

A Village Stroll

1.7 km/1.08 miles

From the village hall, walk down hill to the junction with South Street at the Fox and Hounds pub. Turn right along South Street passing the Mercat Cross and the old village drying greens.

The village was originally designed around two principal streets, North and South Street. The houses on each street backed onto the Houston Burn which ensured that the residents had access to clean water.

Turn left onto Bogstonhill Road and continue over the Houston Burn. The building with the curved wall at the end of the road was once the village smiddy (blacksmiths). Turn right along North Street and continue to Houston and Killellan Kirk and graveyard which sit at the bend in the road.

A church was built on this site around 1775. In 1870 a new church was built which by the early part of the twentieth century had fallen into disrepair. Restorations were carried out in 1938. Houston House, the former home of the local laird, can be seen behind the kirk. It is no longer a single residence but has been divided into apartments.

Continue along Kirk Road re-crossing the Houston Burn. On reaching Houston Road at Lonend Cottage turn right up the slight hill and you will pass the old Glebe House. This would have been the manse where the minister lived.



Craigends Yew and Crosslee Lade

(8.0 km/5.01 miles)

From the Village Hall, cross the road and go left downhill to the junction with South Street at the Fox and Hounds pub. Turn right along South Street passing the Mercat Cross and the old village drying greens. Turn left onto Bogstonhill Road and continue over the Houston Burn. Turn left up North Street to the junction at the Houston Inn and turn right up hill towards the war memorial. There is an old school opposite the war memorial. Take care as you will have to walk on the road. Continue along the road, passing Greenhill Farm on your right. Take the next road on your right - this is one of the "Leisure Lanes in Renfrewshire" with signs to warn motorists that they may encounter walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

Craigends Castle used to sit within the woodland where you are now walking. After continuing straight on for about 300m you will see a stone information point on the left hand side of the path. To get an impression of how large the yew tree is go into its centre. The Craigends Yew is the big bushy tree which lies between the information point and the river. It is thought that the tree is about 600 years old although some experts suggest it may be as much as 1000 years old.

Yew groves were sacred to the Druids and used as places of ritual in connection with prophesy, it is believed that on hot summer days the trees release a vapour that can have a mild hallucinogenic effect on the person(s) sitting within a grove. A useful place for a powerful noble's seer to meditate in!



At the roundabout, the house on your right was formerly the Police Station and was built on the site of an earlier one used for the same purpose. Diagonally opposite across the roundabout is St Fillan's RC Church.

The church was built in 1841. It was only the second Roman Catholic Church to be built in Renfrewshire after the reformation in the 16th Century.

Turn right along Main Street. On the left you will see the old West Kirk built in 1884.

The building was largely destroyed by fire in 1941 and the congregation worshipped in a small hall behind the church. In 1949 the congregations of the West Kirk and Houston and Killellan Kirk united and the West Kirk building was utilised to provide halls.

The Carrick Centre next to the old West Kirk was formerly known as the red school. The separate entrances for Boys and Girls can still be seen. Nowadays the centre is used for a variety of community groups. There is an excellent history display in the tea room. Why not stop here and find out more about the village over some light refreshments.

At the next junction turn right. In the field on your right is a small stone structure. This is a covered well known as St Peter's Well. At the end of the road turn left into Kirk Road and continue past Houston and Killellan Kirk which sits at the bend in the road. You will cross over the Houston burn again. At the junction by Lonend Cottage turn to the right, cross the road and take the narrow lane almost opposite. This eventually leads down via a twisty steeper section to the bus stop on the B790 Bridge of Weir Road. Cross over the road carefully.

To go to the Craigends Yew turn left and follow the path running parallel to the road. Continue straight on into the wooded area beyond Leeburn Gardens. Ignore the path off to the left leading into the houses. After about 350m a tarmac lane crosses your route. Turn right along this lane and over a metal bridge across the River Gryffe. Fork left immediately after the bridge along a gravel path.



Return the same way as you came to the point where you crossed over Bridge of Weir Road. Just before you reach the bus stop turn left along a path adjacent to a stone wall. Now keeping the stone wall to your left continue past the rear gardens of the houses until you come to where the path splits. Take the path to the right towards the shops, turn right along their frontages then left through the underpass and up the steps to the hairpin bend in the road.

Take the road to the right signposted Whirlie Road and continue on past Dunnet Drive, Back o'Hill and Whirlie Drive until you get to the T junction.

An old water-powered cotton mill, Crosslee Mill used to stand opposite this junction. Established in 1793 it was the biggest mill on the River Gryffe. During its heyday it employed 300 workers in a six-storey building. Velvet from the mill was used on the seats of the House of Lords. Water was fed to the mill along a lade which follows the river almost from Bridge of Weir. The mill was demolished in the 20th century.

Turn right cross the road and take a grassy path down the slope towards the river, take the faint grassy path that skirts along the edge of the hill side. Just before you meet the road again turn along another narrow grassy path to your right and continue straight on until you join a muddy earth path near an old ivy covered metal gate. The lade appears on your right with the river on your left. Continue on the narrow path to a stone bridge, locally known as the Fairy Bridge. Turn right over the bridge and follow the path, and then road, past Goldenlea Farm to the Main Road. Turn left and then immediately right on to Old Bridge of Weir Road. The woodland to your right is the location of an ancient bronze age burial site, South Mound. Continue past Gryffe High School to the roundabout and turn left to return to the village hall.

Houston



RENFREWSHIRE VILLAGE WALKS

Take Care Out of Doors

Dress to suit the weather, take an extra layer and something waterproof. While none of these walks are very far from the village, you may want to take snacks and something to drink, or plan a refreshment stop in the village. Stout footwear should be worn. Trainers will probably do in a prolonged dry period, or for routes on tarmac, but walking boots would be better on rough tracks.

Know the Code before you go..... Enjoy Scotland's outdoors - responsibly!

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

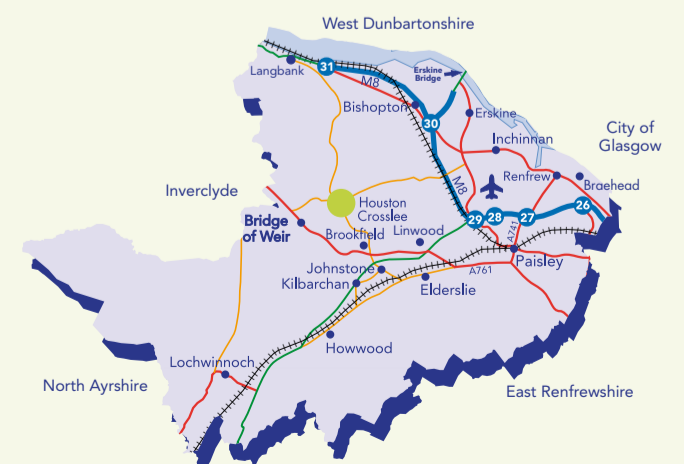
Whether you're in the outdoors or managing the outdoors, the key things are to:

- 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 or phoning your local Scottish Natural Heritage office.

How to get to Houston

For bus information contact www.travelinescotland.com or phone Traveline on 0871 200 2233 (calls cost 10p per minute from BT landlines, charges from other operators may vary).



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Welcome to Houston



● Round the lanes to
Kilallan Church 12.4 km/7.7 miles

Take care on this walk as much of it is on country roads with no pavement. It is recommended that you walk on the right hand side of the road facing the on-coming traffic where there is no pavement to walk on. Other sections can be rather wet and muddy.

From the village hall walk down hill along Main Street towards the war memorial at the far end. You will cross over first South Street and then North Street. Opposite the war memorial is an old schoolhouse. Continue to the crossroads and turn left up a narrower road which leads to Kilmacolm. This is one of the "Leisure Lanes in Renfrewshire" with signs to warn motorists that they might encounter walkers, cyclists or horse riders.

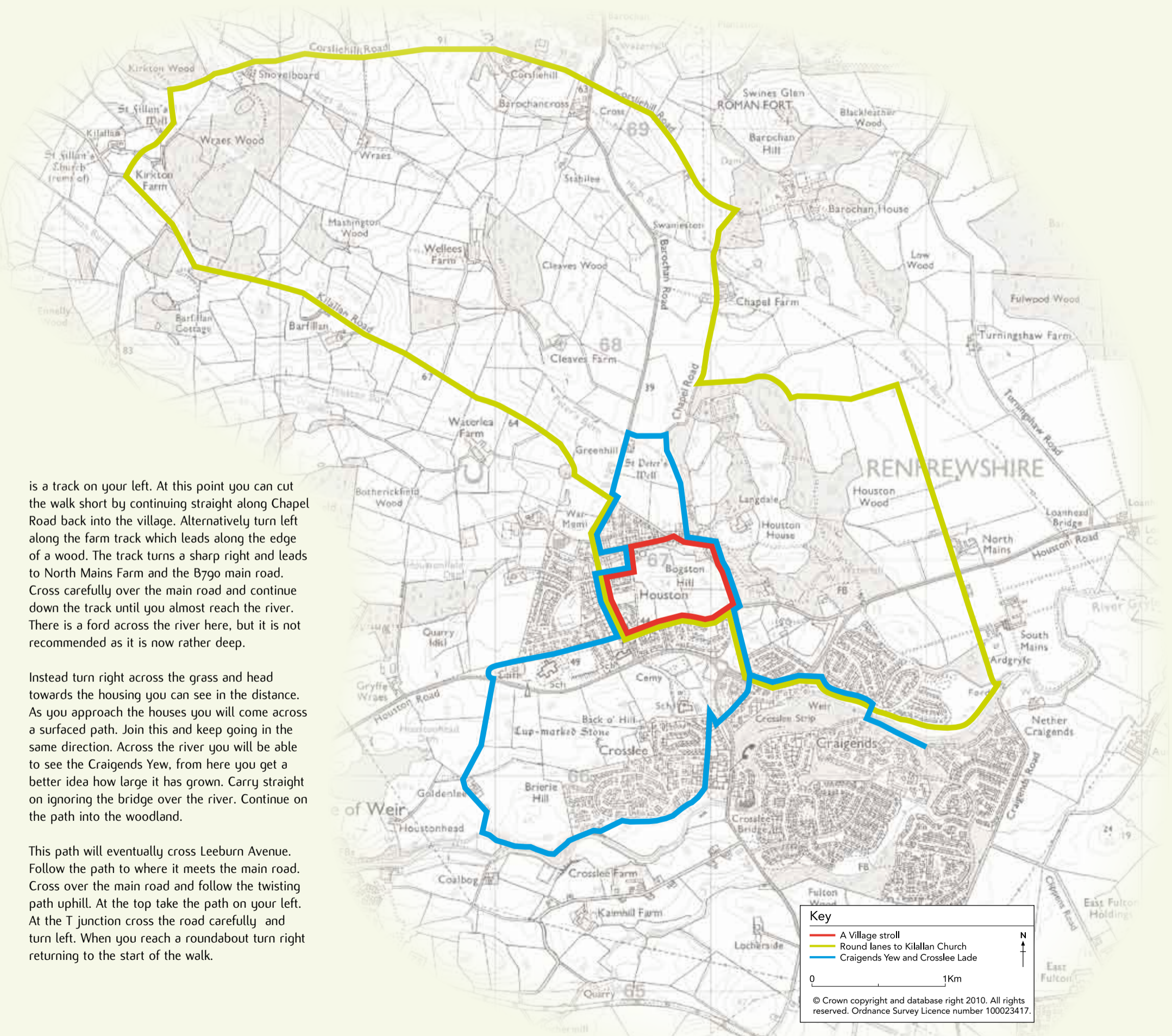
Pass Waterlea Farm and then continue for 2.5 km /1.5 miles. Keep straight on where a road goes diagonally down to the left. In a further 300m take the road to your right. In a few moments on your left you will see the site and ruins of the Old Kilallan Parish Church.

Old Kilallan Parish Church was founded by St Fillan who is believed to have died in this lovely spot in 749AD. Kilallan is derived from kil Fillan – St Fillan's church.

Continue along the road passing Shovelboard Farm until you reach the main road at a crossroads. Carefully cross over to a rougher road opposite. To your left is Barochan Hill which is thought to be the site of a Roman Fort.

The fort has been associated with the fourth campaign season of governor Gnaeus Julius Agricola and was founded sometime in either AD80 or 81. It encloses an area of about 3 acres (c.1.3 ha). On your right you will see what looks like a boulder in the middle of the field. This is where the Barochan Cross once stood. The cross is now in Paisley Abbey.

At the end of the rough track you will pass the entrance to Barochan House at a sharp bend to the right, and later on, Chapel Farm on your left. About 400 m beyond the farm there



is a track on your left. At this point you can cut the walk short by continuing straight along Chapel Road back into the village. Alternatively turn left along the farm track which leads along the edge of a wood. The track turns a sharp right and leads to North Mains Farm and the B790 main road. Cross carefully over the main road and continue down the track until you almost reach the river. There is a ford across the river here, but it is not recommended as it is now rather deep.

Instead turn right across the grass and head towards the housing you can see in the distance. As you approach the houses you will come across a surfaced path. Join this and keep going in the same direction. Cross the river you will be able to see the Craigends Yew, from here you get a better idea how large it has grown. Carry straight on ignoring the bridge over the river. Continue on the path into the woodland.

This path will eventually cross Leeburn Avenue. Follow the path to where it meets the main road. Cross over the main road and follow the twisting path uphill. At the top take the path on your left. At the T junction cross the road carefully and turn left. When you reach a roundabout turn right returning to the start of the walk.

Key

- A Village stroll
- Round lanes to Kilallan Church
- Craigends Yew and Crosslee Lade

0 1Km

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