

Markinch Heritage Group

Woodside and Lady's Walk Circular

A circular route through old Woodside, along a medieval path and track with lots of panoramic views, returning by River Leven.

Mostly smooth surfaces but one rough section which can be muddy and overgrown. Short steep slope. Busy road crossing. Short flight of steps. Can be cycled.



4 miles/
6.5 km
Allow
2 1/2
hours

[Link to Map My Walk](#)

Alternative route:

[Link to Map My Walk](#)

Start at Glass Street free car park – NO 297 018, KY7 6DP

First 5 points are same as Markinch – Woodside- Blue Bridge Circular Walk

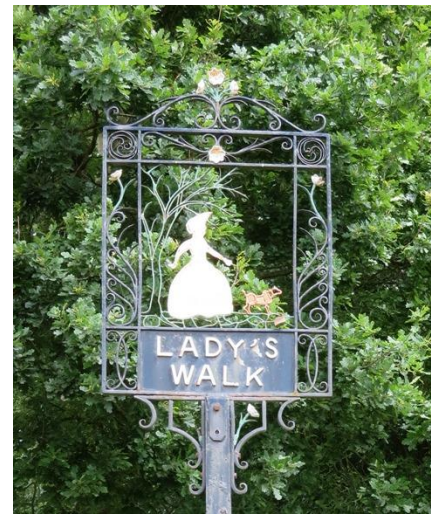
1. Turn right out of car park, keep to this side and cross straight over to High Street. At top of High Street cross to station, opposite Balgonie Road. Follow access road to large station car park beyond station and bear right at its entrance. This is the former branch railway to the paper mills and Leslie and a siding into the former site of the famous Haig whisky plant you see on your right that operated for over a century until 1983 before moving to modern premises. The Markinch-Leslie line opened in 1861 at a cost of £35,000.
2. Shortly, looking back to your left you will see the ten arch mainline viaduct built across the River Leven in the 1840s. It was one of the greatest engineering feats of its time, involving hundreds of workmen including Italian stonemasons. Down in the valley ahead the pan tiled roof of Middle Mill can be seen, one of some 31 mills that lay along the River Leven in 1828.
3. You will soon pass under a stone bridge that carries a path to Woodside (the subject of another walk – **Markinch-Woodside-Blue Bridge Circular**). Pass first left hand junction just beyond the bridge and take next junction on left (signed to Glenrothes) and cross Balbirnie Viaduct. From the viaduct there is another view of the mainline viaduct and as you leave the viaduct reused buildings from Balbirnie Wool Mill, now a gym, can be seen in the valley to your right.



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4. The path emerges in Alburne Park named after English plasterer Thomas Alburn, 'the best plaisterer that ever was yet in Scotland' who in the early 1700s built an inn here on the main Burntisland-Cupar coach road known as the Plaisterer's Inn.
5. Go left and left again at next junction. Follow road round to face a large care home. Go left and along to pedestrian crossing near the Lomond Centre. Just before this point the Leslie branch line used to cross the road. It continued along what is now Boblingen Way and across another viaduct serving Leslie with five passenger trains per day as well as freight for Prinlaws and Fettykil Mills.

6. Continue past crossing up Woodside Way (Woodside was once part of Markinch before Glenrothes came into being) to a small roundabout at the Woodside Inn once known as Strephon's Inn. On your left across from the Inn and next to the bus stop is Lady's Walk, a beech lined medieval path which existed at the time of Alexander III. This path skirts Carleton which in the 1850s only consisted of a few cottages. Along the way and to your left the panorama is from Largo Law hill in the east to the West Lomond and beyond to the west. Follow the path all the way to a rail bridge (at Lady Nina Square, Coaltown of Balgonie – named after Lady Nina Balfour whose family operated mines locally).



7. Immediately over the rail bridge an ancient track to your left signposted Sythrum will take you back to Markinch but it can be muddy (***see alternative route details and pink waymarked map below – this will add approx. 0.1 miles/km***). If track taken, follow it until it reaches first a lade then a stone bridge over the River Leven. Where the track joins the A911 bypass turn left to the 10 arch viaduct mentioned previously.

8. Just before crossing at the viaduct look over and up to see a good view of the John Haig B-listed Art Deco Coronation Bond. Carefully cross road and follow steep old tarmac road known as the 'Parley Brae', which turns into a path, until it emerges at the top near two cottages known as the Roadman's Cottages.



An alternative to reach the cottages is by way of the '63 steps' on your left adjacent to viaduct (probably built for railwaymen). It's slightly shorter but can be more hazardous!

9. Go under the metal rail bridge to wide steps leading to the station car park. Cross the car park towards the station and return to starting car park via High Street.

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ALTERNATIVE ROUTE AVOIDING ANCIENT TRACK:

Cross rail bridge and walk to end of Lady Nina Square, turn left out of the village and head downhill where you will cross a metal sided bridge over a lade, a spur of the River Leven built to power a small hydro power station near Balgonie Castle originally commissioned in 1922 to provide electricity to a nearby colliery and in more recent times as a supplement for Tullis Russell paper mills.

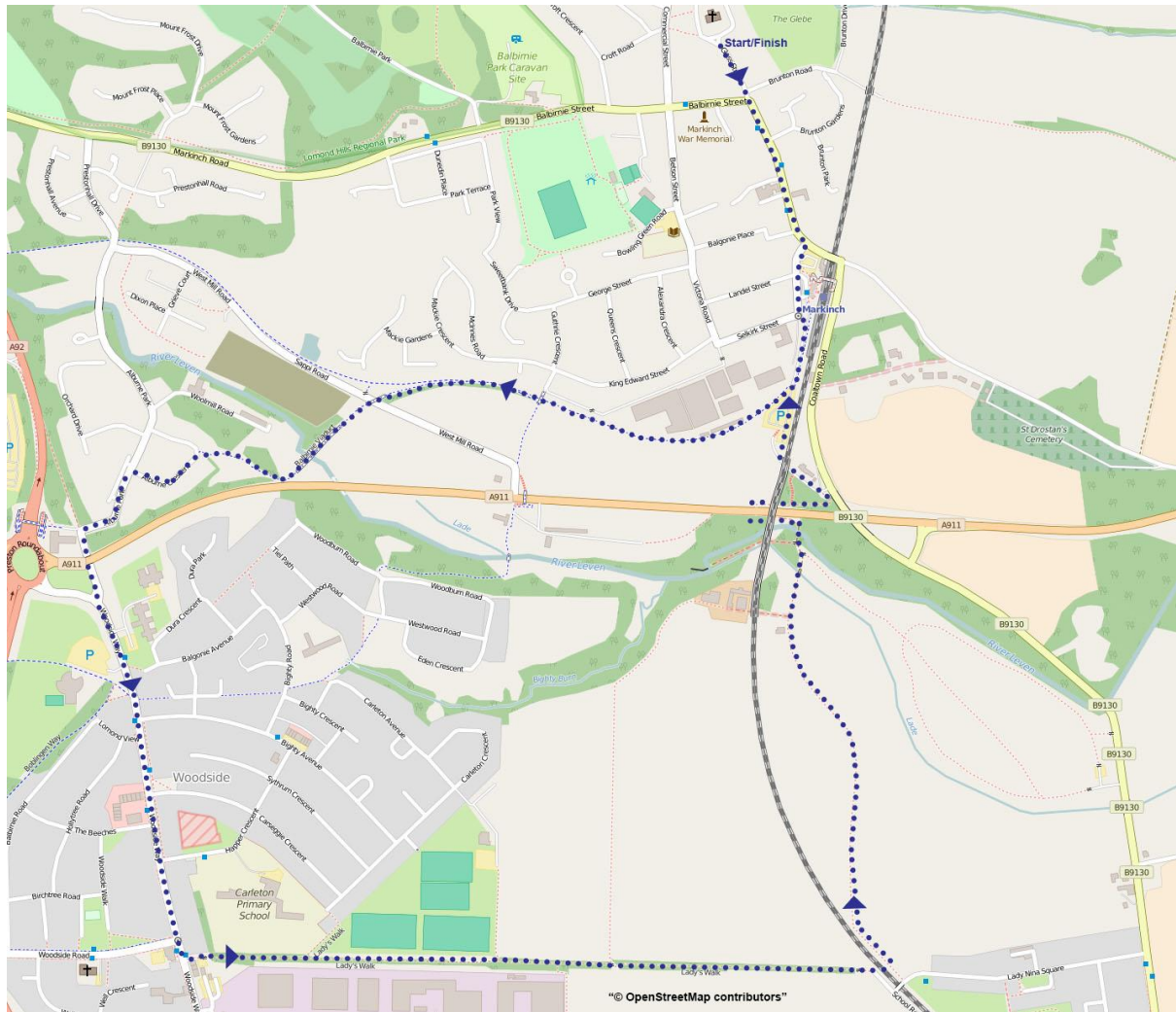
Shortly further down on your left is Balgonie Bleachfield (part of another walk – **Balgonie Bleachfield Viewpoint & Leven Woods**) that you can detour into. The road then swings left over the River Leven and continues up past Leven Woods on your left. On your right is the site of the ill-fated Balgonie Ironworks which once had a water wheel, though there is no trace of anything now.

When a flyover high above the A911 bypass is reached, look left into the trees immediately before the flyover and you may see WW2 tank trap blocks. From the flyover view the viaduct mentioned previously carrying the main east coast line. Behind you up on the hill you may see a wide slot in the cemetery wall, a gun loop.

Immediately after the flyover are two cottages, known as the Roadman's Cottages. Take a left to pass in front of the cottages and under the metal rail bridge to wide steps leading to the station car park. Cross the car park towards the station and return to starting car park via High Street.

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Markinch-Woodside-Lady's Walk-Back Road 4 miles/6.5km



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ALTERNATIVE TO ANCIENT TRACK:

Markinch-Woodside-Lady's Walk-Lady Nina Square-Bleachfields 4 miles/6.5km

