothing. The paths can be muddy in places so sensible shoes or walking boots are recommended. Take a snack or drink along with you - it's always a good excuse to stop and enjoy the view. The Blairgowrie Path Network has been set up with the support of local landowners and farmers. Please remember that they make their living from the land so please don't damage crops, disturb livestock and do adhere to the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.



Blairgowrie Paths

- Bluebell Wood Path
- Ard Blair Trail
- The Knockie Path
- River Ericht Path
- Drimmie Wood Path
- Other Paths

