

# Markinch Heritage Group

## Balbirnie Circular - Route 2 via Fir Hill

A beautiful woodland walk with picnic sites and taking in former stable block, Balbirnie House and view from Fir Hill, the highest point in Balbirnie Park.

Route follows well made wide surfaces with some short steep sections and two short flights of steps. No gates or stiles.



2 miles/  
3.4km  
Allow 1  
hour

[Link to Map My Walk](#)



**Start at car park, KY7 6NP, NO 292 018, near Main Entrance, off Balbirnie Street**  
(summertime toilet 9am-6pm may be available)

1. Left out of car park and follow tarmac road, then first right to a junction at the top of the hill. A very short way down the track to your right lies a former walled garden from the mid 1780s, now community allotments. Just beyond the junction and to the right is the Craft Centre, though now mostly converted to dwellings. This was once the Balbirnie House stable block dating from around 1780.
2. Follow tarmac surface past arched entrance to courtyard, round to the right past Leather Company and on to path. Take the first path on left and bear right past a flight of steps. On your right is a row of large monkey puzzles and some redwoods. Continue following path and it sweeps round to the left and rises to a metal sculpture. This is Fir Hill. From here you can enjoy views east to the main east coast line rising from Markinch station and views south across Markinch.
3. Now follow the path and keep to this until on the left you reach a flight of steps with a metal railing. Ascend and turn right at the top, a nice rest area. To see views over to the Lomonds to the left and Bandon Tower ahead (a late 16<sup>th</sup> C tower built for David Balfour of Bandon on the site of an older tower) you will probably have to stand on the bench! Return to steps. Go down the steps on the right and retrace route back to Craft Centre then take a right down towards award winning A-listed Balbirnie House Hotel, a grand neoclassical mansion, once the Balfour residence.



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4. The grassed area to the left of the house and adjacent to the road was once a croquet lawn and is marked with a large 'H' as it is sometimes used to helicopter guests to golf championships.

5. Continue past front of hotel and then on your left an 18<sup>th</sup> century yew tree whose branches sweep to the ground, to the Golf Shop ahead. Turn right and as you start to pass front of Golf Club note Balfour marriage stone dated 1675 in entrance wall to golf course next to car park.



6. Proceed on to path into woods soon coming to a picnic area next to the burn. Follow the path keeping burn on left. Stay on this path and it eventually emerges briefly from the trees close to a field edge with a steep rhododendron covered incline to your right and a view to the railway and Markinch Hill over the field to your left.

7. Remain on the path until you reach a wide cross road at a track. You may wish to turn right to make a very short detour to reach a lovely, small sheltered clearing on the right with picnic table surrounded by beautiful trees and rhododendrons, particularly in May. Alternatively go straight ahead and take next right and follow path to a narrow stone sided bridge. Cross and shortly emerge to a large grassy area leading back to the car park.

8. As you reach the road at the car park you may wish to go left for approximately 50m towards the old Balbirnie estate gates and South Lodge. Built in 1861 it is likely that this entry point was created due to the arrival of the railway. Its alignment and high architectural status design was intended to impress guests as well as clearly differentiate the estate owners from the inhabitants and the built character of the adjacent burgh.



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## Route 2 Map

Car park-Craft Centre-Fir Hill-Balbirnie House-Balbirnie Burn-Woodland-Car park

2.1 miles/3.4km

